Internal Social Media: A New Kind of Participatory Organizational Communication?

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Two Explorative Studies of Coworkers as Communicators on Internal Social Media

PhD **dissertation**

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Tak

Det har været lidt af en rejse at skrive denne Ph.d.-afhandling. En rejse fuld af udfordringer med gode hjælpere på vejen, der har været med til at gøre afhandlingen mulig. Jeg vil gerne benytte lejligheden til at takke alle dem, som hjalp mig på rejsen.

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Chapter 1

”It makes sense to write in ”The Word is Free”. I think so. I also think it makes sense to those who are responsible. In this way the people who has an opinion enters the scene, and their ideas can be used in the ongoing development.”

Specialist (JB, Iw 9)

1. Introduction

Internal social media (ISM) can connect coworkers across geographical, hierarchical and departmental distance (Koch, Gonzalez and Leidner, 2012; Treem and Leonardi, 2012), and it can develop into multivocal communication in which many voices can be seen and heard (Baptista and Galliers, 2012; Huang, Baptista and Galliers, 2013). At the same time, coworkers are increasingly perceived as active communicators who can influence and change organizations (Heide and Simonsson, 2011, 2015; Kim and Rhee, 2011; Mazzei, 2010; Mazzei, Kim and Dell'Oro, 2012; Strandberg and Vigsø, 2016). The combination of empowered coworkers and a communication opportunity could pave the way for a new kind of participatory organizational communication, and this has led practitioners to praise ISM for its ability to dramatically change the organizations way of working and make organizations more effective and competitive. A praise several scholars have been noticed (cf. Falkheimer and Heide, 2014; Heide, 2015; Rice and Leonardi, 2013).

However, introducing ISM does not in itself automatically change international communication and the organization's way of working (Denyer, Parry and Flowers, 2011; Trimi and Galanxhi, 2014; Young and Hinesly, 2014). Organizational contexts like management style, organizational culture and communication climate all make a difference to how ISM is perceived and used in an organization (Baptista and Galliers, 2012; Chin et al., 2015; Martin, Parry and Flowers, 2015; Parry and Solidoro, 2013).

To date, little research has explored how coworker communication on ISM influences organizations. Most research on ISM has been from an information systems perspective (for reviews, see El Ouirdi et al., 2015; Leonardi, Huysman and Steinfield, 2013; Van Osch, Steinfield and Balogh, 2015), and few scholars have specifically studied communication on ISM (e.g. Baptista and Galliers, 2012; Beers Fägersten, 2015; Uysal, 2016).

From a communication perspective, ISM is interesting in at least two ways. First, ISM is different to other internal communication channels. ISM represents a communication arena in which everyone in the organization can participate, everyone is seen as they participate, and everyone can see what is happening (Brzozowski, 2009). Treem and Leonardi (2012) highlight the combination of four affordances to describe the significance of the media: visibility,

persistence, association, and editability. The four affordances describe how communication and people become visible to the organization in a new way, and how communication stays on ISM. ISM connects people to people, and content to people, and in this way it creates a meta-knowledge about who knows what and whom. Finally, ISM offers individuals "time to craft and compose messages" (p. 160).

Second, the communication constitutes organizations (CCO) understanding of organizations makes the ISM communication arena even more interesting because of the insight it offers into how communication can be said to constitute organizations. Because the communication is visible not only to members of the organization but also to any researchers allowed access to the media, ISM provides an opportunity to study the interactions between members of an organization and to see how they communicate with each other and about what. In this way communication on ISM can provide an insight into how communication constitutes organizations.

To sum up, ISM is interesting because it provides an internal communication space in a period in which coworkers are perceived and valued as communicators, both on a concrete level (for their contribution in knowledge-sharing, collaboration and more effective communication) and on a more abstract level as constructors of organizations, through interactions and communication as perceived in a CCO understanding.

However, since little research has studied communication on ISM (El Ouirdi et al., 2015; Leonardi, Huysman and Steinfield, 2013; Van Osch, Steinfield and Balogh, 2015), the question remains what exactly takes place in the communication arena created by ISM. Social media has been praised for its capability to democratize and change societies (Castells, 2007; Coombs, Falkheimer, Heide and Young, 2015). But is the same likely to happen in an internal context in an organization? Does ISM create a new kind of participatory organizational communication? Studies have found that not all organizations succeed in developing multivocal communication on ISM (Baptista and Galliers, 2012; Parry and Solidoro, 2013), and that far from all coworkers communicate on ISM (Denyer, Parry and Flowers, 2011). These findings suggest that the organizational setting is likely to influence coworkers and their way of communicating on ISM. Coworkers have a different, closer and more complex relationship with an organization in which

they are employed (Frandsen and Johansen, 2011) than external users of social networks have with a network or organization. They have more at stake, their identity and identification with the organization are central, and their roles as receivers and senders of information are different (Frandsen and Johansen, 2011). This is likely to influence how and what they communicate about. These considerations have led me to the overall purpose and the research questions of the dissertation.

1.1. Purpose and research questions

The purpose of the dissertation is to apply a communication perspective to communication on ISM and to the understanding of coworkers as communicators on ISM. The intention is to understand what coworkers talk about, the communication processes that unfold on ISM, and the interactions that develop between coworkers in the ISM communication arena. This is explored with the aim of answering the following overall research question:

Does internal social media create a new kind of participatory organizational communication? And if yes, in what way? And what are the dynamics driving coworker communication on internal social media?

In order to answer the overall research question, I conducted two exploratory qualitative studies. The major findings from the studies are presented in three articles, each with their set of research questions. The three main research questions in the three articles are:

RQ 1: How and why do organizations experience challenges in getting coworkers to communicate on ISM?

RQ 2: How and why do coworkers contribute to the construction of organizational identity, when communicating on ISM?

RQ 3: Why and how does self-censorship influence coworker communication on ISM?

1.2. Theoretical framework, empirical material and the three articles

In the dissertation I build on a social-constructivist approach and a communication constitutes organizations (CCO) understanding of organizations. In the theoretical framework of the dissertation and in the articles I especially draw on theories of employee voice and silence (Brinsfield, 2014; Morrison, 2011, 2014) and of imagined audiences on social media (Litt, 2012; Marwick and boyd, 2011) in order to understand the dynamics driving coworker communication on ISM. However, I also use ISM adoption literature (Chu, 2012; DiMicco et al., 2008; Treem and Leonardi, 2015), theories of employee participation (Stohl and Cheney, 2001; Wilkinson et al., 2013b), the rhetorical arena theory from the field of crisis communication (Frandsen and Johansen, 2010; 2016), organizational identity (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Gioia et al., 2013; He and Brown; 2013), and other fields in order to shed light on the phenomenon of ISM and the empirical findings that emerge from my studies of ISM.

The dissertation itself builds on two qualitative studies. The first is a multiple case study conducted with ten Danish organizations in the spring of 2014. ISM coordinators were interviewed in order to explore the phenomenon of ISM and the challenges experienced by organizations in getting coworkers to communicate on ISM, with the aim of establishing an initial understanding of communication on ISM and coworkers as communicators on ISM. The second study is a single case study conducted in Jyske Bank over a period of 15 months. A netnographic study of screenshots of communication on ISM was conducted for four months (three months in fall 2014 and one month in September 2015) to explore what coworkers communicated about, how they communicated, and who communicated. Additionally, 24 coworkers were interviewed about their communication behavior on ISM. Seventeen coworkers, representing different kinds of communication behavior, were interviewed in December 2014 and January 2015, and seven were interviewed in October and November 2015 specifically so as to gain insight into their self-censorship while communicating on ISM.

The findings from the two studies were used in the three articles in the dissertation in order to present three different perspectives on communication on ISM and coworkers as communicators on ISM. The first article has a managerial perspective, and uses the multiple case study to explore challenges experienced with the introduction of ISM and the role of ISM

coordinators. The second and third article use the single case study in Jyske Bank. The second article applies a communication perspective to coworker communication on ISM. Discussions about organizational identity are used in order to study how coworkers communicate and how they can be said to challenge, negotiate and construct organizational identity in a CCO perspective. The third article has a coworker perspective and uses self-censorship as a lens to understand coworker communication behavior on ISM.

The remainder of the dissertation attempts to shed light on the role of coworkers as communicators on ISM, and to discuss whether ISM introduces a new kind of participatory organizational communication, as well as discussing the dynamics that drive communication on ISM.

1.3. Structure of the dissertation and overview of the articles

The dissertation consists of five major parts.

The first part and **chapter one** introduce the topic and purpose of the dissertation. The second part presents its theoretical background. In **chapter two,** the social-constructivist perspective chosen in the dissertation is explained. In **chapter three,** three sets of theories are reviewed that set out to understand coworkers as communicators in organizational communication. In **chapter four,** the literature on internal social media (ISM) is reviewed to create an understanding of coworker communication behavior on ISM. In **chapter five,** a conceptual model of communication on ISM is developed, based on the theory of imagined audiences, the rhetorical arena theory from the field of crisis communication, and a CCO understanding of communication.

In the third part, the methodology and research design of the dissertation are described and reflected upon. In **chapter six,** the methodological considerations are presented in order to reflect on the assumptions upon which the dissertation is based. In **chapter seven,** the research design is presented so as to give an understanding of how the empirical material was constructed and the reflections that were involved in the choices taken.

The fourth part consists of the three articles. **Chapter eight** introduces the articles, and **chapters nine**, **ten** and **eleven** consist of the three articles, an overview of which is presented in Table 1.3. This table lists the article title, the journal of intended publication, the status of the article in the review process, and the three perspectives used in the articles: managerial, communication, and coworker. Following this, the articles' objectives, methods and conclusions are briefly summarized. The third article, also listed in the table, is co-authored with Joost Verhoeven, University of Amsterdam.

The fifth part concludes the dissertation. **Chapter twelve** briefly summarizes the findings of the three articles. **Chapter thirteen** compares the multiple case study in the ten organizations and the single case study in Jyske Bank, and this comparison is used as a background for discussion of the overall research question, whether ISM introduces a new kind of participatory organizational communication and the nature of the dynamics driving communication on ISM. Finally, **chapter fourteen** concludes the dissertation and reflects on its major contributions and the implications for practice, as well as limitations and future research.

1.4. Reflections on the writing process

The dissertation is based on three articles by the author. The articles were written before the text that surrounds them. This means that some of the insights and some of the literature discussed in the theoretical framework and the final discussion of the dissertation do not appear in the articles, even if it might have made sense to include them.

Table 1.3. Overview of the three articles

Article 1: Challenges of Introducing Internal Social Media: ISM coordinators' Roles and Perceptions of Communication on ISM		
Journal: Journal of Communication Management (accepted)		
Perspective: Managerial		
Objective/aim/ research question	Method(s)	Conclusions
Understanding adoption of ISM	Multiple case study in ten Danish organization. Semi-structured interviews with ISM coordinators.	Coworker interpretation and sensemaking of ISM is decisive to how ISM is used, and the ISM coordinator can play a role a facilitator and sensemaker in relation to ISM.
Article 2: Constructing Organizational Identity on Internal Social Media: A Case Study of Coworker Communication in Jyske Bank		
Journal: International Journal of Business Communication (published)		
Perspective: Communication		
Objective/aim/ research question	Method(s)	Conclusions
Understanding communication on ISM	Single case study in Jyske Bank. Textual analysis of 40 significant discussions on ISM, and semi-structured interviews with 17 coworkers.	Coworkers in Jyske Bank contributed to the construction of organizational identity when they challenged, negotiated, and discussed organizational issues on ISM.
Article 3: Self-censorship on Internal Social Media: A Case Study of Coworker Communication Behavior in a Danish Bank		
Co-author: Joost Verhoeven		
Journal: International Journal of Strategic Communication (published in October 2016)		
Perspective: Coworker		
Objective/aim/ research question	Method(s)	Conclusions
Understanding coworkers as communicators on ISM	Single case study in Jyske Bank. Semi-structured interviews with 24 coworkers, and studies of four month of ISM communication.	Coworkers consider carefully what they write on ISM in order to not annoy imagined audiences, damage their own self-presentation, violate unwritten rules, or run into a storm of comments from other coworkers. They use seven strategies to ensure that their content is constructive and relevant.

Chapter 2

”Some times it becomes a little bit political. Or how should I phrase it. There are areas that I am responsible of or my department is, and then I have to think carefully…. Then it is unpractical or stupid to comment.”

Marketing Consultant (JB, Iw 3)

2. A social-constructivist perspective on coworkers as communicators

Theories and assumptions influence and guide both researcher and research (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000), and in the dissertation I have chosen a social-constructivist approach. To shed light on the implications for my research, in this chapter I situate myself within social constructivism, a field in which there are several positions (Wenneberg, 2000), and I reflect on what this approach means both for the research itself and for the understanding that it applies to communication on ISM and the role of coworkers as communicators on ISM.

2.1. Social constructivism: a paradigm and a way of perceiving the world

Social constructivism draws on many different sources, such as Kant (1724–1804), Marx (1818–1883), and the German idealist tradition within philosophy. Social-constructivist thought developed seriously from the 1960s. Kuhn (1962) questioned the entire idea of scientific progress, and developed the idea of competing paradigms which influence researchers' way of thinking and understanding. This relativistic understanding perceives science as developing in different paradigms, which cannot be compared because they spring from different perceptions of reality. This approach dictates that it is impossible to distinguish that knowledge which is truer than other forms of knowledge. About the same time, Gadamer (1960), the initiator of hermeneutics, put forward the thought that meaning was not there to be discovered, but was created by the individual person.

These ideas were taken up by Berger and Luckmann (1966), who studied all kinds of knowledge, including common sense. They did not wish to distinguish between true and false knowledge, and they proposed that *reality is socially constructed.* They showed how people create social institutions when they interact. They create habits, which over time become stable and eventually develop into institutions (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). Berger and Luckmann (1966) also came up with the idea that our subjective perceptions and knowledge are determined by the social context. In addition to Kuhn, they were also inspired by Wittgenstein's (1889–1951) thought that the meaning of language is determined by the context in which it is used.

In the 1970s, social constructivism developed in various different directions, focusing on how theory is produced, on negotiation between different social actors, and on how everything is constructed through social processes and structures (cf. Wenneberg, 2000). The relativistic approach fitted well within the postmodern paradigm, which challenged a universal understanding of rationality and sense, and instead focused on local understandings. For example, Foucault studied imprisonment, sanity and law as institutions developed as social constructions. Another inspiration in this context is Feyerabend's (1975) position that "Anything goes," where in the social sciences he advocates the use of methods appropriate to particular fields of study. Finally, the concept of narrativity pays attention to the importance of narrating science research (White, 1980). Research thus always represents a choice of what to include and what to exclude, a choice guided by an ethical or central idea that makes objectivity a mere illusion.

2.1.1. Four different social-constructivist positions

Different perceptions and understandings of social constructivism have thus emerged, and Wenneberg (2000) places them on a slide with four different positions in terms of their interpretation of social constructivism.

Generally speaking, social constructivism introduces a critical aspect by questioning the naturalness of almost everything. The connection between language and a phenomenon is a convention that has been socially constructed. But the question is how radical the perception is of what has been constructed. Wenneberg (2000) addresses this by describing four different positions.

Social constructivism I questions the naturalness of all kinds of phenomena, including family patterns and gender. When different cultures are compared, it becomes apparent that they are socially constructed. Everything is deconstructed, and a critical perspective is adopted.

Social constructivism II is not only critical, but also tries to explain how social phenomena are constructed. People develop habits, which eventually become institutions. Through legitimization and reification, the institutions become natural. They become part of the social world, into which newcomers are introduced. The newcomers internalize the norms, and the

institutions help them to become socially accepted. In the process, both a social and a subjective reality are created. In this version humans construct society and are constructed by society.

Social constructivism III questions altogether what knowledge is. The approach thus becomes an epistemological perspective. Knowledge about reality is determined by social factors, and therefore irrational social factors, such as power and differing interests decide what knowledge is. In this way, knowledge is far from glamorous. It is socially constructed.

Social constructivism IV is the most radical position. It even questions the existence of reality. It is an ontological position, which claims that scientific knowledge creates reality, and not the other way around. Everything is socially constructed, even the physical reality.

2.1.2. Central issues within social constructivism

Wenneberg (2000) points out the difficulties of claiming more radical social-constructivist approaches. This is especially a challenge when studying the natural sciences. How can you claim that a rock is socially constructed? Naming the rock is a social construction, but with the rock itself it is harder to argue for the social construction. Examples like this have led scholars to argue for different perspectives and positions, and at the heart of those appears the discussion about the social construction of what? (Hacking, 1999). Wenneberg's (2000) four positions reflect construction on three levels: the natural or physical reality, the social reality, and the subjective reality (Wenneberg, 2000). The positions also pose the question how far the social construction of reality should be taken. Is it knowledge about reality that is a matter of social construction, or reality itself? In the first position, construction occurs in language when people talk and interact; in the fourth position, concrete constructions and natural evolution are constructed. When taking a social-constructivist approach these issues need to be addressed.

2.2. The social-constructivist position in the dissertation

Wenneberg's (2000) four positions and his discussion of the difficulties are used to situate me as a researcher within the social-constructivist paradigm. I do not adhere to the fourth position, as I believe that there is a natural reality out there somewhere; however, I do believe in the social construction of the social reality. Institutions and human perceptions of reality are socially constructed and influenced by the society they are situated in and the dominant

paradigm of thought. In my dissertation I therefore situate myself somewhere between Wenneberg's (2000) versions II and III of social constructivism. As Hyland puts it (Hyland, 2009):

> Academics work within communities in a particular time and place, and it is this intellectual climate which determines the problems they investigate, the methods they employ, the results they see and the ways they write them up. (Hyland, 2009, p. 12)

This position implies that science is a social construction and that social factors play a role when scientific knowledge is created. The same goes for institutions and society. These are socially constructed through the use of language and interactions between people, yet at the same time the way people behave, talk and interact is influenced by the society they live in and the discourses and paradigms dominating that society. The subjective and the social reality are socially constructed, the natural reality is probably not. But it could be argued that some physical objects are socially constructed as well as existing in a physical form. As an example, internal social media exists physically in an organization. Coworkers can see it on their computer, and can observe coworkers communicating with each other. At the same time, the phenomenon "internal social media" is something that coworkers talk about, perceive, understand and interpret. So in this respect the perception of ISM is socially constructed. Because perceptions of ISM are very different from one organization to the other, it could therefore be argued that no ISM is alike, but that each is socially constructed in its own way in each organization. Treem and Leonardi (2012) describe the affordances of ISM, and how different interpretations of these affordances influence the perception of ISM. In this way it can be argued that perceptions of or knowledge about ISM are socially constructed.

With social constructivism, knowledge becomes somewhat relativistic. The researcher can end up in a position where it becomes hard to say anything at all. Here I choose the position proposed by Alvesson and Sköldberg (2000), who conclude: "We claim that it is pragmatically fruitful to assume the existence of a reality beyond the researcher's egocentricity... . . and we as researchers should be able to say something insightful about this reality" (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000, p. 3).

2.2.1. The social-constructivist position shapes the research

Taking a social-constructivist position, I cannot access the truth about communication on ISM and coworkers as communicators on ISM, but hopefully I will be able to elaborate an understanding of ISM that can be used both by the academic world and by practitioners. In order to construct usable knowledge, my research has to be trustworthy, and in the following I will reflect on how this is possible with socially constructed knowledge.

Through my research I will gain insight into the phenomenon of ISM and elaborate an understanding of the processes involved when coworkers communicate on ISM. My social-constructivist position will influence my way of working, understanding and communicating my findings. Being a social constructivist means that I am aware that knowledge is socially constructed, and that is also the case with my empirical material, findings and interpretations. I therefore have to pay attention to "the different kinds of elements that are woven into the process of knowledge development, during which empirical material is constructed, interpreted and written" (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000, p. 5).

This means that the empirical material that I collect is not there to be discovered. Rather, I construct it when I choose what to study and what kind of empirical material to collect (or rather construct). Another researcher is likely to have another focus and choose different empirical material. However, my findings will not be completely arbitrary. Another researcher duplicating my research design in the same organization is likely to come to some of the same conclusions, but at the same time might also stumble upon something else to which I did not pay attention. To allow for the degree of arbitrariness of my findings, I have to conduct research that is reflexive (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000, p. 5) and also to incorporate my social-constructivist perspective. This means I have to pay attention to four processes within my research.

1. "Anything goes" (Feyerabend, 1975) in terms of methodology, but when I interact with the empirical material I have to be consistent and systematic in my construction of the empirical material.
2. I have to be aware that the process is driven by interpretation, and that my interpretation cannot be detached from theory. My study will, consciously or

unconsciously, be influenced by one or more theories. That could be both middle-range and grand theory.

3. I have to be aware of the political nature of the study. Either the study supports existing knowledge or it challenges it.
4. Finally, the presentation of the research is a social construction, since not all findings can be included and something has to be selected. My choices will be guided by my research questions, and not everything can be included.

(Inspired by Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000, p. 7)

It is also worth mentioning that the models developed or used in research informed by a social-constructivist perspective do not amount to pictures or representations of reality. They are merely tools to create an understanding (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000).

By being reflexive about my selections, my choices and the presentation of my research, I make my research trustworthy. Having a social-constructivist perspective thus means that I make sense of what I construct, and that I create understandings, perceptions and interpretations of my findings. I do not try to verify, document or test results.

2.3. My understanding of coworkers as communicators

So far I have presented social constructivism as a scientific paradigm and myself as a researcher within that paradigm, and I have also presented an account of how a social-constructivist perspective affects the way in which my research is done. In the following I will more concretely sketch out how the social-constructivist approach affects the way I understand my research topic, namely coworkers as communicators and communication on ISM.

2.3.1. Assumptions shaping the research

I have to be aware of my own assumptions and of the theories driving my research. I can build on at least three different assumptions about ISM. First, that ISM is a benefit to both the organization and the coworkers. Second, that ISM is yet another attempt to make coworkers more satisfied with their jobs so that they become more efficient. Third, that ISM is a way of empowering coworkers and democratizing the organization which can lead organizations to

perceive the introduction of ISM as a risk. In my research, I have not chosen a critical lens. Rather, I explore how and why coworkers communicate on ISM, what happens when they communicate on ISM, and how their communication can contribute to internal communication. Thereby, I assume that ISM can potentially benefit both coworkers and organizations, and that ISM has a participatory potential. A more critical perspective could study how ISM changes power relations and power structures. This is certainly an interesting perspective, but I will leave that to future research. In other words, I will not deconstruct the phenomenon of ISM before the research field itself has been constructed. The first step is to explore the opportunities. As Alvesson and Sköldberg (2000, p. 230) put it, a focus on power will color the research and lead the researcher to ignore other aspects that might be of interest.

2.3.2. The understanding of communication on ISM

The social-constructivist approach influences the way I understand coworker communication on ISM. If the world is socially constructed by language, then coworkers communicating on ISM construct something. It is not just some sort of innocent writing. The topics discussed on ISM influence coworkers in two ways: the topics help coworkers in their construction of different realities, and the communication influences coworker perceptions of what ISM is and what it is used for. This social-constructivist approach is in line with a CCO perspective (communication constitutes organizations: Putnam and Nicotera, 2009), and in the dissertation both of these concepts will be used. The central idea running through the dissertation is that in their communicating or not communicating on ISM, coworkers are constructing the organization. Language has the power to construct realities. As coworkers communicate and interact on ISM, they therefore help to constitute the organization. How this is done, and what is means to organizations, is explored in the second article.

Chapter 3

”This is my job and my every day life. I think about, what I comment, what I like and if I make a post….then I think about it a bit more than in another place.”

Bank Officer (JB, Iw 1)

3. Coworkers as communicators in organizational communication

The aim of this chapter is to provide a theoretical background to the understanding of whether ISM creates a new kind of participatory organizational communication. First, the use of the concept "coworker" instead of "employee" will be explained. Then, organizational communication as a field is briefly presented, in order to contribute to understanding the growing interest in coworkers as active and influential communicators (Heide and Simonsson, 2011; Mazzei, 2010). Finally, the literature on three different perspectives on coworkers as communicators is reviewed in order to understand how coworkers as communicators are perceived in organizational communication.

The concept of *coworker* is used in the dissertation to indicate that coworkers are no longer viewed as passive, subordinate employees, but as active communicators who can influence and change their organization. Their communication roles "are broader and more consequential than the roles they have traditionally been given" (Heide and Simonsson, 2011, p. 202). The word "employee" draws attention to the relation between the individual, the manager and the organization, whereas "coworker" indicates a more holistic approach, in which relationships to other coworkers are more important than, or just as important as, those to the manager and the organization. Coworkership is closely related to the communication constitutes organization (CCO) perspective (Heide and Simonsson, 2011). In CCO, organizing is understood as involving local and emergent processes, and these processes start with coworkers communicating with each other (Putnam and Nicotera, 2009).

3.1. Toward a new understanding of organizational communication

This section briefly sketches out the development of organizational communication as a field in order to provide a context for understanding the growing interest in coworkers as communicators in organizations.

Organizational communication has existed as a field of research since the 1950s (Putnam and Cheney, 1985; Tompkins, 1984). In the early studies, communication is perceived in a functionalistic manner as a transmission of information as a means to reach a goal, and attention is paid especially to the senders of communication (such as managers) and their

ability to communicate. In the first comprehensive and detailed review of the existing literature on communication in organizations, Charles Redding (1972) switched the focus of organizational communication studies from the sender of a message to its receiver. He pointed out that a sender cannot transfer a meaning. The meaning is created in the mind of the receiver (Redding, 1972, p. 27), and only the message that is understood counts. Redding also postulated that everything communicates, including furniture, silence, and action. His conclusion was: "it is impossible *not* to communicate" (Redding, 1972, p. 30).

The linguistic turn in organizational communication, initiated at the Alta seminar in 1981 (Putnam and Pacanowski, 1983), shifted attention from sender and receiver to the communication itself, and introduced the idea that meaning takes place in the interaction between people and that meanings are subjective, intersubjective, and socially constructed (Putnam, 1983). The turn was especially inspired by Karl Weick's ideas of sensemaking and his understanding of organization as a process of organizing (Weick, 1979). (In CCO, the terms "organizing" and "organization" are both used (Schoeneburn and Vásquez, 2016, in press).) This thinking has since then developed into an understanding of communication and social action as the building blocks of organizational structure, also known as communication constitutes organization (CCO) (Putnam and Nicotera, 2009).

Today, the question is whether the field of organizational communication is experiencing a "collaborative turn" (Deetz and Eger, 2013) or a "relational turn" (Taylor, 2013). Taylor (2013) finds that organizational communication is at a new crossroads, with the focus shifting from looking at the individual to viewing relationships as a primacy of organizing, and he proposes a new slogan: "It all begins and ends as a relationship, in a context" (Taylor, 2013, p. 210). It is no longer either the individual or the communication itself that is the center of attention, but the relationship that the coworker has with other coworkers in a particular context, and how this interactive communication acts as a collective (Ashcraft, Kuhn and Cooren, 2009; Chaput, Brummans and Cooren, 2011). Organizational communication is therefore perceived not only as one-way or two-way communication between managers and employees, but also as multidirectional and multivocal communication among organizational members interacting with each other.

This turn could be perceived as a continuation or a consequence of the linguistic turn, or as a new turn in its own right. In the dissertation I have chosen to see it as a new turn, characterized by interactions, multivocal communication and the CCO perspective. This development within organizational communication toward taking a third step (Frandsen and Johansen, 2010; 2016) draws attention to coworkers as active or even key communicators in organizations, seeing organizations as constituted through their communication and texts (Heide and Simmonsson, 2011). In the dissertation I wish to look at both whether the interactions between coworkers act as a kind of collective, and how the individual coworker contributes and makes choices that influence the interactions.

3.2. Three different perspectives on coworkers as communicators

Coworkers are increasingly perceived as active and influential communicators in organizations (Heide and Simonsson, 2011; Heide, 2015; Kim and Rhee, 2011; Mazzei, Kim and Dell'Oro, 2012; Mazzei, 2010, 2014; Strandberg and Vigsø, 2016). In order to present an overview of previous research shedding light on coworkers as communicators in organizational communication, I draw on three sets of theories, each with their own perspective: employee participation and decision-making, communication constitutes organization (CCO), and employee voice and silence. The three sets of theories do not replace or exclude each other, but coexist, and to some extent even overlap.

3.3. Employee participation and decision-making

The first set of theories is employee participation and decision-making, which presents a managerial perspective on coworkers as communicators. Employee participation and decision-making turns one's mind to workplace democracy, and is related to research on participation from an industrial relations or HRM perspective, even if it is the other side of the story. This section draws on literature from management studies as well as HRM and demonstrates how work in these fields has been translated into communication studies.

In an increasingly competitive world, involving coworkers in decision-making is believed to make the organization more effective (Seibold and Shea, 2001; Wilkinson, Dundon and Marchington, 2013), and participation is seen as a special case of organizational communication

(Redding,1972; Stohl and Cheney, 2001). Participation has been given many different names, including involvement, engagement, empowerment, upward communication, feedback, and soliciting input. These different terms imply slightly different meanings and degrees of influence, but they all embody an aim to make the organization more effective by involving employees. In the dissertation, the concepts of participation and voice are the main ones used. Participation is related to workplace democracy, while voice accounts for the communicative processes concerning the individual coworker speaking up or making suggestions in an organization.

Research on employee participation initially grew out of the human relations movement after the Second World War, which explored such different ways of organizing work as quality circles, self-managing teams, and employee stock ownership. The concept of participation can refer to anything from a fundamental social right (Stohl and Cheney, 2001) to "organizational structures and processes designed to empower and enable employees to identify with organizational goals" (Stohl and Cheney, 2001, p. 357). Therefore participation has been found hard to define: "Some researchers equate participation with organizational practices, programs and techniques, while others view participation as an overarching philosophy of management" (Glew, O'Leary-Kelly, Griffin and Van Fleet, 1995, p. 400). Still others view participation from a more critical perspective, looking at manipulation and oppression (Wilkinson et al., 2013b), or acknowledging that as they gain the right to make decisions, coworkers also have to take responsibility, which can lead to additional work, and even stress (Wilkinson et al., 2013b). According to Redding (1972), participation is "loose and slippery" (p. 154), and he distinguishes between real and pseudo-participation, claiming that coworkers can tell the difference – a line of thought that was taken up by Stohl and Cheney (2001), who pointed out the paradoxes involved when participation is introduced into organizations. Even if the intention is to involve coworkers, this does not happen, since conditions inherent in the organization prevent it, ranging from organizational structure to coworker sense of agency, organizational identity, and power issues within the organizations (Stohl and Cheney, 2001).

The idea of participation stems especially from two beliefs. First, that coworkers are close to customers or production processes and have hands-on knowledge about what is needed to improve services or products, and that when coworkers are involved, they can improve

economic performance and help protect the organization's reputation (Mazzei, 2014). Second, according to Redding (1972), heterogeneous groups, as well as groups characterized by dissenting views, produce high-quality decisions (Redding, 1972, p. 205).

Participation is found in many forms, and not all of them create more effective organizations (Dutton and Ashford, 1993). However, when coworkers have more influence, they tend to be more satisfied with their job and with the organization (Dutton and Ashford, 1993). Early research in participation has mainly seen communication from a functionalistic perspective as a means to make coworkers more satisfied and thereby to make the organization more effective (Redding, 1972; Cotton, 1993). They have looked at information flow, amount and frequency of information, sources of information, and networks (Seibold and Shea, 2001). The most recent research takes a more interpretive and constitutive approach, yet still views communicative processes as a way to create engagement (Ruck and Welch, 2012) with the aim of improving the organization.

From a managerial perspective, the thinking behind participation is to get coworkers to display organizational citizen behavior (Van Dyne, Graham and Dienesch, 1994), so that coworker make suggestions, point out problems and take responsibility on their own initiative. They identify with the organization – and in a way, become the organization (Ashforth and Mael, 1989).

3.3.1. Deconstructing participation

Coworkers can participate in a range of different ways, and Wilkinson and colleagues (2013b) outline this by deconstructing participation in terms of degree, form, level, and subject matter. First, in relation to *degree* they suggest an escalator of participation with five steps: information, communication, consultation, co-determination, and control. The steps are comparable to Lewis's (2011) seven different approaches to stakeholder participation during organizational change. Lewis has a continuum extending from symbolic participation (where coworkers are told they are important participants) to providing channels for inputs, to actually giving coworkers decision-making power (p. 69). Second, in terms of *form,* Wilkinson and colleagues (2013b) distinguish between indirect participation through representatives and actual financial participation such as gain-sharing. Third, participation can take place at different *levels* – at task,

department or organization level. Finally, the *subject matter* can range from trivial matters such as which coffee to offer employees to more strategic concerns about how to brand the organization.

It makes a difference in the discussion of participation or coworker communication on ISM whether coworkers just comment on their tasks or contribute to organizational decisions, and whether the communication is perceived as one-way information from managers or as multidirectional communication among coworkers. Redding (1972) found that coworkers were mainly interested in making decisions in relation to their job function; having a say in organizational issues was less important. This might however have changed since Redding wrote his state-of-the-art review on organizational communication in 1972. Simonsson (2002) concludes that the communication process between manager and coworkers has become more complex with regard to form and content, and that communication between managers and coworkers is no longer focused on simple directives but rather on visions, values and strategies.

The managerial perspective on participation focuses mainly on how much say employees should have, emphasizing that participation is about shifting or changing power relations. Research on employee participation yields useful insights into the paradoxes inherent in the concept (Stohl and Cheney, 2001).

3.4. Communication constitutes organizations (CCO)

The second set of theories that can shed light on coworkers as communicators is the communication constitutes organizations (CCO) perspective. The dissertation is situated within the CCO perspective, and the CCO perspective offers a lens with which to understand coworkers as communicators from a communication or interaction perspective, which is presented in the following section.

When organizations are treated as social constructions, organizing becomes a process of communicating (Johnson, 1977; Putnam, 1982, cited in Putnam and Mumby, 2013). Since the linguistic turn, scholars have concentrated on the question of how communication actually constitutes organizations – also known as the "composition problem" (Kuhn, 2012, p. 559). Coworkers will somehow play a role in this constitution of the organization, but what are their

roles, and how influential are they perceived to be? In the fourth of six premises implicit in the CCO principle, Cooren et al. (2011) state that "who or what is acting is always an open question" (p. 1153). The question of "agency" is thus a central issue within CCO, and this is also reflected in the different understandings of agency in three different approaches to CCO: the four-flow model (McPhee and Zaug. 2000), the Montreal school (Ashcraft, Kuhn and Cooren, 2009), and the social system theory approach (Luhmann, 1992).

McPhee and Zaug's (2000) four-flows model suggests that four communication processes constitute the organization: membership negotiating, self-structuring, activity coordination, and institutional positioning. In these four "flows," coworkers play a decisive role because "only individual humans can communicate" (McPhee and Zaug, 2000, p. 35); it is when they struggle "to master or influence their member roles, statuses and relations to the organization" (p. 42) and when they engage in work or deviate from collaborative engagement (p. 42) that coworkers constitute the organization. McPhee and Zaug in their model (2000) see self-structuring as the way in which leaders in their process of decision-making produce authoritative meta-communication. However, it can also be argued that coworkers participate in this flow, as they interact with the authoritative meta-communication in the organization (Kopaneva and Sias, 2015; McPhee, 2015), or speak on behalf of the organization when they say "we" (McPhee, 2015). This interaction can both support and deviate from the interpretation desired by the organization (Kopaneva, 2015; Kopaneva and Sias, 2015). To sum up, the four-flows model perceives agency as human beings communicating and interacting.

Luhmann and his followers (including Steffen Blaschke, Dennis Schoeneborn and David Seidl) have a very different view. They understand organization as "nothing but a communication system" (Brummans, Cooren, Robichaud and Taylor, 2013, p. 186), and see organizations as networks of communication episodes. In this perspective, communication is a synthesis of three processes of selection: selection of information, selection of utterance, and a selection of understanding or misunderstanding (Luhmann, 1992). In Luhmann's view, organizations are constituted in decisional communication (Schoeneborn and Vásquez, 2016). Agency is inherent in communication when a communication is accepted or rejected (Luhmann, 1992), and communication thus involves the risk of rejection (Luhmann, 1992). Luhmann's focus on communication episodes is useful for understanding how communication on ISM can

constitute the organization; however, the role of coworkers as communicators becomes more blurred or entangled when communication acts on its own. The three processes of selections could be perceived as the concrete choices that coworkers make when they communicate, and the perception of communication as involving risk can be useful in understanding coworkers as communicators. Luhmann admits that this is a possible way to apply the selections, but he argues that the selections should be viewed as happening in communication itself as part of a closed, circular system (Luhmann, 1992).

The Montreal school, led by James Taylor and Francois Cooren, perceives organizational members as well as such non-human actors as text, tools, technology and other artifacts, as having agency (Cooren, Fairhurst and Huët, 2012), which means that internal social media has an agency in itself. They draw attention to the process of *co-orientation,* in which "people 'tune in' to one another as they coordinate and control activity" (Kuhn, 2012, p. 551). Organizational members or "interacting individuals collectively produce an organization's 'substance,' basis or ground" (Chaput, Brummanns and Cooren, 2011, p. 3). Something is "written" in texts, however these "texts" are continually contested and negotiated in conversations (interactions through language) during day-to-day interactions. "Texts are the 'substances' upon and through which conversations take shape" (Kuhn, 2012, p. 551). Taylor and Van Every (2000) describe the relationship between text and conversation as follows: "Text is the product of conversational process, but it is also its raw material and principal occupation. Together, then, conversation and text form a self-organizing loop" (pp. 2010–2011). Cooren (2010) use the concept "ventriloquism" to point out both that texts are co-authored by organizational members and that the texts "speak through them." Co-orientation "implies that organizing is an ongoing interactive achievement that exceed any single agency, however powerful she/he/it may be" (Ashcraft, Kuhn and Cooren, 2009, p. 8).

Even if the three different approaches to the CCO principle perceive coworkers as communicators in different ways, in all of them the individual coworker is central to constituting the organization – at least within the Montreal school and McPhee and Zaug's four-flows model. In the dissertation I draw mainly on the Montreal school's understanding of CCO, but I am also inspired by Luhmann's perception of communication episodes. Coworkers have a role as interpreters, sensemakers, and producers of organizations (Heide and Simonsson, 2011),

and they are active communicators, since "organizations are materialized through coworkers conversations and their texts" (Heide and Simonsson, 2011, p. 203). The question is however the extent to which the individual coworker participates, and how influential coworkers are.

Bencherki and Snack (2016) problematize that all coworkers constitute the organization. First of all, they find it difficult to determine who is actually a member and who is not, and some organizational members are more influential than others. They therefore prefer to start from communicative events, where it becomes possible to see who contributes and who does not have a voice, and then move on to who becomes actual authors in the organization. This is in line with the criticism of the CCO perspective that it does not allow for managers and coworkers having different capabilities for discursively constructing the organization, nor does it take the power relation into account (Cloud, 2005; Reed, 2009). Schoeneborn and Vásques (2016) also call for further insights into the notions of authority and authorship in relation to communication.

Kopaneva and Sias (2015) challenge the co-orientation of organizational members. They find that managers and coworkers have very different perceptions of official mission and vision statements, and that their perceptions exist alongside each other. This indicates that coworkers have their own voices in organizations rather than being merely vehicles for organizational texts. Interestingly enough, however, coworkers in organizations without mission and vision statements can easily articulate ideal future states for their organization (Kopaneva and Sias, 2015); so coworkers do interact and co-orient, but perhaps not in line with managers' ways of thinking. Focusing on disordering and dissent is a growing issue in CCO research. Organizations are thus perceived as heterogenous sites with conflicting sensemaking processes, evident in irrationality, paradoxes and ironies (Schoeneborn and Vásques, 2016).

Interactions, communicative events and co-orientation are central to organizing, and coworkers participate when they communicate, interpret and make sense. In the interactions between coworkers and managers, leadership is socially constructed, and the focus in organizations shifts toward how coworkers make sense in their interactions with other coworkers and with non-human actors. Managers become concerned with if and how they can direct or control the understanding of communication in the organization (Putnam and Mumby,

2013). When leadership and the relationship between leader and member are (re)produced in communication between leader and member (Sias, 2013, p. 379), this can be a difficult task. In this perspective, coworker communication becomes a key site of sensemaking (Sias, 2013, p. 383), and communicative leadership (Hamrin, Johansson and Jahn, 2016) becomes a way to interact with coworker sensemaking.

The CCO perspective theorizes how organizations are established, composed, designed, and sustained (Cooren et al., 2011). It also theorizes how coworkers, through their interactions, communication and sensemaking, help to constitute the organization. In this way the CCO perspective offers a communication perspective on coworkers as communicators. The question is, however, whether the CCO perspective provides too rosy a picture of coworkers' ability to construct the organization.

3.5. Employee voice and silence

A third set of theories that shed light on coworkers as communicators is employee voice and silence, an approach that has also been explored under such terms as dissent, whistle-blowing, and speaking up. Each of these terms carries their own meanings, and they will not be treated as separate concepts here, but rather seen as aspects of the concepts of employee voice and silence, to be used to shed light on coworkers as communicators from a coworker perspective.

This field grew from three sets of theories: Hirschman's (1970) three strategies for critical coworkers, namely voice, exit, or loyalty; the MUM effect (Rosen and Tesser, 1970), whereby coworkers keep silent about negative messages because managers are sensitive to critique; and the spiral of silence (Noelle-Neumann, 1974), which finds that people tend to keep silent about opinions that differ from those of people around them. From the end of the 1990s, the psychological and communicative aspect of employee voice and silence became the center of attention, and the perception of voice changed from understanding voice as a critical reaction to dissatisfaction to a prosocial behavior that might be beneficial to the organization. Morrison (2011) thus defines employee voice as "discretionary communication of ideas, suggestions, concerns or opinions about work-related issues with the intent to improve organizational or unit functioning" (Morrison, 2011, p. 375). In line with this definition, employee silence refers to "the withholding of potentially important input or to instances when an employee fails to share

what is on his or her mind" (Morrison, 2014, p. 174).

Several scholars have recently reviewed the literature on employee voice and silence (Brinsfield, 2014; Brinsfield, Edwards and Greenberg, 2009; Miles and Mangold, 2014; Miles and Muuka, 2011; Morrison, 2011; 2014; Mowbray, Wilkinson and Tse, 2015). Their work reflects a growing interest in coworkers as communicators, and shows that the field has matured and that several aspects of employee voice and silence have been explored.

According to Morrison (2014), two core assumptions dominate the literature on employee voice and silence. First, coworkers do not necessarily share their ideas and concerns, and they tend to remain silent. Second, employee voice is beneficial to the organization, but silence is not. Morrison (2014) finds support for the first assumption, while there is little empirical research in support of the second. This is interesting, since the preoccupation with employee participation and voice is often related to the belief that it makes organizations more effective.

A succession of factors that influence employee voice and silence will be outlined below to contribute to the understanding of coworkers as communicators. These are described as: antecedents to voice, voice target, voice channel, motivations or drivers of voice and silence, different types of voice and subject matter, voice strategies, and outcome of voice for the coworker.

3.5.1. Antecedents to voice

The organizational context is decisive for whether or not coworkers will voice an opinion (Ashford et al., 1998; Detert and Edmondson, 2011; Morrison and Milliken, 2000). According to Dutton et al. (1997), the best conditions are when top management listens, the organizational culture is supportive, and coworkers have little uncertainty or fear of negative consequences when speaking up. These findings are in line with Edmondson's (1999) definition of psychological safety in teams as "a shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking" (Edmondson, 1999, p. 354) – a belief that tends to be tacit or taken for granted. Several researchers have found that psychological safety influences whether or not coworkers voice (Detert and Edmondson, 2011; Detert and Trevino, 2010; Edmondson, 1999; 2003; Liang et al.,

2012; Miles and Muuka, 2011; Tangirala, Kamdar, Venkataramani and Parke, 2013). Coworkers take cues from the organization about the safety of speaking up (Ashford et al., 1998; Kish-Gephart et al., 2009; Martin, Parry and Flowers, 2015). This is linked to managers and immediate supervisors wishing to avoid critical feedback: their behaviors and implicit perception of coworkers influence the coworkers' willingness to speak up (Morrison and Milliken, 2000).

