

And They Lived Sustainably Ever After...

A study on the social construction of CSR in YouTube videos of Dutch banks

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Abstract

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a popular social phenomenon in corporate communication, as it refers to the changing role of business in society from solitary profit-driven to a leader in societal and environmental strives. What this responsibility exactly contains and to whom it is prioritized, is a matter of concern in both academic literature and corporate practices. Therefore, CSR is argued to be context-dependent, which results in a paradox on how to communicate CSR to stakeholders. On the one hand, an implicit approach increases stakeholder skepticism, but fails to create awareness among the general public. On the other hand, an explicit approach reaches out to multiple stakeholder groups, but causes doubt about the sincerity of the messages. As a result, this paper introduces the influence of visual elements in CSR communication based on 55 online videos from five Dutch banks. With a combination of a rhetoric and semiotic approach, a discourse analysis is performed to deconstruct the rhetorical and discursive strategies in the videos. The first findings indicate that in line with traditional advertising, the banks implement classic rhetorical tactics divided in the appeal to credibility, the appeal to emotion and the appeal to reason. A prominent finding is the excessive focus on storytelling and identification techniques, which has shifted the focus on logos to the dominant use of ethos and pathos. The second phase of the analysis resulted in the establishment of three discursive strategies that companies use to receive their license to operate, being authorization, moralization and narrativization. Authorization involves the use of personal and role model authority, which enhances the credible character of the speaker. Moralization focuses, mainly with the appeal to emotion, on national and humanistic interests and narrativization mainly includes moral lessons. As a result, the findings of the rhetoric and discursive strategies lead to two discourses in which CSR is socially constructed by Dutch banks. The first one suggests that CSR is a shared responsibility in which the banks function as a middle man, offering possibilities for consumers and other stakeholder groups to be socially responsible. The second discourse frames CSR as a stakeholder responsibility, where the driving factor of CSR is not about being a good corporate citizen or having an ethical obligation to do the right thing, but about responding to the expectations and demands of stakeholders. Moreover, the overall goal of this study is to create awareness for the role of visuals in CSR communication and its potential to influence the way CSR is understood in various contexts.

KEYWORDS: *corporate social responsibility, CSR communication, rhetorical strategies, discursive strategies, stakeholder dialogue, stakeholder responsibility, rhetoric*

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1. Introduction

The price of greatness, is responsibility.

Winston Churchill

The corporate environment is changing. Financial motives can no longer take the upper hand in business, but companies need to have an open and honest attitude towards its stakeholders about their activities and values. Society expects companies to take responsibility for their impact on the environment and social life. The Volkswagen scandal is a well-known example of questionable practices brought to light, in which cultural and ethical arguments are playing an important role in establishing the future of the corporate world. However, the rise of corporate social responsibility (CSR) as a predominant discourse for legitimate business practices brings out the controversies and uncertainties of its true essence. To what extent can we demand companies to be socially responsible in their profit-driven existence? What exactly does this responsibility entail? To whom do they owe this responsibility? And how do we define and measure the fulfilment of this responsibility?

In academic research, the conceptualization of CSR is argued to be inextricably linked to the context in which it is understood, applied or studied (Dahlsrud, 2006; Van Marrewijk, 2003). For example, where in academia a scholar focusses on stakeholder responses, the definition of CSR as “to act in the interests of legitimate organizational stakeholders” (Greenwood, 2007, p. 315) will differ from a scholar that places CSR in a political context where it can “hold multinational corporations accountable for the increasing power and influence they exercise in their daily decision making” (Baur & Schmitz, 2011, p. 17). Likewise, in practice, the way a company can fully incorporate CSR in their core business strategies and values depends on the economic and social context in which it operates. For example, the social responsibility of an oil industry company such as Shell can only go to certain extends, as they can never fully be disconnected from environmental damage and will therefore maintain different standards and goals than a company like Tony Chocolonely, which is founded in a desire for a slavery free cocoa industry. Therefore, it is important to question how the multiple meanings and contextual approaches of CSR can be attributed to understand the way CSR is socially constructed in society, as it can characterize a company, shape stakeholder expectations and is able to create legitimization and discourses of the corporate world.

In Europe, the global economic crisis of 2008 caused revisions of the role of businesses in the eyes of the media, politics and public and especially targeted the financial industry, as the previously categorized ‘blameless’ industry with no direct impact on society was being challenged in their values, goals and purposes (Crane, Matten, & Spence, 2013; Jeucken, 2001; Relano & Paulet, 2012).

The growing attention on the environmental and societal impacts of companies ensured that companies feel a constant pressure of meeting stakeholder expectations in their contribution to solve ethical, social and environmental problems (Yıldız & Ozerim, 2014). The banks, eager and in need to increase their corporate image, actively began to involve themselves with CSR.

Interestingly, three Dutch companies are localized in the top 10 of the Global 100 Most Sustainable Companies, including Dutch bank ING (Dekker, 2017). In addition, last year the bank is declared as the most sustainable bank in the world according to Sustainalytics (<https://www.sustainalytics.com/>) and was ranked fifth last year in the top 100 of the World's Most Sustainable Companies of 2017 (Kauflin, 2017; "ING meest duurzame bank ter wereld", 2016). In fact, Triodos Bank, ASN Bank, Rabobank, ING Bank, ABNAMRO, and SNS Bank are all banks who are named in the Dutch report of the Sustainable Brand Index 2017, Europe's largest analysis institute in terms of sustainability branding from the consumer perspective (<https://www.sb-index.com/>). Therefore, this study has an industry-focused context of the banking sector as they have a national and international recognition as sustainable companies from a consumer perspective.

Although each bank differs in size and number of customers, it seems that the resemblance can be found in the way they actively communicate CSR. The banks do not only use common communication tools such as CSR reports and their corporate websites, but simultaneously produce series of videos on their corporate YouTube channels. Looking at the historical line of CSR literature and the aim of contemporary CSR studies, much has been written in organizational research regarding CSR communication, but not many explicitly focus on the visual mode of meaning construction in relation to CSR. As a result of this gap in literature, the aim of this thesis is to explore the opportunities and possibilities of video (advertising) in CSR communication. Hereby, the Dutch banking sector functions as a specific contextual framework as they provide a relevant dataset for this research.