In addition to the organizational context, different individual dispositions (Detert and Edmondson, 2011; Morrison, 2014) influence coworkers' desire to voice in an organization. These include personality (Klaas, Olson-Buchanan and Ward, 2012), experience, tenure and job position (Milliken, Morrison and Hewlin, 2003), and organizational citizen behavior, described as out-of-role behavior (Bateman and Organ, 1983), extra-role behavior (Liu, Zhu and Yang, 2010), felt obligation to contribute (Liang, Farh and Farh, 2012), and strong duty-orientation (Tangirala et al., 2013).

3.5.2. Voice target or audience

The voice literature differentiates between voicing to managers, coworkers or family (Kassing, 1998) and speaking up or out to the organization (Liu, Zhu and Yang, 2010; Morrison, 2011). The audience or the target of voice is generally found to make a difference as to whether or not coworkers voice (Kassing, 1998; Morrison, 2014; Mowbray et al., 2015). Voicing opinions upward is generally perceived as riskier than voicing to other coworkers. However, the climate in the work group makes a difference (Kish-Gephart et al., 2009). Coworkers tend to be less silent when they identify with their workgroup (Tangirala and Ramanujam, 2008), and they are more likely to voice up if they perceive that a supervisor or a manager has the ability to act on their concerns (Detert et al., 2013).

A coworker's perception of the relationship with his or her supervisor also influences dissent. A coworker feels more inclined to voice dissent to a supervisor when he or she perceives that they have a high-quality relationship with that supervisor. In contrast, a poor relationship with the supervisor leads them to express their dissent to other coworkers instead (Kassing, 2000b). Voicing dissent to other coworkers is however less likely to have a positive outcome (Detert et al., 2013).

Organizational dissent is often treated as one person speaking up to managers, neglecting the role of other coworkers (Garner, 2013). Other coworkers can support, obstruct or extend the dissent, and they can help dissent to develop over time when they retell stories of previous dissent. In this way dissent is not just a one-time event (Garner, 2013), but a continuous or ongoing story. Garner (2013) thus sees dissent as growing out of interactions between coworkers. The voice target in this way becomes blurred and the concept of audience is a more accurate description. Voice might be directed at a specific target, but the audience surrounding the event is just as much involved in constructing the event.

3.5.3. Voice channel

Most research on voice does not specify the channel of voice, often presupposing face-to-face communication (Garner, 2016). For this reason, the implications of using ISM to voice opinion in an organization have not been studied. In a study by Treem et al. (2015), the participants seemed to have certain unwritten rules about what was appropriate in different channels at work and in their private lives. In this respect they felt that social media was an improper medium for dissent, given the mixed audience, and that emotional communication tended to escalate via the medium of e-mail. ISM is therefore likely to add an additional dimension to the theories of employee voice and silence, and this will be explored further in the dissertation.

3.5.4. Motivations for voice and silence

Coworkers scan their environment to evaluate how their voice about a specific topic will be received by their voice target or audience, and how likely they are to succeed (Morrison, 2011; Noelle-Neumann, 1974). They judge the perceived safety and perceived efficacy of voice (Morrison, 2011) before voicing. Milliken et al. (2003) found that coworkers have five fears when speaking up: harming their image or reputation in the organization, damaging relationships, retaliation from managers, exposing other coworkers, and futility. The five fears are closely related to Brinsfield's (2013) six types of silence, indicating that some of the same dynamics drive voice and silence. Another factor explaining whether or not coworkers voice an opinion is implicit voice theories – taken-for-granted beliefs about how to behave as a human being (Detert and Edmondson, 2011).

Coworkers are driven by opposing motivations. On the one hand, they wish to be prosocial and to benefit the organization; on the other, they wish to serve their own interests (Mila and Muuka, 2000) by protecting or promoting themselves (Brinsfield, 2014). They may even calculate how to be both prosocial and self-promotional (Klaas et al., 2012). In this way coworkers can be strategic when voicing in organizations.

3.5.5. Type of voice and subject matter

The type of voice and the topic raised influence how likely coworkers are to voice. Morrison (2014) distinguishes between making suggestions, pointing out problems, and airing opinions. Liang et al. (2012) talk about promotive or prohibitive voice, while Burris (2012) describes it as challenging or supporting voice. Whichever terms are used, there is a difference between voice that supports the way of doing things and voice that is more critical of the organization. Even if it is in the organization's interest to tackle problems, raising them can be seen as a critique of the way the organization is managed. A coworker raising an issue can thus not know how their voice will be perceived. They might see a proposal as supportive of the organization, but the manager receiving it might view it as a critique. So coworkers are likely to reflect on whether their voice will be perceived as supporting or challenging (Noelle-Neumann, 1974; Rosen and Tesser, 1970).

The type of voice is related to the topic or subject that coworkers are concerned about, and this also influences whether coworkers will voice or not. Milliken et al. (2003) found that employees would voice their opinions about task-related issues, but not about organizational issues. Some topics are not talked about at all. Milliken et al. (2003) mention eight different topics, and Brinsfield (2013) five: combining the two, a list of concerns not raised can be compiled (see Table 3.5.5). In particular, the incompetence of a colleague or manager and problems with organizational work processes have been found harder to voice about (Milliken et al., 2003).

Table 3.5.5. Concerns not raised in an organizational context

Concerns not raised in an organizational context	
1.	The incompetence of a colleague or a manager
2.	Problems with organizational work processes
3.	Organizational decisions
4.	Unethical behavior
5.	Perceived unfair treatment
6.	Harassment or abuse
7.	Equal pay and salary
8.	Personal career
9.	Conflict with another coworker

Based on Brinsfield (2013) and Milliken et al. (2003)

3.5.6. Strategies when voicing

A few scholars, especially Kassing (2005) and Garner (2013), have explored how to formulate an especially challenging voice in order to be successful when voicing. Kassing (2005) found five different strategies (See Table 3.5.6.). The upward dissent strategy that was perceived as most effective was solution presentation, followed by direct factual appeal; the least effective was to threaten resignation (Kassing, 2005).

Table 3.5.6. Five strategies when voicing dissent

Five strategies when voicing dissent	
1.	Solution presentation
2.	Direct factual appeal
3.	Repetition
4.	Circumvention
5.	Threatening resignation

Based on Kassing (2005)

3.5.7. Outcome of voice

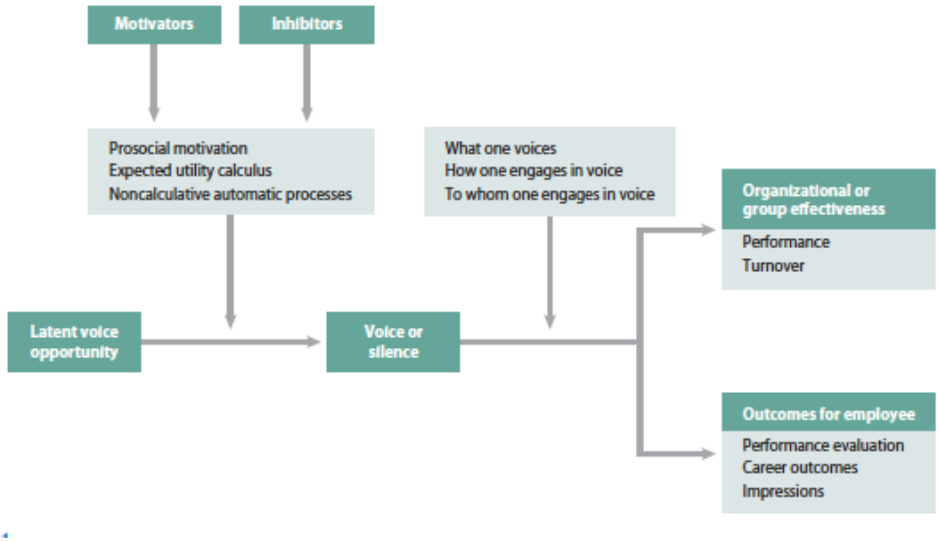
On the organizational level, employee silence has been linked to poor quality in decision-making, lack of innovation, low quality of performance, and an inability to detect mistakes (Morrison and Millliken, 2000). In such a situation, the organization will lack information, learning and engagement (Milliken et al., 2003). So when coworkers voice, the opposite is assumed to be the case: the expected outcome is that when coworkers can voice their opinion and are listened to, then trust is built in the organization (Miles and Mangold, 2014).

From a coworker perspective, coworkers who do not voice their concerns and suggestions, either from fear or a sense of futility, may not feel appreciated, may perceive that they are losing control of their work situation, and may experience discontent in everyday interactions (Morrison and Milliken, 2003). Kassing et al. (2012) found that in these situations burnout and lack of organizational identification were likely. In contrast, coworkers voicing their concerns and feelings were likely to feel more engaged and to identify with the organization.

3.5.8. Morrison's model of antecedents and outcome of employee voice and silence

The review of the literature on employee voice and silence shows that there are many factors that influence whether coworkers voice or remain silent. Kassing et al. (2012) summarize the dynamics in voice behavior: "Employees determine if, when, and how to express dissent by relying on a complex set of filters that take into account individual, relational, and organizational factors" (p. 238). Morrison (2014) has created a model (See Figure 3.5.8) that presents a good overview of antecedents and outcomes of employee voice and silence.

Figure 3.5.8. Morrison's model of antecedents and outcome of employee voice and silence



Model presented in Morrison (2014).

Morrison (2014) uses slightly different terms and concepts than those I have used in the sections above, but the review I have presented of the literature on employee voice and silence

should make it possible to make sense of the model. On the left side of the figure, organizational context and personal motivation to promote or protect oneself, as well as perceived efficacy and safety of voice, influence whether a coworker will voice or not. On the right hand side, in the box with "What one voices," the way coworkers voice their concerns is shown to be determined by subject matter and level, the type of voice (whether it is a challenging or supporting voice), and finally the target of the voice or audience. On the far right, the outcomes for the coworker and the organization are displayed.

3.6. Applying the three perspectives

The three sets of theories contribute to understanding coworkers as communicators from three different perspectives: a managerial perspective; a communication or interaction perspective; and a coworker perspective. The three perspectives are useful for exploring whether communication on ISM is a new kind of participatory organizational communication. The managerial perspective inherent in theories of employee participation and decision-making helps to make sense of the possibly divergent interests of managers and coworkers and the paradoxes of participation that can make it a challenge to introduce ISM in the first place. Coworkers can perceive that ISM does not bring anything new to the organization and that it is pseudo-participation. In this respect, the perspective can add to our understanding of the challenges of introducing ISM.

The CCO perspective theorizes how coworkers through their interactions and communication with each other constitute the organizations. Studying coworker communication on ISM might enable us to understand how this happens, as well as the "substance" that coworkers construct in their communication. Finally, employee voice and silence theories can bring insight into the many considerations that coworkers might have when they communicate on ISM. The theories may not transfer directly to communication on ISM, since ISM will add another dimension, but they will help the understanding of different dynamics when coworkers choose to voice or to remain silent.

Chapter 4

"(ISM) supports what I do in my workday, and it is a tool in the toolbox. And if it is not there tomorrow, then I will live without it. But I use it when it is there."

Branch Manager (JB, Iw 8)

4. Coworker communication and participation on internal social media

The aim of this chapter is to review the literature on internal social media (ISM) in order to develop insight into the existing research on coworker communication and participation on ISM. First, some comments on the field in general will be presented; second, a definition of ISM will be offered; and third, the literature on ISM will be reviewed in order to develop an understanding of ISM from a communication perspective.

ISM began to develop as a research field in 2008, when the first studies were conducted in organizations like IBM and Hewlett Packard (DiMicco, et al., 2008; Brzozowski, Sandholm and Hogg, 2009). Most of the research is in the form of conference papers presented at the Annual Hawaii International Conferences on System Sciences, or other conferences on information systems. A few articles found their way into the *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* (e.g. Gibbs, Rozaidi and Eisenberg, 2013; Fulk and Yuan, 2013; Leonardi, Huysman and Steinfield, 2013; Oostervink, Agterberg and Huysman, 2016) and the *Journal of Communication* (Treem, Dailey, Pierce and Leonardi, 2015). This research has mainly been concerned with the actual technology, ISM affordances, and improving the adoption and usability of the systems, as well as outcomes of introducing ISM. However, since 2011 scholars have also looked at ISM from fields such as knowledge management (Vuori and Okkonen, 2012; Pirkkalainen and Pawlowski, 2013), management studies/human resource management (Denyer, Parry and Flowers, 2011; Koch, Gonzalez and Leidner, 2012; Parry and Solidoro, 2013), and communication (Cardon and Marshall, 2015; Beers Fägersten, 2015; Heide, 2015; Uysal, 2016).

Most of the research on internal social media uses the term "enterprise social media." Leonardi, Huysman and Steinfield (2013) define this as:

> Web-based platforms that allow workers to (1) communicate messages with specific coworkers or broadcast messages to everyone in the organization; (2) explicitly indicate or implicitly reveal particular coworkers as communication partners; (3) post, edit, and sort text and files linked to themselves or others; and (4) view the messages, connections, text, and files communicated, posted, edited and sorted by anyone else in the organization at any time of their choosing (p. 2).

This definition highlights the technicalities of the media, and in this sense the definition belongs to the realm of information systems. This dissertation however is taking a communication perspective; consequently the term internal social media (ISM) is used to define ISM as an integrated part of organizational communication, rather than as an IT system. The term internal social media was first mentioned in 2009 (Brzozowski, 2009; Brzozowski, Sandholm and Hogg, 2009). Heide (2015) prefers the term "social intranet" (in use since 2012), even if he finds the term contradictory because intranets always have been social. For the purpose of this dissertation, I define *internal social media* as:

> A user-friendly and visible web-based communication arena inside an organization in which coworkers and managers can communicate, interact, connect with each other, and make sense of their work and organizational life.

In order to give a better understanding of ISM from a communication perspective, the following review of the literature on ISM is an attempt to shed light on role of coworkers as communicators on ISM based on the research that exists so far. I draw on the information systems literature on ISM to the extent that it can shed useful light on coworkers as communicators on ISM; otherwise I rely on the rather scarce literature on communication on ISM that exists. The review is grouped into the following themes: adoption of ISM, participation on ISM, coworker motivation, communication on ISM and finally the perceived outcome of having ISM.

4.1. Adoption of ISM

Most of the literature on ISM has been concerned with its adoption, and especially how to get coworkers to communicate on ISM. A few scholars reflect on the apparent paradox between the ideology of social media as open and democratic and on the other hand organizations' wish to manage communication within the organization (Hamadabi Janes, Patrick and Dotsika, 2014; Macnamara and Zerfass, 2012; Parry and Solidoro, 2013). In a review of literature on employees' use of social media technology, El Ouirdi et al. (2015) point out that 22 out of 66 articles are concerned with legal issues, social media policies, and the risks of introducing social

media. It seems that the ideology of openness, participation and democracy is difficult for organizations to deal with (Gibbs, Rozaidi and Eisenberg, 2013).

The organizational context influences how coworkers communicate on ISM, and whether they will communicate at all (Batista and Galliers, 2012; Bochenek and Blili, 2013; Chin et al., 2015; Denyer, Parry and Flowers, 2011; Pirkkalainen and Pawlowski, 2013; Trimi and Galanxhi, 2014). The organizational culture should thus embrace open communication and participation (Parry and Solidoro, 2013) and build on trust (Sedej and Justinek, 2013). Management has to believe in ISM and lead the way (Martin et al., 2015; Trimi and Galanxhi, 2014). However, top management should not control it (Argenti and Barnes, 2009), and the interests of managers and coworkers should converge in its use (Trimi and Galanxhi 2014).

Several scholars have addressed the process of adopting ISM into organizations. Cardon and Marshall (2015) distinguish between enthusiasts and realists. Enthusiasts overestimate the outcome and the ease of introducing ISM, while realists appreciate that the process takes time. Across the field there is a realization that communication on ISM does not happen by itself. The process of introducing ISM is long and self-regulating (Barker, 2008; Heide, 2015). Turban, Bolloju and Liang (2011) suggests a planned process, while Chu (2012) highlights a continuous adaptive process, and Hamadani Janes and her colleagues (2014) find that several approaches should be blended in order to accommodate both the iterative and participatory nature of ISM and the traditional methods of developing IT solutions for organizations. In the literature it becomes apparent that there is a tendency to overestimate the ease of introducing IT and the value of having ISM. ISM is often treated as an IT system, and is consequently believed automatically to increase knowledge-sharing and collaboration and in this way make the organization more efficient. Organizations tend not to take into account that the technology has an agency (Cooren et al., 2012).

Treem and Leonardi (2012) address the issue by introducing an affordance approach to explore how ISM technology becomes mutually constituted in the organizational context in which it is embedded. Affordances focus on the relational aspect of technology, which helps explain how the same technology is used very differently in two different organizations. “The affordances approach encourages the researcher to look at the communicative actions that the

relationship between an organizational context and a technology's functionality enables" (Treem and Leonardi, 2012, p. 147). Across different technologies, Treem and Leonardi (2012) argue that ISM affords coworkers the opportunity for communication which can support high visibility, persistence, editability and association. These affordances in combination make communication on ISM different from other kinds of internal communication. In particular, communication visibility has been found to be the most significant affordance (Leonardi et al., 2013), and in his theory of communication visibility, Leonardi (2014) points out that message transparency and network translucence create a meta-knowledge about who knows what and who.

However, the affordances may also be perceived or interpreted in different ways, which accounts for the differences between ways of communicating on ISM in different organizations. The concept of affordances is especially used within technology studies, while the concept of materiality figures especially within the Montreal school. The two concepts are closely related. The general idea is that ISM is not just an innocent tool that is introduced in an organization; it is used, perceived and interpreted in many different ways by individual coworkers, and in this sense the technology has an agency (Cooren et al., 2012) or an "affect" (Ruck and Welch, 2012). Over time, members of an organization will to some extent reach a consensus about how the ISM is used and perceived in their organization (Fulk and Yuan, 2013).

4.2. Participation on ISM

Closely related to the theme of adoption, a further issue in the literature on ISM is how to get enough coworkers to participate in order to reach a critical mass (Markus, 1987). Researchers have observed various user patterns on social media (Brandtzaeg and Heim, 2011; Li and Bernoff, 2011; Nielsen, 2006), with a few users being very productive, while most are merely lurkers (Brandtzaeg and Heim, 2011). The same user patterns have been observed on ISM, but so far no one has developed a comprehensive typology of coworker communication behavior on internal social media. Scholars have only distinguished between two types of behavior: lurkers and elders (CIPD report, 2013), contributors and reluctant users (Lüders, 2013), or moving from reader to leader behavior (Preece and Shneiderman, 2009). Even if a certain number of people communicating is necessary to create a community, being a lurker on ISM can benefit

both coworker and organization (Leonardi, 2014). The coworker knows what is happening in the organization, and in an internal context the concept listener (Crawford, 2009) is therefore more appropriate. The only scholar to have developed a more nuanced perception of coworker communication behavior on social media, to my knowledge, is Agerdal-Hjermind (2014), who finds four different types of behavior or positions as she calls them, namely the official, the debater, the engineer and the passionate blogger. However, these coworkers are communicating to both an internal and an external audience, so the four positions cannot be transferred to a purely internal context.

4.3. Coworker motivation to share knowledge and communicate

Coworker motivation to communicate on ISM has been studied mainly in the field of knowledge management in order to understand what drives or hinders coworkers sharing of knowledge on ISM. Apart from the technological, organizational and social context (Chin et al., 2015), being in a collaborative environment (Yuan et al., 2013) and engagement (Muller, 2012) have been found to enhance the motivation to share knowledge.

In line with organizational citizen behavior (Van Dyne, Graham and Dienesch, 1994), Vuori and Okkonen (2012) found coworkers' desire to help the organization and colleagues to be a more significant driver than financial reward. They even found that rewards could be counterproductive in the long run. In contrast, DiMicco et al. (2008) found three motivations for sharing knowledge or communicating on ISM, which they termed caring, climbing and campaigning. The last two are self-promotional, since coworkers are driven by their wish to advance their career or to dominate the agenda for their own benefit; only caring refers to organizational citizen behavior. Organizations would like coworkers to be driven by a desire to improve the organization; however, the limited research available indicates that this desire may be mixed with personal motives on the part of coworkers. The dynamics of employee voice and silence reviewed in chapter three are thus likely to be reflected when coworkers communicate on ISM.

Through their communication on ISM, coworkers can create a particular image of themselves (Goffman, 1959) that can help them to build social capital (Steinfield et al., 2009; Yuan et al., 2013: Wu, DiMicco and Millen, 2010). Weak ties can become strengthened (DiMicco

et al., 2008; Fulk and Yuan, 2013) when coworkers share knowledge with people they know (Ferron, Massa and Odella, 2011), find out who knows what (Yuan et al., 2013), identify experts (Fulk and Yuan, 2013), and distinguish between experts and trusted experts (Watson, 2011). At the same time, individual coworkers' behavior reflects the relationships they have with each other (Wu et al., 2010). The research on social capital and the strength of weak ties has attempted to uncover and describe what happens on ISM, but with little regard to the actual communication among coworkers.

Finally, coworkers' prior knowledge of and experience with social media influences whether and how they will use ISM. Technologically savvier coworkers are quicker to adopt new technologies (Trimi and Galanxhi, 2014). On the other hand, coworkers might take their technological frame of reference with them into the workplace (Treem et al., 2015), so that their own perceptions of external social media influence how they perceive ISM.

4.4. Communication on ISM

Research conducted on the actual communication on ISM indicates that it is especially suited to horizontal communication, although it can be used for both vertical and horizontal processes (Davison et al., 2014). Interactive communication is most beneficial for the organization (Batista and Galliers, 2012; Denyer, Parry and Flowers, 2011; Huang, Baptista and Galliers, 2013). Majchrzak et al. (2013) talk about "knowledge conversations," finding that knowledge grows out of a conversation rather than being information given from one coworker to the other. Communication on ISM is an opportunity to challenge coworker opinions and involve other coworkers in decision-making (Miles and Mangold, 2014). However, there is a tendency to use communication on ISM for one-way communication (Batista and Galliers, 2012; Denyer, Parry and Flowers, 2011; Heide, 2015), so that organizations do not harvest the benefit of the media.

Some scholars (Huang, Baptista and Galliers, 2013; Sun and Shang, 2014) have looked at the relationship between leisure- and work-related use of ISM. Leisure-related use can encourage coworkers to communicate on ISM, and over time the communication will become more work-related. Morris, Teevan and Panovich (2010) have found that communication on ISM consists mostly of questions and answers; Risius and Beck (2014) have found that coworkers are either informers or me-formers – sharing either organizational information or personal

information – when they communicate on ISM. The only two studies to my knowledge that explore interactions between coworkers and the dynamic of communication on ISM in greater depth are those by Beers Fägersten (2015) and Uysal (2016).

The studies mentioned above indicate that research into communication on ISM has been rather sporadic. Research on what coworkers do and do not communicate about, how conversations develop, and how the conversations help constitute the organization would give a much fuller understanding – as well as a better understanding of why coworkers communicate the way they do.

4.5. The outcome of having ISM

Several researchers point out that there is a discrepancy between expectations and reality when organizations introduce ISM (Falkheimer and Heide, 2014; Heide, 2015; Lundgren, Strandh and Johansen, 2012). On a rather provocative note, Heide (2015) concludes after a review of the literature on social intranet that not much has happened since he wrote his doctoral thesis on intranet in 2002. The same challenges and paradoxes of participation are found, and the functioning of ISM is still seen as dependent on the organizational context.

When organizations succeed with the introduction of ISM, coworkers can communicate, connect with each other, collaborate, and share knowledge on ISM (Sedej and Justinek, 2013; Vuori, 2012). Each organization does it their own way, and after reviewing the literature on ISM, Leonardi, Huysman and Steinfield (2013) use three metaphors to describe the different roles ISM can play within organizations: the leaky pipe, the echo chamber and the social lubricant. The leaky pipe metaphor refers to communication being visible to everyone in the organization, and therefore making the organization more transparent. The echo chamber is the idea that people with the same interests can find each other on ISM, and other members of the organization become aware of the different communities within it. Finally, the social lubricant refers to ISM having a more social function, so that coworkers get to know more about each other both privately and work-related, which strengthens the social fabric of the organization. Communication on ISM can increase the reach and the richness of internal communication (Huang, Baptista and Galliers, 2013), as well as improving the internal communication both in terms of expense and time (Denyer, Parry and Flowers, 2011). Both managers and coworkers

can believe in the benefits of using ISM for internal communication (Trimi and Galanxhi, 2014); and ISM can be useful for internal branding (Omilion-Hodges and Baker, 2014).

So introducing ISM can change communication in some organizations, while communication in other organizations does not change (Denyer, Parry and Flowers, 2011; Huang, Baptista and Galliers, 2013; Parry and Solidoro, 2013; Vuori and Okkonen, 2012). ISM has a potential; reviewing the literature, Treem and Leonardi (2012) found that ISM can have important consequences for organizational communication processes because it affords behaviors that were difficult or impossible to achieve before its entry into entered the workplace. They conclude that ISM "may alter socialization, information sharing and power processes in organizations" (p. 143). Martin, Parry and Flowers (2015) support the view that ISM can enhance employee voice, and Heide (2015), despite his skepticism, believes that ISM has the ability to flatten hierarchy and can lead to organizational democracy. Social media makes it more realistic to reach joint decision-making, and ISM can shift power from managers to coworkers, since coworkers themselves can create strategic messages and make them available to everyone in the organization (Falkheimer and Heide, 2014). However, coworkers have a contractual and emotional relationship with the organization (Frandsen and Johansen, 2011) that will influence how and when they will communicate.

Central to the outcome of ISM is the coworker as communicator. When coworkers participate in organizational communication in a much more visible way than previously, the potential is there for them to become key communicators in the organization. Therefore, research has begun to explore how communication on ISM influences the individual coworker. Brzozowski, Sandholm and Hogg (2009) found that coworkers changed their perception of the organization when ISM was introduced. Koch, Gonzalez and Leidner, (2012) noticed that ISM created positive feelings and engagement among newcomers, reducing turnover. Omilion-Hodges and Baker (2014) indicated that everyday talk on ISM made coworkers into ambassadors for the organization. Finally, Shami, Nichols and Chen (2014) revealed that ISM did not hinder the performance of the individual coworker, reflecting the general concerns in organizations and research that coworkers will waste their time when using ISM.

The question remains what ISM can do for the organization apart from engaging the coworker. Several scholars seem to find that ISM improves the effectiveness of the organization (e.g. Bennett et al., 2010; Leftheriotis and Giannakos, 2014; Shami, Nichols and Chen, 2014), but effectiveness is generally difficult to measure, since ISM exists within a context influenced by many different factors. So it can be hard to tell whether increased effectiveness is due to ISM, a different type of management, or greater attention being paid to coworkers during the implementation.

However, introducing ISM might also have the opposite effect, since ISM can enhance a negative organizational culture (Denyer Parry and Flowers, 2011) or lead to information overload among coworkers (Cross and Gray, 2013).

4.6. Main points in the research on coworkers as communicators on ISM

From the research on ISM so far, it appears that introducing ISM does not in itself create participatory organizational communication. Coworkers interact with the technology in different ways, and their interpretation of ISM influences how and why they communicate. Not all coworkers will contribute equally. A small group will be very active (cf. Brandtzaeg and Heim, 2011; Li and Bernoff, 2011; Nielsen, 2006), and in this respect some coworkers are likely to be more influential than others. Coworkers are especially driven by the desire to benefit the organization, but they will also serve their own interests, either by promoting or protecting themselves.

In this respect, therefore, research on ISM has shed some light on coworkers as communicators on ISM, but communication on ISM has not been the main focus of attention. Much more could be explored: the strategic behavior of coworkers when communicating on ISM, what happens in coworker interaction with each other, how coworker communication on ISM contributes to organizational communication. Does ISM actually make organizational communication participatory? Or will coworker concerns identified in employee voice and silence theories be transferred to the new media, so that coworkers will refrain from communicating?

Chapter 5

”The times when I have commented, then I have sensed the presence of other people. If I am frustrated about my work processes and others don’t know about it, then I have to say something. Then they have written. Thank you for your contribution. We will look into it and improve it. I know it will not be improved today. But I think that when I point out problems then there is a response from the responsible people in the other end.”

Bank Adviser (JB, Iw 7)

5. A conceptual model of the ISM communication arena

In this chapter, I will use three theories to develop a conceptual model of the ISM communication arena. My motivation in developing the model is that the limited amount of research conducted to date on actual communication on ISM suggests that interactive conversations among coworkers are the most valuable thing about communication on ISM (Batista and Galliers, 2012; Denyer Parry and Flowers, 2011; Huang, Baptista and Galliers, 2013; Majchrzak et al., 2013). Leonardi, Huysman and Steinfield (2013) thus state that "rather than functioning as a *channel* through which communication travels, ISM operates as a platform upon which social interaction occur" (p. 2). This suggests that coworker communication on ISM has the potential to make organizational communication multivocal. In order to understand these dynamics of communication on ISM, I develop a conceptual model of communication on ISM based on the theory of imagined audiences (Litt, 2012; Marwick and boyd, 2011), the rhetorical arena theory from the field of crisis communication (Frandsen and Johansen, 2010; 2016; Johansen and Frandsen, 2007), and the CCO understanding of communication.

5.1. Theory on imagined audiences on social media

From voice theories, we know that the target of voice is important. However, in organizations of more than 500 people, it is difficult to know who is actually listening when coworkers communicate on ISM. Coworkers will talk both up and out to the organization (Liu, Zhu and Yang, 2010) and will perceive the audience as both known and unknown. Known, because the organization sets the boundaries and only members of the organization have access to the platform. Unknown, because coworkers do not know everyone in the organization, and cannot always predict who will read a post or a comment.

The theory of imagined audiences on social media (Litt, 2012; Marwick and boyd, 2011) describes what happens when different audiences collapse into one context on social media. According to this theory, people take cues from the social media environment to imagine the community they are communicating with (boyd, 2007, p. 131). The imagined audience is socially constructed in the text through stylistic and linguistic choices (Scheidt, 2006). In an organizational setting, coworkers will take cues both from communication on ISM and from the organization. According to Marwick and boyd (2011), topics are chosen based on the

anticipated audience response. There is a constant tension between revealing and concealing. This is also the case in an organizational setting, where a coworker will communicate to benefit the organization, yet at the same time construct a self-presentation that will both promote and protect themselves. Marwick and boyd (2011) observed two techniques used to navigate within this tension: self-censorship and balance. Self-censorship was refraining from communicating about some issues; balancing was a matter of balancing personal and professional content in order for the individual not to reveal too much about themselves yet at the same time come across as authentic. Transferring these insights to an organizational context, coworkers will refrain from discussing certain topics and are likely to balance their communication in order to please the audience yet serve their own interest. The theory of imagined audiences is useful for understanding some of the considerations that coworkers may have when participating in the ISM arena.

5.2. Rhetorical arena theory in crisis communication

Communication on ISM introduces a communication arena that differs from other kinds of organizational communication in at least three ways. The communication is persistent and visible to everyone in the organization; many voices can be heard; and the communication is to some extent unpredictable, perhaps even uncontrollable. The introduction of uncertainty as a precondition in organizational communication, as well as multivocality, makes it relevant to draw on the rhetorical arena theory from the field of crisis communication to understand communication on ISM.

The concept of the rhetorical arena introduces a complex and dynamic social space in which multiple voices act when a crisis opens up (Frandsen and Johansen, 2016; Johansen and Frandsen, 2007). Different voices can choose to enter the arena or can be forced to do so. The strength of the model is its multivocal approach (Frandsen and Johansen, 2010; Coombs and Holladay, 2014): communication associated with a crisis is produced by a multitude of senders and receivers, who communicate to, with, against, past or about each other (Frandsen and Johansen, 2010; 2016). Receivers of crisis communication are as much interpreting as sending communication, and they can have a major influence on the interpretations of a crisis. In other words, the organization cannot control the multiplicity of voices in the arena.

The multivocal approach from the rhetorical arena theory can be applied to the field of ISM in order to understand how organizations emerge from or are constituted in a multiplicity of voices. The difference between the rhetorical arena in a crisis and the ISM communication arena is that the former opens up around a specific crisis, whereas the ISM communication arena will consist of strings of ongoing conversations about different topics, and issues as suggested by Garner (2013) in the context of dissent.

In line with research in crisis communication, ISM can also be considered as a sub-arena (Coombs and Holladay, 2014) within an organizational rhetorical arena. Coombs and Holladay (2014) describe sub-arenas as "spaces where crisis publics may express and hear ideas about a crisis" (p. 41), and they argue that a social media channel could be seen as a sub-arena. The ISM sub-arena in an organization might have a small or a huge impact on the organizational rhetorical arena, depending on the number of coworkers communicating and listening and the topics discussed. In the ISM sub-arena just as in the rhetorical arena, voices can communicate to, with, against, past and about each other. They influence and are influenced by the organizational rhetorical arena, which again is influenced by the ISM sub-arena as well as by the national and social context surrounding the organization. Figure 5.2. illustrates the ISM communication arena as a multivocal sub-arena within an organizational rhetorical arena. The lines in the ISM communication arena and the organizational communication arena are dotted to imply that the arenas have no fixed boundaries and that they influence each other. The figure is rather simple, because in reality there will be several different sub-arenas within the organizational rhetorical arena, such as conversations over lunch, department meetings and collaboration processes.

It is relevant to view the ISM communication arena as a sub-arena within a rhetorical organizational arena. However, the term I use in this dissertation is the ISM communication arena, since this is the principal focus of my research and my theoretical study.

Figure 5.2. The ISM communication arena

Inspired by the rhetorical arena model (Johansen and Frandsen, 2007; Frandsen and Johansen, 2016).

5.3. The ISM communication arena in a CCO perspective

The arena metaphor implies that audiences are watching the interactions in the arena (Frandsen and Johansen, 2016), and this links the rhetorical arena theory and the theory of imagined audiences in understanding the ISM communication arena. In the ISM communication arena, processes of communication, interpretation and sensemaking unfold when multiple voices communicate, and imagined audiences perceived by coworkers as watching the interactions influence the processes and in turn determine whether coworkers communicate, and in which way and when.

The voices acting in the ISM communication arena are expressed in written text, but due to the affordance or the informal nature of the media, the text will consist of both "text" and "conversation," in the Montreal school understanding of these two words (see section 3.4). "Text" refers to the fairly stable side of communication or "substances," while "conversation"

refers to the lively, evolving co-constructive side of communication (Ashcraft, Kuhn and Cooren, 2009; Kuhn, 2012). According to the Montreal school, text can take various forms – verbal, non-verbal and written – while conversations are found in settings such as collaboration processes, meetings and routine operations.

Communication on ISM is therefore likely to be both text and conversation, perhaps even leaning more toward conversation, depending on the imagined audiences perceived to be watching – or, in other words, the organizational context. The interactions are sometimes likely to develop into authoritative text when a "dominant reading" (Kuhn, 2008) occurs and becomes the "substance" that constitutes the organization (Chaput, Brummans and Cooren, 2011). This "common substance … must be negotiated and renegotiated during day-to-day interactions (Chaput, Brummans and Cooren, 2011, p. 3). Taylor and Van Every (2000) conclude that communication is the site in which the organization is continually negotiated, and since voices act in the ISM communication arena it is likely that the ISM communication arena can or will become a space where the organization is negotiated – depending on how influential and how used the arena is.

Chapter 6

"The language is a bit more cleansed for swear words and those kind of things. There is no doubt about that, but occasionally there will be some harsh comments… That is possible. But that is what you are in for, when you choose to post or comment."

Bank Adviser (JB, Iw 13)

6. Methodology

This section presents the methodological considerations of the dissertation. The term methodology is concerned with the logic of the scientific inquiry and the assumptions governing the way knowledge is produced (Grix, 2002), while methods refer to the tools and strategies used for constructing and analyzing the empirical material presented in the research design. The two terms are related, since the methodology influences which methods are used and how they are used.

In chapter 2 the ontological and epistemological position of the dissertation was laid out as social constructivist, with an interpretive and CCO perspective on communication. Situating myself as a researcher within the streams of social constructivism and CCO influences the choice of methodology in the project.

To use the terminology of Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), I regard myself as a traveler setting out to explore the phenomenon of internal social media. I have therefore chosen an exploratory and qualitative approach involving case studies.

6. 1. Case studies as research strategy

Case studies are appropriate for the study of a new phenomenon and when very little research has been done within a field (Neergaard, 2007; Thomas, 2011; Yin, 2014), and this is the case with coworker communication on ISM. Only a few qualitative and empirical studies on coworker communication on ISM have been conducted (Leonardi, Huysman and Steinfield, 2013; Van Osch, Steinfield and Balogh, 2015). My research strategy was therefore to build theory from the case studies (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). Case studies are useful in the study of context-dependent phenomenon (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Yin, 2014), since they describe the "rich real-world context in which a phenomenon occurs" (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007, p. 25) and "elevates a view of life in its complexity" (Thomas, 2011, p. 2).

Case studies cannot be used as a basis for generalization, because one or a few cases are not sufficient to generalize from in the statistical sense. However, they can be used to shed empirical light on theoretical concepts or principles, and perhaps also to develop new middle-range theories. In this way case studies are a way of understanding the "how" and "why"

(Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007; Thomas, 2011; Yin, 2014), and from this make s analytical generalization (Neergaard; 2007; Yin, 2014) about a phenomenon. Theory building is "deeply embedded in rich empirical data, building theory from cases is likely to produce theory that is accurate, interesting and testable" (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007, p. 26), since "they are closer to theoretical constructs and provide a much more persuasive argument" (Siggelkow, 2007, p. 22).

6.2. Grounded theory

In terms of being exploratory and inductive the dissertation is rooted in grounded theory, as introduced by Glaser and Strauss (1967). They suggested that, in the social sciences, theory should be discovered from data rather than being verified or tested. Their intention was to build theory by focusing on the interpretation of meaning by social actors. Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) advise against using the term "grounded theory" since the term has multiple meanings. However, exploratory studies are inspired by grounded theory, and therefore the theory is visited to highlight what has been taken from the approach.

Glaser and Strauss's original idea with grounded theory was to enter the field and absorb what happened: then patterns would appear, and new theory would develop. Glaser and Strauss have since then gone in two different directions in their understanding of and approach to grounded theory. Glaser has stayed with the original concept, while Strauss and Corbin have developed a detailed system of coding and analyzing empirical material in which some things are defined before entering the field (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; 1998). The central idea taken from Glaser and Strauss in this dissertation is that it is possible to develop theory from collected and constructed empirical material, without verifying the theory through quantitative studies. The researcher has to become immersed in the empirical material and search for patterns, and this will allow them to construct theories from the empirical material.

Grounded theory is based on "theoretical sampling" and "constant comparison" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), which basically means that the researcher makes choices about which empirical material to select and construct during the construction process. The choices are based on the research questions and are formed by comparing newly constructed to already constructed material to see whether patterns emerge, which can help to develop theory about

the phenomenon. Thus data collection and data analysis start at the same time, and data analysis and interpretation are an ongoing process (Miles and Hubermann, 1994; Suddaby, 2006). The analysis reveals themes and issues for further exploration, and through the iterative process theoretical categories emerge from the empirical material and shape further data collection (Edmondson and McManus, 2007). This idea of analysis starting at the point of the selection and construction of material is also taken on board in the dissertation.

During the process of exploring ISM, various theories about organizational communication, social media and organizational behavior were read in order to find support for the findings, to understand the dynamics of communication on ISM, and to compare with other research. In this way the research process became a constant dialog between the empirical material and the literature, a methodological approach also known as abduction and first described by Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914). When I moved from the multiple case study in ten organizations to the single case study in Jyske Bank, my exploratory approach was shaped by the findings and literature used in the first study. In this respect my approach differs from grounded theory, but it is still exploratory and qualitative. In the research design, the methods from grounded theory were replaced by other methods also inspired by grounded theory that seemed more in line with acknowledging the use of prior literature as a stepping stone as well as for building theory.

6.3. Reflexivity and sensemaking

One of the weaknesses of the original grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) is that it relies solely on data and takes no account of the fact that all data is influenced by the researcher, by the context, and by the way that context is constructed (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000). "Interpretation-free, theory-neutral facts do not, in principle exist" (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000, p. 1), and our observations are guided and influenced by initial hunches and frames of reference (Siggelkow 2007; Suddaby, 2006). As a researcher I have certain presumptions and preferences from my knowledge of organizational communication that influence where I am looking, which empirical material I choose to construct, and how I perceive the empirical material. Case study research has therefore been accused of bias (Flyvbjerg, 2006). However, both Flyvbjerg (2006) and Eisenhardt (1989) argue against this bias. On the one hand, quantitative research is also biased, since questions asked have been chosen. On the other hand,

using case studies, researchers are so close to the empirical material that they constantly have to revise their ideas and concepts, since they have to be altered when facing the empirical material. This is part of the process in inductive research (Flyvbjerg, 2006), and therefore rather than being biased, the data is adapted. Instead of trying to argue for the validity of case studies, Alvesson and Sköldberg (2000) accept the conditions when constructing empirical material.

A social-constructivist approach makes validity in the traditional positivistic sense itself questionable, and this dissertation leans on Kvale and Brinkmann's (2009) perception of validity, rejecting the notion of universal truth while accepting "the possibility of local, personal and community forms of truth with a focus on daily life and local narrative" (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p. 21). In this respect, the stories that the coworkers in Jyske Bank tell each other about past incidents in the bank become over time intersubjective understandings of what happened. Conducting case studies is not, then, a matter of whether findings are representative; it is more a matter of whether they are trustworthy (Neergaard, 2007, p. 43). Neergaard (2007) thus recommends researchers with a social-constructivist approach to use Guba and Lincoln's (1985) four criteria for evaluating trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

For others to evaluate whether my research is trustworthy, I have to be systematic and reflect on the choices made during my journey exploring ISM. I have to reflect on my role, and be aware that just as I as a researcher influence the case study, the case study and the empirical material also influence me (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000). In this analytic journey I organize the qualitative data into coherent stories of experience, and sensemaking processes are essential analytical activities (Edmondson and McManus, 2007). In this sensemaking process, I keep going back and forth between pieces of empirical material and the whole case study in order to create patterns and understandings. Alvesson and Sköldberg (2000) advocate a reflexive methodology, which means that a researcher must constantly assess and be critical about the way the empirical material is constructed, interpreted and written. The researcher's assumptions influence the constructions, as do the understandings inherent in the language used.

As a social constructivist, therefore, I am thus a craftsman and a traveler (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009), setting out to explore the phenomenon of ISM. I study what comes up in the exploratory studies, and I apply the methods that can help shed light on ISM. However, I do not travel around all aspects of ISM. I have chosen to focus on communication on ISM and coworkers as communicators on ISM, with the aim of exploring whether and how ISM influences organizational communication and the organization.

Chapter 7

"Some managers might comment but then it is mainly to sum up or maybe to round off a discussion. Not to quiet things down. Don't get me wrong. More to clarify what happens next."

Bank Officer (JB, Iw 1)

7. Research design

In order to answer the research questions of the dissertation, a multiple case study and a single case study were conducted. In the articles, the case studies are briefly described, and to get a fuller understanding of how the empirical material was constructed, what choices were taken and the reflections involved, the research design is described more in detail in this chapter. As laid out in the theoretical section above, most studies of ISM have studied ISM from an information systems perspective; little research has tried to explore the phenomenon of ISM and the dynamics underlying communication on ISM. Therefore there are no established methods, and as Flyvbjerg (2006) states: "Good social science is problem driven and not methodology driven in the sense that it employs those methods that for a given problematic, best help answer the research question at hand" (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 242). I therefore combined different qualitative methods that seemed appropriate to explore the dynamics of communication on ISM.

7.1 A multiple case study in ten Danish organizations

Before writing the dissertation, I had worked for ten years as a consultant specializing in internal communication, intranet and ISM. From this work I had some experiences with organizations as well as anecdotes about how ISM were working in organizations. In order not to be too influenced by my preconceptions and to get a fresh perspective, I carried out a pilot study in ten organizations. Case studies have been accused of bias by the researcher's preconceptions (Flyvbjerg, 2006). I chose the opposite strategy – to conduct a multiple case study in order to get away from my preconceptions. I knew that I wanted to conduct a single case study so as to study coworker communication in depth, but in order to avoid studying only the obvious or known issues within ISM, I wanted to approach the topic with an open mind so as to allow new insights to emerge. Therefore a multiple case study was conducted. In accordance with this, Eisenhardt (1989) finds that cross case studies is a way to allow novel insights to emerge or, from a social-constructivist perspective, to allow the researcher to construct novel insights.

Eisenhardt (1989) recommend using between four and ten cases when conducting a multiple case study. For this purpose, ten were chosen, since the intention was to interview only the ISM coordinators, not several people within each organization. Therefore more

organizations were chosen to make up for interviewing only one or two people in each organization. From my work as a consultant I had experienced that ISM coordinators were very knowledgeable about ISM, since they were often in charge of implementing it. They therefore seemed to be a good entry-point into the organizations, given that the aim was to understand the overall perception of how ISM was working, and what happened when coworkers communicated with each other on ISM.

From my practical experience I formulated the proposition that ISM were most likely to work well in organizations with fewer than 500 employees, in knowledge-intensive organizations, and perhaps in the private sector. A smaller company would create a more intimate atmosphere, making it easier for coworkers to communicate; and coworkers in knowledge-intensive organizations used their computers on a daily basis and therefore ISM was more likely to be a natural part of their way of working. At the same time they would also have an incentive to share knowledge, since this was the purpose of the organization. Finally, I assumed that private firms would be ahead of public organizations in their adoption of new technology and new ways of working.

So the initial idea was to find ten organizations matching those criteria and also with active communication on ISM. As I started approaching organizations, I found that it was a challenge to find organizations with a well-functioning ISM. I therefore had to change the criteria to organizations with some communication on ISM. Even then it was a challenge to find organizations fitting the description of having fewer than 500 employees yet being knowledge-intensive. It was a challenge even to find organizations with any communication on ISM, and therefore the objective was changed from having similar organizations to having very different organizations. A maximum of variation between cases is an alternative strategy for selecting cases (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 230; Neergaard, 2007), and it actually made sense to apply this strategy, since it can reveal different ways of using ISM and different perceptions of having it in an organization, as well as giving validity to similarities (Neergaard, 2007). In this way I could explore possible emerging issues when coworkers communicated on ISM regardless of what kind of organization it was, and also get closer to understanding the phenomenon of ISM by finding similarities across very different organizations. This was therefore a way both to open up the phenomenon and to allow me to analytically generalize (Yin, 2014) about the similarities,

since they occur across great differences. A snowballing sample strategy (Neergaard, 2007) was used to select the organizations. As it turned out, three organizations fitted the initial description. This made it possible to explore whether the initial proposition about which organizations were most likely to have well-functioning ISM seemed plausible. To compare the ten organizations, they were therefore listed in several tables (see Table 1 in article 1, and the tables in appendix 3). Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) suggest using tables when conducting multiple case studies, because it creates an overview. Comparing the ten organizations, two of the three that fitted the initial description had a well-functioning ISM; in addition, three large organizations with more than 2,000 employees, as well as the public adviser firm with only 50 employees, also had well-functioning ISM. In this way it became clear that well-functioning ISM did not relate to the size of the organization or whether it was private or public, and not even to whether the organization was knowledge-intensive. Something else seemed to trigger whether communication on ISM was working well or not, and since it had been difficult to find organizations with a well-functioning ISM, the research focus shifted from understanding how well-functioning ISM worked to understanding the challenges of introducing ISM. In the interviews with ISM coordinators, it became clear that even in organizations with a well-functioning ISM, coordinators had worked hard to facilitate coworker communication on it.

Initially, I was interested in the ISM coordinators' perceptions of coworker communication on ISM. Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) recommend interviewing informants with in-depth knowledge of topics, and in my perception the ISM coordinators in the organizations where ISM worked well were very informed about what coworkers communicated about; they also had insightful knowledge about the dynamics that were driving communication. At the same time, I perceived that this could not be said of the ISM coordinators in those organizations that did not have that much activity – except for one ISM coordinator, who worked in a municipality. She had a very good idea of why their ISM was not working well. During the process of analyzing and writing the first article based on the findings from the multiple case study, it therefore became apparent that I actively had to explore the role of the ISM coordinator in order to make sense of the empirical material.

Based on the research questions, I had defined four themes to be explored during the interviews with ISM coordinators: communication on ISM, coworker motivation, coworker

behavior, and internal communication. Specifying constructs a priori in terms of themes to be explored (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007) is not common practice in grounded theory, but constructs of this kind were used in this study because a few predefined codes can help to guide the analysis (King, 2012) to focus on the topics I wanted to explore in the interviews, in order to avoid drowning in empirical material.

During the analysis it became apparent that the findings about coworker motivation were not that trustworthy because they were based on the ISM coordinators' perceptions. This gave me some hints about which topics to explore in the single case study, but could not be used to report the study in article one. So when the study was reported in article one, the construct of coworker motivation was taken away, and only the three other constructs were reported. Deletion like this is part of the process of analysis (King, 2012).

The construction of empirical material in the multiple case study is reported in article one. Later in section 7.3., some more general reflections about the thematic analysis of interviews used in all three articles are presented.

7.2 Single case study in a Danish Bank

Among the ten cases in the multiple case study, coworkers voiced their opinion about organizational issues in only two organizations, and that was rarely. For the single case study I was interested in finding an extreme case or critical case (Flyvbjerg, 2006) of coworkers not only using ISM for knowledge-sharing, but also for discussing organizational issues. The intention was to find a case that could richly describe the ISM phenomenon – rich description being the strength of case studies (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007; Siggelkow, 2007). None of the organizations in the first sample seemed really suitable, since none of those coordinators perceived ISM as crucial to their organizations. During the search for cases for the multiple case study, Jyske Bank turned up toward the end. Ten cases were at that stage already included in the sample, and a financial company with more than 500 employees was already included. So I decided not to use this case in the multiple case study, but as a single case study. In this way I could compare the findings from the single case with the findings from the ten cases.

In a Danish context, Jyske Bank is known for being a bit untraditional and having an open culture. Since 2003 a discussion forum named "The Word is Free" had been on the front page of

their intranet, so the organization had a long tradition of allowing coworkers to speak their mind on a digital media visible to everyone in the organization. The organization could thus represent a critical, perhaps even an extreme case. A case study can represent more than one characteristic (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

After negative coverage in the newspapers, Jyske Bank was a bit skeptical about giving a researcher free access to their internal communication, so I was asked to sign a contract of confidentiality, with the intention of protecting both the coworkers and the bank. This was not found to restrict my research. It was in my interest too to protect the coworkers, and the nature of the study was not critical to the organization, since the main intention was to understand and shed light on the phenomenon ISM. At the same time, Jyske Bank saw the research as an opportunity to create some publicity about the bank as a frontrunner in relation to ISM. We therefore agreed that the case should not be anonymous.

The ISM coordinator, or the intranet strategist as his official title was, became my contact person during the research. He turned out to be a very important person during the construction and analysis of the case study. He had worked with intranet in the bank for 15 years, he was co-author of a report on the discussion forum "The Word is Free" (Nørgaard and Vestergaard, 2004), and he was very knowledgeable and reflective about communication on ISM. We had several meetings and discussions. First, he told me about the background to the introduction of ISM and the original aim of the process, as well as different experiences with ISM. Second, he downloaded the screenshots of communication on ISM for four months from five selected social-media channels on the bank's intranet, JB United. Third, I used him to discuss and validate codes and categories found in a thematic analysis of screenshots of communication on ISM and to discuss emerging themes and cues arising from the empirical material. In this way the discussions with the intranet strategist were a member check (Burnard, 1991) that ensured that the findings were rooted in the empirical material.

Fourth, he helped contact the first ten coworkers interviewed, and presented and explained the idea of the interviews. I subsequently contacted the last 14 coworkers myself by writing an email and referring to the intranet strategist if the coworkers wanted to know something more about the project (See examples of emails send in appendix 5, document 3).

Some coworkers used this opportunity to contact the intranet strategist. The intranet strategist has thus influenced several parts of the construction of empirical material in the study, but he did not participate in the final analysis and discussions of the findings. As a researcher, I am aware of the role of the contact person in relation to the case study. He might have influenced what I looked at, what questions I asked in the interviews, and how I perceived the findings. However, the findings are deeply rooted in empirical material (such as screenshots and interviews) that the intranet strategist could not influence. At the same time, he was also interested in becoming more knowledgeable about their communication on ISM, and that would not be the case if he tried to point me in a certain direction. So the overall evaluation of his role is that his interest in the project helped drive the process. He spent a lot of time downloading screenshots, being the host when I visited the organization, and doing member check when codes and findings were discussed with him. It is likely that without his help the research could not have been done, and he used a great deal of time to assist with the project.

In the case study, several data sources were chosen in order to make the findings trustworthy, as different sources make the findings "stronger and better grounded" (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 541). First, screenshots and interviews with coworkers were selected. The screenshots made it possible to study the actual communication and the dynamics when coworkers communicated. The interviews captured the motives that drove coworker communication, as well as yielding insights into their perceptions of communication on ISM, and this could be compared with the actual communication. During the analysis it became apparent that the various internal communication channels on the organization's intranet interacted with each other, and therefore the research design was altered to include two different types of videos with internal news – the monthly internal television program *INSIDE*, which had replaced the employee magazine, and a daily news program, *Good Morning Jyske Bank*.

7.3. Choices when constructing and analyzing empirical material

All research includes choices, especially when it comes to constructing and analyzing empirical material. In the following six sections the two main methods used – semi-structured interviews and netnography – will be described and discussed in greater detail than in the articles. Then additional material studied, the choice of using template analysis, and considerations and reflections on using NVivo software for coding the interviews are described and discussed.

7.3.1. Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used to construct empirical material in both the multiple and the single case study. ISM coordinators in ten organizations were interviewed in the multiple case study, and 27 coworkers in the single case study (see the interviews in appendix 2 and 6). Qualitative research interviews are a unique way to try to understand the world from the perspective of the interviewees (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009). Interviews give an insight into people's perceptions and sensemaking. This is especially relevant from a social-constructivist perspective, where all knowledge is seen as constructed through interactions and sensemaking among people (Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Wenneberg, 2000).

Perceptions of ISM, as well as the communication itself on ISM, are socially constructed in the interactions among coworkers, and in this perspective it becomes interesting to listen to the different stories involved in this construction.

Interviews are in themselves socially constructed. They are constructed through the questions and answers, and the constructions continue when the interviews are transcribed, analyzed and reported (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009). Through the whole process, particular choices shape the findings, and therefore conducting interviews is a moral undertaking (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009), so that a researcher must establish an ethical position. Various choices in relation to the interviews have therefore been taken during the research process, and they are described and reflected upon.

First, I tried to make sure that the ISM coordinators and the coworkers interviewed did not report anything they would later regret. In cases where they crossed their personal boundaries or said something silly that might be traced back to them, I felt obliged not to use that part of the empirical material. The interviewees' lives should not be negatively affected by the interviews. However, it is an illusion to think that the interviews would leave the interviewees unmarked by the experience. An interview will lead the person interviewed to reflect on themselves and their behavior, which might lead them to change their perceptions (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009). In the single case study, a bank adviser in a local branch was interviewed when the first empirical material was constructed in autumn 2014. The bank adviser claimed not to read or write anything on ISM. When the organization was revisited in September 2015 and screenshots were collected for one month, the researcher noticed that the

bank adviser had made a few comments on ISM during September 2015. In this case, after the interview, the coworker had changed her behavior on ISM.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen, both to explore certain predefined themes (Eisenhardt, 1989) so that the interviews could answer the research questions, and to allow new themes to emerge. In both studies, a rather long list of questions were included in the interview guide (see the interview guides in appendix 1 and 5). However, not all the questions were asked systematically. The ISM coordinator or the coworker would talk freely and answer several questions at the same time; the interview guide was used more as a checklist. The researcher listened carefully to what the interviewed person said and asked follow-up questions to explore interesting cues that emerged, or to ask a "how" or "in what way" question to invite the interviewee to be more specific about their perceptions and experiences. I experienced that some questions had to be explained in more detail, perhaps by giving examples. This could on the one hand help me get answers to the question to which I wanted an answer, but it could also influence what the person answered. In this respect, the empirical material from the interviews was constructed in the interaction between the researcher and the person interviewed.

In the single case study, answers to one specific question were found not to reflect actual behavior by the coworkers. When asked whether they were strategic in their behavior on ISM, most coworkers answered "No." Even when the researcher explained how the question should be understood – had the coworker deliberately set the agenda by raising certain topics on ISM, presenting a desirable self-presentation or promoting themselves in order to make managers aware of them and hopefully offer them a better position in the organization –they still answered "No," and after about fifteen interviews the researcher stopped asking the question. But during the interviews it became apparent that the coworkers were strategic. They balanced very carefully what to reveal and what to conceal, and how they presented themselves to the organization. These self-censorship strategies became the central focus of attention in the third article in the dissertation. However, it was quite paradoxical that the coworkers were strategic in their behavior on ISM, but did not perceive themselves as strategic – or at least that they were not prepared to admit to the researcher that they were strategic.

All the interviews were transcribed (see the transcriptions in appendix 2 and 6). Transcription is a translation from oral to written language (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009), and the amount of detail transcribed depends on the purpose of the study. Since the intention was to conduct thematic analysis of the interviews, the objective of the transcriptions was to transfer the meaning of what the ISM coordinators and the coworkers had said during the interviews. In other words, the transcriptions were not exact word-for-word transcriptions of all words, pauses and emotions. Rather, they summarized what was said. Sometimes, if the interviewee suddenly sidetracked the interview completely, a comment was entered that the conversation had sidetracked and on what topic, and then the transcription continued when the interview was back on track again (example: Multiple case study, appendix 2, interview 1). At the beginning of the interviews, those interviewed were asked to answer questions about job function, age, and duration of employment. During this part of the interview some coworkers might elaborate on getting older or where they worked before, but if nothing of interest to the research questions came up, only answers to the questions were transcribed.

When extracts from the interviews were cited in the three articles, great care was taken to give an accurate impression of what the interviewed people said. People tend to stop in the middle of a sentence or to use a lot of little words that do not add a lot. A degree of liberty was therefore taken in transforming the quotations into something coherent. However, the researcher still aimed to stay as close as possible to what was being articulated. This is acceptable when the intention is to focus on themes in the analysis (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009).

To confirm that neither the ISM coordinators nor the coworkers felt exposed or wrongly quoted, and to add to the validity or trustworthiness of the process, both ISM coordinators and coworkers were asked to agree to publication of their quotations (See examples of mails send to coworkers in appendix 5, document 4). The risk was then that those interviewees who were not quoted might perceive that they had been interviewed in vain, and therefore great care was taken both before and after the interview to let the person know that all the interviews contributed to the research, but that only a few quotations would be used which illustrated a certain point.

In the multiple case study, the persons interviewed and the organizations were anonymized in the reporting of the empirical material. Again, this was done with the intention of protecting subjects in case a quotation might backfire on them.

Throughout the whole process – from constructing the interview guide, to conducting the interviews, to transcribing the interviews and to reporting the findings – choices were made about what to include and what to exclude. The research questions guided the choices, but at the same time I tried to keep an open mind and to allow new insights to emerge.

7.3.2. Netnography: a way to study online behavior and communication

In the single case study, the aim was to explore coworker communication on ISM. Netnography (Kozinets, 2010; 2015) was used as the approach for studying online communication. "Netnography" is a combination of the words "internet" and "ethnography" (Kozinets, 2010), and it is inspired by ethnography, in which a researcher enters a field with the intention of providing thick, rich descriptions of a phenomenon. Netnography is thus a qualitative approach to constructing and analyzing online communication; it is not just one way of conducting research online, but a broad range of methods, combined according to the nature of the research topic. The methods can both be quantitative and qualitative. The first scholarly studies of ISM were most concerned with studying ties between actors in a social network, and they were often quantitative. Kozinets (2010) distinguishes between research in "online communities" and "communities online" (Kozinets, 2010, p. 55); coworker communication on ISM relates to the latter type, since coworkers in the bank also have a community in themselves, and the communication on ISM becomes an extension of that community. This will influence how, when and what coworkers communicate about.

For this dissertation, the methods used in the netnographic research were mainly qualitative, reflecting the overall social-constructivist approach. However, some measurements were conducted. The number of posts, comments and likes was counted to give an idea of the quantity of posts and how many received comments, How many coworkers commented, and how widespread was the use of likes, as well as what type of posts were most likely to receive comments and likes, were also recorded (see tables in appendix 4, folder B). The approach used to analyze the content in the communication and in coworker communication behavior was

invented for the purpose, and it was my method for conducting netnographic research, which I found most likely to be able to answer my research questions.

Ethical considerations are important in netnography, because the research involves individuals who come to be affected by it. First, in relation to the entry into the field, Kozinets (2010) recommends making the researcher's presence known in an online community: the researcher should be an active member in order to get the right feel for the community and to gain insight into what goes on outside the community. Bertilsson (2014), on the other hand, sees an advantage in the researcher being completely observant, an approach in which the researcher does not influence communication by the participants (Bertilsson, 2014, p. 116). This is a central and highly significant issue in the field of ethnography: namely whether, in entering the field, the researcher influences it. By staying out of sight, the researcher gains the opportunity to catch naturally arising communication (Bertilsson, 2014), and in this way the empirical material can speak for itself. Kozinet's recommendation about entering the field was a major concern for me. However, the bank would not allow me free access to their ISM on JB United, their intranet. The contact person assumed that this would not be an issue, probably owing to his perception that the communication climate in the bank was very open. However, the financial crisis and some bad media coverage led the communication manager to be more careful, and I was not allowed full access to the intranet. I also asked whether I could introduce myself and the project to the organization in an article on the intranet. But the organization was afraid that if coworkers knew that someone was observing their communication on ISM, this would influence them and perhaps even inhibit them from communicating. This was a bit of an ethical dilemma. Leaning on Bertilsson (2014),it would make sense not to make the researcher's presence known, since this could be a way to study the naturally occurring communication without doubting whether the researcher's presence had influenced it. In this way, this could be perceived as a strength. On the other hand, it seemed like a kind of unethical trespassing not to say anything about my presence. The literature on netnography (Bertilsson, 2014; Kozinets et al., 2014) discusses the difference between being a public and a private community. If it is a private community, you must certainly make your presence known. If public, then this is not required in the same way (Bertilsson, 2014). But how about ISM? Is that public or private? You could claim that it is public within the organization, and since a contract of confidentiality was

signed, you could argue that it was informed consent (Yin, 2014) when I studied the communication. Nothing would be published which had not been accepted by the organization.

As it turned out, the organization did actually use this right on one occasion, when they did not allow me to publish a specific discussion thread for the second article because they feared the thread might make a newspaper headline. I therefore had to find and publish another discussion illustrating the same point, but not so well. On top of that, the coworkers in the discussions published in the second article were anonymized. They might be recognized by coworkers inside the organization, but not by anyone outside it. After the first three months of studying communication on ISM, I interviewed 17 coworkers in the organizations. In this way my presence became known to the coworkers interviewed, and word about the research probably spread. Moreover, I returned to the organization after performing the analysis of the case study, and presented the results to the communication department. This meant that the coworkers were informed about the research after the netnographic study, but before the dissertation was published. So the coworkers were informed, but only after the research had been completed, in order not to influence the communication. I had several ethical considerations about this, but ended up accepting the conditions since this was the only way to gain access to the empirical material. Finding a suitable case that would allow me to study communication on ISM had been a challenge in the first place, since allowing someone access to unfiltered internal communication is a matter of great trust.

Since I did not get direct access to ISM, the contact person guided me around the intranet and the many different social media channels on the intranet. The content and the amount of posts in the different channels were discussed, and as a result I ended up choosing five channels to follow for three months in the fall of 2014 and one month in 2015. The contributions, comments and likes were copy-pasted into Word documents and made into PDF files by the contact person. Kozinets et al. (2014) describe this as one of the two fundamental techniques for recording online data (Kozinets et al., 2014, p. 267). The comments were located in one set of documents, the likes in another (See examples in appendix 8). All the likes from September 2015 I downloaded myself, which I was allowed to do while sitting in the communication department at the bank. In this way it was visible to everyone which part of the intranet I accessed, and the privacy of the bank was maintained.

Four of the channels were chosen because they had most discussions. The fifth channel, *Jyske Tube*, a video channel where coworkers could upload their own video, was chosen because it had just been introduced and would allow me to compare the different types of media. Were coworkers more likely to post a video or a written contribution? Would the content in the two channels be different? As it turned out, not many videos were being posted during the period of observation. It might have been too early, as the coworkers at that point did not quite understand "how" and "why" they should make videos, since it was only a couple of months since the channel had been introduced. When the second round of interviews were conducted in the fall of 2015, one of the coworkers (JB, Iw 19) had just realized the potential in using videos to show other coworkers how to do things rather than writing a long text, and she claimed that she would use it more in future.

7.3.3. Constructing and analyzing the netnographic material

The researcher received downloaded screenshots twice a month from the contact person, and analysis was carried out after each stack of screenshots was received (See appendix 4, folder A). The aim was to analyze the actual communication on ISM, and to study the coworkers' communication behavior on ISM. As Kozinets (2002) points out, there are at least two important elements in the construction of empirical material: the communication itself, and the observations made by the researcher. For this study, the analysis was conducted in three steps.

First, three methods were used to construct the empirical material: thematic coding of the content in the screenshots, counting the numbers of comments and likes, and observing the communication behavior of coworkers. The construction of the three types of material was combined in tables (see appendix 4, folder A) in order to compare the different types of communication and behavior. During this process, 40 significant discussions were marked (see the discussions in appendix 8, folder A) and the names of coworkers exhibiting various types of communication behavior were written into a separate document.

Second, textual analysis was conducted of the 40 significant discussions and 17 coworkers were selected on the basis of their communication behavior from the list in the separate document, and interviewed. Third, one year later, screenshots from September 2015 were similarly analyzed and an additional seven coworkers were interviewed (see all 24 interviews in appendix 6).

In the first step, a sequence analysis (Eisenhardt, 1989) was made after one and a half months, when three stacks of screenshots had been coded. The content of the screenshots was given 25 different codes to describe the various types of first posts occurring on ISM – such as product information, description of work process, or corporate news. The 25 codes were discussed with the contact person and reduced to 17, as some were similar or overlapping (see the list of codes in appendix 4, folder C., Table 2). The 17 codes were then categorized into seven categories by the researcher so as to characterize the different kinds of first posts. When looking through the screenshots again, more examples were added to the categories and the codes were adjusted. The process ended with seven categories and 18 codes (see the list in appendix 4, folder C, Table 3). During this process it turned out that the content in two of the channels (private and business) were very similar. In the final month, therefore, screenshots were collected from four channels only, and screenshots from the business channel were left out. The analysis of the screenshots was a variation of template analysis (King, 2012), described below in a separate section.

Next, another stack of screenshots were analyzed. After two months no new codes had appeared, and after three months a point of saturation seemed to have been reached. This was the initial period agreed upon with the organization, and it seemed to be sufficient. Otherwise screenshots would have been collected for more months. At this point the categories were purely descriptive, as was the analysis so far.

In the second step, the constructed tables (see appendix 4, folder A) were studied, and selected screenshots were read again and again to allow new insights to appear. It became apparent that most topics received just a few comments, while 40 posts attracted a lot of comments and attention in terms of likes (see the list of 40 post in appendix 4, folder C, Table 4). The first interviews were conducted, and it became apparent that the longer discussions had caught coworkers' attention and that they discussed them with their colleagues. I therefore returned to the screenshots and studied the 40 significant discussions in greater detail. Kozinets et al. (2014) recommends concentrating on a small number of postings to get a deep understanding or cultural sense of the social space (Kozinets et al., 2014, p. 269). A table (see appendix 4, folder C, Table 4) with an overview of all 40 significant discussions that appeared

during the three months was drawn up so as to describe the content and observations made in each discussion. In this way, it emerged that four types of topics created discussions.

Next, I conducted a textual analysis of the 40 discussions to understand how the coworkers constructed organizational identity on ISM. For example, I looked at who "we" referred to, how coworkers used a "them and us" rhetoric, and the metaphors they used to negotiate the organizational identity. See the second article about constructing organizational identity on ISM for further details about the analysis of the 40 significant discussions.

At the same time, the document with the names of coworkers and their communication behavior was studied in greater detail to select which coworkers to interview. These coworkers' behaviors were related to the typology of communication behavior suggested by Brandtzaeg and Heim (2011), and it became apparent that some coworkers represented several types of communication behavior and could not be fitted into one box. So the aim became to find coworkers representing distinctly different types of communication.

On the list there were 43 in 2014 and 17 in 2015. The list was used as a gross list. In addition to communication behavior, geographical position and job position were used to select the coworkers to interview. In this respect the coworkers were purposely selected to represent different types of coworkers in terms of how they communicated and where they were placed in the organization in terms of job and geography. Most people on this list were located in Silkeborg, where the bank's head office is, indicating that most of those communicating were in Silkeborg.

In this second step in the analysis of the screenshots, I also observed how discussions developed. Various distinct patterns were found, which are described in article two.

7.3.4. Videos, archive material and observation

In addition to analysis of the screenshots and interviews with the coworkers, corporate videos, archive material, and observations in the banks were also used to understand how the various internal communication channels influenced each other, and how discussions that begun on ISM developed into organizational stories.

The bank provided me with a desk in the communication department, where I viewed the bank's video employee magazine *INSIDE* and an eight-minute-long daily news program, *Good Morning Jyske Bank*. They were viewed in the bank because the videos could not be taken off the premises due to confidentiality issues. All the *INSIDE* programs from September 2014 to December 2015 were viewed to explore whether discussions on ISM had any impact on the internal news. As it turned out, the discussions were mentioned from time to time, and a few times they even set the agenda for the entire program. The daily *Good Morning Jyske Bank* programs were viewed for the whole of September 2015, and likes were explored in order to see how many viewers and who had liked an episode. *Good Morning Jyske Bank* was introduced in September 2014 and was terminated on 30 September 2015. The program did mention discussions on ISM, but the interviews with the coworkers revealed that in their perceptions, *Good Morning Jyske Bank* did not have the same impact as the *INSIDE* programs. *INSIDE* was seen as the official internal channel in the organization, whereas *Good Morning Jyske Bank* was not seen by everyone and was regarded as more informal. The viewing of the videos was not reported in the articles in detail, since it would have made the research design section too complex and too long. However, watching the programs gave me an insight into how discussions on ISM developed into organizational stories, and supported findings from the interviews with coworkers.

Watching the videos in the communication department also allowed me to observe how coworkers discussed contributions on ISM across their desks, and to sense the atmosphere in the organization. Like the bank advisers in the branches, coworkers in the communication department were seated in clusters or circles of between three and eight people, in open office spaces. This observation made coworker reports about how the ISM contributions were discussed more credible.

Finally, some archive material was studied, such as copies of the significant discussions that coworkers mentioned in the interviews but that had occurred before September 2014. In particular, a discussion called "When will I be a bank adviser again" was mentioned by almost all the coworkers. This and another discussion named "Is the catfish dead?" which took place between the two points of collecting screenshots were studied in detail (see the two discussions in appendix 8, folder B).

7.3.5. Thematic analysis of the empirical material

Template analysis (King, 1998; 2012) was used to make a thematic analysis of the interviews. Template analysis is recommended in research with a social-constructivist approach (King, 1998), and it allows a flexible coding structure and the use of a priori themes. King (1998) places template analysis between content analysis (Weber, 1985), where all codes are predefined with the intention to analyze them statistically, and grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), where no codes are predefined. Template analysis thus occupies the middle ground between top-down and bottom-up styles of analysis (King, 2012). I had some research questions that structured the interview guide, so I had some a priori codes when I started coding. At the same time, new codes were allowed to emerge during the process of coding, and instead of coding all the material in a three-level hierarchy (Strauss and Corbin, 1990), I could develop themes more extensively where the empirical material was most interesting and revealing, relating to the research questions. Thematic codes were developed and changed in the course of the analysis. (See appendix 3, folder B and appendix 7 for examples of coding in the two studies.)

Following Burnard (1991), notes were made after each interview. Before coding, all interviews were read several times so as to become immersed in the empirical material and to get an idea of central issues at stake and possible codes to apply. Then the thematic coding according to King (2012) was begun, and three principles guided this coding. Codes were used as labels to describe sections of text. Parallel coding was permitted, so that the same text could be given two or more codes. Finally, the codes were used to organize the codes into clusters and to create more general higher codes (King, 2012). Each code was given a description, when it was first made. This description could be altered, though, as new pieces of text were given the same code and as I found that another description was more accurate.

The codes made it possible to retrieve all the text with the same label and in this way understand a theme, an idea or an activity. Then the codes were organized into lists and hierarchies, so as to examine analytical questions and relationships between codes as well to compare cases (Gibbs, 2007).

The codes created were constantly revised as the analysis progressed. For example, when the interviews with coworkers were coded, a code was labeled “considerations before

writing." As the analysis proceeded, self-censorship emerged as a central issue, and the code "considerations before writing" was revisited, now to explore whether there were different strategies hidden in the text coded. So all the content under this code was coded again. The findings were reported in the third article co-authored with another researcher, Joost Verhoeven, which was about self-censorship. During the writing of the article the two researchers several times discussed how to define and understand the strategies used by the coworkers. The codes were changed and renamed a few times until we finally arrived at seven codes to describe seven strategies. Two of the articles have examples of coding of the interviews (Table 2 in the first article, Table 2 and 3 in the third article).

The analysis was taken further than just coding the content, making hierarchies, and recoding content within a code. As suggested by Gibbs (2007), tables were drawn up with the empirical material, especially from the multiple case study (see examples in appendix 3). The idea was to gain insights by comparing different parameters. Some of the tables shed light on the material, others were less insightful; this was part of the process of getting familiar with the empirical material. In the single case study, tables were useful for comparing and developing typologies, as with defining and describing different perceived risks and self-censorship strategies (described more in detail in the third article).

Finally, a longitudinal approach was attempted. In the single case study, empirical material was constructed in both 2014 and 2015 with the purpose of confirming findings and exploring whether there had been any development during the year. This part of the research was mainly used to confirm the findings from the first set of empirical material. No significant changes emerged, and therefore I did not focus on the development of communication on ISM over time. However, this aspect could have been explored more in depth.

7.3.6. Coding in NVivo

The interviews with the ISM coordinators and the coworkers in the bank were coded in NVivo software. NVivo can help code and categorize large quantities of data (Gibbs, 2007; Yin, 2014;), and since a prerequisite of really effective data analysis is "efficient, consistent and systematic data management" (Gibbs, 2007, p. 106) using NVivo is a way of systematizing and gaining an overview of constructed empirical material. However, a researcher has to avoid getting seduced by the software (Gibbs, 2007; Yin, 2014). This is only a way to keep track of the empirical

material. A researcher still needs to do the reading and the thinking (Gibbs, 2007). The researcher thus needs to be in charge of the coding, knowing how and why a certain piece of text is coded. NVivo helps organize, but it does not provide any answers.

For this dissertation NVivo was used only to code, organize, restructure and rename codes, as well as code content within a code to get a deeper understanding of particular themes. It could be argued that the full potential of using NVivo was not realized, since only the interviews were coded in NVivo, not the screenshots, observations or memos from the netnographic research in Jyske Bank (See appendix 3, folder B, Table 1 and appendix 7, Table 1 to see initial coding in the two studies).

Some limitations with NVivo were also experienced. The text coded is taken out of context. So while exploring self-censorship on ISM, I saw a need for a fresh exploration of the interviews. Therefore, all the interviews were read and coded again, manually, with a sole focus on self-censorship, and this time the interviews were coded with a new understanding of self-censorship reached in the first round of coding. After the coding, the codes were compared to the first codes, and this led to a re-evaluation. Most codes remained the same, but some were renamed. A deeper understanding was reached of the empirical material, and the initial codes became trustworthy (see appendix 7, Table 5).

Chapter 8

”Some times there is a firestorm, where a lot of people contribute and where you have to respond. Okay. That was not very smart. I think that some times it can act as a release, as an opportunity to let out steam. It is an opportunity for stakeholders to be heard.”

Bank Adviser (JB, Iw 15)

8. Introduction to the three articles

The dissertation consists of three articles, which apply the three different perspectives on coworkers as communicators laid out in chapter three. The first article looks at ISM from a managerial perspective, the second article has a communication or interaction perspective on ISM, and the third article has a coworker perspective. The three articles help to shed light on communication on ISM, coworkers as communicators on ISM, and whether communication on ISM is a new kind of participatory organizational communication. In the following three sections I introduce the three articles. After that, I present the interconnection between the three articles.

8.1. The first article: A managerial perspective

The first article aims to understand why organizations experience challenges with introducing ISM. It is based on a multiple case study carried out in ten Danish organizations. Most of the literature on ISM has been concerned with the adoption of ISM in terms of how to introduce the media into the organization (Chu, 2012; Turban et al., 2011), how ISM affects the organization (e.g. Leftheriotis and Giannakos, 2014; Koch, Gonzalez and Leidner, 2012; Manuti, 2015; Treem and Leonardi, 2012), how to make coworkers communicate on ISM (Gibbs et al., 2013; Manuti, 2015; Pirkkalainen and Pawlowski, 2013), and why coworkers are driven (or not) to communicate or share knowledge on ISM (DiMicco et al., 2008; Muller, 2012; Vuori and Okkonen, 2012). The central issue has been how to achieve the benefits that ISM is assumed to deliver to an organization. Before ISM became part of the workplace, theories about employee participation advocated that by involving coworkers and listening to their voices the organization could become more effective (Redding, 1972). The potential with introducing ISM builds on this idea of employee participation, since ISM provides coworkers with a communication arena in which they can both communicate with one another and address issues in the organizations, with direct access to top managers.

When I interviewed ISM coordinators in ten organizations for the multiple case study, it became apparent that it was not only the literature that was concerned with how to get coworkers onboard. This was a major issue within organizations, too. The organization approach to ISM was very much in line with a managerial perspective on coworkers as communicators. Organizations wished to get coworkers to communicate on ISM in order to

make themselves more effective. So in order to understand the phenomenon of internal social media and the role of coworkers as communicators on ISM, I stepped into the managerial perspective to find out why organizations in the first place had challenges with introducing ISM and reaping the benefits of introducing these media.

8.2. The second article: A communication perspective

The second article explores from a communication perspective what happens in the interactions between coworkers in the ISM communication arena. In the multiple case study, the organizational context was found to play a significant role in affecting whether coworkers would communicate or not. A single case study was therefore conducted in Jyske Bank, since the organization has at least 13 years of experience with multidirectional communication among coworkers as an integrated part of their intranet (Nørgaard and Vestergaard, 2004). Screenshots from three months of ISM communication were studied and analyzed, and 17 coworkers were interviewed about their perception of communication on ISM and their communication behavior.

The findings were used in the second article to explore multivocality in the ISM communication arena and the consequences of coworkers communicating on ISM. In a CCO perspective, coworkers construct the organization through their communication (Ashcraft, Kuhn and Cooren, 2009). As I analyzed the ISM conversations, it occurred to me that the coworkers were contributing to the construction of organizational identity. Theories about organizational identity were therefore integrated into the theoretical framework of the article to shed light on these findings. The article looks at the topics coworkers talk about, the interactions between coworkers, and how conversations develop. Forty significant discussions were identified during the period of observation, and two of them were analyzed in the article to create a detailed understanding of coworker communication on ISM.

8.3. The third article: A coworker perspective

The third article seeks to understand coworker communication behavior on ISM from a coworker perspective. It is based on an analysis of interviews with 24 coworkers interviewed as part of the single case study in Jyske Bank. In the multiple case study, ISM coordinators describe coworker self-censorship as one of the challenges of introducing ISM; and the study of communication on ISM in Jyske Bank revealed that coworkers generally were very polite and

careful in their use of language in communicating on ISM. This indicated that self-censorship could be a useful lens for studying coworker communication behavior on ISM. This was supported by a bank adviser (JB, Iw 6) in the first round of interviews in Jyske Bank claiming that there were no rules on ISM *except* self-censorship.

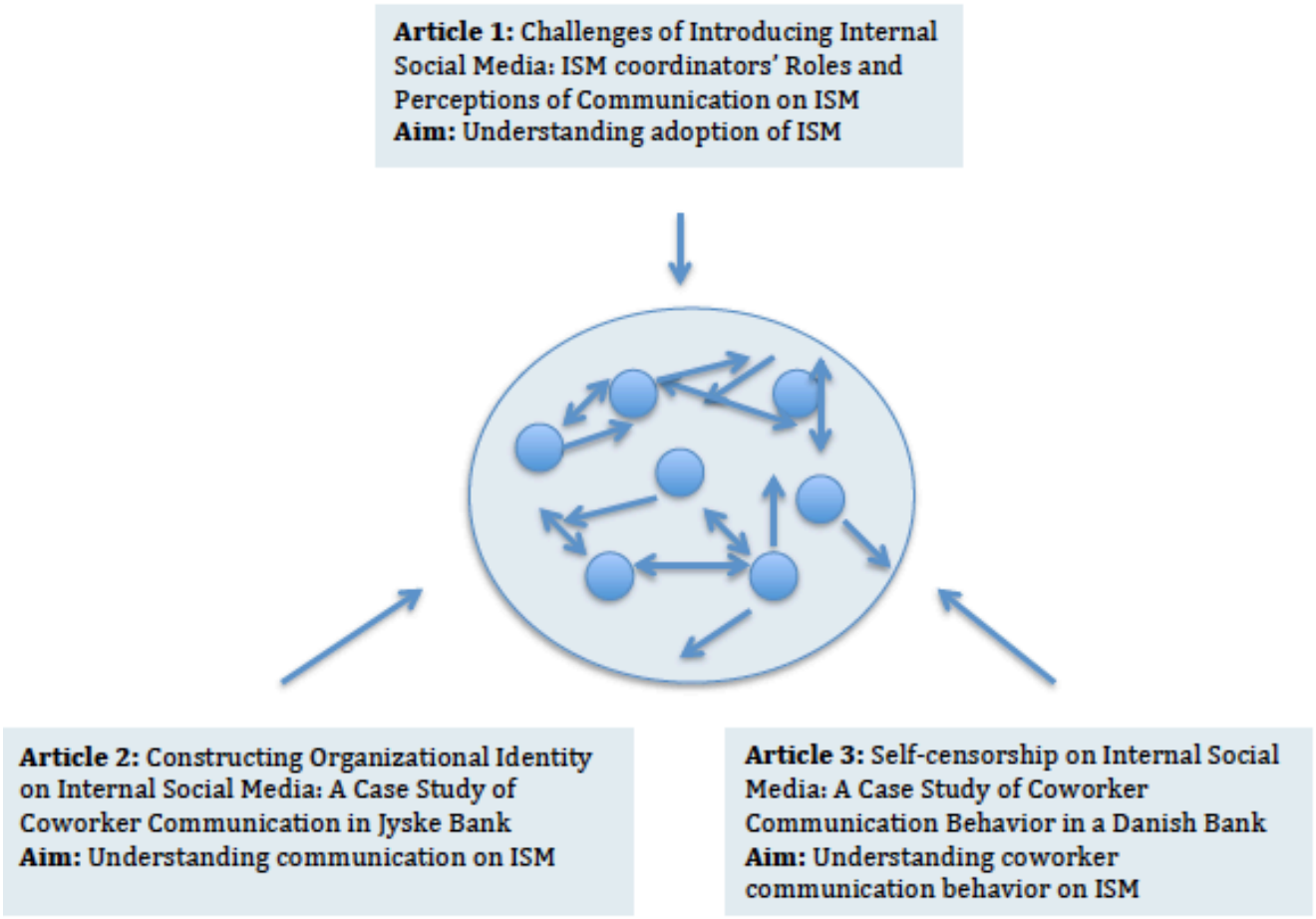
Despite the open communicate climate, self-censorship did appear to be an issue within Jyske Bank, and if it is an issue in this organization, it is likely also to be an issue in other organizations. Self-censorship was therefore used as a lens for exploring and understanding coworker communication behavior on ISM in the third article. That article draws on theories of employee voice and silence (Brinsfield, 2014; Detert and Edmondson, 2011; Morrison, 2011; 2014) to shed light on coworker self-regulation behavior and self-censorship. It also uses the theory of imagined audience (Marwick and boyd, 2011) to understand the perceived risks of entering the ISM communication arena.

8.4. Interconnections between the three articles

The three articles present three different perspectives on coworkers as communicators on ISM and communication on ISM. The multiple case study was conducted as a preparation for the single case study, so article one could also be said to lead to articles two and three. If coworkers in an organization begin to communicate on ISM, then it is possible to explore the communication and the coworkers' communication behavior. However, I prefer to view the articles as three different perspectives on coworkers as communicators on ISM and communication in the ISM arena: This interconnection between the three articles is shown in Figure 8.4.

Each of the three articles sheds light on the phenomenon of internal social media. The three perspectives were chosen since they developed most strongly from the empirical material and were found to give the most interesting insights into the phenomenon of internal social media. They do not, of course, give a full understanding of internal social media. Questions still remain unanswered, and other angles could have been chosen, but they are a considerable step toward understanding communication on ISM and coworkers as communicators on ISM.

Figure 8.4. Interconnections between the three articles.



Chapter 9

””The media is not social. It is the people, who are social. The media is fairly unsocial.”

ISM coordinator (Multiple case study, Iw 10)

Challenges of Introducing Internal Social Media:

ISM Coordinators' Roles and Perceptions of Communication on ISM

Journal of Communication Management

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Abstract

Purpose – The aim of the article is to explore the challenges associated with introducing internal social media (ISM) into organizations in order to help them reap the benefits of coworker communication on ISM.

Design/methodology/approach – The article is based on an exploratory study in ten organizations. The data was collected in semi-structured interviews with ISM coordinators in spring 2014.

Findings – According to the ISM coordinators, four challenges were associated with introducing ISM: (1) Coworkers could perceive communication on ISM as not work-related. (2) Coworkers might not understand the informal nature of communication on ISM, and self-censorship might stop them communicating on ISM. (3) ISM was not considered a 'natural' part of the daily routines in the organizations, and (4) top managers mainly supported ISM in words, not in action.

Research limitations/implications – The study is based on the perceptions of ISM coordinators. Further research is called for to explore both coworker perceptions and actual communication on ISM.

Practical implications – Practitioners introducing ISM should be aware of these four challenges, and should help coworkers to make sense of communication on ISM as work-related communication among coworkers. ISM coordinators' perceptions of their own role in relation to coworker communication on ISM make a difference.

Originality/value – The study provides insights into the key challenges associated with introducing ISM, as well as the role of ISM coordinators as community facilitators and sense-givers.