1.1 Research questions and purpose

In the early days, banks were rarely associated with social or environmental consequences, as they solely were expected to have an economic responsibility (Jeucken, 2001, Paulet & Relano, 2012). However, after the economic crisis of 2008, the general public lost their faith in banks and together with the rising prominence of CSR as challenging to the dominant discourse of profit maximization, the role of the banking sector had to be reconsidered (Crane et al., 2013). The stakeholder expectations and demands of what the banking sector has to take responsibility for is questioned in the communication processes of the bank, as they produce newly established discourses about CSR

based on already existing discourses in society. However, as the Dutch banks simultaneously seem to emphasize CSR in their visual communication, it is interesting to investigate how the banking sector is positioning itself within this new corporate environment and how this new way of communicating CSR can influence the CSR discourse.

Although the most well-known and researched ways of CSR communication are annual reports (e.g. Birth, Illia, Lurati, & Zamparini, 2008; Golob & Bartlett, 2007; Waller & Lanis, 2009) and corporate websites (e.g. Capriotti & Moreno, 2007; Chaudri & Wang, 2007; Wanderley, Lucian, Farache, & de Sousa Filho, 2008), it appears that the Dutch financial sector is simultaneously looking at alternatives for communicating with their stakeholders. Recently, ING, ABN AMRO and Triodos bank launched new campaigns that consists of a series of videos. For example, ING created multiple videos and online stories dedicated to social initiatives for the campaign *Where there is a will, there must be a way*. At the same time, Triodos Bank created six videos in which different entrepreneurs talk about their social initiatives for their campaign *Buy the Change*. The videos illustrate the goals and dreams of entrepreneurs or people in society, which are realized with the financial support the banks. Triodos Bank claims that “by consuming consciously and connecting sustainable entrepreneurs with each other, we accelerate the transition to an economy that is fairer, greener and more humane” (“Waarom we dit doen”, n.d.). This illustrates that companies are trying to find new ways for communicating CSR, that go beyond textual reports but are based on an interplay between words and image and combine traditional advertising tactics, such as narrative- and rhetorical strategies.

The importance of visualization in Western societies is only increasing due to the development of information and communication technologies, and the overwhelming amount of information and materials available. Visual texts and materials play a crucial role in the way corporations construct meaning in a media environment where stakeholders are extremely critical and aware (Höllerer, Jancsary, Meyer, & Vettori, 2013). Various studies alarm the importance of visual components in advertising, which seem to have more potential in drawing attention and communicating the message more effectively than verbal advertising (e.g. Berger, 1998; Lester, 2013). The Dutch banking sector seems to respond to this need for visual communication by actively posting videos on their corporate YouTube channel. For example, ABN AMRO created a separate playlist called *Giving Voice to Value*, where the interests of the stakeholder are being discussed. ASN Bank also introduced the series *How sustainable is...* in which children are researching their own questions about a company's influence on society and the environment.

Unfortunately, although CSR communication research has a limited amount of studies focusing on images, there has been alarmingly few on the presence of CSR in moving images. Therefore, the aim of this study is to draw attention to the importance of visuals in CSR

communication and to investigate how the CSR discourse is influenced by the videos of the Dutch banking sector. This research therefore asks the following question:

Primary research question: How do banks socially construct CSR in their videos?

In order to answer the research question, this research analyzes a dataset of 55 videos produced by five different Dutch banks by means of a visual discourse analysis. A discourse is usually a set of ideas about a certain topic and refers to the way in which it is talked about. Macdonald (2003) describes discourses as “a system of communicative practices that are integrally related to wider social and cultural practices, and that help to construct specific frameworks of thinking” (p. 10). Discourses are therefore shared meanings, which are not solely produced by an individual but socially constructed within society. This means that there can exist multiple discourses that construct a topic, but most of the time one of them is considered dominant. According to Machin and Mayr (2012), discourse analysis is then “the view of language as a means of social construction: language both shapes and is shaped by society” (p. 4). This is important for this research, as the choice for a discourse analysis is justified by the assumption that banks both use existing discourses to talk about CSR in a certain way, but at the same time create new discourses in their communication process. Hence, discourse makes events and relations in modern society easier to understand, whereby certain contexts, viewpoints and interpretations are inevitable (Burchell & Cook, 2006).

As the study of discourse in academic literature mostly focuses on language in the form of speech, writing or other textual forms, the absence of guidelines and frameworks of discourse analysis on visual data is problematic (Jardine, 2004). As a result, this study uses a combination of theories to analyze both word and images of the message in order to understand the complete meaning of the video. The main research question is substantiated by two sub-research questions, as they do not only present the findings in a broader perspective, they also structure the analytical procedure of this study. The sub questions are:

RQa: Which rhetorical strategies do the banks use in their videos?

RQb: Which discursive strategies do the banks use to talk about CSR?

The sub questions in this research are answered by a combination of visual rhetoric and semiotics, in order to both include words and image in the analytical procedure. This multimethod approach focuses on both words and image and its findings present a differentiation of strategies. For the first research question, the theory of classic rhetoric is applied as a framework in combination with pre-

established identification strategies. For the second question, a framework of discursive strategies is used to place the findings within the broader context of CSR discourse. As such, the findings present two discourses that discuss the way Dutch banks are socially construct CSR in their videos.

1.2 Academic and societal relevance

The term corporate *social* responsibility already indicates matters of societal concern, since it evolves around influences that corporations have on humans and society. This means that the relevance of researching this topic can be found in the uncertain role of businesses in today's corporate climate, acknowledging their impact on social life. The concern here is that the conceptualization of CSR is considered problematic when companies want to implement it as a core value, as well as the confusion among stakeholders about what CSR means and how they can base their expectations and demands around this meaning.

A recent research conducted by Triodos Bank shows that more than half of the Dutch population is willing to consider a sustainable alternative by purchasing a product, regardless of the costs (Goos, 2017). This reveals that people have a positive attitude towards the idea of a company acting socially responsible, but that concrete results in the form of direct action hold off due to incomprehension of the exact meaning of CSR and how to recognize these activities in practice (Goos, 2017). Consequently, companies are struggling with both implementation and communication of CSR, as it is unclear which responsibilities they have and how this can be put into practice in order to satisfy their stakeholders. As Štumberger & Golob (2015) argue in their study: "different meanings of CSR can be confusing for individuals who expect that companies will behave in a socially responsible way (e.g. stakeholders) and those who implement and communicate CSR (e.g. companies)" (p. 523). Thus, the societal relevance of this research can be found in the importance of understanding CSR in specific discourses, as these meanings are fixed within organizations and are adapted to social relations which are constantly open to negotiation and change (Golob & Podnar, 2014).

As for academic relevance, the suggested gap in literature concerning the analysis of moving images in regard to CSR urges the need for scholars to focus their attention on the visual modes of communication. Meyer, Höllerer, Jancsary, and Van Leeuwen (2013) introduce the term *visual mode* and argue that this is a crucial factor in the understanding of meaning construction and discursive talk (p. 493):

Here, we employ the term "visual mode" in order to refer to a specific way of constructing and expressing meaning: It is created, transformed, transferred, and put into practice by

either the use of primarily visual objects and artifacts, or by integrating the visual and the verbal in such a way that neither can be fully understood without the other. The meaning of artifacts is tied to the specific cultural contexts in which they are used; they represent visual manifestations of social knowledge and practice. Such visual manifestations do not form but, potentially, also in content. Thus, the visual mode of discourse and meaning construction, while sharing central features with other modes, shows distinct characteristics and therefore requires different treatment in scholarly analysis.

Thus, contributing to both the academic and societal debate concerning the conceptualization and implementation of CSR in organizations, the main purpose of this research is to display the discourses that derive from the corporate video communication of companies in order to raise awareness for the visual mode in CSR communication and to contribute to the debate of how these discourses legitimize the CSR practices of the Dutch banking sector. The following paragraph explains the specific outline of this thesis.

1.3 Thesis outline

The first chapter discusses pre-existing literature on the CSR discourse, where mainly attention has been paid to the argumentation of why CSR is assumed to be socially constructed and the introduction of the visual mode in CSR communication that reflects the gap in literature. It reveals the paradoxical nature of CSR in both definition and communication, discusses several communication strategies in regard to the focus of this research and addresses the contextual approach of this research. The second chapter concerns the methodological choices of this study, in which it is necessary to first understand the origins of discourse and explain its common understanding in academic debate. Also, it explains the multimethod approach that is used to perform an analysis on 55 videos, in which theories of visual rhetoric and semiotics are combined. Moreover, it elaborates on the data collection and outlines the specific analytical steps that have been applied in analyzing the material. Subsequently, the third chapter presents the findings of this research in three steps and discusses the discovered discourses in order to formulate an answer to the main research question. Finally, the concluding chapter presents a summary of the findings and discuss the limitations and future recommendations of this research.

2. Literature Review

A business that makes nothing but money is a poor business.

Henry Ford

It is not surprising that where capitalism is the driving ideology of Western society, the main goal of corporations in a free market economy is profit maximization. However, ever since American economist Howard Bowen published the book *Social Responsibilities of the Businessman* (1953), in which he suggests academia to think about the powerful influence businesses have on society and the responsibilities this might bring, corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a recurring and growing phenomenon that challenges the dominant discourse of corporations. Nowadays, companies are forced to constantly think about the impact of their activities and whereabouts at any time and place, as globalism resulted in expansion overseas and the internet opened up an accessible platform for worldwide activists and critics (Carrigan & Atalla, 2001). Not only controversial industries such as oil, chemical and tobacco companies are taken under fire, but every sector or type of business is under pressure by stakeholder expectations and demands (Crane et al., 2013).

This chapter firstly explains the problematic nature of defining CSR and emphasizes the importance of deconstructing the CSR discourse within this research. Secondly, this literature review describes the way corporations are communicating CSR mainly through reports and corporate websites and sheds light to the rising prominence of CSR advertising. Moreover, this chapter suggests that there is a gap in literature in which moving images and visual elements are disregarded in academic research. Lastly, it shortly discusses why the Netherlands and the banking industry are used within the contextual approach of this study.

2.1 How to understand CSR

2.2.1. *The definition of CSR*

After Bowen's introduction of the concept corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the 1950s, academic literature piled up through the years, surrounding discussions, revisions and adaptations of the CSR concept (e.g. Carroll, 1983; Davis, 1960; Johnson, 1971). Thereupon, management professor Archie Carroll (1991) argues that CSR is the overarching concept of the four obligations that business has to society, in which a company has to meet society's demands by being economically, legally, ethically and philanthropically responsible. This means that first of all, society requires companies to fulfil their basic economic and legal responsibilities, as a company has to function as a successful

business that fosters the money flow in the market place. The company has to do this in a legal manner, without violating the law or misleading people by simply obey the rules and regulations within society (Matten, 2006). In other words, although society *requires* corporations to act economically and legally responsible by respecting the limits and boundaries in which they can operate, it *expects* them to do the right thing by being a good citizen and to anticipate to social obligations. As well, it is *desired* that corporations try to improve society at large by reaching outside their day-to-day business operations (Matten, 2006).

Although this illustrates in some sense the societal expectations of business operations in the last decades and the motivations behind the prominence of CSR in the corporate landscape, it remains unclear to what kind of practices and necessities the concept is referring to. Dahlsrud (2008) analyzes 37 definitions of CSR from 1980 to 2003 and demonstrates that CSR can be classified into five different dimensions of CSR: (i) environmental, (ii) social, (iii) economic, (iv) stakeholder, and (v) voluntariness. Environmental refers to the natural environment, social to the relationship between business and society, economic to socio-economic or financial aspects, stakeholder to associated groups in the marketplace, and voluntariness to actions not prescribed by the law. His study shows that CSR literature quite often describes CSR as a phenomenon, but “fail to present any guidance on how to manage the challenges within this phenomenon” (Dahlsrud, 2008, p. 7).

Literature suggests a distinction in theories of CSR to understand the way CSR is practiced by organizations and talked about in present debate. Garriga and Méle (2004) classified these theories into four groups: (1) instrumental theories, in which CSR is approached as a strategic tool used to meet economic targets and enhance wealth creation, (2) political theories, which focuses on the relation between business and society based on the social- and political power of organizations, (3) integrative theories, in which social demands are the driving force of businesses as it resolves in social legitimacy, social acceptance and prestige, and (4) ethical theories, in which business has an ethical obligation to do the right thing and has to actualize societal improvement. Thus, the choice of theory usually relies on the context in which it is understood and may vary across different countries, industries and perceptions (e.g. Chomvilailuk & Butcher, 2013; Crane et al., 2013; Freeman & Hasnaoui, 2011; Podnar & Golob, 2007).