Keywords – Internal social media, internal communication, coworker, organizational communication

Paper type – Research paper

Introduction

Coworker communication on internal social media (ISM) is considered valuable to organizations. It can lead to improved workplace productivity (Bennett et al., 2010; Leftheriotis and Giannakos, 2014), to new forms of organizational collaboration (Valentini et al., 2013), and to knowledge-sharing (Vuori and Okkonen, 2012); it can contribute to a sense of community (Nur, 2016) and to employee engagement (Koch et al., 2012, Parry and Solidoro, 2013). Many organizations, however, struggle to reap these benefits since coworkers refrain from using the social tools (Denyer, Parry and Flowers, 2011; Young and Hinesly, 2014). They carry on working in the ways they are used to, and communication on ISM does not change internal communication (Trimi and Galanxhi, 2014). To gain insights into why organizations sometimes struggle to make communication on ISM an integrated part of internal communication, it is relevant to turn to the ISM coordinators who are responsible for introducing ISM to organizations (Meske and Stieglitz, 2013). Their perceptions of coworker communication on ISM can cast light on the mechanisms underlying communication on ISM as well as the challenges arising when ISM is introduced in an organization. They have a unique position "at the center of the organization, close to basic organizational processes" (Heide and Simonsson, 2011, p. 202).

Several studies have called for research into coworker communication on ISM (El Ouirdi et al., 2015; Heide, 2015; Koch et al., 2012; Treem and Leonardi, 2012), and to date only one has looked at the role of the ISM coordinator (Meske and Stieglitz, 2013). An exploratory study interviewing ISM coordinators in ten organizations was therefore conducted in spring 2014 with the objective of exploring the challenges associated with introducing ISM. Participants were asked to reflect on their perceptions of coworker communication on ISM and of their own role as ISM coordinators.

The study is documented in the present article, which consists of four sections. The first develops a theoretical framework, together with three research questions based on previous literature. The second section presents the research design of the exploratory study. Section three presents the study's major findings; and the final section presents the discussion, the conclusion, and the implications for practice.

Literature review

Drawing on definitions of "social media" (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010) and "enterprise social media" (Leonardi et al., 2013) ISM is defined as an user-friendly and visible web-based communication arena inside an organization in which coworkers and managers can communicate, interact with each other, connect, and make sense of their work and organizational life.

To explore the associated challenges with introducing ISM and to understand what enables or inhibits coworker communication on ISM, a theoretical framework was built up based on previous research. This is presented in the following four sections.

Coworker behavior on social media

Organizations introduce ISM hoping to develop a new kind of collaboration, communication, and knowledge-sharing among coworkers (Heide, 2015). However, coworkers may choose not to use ISM if it cannot offer a new kind of horizontal communication, or is not seen as valuable. It can therefore be assumed that ISM has to be an alternative to existing internal communication channels, and has to improve the way of working, before coworkers will use it. Morrison (2011) found that coworkers are reluctant to communicate ideas, suggestions, concerns, or opinions about work-related issues if they perceive that this communication is futile. Coworkers will not communicate just for the sake of communicating.

Another factor likely to influence coworker communication on ISM is the variety of user-types in online communities (Agerdal-Hjermind, 2014; Brandtzaeg and Heim, 2011; Li and Bernoff, 2009). The study most relevant to ISM is Brandtzaeg and Heims's (2011) study of four closed Norwegian social networks. Brandtzaeg and Heims found five distinct user-types: sporadics, lurkers, socializers, debaters, and actives. The patterns of behavior on ISM could be expected to match those in closed social networks on external social media, and therefore it is relevant to draw on their findings. As the term "lurker" has negative connotations, the concept of "listening" (Crawford, 2009) as a metaphor for paying attention on social media may be more appropriate. In an internal context, it is valuable for the organization if coworkers keep up to date by following ISM, even if they do not contribute themselves. However, we cannot expect the same behavior on ISM as on external social media, because as stakeholders employees have a closer and more complex relation to the organization in which they are employed (Frandsen and Johansen, 2011). They have more at stake on ISM. Their

identity and their identification with the organization are central, and they have contractual relationship with the organization.

The organizational context of ISM use

Organizational culture and the style of management affect the adoption of ISM (Chin et al., 2015; Parry and Solidoro, 2013). Baptista and Galliers (2012) found that the organizations had either an "open" or a "closed" approach to ISM: Closed organizations maintained strong control over editorial content and restricted coworkers from commenting, while open organizations allowed open debate and comments (Baptista and Galliers, 2012). Closed organizations did not experience a significant change in rhetorical practices after the introduction of ISM, whereas in open organizations these changed considerably: ISM drove multidirectional communication that cut across levels and areas of the organizations, eroded central control, and led to the development of new communication roles for both coworkers and management (Baptista and Galliers, 2012). Research has also identified other organizational factors that encourage the adoption of ISM. The organization has to create an atmosphere of trust (Cao et al., 2012); coworkers need to know *why* and *how* they can contribute (Denyer, et al. 2011); top management has to be committed to ISM, and preferably lead by example (Trimi and Galanxhi, 2014); and finally, ISM needs to be part of the social fabric of the organization (Dyrby et al., 2014). If the organizational culture does not support ISM, coworkers can even become disengaged (Denyer et al., 2011) and organizational silos can develop (Chin et al., 2015).

Perceptions of ISM technology

The ISM technology is seen as changing communication in the organization, since ISM "afford[s] new types of behaviors that were previously difficult or impossible to achieve before these new technologies entered the workplace" (Treem and Leonardi, 2012, p. 178). Furthermore, ISM can potentially "alter socialization, information sharing and power processes in organizations" (Treem and Leonardi, 2012, p. 178). However, communication technologies are equivocal and can be interpreted in multiple ways. Group processes will influence how the individual coworker will interact with and interpret the new technology (Fulk, 1993). In this respect coworkers' conversations about ISM will decide whether they use it or not (Leonardi, 2009; Orlikowski, 1992; Welch, 2012), a point that highlights the contingency of ISM. This is a move away from technological determinism toward a social-constructivist perception of technology that sees technology as having agency in itself (Cooren

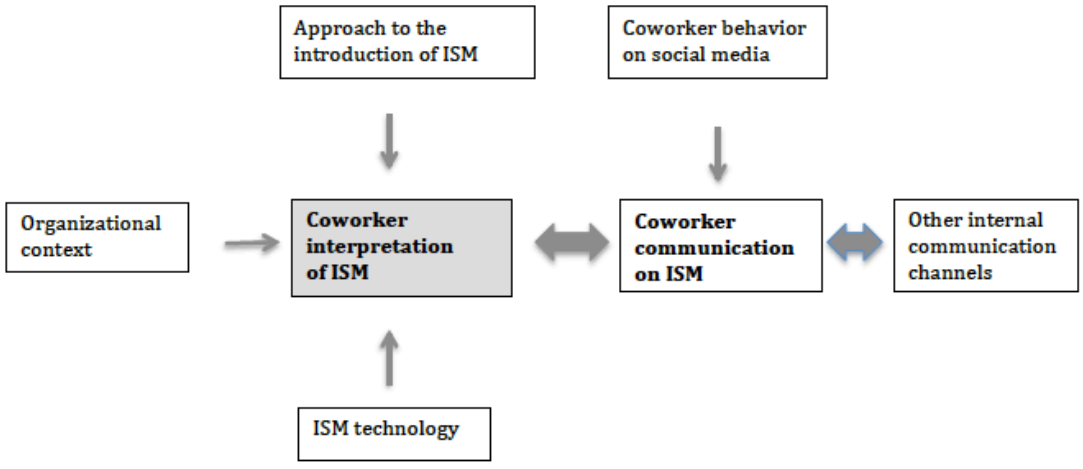
et al., 2012), and Welch (2012) suggests that coworker perceptions of technology, or as she terms it *media affect,* should be taken into account when looking at internal communication.

Approach to the introduction of ISM

The way ISM is introduced into an organization influence how coworkers perceive it (Leonardi, 2009) and how they will communicate on it. There are two competing approaches to introducing ISM into an organization: it can either be considered a functionalist IT project, or a change-management project. Turban et al. (2011) suggest that the process should be properly planned and managed so as to tackle coworker reluctance to participate or misuse the media, and that this process should involve governance, policy, employee education, and a phased introduction. Such an approach is rather functionalist with a focus on how to use ISM, in contrast to the change-management approach suggested by Chu (2012), who finds that the process should be a continuous, adaptive, and non-demanding engagement with colleagues and staff helping them to make sense of communication on ISM.

It appears from the various streams of research presented above that introducing ISM into an organization is a complex process. Figure 1 gives an overview of the dimensions influencing coworker communication on ISM used in this study.

Figure 1: Dimensions influencing coworker communication on ISM



Coworker interpretations of the phenomenon ISM are influenced by their perception of ISM technology, by the organizational context, and by the approach taken in introducing ISM. These interpretations, together with employee voice behavior, the range of user-types on social media, here termed coworker behavior on social media, and communication on other internal communication channels all influence how coworkers communicate on ISM.

Since coworker communication on ISM is a new field of research, we know little about the importance of the various dimensions in Figure 1 and why it can seemingly be challenging to get coworkers to communicate on ISM. However, the ISM coordinators are usually key players with respect to the introduction of ISM. They manage the process of introducing ISM, even if they often lack the formal power of being managers (Meske and Stieglitz, 2013). As insiders, they follow what takes place on ISM, and their perceptions of the communication can give insights into how coworkers communicate on ISM. Informed by the theoretical framework, this article endeavors to answer the following research questions:

RQ1. What are ISM coordinators' perceptions of coworker communication and behavior on ISM?
RQ2. What are ISM coordinators' perceptions of challenges with introducing ISM?
RQ3. What are ISM coordinators' perceptions of their role in relation to coworker communication on ISM?

Research design

When research on a phenomenon is at an early stage and little is known about it, it is appropriate to build theory from case study research (Eisenhardt, 1989). In spring 2014 an exploratory multiple case study (Yin, 2014) was therefore conducted, based on semi-structured interviews with ISM coordinators in ten organizations in Denmark. These coordinators were asked about their perceptions of challenges in introducing ISM and coworker communication on ISM. The article presents and documents this study.

Sample of ten organizations

Ten organizations (see Table 1) were selected using a snowballing sample strategy (Neergaard, 2007). The main criterion was that the organizations should have introduced ISM for the purpose of

Table 1. Organizational characteristics and use of internal social media

Respondent	Organization	Number of staff	Person responsible for ISM*	Years with ISM*	Technology used	Purpose of ISM*	Perception of the use of ISM*
1	Wholesaler	1200	Marketing director	½	IBM connections LM-net	More effective communication and organization	Could be improved
2	Engineering firm	500	Webmaster	4	SharePoint 2010 Discusssion forum	No clear stated purpose	Working well
3	Law firm	480	Intranet editor	2 ½	Yammer as part of the intranet	Knowledge-sharing	Working well
4	Retailer	7500	Project worker in HR	2	Own system developed on Jumla – open source	Knowledge-sharing and appreciative management	Working well
5	Public advisor Firm	50	Communication consultant	3–4	Yammer	Social glue	Working well
6	Agriculture Consultancy	500	Digital business developer	½ + 3	Sharepoint 2013	No clear purpose. Treated as an IT project	Could be improved
7	Financial company	32500	Deputy in digital communication	17	Sharepoint 2010 Can create news and comment on every thing	Support for values, creation of team spirit	Working well
8	Shipping firm	1350	Manager of technology	1	IBM Connections	Knowledge-sharing and idea generation about IT systems. No managed approach. Treated as an IT project. The only strategy: super-users have to use it.	Could be improved
9	Municipality	8000	Web coordinator	3	Yammer	No strategic approach. Seen as interesting new technology	Not working
10	Consulting engineering firm	2000	Web programmer manager and web consultant	9	Episerver adjusted to serve their purpose	Knowledge-sharing – very clear purpose	Working well

* Internal social media

generating internal communication. The organizations selected represented various sizes and industries in both private and public sector, so not only variations but also shared patterns could be documented: similarities are particularly interesting if they arise across great variation (Neergaard, 2007). The second criterion was that some communication should take place on their ISM at the time of the interview. Some companies that turned up in the snowballing sample had abandoned their ISM, either because coworkers were not communicating or because management had chosen to close them down. These companies, though interesting, were excluded from the study, because one of its aims was to explore communication on ISM. The organizations in the sample used a variety of platforms, and since the purpose of the study was to look at perceptions of coworker communication on ISM, it was not important to have organizations using the same type of platforms included in the sample. The term "ISM coordinators" was used to cover a range of people and job functions responsible for ISM (see Table 1); these were regarded as key informants (Neergaard, 2007) because of their central role in relation to the ISM.

Data collection

Ten semi-structured interviews with ISM coordinators, lasting one to two hours, were conducted. Semi-structured interviews were chosen in order to allow new themes to emerge during the interviews (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009). The interview guide was designed to answer the three research questions and consisted of three sets of questions. First, questions about the organization, the role of the ISM coordinator, and the introduction of ISM to the organization. Second, questions relating to three a priori constructs (Eisenhardt, 1989) developed from the literature: coworker communication on ISM, coworker communication behavior, and internal communication. The final section of the interview guide had six critical incident questions (Downs and Adrian, 2004) about communication on ISM, changes to the organization, and relations between coworkers. These were intended to get ISM coordinators to identify and talk about concrete experiences with communication on ISM and also to highlight successes and failures. In this way the questions allowed for the emergence of new perspectives not captured by the theory-driven questions. In connection with the interviews, the ISM coordinators showed examples of communication on ISM to the researcher to create an understanding of how coworkers communicated in their organization.

Data analysis

All interviews were transcribed and a thematic analysis was conducted using template analysis (King, 2012). The interviews were analyzed in three steps, using NVivo software. First, they were coded for general themes, including the three a priori constructs. New codes emerged during the process of coding, including introduction to ISM, visibility, and organizational culture, and in total, 24 general thematic codes were identified. The second step was to code the content within the most interesting of the 24 general thematic codes. To illustrate this second step in the coding process, the content in the general thematic code "communication" was coded to describe the various types of communication taking place on ISM. This second coding stage yielded 44 different types of communication such as "best practice," and "sharing articles" (see Table 2 for the full list). In the third step, the codes from the second step were clustered to produce descriptive categories of communication, in order to understand and define the types of communication occurring on ISM. This resulted in eight categories of communication codes (see 1 to 8 in the first column of Table 2). To ensure the trustworthiness of these eight categories, another researcher clustered the codes found by the first researcher, and the two were compared.

Table 2. Example of coding: the a priori construct of communication

Thematic codes	Description of codes	Examples of coded text from the interviews
Communication	**Coordinators' perception of coworker communication on internal social media**	
1. Knowledge-sharing	Sharing or asking for knowledge	
• Right information or person	Coworkers asking a question to find the right information or person	"And then we have the very practical approach. I am sitting with a problem. Do any of my colleagues know how I can..." (Iw 10)
• Best practices	Coworkers sharing experiences or ways of doing things that could be valuable to others	"You can talk about projects, ways you got new customers, questions about different professional issues. You could ask for help about how to transport an instrument from one end of the country to the other. It's actually used very frequently." (Iw 2)
• Sharing articles	Coworkers sharing articles they find valuable	"..or you can have read an article, then you take a picture of it and write: Look at this. Someone has screwed up." (Iw 5) "It could be a comment on an article. Grundfos shares knowledge on Yammer." (Iw 6)
• Asking for help with a task	Coworkers asking other coworkers to help with an assignment or a task	"In reality it can be anything from transports to X-ray measurements. Is there anyone who knows someone in Fredericia municipality who can do this? Very practical. Who can help?" (Iw 2)
• Second opinion	Coworkers sharing how they intend to solve a case or a problem and asking for comments	"Sometimes they are stuck and ask others what they have done in the situation. That's where it really works well. That really makes me happy. And shortly afterwards, two people reply." (iw 3)
• Practical information	Sharing written instructions and guidelines	"I also use it, if I have uploaded a new instruction to the intranet." (iw 9)
2. News	News about projects, the industry, the organization, products, departments, private or short news items	"Common one-way information." (iw 9)
3. Strategic use	Campaigning or self-branding	"There are some who comment all the time. Unconsciously creating a personal brand." (Iw 7)
4. Innovation	Suggestions for products or savings	"Home banking is generally a good topic. It is visible for the customers. What can we offer them? It is also important for the employees. We get a lot of opinions, feelings and support." (Iw 7)
5. Supporting social life	Announcing events, sharing victories, recognizing others' work, office jokes, competitions, pictures	"Someone writes. Everyone in our lovely shops is wished a Merry Christmas and good Christmas Sales." (iw 4)
6. Voice	Voicing opinions on work-related issues, the organization, ethical issues or political issues	"If there has been a debate about something, then we will talk about it for years afterwards. That's how unusual it is." (Iw 2)
7. Meta-communication	Conversations about how to use internal social media	"There has been a worry, when we asked about confidentiality. What are we writing, and how will it be used by others." (Iw 6)
8. Way of communicating	Describing the genre of communication	"It is the kind of talk you have over coffee." (Iw 5)

Iw = interview

Findings

The main findings of the study are presented in the following three sections in order to answer the three research questions.

Perceptions of coworker communication and behavior on ISM

Across the different organizations, ISM coordinators agreed that most of the communication taking place on their ISM concerned news, knowledge-sharing, and practical information (see Table 1). Respondents stressed that they perceived the communication to be primarily work-related. Only the public adviser firm (with 50 employees) seemed to experience coworkers writing about their private lives - which is probably because they all knew each other because the organization was so small. Otherwise, when leisure-related communication occurred at all, it was about social life in the organization.

> It's professional. 98 percent is professional. It has to do with their jobs. Technical questions or who can do it or who knows someone that can do it (Iw 2).

The analysis revealed that within the organizations the word 'social' was socially constructed by the coworkers as meaning something belonging to platforms such as Facebook. This affected the ISM coordinators, and led them to emphasize that communication on their ISM was primarily work-related rather than private. In the interviews, however, it became apparent that ISM were 'social', but in a work-related way. Several of the ISM coordinators used the metaphor "knowledge-sharing around the coffee machine" (Iw 5; 10) to describe communication on ISM.

In four out of ten organizations, the perception was that coworkers did not voice their opinions regardless whether ISM was working well or not. In the organizations where opinions were voiced, these were primarily concerned with work-related issues, commenting on products and services, as in the following quotation:

> Home banking is generally a good topic. It is visible for the customers. What can we offer them? It is also important for the employees. So we get a lot of opinions, feelings and support (Iw 7).

Coworkers voicing opinions on organizational issues were reported in only two organizations: the financial company and the consulting engineering firm. This could indicate that coworkers are more ready to communicate on less risky topics, like sharing knowledge. However, the ISM coordinators in those two organizations perceived that coworkers followed the discussions with great interest. Both organizations had had some form of ISM or discussion forum well established — for 9 or 17 years — and the organizational culture was perceived to play a decisive role for developing organizational voice.

The ISM coordinators perceived that coworker communication behavior on ISM resembled behavior on external social networks. A few coworkers contributed a lot, some did so from time to time, a majority were listeners (cf. Crawford, 2009), and some never used the ISM at all. The ratio of these user groups differed markedly from one organization to another. In the public adviser firm, the perception was that almost everyone would use ISM from time to time, while in the agriculture consultancy, the perception was that fewer than ten percent participated. The more active communicators had various ways of communicating. According to some of the ISM coordinators, these could be classified as socializers, debaters, and actives (cf. the typology of Brandtzaeg and Heim, 2011). Debaters were perceived to be less present on ISM than on external social media, however. This might imply that coworkers were more reluctant to voice their opinion internally than externally.

Most ISM coordinators agreed that the topic of the ISM conversations was decisive for coworker communication behavior. The coworkers had to know or feel something about the topic before they were prepared to comment. In the financial company, restructuring the organization got a lot of comments, while in the agriculture consultancy, it was the choice of Android or iPhone that was debated. The activity varied a lot, and it was not possible to know beforehand which topic would create debate, as one ISM coordinator explained:

> You can't say: this question is important for you or this is for you. One only knows when the question has been asked. It runs in waves. Some weeks nothing happens and then for several months it can be very hectic. It runs back and forth (Iw 10).

Moreover, in three of the organizations, ISM was used mainly as a one-way channel for the marketing, communication, or IT department. In those organizations, ISM was perceived as not working that well.

Challenges of introducing ISM

The analysis showed that four challenges were especially significant for ISM coordinators when introducing ISM. To understand these, a brief description of how ISM was working in the organizations, and the varying approaches to introducing it, are presented first.

In six organizations, ISM was perceived as working reasonably well. Three ISM coordinators were dissatisfied with the adoption of ISM, while one organization considered closing their ISM because so few people were using it. Differences in perceptions of well-functioning ISM were not related to size or industry. Factors that seemed to influence perceptions of ISM positively were: organizations with more than two years of experience with ISM; a clear objective in introducing ISM; a change-management approach to the introduction; and a supportive culture and management. There was one exception. The engineering firm had no clear objective for its ISM – the platform was just introduced as a new tool – but it still worked. In this organization the argument could be that communication on ISM made sense to coworkers and their way of working, and therefore that it worked despite the lack of an explicit purpose or change-management approach.

The approaches to introducing ISM differed markedly across the ten organizations. The retailer and the agriculture consultancy conducted coworker needs analysis before they developed their ISM. The wholesaler, the law firm, and the retailer had a detailed plan for launching, as part of which they were very communicative about the existence of ISM before, during, and after the implementation. The wholesaler, the shipping firm, and the consulting engineering firm offered introduction courses, and the law firm and the consulting engineering firm provided practical guides on how to use the system. However, none of these initiatives were in themselves decisive for the good functioning of ISM. More crucial was whether the introduction of ISM was treated as a functionalist IT project or a change-management project. When it was considered a change-management project, the ISM coordinator facilitated the process and interacted with coworkers' sense-making of the purpose of communication on ISM.

The first challenge for the organizations which had introduced ISM within the last five years was the word 'social,' which was perceived as an initial barrier to getting coworkers and organization alike to accept the media. The meaning coworkers assigned to ISM was that it was a means for sharing personal news and cake recipes, and therefore considered it a waste of time in a work context. This was linked to perceptions of time as scarce and of information overload, and that knowledge-sharing and helping each other were not considered as work. The consulting engineering firm found that coworkers first made sense of ISM when they themselves experienced the benefit of getting an answer by using ISM:

> It is a development that takes many years. You have to see the light. If you just get a successful experience. If you have a question and you get an answer within three minutes. Then it works, and you will tell your colleagues, and then you make them use it (Iw 10).

The ISM coordinators all agreed that a second challenge was to make coworkers understand the informal nature of the communication arena, and that silly questions and imperfection were okay. They perceived that self-censorship would prevent coworkers communicating. Coworkers would fear the consequences of showing their ignorance, of being "on stage," of standing out, or of not having interesting knowledge to share:

> It depends on the filter of the individual person. Some might wonder about the consequences. It might be easy to write something and get a comment. But in practice there is still a mental barrier that makes you consider it (Iw 4).

Third, the ISM coordinators agreed that the biggest challenge was to make ISM a natural part of everyday routines. Coworkers tended to continue working as they were used to (cf. Trimi and Galanxhi, 2014), and communication on ISM was perceived as not crucial to the organizations. Both organization and coworkers were reluctant to embrace a new way of working. The only exception to this was the public adviser firm, where ISM had been their mode of communicating almost since the organization was established in 2007.

Finally, ISM coordinators mentioned top management not communicating on ISM as a challenge. Nine of the ISM coordinators indicated that top management in their organization had supported introducing ISM. Some of the top managers had contributed at the beginning, to encourage everyone to participate, and this was perceived as a symbolic and very important presence. A few continued to make a contribution now and then, to underline that it was okay to spend time helping each other, but only in the public adviser firm and the financial company did top managers use ISM as an integrated part of their communication. In other words, the top managers supported ISM in words but not in action, and this lack of top-management participation was perceived as problematic, since the ISM coordinators saw managers as having to lead the way.

The role of the ISM coordinator

In the six organizations with a reasonably well-functioning ISM, the ISM coordinator had played an active role, especially in the first year. As one ISM coordinator explained:

> Someone has to lead it, if it has to become part of the fabric of everyday life (Iw 5).

The active ISM coordinators reported contributing content to start conversations and give coworkers an experience of activity on ISM, and this role was considered important because it was a way of enhancing the level of activity as part of a "positive or negative spiral" (Iw 6). The active ISM coordinators observed communication on ISM and nudged coworkers to answer specific questions within their field, so that questions asked were not left unanswered. This was an ongoing task for the coordinators, even when ISM had been part of internal communication for several years (Iw 7); all the ISM coordinators reported that getting coworkers to communicate was a constant challenge. The consulting engineering company was aware of the need for a facilitator, and they appointed community leaders to take care of specific topics on ISM. Each year their efforts were measured as part of their contract (Iw 10).

Discussion

The interviews with ISM coordinators in ten very different organizations generated new insights into the challenges associated with introducing ISM in organizations. The following two sections discuss

the challenges associated with getting coworkers to communicate on ISM, and the role of the ISM coordinator in the introduction of ISM.

Challenges with getting coworkers to communicate on ISM

It became evident in the study that a key challenge for the ISM coordinators was getting coworkers to communicate on ISM, regardless of whether the ISM were reasonably well-functioning or not. Two issues here are of particular interest: the communication content, and organizational constraints.

First, although the ISM coordinators saw ISM as creating a communication arena allowing for the emergence of work-related, horizontal, and multidirectional communication between coworkers — considered as "knowledge-sharing around the coffee machine"— the ISM coordinators were aware that coworkers might not share this perception. Coworkers perceived that ISM was a place for unimportant, informel communication and not work-related communication: they associated the word 'social' with swapping cake recipes on Facebook. In this sense, the social technology was perceived as having an agency (Cooren et al., 2012). Coworkers might be social in their private lives on external social media, but it seemed they were not prepared to import this kind of behavior into the organization or to relate it to the realm of work. Group processes had helped to construct this perception among coworkers (Fulk, 1993), and led them to interact with ISM differently than anticipated by the coordinators. In other words, 'social' technology had a negative affect (Welch, 2012); and once a perception of a new technology has been formed, it is hard to change (Orlikowski, 1992). The ISM coordinators thus talked about hitting a negative or a positive spiral of communication on ISM in the introduction phase.

A second issue was related to organizational constraints. The findings indicated that debaters (cf. Brandtzaeg and Heim, 2011) were less present on ISM than on external social media, that discussions of organizational issues were rare, and that self-censorship was a major issue. This may reflect that coworkers have more at stake (Frandsen and Johansen, 2011) communicating on ISM than on external social media. They could risk their job or violate unwritten rules about how to behave in the organization. Organizational constraints such as culture (Baptista and Galliers, 2012) or psychological safety (Cao et al., 2012; Morrison, 2011) may thus influence the desire to voice an opinion in an organizational context. This study found that discussions of organizational issues on ISM were rare and took place in only two organizations, and this may be related to voice and voicing:

Voicing opinions on organizational issues is perceived as more risky than other types of voice (Morrison and Milliken, 2003), and organizations have to deliberately welcome open debate and comments if participants are to feel safe (Batista and Galliers, 2012). This means that an open organizational communication culture may pave the way for discussions about organizational issues to develop over time. The two organizations that did experience discussions on organizational issues had been using ISM for some years, and this could indicate that it takes time to develop critical and multidirectional communication. In the same two organizations, coworkers were perceived as following the discussions with great interest. Thus discussions about organizational issues could be a way of increasing readership and participation.

An indication in support of this was the three organizations that used ISM mainly as a one-way channel for the communication or the IT department, their ISM did not work that well. In order to be perceived as a beneficial and additional platform for internal communication, therefore, it seems that ISM have to be based upon work-related and multidirectional communication, and also that the organizational context must support a 'safe' communication climate. In this way, not only coworker interpretations, but also management views of ISM become decisive as to whether or not coworkers will communicate on ISM.

The role of the ISM coordinator

In the organizations in which ISM did not work that well, ISM was implemented as a functionalistic IT project (cf. Turban et al., 2011) and no one took on the role of community facilitator. In these cases the ISM coordinators seem to have taken it for granted that communication on ISM would make sense to coworkers and that top managers would or should lead the way. By contrast, in the organizations where ISM was perceived to work reasonably well, the ISM coordinator had played an important role as facilitator and sense-giver. This is a bit of a paradox. On the one hand, participatory processes cannot (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010), perhaps should not, be controlled. On the other hand, the study shows that in an organizational context coworker communication on ISM should not be left alone, because coworkers' initial perceptions of ISM as "a waste of time" can come to dominate sense-making processes. Leadership is a process that unfolds between organizational members (Simonsson, 2011), and if an ISM coordinator or a manager does not take the lead in the sense-making process, one or more coworkers will. This is a further indication that coworkers need to understand *how* and *why* they are to communicate on ISM (Denyer et al., 2011), and that a continuous, adaptive, and non-

demanding engagement with colleagues and staff (Chu, 2012) seems like an appropriate approach when introducing ISM.

The study indicated that ISM coordinators' perceptions of their own role is decisive in getting coworkers to communicate on ISM. Are they just implementing new software, or are they helping coworkers change their way of working and understanding the organization? If they insist on the first, communication on ISM is likely to fail. If they are aware of their role as community facilitators in a change-management process, they are more likely to succeed. From the interviews it became apparent that the first year was crucial to the future life of ISM. This was consistent with studies by Orlikowski (1992) and Denyer et al. (2011), which showed that it takes at least a year to introduce new technology. However, even a very competent and dedicated ISM coordinator might not succeed. ISM coordinators often lack the formal power to lead a change-management process (Meske and Stieglitz, 2013), and coworker interpretations of ISM are influenced by a multiplicity of aspects, as shown in Figure 1.

Practical implications

For organizations wishing to introduce or re-introduce ISM, the study has at least three implications.

On the organizational level, ISM cannot solve organizational climate problems. Organizations with a closed organizational climate (Baptista and Galliers, 2012) cannot expect constructive discussions on ISM. Fear and lack of trust (Morrison, 2011) will prevent coworkers from communicating.

With regard to introducing ISM, the ISM coordinator can play a central role as community facilitator, sense-giver, and change-management agent, especially in the first year of introduction. Introducing ISM is not just a matter of implementing ISM, telling coworkers how to use ISM. They also have to help coworkers understand why they should use it and what they could communicate about. The ISM coordinators thus have to see themselves as change agents, and they are likely to need some formal power to put weight behind their words.

Finally, management has to genuinely wish to involve coworkers. Stohl and Cheney (2001) have pointed out the paradoxical nature of participation within organizational communication, whereby management or the organization explicitly encourages coworkers to participate, but at the same time the invitation is formulated in a way that actually limits or discourages participation. As an example

coworkers could be free to speak their mind as long as they would not say anything critical about the organization. This seemed to be the case in at least two of the organizations in the study. So management's willingness to listen to coworkers has to be genuine - and has to be supported by action, not just words. Psychological safety (Morrison, 2011) is important to coworkers: if managers are communicating on ISM, this can send a signal that the communication is relevant and can make coworkers feel that they are seen and heard. However, future research is still required to address how managers can support and benefit from coworker communication on ISM without taking the lead.

Limitations

This study was based on the perceptions of ISM coordinators in ten organizations. However, ISM coordinators may report ISM outcomes in a somewhat positive light and even exaggerate their own role, as their job and internal legitimacy depends on it. Further research is required to explore what actually happens on ISM, including coworkers' own perceptions of their communications on ISM, as well as their actual communication.

The organizations in the study were selected through a snowballing sample. It is likely that the organizations that turned up in the sample were those organizations most interested in promoting themselves as having ISM making ISM coordinators more positive about the role of ISM in the rganization. The study has identified patterns across ten different types of organization, across different industries and organization sizes. Further research may yet explore whether and how the use and interpretation of ISM differs in various industries, and whether the size of the organization matters.

Conclusion

This study provides insights into the challenges associated with introducing ISM into organizations, as perceived by ISM coordinators. The way in which coworkers interpret the use and purpose of ISM is decisive for whether they will communicate on ISM or not. The study also found that the ISM coordinators' role in the introduction process can make a difference. The ISM coordinator can play a key role as facilitator and sense-giver, as the introduction of ISM mostly requires a change-management process. However, even if an ISM coordinator is able to convince coworkers of the benefits of communication on ISM, differences between user-types on social media, as well as coworker self-censorship, can still hold back coworkers from communicating. In other words,

coworkers are not likely to start communicating on ISM by themselves; ISM coordinators and organizations should be prepared to tackle challenges as they introduce ISM.

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Chapter 10

”I think I commented at some point, where I thought it is nice to contribute. The recognition you get. It might well be that no one write thank you. But there is some kind of satisfaction when you feel you have done something and some one has seen it.”

Cashier (JB, Iw 11)

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Constructing Organizational Identity on Internal Social Media: A Case Study of Coworker Communication in Jyske Bank

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Abstract

This study explored how coworkers use internal social media (ISM) to contribute to the construction of organizational identity. The study analyzed 3 months of interactions among coworkers at a large Danish bank on ISM. In addition, 17 coworkers were interviewed to provide additional understanding about the online interactions. The study found that these coworkers constructed organizational identity when they challenge, negotiate, and discuss organizational issues on ISM. They use phrases from vision and mission statements to support their arguments and to push the understanding of organizational identity so that it is in line with their perceptions of what the bank really is or should be. Some of these discussions on ISM develop into organizational stories, which are shared and discussed in informal, in-person conversations among coworkers. The stories become narratives, which contribute to the organizational identity, help coworkers make sense of the organization, and help them identify with the organization.

Keywords

internal social media, organizational identity, internal communication, coworker, organizational identification, social intranet

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Introduction

Internal social media (ISM) provide coworkers with a communication platform for sharing viewpoints and knowledge across departments and geographical distances. Coworkers become visible to the whole organization when their pictures and names appear next to their comments and likes, and this visibility alters social relations and interactions (Leonardi, Huysman, & Steinfield, 2013). So far, research has highlighted that communication on ISM leads to improved workplace productivity (Bennett, Owers, Pitt, & Tucker, 2010), new forms of organizational collaboration (Valentini, Andersen, & Agerdal-Hjermind, 2013), knowledge sharing (Vuori & Okkonen, 2012), and engagement (Koch, Gonzalez, & Leidner 2012, Parry & Solidoro, 2012). As several scholars have concluded, little research has looked at what coworkers actually communicate about on ISM, and how communication on ISM contributes to the construction of organizational identity (El Ouirdi, El Ouirdi, Segers, & Henderickx, 2015; Heide & Simonsson, 2011; Koch, Gonzalez, & Leidner 2012; Treem & Leonardi, 2012; Welch, 2012).

Scholars argue that ISM provide a communication arena (Leonardi et al., 2013; Parry & Solidoro, 2013) in which any coworker can start a conversation and comment on other conversations (Beers Fägersten, 2015). This environment creates an opportunity for multivocal communication, where voices act and communicate to, with, against, past, and about each other (Frandsen & Johansen, 2010; Johansen & Frandsen, 2007). This is especially interesting seen from a communicative constitution of organizations perspective, which views organizations as constituted in the conversations of organizational members (Putnam, 2013). Coworker conversations on ISM are therefore proposed to construct organizational identity.

The concept of coworker is used by the author to draw attention to horizontal communication and to indicate that in postbureaucratic organizations, coworkers are no longer viewed as passive, subordinate employees but as active communicators who can influence and change the organization. Their communication roles "are broader and more consequential than the roles they have traditionally been given" (Heide & Simonsson, 2011, p. 202).

The article presents the findings of a case study of coworker communication in ISM in Jyske Bank, the third biggest bank in Denmark. The research was conducted from 2014 to 2015 with the aim of understanding how coworkers construct organizational identity on ISM and to explore the implications for the organization.

Theoretical Background

Organizational identity has received a lot of scholarly attention in recent years (Gioia, Patvardhan, Hamilton, & Corley, 2013; He & Brown, 2013). This section sketches out theories that explain how and why coworker communication can contribute to the construction of organizational identity. The review will address literature about organizational identity, sensemaking, and organizational identification.

Identity is a way for individuals and organizations to define themselves in relation to others (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Hogg & Reid, 2006). Literature on organizational identity views it as either stable or dynamic (Cheney et al., 2014; Christensen & Cheney, 2000; T. S. Johansen, 2010). The static approach sees organizational identity (who we are as an organization) as that which is *central, distinctive*, and *enduring* about an organization (Albert & Whetten, 1985). It implies an understanding of organizational identity as a stable entity, which can be described, planned, and managed. The dynamic approach revolves around the same three characteristics but defines organizational identity as "what organizational members believe to be its central, enduring, and distinctive character" (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991, p. 520). This approach depicts organizational identity as "less stable and more malleable, less the product of senior executives' decisions and more open to political influence at different levels, and less clearly and more ambiguous" (He & Brown, 2013, p. 8). In this social constructivist perspective, organizational identity is believed to be continually under construction. Coupland and Brown (2004) thus describe "organizational identities as discursive achievements, and stakeholders in organizations as rhetors (persuaders) engaged in ongoing identity-centered debates" (p. 1325). However, Gioia and Patvardhan (2012) argue that the distinction between static and dynamic is somehow artificial, and that organizational identity "can be construed both as some sort of entity and some sort of process" (p. 53).

Gioia et al. (2013) found that a change in organizational identity can be initiated by different situations such as a discrepancy in the present organizational identity, or a gap between who we are and who we want to be. They found that unplanned changes in organizational identity have not received much scholarly attention. This is likely because literature about organizational identity mainly takes a managerial approach and regards organizational identity as something that can be managed (Scott & Lane, 2000). In other words, the role of coworkers in the construction of organizational identity has remained an underresearched field. Many stakeholders constantly influence organizational identity (Scott & Lane, 2000), and coworkers are likely to play a role as well when organizational identity is understood as "contested and negotiated through iterative interactions" (Scott & Lane, 2000, p. 44). This communicative process, where organizational identity is constructed, is linked to the way coworkers in an organization develop and negotiate organizational norms and unwritten rules (Jabs, 2005). Discussing *who we are* as an organization and *how we should act* as members of this organization are closely related, and ISM introduce a new communication arena for negotiating rules, norms, and organizational identity.

To shed light on the process of constructing organizational identity, Scott and Lane (2000) built a model in which management is seen as holding the power to define organizational identity, while other stakeholders can provide feedback. This can create misalignment between coworkers and managers because, as Corley (2004) found, top-level managers are concerned with strategy and constant changes, while the lower level employees are more interested in behavior, organizational culture, and a stable identity.

The perception of organizational identity being negotiated between organizational members makes it relevant to adopt a sensemaking perspective (Weick, 1995). In this context, "sensemaking refers to processes of meaning construction whereby people interpret events and issues within and outside of their organizations that are somehow surprising, complex and confusing to them" (Cornelissen, 2012, p. 118). This definition shows that sensemaking processes are triggered when the organization changes, when the organizational identity is threatened, and when coworkers "simply become uncertain about what the organizational identity is" (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014, p. 75). In this way, sensemaking processes are not only triggered when unusual situations occur but also when coworkers experience ambiguity and uncertainty in everyday work processes and situations. Sensemaking then becomes a social process whereby coworkers communicate with each other to arrive at a shared understanding of a situation (Weick, 1995).

Coworkers' need to make sense of organizational identity is rooted in a basic need to belong to and to identify with the organization (Cheney et al., 2014). The ongoing construction of organizational identity creates patterns of shared meaning and collective sensemaking. This provides coworkers with a sense of belonging and a common orientation (Cornelissen, 2012), also known as organizational identification (Cheney et al., 2014). Organizational identification has been found to influence coworkers' creativity and their willingness to improve the organization and their way of working (He & Brown, 2013). Coworkers are more likely to identify with attractive organizations than with less attractive organizations since it enhances a positive self-image (He & Brown, 2013). Coworkers who identify strongly with their organizations are therefore more likely to engage in conversations to improve the perception of organizational identity than coworkers working in organizations perceived as less attractive.

Beers Fägersten (2015) conducted one of the few studies about coworker communication on ISM in relation to organizational identity. She analyzed an intranet discussion among coworkers about whether a Swedish web consultancy should have a tobacco company as a customer when the organization at the same time has antismoking organizations as their customers. The topic creates a heated debate among coworkers about what the identity of the organization is and what it should be. The study shows how the coworkers discuss organizational identity, but there is no explicit reflection on coworker contribution to the construction of organizational identity. The discussion is seen as a threat to the organization, and the conclusion is that social responsibility and moral accountability of the organization are of great importance to the coworkers. ISM give the coworkers an enhanced "opportunity to influence corporate decisions that could reflect on their own, shared, professional identities" (Beers Fägersten, 2015, p. 156).

So the question remains whether coworker communication on ISM about organizational identity is an exceptional situation or part of a constant self-reflection about who we are as an organization (Gioia et al., 2013) in an ongoing, unending process (Coupland & Brown, 2004). In other words, we still know very little about coworker communication on ISM and how the communication contributes to the construction of

organizational identity. The aim of this article is to address these issues with the following research questions:

Research Question 1: What are coworkers talking about on ISM?
Research Question 2: To what extent and how do coworkers use ISM to contribute to the construction of organizational identity?
Research Question 3: What are coworkers' perceptions of the implications of having discussions about organizational identity on ISM?

Research Design

A case study (Yin, 2014) was conducted to understand how communication on ISM contributes to the construction of organizational identity. Since there is scant research in this area, it is appropriate to build theory from case studies (Eisenhardt, 1989). A single case study can richly describe the existence of a phenomenon (Siggelkow, 2007) and "elevates a view of life in its complexity" (Thomas, 2010, p. ix).

Selection of the Case

The Danish bank, Jyske Bank, has 4,000 employees in 110 locations. The bank was selected as a critical case (Flyvbjerg, 2006) because the management in the organization has promoted a culture of open communication for many years. Coworkers are known for voicing opinions on both work-related and organizational matters in the various discussion forums. The organization has received a digital communication award for the best internal communication in Europe in 2014 ("Digital Communication Awards Winner List 2014," 2014; Larsen, 2014) and for the best social media intranet in Europe in 2015 ("Digital Communication Awards Winner List 2015," 2015; Ingemann, 2015).

Jyske Bank introduced a new intranet technology with social media features in spring 2014 and named the communication platform *JB United*. When coworkers start their computers, JB United automatically opens as their daily gateway to work. The front page appears with six sections: (a) top corporate news presented with four news items; (b) a discussion forum named *The Word is Free* (*Ordet er frit*), where the headlines of the three last discussions are visible; (c) a television channel called *Good Morning Jyske Bank* with an 8-minute issue of morning news; (d) webnews (*netnyheder*) with the headlines of the last three news items drawing on more than 100 different news channels, which coworkers can choose to follow or not; (e) news from the press; and (f) *JyskeTube*, a video channel where coworkers can upload videos. One of the top news items is likely to be a link to the latest edition of the monthly television program, *Inside*, which has replaced the employer magazine. All the coworkers can start a discussion, comment, or like the news items and discussions. When they do so, their pictures, names, job positions, and locations appear to everyone in the organization.

Data Collection

The study was conducted in two steps based on a netnographic approach (Kozinets, 2002, 2010): (a) a content analysis of coworker communication on ISM for 3 months from September to November 2014 and (b) semistructured interviews with 17 coworkers in December 2014 and January 2015 about their communication on ISM.

The content analysis was conducted to explore what coworkers talked about and to identify different kinds of coworker communication behavior. The coworkers were interviewed to shed light on the findings in the content analysis and to explore their perceptions of communication on ISM. The two steps are described in more detail in the following two sections.

Netnographic Study of Forum Discussions. During the 3 months from September to November 2014, a netnographic study (Kozinets, 2002, 2010) of the communication on ISM was conducted. Netnography is an ethnographic method applied to the study of online communities to understand and analyze online conversations and networks. Since communication on ISM happens online, it is appropriate to use a netnographic approach to study communication on ISM. Netnography is naturalistic and unobtrusive (Kozinets, 2010), meaning that the presence of the researcher does not affect the data.