Due to the complex character of CSR in both academic literature as the variety of dimensions in which CSR can be understood, companies struggle in deciding what CSR exactly contains and face difficulties with prioritizing stakeholders (Moir, 2001). As a response to this puzzlement, companies adjust their language in a way that deliberately avoids the actual use of CSR (Matten & Moon, 2008). For example, research on CSR in the Dutch corporate landscape has shown that the concepts of sustainability and corporate social responsibility are most of the time being avoided due to confusing or negative associations and are implemented in expressions of everyday life in the form of “green”

and “working on the future” (MVO Trend Report, 2017). Thus, related terms such as corporate citizenship, business ethics, stakeholder management, and corporate sustainability are popular in use for describing the relation between business and societal matters (Carroll & Shabana, 2010). This leads to confusion among stakeholders and consumers that construct certain expectations of companies behaving in a socially responsible way (Štumberger & Golob, 2015).

Although the conceptualization of CSR is proven to cause confusion in both the corporate world and academics, it is clear that in contemporary society business has obligations that go beyond making profit and include their role in society in a broader context. In order to understand the discourses and practices of CSR, the concept has to be approached as a social construction in relation to the context in which it takes place (Dahlsrud, 2008; Van Marrewijk, 2002). In that sense, this study uses the identification of CSR provided by Ählstrom (2010), where “corporate responsibility is a social construction where conflicts of interest struggle for the right of interpreting the issue” (p. 76). Thus, the analysis is expected to give insight in the way CSR is socially constructed by the banks as they combine text and image to produce meaningful discourses. By deconstructing the discourses in which banks represent CSR, it is possible to gain a better understanding of how organizations practice CSR and anticipate on both stakeholder demands as expectations from society at large. When it is clear how the social construction of CSR takes place, it is easier to adjust expectations and reform demands which makes it easier for companies to legitimize their business operations.

2.2.2. The motivation for CSR

The previous paragraph demonstrates why a universally understood definition for CSR might be problematic and how this research claims that CSR has to be understood as a social construct. But why is it so important for companies to associate themselves with CSR, in any way possible? Is it only a tool with which they can improve their brand image or increase their profits? And what benefits does it have to equalize stakeholder and shareholder values? Friedman (1970) once plead that a business cannot have responsibilities, as only humans are able to have a moral responsibility for their actions, and that the only responsibility a company has is to increase its profit. So why do companies choose to present oneself as socially responsible?

With the rise and prominence of the internet, people are able to inform and educate themselves on political, economic and social matters, which often results in questioning the status-quo. The combination of increasing worldwide social issues (e.g. global warming, overpopulation, food- and natural gas shortage, water wastage or economic crisis) and technological developments results in changing consumer expectations, as it becomes possible for all stakeholders – from NGO to consumer – to involve themselves with societal concerns. These stakeholders demand companies to take responsibility for their societal and environmental impact or call them out for unethical

practices, instead of only being satisfied with their profit-driven existence. As a response, companies are obligated to think about their responsibility towards the environment and society, as their solely aim for profit maximization is questioned within all layers of society.

Matten (2004) distinguishes reasons for companies to incorporate CSR in economic, managerial, ethical and political drivers. From an economic point of view, CSR is able to increase a company's profit as it enhances shareholder value and creates competitive advantage. The managerial driver is the focus on stakeholder interests. The ethical driver of CSR is concerned with business ethics and sustainability. Lastly, the political driver of CSR for companies is to be known as a good corporate citizen. Thus, with engaging in CSR, companies are in general able to increase stakeholder engagement and create a positive image. Likewise, Fernando and Lawrence (2014) argue in their study three significant theories that explore the reasons for companies to practice CSR, namely the legitimacy theory, the stakeholder theory and the institutional theory. With the legitimacy theory, organizations use CSR to legitimize their existence by meeting society's expectations at large (Fernando & Lawrence, 2014). Farache and Perks (2010) refer to this as "a social contract between business and society in which society allows the company to operate as long as it behaves in accordance with society's norms and values" (p. 236). In contrast to the legitimacy theory, the stakeholder theory does not focus on the relation between the company and society at large, but on the relation between the company and its stakeholders in specific as organizations use CSR to acknowledge its accountability to its stakeholders (Fernando & Lawrence, 2014). Another reason for companies to engage in CSR from an institutional perspective is the "need to conform to legitimate norms and beliefs those are largely imposed on an organization, which ultimately leads to homogeneity in organizations in the same field" (Fernando & Lawrence, 2014, p. 170).

Establishing the reasons for companies to incorporate CSR is useful for this research, as it can help to understand why certain choices in constructing and communicating CSR are made by the banks. For example, ING states on their website the following: "To improve as an organization, we engage with our stakeholders in a variety of ways. This helps us continuously identify and understand the topics most important to them and how these relate to the actions and decisions we take" ("The world around us", 2018). According to the framework above, this indicates that the motivation for CSR can be derived from improving stakeholder relations and might provide meaning to the way ING communicates CSR in their videos. It differs from the way Triodos Bank approaches CSR, as they claim to "help create a society that protects and promotes the quality of life of all its members" ("Mission", 2018). In contrast to ING, this suggests that CSR is an ethical driver that is used to create legitimacy. Thus, the context of the way banks motivate their CSR initiatives can later on be projected on the findings of this study as discourses are placed within a broader context.

It is clear that organizations are busy with proving their license to operate by linking their economic existence to positive impact on either the environment or society at large. But as academia and the business landscape are struggling with defining CSR, how do we recognize CSR activities? Kotler and Lee (2008) explain how companies can put CSR into practice, creating a framework of six different types of social initiatives. The first one is *cause promotions*, where a company raises awareness and demonstrates concern about a social cause by using corporate funding, volunteering, participation or other types of involvement that include the company's resources. Secondly, *cause-related marketing* is when a certain amount of money coming from a product or service is put aside for a social project, charity or cause. This type of practice usually goes hand-in-hand with a collaboration with a nonprofit-organization, as it is able to increase the profit or positive brand image of a company and on its turn provides financial support for the NGO. Furthermore, when a company sets up or stimulates a behavior change its called *social marketing*. *Corporate philanthropy* entails a direct contribution, usually in the form of a donation. Although this is probably the most traditional form of a social initiative, nowadays companies are expected to combine corporate philanthropy with the company's core values and business purposes. *Community volunteering* is when a company stimulates its employees in volunteering and finally, *socially responsible business practices* are optional initiatives that rely upon a company's investments and practices that have a positive impact on society or the environment.