A contact person at the bank (referred to in this article as the *ISM coordinator*) downloaded screenshots of conversations on ISM during the selected period. The researcher paid a visit to the organization and met with the ISM coordinator once per month for 3 months to examine communication during the last month and to discuss which communication to include in the study. After the first month, a sequence analysis (Eisenhardt, 1989) was made to analyze the content to that point and to start identifying patterns. This process was repeated after 2 months and 3 months.

Five channels on JB United were initially chosen (see Table 1) because they had the most activity in terms of posts, comments, and likes from coworkers. Screenshots of the initial posts, comments to the posts, and likes were collected from the five channels. The screenshots were used to explore what the coworkers communicated about, who communicated with whom, and how conversations developed. The 357 posts contained a lot of variety. Relatively few posts created a lot of activity, while most posts got no or only a few comments or likes.

Semistructured Interviews With Coworkers. After the 3 months of netnographic research, 17 coworkers were interviewed to explore their perceptions of the communication on ISM. The coworkers were purposively selected (Neergaard, 2007) to represent a variety of communication behaviors and types of coworkers. The screenshots were first analyzed to identify coworkers' communicative behaviors based on Brandtzaeg and Heim's (2011) five distinct user types found in closed social networks: sporadics, lurkers, socializers, debaters, and actives. In addition to identifying each of these social network user types, other parameters, such as job position and geographical location, were used to purposively select which coworkers to interview. Convenience was applied when two of

Table 1. Posts, Comments, and Likes on JB United, September to November 2014.

ISM channel	Description	Posts	Comments	Likes	Period
The Word is Free	Discussion forum	57	397	2,580	3 Months
Private	News for coworkers working with private customers	120	80	914	3 Months
Business	News for coworkers working with business customers	49	20	316	2 Months
United	News for all coworkers	110	101	2,010	3 Months
JyskeTube	Coworkers own videos	21	25	464	3 Months
Total		*357*	*623*	*6,284*	

Note. ISM = internal social media.

the coworkers who were initially selected could not participate in the interviews. As a result, two coworkers with similar profiles were asked to participate in the interviews. The interviews were semistructured and lasted from 1 to 1½ hours each. The interview guide consisted of 11 main questions and a total of 47 possible questions. After 17 interviews, a point of saturation (Eisenhardt, 1989) was reached in the variety of answers.

Ethical Considerations

Conducting case studies and netnographic research involve reflections about how to collect data without harming anyone (Kozinets, 2002, 2010; Thomas, 2010). First, a contract of confidentiality between the researcher and the bank was signed, which allowed the organization to see all the discussions being published to ensure that no coworkers or the organization were harmed. Second, all the coworkers in the content analysis interviewed were anonymized. Third, the interviewed coworkers were asked to approve the quotations included in this article. The bank requested removing the gender of the coworkers, the names of competitors, and the names of products. One discussion was removed because of confidentiality issues. The coworkers did not see a need to remove their quotations.

Analyzing the Data

A content analysis inspired by grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), a stage-by-stage process (Burnard, 1991) involving thematic coding (King, 2012), was conducted. All the screenshots were read and coded to describe the different types of posts. To ensure the validity of the codes, the ISM coordinator went through the codes and helped discuss them. This resulted in 23 different codes, which were grouped into seven categories.

The second step was to analyze all the comments to the posts. Forty discussions appeared to be especially significant as they had several if not many comments and developed around crucial themes for the organization, such as how to attract young

customers, how to be a customer-oriented bank, and how to work fast with slow IT systems. The 40 significant discussions were analyzed in two ways. First, the development of the discussions were analyzed and patterns identified in terms of who communicated with what kind of comment and what was the reaction to the different types of comments. Second, the 40 significant discussions were analyzed and categorized into nine different themes. The nine themes were then reduced to four categories/themes, which seemed to represent four different levels of discussion. The four themes were the following:

1. *Customers and products*: Sharing knowledge, generating ideas, finding solutions to challenges, and other task-related communication.
2. *Working conditions*: Discussing IT systems, work routines, and employer benefits.
3. *Organizational issues*: Discussing organizational issues and organizational identity.
4. *ISM-specific issues*: Metacommunication about how to communicate on ISM.

Some of the discussions would start in one category and end in another as the discussions developed. Generally, a discussion started with a concrete problem that developed into an organizational issue. About 22 of the discussions could be perceived as discussing organizational identity, thus making the category the biggest one. These discussions were further analyzed to understand the content of the discussions and how they evolved.

After the analysis of the discussions, the 17 coworkers were interviewed. The interviews were transcribed, reviewed several times, and analyzed with a stage-by-stage process (Burnard, 1991) involving thematic coding (King, 2012). These interviews helped search for patterns and themes that could shed light on the findings from the content analysis of discussions.

Findings

The findings in the study are presented in four sections. The first section presents how discussions on JB United typically developed. The second section goes more into detail with the four categories of discussions. The third section illustrates how interactions between coworkers lead to the construction and negotiation of organizational identity. The last section presents coworkers' perception of discussions on JB United, especially those leading to discussions about organizational identity.

Development of the 40 Significant Discussions

The 40 significant communication situations analyzed in the study occurred and developed in two ways. Either an article authored by a specialist from the main office prompted a comment by a coworker or a coworker wrote a post in the discussion

forum, which generated support from one or several coworkers. A coworker described the process of commenting in the discussion forum in the following way:

> I do not know, who I should direct my frustration to, but now I try to describe it in a nice, decent and sober tone of voice. Then what happens? Then eights others say: I feel the same way. Then the message starts gaining weight. (Interview 8)

The discussions started by coworkers in the branches, who work closely with the customers, were perceived by the coworkers to be the most significant ones (Interviews 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 12, 14). In this way, the interviewed coworkers underlined a perception of ISM as a coworker communication arena.

The Topics Coworkers Communicated About

The 40 significant communication situations that occurred in the 3 months of observation were divided into four different categories of discussions.

The customer and product-related themes category consisted of 10 discussions with proposals like the following:

- It should be possible for customers to do a specific task in the bank's online banking service.
- It could be an advantage to call customers instead of writing letters to them when trying to sell a specific product.
- How a branch can support a campaign running in the media.

Coworkers discussed the suggestions and often a specialist, responsible for the product or service, responded by thanking coworkers for their suggestions or explaining why the ideas could not be applied or implemented.

The working conditions themes category consisted of eight discussions revolving around IT systems or work procedures. These had the most negative tone of voice. These contributions included questions such as the following:

- Why is it so difficult to book a meeting room?
- How can we be more efficient when our IT systems are so slow?
- Why do we need to register so much information?
- How can you discuss your pension when it is almost impossible to get an appointment with a pension advisor?

The organizational themes category was the biggest with 22 relatively different contributions. The discussions touched upon organizational issues and they challenged the organizational identity of the bank by discussing how the bank should act in society, how the bank should compete with other banks, and whether the bank could live up to the image used in marketing campaigns and materials. Six examples of these discussions are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Examples of Discussions About Organizational Identity.

Headline of the post [*named by the author of the post*]	Summary of the discussion	Examples of comments in the discussion
CSR-innovation culture	What causes should Jyske Bank support?	"I can clearly see a match between being a bank and supporting . . . " "From my point of view Jyske Bank has always been a responsible player in society." "I hope that in Jyske Bank, we can be more concrete about, what do we or do we not wish to do in terms of CSR."
JB product versus X product - sales inspiration	How should Jyske Bank act in the market?	"The nice guy in class should give some slaps instead of bending the head."
Frustration about 18:27 concept[a]	How should Jyske Bank compete - with prices or by developing relations with customers?	" . . . I just have to say that Jyske Bank is REALLY way behind on the concept for young people. We have nothing to offer, that cannot be matched by the other banks . . . " "If the concept is not improved we will lose customers in the long run." "We have chosen a strategy focusing more on the relation than the price." "The best we can give our customers is time."
Fed up with waiting at Y Bank	A critique of waiting times when phoning to another bank leads to self-criticism about whether it is the same in Jyske Bank.	"We have to be careful not to become like the blue ones in this field. There are several smaller banks with a direct telephone line to the branch. A good telephone culture is important, and it becomes even more important with the new telephone system."
Is the "name"[b] doing a good job?	Discussing a new campaign for a banking product, which leads to a discussion about how the product is, compared with the product of the competitor.	"I think we become too much the younger brother, when we try to insult X-product instead of finding out why their product is perceived as being better designed than ours." "If we focus too much on slating X-product and pinpointing the shortcomings of that product, then I honestly think it resembles a bad election campaign. I think, we are better than that!"
Consciously satisfied employees	Discussing whether Jyske Bank should survey employees' satisfaction.	"This is an obvious opportunity to make Jyske Bank a little bit better bank." "Jyske Bank value employer satisfaction highly."

Note. CSR = corporate social responsibility; JB = Jyske Bank.
[a]18:27 is an abbreviation for customers between 18 and 28.
[b]Name of a Danish news presenter used in a campaign for a product.

Some discussions ended when a specialist within a certain product area or a middle manager took one of two actions: justifying the bank's behavior or thanking employees for their input, which would be taken into consideration. Other discussions got the attention of top managers and the topics were brought up in the monthly internal TV program *Inside*. One discussion started by a coworker about whether to measure employer satisfaction was picked up by a senior manager, who wrote a blog post about the topic. These discussions got many likes and were mentioned and remembered by the interviewed coworkers. A coworker, who was the manager of a small branch, even pointed out, "The good topics, which create debates, are the self-critical ones, which are critical to our own organization and ways of doing things" (Interview 8).

The last category with *ISM-specific themes* was represented by three discussions, which raised issues about the content and language in the discussions. The first one was a coworker advertising a holiday house for rent in the discussion forum, which quickly got a comment that it should be advertised in another channel, "Green and for Free," where coworkers could advertise things for sale. The second comment pointed out that a coworker should not disclaim a certain brew of beer since the brewery might be one of the bank's customers. The coworker quickly posted an apologetic comment. The third discussion revolved around whether spelling and grammar should be 100% correct or whether "The Word is Free" meant that any writing was acceptable. According to the interviews with the 17 coworkers, these kinds of discussions had been much more frequent initially but had decreased as coworkers gained more experience with the platform. Prior to the period of netnographic observations, the coworkers referred to the presence of a "language and order police": Coworkers who commented on topics being discussed as well as spelling mistakes to the point where others in the discussion forum called them the police. Self-regulative behavior seemed to have developed over time.

The Construction of Organizational Identity on JB United

Discussions about organizational identity were typically initiated by a discussion of a concrete issue or challenge, and then it developed into a discussion of organizational identity. In order to understand how coworkers contribute to the construction of organizational identity, two examples are presented and analyzed.

The first discussion (see Table 3) has four comments and 15 likes. Only the three first comments are included since the last comment returns to the concrete issue addressed. The photos, names, and locations have been anonymized, but the titles are maintained. The bank has many managers at all levels, and the analysis of the discussions showed that the managers from the branches and the specialists in the head office participated like other coworkers and were most of the time perceived as coworkers and not as managers.

In the first post, a challenge with the telephone system is presented. The author quotes a possible new customer who compared Jyske Bank with the main competitor. The author talks about "our telephone system," which activates a collective in-group identity (Brewer & Gardner, 1996). The first comment reflects on the comparison and

Table 3. Discussion About the Telephone System.

"You remind me of X-Bank!!"	Author
"Statement from a possible new customer today, who for two days had tried to contact the undersigned . . . " "Our telephone system is a huge problem!"	 Name Manager International Business Branch A
"That was a very nasty comparison. Something has to be done about it . . . " It should not sound like that when you are a customer in 'Denmark's most customer-oriented bank'."	 Name Bank advisor—Private customers Branch B
"Ouch!"	 Name Journalist Jyskebank.tv
"On the other hand the door is not closed between 5 and 6 pm on Thursdays. So the two-three customers who come in this period can indeed feel that we are 'Denmark's most customer-oriented bank';-)"	 Name Check-out assistant Branch C
"Our telephone system has great priority - it has to work for both our customers and employees." [*This is followed by a longer text where the issue of the telephone system is addressed.*]	 Name Managing director Home markets

perceives it as a "nasty comparison." By doing that, the bank advisor interprets it as an insult, implying that Jyske Bank is a much better bank than the other bank. A "them and us" distinction is activated, and it relates to a perception shared by coworkers in the bank, unifying them as known from theories about social identity theory by distinguishing between in-group and out-group (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Brewer & Gardner, 1996). Then, the coworker holds it up against the vision of the bank to be "Denmark's most customer-oriented bank." This slogan, which has been communicated to both internal and external stakeholders, is used by the bank advisor to point out the misalignment between what the bank says and what the customers experience. In other words, the bank advisor activates a need to make sense of how the bank can be a customer-oriented bank when it does not answer the phone. The comment and the concern is supported by an "ouch" from a journalist at Jyskebank.tv. A check-out assistant from one of the branches then tries to rebuild the organizational identity as "Denmark's

most customer-oriented bank" by arguing that the bank is open for longer hours than other banks.

The second example (see Table 4) is from an exchange of knowledge and arguments for developing a new product for young people. The knowledge exchange develops into a discussion of how the bank should compete with other banks. The whole discussion has 10 comments and 79 likes. Selected sentences referring to organizational identity in the initial post and six of the comments are presented in Table 4.

In this discussion, the organizational members use the pronouns "I" and "we." The "I" is used to present a personal viewpoint or experience, and the "we" sometimes refer to a group of people in a branch and sometimes to the organization as a whole. "We" as a group is addressee-exclusive (De Cillia, Reisigl, & Wodak, 1999), and "we" as the organization is addressee-inclusive (De Cillia et al., 1999). The last one, the collective "we" is especially interesting since it activates coworkers' membership of the in-group. This shows that they identify with the organization, and it may activate other coworkers to identify with the organization. At the same time, using "we" is also a way to persuade others of their argument.

The initial discussion is about the product for young people, which is compared with a product of other banks. The discussion develops into a discussion of the organizational identity of Jyske Bank in relation to other banks, a way to establish organizational identity (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Cheney et al., 2014). Jyske Bank is presented as both better and different from other banks by focusing on the relationship with the customer, but the possibility of maintaining this identity is challenged and questioned by the coworkers. A consensus is not really reached, and different perceptions are revealed. The interesting thing is how the coworkers build their arguments. The operations specialist writes that the young customers "have become very conscious and perhaps not quite as loyal?" This comment is a rewriting of the bank's mission to create "consciously satisfied customers." This is picked up in the next comment: "If the customers have become very conscious and not quite as loyal . . . " In this way, they challenge whether it is possible to connect "consciously" and be "satisfied" and whether the bank can focus on relationships when it comes to young people.

The same tactic is used by a bank advisor, who comments that "Nor do we make a difference any longer, when it comes to the concept for young people . . . :(." This refers to the official image of the bank, which is promoted as "Jyske differences." In this way, they are questioning something that has previously been perceived to be central, distinctive, and enduring (Albert & Whetten, 1985) about the organization. The managing director tries to maintain the perception of the organizational identity by writing a long comment, but the coworker who started the discussion does not entirely buy the argument since she repeats her argument that it is difficult to attract young customers. This shows the organizational identity of the bank is contested and negotiated, and a new understanding of the organizational identity emerges.

The two discussions show how coworkers use the organization's values, mission, and vision statements to negotiate organizational identity on ISM. In other discussions, the coworkers use organizational metaphors to negotiate the organizational identity. Many of them come from the language of sport, especially football, and are

Table 4. Discussion About Product for Young People.

"Frustration about 18:27 concept"	Author
"I wrote a post about a year ago, when we had been to the university trade fair at Aalborg University. Now we have been there again, and I just have to say that Jyske Bank is REALLY way behind on the concept for young people. We have nothing to offer, which cannot be matched by the other banks. On top of that the other banks had stands, which were addressing the young people a 100 percent, and we just had Jyske Welcome." [*The bank advisor then goes into details about what other banks offer in comparison to* Jyske Bank.] "I will therefore ask the question: Do we want to put our stakes on young people or do we not? If the concept is not improved we will lose customers in the long run!!"	 Name Bank advisor Branch D
"Agree entirely! "We had exactly the same challenges at the university trade fair in Aarhus last week - and last year. In Aarhus it was just some other banks we were fighting against."	 Name Bank advisor Branch E
"It is not only the 18:27 concept, which has to be looked at. 12:17 ought to be looked at as well, if we have to maintain the good experience and hold on to the customer relationship - Or??? Just thinking, that I have a daughter, who looked very much at what all "the other" banks offered. And what she could not get at JB. Am thinking, that "the young ones" have become very conscious and perhaps not quite as loyal?"	 Name Operation specialist Head office
"If the customers have become very conscious and not quite as loyal, then it is perhaps more a question about targeting our offers to the time, when they actually become interesting and potentially profitable for the bank." "I have never understood why one do not have a targeted offer to university students through for example student unions etc. . . . " [*The senior specialist then comes with a lot of concrete examples of how to attract the young customers.*]	 Name Senior specialist Investment tools
"I completely agree with 'name' and the others - Neither on the concepts for young people do we make a difference any longer . . . :("	 Name Bank advisor Branch F

(continued)

Table 4. (continued)

"Frustration about 18:27 concept"	Author
"Hi "name" Thank you for your post about young customers and your report from "the battlefield." As you write there is a big competition at the moment for the young customers . . . " [*The managing director explains in detail how the bank has chosen to focus on the relation rather than the price, when competing for the young customers.*] [*The discussion continues and becomes an issue about whether the bank should compete with prices or by developing relations with customers.*]	 Managing director Private products
[*Toward the end the initial author steps in*:] "Thanks for all the comments. The relation is of course a very important factor. I agree completely. But with our concept/ products it is very difficult to attract new young customers from for example the university. Then does it make sense at all to participate in various student fairs, if we only want to focus on existing young customers? A stand is not entirely cheap + manpower."	 Name Bank advisor Branch D

in line with the metaphors used in the internal branding of the bank, like the name JB United. The bank is seen as *the green ones* especially fighting against *the blues ones*, the biggest bank in Denmark. Other metaphors come from the language of war, like *the battlefield* and *the front*. The metaphors are somehow collectively shared, and they are used to serve the coworkers' arguments. In other words, the language created to initially describe the organizational identity is also used to negotiate it. This is in line with the understanding that collective sensemaking "takes place in interactive talk and draws on institutionalized resources of language" (Christensen & Cornelissen, 2010, p. 16). At the same time, the metaphors and the distinction between them and us help coworkers identify with the organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

Coworker Perception of the Discussions About Organizational Issues

In the interviews, the coworkers paraphrased a lot of the discussions about organizational issues that elicited many comments and likes. The general impression was that the discussions made a difference, and the coworkers perceived that ordinary coworkers could push the organization in different directions. One coworker stated, "I think it is possible to point the crowd in a certain direction and change people's viewpoints and attitudes" (Interview 1). The same coworker describes how the organizational identity was negotiated:

> Someone writes something about the corporation, and someone comments. Then I think it is very interesting to see people's opinions. Someone might like it. Someone has an

> input pointing in another direction seeing things from a different perspective. It can help open your eyes, because you might have a one-sided way of seeing things, but by seeing different people expressing themselves. (Interview 1)

The discussions could change coworkers' opinions about organizational identity and create an understanding of other viewpoints, even if they only watched other coworkers discuss (Interviews 4, 14). At the same time, coworker accounts of various significant communication episodes revealed that they remembered different viewpoints, and that the discussions helped them gain a nuanced and insightful knowledge of the different topics discussed. Several coworkers told how discussions on ISM led to discussions among coworkers informally and in person in the office (Interview 15), which might even lead to two or three coworkers formulating a response to a running discussion (Interviews 6, 7, 8). In this way, organizational issues were constantly discussed both on ISM and across the desks in the organization. This created awareness among coworkers, as stated by one of the coworkers: "It gives some sort of idea about what the organization thinks about the issues put forward" (Interview 6).

Several coworkers mentioned their role as ambassadors for the bank when talking with friends and family, and the discussions on ISM made the coworkers well equipped to discuss current issues and the organizational identity of the bank. One coworker explained:

> It gives an enormous insight into how everyday life is. Also when you meet people on the street . . . and then you get asked about Gibraltar (an incident where Jyske Bank got a lot of media coverage), then you are equipped. (Interview 5)

The ISM arena thus became the site of negotiations between viewpoints, interests, and perceptions of organizational identity. The possibility of pushing or pointing the crowd in a certain direction created a sense of the organization as always on the move (Interview 9). In this respect, ISM became an arena where coworkers continually constructed the organizational identity. Discussions would start as discussions about services, working conditions, and how to communicate on ISM, and then develop into questions about whether such products, services, or behavior were typical for the organization's identity by comparing the actual and the perceived ideal identity. They would do that by either discussing who we are or by using phrases from the vision and mission statements to underline an argument.

Discussion

The study made two contributions to the literature about ISM and organizational identity. First, the study described coworkers' discussions on ISM in terms of content, structure, and development. Second, the study showed how the discussions contributed to sensemaking processes that constructed organizational identity in the bank. Jyske Bank is in this context an exceptional case, and the findings from the case study cannot be generalized to other organizations. However, based on analytical generalization (Yin,

2014), the study can be used to explore the potential of having ISM, which will be discussed in the following sections along with the implications for the organization.

Discussions on ISM

The study showed that coworkers mainly initiated discussions on JB United, indicating that ISM has the potential to empower coworkers to put organizational issues on the agenda as applauded in several articles about social media (e.g., Castells, 2007; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The discussions would either start as a comment to internal news or as a post in the discussion forum. The discussions could be divided into four different categories, namely customer- and product-related, working conditions, organizational, and ISM-specific themes. The discussions often started as concrete discussions about how to improve services or tackle challenges in the daily work. The discussions helped coworkers make sense of services to customers, working conditions, organizational issues, and how to behave on ISM. At the same time, 23 out of 40 discussions developed into more abstract discussions about organizational identity. This is in line with Karreman and Alvesson (2001) who find that coworkers construct organizational identity as they discuss work. The present study showed how this phenomenon happened on ISM.

Beers Fägersten (2015) argues that discussions about organizational identity can develop into an internal crisis since these discussions appear suddenly and unexpectedly, perhaps even being perceived as a threat to organizational reputation. However, the present study seems to indicate that coworkers in Jyske Bank challenge and negotiate organizational identity not to damage but to improve the organization, and that memorable discussions are likely to develop into organizational stories supporting organizational identity. So, rather than perceiving communication that challenges and negotiates organizational identity as a threat to the organization, it could be perceived as a way to develop and encourage organizational identification, which has the potential to influence coworker creativity and coworker willingness to improve the organization and working tasks (He & Brown, 2013).

The Construction of Organizational Identity on ISM

Coworkers in the study perceived that there was something that was "central, distinctive, and enduring" (Albert & Whetten, 1985) about the organizational identity of Jyske Bank. On ISM, they would comment if they perceived a gap between how different external stakeholders saw the bank and the organizational discourses about the identity of the bank. In this way, the organizational identity was in a constant dialogue between the external image and the internal organizational identity (Gioia et al., 2013; Scott & Lane, 2000). But "the product" or the perception of what Jyske Bank should be was somehow taken out of the hands of the managers and left to coworkers' sensemaking both in the discussions on ISM and through discussions in the lunchrooms and across the tables in the offices. In this way, organizational identity was "less stable and more malleable, less the product of senior executives' decisions and more open to

political influence at different levels, and less clearly and more ambiguous" (He & Brown, 2013, p. 8).

Coworker communication on ISM contributed to the construction of organizational identity in at least three ways. First, coworkers discussed who Jyske Bank was in relation to other banks by a applying a them-and-us rhetoric as shown in the findings. Second, the interviewed coworkers paraphrased several memorable discussions on ISM. In this way, some discussions on ISM became organizational stories and types of milestones in the construction of organizational identity. These types of organizational stories help coworkers identify with the organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Cheney et al., 2014), and coworkers who identify with their organizations are more engaged and willing to make a difference to the organization (He & Brown, 2013). Third, the discussions on communication behavior contributed to *organizing* (Putnam, 2013) by developing and maintaining group norms, which indirectly affect organizational identity. As an example, a coworker is told off for disclaiming a certain brew of beer on ISM since it could be one of the bank's customers, which constitutes a perception of the bank as loyal to the customers. The three different ways of constructing organizational identity are also concrete examples of how communication constitutes organizations (Putnam, 2013).

Implications of Discussions About Organizational Identity on ISM

The study showed that coworkers contribute to the construction of organizational identity when they discuss and negotiate organizational identity on ISM. There are at least four implications for business communication.

First, the discussions made coworkers across the organization aware of different viewpoints and made them understand and more or less accept the diversity of viewpoints. A specialist in the head office (Interview 10) mentioned that a discussion about coworkers in the branches having too many administrative assignments made him reduce the number of things he wanted bank advisors to register for statistical surveys. In this way, communication on ISM became a social lubricant (Leonardi et al., 2013), building an understanding of the challenges in the different corners of the organization. This helped create social cohesion in the organization.

Second, ISM are primarily a coworker communication arena. Some discussions would be sparked by initiatives from management and could have been expected, but most of the discussions grew out of coworkers' personal perceptions and experiences. In other words, coworkers set the agenda when organizational identity was discussed, and coworkers perceived the discussions to make a difference. This is in contrast to most literature on organizational identity, which emphasizes how management should manage changes in the organizational identity (Gioia et al., 2013; Scott & Lane, 2000). In Jyske Bank, changes to the organizational identity grew organically, and they popped up whenever one or more coworkers perceived a need to adjust or get back to the perceived essence of organizational identity. The coworkers thus had the power to change the collectively shared perceptions if enough coworkers supported an argument, which supports a communicative constitution of organizations perspective on

coworkers as active communicators who can influence and change their organization (Heide & Simonsson, 2011; Mazzei, 2010; Zerfass & Franke, 2013).

In this way, organizational identity in Jyske Bank was not only constructed by management or a communication department but by coworkers as well, and this could make a difference to the organization. Corley (2004) found that managers were more concerned with "labels," while coworkers were concerned with "values and beliefs" (p. 1169). When coworkers contribute to the construction of organizational identity, they will perceive it as more authentic, especially since they have followed or even been part of the reflections and arguments either on ISM or in the lunchroom. Certainly, it is valuable for organizations when coworkers not only feel that they were asked, as suggested in Scott and Lanes's (2000) model, but that they were actually the drivers behind changes in the perception of organizational identity.

The discussions were perceived as unfiltered and authentic, and when a manager responded in a corporate or formal language, the coworkers scorned it (Interview 12). This could indicate that attempts to control or manage the way coworkers ought to perceive different issues are likely to backfire. In this respect, the proposition of the study is that communication on ISM is a coworker communication arena, and to develop the full potential, managers should refrain from using ISM as their information channel. However, ISM could still be perceived as a management tool in terms of giving managers insights into what goes on in the organization, and they should follow the discussions and answer questions when needed. At the same time, the study indicates that managers should not answer immediately but allow discussions to develop, as coworkers might otherwise get the impression that management tries to close the discussion. In this respect, managers have to be visible in the ISM arena, but they should be careful not to dominate or take the lead. They have other channels where they can do that. This is a challenge for the organization, which has to take a less active role in relation to communication in the ISM arena, and the organization constantly has to live with the uncertainty of what might come up in the discussions and be prepared to tackle the storm. On the other hand, organizations that are willing to live with this uncertainty are likely to become more robust, because organizational identity and organizational practices are constantly contested and debated. On top of that, coworkers become well equipped to discuss current issues with friends and family, and can thus act as ambassadors for the organization. At least this seems to be the case in Jyske Bank, and future research has to explore the relation between elaborate discussions on ISM, coworker identification, and organizational robustness.

Third, the construction of organizational identity is also likely to happen in other communication arenas, such as meetings and lunches. However, the visibility of the ISM discussions to everyone in the organization made it possible for coworkers in the whole organization to become aware of different viewpoints and the ambiguity in different issues, which they would try to make sense of. Local interpretations would arise when discussions continued across the desks in the local branch. In this way, the communication had a much bigger influence on the organization than when a topic was discussed over lunch in one office. The organizational identity is continually

renegotiated as argued in social constructivist approaches to organizational identity (Gioia et al., 2013; He & Brown, 2013).

The final implication is that the study contributes to literature about organizational identity by showing how unplanned and small changes of organizational identity occur as a constant dialogue between coworkers in the organization. Occasionally, discussions on ISM develop into organizational stories, which become important milestones in the perception of organizational identity. The discussions and stories on ISM might also develop into multiple organizational identities, which can coexist as found by Henderson, Cheney, and Weaver (2015). This way of constructing organizational identity is an area of research that needs to be further explored. Christensen and Cornelissen (2010) found that attempts to manage and control organizational identity could stifle and undermine creativity and innovation, and they therefore suggest to embrace polyphony to foster identification and reduce tension. This will allow different coworkers to apply different interpretations and at the same time be part of the organization.

Conclusion

The study showed that coworkers in Jyske Bank contributed to the construction of organizational identity when they challenged, negotiated, and discussed organizational issues on ISM. They used metaphors and language from managers' internal communication as well as vision and mission statements to support their arguments and push the understanding of organizational identity so that it was closer to their perception of what Jyske Bank is. Some of the discussions developed into organizational stories, which were shared and discussed over the desks and in the lunchrooms. The stories and the discussions on ISM helped coworkers identify with the organization. The opportunity to comment and like made coworkers perceive themselves as active communicators who could influence the organization, especially in the discussions about organizational identity. Communication on ISM in Jyske Bank thus became an example of how coworkers can construct organizational identity through communication on ISM and how communication constitutes organizations.

Limitations

The findings in the study are based on a case study in one organization, so future research has to show in what way coworker communication on ISM plays a role in constructing organizational identity in other organizations. Coworkers commenting on organizational issues are not likely to occur in all organizations (Milliken, Morrison, & Hewlin, 2003). Jyske Bank has developed an organizational culture that encourages coworkers to speak their mind, which is likely to make a difference on coworkers' willingness to discuss organizational identity on ISM. Future research has to explore how organizational culture can affect coworker construction of organizational identity on ISM.

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Author Biography

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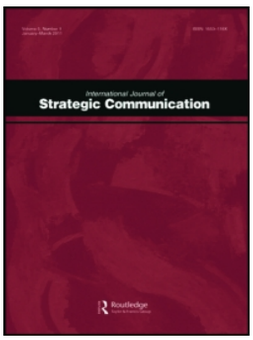
Chapter 11

”It is difficult to be the first person to say something. You might have asked around, but was it only the two people that I asked that agreed with me? It is easier to be number 368. I also think we are loosing our culture here a week after you have seen 300 others thinking that way. It is easier to walk in a herd, if the herd is already there.”

HR Development Consultant (JB, Iw 20)



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Self-censorship on Internal Social Media: A Case Study of Coworker Communication Behavior in a Danish Bank

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ABSTRACT

Internal social media (ISM) or social intranets provide organizations with a communication arena in which coworkers can actively contribute to organizational communication. Coworkers are, however, far from impulsive and spontaneous when they communicate on ISM. A case study in a Danish bank found that coworkers considered carefully the consequences of their posts or comments before publishing them. These coworkers perceived four different risks associated with ISM communication, and they used seven self-censorship strategies to ensure that both the content and the formulation of their communication were relevant and appropriate. Coworkers not only censor themselves by withdrawing, as previous studies have suggested, but they also *postpone publishing content, phrase or frame content differently, imagine responses from organizational members, ask others for a second opinion, choose another channel, or write only positive comments*. Through these seven self-censorship strategies, coworkers retain the quality of communication on ISM and prevent conflict or relational damage. Future research should explore the self-regulation strategies underlying self-censorship in order to improve understanding of the circumstances that increase the likelihood of responsible use of ISM. The potential dark side of self-censorship also requires exploration: when can self-censorship threaten coworkers' freedom of expression, and develop into organizational silence?

Introduction

> "There are no rules: only self-censorship sets the rules."
> —Bank adviser, Jyske Bank

Coworkers are increasingly perceived as key communicators in organizations (Heide & Simonsson, 2011, 2015; Kim & Rhee, 2011; Mazzei, 2010; Mazzei, Kim, & Dell'Oro, 2012; Strandberg & Vigsø, 2016). They suggest workplace improvements, exchange knowledge, and point out issues before these grow into crises. This behavior can benefit both the organization and the individual coworker. Upward, as well as horizontal, communication can improve the organization's performance and may even be crucial to its survival (Morrison, 2011). Coworkers, in turn, feel more empowered when they can express their voice (Morrison & Milliken, 2000; Vuori & Okkonen, 2012) and this helps them identify with the organization (Liu, Zhu, & Yang, 2010; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008), which is crucial to employee engagement (Ruck & Welch, 2012).

Internal social media (ISM)—a web-based communication arena inside the organization—provides coworkers with an opportunity to communicate upwards and outwards to the organization (Liu et al., 2010). Examples of ISM include Yammer, Tibbr, and Facebook at Work, but also blogs, forums, and platforms that are developed for organizations specifically. ISM communication is visible to organizational members, but remains inaccessible to outsiders. Although ISM provides a

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means to speak up and out, implementing ISM is not in itself enough to encourage coworkers to share knowledge and voice their opinions (Brzozowski, Sandholm, & Hogg, 2009; Chin, Evans, Choo, & Tan, 2015; Martin, Parry, & Flowers, 2015). Coworkers' perceptions of organizational climate, supervisor and leader behavior, and employee roles both promote and inhibit employee voices in organizations (for a review, see Morrison, 2014). Martin et al. (2015) found that coworkers' ISM communications were influenced by the organizational context, in particular by leaders' signals and style, organizational culture, and communication climate. So, even though ISM enables voice behaviors, coworkers may still sometimes decide not to use them for that purpose. Although implicit voice theories have addressed coworkers' self-censorship behaviors in general (Detert & Edmondson, 2011), and self-censorship on external social media such as Facebook has been studied previously (e.g., Das & Kramer, 2013), little is known about such voluntary self-restricting behaviors on ISM or coworkers' motivations for such online self-censorship. Secondly, ISM has been studied mainly from an information systems perspective (for reviews, see Leonardi, Huysman, & Steinfield, 2013; Van Osch, Steinfield, & Balogh, 2015), with only a few studies looking at coworker communication on ISM (e.g., Madsen, 2016; Beers Fägersten, 2015; Uysal, 2016).

On external social media, users generally devote little attention to the messages they post, and they can be very impulsive when they communicate (Richey, Ravishankar, & Coupland, 2016). This may not be the case when coworkers communicate on ISM. A coworker has more at stake in the workplace than in the private context of friends and family, because of their identification with and relationship with the organization (Frandsen & Johansen, 2011). Coworkers are thus likely to be more strategic when they communicate on ISM than are users of external social media. Coworkers often remain silent on important issues (Detert & Burris, 2007; Morrison, 2014; Morrison & Milliken, 2000; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008); a coworker in an organizational setting is likely to think twice before posting anything on ISM.

In addition to withholding complete messages, coworkers may decide to withhold elements of information, or to rephrase it so as to avoid negative responses. In other words, on ISM, coworkers are likely to behave more strategically than they would on social media such as Facebook or Twitter. Self-censorship may threaten employee voice, but it may also ensure the quality of conversations on ISM and avoid information overload and semipublic embarrassment. Grant (2013) found that coworkers who could regulate their feelings and formulate their voice in a more controlled manner were more successful when voicing. However, we know very little about the self-censorship strategies that coworkers apply to ensure the safety and efficacy of their voice when they communicate on ISM.

This study explores coworker self-censorship on ISM to gain insights into coworker communication behavior on this internal media. People exercise self-censorship on social media because they wish to manage their self-presentation or wish to avoid discussions (Sleeper et al., 2013), but we lack knowledge of coworkers' motives for such self-censorship or of the strategies that coworkers apply to censor their communication on ISM. An exploratory case study in Jyske Bank was therefore conducted in 2014–2015 to explore coworker ISM self-censorship, and specifically to answer the following research question: why, and how, do coworkers censor their communication on internal social media?

Theoretical background

To shed light on self-censorship on ISM, a theoretical framework is built by drawing on theories of employee voice and silence, as well as on theories of imagined audience on social media.

Self-censorship

Self-censorship has been described as "withholding relevant ideas for self-protective reasons" (Detert & Edmondson, 2011, p. 462). To protect themselves, coworkers may not only refrain from communicating ideas, but also alter the way they communicate about the issues at hand. Therefore, in this study, a

somewhat broadened definition of self-censorship is used to include the processes of consideration, rephrasing and reframing of content. In the present article, self-censorship is defined as the act of controlling whether and how to voice questions, suggestions, or concerns about people, products, or processes to other organizational members on ISM. This process is intended to avoid perceived risks of addressing the imagined organizational audience, and it takes place without overt pressure from the organization.

This definition implies that self-censorship is not just a matter of preventing oneself from speaking in the online arena, as previously suggested in studies of self-censorship on social media (Das & Kramer, 2013; Marwick & boyd, 2011; Sleeper et al., 2013), but that it also involves reframing content before publication, with certain information, consciously or unconsciously, selected and made salient (Entman, 1993). The definition draws on dictionary definitions of self-censorship (Cambridge Dictionaries Online, 2016; Your Dictionary, 2016), Marwick & boyd's (2011) theory of imagined audience on social media, and Morrison's conceptualization of voice as "discretionary communication of ideas, suggestions, concerns or opinions about work-related issues with the intent to improve organizational or unit functioning" (Morrison, 2011, p. 375), which encompasses both voice directed at managers and other coworkers.

The self-censorship process

In the article the self-censorship process is conceptualized in the following way. A coworker censoring him- or herself on ISM goes through a three-phase process. First, the coworker gets the idea or urge to share a suggestion or a problem on ISM. In this initial phase, based on some thought process or emotional experience, the individual considers producing a message or contributing to an existing conversation. Second, the coworker considers the merit of this action: is it smart and desirable to contribute, and to do so *in this way?* These considerations are implied in Detert & Edmondson's (2011) implicit voice theories, allowing individuals to quickly and relatively effortlessly orient themselves, and also in Das and Kramer (2013) concept of last-minute self-censorship, which they describe as "filtering after a thought has been formed and expressed" (p. 120). Third, based on these reflections, the coworker will decide to publish something in a contemplated way or refrain from writing anything. The interest of this article is the second of these phases. What goes through the coworker's head, both consciously and unconsciously? What are the concerns, and how is the communication filtered and adjusted to fit with personal and organizational needs?

Voice dynamics in organizations

Several studies have confirmed that perceived psychological safety is a prerequisite for employee voice (Detert & Edmondson, 2011; Detert & Trevino, 2010; Edmondson, 1999). A coworker will consider both the perceived safety and the perceived efficacy of voice when he or she considers whether or not to voice an opinion to coworkers and managers (Morrison, 2011). The most common reasons for employee silence are fear of retaliation and belief that voice will not make a difference (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). Coworkers are concerned about personal consequences (Detert & Edmondson, 2011), such as harming their reputation, receiving a negative work evaluation, or reducing their opportunities for promotion (Milliken, Morrison, & Hewlin, 2003).

Managers are sensitive to critique, and coworkers do not wish to convey negative messages (Rosen & Tesser, 1970). This fear may become more explicit when coworkers enter the ISM communication arena, where communication is visible both to managers and other coworkers. Furthermore, they may decide to keep silent because they fear communicating is futile (Milliken et al., 2003; Morrison, 2011)—a perception that may be based on concrete examples of previous incidents or on cues they take from the organization (Milliken et al., 2003).

Communicating with an Imagined Audience

On social media, users generally have a desire to control who they share their content information with (Sleeper et al., 2013). Still, it is hard to target specific audiences on social media, and on Facebook users have troubles with how to present themselves across multiple social contexts (Das & Kramer, 2013). Das and Kramer (2013) thus found that self-censorship was common, that posts were more censored than comments, and that the decisions to self-censor were strongly affected by users' perceptions of the audience. On ISM, coworkers talk both up (i.e., to managers) and out to their peers in the organization (Liu et al., 2010). They will perceive the audience as both known and unknown. Known, because the organization sets the boundaries and only organizational members have access to the platform. However, to some extent, the audience is unknown, because coworkers do not know everyone in the organization and cannot always predict who will read a post or a comment.

To understand how coworkers tackle this uncertainty, it is useful to draw on the theory of imagined audience on social media (Litt, 2012; Marwick & boyd, 2011), which accounts for what happens when different audiences collapse into one. According to this theory, people take cues from the social media environment to imagine the community they are communicating with (boyd, 2007, p. 131). The imagined audience is socially constructed in the text, through stylistic and linguistic choices (Scheidt, 2006). In an organizational setting, coworkers will take cues both from communication on ISM and from the organization. As an example, Uysal (2016) found that organizational norms were reflected in communication on ISM.

According to Marwick and boyd (2011), topics are chosen based on the anticipated audience response. There is a constant tension between revealing and concealing. This is also the case in an organizational setting, where a coworker will communicate to benefit the organization, yet at the same time construct a self-presentation that is in line with being a coworker in the organization. Marwick and boyd (2011) observed two techniques used to navigate this tension: self-censorship, and balance. Here, balancing was a matter of balancing personal and professional content in order not to reveal too much about themselves yet at the same time come across as authentic.

Transferring these insights to an organizational context, coworkers will refrain from discussing certain topics and they are likely to balance their communication to please the audience and serve their own interest, as well as striking a balance between the formal and informal tone of voice on ISM. The idea of an imagined audience can be useful in the exploration of self-censorship on ISM in an organization that coworkers perceive to be watching and evaluating every step they take in the arena, and which also influences how, when, and what they communicate about. Figure 1 illustrates the process of self-censorship before entering the ISM arena, as well as the presence of imagined audiences in the arena.

However, we do not know the actual motives for coworker self-censorship on ISM, nor do we know which strategies coworkers apply to balance between revealing and concealing. These were explored in a case study in a Danish bank.

Research design

An explorative qualitative single case study (Yin, 2014) was conducted in order to explore coworker self-censorship on ISM. Case study research is a preferred method when the main research questions are "how" and "why" (Yin, 2014, p. 2) and when there is little research within a field (Eisenhardt, 1989). The study was based on a textual analysis of coworker communication on ISM for a period of 4 months, as well as semistructured interviews with 24 coworkers (see Table 1). The main focus was the interviews with the coworkers, but as preparation for the interviews, communication on ISM was analyzed in order to recognize and understand the ISM communication when interviewing the coworkers. At the same time, the textual analysis of coworker communication behavior on ISM was used to select which coworkers to interview.

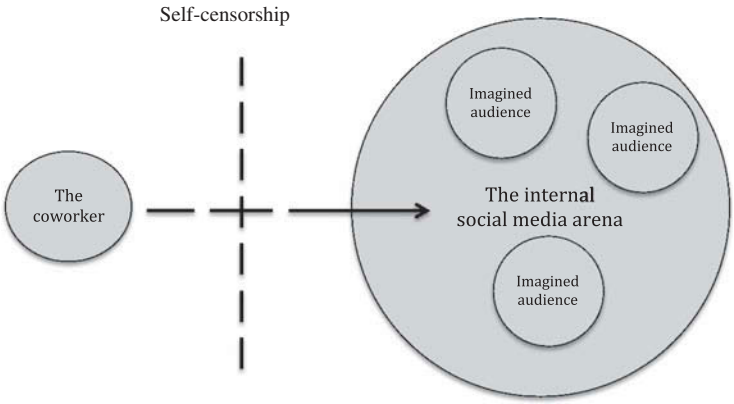

Figure 1. Self-censorship on internal social media.

Selection of the case

The organizational context influences whether coworkers will voice their opinion or not (Morrison, 2014), and Jyske Bank, a Danish bank, was chosen as a suitable case for studying coworker communication on ISM, since the bank is recognized for its open communication climate.

Jyske Bank has 4,000 employees distributed between 110 different locations. In spring 2014 the bank introduced a new intranet technology with social media features and named the communication platform "JB United." When coworkers start their computer, the communication platform automatically pops up and is their daily gateway to work. All coworkers can start a discussion, comment, or like the news and discussions. When they do so, their picture, name, job position and location are visible to everyone in the organization. A department can be the author of a news item, but no comments or likes are anonymous.