2.2 CSR communication

CSR is communicated in many shapes and forms and can therefore be defined as "any communication efforts by a company to promote its CSR activities using any kind of publicly accessible communication tools such as advertising, annual reports, Internet, social media, and promotion events" (Kim, 2017, p. 3). It is important for a company to communicate their CSR, since it can increase consumer loyalty and stakeholder engagement (Du et al., 2010; Türkel et al., 2016). The rise and prominence of the internet creates an arena where people from any place at any time can share their opinions, beliefs and feelings to others, which opened up opportunities for many different stakeholder groups to involve themselves in the discourse of corporations (Colleoni, 2011). In this way, companies are forced to be transparent and can no longer merely focus on shareholder demands, as multiple stakeholder groups carefully watch every move and are able to criticize or threaten their corporate image every single moment (Coombs & Holladay, 2013). Coombs and Holladay (2013) describe this as the pseudo-panopticon, in which activists and NGO's function as a watchdog by alarming the general public when companies do not fulfill their expectations of being socially responsible. Moreover, stakeholders are able to create a two-way street in which they not

merely passively receive a message but can also anticipate on it in creating and evaluating the content on social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook (Colleoni, 2013). This results in a careful consideration of companies of when, what and how to communicate their CSR initiatives as it not only creates potential, but also develops treats (Dawkins, 2004).

2.2.1 Implicit and explicit

As the internet offers potential for corporations to increase stakeholder engagement in the form of dialogue in which shared social values can be transmitted and a CSR agenda can be composed, there is also the alarming presence of stakeholder skepticism (Colleoni, 2013). Previous studies have incorporated this challenge in CSR communication research (Dawkins, 2006; Du et al., 2010; Morsing et al., 2008, Schmeltz, 2012;), which Morsing et al. (2008) have named the 'Catch 22' of CSR communication. Thus, stakeholders are expecting companies to be involved in CSR practices and are welcoming their CSR initiatives but are at the same time skeptical towards companies who are highly engaged in CSR and become extremely critical of their CSR messages (Du et al., 2010; Morsing & Schultz, 2006). Existing literature focuses primarily on criticism and skepticism of stakeholders towards companies communicating their CSR efforts. Especially when they have already developed trust issues towards the company, or when they believe the company is trying too hard in persuading an audience of their sincerity (Skarmeas & Leonidou, 2013). As a result, an implicit approach to CSR has been a familiar way in corporate communication. Companies adjust their language in a way that deliberately avoids the actual use of CSR (Matten & Moon, 2008). Morsing et al. (2008) argue that in order to gain positive responses to CSR, implicit communication towards consumers and the overall public has to attract the attention of people who are already interested in CSR initiatives of the company. In this way, stakeholders who are already familiar with CSR are able to forward the message to a secondary stakeholder group, who is more likely to be less skeptical towards a message from which the direct source is not the company itself.

However, the study of Carrigan and Attalla (2001) reveals that consumers are not really informed well enough about the CSR performances of a company, as they "do seem to need more information to allow them to make better ethical judgements" (p. 574). In spite of this thirst for more information, people are often not willing to specifically look for CSR information themselves, which means that companies need to create awareness to increase an interest in CSR (Schmeltz, 2013). Schmeltz (2013) argues that especially younger stakeholder groups need explicit communication in forms of advertising, digital media and packaging in order to create awareness. If consumers are better aware of CSR, it can possibly lead to more positive responses to CSR and stakeholder engagement (Sen et al., 2006).

Despite a growing interest in explicit communication, the limited research on alternative communication strategies in CSR research is overshadowed by studies on CSR reports (Kim, 2017). People do desire more information about the CSR activities and values of a company, but the way in which they want to receive this information differs (Mohr, Webb & Harris, 2001). The financial sector is one of the pioneers in creating corporate websites that allow consumers to be interactive, as banks were the first industry that introduced online communication through online banking (Barnes, 2007). The usefulness of corporate webpages is already established in the twentieth century, focused on benefits such as actively spreading and collecting information, keeping an eye on the public debate surrounding corporate issues, and stimulating consumer engagement in direct dialogue (Esrock & Leighty, 1998). In relation to CSR communication, academia's interest in corporate webpages has increased the last decade and resulted in a variety of studies (e.g. Capriotti & Moreno, 2007; Gomez & Chalmeta, 2011).

However, it can be argued that extensively informed websites are not attractive for an audience that uses their smartphone as their main internet device and only cause confusion among those who read it (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001). Moreover, Esrock and Leighty (1998) argue that online content on corporate webpages does not differ that much from traditional media, as it remains a one-way communication model. It is not surprising that companies are increasing their visual communication, since it is predicted that video will increase to be the main medium for information consuming on the internet (Hopkins, 2017). Furgenson (2008) claims that the use of social media such as Facebook and YouTube to publish videos increases among the communication strategies of any type of organizations nowadays, whether its non-profit, commercial or governmental. Nevertheless, research on visualizing CSR is very limited, as there are only a few studies that center around images in CSR communication. The following paragraph briefly discusses previous research in CSR advertising that include images in their studies and discusses this gap in literature.

2.2.3. Where are the visuals?

CSR advertisements can be identified from commercial advertisement, as it is not merely centered around promoting their product or service. This research uses the description of Schroder (1997), who claims that CSR advertisements “inform about a company's commitment to environmental concerns, community relations or the future of mankind, without any overt attempt to promote a specific product” (p. 277). Studying CSR advertisements is not only relevant because it is a form of a company's communication strategy but shows how companies are trying to influence the way an audience perceives or evaluates them (Farache & Perks, 2010). For this study, it is important to create a contextual background of CSR advertising, as the YouTube videos that form the data set can be categorized as CSR advertisement according the definition provided above.