On the front page of the communication platform is a discussion forum, "The Word is Free." This forum, which has existed on the front page of the intranet since 2003, was carried over to the new platform. The discussion forum sends a signal that employee voice is welcomed and that the CEO actively encourages open communication. The organizational context thus supports communication on ISM. Coworkers have also amassed both experience of communication on ISM and knowledge of their own self-censorship behavior. Jyske Bank was acclaimed for its ISM when it received a digital communication award in Berlin in 2015 for Best Social Intranet in Europe (Ingemann, 2015). In this respect the bank is a critical case (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Yin, 2014) for the exploration of coworker communication behavior on ISM.

Data collection

The study was based on a textual analysis of coworker communication on ISM over a four-month period and semistructured interviews with 24 coworkers (see Table 1).

Five channels on JB United were chosen because they had most activity in terms of posts, comments, and likes from coworkers. This included the discussion forum "The Word is Free," three internal news channels and a video channel, where coworkers could upload and comment on each other's videos. Screen shots of the initial posts, comments on the posts, and likes were collected from the five channels. The screen shots were used to explore what the coworkers communicated about, who communicated with whom, and how conversations developed. From September to November 2014, a total of 357 entries, 626 comments and 6,248 likes were collected and analyzed; and in September 2015 a total of 133 entries, 330 comments and 2,745 likes were collected and

Table 1. Coworkers Interviewed: Title, Workplace, Demographics, and Communication Behavior.

Interview	Title	Workplace	Gender	Age	Years at JB	Communication behavior on JB United
1	Bank Officer	Head Office	M	51	9	Has uploaded own video. Answers questions, likes social and corporate news
2	Specialist—customer and bank adviser support	Head Office	M	28	2.5	Comments a lot, answers questions, likes a lot, and has started discussions
3	Marketing consultant	Head Office	M	35	16	Writes news, comments, and likes
4	Bank adviser—private, young customers	Branch	F	28	4	Likes a lot, mainly organizational discussions, no comments
5	Business consultant	BRF Head Office	F	45	1	Writes news, comments, answers questions, and likes
6	Bank adviser—Business	Branch	M	32	7.5	Comments, answers questions, a bit of humor, some likes
7	Bank adviser—Private	Branch	M	27	2	Has started a discussion, a few comments, a few likes
8	Branch manager	Branch	M	48	30	Uploads videos, writes social news, comments, likes a lot
9	Specialist, pensions, Customer and adviser support	Head Office	M	48	5 + 10	Comments, answers questions, likes a lot
10	Quantitative analyst, model development	Head Office	M	34	7	Likes a lot, especially corporate items, no comments
11	Cashier	Branch	M	31	6.5	Comments a lot, asking questions, appreciating efforts or humor, few likes
12	Bank adviser—private, young customers	Branch	F	29	6	Has started discussions, only few likes
13	Bank adviser—private	Branch	M	30	2	No comments, only one like in observation period
14	Manager, private	Branch	F	46	26.5	No comments, likes items related to private customers
15	Bank adviser—private and business	Branch	M	48	29	Have started one discussion, answer questions, funny comments, and few likes, most popular items
16	Bank adviser—private	Branch	F	31	6.5	No comments, only likes very popular items
17	Currency adviser—private	Branch	M	39	16.5	A few comments, no likes
18	Business Manager	Head Office	M	40	16	Writes news, comments, and likes a few items
19	Senior Consultant	Head Office	F	32	2.5	Writes several news items, answers questions, and likes social items
20	HR Development Consultant	Head Office	M	39	11	Comments and likes a bit. Has previously in another job in the bank written several news items
21	Bank adviser—private	Branch	F	38	7	Shares knowledge, positive comments, and points out mistakes
22	Bank adviser—private	Branch	M	50	25	Comments a few times, likes popular items
23	Bank adviser—Business	Branch	M	38	3	Started a huge critical discussion, comments sometimes, and likes a few times
24	Bank adviser—private	Branch	M	54	8	Has started a thread, comments often, and likes a lot

analyzed. The two different points in time were chosen to observe whether the communication on ISM changed over time in terms of topics discussed and the coworkers contributing.

The coworkers interviewed were purposively selected (Neergaard, 2007) to represent a variety of communication behaviors, job positions, and locations. Inspired by Brandtzaeg and Heim's (2011) five distinct user types—sporadics, lurkers, socializers, debaters, and actives—as well as Crawford's (2009) concept of listeners rather than lurkers on social media, the aim of the analysis of ISM communication was to identify different coworker communication behaviors. In the 4 months the screen shots were collected, most of the coworkers were perceived as listeners. In order to gain insight into the various motives and strategies for self-censorship, coworkers were selected so as to represent various user types.

In addition to selection for particular communication behavior, coworkers were also selected to represent different job position and geographical location. Convenience sampling was applied when

two initially selected coworkers could not participate in the interviews. As a result, two further coworkers with similar profiles were asked to participate in the interviews.

Seventeen coworkers were interviewed in December 2014 and January 2015, and another seven were interviewed in October and November 2015. The intention in the second round of interviews was to deliberately interview coworkers who communicated, in order to understand how self-censorship influenced what they were writing. The two different points in time were chosen in order to explore whether coworker communication and self-censorship in the bank developed after more prolonged use of the new communication platform. Both times, coworkers were interviewed until a point of saturation (Eisenhardt, 1989) was reached in the variety of answers.

Five of the coworkers interviewed (Iw 3, 5, 18, 19, 20) wrote news and answered comments mainly as part of their job; the rest commented out of their role (Bateman & Organ, 1983). Both types of communication were considered relevant to the exploration of self-censorship on ISM. Each interview lasted between 50 and 90 minutes. The interviews were semistructured, and followed a protocol comprised of three major sections: (a) the person's job, age, seniority and general activity on external social media; (b) their communication behavior; and (c) their perception of communication on ISM, motivation to contribute, and the impact of communication on ISM.

Ethical considerations

Conducting case-studies (Yin, 2014) involves reflecting on how to collect data without harming anyone (Thomas, 2011). A contract of confidentiality between the researcher and the bank was signed, the coworkers interviewed remained anonymous, and their approval was obtained for all the quotations included in this article.

Analyzing the data

A stage-by-stage process (Burnard, 1991) involving thematic coding (King, 2012) was conducted for the analysis of the interviews. First, the interviews were transcribed and read several times by one of the researchers. Second, they were coded in NVivo to describe communication behavior, reflections on behavior, and perceived value of communication on ISM. In this process the code "self-censorship" appeared. In the third step, all the content under this code was coded again to describe different motives for self-censorship. The codes were overlapping and interrelated, since coworkers could express motives for self-censorship which could be labeled with more than one code (see Table 2). Fourth, the process was repeated with a sole focus on the motives for self-censorship. This time all the interviews were read again, and everything the coworkers said relating to self-censorship was written into a Word document. The quotations were cut out, sorted into different kinds of self-censorship, and coded. The codes from the two approaches were compared, and twenty different codes (see Table 2) were obtained as a result, organized into four categories describing four different main motives for censuring or not communicating.

Finally, the code "considerations before writing" from the first round of coding was coded again in NVivo in order to describe different strategies of self-censorship used by coworkers before writing a comment or a post. This yielded seven codes (see Table 3).

Findings

First, for a better understanding of the context in which self-censorship occurred, the communication climate in JB will be discussed. Then, to understand who coworkers imagine they are communicating with when they consider posting something on ISM, four imagined audiences on Jyske Bank's ISM are laid out. Third, four perceived risks of entering the communication arena are discussed in order to understand why coworkers censor their communication. Fourth, the question of how the coworkers censored themselves is addressed by presenting seven strategies of self-censorship that the participants applied to avoid or tackle the perceived risks. Finally, the findings are tied together in order to shed light on how they are interrelated.

Table 2. Coding of Coworkers' Reported Motives For Self-Censorship.

Code	Description	Example
Risk of providing low quality posts and comments	Concerns about wasting other coworkers time and efforts	
Relevance	The coworker feels a first post or a comment has to be relevant, because it takes up other coworkers' time	"What you write has to be relevant. It should not just be something… I feel something has to be added. It has to mean something" (Iw 12) "I have a filter, that it should not be trivial. It needs to have some sort of essentiality, before you disturb people" (Iw 3)
Value	Will only write something if it is of value to the organization	"Basically it is about adding value on the basis of what does the organization need" (Iw 23)
Language	Concerns about spelling, language and tone of voice before posting	"I might go through it three times to see if it is in the right tone of voice. Sometimes you are caught by your own enthusiasm. So I analyze. When you are not so happy about one thing or the other, you can be a little too critical and then you … read it again, before you send it. Then you might edit it a bit" (Iw 24)
Correctness	Not wanting to post before checking that the facts are correct	"I want to make sure that it is the right answer" (Iw 2)
Risk of harming personal reputation	Concerns about self-protection and self-promotion	
Visibility	Restricting oneself because it is visible to everyone	"Even if you write your honest opinion, then I still think you withhold something, because everyone can read it" (Iw 7)
Self-presentation	The coworker is concerned about the image they present to the rest of the organization	"I think, I become unsure. Is it only me, who thinks it should be done differently or is it an opinion…." (Iw 4) "It is the fear of exposing oneself" (Iw 6) "I do not want to expose myself or my division" (Iw 7) "I lose credibility if I have written 80% of all the content on JB United in a short period" (Iw 8)
Job function	The coworker censors him or herself because of his or her position in the organization	"It would be perceived as odd if I made a proposal. Qua my work place, which people can see. You are not anonymous; your job function is there" (Iw 10) "Because I think it is not my area of competence. When I write the post, it will say 'pensions and special adviser' next to, so then it is of no use that I answer a question about housing" (Iw 9)
Personality	The coworker using their personality as an explanation for why they will, or will not, comment	"I think it also depends on who you are. Some people I know in the bank would never write anything. I am completely indifferent to that. I guess it depends on how you are as a person" (Iw 12) "If I had a stranger in front of me, then I would not say a lot about who I am. I need to know, who is in front of me….I am a person seeking comfort" (Iw 16)
First like	To have the courage to be the first to like a critical post	"If it is something controversial, then it [the first like] can be difficult" (Iw 20)
Risk of violating unwritten rules and norms	Concerns about how one ought to behave	
Unwritten rules/ implicit voice theories	Considerations about not saying something they would not want to hear again and about not exposing other people	"Play the ball, not the man. It means a lot to me that it is an equal dialog" (iw 8) "Some form of responsible behavior and a loyalty….I think I should talk directly to the people who work with it, and add my contribution. In this way I can change things without exposing anyone" (Iw 14)
The coworker as a stakeholder	Considerations about how one ought to behave as an employee	"It is a bit colored by the fact that you are in a workplace" (Iw 3)
Risk of comments and reactions from other coworkers and managers	Fearing or taking different kinds of retaliation into account	

(*Continued*)

Table 2. (Continued).

Code	Description	Example
Fearing discussions	The coworker refrains from speaking, fearing comments from coworkers	"If you have something negative, then you cannot present it without it being visible to everyone, and then you will get a reaction from those who feel it was meant for them" (Iw 6) "In the old 'The Word is Free,' before we had JB United, some people thought they were the police. . ..There was a tone of voice which many indicated stopped them from writing, since they feared being made a fool of. You could not write something like that" (Iw 9)
Tall poppy syndrome	The coworker fears that coworkers will comment offline on the wish to be on stage	"Why doesn't someone in that division tell the person: You do not always have to be the first person to comment and perhaps work some times. And that is rubbish, because it does not take that long to write a comment, and as I say, I read it myself, and it will not take longer than I spend. It is more. .. Maybe there is a bit of tall poppy syndrome in it" (Iw 20)
Being responsible for one's words	Being prepared to receive and tackle hard comments	"You put yourself in line for tough verbal comments" (Iw 13) "You are responsible for your own words—and you should be able to say it face-to-face as well" (Iw 6) "You have to be prepared to take a beating" (Iw 3)
Cost-benefit reflections	Considerations whether it is worth the effort	"There is a kind of self-censorship determined by your own courage, and how important it is to say it" (Iw 6) "But why not comment? I think it will have a poor effect compared to the attention that will occur" (Iw 23)
Time	Considerations whether the person has time to enter the arena	"You have to spend time writing and answering" (Iw 17) "Time plays a role—you need time to write" (Iw 7)
Strategic	The coworker choosing what to say for strategic or political reasons	"Some people will think both strategically and politically that it is not so clever if I say this, because then I will get some enemies" (Iw 3) " Or [I cannot] openly question the bank's credit policy. As a [branch] manager I play a certain role in relation to my employees and other managers, which I have to be conscious about" (Iw 8) "I consciously spend a lot of time on it [formulating a first post]. Because then I avoid getting answers back. I see it as an investment" (Iw 19)
Timing	Concerns about how quickly to comment. Some topics should be answered quickly, while others topics purposely are delayed to get more comments	"We have the responsibility of credit cards and automatic payments, which customers are in contact with every day. It has to function all the time. That is an issue in relation to the speed of my communication. If something is wrong, then everyone goes ballistic" (Iw 19) "Speed is relevant in terms of commenting before it runs for too long, and people think: Are they hiding" (Iw 18)
Personal needs	To have something on one's mind and a desire to improve the workplace	"You have to get it off your chest, when you are right in the middle of it" (Iw 11) "To have something on one's mind" (Iw 1)
Support	Wanting to support a person or an argument	"It is to support the person" (Iw 23) "Would like to sympathize with those who write" (Iw 15) "To support or develop what has been written" (Iw 24)

Open communication climate

The Jyske Bank coworkers who were interviewed perceived that, in general, they were free to speak their mind on ISM, and also that communication on ISM made a difference—it could lead to concrete changes, and they generally felt they were heard. In other words, coworkers felt overall that it was psychologically safe to voice their opinion, and that it was worth the effort when someone voiced their opinion. In this respect the study confirmed that the organizational context in Jyske Bank supported employee voice.

Table 3. Coworkers' Reported Self-Censorship Strategies.

Strategy	Description	Examples
Postpone publishing the content	The coworker thinks about it for a while before formulating a post or a comment	"It goes around in my head, and when I return to my desk half an hour later, then I have found the right phrase I want to use, so that I comment in the right way" (Iw 1) "When it is written, then I leave it for an hour or two" (Iw 6)
Phrase or frame the content differently	Writing, reading, and rewriting carefully before posting	"I write directly [on ISM], but it takes a long time to write it, if it is 10–15 lines" (Iw 17) "I consider whether I have written it in a constructive manner" (iw 21)
Imagine responses from organizational members	Trying to imagine responses from the audience and writing a post or a comment to meet or avoid the responses	"This color has been changed from yellow to blue. And then they ask why? I might just as well give them the answer straight away, because there will always be a why, or I write: There is no why?" (Iw 19)
Ask for a second opinion	The coworker asks for a second opinion from a manager or colleagues	"There are always two from the division who know about it before I post it" (Iw 7) "I always talk it over with my manager before I post" (Iw 2) "I had my manager look at it in order not to make too much of a fool of myself" (Iw 12)
Choose other channels	Talking with colleagues instead of airing a frustration or an opinion on ISM	"I am more inclined to discuss it with my colleagues around the table" (Iw 4) "The written word has its limitations, and sometimes it is better to engage in a dialog" (Iw 18)
Withdraw	Deciding not to post or comment	"If I don't know how to formulate it or if I don't have the time" (Iw 12) "Don't want to say too much. I have also heard colleagues say that. You do have a desire to comment, but you don't do it" (Iw 16) "If I can't write it in a matter-of-fact way, then I leave it" (Iw 22)
Write only positive comments	Only posting harmless, positive comments	"I want to praise in a place like that (ISM)" (Iw 14) "I might write something like 'Well done'" (Iw 14)

> We have a way of communicating which does not distinguish between whether it is Anders (the CEO) who says it or someone at the bottom. We listen to each other and we help each other. After all, it is a workplace for all of us. We want things to go well, and we would like to keep our jobs. That must be the starting point. (Iw 1)

> It ("The Word is Free") shows that it is okay to voice your opinion. It is not certain that everyone will agree, but it is okay. (Iw 4)

The coworkers' perceptions of an open communication climate were supported by the textual analysis of communication on ISM. Coworkers from a wide range of levels took part in the communication on ISM either by commenting or liking, and they communicated on a wide variety of topics such as product and services, working conditions, organizational issues, and organizational identity (Madsen, 2016). However, they did so politely and well-articulated.

Participants reported that they were active on external social media such as Facebook, LinkedIn, or both. Only a few of the participants said they did not understand the use of likes. In this respect, the coworkers were found to be reasonably confident social media users.

Four imagined audiences

The Jyske Bank coworkers perceived themselves as communicating with four different audiences inside the organization: (a) frontline coworkers in the branches such as bank advisers, middle managers and branch managers; (b) back-office coworkers, such as specialists in product development, staff functions, and support teams; and (c) top managers like the CEO, a small, but very influential audience. This audience was perceived as initiators of organizational change, and the

audience was addressed directly or indirectly to try to get something done about an issue under discussion. Furthermore, the coworkers believed that these top managers would protect their right to voice their opinion (Iw 15, 6). Finally, (d), a small group of coworkers were perceived as "the language and order police." Participants believed this group of coworkers oversaw all communication on ISM and corrected other coworkers when they deemed it necessary—for instance, if they considered topics irrelevant, the tone of voice out of place, or the spelling incorrect. Top management was not perceived as a severe or feared audience. It was more coworkers in the branches (if you were a specialist) or the specialists (if you were a coworker working in a branch), as well as "the police," who might expose one or damage one's reputation.

The coworkers used the four imagined audiences to imagine likely reactions in the communication arena, and they formulated their communication so as to take these perceived risks into account.

> I spend a very long time to communicate very, very specific, cut into the bone, what do you need to know as a bank adviser, and what is your job in this. (Iw 19)

Some participants (Iw 2, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15) perceived that coworkers might deliberately bring up on ISM issues they had had difficulty drawing attention to through more traditional channels such as their immediate supervisor or in staff meetings; a perception here was that the visibility of the ISM arena and the presence of top managers was a guarantee that something would be done about it, especially if they managed to get support from other coworkers. In this way the ISM was a political arena, in which important decisions were affected.

Four perceived risks leading to self-censorship on ISM

The coworkers perceived that entering the communication arena on ISM required courage and determination. From their experiences with communication on "JB United," they knew that discussions could develop or escalate quite intensely and unpredictably. Posts could elicit opposition as well as support. A manager or specialist responsible for the topic under discussion would typically comment at the end to thank coworkers for their contributions and to sum up what would be done or not done about the issue (Iw 2, 3, 9, 10, 11, 14). This perception of likely reactions from the imagined audiences led coworkers to censor their communication on ISM. Twenty different motives for self-censorship were identified, and these were grouped into four perceived major risks (see Table 2).

The four major categories were overlapping and interrelated, since some motives could be placed in more than one category. This reflects that coworkers' motives for self-censorship were usually a mixture of motives, with the dominant motive differing from one coworker to another. For example, one coworker did not mind about spelling mistakes, but was concerned not to be seen as someone who always commented (Iw 8). Another was worried about being seen as presenting incorrect information and being reprimanded by other coworkers (Iw 22). Several were conscious of the risk of offending others and being seen as unprofessional (Iw 14, 19). So all the motives were taken into account, and all influenced the way individuals chose to communicate, some more than others depending on person and topic. The four main motives are explained in detail next.

1. Risk of providing low-quality posts and comments

Coworkers were very conscious that they were talking to a potential 4,000 coworkers on ISM. They tried to target the imagined audiences by means of relevant topics (Iw 8, 11, 12, 13, 21, 22), accurate information (Iw 17, 21, 22), and the right tone of voice (Iw 1,3, 9, 11, 21, 24). They feared wasting other coworkers' time (Iw 1, 6) if they wrote irrelevant (Iw 1, 3), uninteresting, or low-quality comments. Before entering a discussion, coworkers considered whether their contribution was valuable (2, 11, 17, 22) or unique (Iw 15, 20, 21, 23).

> I have a kind of filter which tells me that it should not be trivialities. It should have some kind of importance before I disturb people. (Iw 3)

Some coworkers said they were very careful about how they wrote. Posts or comments had to be concrete (Iw 9), very precise (Iw 19), and not capable of being misunderstood (Iw 11). Two coworkers even tried to formulate their headlines so as to address their information to a relevant target group (Iw 20, 23).

2. Risk of harming personal reputation

Coworkers were very conscious of the visibility of communication on "JB United," and self-presentation was a recurrent theme. Coworkers feared exposing themselves (Iw 1, 6, 7, 12) if no one supported their opinion (Iw 4), if they were the first person to like a controversial post (Iw 20), if they made spelling mistakes (Iw 1), or if they showed ignorance (Iw 12, 22). Such reputational risks were linked to the risk of providing low-quality contributions.

> I would probably be nervous about saying something where people would say: That is not the way it is. Did you not know that? (Iw 22)

Five coworkers mentioned that they worked to get the facts 100% correct (Iw 2, 7, 13, 21, 22); and two did not wish to lose credibility by commenting too often (Iw 8, 19).

In general, the coworkers strove to present a professional image of themselves in the organization (Iw 10, 12, 19). They tried to be constructive (Iw 14, 15, 21, 24), rather than merely complaining, on ISM (Iw 15). The specialists and middle managers in particular reflected on representing a job function or a role, and they strove not to compromise their position in the bank (Iw 3, 5, 8, 9, 18) and to support the official line in the organization. Most participants who commented were very conscious that their post or comment would appear in conjunction with their job title (Iw 18), and that their comment would be evaluated in relation to their job title (Iw 1, 3, 9, 10, 13, 18, 22). For example, one coworker in the head office commented on how to handle customers, and two bank advisers thought that was out of place (Iw 12, 13). A person's reputation in the organization could also influence the perception of a post or a comment: thus a critical post was perceived to have more weight because it was written by a hard-working, competent coworker (Iw 17; 20). "All the knowledge you have about a person will be read into the comment" (Iw 20).

3. Risk of violating unwritten norms and rules

Participants talked about several unwritten rules (Iw 1) or implicit voice theories (Detert & Edmondson, 2011) that censured what they could say on ISM. For example, they would not openly criticize anyone on ISM (Iw 6, 7, 8, 11, 13, 14, 23), expose other coworkers' incompetence (Iw 23), or write something online which they would not have said face-to-face (Iw 6). They talked about fair treatment as "playing the ball rather than the man" (Iw 6, 8, 11). This meant they would not undermine their immediate manager (Iw 6, 8) or write something that they would not like to hear themselves (Iw 16). Several coworkers also mentioned that they would often call people rather than writing in the discussion forum (Iw 9, 14). This gave the authors of the post a chance to correct it themselves, rather than being told off in public.

The considerations about unwritten rules were linked to perceptions of how they should act as employees. The coworkers were very conscious of being in a workplace (Iw 1, 3, 16), and that there was a difference between voicing an opinion on ISM and on external social media. All but one of the participants said they communicated in a different way on ISM than they would on external social media, like Facebook. Being in a workplace made coworkers very careful about their tone of voice.

> I cannot say: you are a fool. That is not a face I can put on. So each time I need to be political. Put on a decent tone of voice. (Iw 19)

However, coworkers still raised critical issues. One coworker claimed to be more critical internally than externally, since loyalty to the bank restricted what they could say about the bank externally (Iw 21).

4. Risk of comments and reactions from other coworkers and managers

Coworkers knew from experience that posts and comments could develop into long discussions (Iw 3, 6, 11, 13, 15, 17); when writing on ISM, depending on the topic and the person, they might fear, calculate, or just not think about the response from the imagined audience.

Only a few coworkers said they feared reactions from managers (Iw 6, 17) that could affect their career prospects. A few more participants speculated or had heard about coworkers who refrained from voicing their opinion after major workforce reductions (Iw 6, 16, 17, 20). Other participants claimed they did not share that fear, and that the feeling passed, since "you can't live in fear all the time" (Iw 20). However, one coworker thought that openly criticizing a top manager would be close to dismissing oneself (Iw 23), which could also be perceived as opposing an implicit voice theory (Detert & Edmondson, 2011).

The reactions coworkers feared were mainly those of other coworkers (Iw 6, 9, 11, 17, 19, 24). "It is the inner fear of writing something to 4,000 [coworkers]" (Iw 24). They feared that someone might talk back (Iw 11), that they might drown in comments (Iw 19), or that they might be caught by the self-appointed "language and order police" (Iw 9) if they made a spelling mistake or brought up an issue that in their perspective was trivial. Two coworkers mentioned the "tall poppy" syndrome (Iw 6, 16). One had experienced a snide remark in the lunch break after commenting on ISM (Iw 6), and several said of a coworker who commented a lot that they wished the immediate manager would talk to the person (Iw 16, 20). The discussion forum was called "The Word is Free," and some of the coworkers took "The Word is Free" very literally (Iw 23, 24). Two were more reluctant (Iw 1, 6), and most agreed that the word might be free, but coworkers should think twice before posting something.

> I think the word is free. You can write what you want. But of course you have to be prepared for some colleagues not to agree with you. But in relation to top management I think the word is free. (Iw 11)

Coworkers knew from experience that their comments on ISM could trigger questions and discussions (Iw 3, 6, 11, 13, 15, 17), that they were responsible for what they had written (Iw 6, 11, 17), and that a post or comment might require an answer from them. "I consider, when you say your opinion, then you have to be prepared to take a beating" (Iw 3). So they considered whether it was worth the effort (Iw 6, 23) and whether they had the time required to answer questions and comments (Iw 7, 17), or how they should best time their answer (Iw 18, 19). In this way the study confirmed that the coworkers judged the perceived efficacy of voice (Morrison, 2011) before communicating.

A few participants admitted that they had been strategic in writing on "JB United." Four of them consciously wrote on ISM to draw attention to issues if they had had difficulty getting a topic onto the agenda through traditional channels (Iw 6, 7, 10, 15). Three coworkers said they had taken into account that when they wrote on ISM someone might notice them (Iw 3, 5, 23), and several referred to how one coworker who started a big discussion a couple of years ago was now an employee representative on the bank's board (Iw 8, 20). This served as an example of how voicing an opinion on ISM could lead to advancement.

Finally, some coworkers, in certain situations, did not think about responses from the imagined audiences. They were aware that it took courage to enter the ISM arena, and they wished to support coworkers who dared to raise critical issues. They did not wish to leave them in isolation with their expressed view (Iw 15, 23, 24), and "liked" their post to demonstrate support. Finally, a few coworkers reported that sometimes they just had something on their mind (Iw 1) or needed to get something off their chest (Iw 11), which they did without considering possible responses. This is related to research showing that anger can make coworkers voice their opinion even when everything tells them not to (Grant, 2013).

Coworkers thus perceived that there were four major risks in entering the ISM communication arena, and they had different ways of handling these. Some were very concerned about perceived risks and held back, some even refraining from writing anything at all. Others were more conscious about the process, either actively playing the game or strategically using the process and the visibility of the arena to meet their own goals. In the interviews, the bank advisers came across as having less at stake and deliberating less, while specialists and managers deliberated more.

Seven self-censorship strategies

The coworkers found that the written, persistent and visible nature of the communication on ISM made it necessary to filter what they wrote on ISM.

> I do not know who I should direct my frustration to, but now I try to describe it here in a nice, decent, sober tone of voice. (Iw 8)

A few reported they were very impulsive and spontaneous (Iw 8, 24), particularly when it concerned positive and harmless comments, while most coworkers reported being more careful than on external social media. Seven self-censorship strategies (see Table 3) were thus identified, and these are explained below:

(1) *Postpone publishing content*. Most of the coworkers would think about their intended post very carefully before they published it on ISM, sometimes waiting as long as 2 days before they published their contribution (Iw 12), particularly when the post or comment was critical of the organization. This allowed the coworker time to deliberate on whether the post was worth for other coworkers to spend time on.
(2) *Phrase or frame content differently*. The coworkers were generally careful not to get carried away by their feelings (Iw 12) or be unprofessional (Iw 22), and they took their time in order to be constructive (Iw 8, 14, 15, 19, 24). Some reported framing content for political (Iw 3, 8, 14, 18) or self-promotional (Iw 5, 6, 7) reasons. In this way, the coworkers made sure of choosing the right words to get their intended meanings across and avoided misunderstandings.
(3) *Imagine responses from organizational members*. Before writing a comment or post on ISM, some coworkers tried to imagine how other coworkers might respond to it. They wrote their post in such a way as to meet other coworkers' expectations, either by answering anticipated questions (Iw 19) or by deliberately creating a discussion (Iw 6, 12, 23) that would draw attention to a problem. This was done to prevent a discussion getting sidetracked by questions and comments if they had not explained themselves well enough; or alternatively, to create so many comments that a discussion received attention from top management.
(4) *Asking others for a second opinion*. Several coworkers reported asking their colleagues (Iw 3, 7, 19, 20, 21) or their immediate manager (Iw 2, 12) for feedback before commenting or posting. This gave them a sense of whether their post would be received as anticipated or whether they should rephrase in order not to be told off by a manager or run into a storm of comments.
(5) *Choose another channel*. Several coworkers mentioned situations where they had talked to people in person rather than writing something on ISM (Iw 3, 7, 8, 10, 11, 14, 15, 18, 22). Others preferred to discuss a subject with colleagues at their desks or over lunch (Iw 4, 16). They did this to avoid any risk of harming their self-presentation, or of violating unwritten rules by exposing other coworkers or themselves.
(6) *Withdraw*. Several coworkers choose from time to time not to write, if they did not have the time (Iw 12), have anything to add (3,22) or did not know how to formulate their comment or post (Iw 12, 22). While other coworkers choose never to comment to stay out of trouble (Iw 16, 17).
(7) *Write only positive comments*. A few had a deliberate strategy of only posting positive supportive comments (Iw 14). Either they preferred to talk to people in person about issues involving

criticism (Iw 9, 14), or they wanted to avoid harming anyone (Iw 10, 13). In this way they did not risk being perceived as a complainer or as somebody breaking unwritten rules.

The coworkers reported that the process of self-censorship was longer and more considerations were taken into account, when the post or comment was critical of the organization.

Linking the findings together

Despite the open communication climate at Jyske Bank, self-censorship was widespread across the organization. Seven self-censorship strategies were used in response to the perceived risks of communicating to four imagined audiences. Coworkers did not just withhold communication, as suggested in studies of self-censorship on social media (Das & Kramer, 2013; Marwick & boyd, 2011; Sleeper et al., 2013); they adjusted their communication to the anticipated reactions from the imagined audiences, deliberating on what to say, how to frame it, when to communicate, and through which channels. Moreover, the existence of a discussion forum on the intranet over many years had developed ISM as a natural setting in which to bring up issues. Coworkers chose to communicate even if it was out of role—some even felt obliged to communicate—so they had developed strategies to cope with the perceived risks of addressing the imagined audiences.

Discussion

Based on the findings of the study, the following discussion addresses the conceptualization of self-censorship on ISM, the reasons coworkers engage in self-censorship on ISM, whether self-censorship strategies could be perceived as a social media skills, and the organizational context of self-censorship. In the final part of the article, the implications of the study for theory and practice are discussed.

Self-censorship on ISM

The study found that self-censorship on ISM involved a deliberation phase reported by nearly all coworkers before posting on ISM. They would get the urge or feel obliged to publish something on ISM, but just before writing it they would imagine the potential audiences and consider the perceived risks of entering the communication arena. As part of the deliberation phase, coworkers apply one or several self-censorship strategies to handle risks. The respective importance of the various risks as well as the choice of strategy depended on the individual coworker, the job position, and the topic. Such contextual factors have also been found to influence employee voice and silence more generally (Morrison, 2014). Self-censorship involved a process of transformation in which an initial idea or comment was considered, framed, and formulated in a way that was safe, constructive, correct and relevant for the organization, and harmless to the individual's self-presentation.

Motives for self-censorship

The study found that even in an open communication climate perceived as psychologically safe, self-censorship was always present. In the following, the motives for self-censorship related to each of the four perceived risks found in the study are discussed.

The coworkers were concerned about *providing low-quality posts and comments*. They wanted to address the imagined audiences (Marwick & boyd, 2011) on ISM with relevant, correct and useful information. Imagined audiences on ISM are more tangible than on external social media: It is arguably easier to know your audience's interests, goals, and values on ISM than on external social media, since organizational members are gathered around a common purpose: the organizational goals and values. Coworker communication on ISM in Jyske Bank was driven by a desire to bring about constructive change for the collective.

Such prosocial behavior is also termed organizational citizen behavior (Van Dyne, Graham, & Dienesch, 1994) and has been linked to personality (LePine & Van Dyne, 2001), organizational identification (Liu et al., 2010), job satisfaction (Morrison, 2011), and duty orientation (Tangirala, Kamdar, Venkataramani, & Parke, 2013). The interviews reflected that the coworkers identified with the organization and that most of those interviewed felt an obligation to contribute, even if it was not part of their job to do so. Moreover, concerns about the responses of internal imagined audiences at Jyske Bank were found both among coworkers acting in role and those who were acting out of role (Bateman & Organ, 1983). In this sense, self-censorship was not just a prosocial behavior, it was also an acquired skill. Coworkers thus developed *social media skills* in the same way as children over time develop social media literacy as they use social network sites (Livingstone, 2014).

However, coworkers were not solely concerned with contributing to the organization when they offered constructive suggestions on ISM. They were also influenced by self-promotional motives (Klaas, Olson-Buchanan, & Ward, 2012; van Zoonen, Verhoeven, & Elving, 2014). For example, they might wish to be perceived as competent, well-informed and skilled. Communication on ISM is a way of building social capital (Adler & Kwon, 2002), and coworkers are continuously involved in identity work (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002); this may give rise to a perceived risk of *harming personal reputation*. Scholars have found self-presentation to be a major issue on external social media (Sleeper et al., 2013; van Zoonen et al., 2014), and the present study shows that this is also the case on ISM. However, in the context of ISM, coworkers were more concerned about their professional than their personal image. They were careful with what they posted for self-protective reasons, such as fear of retaliation or of making a fool of themselves (Brinsfield, 2014; Detert & Edmondson, 2011; Morrison & Milliken, 2000).

The third risk—of *violating unwritten rules and norms*—reflects both conscious and unconscious motives for self-censorship, such as wishing for fair treatment and avoiding exposure of other coworkers' incompetence or undermining an immediate manager. Detert and Edmondson (2011) found that actions were guided by implicit voice theories: that is taken-for-granted beliefs about when and why speaking up at work might be risky or inappropriate. The coworkers in the study expressed several implicit voice theories, such as the norm that solid data were needed before they spoke up, or not wishing to circumvent the boss. At the same time, coworkers considered how to behave as an employee—a concern supported by Alvesson and Willmott (2002), who found that coworkers were shaped by the discourses within the organization. In this way, unwritten rules and norms for communicating on ISM developed over time within Jyske Bank and shaped the way the coworkers communicated. In particular, coworkers used self-censorship strategies to align their communication with these unwritten rules.

Finally, the fourth risk—of *comments and reactions from other coworkers and managers*—is rooted in the perception that all kinds of voice behaviors are risky, because constructive suggestions challenges the status quo (Burris, 2012). Managers (Rosen & Tesser, 1970) as well as peers are sensitive to criticism, so coworkers may be reluctant to convey negative or critical messages. On ISM, a suggestion can easily grow out of proportion when perceived differently than anticipated. So, coworkers feared blowback from other coworkers who felt a comment was aimed at them, or they feared being told off for promoting themselves. Coworkers judged the perceived safety and perceived efficacy of voice (Morrison, 2011), and considered carefully whether communicating on ISM was worth the effort.

It has been shown that self-censorship on ISM, just like employee silence, may be motivated by fear of retaliation or the belief that voice will not make a difference (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). However, the coworkers in the case study perceived that communication on ISM did make a difference, either leading to concrete change or to restorative justice—when people feel empowered and heard when there is an open debate about a topic, even if the discussion does not lead to concrete changes (Klaas et al., 2012).

The perceived risks of entering the ISM communication arena could also be reversed, so as to represent opportunities rather than risks—such as promoting oneself or strategically using the

knowledge of how communication develops in the ISM arena. Either way, the study found that coworker self-censorship was driven by prosocial as well as self-serving motives (Miles & Muuka, 2011). The coworkers wished to benefit the organization, but they also wanted to protect and promote themselves.

Self-censorship strategies as social media skills

The study found that coworkers apply seven strategies to ensure that the content was appropriate to the organization, the topic, and the person. This is in line with the findings of Kassing (2002), who suggests that employees exercise "political, relational and organizational savvy, when choosing to express upward dissent" (Kassing, 2002, p. 189). The strategies provide means to navigate the risks of communicating on ISM, as well as to balance serving coworker and organization interests. Arguably, the strategies are an expression of responsible coworker communication behavior: they can be perceived as *social media skills* (Livingstone, 2014), which coworkers acquire over time through taking cues from communication on ISM and from organizational discourse. Becoming aware that a post or a comment on ISM might elicit a particular reaction from one of the imagined audiences, coworkers use strategies to communicate in such a way as to reach the intended goals. Self-censorship then becomes a means to strategically manage communication on ISM. In this sense, self-censorship is a very important dynamic to maintain and improve the quality of organizational communication on ISM.

Self-censorship and the organizational context

Communication on ISM is not likely to play the same role in all organizations. The organizational context influences coworker self-censorship in terms of what coworkers talk about and how they talk about it on ISM (Martin et al., 2015). For example, coworkers pay attention to inconsistency between leader rhetoric and the way leaders use ISM in practice, and coworkers have to perceive an honesty in leadership signals before they will engage on ISM in a constructive manner (Martin et al., 2015).

In this respect, the process of self-censorship on ISM is a way for coworkers to interpret and enact the norms and unwritten rules in an organization. Both consciously and unconsciously, coworkers regulate their self-identity to fit both the organization and their own sense of self (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002). Rather than the organization controlling how an individual coworker behaves on ISM, it is the organizational discourses that will influence how the coworker positions his or her sense of identity in relation to the discourses and their understanding of the organization (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002, p. 632); and this will affect how the individual coworker communicates on ISM.

In a hostile organizational climate, coworkers are therefore likely to remain silent (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). However, this study indicates that even in an open communication climate, coworkers will censor their own communication to benefit the organization and themselves. In a closed organizational climate, self-censorship is likely to inhibit coworker communication on ISM. Conversely, a hostile climate could also hamper coworker self-censorship, especially if coworkers are not committed to the organization or their job and think they can easily find employment elsewhere. Some studies have indicated that during the financial crisis, coworkers refrained from voicing their opinions (Martin et al., 2015). More research is required to explore the relationship between self-censorship and the organizational context.

In addition to being affected by the organizational context, self-censorship is likely to influence the communication climate within the organization. In particular, self-censorship on ISM may encourage an open communication climate, since coworkers will feel safe to voice their opinion in the knowledge that other coworkers will use self-censorship strategies to formulate their criticism constructively. Psychological safety is thus found to be an antecedent to voice (Detert & Edmondson, 2011; Detert & Trevino, 2010; Edmondson, 1999; Liang, Farh, & Farh, 2012), but may also result from self-censorship.

Implications for theory and practice

Implications for theory

The present study suggests at least four contributions to theory. First, the study contributes to the conceptualization of self-censorship. It demonstrates that self-censorship on ISM is not limited to withdrawing information, as suggested in studies of self-censorship on social media (Das & Kramer, 2013; Marwick & boyd, 2011; Sleeper et al., 2013). Rather, self-censorship involves a phase of deliberation, which coworkers undergo in order to strategically manage the perceived risks of communicating on ISM. In the process, they apply seven different strategies to ensure that ISM communication will benefit not only the organization, but also themselves. Besides withdrawing from communication, coworkers can censor themselves by rephrasing or reframing their message, by postponing communication, by asking for a second opinion, and so on.

Second, self-censorship on ISM requires *social media skills*, which coworkers acquire over time by taking cues from communication on ISM and the organizational discourses (Uysal, 2016). In order to censor themselves, the coworkers in the study needed insight into the likely responses from the imagined audiences. They therefore learned to identify the audience of a post and to imagine that audience's likely response. To predict audience responses, coworkers develop implicit voice theories: "Taken-for granted beliefs about the risks or appropriateness of speaking up" (Detert & Edmondson, 2011, p. 461). The present study adds that such implicit voice theories are also employed for horizontal communication on ISM. The ability to use these implicit theories requires digital skills.

Third, self-censorship on ISM sheds light on the dynamics driving employee voice and silence on online platforms in organizations. Coworkers perceive ISM as a communication arena populated by imagined audiences, an arena that requires courage and determination to enter. Coworkers fear wasting other coworkers'time, harming their personal reputation, violating unwritten norms, and rules, and receiving comments and reactions from other coworkers as well as managers. In this respect, the perceived fears or risks seem to confirm the influence of majority pressure and fear of isolation (Noelle-Neumann, 1974), which may ultimately even lead to a spiral of silence. The study shows that coworkers can be insecure about being understood by their colleagues, which restrains their ISM communication. This points to a 'Homogeneity Paradox' (Stohl & Cheney, 2001): while on the one hand the free expression of divergent opinions on ISM is encouraged (JB's platform is called "The Word is Free"), in practice, expressing divergent opinions can be perceived as risky, which causes self-censorship.

Finally, the study indicated that imagined audiences on ISM differ strongly from those on external social media, where users generally have a rather vague idea about who they are communicating with (Das & Kramer, 2013; Sleeper et al., 2013). In contrast, on ISM, the imagined audiences are more tangible. As found in Jyske Bank, the perception of the four different audiences on ISM was more or less shared among coworkers, which means that it may be easier to assess the potential risks on ISM than it is on external social media such as Facebook—especially over time—when coworkers can take cues from how previous discussions on ISM developed. At the same time, the risks associated with ISM communication are greater than on external social media, as coworkers have more at stake in the organization due to their identification with the organization, and their financial dependency (Frandsen & Johansen, 2011). These elevated risks will make them self-censor more than on external social media. On social media, Das and Kramer (2013) found that users who target specific audiences self-censor more than users who do not.

Implications for organizations

The study has several implications for practice. First, implementing ISM sends an important signal to coworkers, who may feel invited to voice their opinions and suggestions. If the organization at the same time builds up a culture in which ideas, questions, and concerns raised on ISM are being

handled well, coworkers will also perceive that communication on ISM can make a difference in the organization. In other words, they will perceive safety and efficacy of voice (Morrison, 2011) on ISM, but even if no concrete changes are made, just having the discussion can offer coworkers a feeling of restorative justice (Klaas et al., 2012). Coworkers will feel heard, and will feel that they are a part of the organization, which will encourage organizational identification (Liu et al., 2010).

Second, although self-censorship generally has a negative connotation, as it can inhibit organizational voice, on ISM, it can also improve the quality of communication. In an organizational context, coworkers will not post just anything: they will exercise self-control. In this respect, coworker communication behavior on ISM reflects theories of employee voice and silence (Morrison, 2014): coworkers will try to balance being prosocial and constructive on one hand, and protecting and promoting themselves on the other hand. These dynamics indicate that an organization should not fear introducing ISM if it has an open communication climate. If constructive self-censorship is part of coworker communication on ISM, the organization will not receive much irrelevant, low-quality communication. In such cases, criticism, ideas and suggestions are likely to be formulated constructively, particularly when coworkers cannot remain anonymous and pictures, names, and titles are visible.

In this way, self-censorship may be related to the personality trait of self-monitoring, defined as "self-observation and self-control guided by situational cues to social appropriateness" (Snyder, 1974, p. 526). Highly self-monitoring coworkers will take cues from their colleagues' behaviors on ISM to find out what kind of communication is appropriate in a certain situation. Self-monitoring is positively related to promotions (Kilduff & Day, 1994). A coworker with a well-developed understanding of how to communicate in a constructive manner is more likely to be promoted than a coworker who lacks this skill. This is in line with Grant (2013), who found that coworkers who can control their feelings when voicing are more likely to succeed. Even though self-censorship may encourage responsible online behavior, every now and then, a coworker might step out of line. Such deviations might act as a reminder to others of the risks and consequences of ISM communication. In this respect, any incidents of this kind will help coworkers to develop their implicit voice theories and their social media skills.