The relationship between CSR and advertising is not something that is recently appeared in studies but has changed and developed in different shapes and forms throughout the years. In the nineties, consumers seemed to adjust their behavior based on their environmental concerns and pro-active attitude towards sustainability in the marketplace. This green consumerism (Sachdeva, Jordan, & Mazar, 2015) became at that time the focus of multiple studies on how marketing strategies can respond to this green consumerism. Kärnä, Hansen and Juslin (2003) describe this environmental or green marketing as “a tool towards sustainable development and satisfaction of different stakeholders” (p. 849). Most of these studies focus on the way green and environmental messages in advertising were being perceived by customers (Zinkhan & Carlson, 1995; Shrum, McCarty, & Lowrey, 1995) or the way corporations are trying to create a green image by focusing on environmental claims and aspects in advertising (Carlson, Grove, & Kangun, 1993; Banerjee, Gulas, & Iyer, 1995; Carlson, Grove, Kangun, & Polonsky, 1996; Davis, 1993). Nevertheless, scholars that focus on CSR advertisements were the first to include images in their studies and advocate for more studies on visuals “to discern the meaning(s) of CSR constructed by leading corporations through their non-financial reporting” (Breitbarth et al., 2010, p. 242).

Banerjee et al. (1995) created an analytical framework through a multidimensional scaling analysis of 173 print advertisements between 1987 and 1991 and 95 television advertisements recorded between 1991 and 1992, where the authors stated that “the need to project a public image of environmental responsibility is an indication of the influence of the environmental movement on corporate image advertising” (p. 22). The research concluded that the way advertisements are build up back then was more a way to show the recognition of the overall public concern about the environment than companies explicitly implementing environmental measures or responsibility in their marketing strategies (Banerjee et al., 1995). In a more recent study specifically in relation to CSR, Garcia and Greenwood (2013) also emphasize the visual component in the communication of corporate publications, as they analyze photographs in official publications of US corporations in order to learn how CSR concepts are framed. A reason for corporations to incorporate visual representations is that “photographs can readily communicate a complex idea with a greater level of experience and familiarity to a viewer than can be achieved with text alone” (Garcia & Greenwood, 2013, p. 171). Arguably, the few studies on visual elements in CSR communication research are pleading for future research on images used in the construction of CSR, establishing a gap in literature in which alternative strategies for communicating CSR are mostly limited to annual reports (Kim, 2017). This makes it relevant to contribute to the CSR debate of communication by researching new forms of communication that can help in understanding the social construction of CSR.

Multiple studies have revealed that visual communication has a higher potential of drawing attention, transferring a clear and understandable message, and creating more impact than verbal or

written communication (Berger, 1998; Lester; 2013). For organizational purposes, the symbolic context of visuals can reach a broader audience as it is likely to be more universally understood, are less space- and time consuming when a complicated message has to be communicated and produce a less restrained discourse (Höllerer et al., 2013). However, although companies seem to embrace the power of visuals by incorporating images in their CSR messages, studies on CSR-related topics are mostly centered around still images in CSR reports (Breithbarth et al., 2010; Höllerer et al., 2013; Garcia & Greenwood, 2015; Råmo, 2011) or test the effectiveness (Chung & Lee, 2017) and consumer responses (Joireman et al., 2016) of these visual messages. Moving images on corporate websites, television advertisements or YouTube videos representing discourses of CSR seem to be missing in the academic debate concerning CSR communication strategies, which either has to do with the fact that companies are still mainly focused on communicating CSR through annual reports and corporate websites (Kim, 2017) or is being hold off as moving images contain more aspects to analyze and are in that sense far more complex to study (Jardine, 2004). The limitation of visual analysis in CSR research can be problematic as it cannot provide analytical frameworks or theoretical guidelines in which visuals in relation to CSR can be understood. This means that in order to analyze the videos of the banks, this research has to reconstruct a research design based on the way visuals are overall been analyzed in organizational studies.

Meyer et al. (2013) analyze different research designs that focus on the meaning construction of visuals in organizational research and create a division in five approaches: (1) archeological, (2) practice, (3) strategic, (4) dialogical and (5) documenting. The archeological and practice approach both assume that visuals are expressed through culture as society socially construct ways in which meaning, relevance and use of these visuals take place. The strategic and dialogical approach aim to analyze the sense-making and information processing of visuals as they activate cognitive mechanisms. The documenting approach is applied when the researcher creates visuals to enhance existing amounts of data or to present findings. For this research, the archeological approach is particularly important to dwell upon as the collection and interpretation of the videos is meant to trace hidden systems of meaning in organizational structures. Academia provide multiple frameworks in which visuals can be linked to society, knowledge and practice, as they either reflect, mask or constitute social reality (Meyer et al., 2013). Either way, in archaeological research visuals are defined by the cultural systems in which they take form and “are therefore suited to enhancing our understanding of the specific meaning structures that are created and maintained through visual means” (Meyer et al., 2013, p. 511). For this thesis, it is important to consider an approach in which CSR is socially constructed. An example of a previous study that uses this approach is Lefsrud, Graves & Philips (2016), who combine classic rhetoric and semiotics to analyze images in relation to CSR. Since there are no existing studies that apply a discourse analysis

to moving images regarding CSR communication, the methodological framework from Lefsrud et al. (2016) is used for the video analysis. A detailed explanation is provided in the Method chapter.

2.3 Context

Since banks are financial institutions, it is needless to say that most of the CSR initiatives exist of financial contributions or investments. However, according to Del Mar García de los Salmones, Pérez and Rodríguez del Bosque (2009) banks need to focus on their business ethics in order to satisfy their stakeholders. Therefore, banks can not merely use charity to legitimize their business or to improve their brand image but have to carefully consider CSR as a means to establish long-term relationships with stakeholders and justify their corporate achievements on a long-term base (Podnar & Golob, 2007). Coupland (2006) argues that the CSR performances of banks can be divided into *doing good*, *being good* and *funding good* (Coupland, 2006). *Doing good* entails that a bank contributes to the welfare of a community, in which their actions go outside the limits of their financial services. 'Being good' is when banks are accounting for their environmental impact. Lastly, *funding good* "is when radical differences appear between values-based organization and the traditional organizations" (Coupland, 2006, p. 873). These three distinctions on how banks are constructing CSR in their reports provide general insights in the way banks are understanding CSR. Additionally, it can be projected on the way Dutch banks are communicating their CSR to investigate whether the social construction of CSR in their visual communication is significantly distinct.

The Green Paper of 2001 provided by the European Commission demanded the business world to engage in CSR by showing that they are accountable, transparent and responsible in doing business (Yıldız & Ozerim, 2014). In addition, consumers drastically decreased trust in corporations after the global economic crisis since 2008, which resulted in a critical attitude towards corporate activities and made them more aware of a company's social impact and ethical values (Yıldız & Ozerim, 2014). This especially affected the role of the financial sector, as both the general public and the government started to question their role in society at large (Crane et al., 2013). The trust in Dutch banks decreased immensely, and ongoing negative media attention caused a skeptical attitude towards banks that is still present today. Idowu and Filho (2009) link the economic crisis specifically to CSR, stating that "the global financial crisis of 2007 and 2008 presents a major challenge to bankers to rebuild reputations that have been damaged by a breakdown of trust and confidence in bankers' ability to execute their economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic responsibilities" (p. 153).

In response, the banks openly changed their policy by including sustainability and societal welfare into their corporate values. For example, ABN AMRO stopped investing in oil- and gas drilling

in the pool areas, ING withdrew from coalmining in vulnerable landscapes, ASN created strict conditions for animal welfare and Rabobank showed more transparency in loans to companies (“Banken worden beter”, 2015). Moreover, the banks started to openly communicate their statements and standpoints about their renewed roles in society, as ING specifically states the following on their website: “As a bank, we have an opportunity and responsibility to finance and facilitate the shift to a more sustainable society, whether supporting our clients in their own transition to becoming more sustainable or by financing sustainable projects” (Society’s transition, 2018). In relation to the literature review, it is however interesting to notice that banks avoid the term ‘CSR’ and are more likely to use sustainability or sponsorship.

In the past decade, CSR in the banking sector has gained much attention in academic literature (Scholtens, 2009; Wu & Shen, 2013). Nevertheless, research is most of the time limited to geographical boundaries, such as India (Fatma & Rahman, 2014; Bihari & Pradhan, 2011; Narwal, 2007), Italy (Zappi, 2007), Bangladesh (Islam, Ahmed, & Hasan, 2012; Khan, Halabi, & Samy, 2009; Sobhani, Amran, & Zainuddin 2012), Spain (Pérez & del Bosque, 2014) and Portugal (Branco, 2008). The role of banks in society is dependent on multiple factors, as every country has its own political, economic, cultural and historical context. Literature on CSR expectations in the Spanish banking industry reveals that the biggest number of customers in the industry are CSR-oriented, as they have the opportunity to be more aware of companies’ intentions (Pérez & del Bosque, 2014). This can be justified by the rise of customer expectations of corporate behavior, and the fact that people have better information and education on customer rights and CSR concerns. This makes consumers both sensitive and aware of CSR messages when they actually include the influence of banks on society at large in their judgement. Paradoxically, the communication and advertising strategies of the Dutch banks seemed to have paid off, as they simultaneously appear in reputation- and sustainability ranking lists. Thus, there can be assumed that banks do acknowledge their social responsibility, but what this responsibility contains and how this is put into practice remains vague. By focusing on their CSR messaging, Dutch companies can provide a better understanding of how CSR is framed and what this means for the role of banks in society.

This research takes into consideration that the focus on a particular country or industry can play an important role in the way CSR is socially constructed. Previous literature established contextual and cultural differences in researching CSR, as multiple studies have a contextual, geographical or industrial focus (Chomvilailuk & Butcher, 2013; Crane et al., 2013; Freeman & Hasnaoui, 2011; Podnar & Golob, 2007). Moreover, when researching social constructions there have to be taken into account that discourses produced by individuals or entities cannot be detached from the context and relations in which they exist (Keller, 2011).

In the Netherlands, CSR is known as *maatschappelijk verantwoord ondernemen* (MVO) and a company is related to CSR when it “takes responsibility for the effects of its operations on people and the environment. The company sees in ‘people and planet’-issues opportunities for new products, services or process which benefit both society and the company (profit)” (<https://mvonederland.nl/wat-mvo/begrippenlijst>). In the Dutch corporate landscape, the term is mostly connected to the so-called ‘triple P’ in which People, Planet and Profit have to be balanced with one another. People is about the welfare of employees and the influence of a company on society at large and usually contains human rights or ethical conducts. Planet focusses on environmental concerns and usually take form of sustainable matters. Profit does not only concern financial performances of the company itself but looks at the effects it has on its environment like investments, sponsoring or employment opportunities.

There are only a few academia focusing on Dutch companies and their CSR activities (e.g. Graafland, Van de Ven, & Stoffele, 2003; Wolniak & Habek, 2013). There exists quite some research on the phenomenon of CSR by Dutch academia (e.g. Heene & Dentchev 2005; Hoevenagel, 2004), but none specifically focused on the Dutch banking sector and their CSR communication strategies. Despite the limited number of studies on CSR in the Dutch banking industry, these firms appear in global ranking lists and are known for their high reputations. This paper suggests that Dutch banks approach CSR communication to its stakeholders in a different way, making use of modern visual and online strategies. This makes the Dutch banking sector an intriguing case to investigate, as it can provide insights in the social construction of CSR and its effect on society at large.

3. Methodology

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) means something, but not always the same to everybody.

Votaw (1972, p. 25)

The previous chapters demonstrate that CSR is not merely a strategical tool companies can use to be perceived as legitimate, as the concept itself consists of multiple meanings that can be dynamic, changeable and conflicting of nature. This cannot only be influenced by different perspectives and contexts, but also depends on the semiotics of language (Freeman & Hasnaoui, 2011). Therefore, this study interprets the textual and visual language from videos in relation to the context of the Dutch banking industry. As academia mostly discusses the conceptualization and expectations of CSR, organizations are the ones to carry out the implementation and communication of CSR. In that way, by looking at the way the Dutch financial sector implements the *how* and the *why* of their CSR actions, stands and values, we ought to understand the way in which Dutch banks socially construct the concept of CSR and how this on its turn fuels the CSR discourse.

This implies that in order to answer the research question of how Dutch banks are socially constructing CSR in their YouTube videos, it is necessary to look at the way discourse both generates distinctive frameworks of thinking and how it at the same time produces a new set of conventions. For that reason, this study assumes that the purpose of social constructions within society is not to circumvent or regulate our thoughts but builds on the notion of Macdonald (2003) in which higher institutions establish “‘frames for understanding’ we construct in our head about the material world” (p. 14) and how this reflects the way we act and think in reality. Language thus is the driving force in discursively forming and managing social reality (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000).