Third, communication on ISM is very vulnerable to lack of audience interest. Only when coworkers perceive communication on ISM as important, relevant, open, and honest will they feel motivated to spend time reading it. Besides ensuring that content on ISM remains relevant, self-censorship can also take away the edge and authenticity of that communication if coworkers choose not to communicate about critical issues. In this way, self-censorship can both improve and inhibit communication on ISM.

Fourth, although coworkers may fear reactions to their posts or comments, some responses are desirable in order to prevent coworkers from thinking that their concerns or suggestions are futile. Coworkers who fail to get responses are likely to stop communicating altogether (Brzozowski et al., 2009), which could develop into organizational silence (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). In this respect, it is very important for management to address the issues that coworkers bring up if it wishes to empower them and create an open communication climate. Even if management takes no follow-up action, as so long as management listens and answers, coworkers will feel heard (Klaas et al., 2012).

Finally, our study has several implications for social media governance (Macnamara & Zerfass, 2012). The findings indicate that coworkers may be able to use ISM responsibly and strategically by censoring their expressions on ISM. As self-censorship is motivated by perceived risks, coworkers may over time become aware of these potential risks and develop social media skills and a responsible use of ISM. Furthermore, a participatory culture and management support will make coworkers feel empowered and trusted to rely on their own judgment (Rokka, Karlsson, & Tienari, 2014). This may increase coworkers' confidence in the implicit voice theories they employ to censor their own behavior on ISM. This reasoning is supported by positive correlations between participatory culture and managerial commitment on the one hand and social media skills on the other hand (Linke & Zerfass, 2013). Arguably, a regulatory framework based on risk awareness, management

support, and a participatory culture may govern coworker online behavior more naturally and more effectively than social media guidelines based on rules and sanctions. Over time, communication on ISM will adjust itself to the norms of the organization—one aspect of the organizational processes argued for by Alvesson and Willmott (2002).

Limitations and future research

The findings were based on a single case study and interviews with 24 coworkers in a Danish bank, which had an open communication climate. Further research is required to explore whether the same dynamics are found in other types and sizes of organizations. In particular, although one might expect self-censorship to be more prevalent in closed-communication climates, ISM may also provide the means for coworkers to change such climates. Furthermore, specifically during crises and controversies, communication dynamics may follow quite different patterns than the ones we found in this study. Research is also required to explore the circumstances under which self-censorship improves levels of communication and when it develops into the destructive phenomenon of organizational silence. This could be done by repeating the study in other organizations and collecting information about internal and managerial communication to support the implementation of ISM.

The cultural context should also be taken into account. In particular, self-censorship strategies might be employed differently in other countries in line with differing power-distance tolerance and national cultures. In addition, social media is widely used in Denmark. Sixty-nine percent of the adult population aged between 16 and 74 years is active on social media, making Denmark the most social-media-active country in the EU (Danmarks Statistik, 2015). Lack of social media skills was therefore hardly an issue in this case study, but it could be an issue in other organizations in other countries.

Conclusion

The study found that coworkers consider carefully what they write on ISM in order to not annoy imagined audiences, damage their own self-presentation, violate unwritten rules, or run into a storm of comments from other coworkers. They made use of seven different strategies to ensure that content was relevant and of high quality. This self-censorship was found to be a central dynamic of coworker communication on ISM. The study suggests that coworkers develop these social media skills over time.

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Chapter 12

”It is still trial and error. It is a skill you acquire over the years.”

ISM Coordinator (Multiple case study, Iw 7)

12. Summary of the three articles

The three articles explore coworkers as communicators on ISM and communication on ISM from three different perspectives in order to develop an understanding of the phenomenon of ISM and to help answer the overall research question: whether ISM introduces a new kind of participatory organizational communication.

The first article has a managerial perspective and answers **RQ1: How and why do organizations experience challenges with making coworkers communicate on ISM?** A prerequisite for coworker communication on ISM is that coworkers will use the communication platform. The exploratory study in ten organizations showed that a major concern for ISM coordinators was getting coworkers to communicate on ISM. Half of the organizations in the sample struggled to get coworkers to communicate, while the other half was more successful. The article found that introducing ISM into an organization was not easy. Communication on ISM was contingent and was influenced by multiple factors; coworker interpretation and sensemaking of ISM was central to whether they would use it or not. The organization could benefit from adopting a change-management approach when introducing ISM, and it had to be prepared to tackle challenges. In this respect ISM coordinators could play a central role as facilitators and sensegivers, and they had to be aware of their role in relation to coworker interpretation and sensemaking of communication on ISM.

The comparison between the ten organizations made it possible to make some assumptions about when coworkers will interpret communication on ISM as useful, such as that communication on ISM has to be different from other internal communication channels to make sense to coworkers. This indicates that communication on ISM needs to be multivocal, informal, and preferably honest or even critical. These assumptions were based on ISM coordinators' perceptions, however; so in the second article, a single case study in Jyske Bank studied the *actual* communication on ISM to understand what happens in the interactions among coworkers when they communicate on ISM.

The second article has a communication perspective and answers **RQ2: How and why do coworkers contribute to the construction of organizational identity, when communicating on ISM?** Three months of interactions among coworkers on ISM in Jyske Bank

were analyzed. Coworkers were found to discuss four themes: (1) customers and products, (2) working conditions, (3) organizational issues and (4) ISM-specific issues. The analysis also found, in line with a CCO perspective, that the coworkers in Jyske Bank did constitute the organization when they challenged, negotiated and discussed the organizational identity of the bank on ISM. Significant discussions about organizational identity on ISM developed into organizational stories shared in informal conversations with other coworkers; discussions on ISM helped develop and maintain group norms in the organization. Coworkers have a basic need to belong to and identify with the organization (Cheney et al., 2014), and the communication about organizational identity on ISM helped coworkers to make sense of and to identify with the organization.

A central argument in the second article is that ISM is a coworker communication arena in which coworkers can become active communicators. They have an opportunity to set the agenda in an organization, if enough coworkers support their argument. However, in both the multiple and the single case studies, it became apparent that coworkers did not communicate all the time about all sorts of topics. Actually, a lot of coworkers would not communicate at all, and coworkers in Jyske Bank communicated in a very polite manner. In this respect it became apparent that self-censorship could be used as a lens to understand the dynamics driving coworker communication on ISM, and this was explored in the third article.

The third article has a coworker perspective and answers **RQ3: Why and how does self-censorship influence coworker communication on ISM?** Twenty-four coworkers in Jyske Bank were interviewed to explore their communication behavior on ISM. Coworkers found that it required courage and determination to enter the ISM communication arena. They perceived four risks when addressing the imagined audiences on ISM: (1) the risk of providing low-quality posts and comments, (2) the risk of harming their own personal reputation, (3) the risk of violating unwritten rules and norms, and (4) the risk of incurring comments from other coworkers and managers. These risks led them to apply seven distinct self-censorship strategies in order to ensure that their content would benefit the organization as well as promoting and protecting themselves: (1) postpone publishing content, (2) phrase or frame content differently, (3) imagine responses from organizational members, (4) ask others for a second opinion, (5) choose another channel, (6) withdraw, and (7) write only positive comments.

Coworker self-censorship on ISM was proposed by me and the co-author of article three to be an expression of *social media skills* that helped coworkers to strategically manage communication on ISM, as well as to improve the quality of organizational communication. In this respect self-censorship can be constructive for organizational communication, but it can also have a potential dark side in organizations with a more closed communication climate. By addressing self-censorship on ISM, the study revealed that communication on ISM was very different to communication on external social media. The communication in many ways reflected the norms in the organization (Uysal, 2016). It showed that coworkers had more at stake (Frandsen and Johansen, 2011) than people communicating on external social media.

The three articles shed considerable light on the adoption of ISM, communication on ISM, and coworker communication behavior on ISM. The three different perspectives complement each other to create an understanding of the phenomenon of ISM. In the next chapter the findings from the articles will be discussed in relation to the literature reviewed in chapter 3, 4 and 5, with the aim of answering the dissertation's overarching research question.

Chapter 13

”It forces the responsible person to respond. Because now everyone has seen that this could be an option.”

Bank Adviser (JB, Iw 6)

13. Discussion: Toward an understanding of the use of ISM in organizational communication

In this chapter I will discuss the overall research question of the dissertation, namely whether ISM introduces a new kind of participatory organizational communication, and what are the dynamics driving coworker communication on ISM**.** First, I will discuss three themes emerging from the literature review, the empirical material and the three articles, and then I will return to the overall question.

The three themes discussed are: employee participation and ISM, coworkers as communicators on ISM, and the ISM communication arena. The first theme mainly relates to the literature on employee participation and decision-making. It looks primarily at coworkers as communicators primarily from a managerial perspective so as to understand the different issues involved when coworkers communicate on ISM as well as the benefit of having ISM. The second theme mainly uses theories on employee voice and silence in order to understand coworkers as communicators from a coworker perspective. The third theme draws especially on the theory of imagined audiences, the rhetorical arena theory, and a CCO perspective in order to understand the interactions in the ISM communication arena from a communication perspective.

13.1. Employee participation and ISM

Theories of employee participation have shown that employee participation is very paradoxical (Stohl and Cheney, 2001). My multiple case study in ten organizations seems to indicate that the same issues are found when organizations introduce ISM in an attempt to engage coworkers. From a social-constructivist and a CCO perspective, organizations become constituted in the interactions between organizational members and materiality (Cooren et al., 2012) such as ISM. In this respect the ISM technology itself will not introduce participatory communication; but how coworkers and managers perceive and interact with ISM will decide what role ISM will play in an organization (First article; Leonardi, 2009). The multiple case study showed that ISM played very different roles in the organizations surveyed, and that the ISM coordinators in half of the organizations perceived that it did not work that well. Moreover, all the ISM coordinators perceived that there were challenges in getting coworkers to communicate on ISM. This might reflect different user patterns, with most being are lurkers (Brandtzaeg and Heim, 2011), or the

paradox of participation (Stohl and Cheney, 2001) in which coworkers perceive the introduction of ISM as pseudo (Redding, 1972) or symbolic (Lewis, 2011) because their inputs are not translated into actual decisions.

The case study in Jyske Bank, however, showed that in this organization ISM was a central and important communication arena. The organizational identity was challenged, negotiated and constructed in the interactions between coworkers, and the coworkers perceived communication on ISM as making a difference in terms of setting the agenda or even changing perceptions of the way things were done (article 2). Comparing the two studies raises a major question: how can it be that ISM constitutes an influential communication arena in Jyske Bank, while other organizations struggle to get coworkers to communicate? The organizational context – management style, organizational culture and communication climate – influence how ISM is used (Martin et al., 2015; Parry and Solidoro, 2013), and the multiple case study showed that the way ISM was introduced into the organization, as well as the role of the ISM coordinator, influenced how coworkers interpreted and made sense of ISM. In this respect therefore the interpretation of and interaction with ISM were contingent to the organization. But other factors also influence how ISM is used and perceived, and in order to shed a different light on coworker participation on ISM than previous studies of ISM, I will in the following discuss three topics, or rather questions, in relation to employee participation on ISM: (1) what topics do coworkers discuss on ISM?, (2) who does not participate? and (3) what is the outcome of participation?

13.1.1.What topics do coworkers discuss?

In the multiple case study, the ISM coordinators agreed that most of the communication on ISM was news, knowledge-sharing and practical information. In four organizations, opinions were not aired at all; opinions voiced in the other organizations, when this happened, primarily concerned work-related issues, commenting on products and services (see appendix 3, folder B, Table 5). Only two organizations had experienced coworkers commenting on organizational issues: this had happened so rarely that the few times it did take place, the comments took on a life of their own as organizational stories. This is in quite starl contrast to Jyske Bank, where 22 out of 40 significant discussions in a period of three months in the fall of 2014 were about organizational issues, and another eight discussions were about working conditions. This is

interesting, since Brinsfield (2013) and Milliken et al. (2003) found that coworkers would not voice opinions about problems to do with organizational work processes and organizational decisions. Actually, out nine listed concerns not raised in an organizational context (Brinsfield, 2013; Milliken et al., 2003 – see 3.5.5. to see the list), only four – namely the incompetence of a colleague or a manager, harassment or abuse, equal pay and salary, and personal career – were *not* discussed on JB United. In this respect it could be said that in the ten organizations coworker communication on ISM was mainly a promotive (Liang et al., 2012) or supportive voice (Burris, 2012), while at Jyske Bank coworker voice on ISM was both challenging and supportive (Burris, 2012).

Drawing on Wilkinson and colleagues' (2013b) deconstruction of participation (as explained in 3.3.1.), there is a difference between the ISM coordinators' perceptions of participation in the ten organizations and the observed participation in Jyske Bank in term of the organizational level of the subject and the subject matter discussed. According to the ISM coordinators, coworkers in the ten organizations mainly discussed issues at task or department level rather than strategic issues, whereas in Jyske Bank coworkers also moved up into the organizational level and discussed strategic issues. It could be argued, in line with Redding (1972), that coworkers are mainly interested in making decisions relating to their own tasks and are less interested in having a say in organizational issues, and this comes across in the multiple case study. But how come then that the coworkers in Jyske Bank are willing to discuss organizational issues? This could be related to differing degrees of participation (Wilkinson et al., 2013b) or differing approaches to stakeholder participation (Lewis, 2011) as described in chapter 3. There is a difference between providing an arena for coworker communication and allowing that the communication arena to play a role in organizational decision-making. Two factors could explain the difference between Jyske Bank and the ten organizations in terms of topics discussed.

First, Jyske Bank had a long tradition of listening to and involving coworkers. Organizational stories about previous significant discussions on ISM confirmed that coworker voice on ISM was safe and taken seriously (Nørgaard and Vestergaard, 2004; article 2 and 3). Engaging coworkers in dialog is in general not so simple (Lewis, 2011), and they can detect whether the wish for coworker participation is symbolic or more substantial (Lewis, 2011;

Redding, 1972). Jyske Bank somehow succeeded in making coworkers understand that their input was wanted and that the input could be consequential. In this perspective the communication process between coworkers and managers has become more complex (Simonsson, 2002), and communication between managers and coworkers is no longer focused on simple directives but rather on visions, values and strategies (Heide and Simonsson, 2011). This last development is reflected in Jyske Bank, where coworkers challenge, negotiate and construct organizational identity in a constant dialog with other coworkers and managers. Communication between managers and coworkers in Jyske Bank could thus be seen as an example of communicative leadership, especially known from a Swedish context (Hamrin, 2016; Hamrin et al., 2016) but applicable to the case study in Jyske Bank, since the interactions with coworkers created a perception of ISM as a space or a communication arena in which many voices could act. Managers in Jyske Bank did not tell coworkers how to communicate on ISM: they *showed* that coworker communication was welcome by interacting with the coworkers or by not intervening when critical issues were discussed. Coworkers at Jyske Bank do not completely control the communication in the ISM communication arena; they can decide what topics to discuss and influence the outcome, but they do not take the final decisions about what actions to take when. They could be therefore said to have some co-determination, if I can refer to the escalator of participation suggested by Wilkinson et al. (2013b), or to be on step six in Lewis's (2011) continuum of seven steps, namely that "stakeholders are asked to provide initial guidance and render opinions that are heavily influential in decision-making" (p. 69).

Second, when coworkers engage in a dialog about organizational identity in Jyske Bank, this is likely to be an expression of their identification with the organization (Ashforth and Mael, 1989) and their display of organizational citizen behavior (Van Dyne, Graham and Dienesch, 1994). Coworkers identifying with the organization are more likely to engage in discussions about organizational issues and strategic matters (He and Brown, 2013). Several scholars have found that coworkers' active communication behavior is influenced by the quality of the relationship between an organization and its employees (Mazzei, Kim and Dell'Oro, 2012; Kim and Rhee, 2011; Welch and Jackson, 2007). Coworkers in the ten organizations were also likely to identify with their organizations, but somehow this did not translate into coworkers

discussing organizational issues. It could therefore be argued that coworkers in Jyske Bank identified to a much higher degree.

So a combination of personal and organizational factors seems to be decisive in influencing what topics coworkers are prepared to discuss and communicate about on ISM. It could therefore be argued on behalf of the case study in Jyske Bank that the real value of communication on ISM arises when coworkers dare or wish to be critical of the organization in order to improve it.

13.1.2. Who does not participate?

When looking at employee participation and ISM, it is relevant to discuss why some coworkers choose not to participate. In the articles and in chapter four I have addressed the fact that not all coworkers participate equally on ISM, and that this is likely to reflect different user patterns on social media (Brandtzaeg and Heim, 2011; Lüders, 2013), where most coworkers are likely to be listeners (Crawford, 2009). This was also the case in Jyske Bank, where far from all the coworkers communicated on ISM. The coworkers interviewed felt they were welcome and had been invited to communicate on ISM, but not all the coworkers did so. Apart from reflecting different user patterns on social media, this could also reflect the spiral of silence (Noelle-Neumann, 1974) and the MUM effect (Rosen and Tesser, 1970). The spiral of silence theory suggests that people only express their opinion publicly if they sense that their opinion is in line with the majority of the people present; the MUM effect describes how coworkers tend to avoid conveying negative information to their superiors.

Coworkers in Jyske Bank could be critical of the organization in their communication on ISM, but perhaps they sensed whether other coworkers supported their opinion and only put their opinion forward if they firmly believed that others would support it. However, this issue was not found in the interviews with the coworkers, nor is it addressed in the seven self-censorship strategies found in the second study; moreover it was only just touched upon by a few of the interviewed coworkers. For example, one coworker said that when posting something it would either gain support or not, and in the latter case, this could confirm to the person posting that he or she was the only one who saw an issue as worth mentioning (JB, iw 8). In this respect minority viewpoints might not be expressed in the first place due to the spiral of silence, or they might sink without a trace if they did not receive attention in the form of likes and

comments from other coworkers. It is also likely that a minority viewpoint will be supported by no one out of fear that no one else will support it. Thus one coworker said it required courage to be the first person to like a critical post (JB, Iw 20).

A coworker with a minority viewpoint might have a relevant point, but might not be listened to. In this respect it therefore becomes the outspoken and recognized coworkers, who know the organization, who set the agenda. On social media, influentials have been found to move the crowd (for a review, see Probst, Grosswiele and Pfleger, 2013); in an organizational context, these influentials are likely to be members of the organization with some status (Morrison, 2014). Some of the coworkers interviewed in Jyske Bank remarked that a particular post was taken seriously both by other coworkers and by managers because the viewpoint was expressed by a hard-working and conscientious coworker (JB, Iw 9, 20). So what happens with crazy ideas expressed by the sloppy coworker? I do not know, and the study in Jyske Bank did not reveal anything more than that some posts did not get much attention and that, owing to self-censorship, a lot of posts were probably never aired in the first place. Perhaps, then, the people in the arena are mainly the "organizational supporters" who identify with the organization and think like the organization. In this respect the dissenting view that was characterized as one of two beliefs about the benefits of employee participation (Redding, 1972) was not found. However, this is only speculation and should be explored in future research.

13.1.3. What is the outcome of participation?

Organizations' motivations to involve coworkers are mainly driven by the desire to improve economic performance and help protect the organization's reputation (Mazzei, 2014; Ruck and Welch, 2012). The same findings run through the literature on ISM. The original objective in introducing ISM is to improve the effectiveness of the organization (e.g. Bennett et al., 2010; Leftheriotis and Giannakos, 2014; Shami, Nichols and Chen, 2014). The question is however whether the organization's quest for effectiveness and efficiency leads coworkers to perceive the wish for participation as pseudo-participation (Stohl and Cheney, 2001). Organizations want the benefits, but are not prepared to engage with the philosophy of social media, which is to allow everyone to have a say (Castells, 2007). Morrison (2014) even questions whether it has actually been proven that coworker voice is beneficial to organizations: perhaps organizations have the wrong intentions when introducing ISM. They might instead have to see ISM from a

different perspective and start not with the benefits to the organization but with looking at what participation can do for coworkers. Participatory decision-making has been found to have a positive influence on job satisfaction (Cotton, 1993; Pacheco and Webber, 2016). However, research is less unequivocal about the impact of participation on organizational effectiveness, since this is influenced by many different factors (Cotton, 1993; Wilkinson, Dundon and Marchington, 2013a). Additionally, satisfied coworkers are not necessarily more effective (Cotton, 1993).

In Jyske Bank the coworkers perceived that their voices were heard, and that they could influence decisions and perceptions in the organization. This was especially underlined in some of the major and memorable discussions in the organization where an initial post received many comments and likes, and where all the coworkers who commented were invited into the bank's television studio to participate in a live debate about the topic. This had a huge impact, if not in the form of concrete initiatives, then in terms of restorative justice (Klaas et al., 2012). These incidents developed into organizational stories of how coworkers were listened to; the impression was that these episodes made coworkers identify even more with the organization and led them to act as ambassadors. This kind of behavior cannot really be measured in terms of efficiency, but is certainly valuable to the organization. So the drivers behind introducing ISM should perhaps be the wish to hear the voices of coworkers from a philosophical standpoint, rather than economic incentives.

13.2. Coworkers as communicators on ISM

Theories of employee voice and silence (for reviews, see Brinsfield 2014; Morrison, 2011, 2014) have shed a considerable amount of light on coworkers as communicators in organizations; my two studies, and especially the Jyske Bank case study, also provide insights into how this role becomes more visible and more developed in relation to ISM. The question is, however, what is the next stage when coworkers are active communicators, and what are the dynamics that drive coworker communication on ISM? Here I will discuss three issues in relation to this role for coworkers as active communicators. First, why do coworkers communicate the way they do on ISM? Second, could the coworker be perceived as a strategic communicator? And finally, does ISM point to new implicit voice theories or unwritten rules about how to communicate in an organizational context?

13.2.1. Why do coworkers communicate the way they do on ISM?

Scholars provide at least four explanations that can be used to understand coworker communication behavior on ISM. First, coworkers take cues from the organization about how to communicate (Ashford et al., 1998; Kish-Gephart et al., 2009; Martin et al., 2015). Figure 1 in the first article gives an overview of the contextual factors influencing how coworkers communicate on ISM, including coworker perceptions of ISM technology (Leonardi, 2009; Orlikowski, 1992; Welch, 2012), the way ISM was introduced (Leonardi, 2009), and the organizational context (Martin et al., 2015; Uysal, 2016).

Second, as suggested by theories of employee voice (Milliken et al, 2003), this can depend on the individual coworker in terms of personality (Klaas et al., 2012), experience, tenure and position in the organization. Third, the different types of communication behavior found on social media can explain different degrees of participation (Brandtzaeg and Heim, 2011; Li and Bernoff, 2011; Nielsen, 2006), including the phenomenon that most coworkers choose not to communicate on ISM.

Fourth, coworkers can feel that they have an obligation to improve the organization. Several theories have been developed to explain this kind of behavior including extra-role behavior (Liu, Zhu and Yang, 2010), duty orientation (Tangirala et al., 2013), and organizational citizenship (Van Dyne, Graham and Dienesch, 1994).

These theories shed some light on what could prompt coworkers to communicate on ISM; but I would like to push the understanding a bit further, beyond organizational context and personal explanations. The question is whether something can also be explained by the media and the affordances of ISM, such as visibility and persistence (Treem and Leonardi, 2012), or rather by the way coworkers interpret communication on ISM. I can see at least four possible consequences.

First, it is easy to communicate on ISM. Coworkers have become accustomed to communicating on external social media, and they bring their media habits into the organization (Treem et al., 2015). Coworkers have always been communicators in organizational communication in one way or another, but with the introduction of ISM, coworkers – or at least some of them – communicate more often and to a bigger and more diverse audience. Coworkers

are likely to consider what and how to communicate more often because ISM is an ever-present communication opportunity.

Second, given the presence of the communication opportunity and the visibility and persistence of the communication, coworker communication is likely to become more reflective than before ISM entered the workplace. Coworkers constantly build on previous experiences of communication on ISM – both their own and conversations they have seen displayed on ISM, including the meta-discussions about how to communicate on ISM (cf. topics discussed on JB United in the second article). In this respect coworkers become aware of their own role as communicators and of interactions on ISM, and become increasingly aware of how their communication on ISM can influence their relationships with other coworkers, the organizational discourse, and the way things are talked about. They become reflective communicators.

Third, the visibility and persistence of communication on ISM are also likely to prompt coworkers to perform impression management (Goffman, 1959) when they communicate on ISM, as found in the case study in Jyske Bank. This could be not only a practical matter of making their knowledge available as part of their job, but also of maintaining or building up their own reputation in the organization, something that might be crucial to retaining a job or a particular power position in the organization.

Fourth, another consequence of the visibility and persistence of communication on ISM is that coworkers can interpret it as offering potential to move the organization (Treem and Leonardi, 2012), because such communication can force the organization to do something about an issue if many coworkers support it (JB, iw 6). It can thus become far more interesting for coworkers to use ISM than other internal channels such as staff meetings and conversations with peers and managers. As seen with voice theories, the efficacy of voice is decisive for whether coworkers will voice an opinion or not (Morrison, 2014), and the visibility and persistence of ISM somehow make the communication more consequential for both coworker and organization (Treem and Leonardi, 2012). The organization – or rather, a manager – might not wish to address an issue raised on ISM, but an unanswered question will remain on ISM as a reminder of an issue not paid attention to. The manager might get away with not answering, but

coworkers are likely to remember and develop the incident into an organizational story of non-engagement, which might be contradictory to the organization's strategy (Spear and Roper, 2016).

The visibility and persistence of communication on ISM can thus be an incentive for coworkers to become active communicators.

13.2.2. The coworker as a strategic communicator?

The case study in Jyske Bank showed that coworker self-censorship is a strategic behavior which can benefit the organization as well protect and promote the coworker. But can coworker communication behavior on ISM be characterized as strategic in other ways? The case study in Jyske Bank seems to indicate this. Coworkers displayed at least four different types of communication behavior in relation to ISM: (1) when they were reading content and making sense of it, (2) when they "liked" content, (3) when they commented, and finally (4) when they were the authors of an initial post. The first type of behavior, reading, was found to be a gatekeeping strategy. There was a lot of content to read on the intranet as well as the more social aspects of the intranet, termed ISM in this dissertation. A few of the coworkers interviewed claimed to read everything (JB, iw 10, 18, 20, 21), while most reported selecting what interested them in relation to their job or perhaps additionally to them personally. The second type of behavior, liking, was found to be far more strategic on ISM than on external social media, where coworkers claimed to be much more spontaneous. On ISM, a like was perceived as an evaluator (JB, iw 3, 10; 12; 18), and several coworkers reported that being too generous with likes would devalue the like function (JB, iw 11; 12). A like was thus a carefully considered act, with thought processes similar to the self-censorship process laid out in the third article. Does this post deserve a like? Should I support this person for their courage in speaking up on ISM? Do I dare to be the first person to like this critical post? The third and fourth types of behavior are discussed in the third article, where coworkers were found most of the time to go through a three-phase thought process of self-censorship before commenting or posting, in which they would frame and phrase the content in terms of benefiting the organization as well as protecting and promoting themselves. This self-censorship was stronger when it came to writing the initial post than for a comment.

These four different types of communication behavior draw a picture of the coworker as a strategic communicator in every aspect of the communication in relation to ISM. This strategic behavior is probably related to coworkers' contractual and emotional relationship with the organization – contractual in terms of the financial relation and the different stakes held by coworkers in organizations such as job security, working conditions and degrees of freedom (Frandsen and Johansen, 2011); emotional in terms of coworker identification with the organization, which can become a big part of a coworker's identity (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). So it could be argued that coworkers are strategic communicators not only consciously, but also unconsciously.

13.2.3. New implicit theories in organizational communication?

The case study in Jyske Bank found that the dynamics of employee voice and silence (Brinsfield, 2014; Morrison 2011; 2014) were also found on ISM. An additional filter was added to these dynamics, by the visibility and persistence of ISM communication, a filter that could both decrease and increase the volume of communication. Coworkers perceived four risks in entering the ISM arena and would apply at least seven different strategies to avoid the risks. In relation to the perceived risks, coworkers would build up implicit theories about what topics were risky to communicate about. As pointed out in section 13.1.1., coworkers in Jyske Bank discussed topics on JB United, their ISM, that Brinsfield (2013) and Milliken et al. (2003) had on their list of concerns not raised in an organizational context (See chapter 3). These topics were organizational decisions, unethical behavior, problems with organizational work processes, and perceived unfair treatment. The first two are of an organizational or strategic character, while the last two could be perceived as circumventing (i.e., dissenting by going around or above one's supervisor). Circumventing has traditionally been perceived as rather risky or even consequential (Kassing, 2007), and Detert and Edmondson (2011) found that coworkers have some implicit theories about not bypassing their boss upward, embarrassing the boss in public, or harming others.

However, in Jyske Bank, circumvention on ISM was a common activity. It was seen as a way to draw attention to issues when coworkers felt they could not get answers through the official channels, the chain of command or "the support stairs" as it was called in Jyske Bank (JB, iw 2, 9, 10, 15, 19). In this way communication on ISM became a way to pressure support

functions and specialists to answer questions that they had otherwise ignored or placed at the bottom of their to-do list. Once placed on ISM, the question became visible to the whole organization as well as the imagined top management audience that might pressure those responsible to come up with an answer. Coworkers interviewed in support or specialist functions were aware of coworkers' deliberate choice to circumvent. They perceived these circumventions as almost demanding internal firestorms, and they complained that this could force them to spend time on issues they considered less important than other tasks that they would accordingly have to postpone (JB, IW 2, 19).

When coworkers in Jyske Bank circumvented on ISM they often did so with a direct factual appeal or by presenting a solution – the two most successful ways of dissenting (Kassing, 2005). Here I propose that implicit theories had emerged in Jyske Bank in relation to coworker communication on ISM, namely that circumvention or exposure of organizational flaws on ISM was all right as long as it was formulated in a manner which addressed the issue rather than the person and carried out in a decent tone of voice, focusing on facts and solutions. The rationale here would have been that this was for the benefit of the organization. This however requires an organization with a very high level of trust, since circumventing has been found to be rather risky for the individual coworker (Kassing, 2007).

13.3. The ISM communication arena

In chapter five, I conceptualized communication on ISM from a CCO perspective as a communication arena with interactions among organizational members, who perceived themselves as being watched by imagined audiences (Marwick and boyd, 2011). Both the multiple case study and the case study in Jyske Bank showed that the ISM communication arena and the imagined audiences were socially constructed by coworkers based on cues they took from the organization, such as their perceptions of norms and unwritten rules, their previous experiences with communication on ISM, and interactions with other coworkers about what had happened in this arena. At the same time, I was able to observe how communication on JB United in Jyske Bank developed, and to interpret what was unfolding in the arena.

In the following I therefore combine these two insights from the empirical material and attempt to develop an understanding of the ISM communication arena. First, I will briefly point

out the difference between internal and external social media in terms of what the media is used for and the communication behavior. Second, I will try to describe the socially constructed arena. Third, I will look at whether ISM can be perceived as a political arena, and finally, in section 13.4, I will discuss whether ISM facilitates a new kind of participatory organizational communication.

13.3.1. The difference between internal and external social media

The rhetorical arena theory from crisis communication (Frandsen and Johansen, 2010; 2016; Johansen and Frandsen, 2007) and the theory of imagined audiences from external social media (Marwick and boyd, 2011) were applied to an internal context in order to create an understanding of the ISM communication arena (See chapter 5). However, a significant difference was found between internal and external social media. Being in an organizational context shapes the communication on ISM in many ways – in the topics discussed, the motive for communicating, the spontaneity of the communication, and the degree of self-censorship.

First, both the ISM coordinators in the first study and the coworkers in Jyske Bank perceived communication on ISM as being professional and work-related, whereas communication on social media was perceived as being social and leisure-related. Second, the case study in Jyske Bank found that coworkers would use ISM to present an image of themselves as competent coworkers and to solve work-related issues, as well as to challenge, negotiate and construct organizational identity. Studies on social media, on the other hand, have found that individuals primarily use social media to construct, negotiate and express their personal identity (van Zoonen, Verhoeven and Elving, 2014). This could include an identity as a coworker in a specific organization that might contribute to the construction of the organizational identity (van Zoonen, Verhoeven and Elving, 2014), but the motive was still personal. Third, the case study in Jyske Bank found that coworkers considered how to frame and phrase their content so as to fit the organizational setting, while people were more spontaneous when communicating on external social media (Richey, Ravishankar and Coupland, 2016; van Zoonen, Verhoeven and Elving, 2014). Finally, self-presentation and self-censorship are considerations on external social media (Das and Kramer, 2013; Sleeper et al., 2013), but they are expressed in a different way in an internal context owing to coworkers' financial relationship and organizational

identification with the organization. This makes coworkers more careful in their communication.

Despite the difference between ISM and external social media, the metaphors of imagined audience and the rhetorical arena are, however, useful in understanding communication on ISM. The ISM in Jyske Bank was indeed a stage watched by organizational members with great interest (or anxiety): it was an arena in which power conflicts were displayed and important organizational stories initiated.

13.3.2. The socially constructed ISM communication arena

Based on the case study in Jyske Bank, I will discuss the ISM communication arena in Jyske Bank in relation to imagined audiences and multivocality.

The coworkers in Jyske Bank perceived that there were four different imagined audiences watching communication on ISM, and they took them into consideration when formulating initial posts or when commenting or liking a post. The audiences were socially constructed, but it was easier for coworkers to imagine these audiences than imagined audiences on external social media, since the audiences actually acted in the arena. The audiences were specific to Jyske Bank, but it is likely that coworkers in other organizations would also group organizational members into a manageable number of audiences, so that it becomes easier to target their communication and to predict likely risks of entering the communication arena. This is a consideration that becomes part of coworkers' *social media skills,* as proposed in the third article.

The rhetorical arena theory uses the concept of multivocality to describe how voices communicate to, with, against, past and about each other (Frandsen and Johansen, 2016). On JB United (the ISM in Jyske Bank), organizational members were communicating to, with, against, past or about each other. But certain patterns seemed to develop in how organizational members interacted with each other, as was observed in the study of communication on JB United (see appendix 5, folder C, Table 1; article 2) and as reported by some coworkers in the interviews (JB, IW 6, 7, 9, 14). Discussions were allowed to develop and many different voices were heard, and at a given point the person responsible for the topic discussed would answer or take action. Finally, the initiator of the discussion would thank others for their answers, or

restart the discussion if he or she found their issue was not well enough attended to. In this respect, therefore, the voices acting in the arena were not completely random. There was a kind of socially constructed manuscript, which was used by organizational members as a basis for improvising on and also for assessing the risks of entering the arena. These patterns to some extent made the communication predictable or recognizable, even if other aspects (such as the issues raised) were unpredictable. This line of thought is expressed by Garner (2013), who argues that rather than looking at expressions of dissent in isolation we have to explore how previous experiences shape present expectations. I therefore propose that the ISM communication arena creates certain flows of communication likely to be contingent to the organization, and that coworkers use the knowledge of these patterns to evaluate the safety and efficacy of voice: something that is decisive for whether or not they will voice. The patterns will not be there when ISM is first introduced, but over time they will develop and subsequently become more and more recognizable. These patterns are likely to reflect the norms in the organization (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Uysal, 2016).

Communication in the ISM communication arena is therefore in many ways predictable. But it is unpredictable in terms of who voices an opinion about what at what point in time. The case study in Jyske Bank showed that some coworkers were known to voice their opinions and would do so from time to time, but sometimes a coworker would suddenly voice an opinion without having done so before because he or she felt very strongly about something (JB, Iw 12, 17, 23). The coworkers in the specialist and support functions also reported fearing a sudden internal firestorm (JB, Iw 2, 10, 19), and in this way they indicated the unpredictability of communication on ISM. So the ISM communication arena was at the same time perceived as both predictable and unpredictable.

Significant discussions on JB United could become organizational stories, as Garner (2013) found that an initial conversation of dissent could, through interactions between coworkers, become part of ongoing stories and discourses about organizational dissent. Significant discussions on ISM would develop into organizational stories, and they would constantly be retold and reconstructed in the interactions between coworkers on and outside of ISM. A story was at the same time constructed about the discussion forum “The Word is Free,” linking the lively discussions to the perception of the organizational identity of Jyske Bank.

Interactions between the coworkers in the ISM arena were part of an ongoing process, constantly deconstructing and constructing the organizational identity, the norms of the organization, perceptions of working conditions, and several other stories not explored in depth in this case study. The coworkers were, in other words, collectively negotiating Jyske Banks' "substance" and "text" (Chaput, Brummanns and Cooren, 2011), to use the terms used by the Montreal School; and in this way they became an example of the CCO principle. These discussions and the way of communicating had become a natural part of organizational communication within Jyske Bank. Since the coworkers were building on previous experiences of discussion on ISM, it could be argued that initial discussions on ISM and how they develop and are handled are likely to influence how the ISM communication arena is perceived and used by organizational members.

13.3.3. The power games in the ISM communication arena

The case study in Jyske Bank indicates that the ISM communication arena could be perceived as a political arena. The interactions between organizational members could be viewed as collaboration or co-construction, but also as struggles or power games. Lundgren, Strandh and Johansson (2012) thus found in one of the organizations in their study that ISM could have a dividing power between those who used ISM and those who did not. In the context of Jyske Bank, one group could thus be part of the construction of organizational identity, while the other was not. The process of self-censorship that coworkers underwent before posting anything also called attention to the fact that the ISM communication arena is not an innocent communication arena, but can be political. This was the case both in discussions where more critical issues were raised, and when coworkers used ISM to circumvent the traditional chain of command.

One of the Jyske Bank coworkers (JB, Iw 6) mentioned that he enjoyed watching the power games played out in the ISM communication arena. He stated this in relation to one of the 40 significant discussions named "Consciously satisfied employees" (appendix 8, folder A, 21). In that discussion, a coworker asked why the bank did not assess coworker satisfaction once a year, and a manager tried to put a lid on the discussion. But the coworker who initiated the discussion kept arguing in support of the value of such an assessment and was supported by other coworkers.

Another example of the display of power was the many times coworkers circumvented the chain of command to draw attention to issues they had not got an answer to through the official communication channels. The "language and order police" also played a role in scaring people off from communicating about trivial or personal matters, ensuring that the subject matter of the communication climbed up the continuum from trivial to strategic concerns suggested by Wilkinson et al. (2013b). In this respect, therefore, power games did unfold the ISM arena, and norms were indirectly being communicated through these.

Power was not chosen as a lens in the dissertation as it did not grow out of the empirical material as the most significant perspective. However, several questions remain after the case study in Jyske Bank that could be explored in future research. Which coworkers did not voice opinions? Were certain organizational members especially talented in moving the crowd in their direction? Were some coworkers motivated by senior organizational members to ask a certain question so as to deliberately create a stir, so that ISM could be used for internal spin? Which topics were not discussed in the ISM communication arena? Or, in line with Schoeneborn and Vásques (2016), were there certain principal authors of the organizational texts?

13.4. A new kind of participatory organizational communication?

The overall aim of the dissertation was to find out whether ISM introduces a new kind of participatory organizational communication, and in this section I will try to conclude the discussion by answering this question.

Deetz and Brown (2004) claim that productive employee participation requires *forums* and *voice*. By voice, they mean "the capacity for differences to be vividly, 'demandfully' present" (p. 186). As pointed out in the first article, introducing ISM in itself is not enough. Coworkers also have to interpret ISM as a space in which they are not only invited to communicate, but also taken seriously when they do. Organizations tend to send conflicting signals to coworkers about their wish to involve them (Stohl and Cheney, 2001; Redding, 1972; Lewis, 2011), so a prerequisite for a new kind of participatory organizational communication happening on ISM is an organization willing to engage in the philosophy of social media and sincerely wishing to listen to coworkers' voices. In this respect the use of ISM is contingent on the organization.

With this prerequisite taken into account, the case study in Jyske Bank showed that participatory and critical communication is possible in an organizational context, and that ISM does create a communication arena with multivocal communication in which voices communicate to, with, against, past and about each other (Frandsen and Johansen, 2016).

The visibility and persistence of the communication on ISM become an incentive in their own right for coworkers to communicate on ISM, as these factors improve the efficacy of voice. These two affordances help develop new implicit rules about how to communicate in organizational communication, such that circumventing, at least on certain topics, becomes an acceptable way for coworkers to voice concerns as long as it is formulated in a constructive and decent manner. The presence of the ISM communication arena in other words helps develop coworkers' skills as strategic communicators because ISM is always present as a communication opportunity and coworkers can observe and learn from the communication of other coworkers.

When the coworkers in Jyske Bank interact in the ISM arena, they challenge, negotiate and construct organizational identity in a way that is visible to the whole organization. They might not all participate by commenting, but they can listen, which is in itself an important communication skill (Crawford, 2009). The many voices in the arena help coworkers as well as managers to make sense of the organization. The voices are not likely to present an unequivocal image of the organization, but this is actually a strength of the media as organizations are more and more perceived as heterogenous sites (Schoeneborn and Vásques, 2016). Many different voices are seen and heard in the ISM communication arena, telling many different stories, which helps organization members to construct a complex understanding of the organization and at the same time provide some kind of co-orientation (Kuhn, 2012).

When coworkers in Jyske Bank talk about communication on ISM, they sometimes remember who initiated a discussion or one or two of the people who commented, but most of the time they mainly remembered what was said and the organizational position of the coworker. For example, a bank adviser in Copenhagen remembers a bank adviser in Jutland raising a critical question about measuring employee satisfaction, and that the post was named "Consciously satisfied employees"(JB, iw 6). He remembers how the discussion developed between a manager and the bank adviser, but he does not recall any names, even though

coworkers' name, job position and location appear next to their post or comment. Significant discussions on ISM thus become detached from the coworkers communicating, and gain agency in themselves (Cooren, 2004). They become communication episodes (Bencherki and Snack, 2016; Luhmann, 1992), with different voices acting perceived as representing the different imagined audiences, or voices within these imagined audiences. The communication episodes can interact with other communication episodes, as Garner (2013) found with episodes of dissent, and they can develop into organizational stories. These communication episodes could be perceived as the pulse or the beating heart of the organization. In this respect – at least in Jyske Bank – communication on ISM becomes an organizational communication in which the communication itself is more important that the coworkers actually voicing.

The individual coworker voicing on ISM, however, does not perceive the communication in this way. Entering the arena involves a lot of perceived risks, as shown in the case study in Jyske Bank. But from an organizational point of view, communication on ISM differs from other kinds of organizational communication in its multivocality, its detachment from senders and receivers, and the centrality of communication episodes as interactions between organizational members. The potential of the communication is immense, since it can "talk" organizations into existence (Cooren et al., 2011). However, this potential is dependent on the organization: in one organization communication on ISM can have a huge impact, while in another almost none (as found in the study of the ten organizations). In Jyske Bank, organizational and strategic issues were discussed, while this was hardly the case in the ten organizations in the multiple case study. This could lead one to propose that for communication on ISM to become participatory and to have an impact, coworkers have to take part in strategic and organizational discussions. Communication on ISM should not just be for trivial matters. However, coworkers are only likely to take part if they identify highly with the organization and feel that it is an integrated part of their identity and that they belong to the organization (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; He and Brown, 2013).

So ISM does provide an opportunity for participatory organizational communication. But is this kind of communication new? First, participatory organizational communication might already exist in other sub-arenas, such as department meetings and self-managing teams. The literature about employee participation and decision-making dates back to at least the 1970s

(Redding, 1972). Employee participation is therefore not a new topic. However, it could be argued that ISM has the ability to connect more people and make more voices heard across geographical and departmental distances, and that this is new.

Second, Jyske Bank introduced their discussion forum on the intranet in 1999 (Nørgaard and Vestergaard, 2004), and Heide (2015) points out that interactive communication has been a feature on the intranet since the mid-1990s. However, the multiple case study seems to indicate that there is a significant difference between having the technology and actually developing participatory organizational communication. So the new thing about ISM at this point in time is perhaps just that some organizations have started to use the interactive possibilities to a greater extent and are allowing coworkers to speak their mind. This development is helped by coworkers developing new media habits on external social media, and also by the increased attractiveness and ease of use of ISM systems, so that they look more and more like external social media.

Chapter 14

”We have seen a discussion that started in ”The Word is Free”, where the bank adviser in the end was brought into the executive board office – not to give him a reprimand. But because the journalists wanted to interview him together with the top managers responsible for the area that he attacked. It ended up in a live broadcast, where people was invited into the studio.”

Specialist (JB, Iw 2)

14. Conclusions and implications

This chapter consists of four sections. First, I will briefly summarize the purpose of the dissertation and the answers to the research questions. Second, I will highlight the major contributions of the dissertation. Third, I will present practical implications from an organizational and a coworker perspective. Finally, I will reflect on limitations and future research.

14.1. Revisiting the purpose of the dissertation

The purpose of this dissertation was to provide a communication perspective on communication on ISM and coworkers as communicators on ISM. The overall research question guiding the research project was to explore whether ISM introduces a new kind of participatory organizational communication.

The dissertation draws especially on three sets of theories: employee participation and decision-making, communication constitutes organization (CCO), and employee voice and silence. But other theories were also included in order to shed light on the ISM communication arena, coworker communication behavior on ISM and the construction of organizational identity on ISM: in particular, theories of imagined audiences, organizational identity, and the rhetorical arena theory from crisis communication.

Two types of exploratory studies were conducted: a multiple case study in ten Danish organizations, and a single case study in Jyske Bank. The two studies were used to write three articles leading to, in particular, three insights. (1) Coworker interpretation of ISM is crucial to whether ISM will be used or not. (2) When coworkers communicate on ISM, they can challenge, negotiate and contribute to the construction of organizational identity. (3) Coworkers use self-censorship to avoid perceived risks of communicating on ISM, and they use several strategies to ensure their content is relevant and appropriate in order to help improve the organization as well as protect and promote themselves.

The dissertation does not provide a loud “Yes” or “No” to the question whether ISM introduces a new kind of participatory communication. The use of ISM is dependent on the particular organization. ISM provides organizations with a communication arena in which multiple voices can act. This does not guarantee participatory organizational communication.

However, the case study in Jyske Bank showed that when multiple voices do act in the ISM communication arena and are critical of the organization, there is a potential to become a central communication arena in which coworkers challenge, negotiate, and construct organizational identity.

14.2. Contributions

The dissertation makes three overall contributions. First, a communication perspective on the multivocal ISM communication arena is provided. Second, an understanding of coworker communication behavior on ISM is developed. Third, an elaborated account is given from a CCO perspective of how coworkers challenge, negotiate, and construct organizational identity on ISM.

14.2.1. An understanding of the multivocal ISM communication arena

The first contribution is to develop an understanding of the ISM communication arena. The *theory of imagined audience* from social media (Litt, 2012; Marwick and boyd, 2011), *the rhetorical arena theory* from crisis communication (Frandsen and Johansen, 2010; 2016; Frandsen and Johansen, 2007), Luhmann's perception of *communication episodes*, and the Montreal School understanding of *conversation* and *text* were combined to understand the interactions in the ISM communication arena.

First, *the theory of imagined audience* (Litt, 2012; Marwick and boyd, 2011) was applied so as to understand ISM as a socially constructed communication arena perceived by coworkers as being watched by a number of imagined audiences that will be contingent on the particular organization. On external social media the audiences are less concrete, but the single case study in Jyske Bank suggested that the imagined audiences in an organizational context are likely to consist of specific groups of organizational members that most coworkers more or less identify. In Jyske Bank it was top managers, bank advisers in the branches, specialists in the main office, and a "language and order police." The individual coworker uses the imagined audiences to judge the perceived risks of entering the ISM communication arena, the likely reactions from the perceived audiences, and how to frame and phrase the content so that it can benefit the organization as well as protecting and promoting the writer. The imagined audiences thus contribute to making coworker communication on ISM reflective.

Second, *the rhetorical arena theory* from crisis communication (Frandsen and Johansen, 2010; 2016; Johansen and Frandsen, 2007) was applied to an internal organizational context in order to understand the ISM communication arena as a complex, dynamic and multivocal social space. The single case study in Jyske Bank confirmed that organizational members communicate to, with, against, past and about each other (Frandsen and Johansen, 2010; 2016), that the persistence and visibility of communication on ISM (Treem and Leonardi, 2012) were decisive affordances of communication on ISM, and that communication on ISM connected people to people and people to content and created a meta-knowledge about who knew what and who (Treem and Leonardi, 2012). Moreover, the communication on ISM in Jyske Bank was found to be both predictable and unpredictable, and it could develop into an internal communication storm (Beers Fägerstein, 2015).

Third, the interactions between organizational members on ISM can sometimes develop into *communication episodes* (Luhmann, 1992; Schoeneborn and Vásquez, 2016), perceived as themselves detached from senders and receivers, since coworkers recall what was said more than who said it. The organizational member communicating thus becomes a voice representing one of the imagined audiences. A communication episode on ISM interacts with previous communication on ISM as well as with informal communication in the organization, and becomes part of a *network of communication episodes* (Blaschke, Schoeneborn and Seidl, 2012) as shown in the case study in Jyske Bank. The ISM communication also interacts with more formal communication coming from the CEO and news on the intranet, as well as the dominant understanding of the organizational identity, and becomes an example of how *conversation* as the more co-constructive side of communication interacts with the more formally accepted organizational *texts* so as to form a self-organizing loop (Taylor and Van Every, 2000).

14.2.2. Understanding coworker communication behavior on internal social media

The second contribution is to create an understanding of coworkers as communicators on ISM. Self-censorship was used as a lens to understand their communication behavior on ISM. The ISM communication arena in Jyske Bank was perceived by coworkers as being watched by imagined audiences (Litt, 2012; Marwick and boyd, 2011), and the arena was found to require courage and determination to enter. Self-censorship on ISM thus shed light on the dynamics driving employee voice and silence (Morrison, 2011; 2014) in the ISM communication arena, and the

dissertation contributes to theory in two ways: the understanding of self-censorship was extended, and an understanding of coworkers as reflective and strategic communicators on ISM was developed.

First, instead of viewing self-censorship as a matter of preventing oneself from communicating, as previously suggested in studies of self-censorship on social media (Das and Kramer, 2013; Marwick and boyd, 2011; Sleeper et al., 2013), self-censorship was proposed to be a three-phase process. First, the coworker has an urge to produce a message or contribute to an existing conversation. Second, the coworker goes through a phase of deliberation, when the perceived risks of communicating in the ISM communication arena are considered. Third, based on their reflections about the perceived risks, the coworker use self-censorship strategies to ensure that both the content and the formulation of their communication are relevant and appropriate. This process of self-censorship is a constant tension between revealing and concealing, and it is a balance between benefiting the organization and promoting and protecting the coworker. This understanding of self-censorship on ISM also extends the understanding of the affordance "editability" (Treem and Leonardi, 2012) that found to shape coworker behavior in three ways: "(a) regulating personal expressions, (b) targeting content, and (c) improving information quality" (p. 160). Based on the case study in Jyske Bank, I suggest that this affordance should be changed to "reflectiveness," and that an additional affordance termed "accessibility" be added, describing ISM as easy to use and easily accessible.

Second, coworker self-censorship on ISM sheds light on coworkers as reflective and strategic communicators. The communication on ISM is visible and persistent (Treem and Leonardi, 2012), and the case study in Jyske Bank found that the coworkers are far from just passive recipients of communication, but active and strategic communicators in all their communicative actions. They are strategic when they select what to read, when they choose to like a post or not, when they decide to comment or not, and when they formulate a post which they perceive as suitable for the media and the organization. Coworkers have always been active communicators in organizations, but with the introduction of ISM they have a visible and potentially consequential communication arena in which it is easy to communicate at any time, but also more risky. Coworkers therefore become much more reflective about their communication. They consider the risks of entering the ISM communication arena carefully.

However, staying out of the arena is not always an option. Coworkers feel an obligation to display organizational citizen behavior (Van Dyne, Graham and Dienesch, 1994) if they can in any way contribute, or because it is part of their job to answer certain questions. They develop *social media skills* over time as they learn to balance between organizational and personal needs. It could be argued that these skills are part of *coworker communication skills,* especially as ISM becomes increasingly integrated into organizational communication connecting with theories about self-regulation in organizations (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002).

14.2.3. Extending the understanding of the construction of organizational identity

The third contribution is to illuminate from a CCO perspective how organizational identity is constructed in the ISM communication arena when coworkers in Jyske Bank communicate. This contribution builds on the understanding of how communication in the ISM communication arena can develop; but here it is highlighted as a contribution in itself.

The visible communication in the ISM communication arena makes it possible to study the interactions between organizational members. Through this it became apparent that the coworkers in Jyske Bank challenged, negotiated and constructed organizational identity when they discussed organizational issues. This added to theory in three ways. First, it became an empirical example of how communication constitutes the organization, and thus addresses the "composition problem" in CCO scholarship (Kuhn, 2012, p. 559). The case study in Jyske Bank is an example of how coworkers push and change the understanding of the organization in their communication on ISM. Beers Fägersten's (2015) study of one discussion on ISM finds the same dynamics. Based on these two studies it can therefore be analytically generalized that ISM offers a communication arena in which organizations can be deconstructed and constructed.

Second, the negotiation of organizational identity on ISM in Jyske Bank also becomes an example of how small and unplanned changes to organizational identity occur as a constant dialog between organizational members, something that Gioia et al. (2013) have identified as a gap in the literature on organizational identity. Third, the multivocal communication on ISM also illustrated that multiple organizational identities coexisted in Jyske Bank, and that these different perceptions of organizational identity interacted on ISM when coworkers challenged and discussed organizational identity. Rather than being a challenge to the organization, the case study indicated that this ambiguity and polyphony fostered identification and reduced

tension, as theorized by Christensen and Cornelissen (2011), and allowed for the emergence of a kind of "unified diversity" (Eisenberg, 1984, p. 230).

The communication episodes on ISM discussing organizational identity may be perceived as a beating heart in the organization, episodes in which the organization is negotiated, constructed and deconstructed. The communication episodes can also develop into organizational stories contributing to the organizational identity of the organization, as well as influencing coworker identification with the organization, as shown in the case study in Jyske Bank. These communication episodes on ISM thus illustrate the CCO principle: they are socially constructed "substance" (Chaput, Brummanns and Cooren, 2011, p. 3) in the building of the organization.

Through the discussions about organizational identity on ISM, a process of *co-orientation* (Ashcraft, Kuhn and Cooren, 2009) takes place. This creates an understanding of the organizational identity which embraces multiple voices. This perception of the organizational identity speaks through organization members when they communicate on ISM, and they are in their communication constantly influencing and pushing this understanding. In this respect, communication on ISM becomes an example of *ventriloquism* (Cooren, 2012), as explained in chapter three.

Apart from illustrating how the perception of organizational identity is challenged, negotiated and changed in organizational members' communication on ISM, the case study in Jyske Bank also illustrates that these discussions can make the organization more robust. When organizational identity and organizational practices are constantly contested and debated, coworkers become more knowledgeable about the organization. In Jyske Bank, this helped coworkers to act as ambassadors for the organization.

14.3. Practical implications

The two studies in the dissertation have several practical implications for organizations that wish to introduce or revitalize ISM and to encourage coworkers to communicate on ISM. In the following, I will first discuss and present practical implications from an organizational or managerial perspective, then from a coworker perspective.

14.3.1. Implications from an organizational perspective

The research in the dissertation found that ISM has the potential to become a dynamic and multivocal communication arena in which coworkers are both proactive and strategic in their communication. The strength of ISM is that it provides an arena in which coworker voices can interact and be heard. The communication is in principle unfiltered, informal, and different to other internal digital communication channels such as news, videos and work procedures on the intranet. These tend to be more one-way communication, mainly from managers to coworkers, whereas the ISM communication arena has the potential to facilitate participatory organizational communication. However, far from all organizations seemed to reap the benefits of participatory organizational communication, as found in the study of ten organizations. This has several implications for organizations, and I will highlight five of them.

First, organizations should only introduce ISM if they sincerely wish coworkers to communicate with each other, and if they wish to listen to coworkers and include their thoughts and suggestions when improving the organization. The case study in Jyske Bank showed that dedication on the part of management was key in encouraging multivocal communication on ISM. The name of the discussion forum "The Word is Free" was taken very literally by coworkers. Implementing ISM can send an important signal that management is prepared to listen to coworkers. However, coworkers' previous experiences with communication from management will influence how they perceive management's wish "to listen to coworkers" (Stohl and Cheney, 2001). In this respect, the norms and culture of the organization are likely to be reflected in the communication on ISM (Uysal, 2016). An organization with an open communication climate and a management dedicated to ISM is therefore more likely to succeed in getting coworkers to communicate on ISM.

Second, the IT system used for ISM is not decisive as to whether coworkers will communicate or not, as long as the technology is easy to use and easy to access, preferably as an integrated part of the intranet. The first study in ten organizations found that coworker interpretation and sensemaking of ISM was crucial to whether they found it useful or not (Leonardi, 2009). This interpretation was based not on the IT system but on, for example, management style, communication climate, and the way ISM was introduced. Moreover, coworkers tend to bring their technological frames with them to work (Dailey, Peirce and

Leonardi, 2015), and they make sense of ISM in their interactions with other coworkers. They may therefore be biased in their perceptions of ISM even before they start using it (Leonardi, 2009). Organizations therefore actively have to interact with coworker sensemaking when they launch ISM. In this process, coworkers will benefit from knowing *why* and *how* they should use ISM (Denyer, Parry and Flowers, 2011). They should know whether the intention is knowledge-sharing, innovation, improving the organization, or enhancing social cohesion. They should also know that communicating on the ISM is considered work.

Third, ISM coordinators can play an important role as sensemakers and facilitators when ISM is introduced, but over time the responsibility for communication on ISM may be shared among coworkers. The first study in ten organizations found that the introduction of ISM could benefit from being treated as a change-management process. Especially in the first year after the introduction, ISM coordinators could play a role as sensemakers and facilitators. However, the role may change over time. Several of the coworkers interviewed in Jyske Bank reported that they would act as a facilitator if they thought somebody ought to see a post and preferably answer. The case study in Jyske Bank then suggests that ISM is a coworker communication arena – not only in terms of who communicates, but also in terms of feeling responsible for the communication. This is a thought also put forward by Mazzei (2012), who says "the responsibility of effective communication not only lies in the hands of managers: it is shared among all organizational member" (p. 341).

Fourth, ISM offers managers a communication arena in which they can listen and respond to coworkers. In this way, ISM can be an integrated part of communicative leadership that is based on listening to coworkers (Hamrin, 2016; Hamrin et al., 2016). By listening to the voices of coworkers interacting in the arena, managers can get an idea of coworker concerns and considerations and thereby develop a greater understanding of the organization and the challenges to be tackled. At the same time, managers can increase coworkers' perceived efficacy of voice on ISM if they answer the questions raised. However, managers have to carefully balance their presence and their absence in order not to dominate the ISM communication arena. The case study in Jyske Bank also showed that discussions on ISM could benefit from being allowed to develop before they were addressed. In this way many different viewpoints could be expressed or even possible solutions found.

Finally, internal social media guidelines might not be necessary. Coworkers consider carefully how to phrase and frame content on ISM because of their contractual and emotional relationship with the organization (Frandsen and Johansen, 2011). This self-regulation when communicating on ISM will reflect the norms in the organization (Uysal, 2016), and could therefore make internal social media policies unnecessary, at least in organizations with an open communication climate.

14.3.2. Implications from a coworker perspective

The research in the dissertation found that ISM was primarily perceived as a coworker communication arena. In Jyske Bank, the visibility and persistence of communication on ISM (Treem and Leonardi, 2012) increased coworkers' perceived efficacy and safety of voice (Morrison, 2011; 2014). Managers and specialists had to respond to questions and concerns that were visible to the whole organization. However, communicating on ISM was a balance between avoiding risks and taking advantage of the opportunities, and over time coworkers developed *social media skills* to tackle what to reveal and conceal. The dissertation gave several insights into coworker concerns in relation to communication on ISM, and I will highlight three.

First, coworkers have to perceive the efficacy and safety of voice on ISM. They want to know that they are not putting their job on the line when they communicate on ISM, and that their concerns raised in the ISM communication arena will be taken seriously, either with good answers or with action taken. In Jyske Bank, coworkers voicing critical comments about the organization were a couple of times almost made into local heroes. They were asked to appear in the bank's television studio to discuss the issues raised with top managers. In this way coworkers were helped to interpret ISM as a communication arena in which it made sense to communicate. It was safe to communicate, and the communication led to changes or to restorative justice (Klaas et al., 2012).

Second, coworkers are likely to develop *social media skills* themselves. In Jyske Bank the coworkers interacted with each other about what and how to post on ISM, and they watched and learned from other coworkers communicating on ISM. Social media skills amount to a kind of tacit knowledge that is specific to the organization and probably best acquired by listening to other coworkers and watching discussions on ISM. Coworkers are likely to learn by example, and organizational stories of coworkers either succeeding in their expressed dissent or violating

norms are likely to develop (Garner, 2013). These stories will themselves act as guidelines or norms of accepted behavior.

Third, coworkers are likely to actively use communication on ISM to conduct impression management (Goffman, 1959) and to promote themselves in the organization. Coworkers sharing their knowledge, conducting organizational citizen behavior or asking critical questions in Jyske Bank seemed to get promoted. Some of the coworkers interviewed reported that before becoming a specialist, they had been bank advisers asking a lot of questions, and they almost all referred to an initiator of a huge discussion who was now an employee representative on the board of the bank. However, the case study in Jyske Bank also indicates that the individual coworker has to contribute in a constructive manner, and that in order be perceived as a constructive coworker he or she should not contribute too often (JB, iw 6; 8).

14.4. Limitations and future research

The dissertation has contributed in several ways to the understanding of communication on ISM and coworkers as communicators on ISM. However, the multiple case study in ten organizations and the single case study in Jyske Bank shared a number of limitations, which may serve to point out possibilities for future research.

First, the ten organizations were selected in a snowball sample. A quantitative study of organizations in Denmark or across several countries could reveal whether these findings could be generalized to other organizations. A study of ten organizations in Sweden (Lundgren, Strandh and Johansson, 2012) also found that the introduction of ISM did not radically change the organization, which could indicate that the findings from the ten organizations are not a merely Danish phenomenon.

Another possible limitation is that the empirical material from the ten organizations was constructed in the spring of 2014. The perception of ISM in organizations may change over time as coworkers become more accustomed to the media, and a multiple case study in the spring of 2017 might show a slightly different picture. In this respect the research is a snapshot of a point in time: a follow-up study might reveal whether the use and perception of ISM in organizations changes over time, and whether ISM becomes more participatory. After three years, the novelty of ISM might have worn off. More organizations might have introduced and used it for a longer

period, while others might have abandoned it since they could not make coworkers communicate. This could give a different picture of ISM coordinators' perceptions of ISM. However, the development might not be that rapid. Heide (2015) points out that interactive communication has been part of the intranet since the late 1990s, and that already in that period there were great expectations about democracy in organizations. In this respect there might not be that big a difference between a multiple case study conducted in spring 2014 and spring 2017.

There is a tendency to be over-optimistic about the potential of a new media (Heide, 2015). ISM is embedded in an organization, and as found in the study of the ten organizations, the introduction of ISM could be considered a change-management project. It takes time for new ways of working to arise, and how ISM is perceived and adopted will depend on the specific organization. This has led Deetz and Brown (2004) to proclaim that new forms of management, leadership and organizational culture are called for before anything will change. Future research has to explore whether ISM can become a normal way of working in organizations, even replacing email. In that case a first step would be to conduct an in-depth single case study in a frontrunner organization to find out how this way of communicating affects the organization.

Second, the findings from the single case study belong to one specific organization's use of ISM. Comparing the single case with the ten organizations in the multiple case study, it became apparent that Jyske Bank was a significant and in some aspects perhaps even a unique case. This could be due to top management, the organizational culture, interactive communication on the intranet since 1999, or the fact that the discussion forum has been on the front page as an integrated part of the intranet since 2003 (Nørgaard and Vestergaard, 2004). In particular, the finding that coworkers construct organizational identity on ISM was barely found in the ten organizations. However, this is supported in a study by Beers Fägersten (2015) in a Swedish organization. Therefore, future research needs to explore to what extent coworkers negotiate and construct organizational identity in their communication on ISM in other organizations, as well as exploring whether the CCO principle come alive in communication on ISM in other ways than when coworkers negotiate and discuss organizational identity.

Third, in the dissertation ISM is perceived as a communication arena that can shed light on what is taking place in the interactions between coworkers in the ISM arena. Other perspectives could have been explored, such as seeing ISM as a political arena in which power games are acted out, as suggested in the discussion. I have given some examples from Jyske Bank, but these dynamics need to be further explored in terms of who communicates and who does not communicate. Are some coworkers more influential, and why? On external social media, a minority of people have been found to be influential (Gruzd and Wellman, 2014), and this is also likely to be the case on ISM. But who is it who exercises influence on ISM, and how do they gain their influence on ISM when their communication and their power games are visible to everyone? The opposite point could also be explored in terms of who is *not* present in the communication arena. Are some minority viewpoints never aired on ISM, as suggested in the theory of the spiral of silence (Noelle-Neumann, 1974)?

Fourth, even if Jyske Bank is a significant case, it can be argued that the findings about self-censorship on ISM can be analytically generalized to other organizations. Research on voice and silence supports the findings of how self-censorship works. Self-censorship is also mentioned in some of the ten organizations, and self-censorship is also found on external social media (Das and Kramer, 2013; Sleeper et al., 2013). However, future research could explore the extent of self-censorship in different types of organizations in terms of industry, size and use of ISM technology, as well as comparing organizations with open and closed communication climates to see how this affects self-censorship. This could shed light on when self-censorship is a constructive communication behavior and when it becomes destructive.

Fifth, in the discussion I point out that ISM can be useful within communicative leadership (Hamrin, 2016; Hamrin et al., 2016) as a way for managers to listen to coworkers. This is a field of research that, to the best of my knowledge, has not been explored. Future research has to explore how managers can use ISM as an integrated part of communicative leadership as a way of involving and listening to coworkers, and how managers can balance the tension between being present and not dominating the ISM arena, as pointed out in the dissertation.

Finally, in the discussion I introduced an understanding of the coworker as a strategic communicator. This concept needs further exploration. In the case study in Jyske Bank, most coworkers did not perceive themselves as strategic in their communication on ISM when they were asked directly. Possibly this was because in a Danish context, being strategic is perceived as a negative behavior. But through answers to questions about their actual behavior in relation to communication on ISM, they in fact reported that they were very reflective, even strategic, in their behavior. A lot of research has been conducted about managers as communicators (for a review, see Fairhurst and Connaughton, 2014), but the time has now come to turn the lens around and look at coworkers as communicators and how they influence organizational processes (Heide and Simonsson, 2011).

14.5. The end of the journey

The completion of this dissertation has in many ways been a journey. I set out to explore the phenomenon of internal social media, and as a traveler I made several choices about the particular paths I wanted to take. As a social constructivist, I am aware that other paths could have been chosen, and that my dissertation is a construction of what I have encountered on my journey. I have created several understandings of internal social media that make sense at this point in time. Internal social media is a new field of research, and it is likely to change and develop in many different directions. Other scholars will take different journeys, and develop new insights.

15. English summary

More and more organizations develop the social media features on their intranet and encourage coworkers to communicate, connect with each other and share knowledge across departmental and geographical distance. The question is however how this internal social media (ISM) influences organizational communication and the organization, and the purpose of the dissertation is to explore internal social media and coworkers as communicators on internal social media from a communication perspective to answer the overall research question:

Does internal social media create a new kind of participatory organizational communication? And if yes, in what way? And what are the dynamics driving coworker communication on internal social media?

The dissertation builds on a social-constructivist approach and a communication constitutes organizations (CCO) understanding of organizations, and the theoretical framework of the dissertation especially draws on theories of employee voice and silence (Brinsfield, 2014; Morrison, 2011, 2014) and of imagined audiences on social media (Litt, 2012; Marwick and boyd, 2011) in order to understand the dynamics driving coworker communication on ISM. Additionally, ISM adoption literature (Chu, 2012; DiMicco et al., 2008; Treem and Leonardi, 2015), theories of employee participation (Stohl and Cheney, 2001; Wilkinson et al., 2013b), the rhetorical arena theory from the field of crisis communication (Frandsen and Johansen, 2010; 2016), as well as theories of organizational identity (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Gioia et al., 2013; He and Brown; 2013) are used in order to shed light on the phenomenon of ISM.

The dissertation builds on two explorative qualitative studies in order to explore the phenomenon internal social media: A multiple case study in ten Danish organizations and a single case study in Jyske Bank. The three articles included in this thesis are based on these two studies and presents three different perspectives on ISM.

The first article "Challenges of Introducing Internal Social Media: ISM coordinators' Roles and Perceptions of Communication on ISM" views ISM from a managerial perspective". ISM coordinators across ten different types of organization, and across different industries and organization sizes were interviewed and based on their perceptions, it was found that half of the organizations were struggling to make coworkers communicate on ISM. The article concludes

that coworker interpretation and sensemaking of ISM is decisive to how ISM is used, and that the ISM coordinator can play an important role as a facilitator and sensemaker in relation to ISM.

The second article "Constructing Organizational Identity on Internal Social Media: A Case Study of Coworker Communication in Jyske Bank" explores from a CCO perspective the actual communication on internal social media in Jyske Bank based on a study of screenshots during three months in the fall of 2014. During the time of observation, coworkers engaged in at least 40 significant discussions. These discussions were studied in detail to understand what happened in the interactions between coworkers. The analysis found that four overall themes were discussed: (1) customers and products, (2) working conditions, (3) organizational issues and (4) ISM specific issues, and that certain patterns occurred in the communication. In this respect the communication was both predictable and unpredictable. Finally, the analysis found that coworkers in Jyske Bank contributed to the construction of organizational identity when they challenged, negotiated, and discussed organizational issues on ISM.

The third article "Self-censorship on Internal Social Media: A Case Study of Coworker Communication Behavior in a Danish Bank" explores coworkers' communication strategies and behavior on ISM. Based on interviews with 24 coworkers in Jyske Bank the article explores if and how self-censorship influence their communication on internal social media. The article finds that coworkers consider carefully what they write on ISM in order to not annoy imagined audiences, damage their own self-presentation, violate unwritten rules, or run into a storm of comments from other coworkers. They use several strategies to ensure that their content is constructive and relevant.

Based on the findings from the explorative study of the ISM coordinators perceptions, and the case study at Jyske Bank, it is possible to shed light on the overall research question whether ISM introduces a new kind of participatory organizational communication. The ISM communication provides organizations with a communication arena, where multiple voices can act and interact. Since the communication on ISM is visible and persistent to all coworkers as well as to managers it calls for commitment to answer questions, and this commitment encourage coworkers to communicate to the whole organization on ISM. Thus, it can be

reasoned that ISM can pave the way for participatory organizational communication. The case study in Jyske Bank at least showed that when multiple voices act in the ISM communication arena and are critical to the organization, it has a potential to become an important communication arena. However, the use of ISM is contingent on the organization, and organizations with an open communication climate and a supportive management are more likely to develop participatory organizational communication.

The dissertation makes three overall contributions. In contrast to previous research that has had mainly focused on ISM as technology, this dissertation provides a communicative approach, and views ISM as a multivocal communication arena, where coworkers and managers can interact and make sense of the organization. Furthermore, the thesis develops an understanding of coworker communication behavior on ISM, and it sheds light on how coworkers challenge, negotiate and construct organizational identity on ISM. In this way the thesis add valuable empirical insights into how the CCO principle works.

16. Dansk sammendrag

Flere og flere organisationer udvikler de sociale medie funktioner på deres intranet og opfordrer medarbejderne til kommunikere, skabe netværk og dele viden på tværs af organisatoriske og geografiske afstande. Spørgsmålet er imidlertid, hvordan disse interne sociale medier (ISM) påvirker den interne kommunikation og organisationen. Formålet med afhandlingen er at undersøge fænomenet interne sociale medier og medarbejderne som kommunikatører på ISM fra et kommunikativt perspektiv for at besvare følgende overordnede spørgsmål:

Skaber interne sociale medier en ny form for deltagende intern kommunikation? Og hvis ja på hvilken måde? Og hvilke dynamikker driver medarbejdernes kommunikation på interne sociale medier?

Afhandlingen bygger på en social-konstruktivistisk tilgang og en CCC forståelse (kommunikation konstituerer organisationer) af organisationer, og afhandlingens teoretiske ramme trækker især på teorier om "employee voice og silence" (Brinsfield, 2014; Morrison, 2011, 2014) og forestillede publikum på sociale medier (Litt, 2012; Marwick and boyd, 2011) for at forstå de dynamikker, der driver medarbejdernes kommunikation på ISM. Derudover trækker afhandlingen også på ISM adoption litteratur (Chu, 2012; DiMicco et al., 2008; Treem and Leonardi, 2015), teorier om medarbejderinddragelse (Stohl and Cheney, 2001; Wilkinson et al., 2013b), den retoriske arena-teori fra krisekommunikation (Frandsen and Johansen, 2010; 2016), samt teorier om organisatorisk identitet (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Gioia et al., 2013; He and Brown; 2013).

Afhandlingen bygger på to eksplorative kvalitative studier gennemført for at undersøge fænomenet interne sociale medier: Et casestudie i ti danske virksomheder og et casestudie i en enkelt virksomhed, Jyske Bank. De tre artikler i afhandlingen bygger på de to studier, og de præsenterer hver deres perspektiv på interne sociale medier.

Den første artikel "Udfordringerne med at introducere interne sociale medier: ISM koordinatorers roller og opfattelser af kommunikation på ISM" har et ledelsesmæssigt perspektiv. ISM koordinatorer i ti forskellige organisationer, der repræsenterer både forskellige industrier og størrelser af organisationer, blev interviewet og baseret på deres opfattelser kom

det frem, at halvdelen af organisationerne kæmpede med at få medarbejderne til at kommunikere på ISM. Artiklen konkluderer, at det i særlig grad var medarbejdernes fortolkning og forsøg på at skabe mening med ISM, der var afgørende for, hvordan ISM blev brugt i den enkelte organisation. I den forbindelse kunne ISM koordinatorerne spille en vigtig rolle som facilitatorer og meningsskabere i forhold til ISM.

Den anden artikel "Konstruktion af organisationens identitet på interne sociale medier: Et casestudie af medarbejdernes kommunikation i Jyske Bank" anlægger et kommunikativt perspektiv på medarbejdernes kommunikation på ISM i Jyske Bank. I en periode på tre måneder i efteråret 2014 opstod der mindst 40 diskussioner, som var særligt interessante, og de blev nærstuderet for at forstå, hvad der sker i interaktionerne mellem medarbejderne. Analysen kom frem til, at især fire overordnede emner blev diskuteret: (1) kunder og produkter, (2) arbejdsforhold herunder frustrationer med it, (3) organisatoriske problemstillinger og (4) ISM relaterede emner, herunder metakommunikation om, hvordan man kommunikerer på ISM. Desuden blev bestemte mønstre og forløb i kommunikationen på ISM identificeret, som viste at kommunikationen på ISM på en gang var forudsigelig og uforudsigelig. Endelig fandt analysen frem til, at medarbejderne bidrog til konstruktionen af organisationens identitet, når de udfordrede, forhandlede og diskuterede organisatoriske problemstillinger på ISM.

Den tredje artikel "Selvcensur på interne sociale medier: Et casestudie af medarbejdernes kommunikative adfærd i en dansk bank" har et medarbejderperspektiv på ISM. Baseret på interview med 24 medarbejdere i Jyske Bank undersøger artiklen om, og hvordan selvcensur påvirker medarbejdernes kommunikation og adfærd på ISM. Artiklen kommer frem til, at medarbejderne meget nøje overvejer, hvad de skriver på ISM for ikke at irritere deres imaginære publikum, ødelægge deres selvfremstilling, overtræde uskrevne regler eller løbe ind i en storm af kommentarer fra andre medarbejdere. De benytter adskillige strategier for at sikre sig, at deres kommunikation er konstruktiv og relevant.

Konklusionerne fra de to eksplorative studier bliver brugt til at besvare afhandlingens overordnede spørgsmål, nemlig om hvorvidt ISM introducerer en ny form for deltagende intern kommunikation. De to studier viser i hvert fald, at ISM giver organisationen en kommunikationsarena, hvor mange stemmer kan agere og interagere. Denne synlige og

fastholdte kommunikationen på ISM tvinger både medarbejdere og ledere til at være mere dedikerede i forhold til at besvare spørgsmål, og denne forpligtigelse opmuntrer medarbejderne til at benytte muligheden for at kommunikere til hele organisationen. På den måde kan ISM bane vejen for en ny form for deltagende intern kommunikation. Casestudiet i Jyske Bank viser samtidig, at når mange stemmer er på banen i ISM kommunikationsarenaen, og når de tør være kritiske overfor organisationen, så har ISM muligheden for at blive en vigtig intern kommunikationsarena. Det vil dog i høj grad afhænge af organisationen, hvor meget medarbejdernes stemmer bliver hørt, og organisationer med en åben kommunikationskultur og en ledelse, der bakker op om ISM, har en større sandsynlighed for at udvikle deltagende intern kommunikation, der udfordrer og udvikler organisationen.

Afhandlingen har mindst tre overordnede bidrag. I modsætning til tidligere forskning, der primært fokuserer på ISM fra et teknologisk perspektiv, så bidrager afhandlingen med et kommunikativt perspektiv på dynamikkerne i ISM kommunikationsarenaen og opfatter ISM som en multivokal kommunikationsarena, hvor medarbejdere og ledere kan interagere og skabe mening med organisationen. Derudover udvikler afhandlingen en forståelse for medarbejdernes kommunikative adfærd på ISM, og endelig kaster den lys på, hvordan medarbejderne kan udfordre, forhandle og konstruere organisationens identitet på ISM. På den måde bidrager afhandlingen med at give et værdifuldt empirisk indblik i, hvordan CCO-perspektivet fungerer.

17. Lists of tables and figures

List of Tables

List of Figures

18. List of appendices

Available for the assessment committee on a USB key.

THE MULTIPLE CASE STUDY

Appendixes 1-3 relates to Article 1

Appendix 1

Interview guide for the multiple case study (In Danish)

Appendix 2 (Confidential)

Interviews with ISM coordinators in ten Danish organizations (In Danish)

1. Transcription of interview with a Wholersaler
2. Transcription of interview with an Engineering firm
3. Transcription of interview with a Law firm
4. Transcription of interview with a Retailer
5. Transcription of interview with a Public advisor Firm
6. Transcription of interview with an Agriculture Consultancy
7. Transcription of interview with a Financial company
8. Transcription of interview with a Shipping firm
9. Transcription of interview with a Municipality
10. Transcription of interview with a Consulting engineering firm

Appendix 3

Tables from the multiple case study

A. Tables comparing the organizations

Table 1: Perception of organization, internal stakeholders and internal communication
Table 2: The perception of the internal social media context
Table 3: Role of the person responsible of internal social media and technology
Table 4: Organization, responsible person, years and purpose with internal social media
Table 5: Ten organizations communication on internal social media

B. Tables showing coding of the interviews
Table 1: The first thematic coding in NVivo of the multiple case study
Table 2: Coding in NVivo: 24 thematic codes in the multiple case study
Table 3: Coding the a priori construct of communication
Table 4: Coding the a priori construct of motivation
Table 5: Coding the construct challenges – number of sources and references
Table 6: Grouping the codes into four challenges with examples of coded text

THE SINGLE CASE STUDY

Appendixes 4 and 8 relates mainly to article 2, while appendixes 5, 6 and 7 mainly relates to article 3

Appendix 4 (Confidential)

Analysis of the screen shots

A. Tables describing the screen shots from the single case study (In Danish)

1. Erhverv nyheder 1.-12. September 2014
2. Private nyheder 1.-12. September 2014
3. Fælles nyheder 1.-12. September 2014
4. Ordet er frit 1.-12. September 2014
5. Jyske Tube 1.-12. September 2014

6. Erhverv nyheder 13. September – 3. Oktober 2014
7. Private nyheder 13. September – 3. Oktober 2014
8. Fælles nyheder 13. September – 3. Oktober 2014
9. Ordet er frit 13. September – 3. Oktober 2014
10. Jyske Tube 13. September – 3. Oktober 2014

11. Erhverv nyheder 4.– 17. Oktober 2014
12. Private nyheder 4.– 17. Oktober 2014
13. Fælles nyheder 4.– 17. Oktober 2014
14. Ordet er frit 4.– 17. Oktober 2014
15. Jyske Tube 4.– 17. Oktober 2014

16. Erhverv nyheder 18.- 31. Oktober 2014
17. Private nyheder 18.- 31. Oktober 2014
18. Fælles nyheder 18.- 31. Oktober 2014
19. Ordet er frit 18.- 31. Oktober 2014
20. Jyske Tube 18. – 31. Oktober 2014

21. Privat 1. - 15. November 2014
22. Fælles 1. - 15. November 2014
23. Ordet er frit 1. - 15. November 2014
24. Jyske Tube 1. - 15. November 2014

25. Privat 16. -31. November 2014
26. Fælles 16. -31. November 2014
27. Ordet er frit 16. -31. November 2014
28. Jyske Tube 16. -31. November 2014

29. Erhverv 1.- 18. September 2015
30. Private nyheder 1.- 18. September 2015
31. Fælles 1.- 18. September 2015
32. Ordet er frit 1. - 18. september 2015
33. Jyske Tube 1. - 18. september 2015

34. Erhverv 21. - 30. september 2015
35. Private nyheder 18. - 30. september 2015
36. Fælles 21. - 30. september 2015
37. Ordet er frit 21. - 30. september 2015
38. Jyske Tube 21. - 30. september 2015
39. God morgen 1. - 30. september 2015

B. Tables with numbers of posts, comments and likes on JB United

Table 1: Post, comments and likes on JB United, September to November 2014
Table 2: Post, comments and likes on JB United, September 2015 (including Good morning Jyske Bank)
Table 3: Post, comments and likes on JB United, September 2015 (Without Good morning Jyske Bank)
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Table 1: Dynamics in the communication on JB United
Table 2: First thematic coding of content on JB United
Table 3: Second thematic coding of content on JB United
Table 4: Significant communication situations sep-nov 2014 (confidential)
Table 5: Significant communication situations sep 2015 (confidential)
Table 6: From nine to four themes discussed on JB United
Table 7: Comparison significant communication situations 2014 and 2015

Appendix 5

Interview guide for the single case study

1. Danish version
2. English version
3. First mail to coworkers before the interview (in Danish)
4. Examples of mails send to coworkers to get their approval (in Danish)

Appendix 6 (confidential)

Transcriptions of interviews with 24 coworkers in Jyske Bank (In Danish)

1. Transcription of interview with a bank officer
2. Transcription of interview with a specialist – customer and bank adviser
3. Transcription of interview with a marketing consultant
4. Transcription of interview with a bank adviser – private young customers
5. Transcription of interview with a business consultant
6. Transcription of interview with a bank adviser – business
7. Transcription of interview with a bank adviser – private
8. Transcription of interview with a branch manager

9. Transcription of interview with a specialist, pensions, customer and adviser support
10. Transcription of interview with a quantitative analyst, model development
11. Transcription of interview with a cashier
12. Transcription of interview with a bank adviser – private young customers
13. Transcription of interview with a bank adviser – private
14. Transcription of interview with a manager, private
15. Transcription of interview with a bank adviser – private and business
16. Transcription of interview with a bank adviser – private
17. Transcription of interview with a currency adviser – private
18. Transcription of interview with a business manager
19. Transcription of interview with a senior consultant
20. Transcription of interview with a HR development consultant
21. Transcription of interview with a bank adviser – private
22. Transcription of interview with a bank adviser – private
23. Transcription of interview with a bank adviser – business
24. Transcription of interview with a bank adviser – private

Appendix 7

Coding the interviews

Table 1: First thematic coding of interviews with coworkers
Table 2: Example of coding of interviews with coworkers in Jyske Bank
Table 3: NVivo coding for coworker communication behavior and perception of communication on ISM
Table 4: Empirical material: Coworkers reported reasons for self-censorship
Table 5: Coding: Reported reasons for self-censorship after 24 interviews

Appendix 8 (Confidential)

Significant communication situations on JB United

A. 40 Significant communication situations in September – November 2014

1. CSR - Iværksætterkultur
2. BRF finansiering til udlejningsejendomme ned til 1 mio kr
3. Swipp vs MobilePay - salgsinspiration
4. Frustration over 1827 konceptet
5. Skarpe(re) kurser på JB lån
6. I minder om Danske Bank
7. 24 mia i boliglån er nået
8. Tænk nu hvis
9. Træt af telefonventetid hos Nordea
10. Lækkert at være en del af Jyske Bank - og nu også JB united
11. Ansatte i BRF har jo sikkert også ferie
12. Nyt unge tiltag

13. Renteændring på Jyske Formuepleje
14. Forbedret Jyske Netbank Privat åbner søndag
15. Boligbarometeret - Endnu en flot uge
16. Digital overførselsanmodning
17. Er Reimer Bo go
18. Ændring i basisrenten på Jyske F1 pr. 01.12.2014
19. Julen står for døren
20. Børsen - Jyske Bank har landets billigste boligrente
21. Bevidst tilfredse medarbejdere
22. Arbejdsgarantier gennem TRYG og Atradius - Hvor står Jyske Bank
23. Vi skal være mere effektive og prioritere opgaverne
24. Tidligere indlæg på ordet er frit
25. Nu letter vi arbejdet ved påfyldning af pengeautomater
26. Har du kunder med virksomhedspant
27. Indrømmet - Jeg er ikke nogen EDB nørd
28. Mødelokaler - Annullerede møder - kan de fjernes fra kalenderen
29. Få en individuel samtale med Bankpension
30. Netbank eller Mobilbank
31. Forbedringer på vej i netbanken
32. Kick off på stor Swipp-kampagne
33. Ratepension indskud under 30 ordningen
34. Noget nyt om BRF realkreditlån til Erhverv
35. Bankboliglån - Nye ejendomstyper og ny godkendelsesprocedure
36. Ansatte i BRF har jo sikkert også ferie
37. Pris på drikkevarer til Landsstævnet
38. Lidt mere umage
39. Nye mål på boligbarometeret - endemål 42.195 mio. kr.
40. TV - JB's aktiestrateg - Pas på, det trækker op til novemberstorm
41. jyskeprivatpcdk - kan jeg lægge til kaj

There are two versions – one with comments and one with likes

B. Archive material (Confidential)

Two significant discussions outside the point of observation and two answers

1. When will I be a bank adviser again? – 8. Jan 2012/13?
2. Answer from a director 10. Jan 2012/13?
3. Is the catfish dead? 09. Marts 2015
4. Blog – Bevidst tilfredse medarbejdere (Consciously satisfied coworkers)

Appendix 9

1. Samarbejds og fortrolighedsaftale mellem AU og Jyske Bank
2. Declaration of co-authorship for the third article

The assessment committee can find the appendices on the USB key attached to the dissertation. Only the 40 significant communication situations have been included in the material available for the assessment committee. If the assessment committee wants to see more examples of communication on JB United, please contact the author.

Others can get assess to the non-confidential material by contacting the author.

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