This chapter firstly discusses the conceptualization of discourse by looking at the origins and explains the choice of visual discourse analysis. Secondly, it provides a detailed explanation of both the data collection as the data analysis for this research in which a qualitative content analysis is performed by combining rhetoric, semiotic and discourse analysis.

3.1 Discourse analysis

3.1.1 The origin of discourse

The general definition of discourse is “written or spoken communication or debate” (oxforddictionaries.com, 2017), which refers to a very broad range of meanings. But this notion of

discourse is mostly influenced and shaped by French historian and philosopher Michel Foucault, as he used it to significantly describe the production of knowledge (Hall, 1997). Therefore, discourse did not merely focus on the production of meaning in texts but acknowledged language as a social practice that necessitates meaning and produces knowledge with regard to a specific topic at a specific moment in time (Hall, 1997). Simply said: discourse concerns the production of knowledge by means of language. Hereby, both historical events and power relations play a key role in the creation of meaning (Hall, 1997).

Thus, discourse involves both what is said (language) and what is done (practice) (Hall, 1997). This distinguishes discourse from semiotics, as semiotics is merely a linguistic concept which suggests that meaning is constructed by signs within texts only. Discourse on the other hand, determines the means in which we talk and make sense of certain matters, as it defines and produces the bodies of our knowledge (Hall, 1997). This implies that nothing generates meaning outside discourse, which is the foundation of the constructionist approach of meaning and representation (Hall, 1997). It suggests that objects do not obtain meaning through its own being, but the knowledge we have of it – the discourse – creates the meaning it entails. A well-known example to explain the fundamentals of discourse, is soccer. The physical object of a round, leather object that can be kicked is known as a ball, but only becomes ‘soccer’ within the context of the rules of the game. This means that according to Foucauldian theories, soccer is a social construction, where the ball as an object cannot define its meaning outside the context in which it is used (Hall, 1997).

In a study on the way corporations respond on demands to expand the responsibility sphere, Ählstrom (2010) used the discourse theory to explain that there can be multiple discourses challenging and dominating the social construction of CSR. To give a clear example:

“The different discourse of CSR can be for example be divided into the discourse in which corporations are only responsible for maximizing profits for the shareholders, and another one is that corporations are responsible toward all stakeholders, not only shareholders.”
(Ählstrom, 2010, 72)

If the different discourses of CSR are not being discussed or deconstructed, it means that there are contradicting worldviews out there that can be problematic for the interpretation of reality (Ählstrom, 2010). Discourses are able to understand the means of different actors that can sustain or challenge dominant worldviews when fundamental meanings are being uncovered (Ählstrom, 2010).

Therefore, this study uses a discourse analysis to detect underlying meanings within videos produced by Dutch banks as a means to communicate about CSR. According to Alvesson and Kärreman (2000), there are three ways of interpreting within discourse analysis, where either

“statements say something about reality (...), statements say something about individual or social shared ‘subjective reality’ (...) and statements say something about norms of expression” (p. 1146). By unraveling these hidden discourses, it can help us to understand how companies socially construct CSR and in what way this is being challenged or sustained. The following section explains the methodology of a discourse analysis and places this in a visual context.

3.1.2 Visual discourse analysis

When a discursive approach is applied in research it generally centers around disclosing the origins of certain meanings (Hall, 1997) and is based on the examination of talk and texts as social practices (Wetherell, Taylor, & Yates, 2001). As a part of qualitative analysis, the process exists of deconstructing components of the data in a social context and uncover hidden meanings, as it “aims to provide an in-depth, socio-contextual and detailed description and interpretation of the research topic” (Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen, & Snelgrove, 2016, p. 100). According to Machin and Mayr (2012), discourse analysis is then “the view of language as a means of social construction: language both *shapes* and *is shaped by* society” (p. 4).

However, when looking at the way discourse analysis is applied as a method for researching CSR, it becomes clear that there is not a specific tool kit, framework or type of data that suggests enclosed guidelines within academic research. For example, Pollach (2003) practiced a discourse analysis on corporate website concerning the communication of corporate ethics, and Nielson & Thomsen (2007) analyzed the way companies talk in their annual reports. Previous research shows that a variety of approaches to discourse emerge in CSR literature (Caruana & Crane, 2008; Milne, Tregidga, & Walton, 2009; Laine, 2005; Humphreys & Brown, 2008; Siltaoja, 2009), but proves that little to no research has been focusing on the visual aspects of language construction, specifically with a discourse approach. Although the literature review discussed some visual analysis regarding images in CSR reporting or environmental research, no attention has been paid to the inclusion of moving images in CSR communication studies. This study wants to acknowledge the importance of visuals in CSR communication and advertising and aims at including video analysis in the discursive construction of CSR.

Machin and Mayr (2012) claim that the production of meaning through language can as well be enhanced by visual language, as it provides a more in-depth view of how an interplay between language and semiotics brings out the how and the why of communication. As a result, this research uses a discourse analysis to study the way Dutch banks are framing CSR in their videos by looking at narrative elements, semiotic elements, textual elements and characterization of 55 videos produced by Dutch banks. It questions the discourses about CSR represented in the videos, investigates how

Dutch banks are dealing with the concept of CSR, and what rules there are in relation to both implementing and communicating CSR as a discourse. The outcome of the analysis will provide both similarities and differences in discourse, as the videos are provided by five different Dutch banks. Without a clear analytical framework or approach to analyzing moving images in CSR communication research, the analytical choices of this study and the analytical process exist of a combination of approaches and frameworks and is therefore extensively discussed in the following sections.

3.2 Data collection

The first step before conducting the actual analysis was to find out which Dutch banks actively use video communication and to what extent they incorporate CSR activities, stands or values in their communication process. The pre-selection of banks is established by only considering banks that appear in the Sustainable Brand Index (2017), who is considered Europe’s largest analysis institute in terms of sustainability branding from the consumer perspective, and specifically targets the Dutch corporate landscape. If one of the Dutch banks is presented on the list, a carefully evaluation of their YouTube channel followed. This is a necessary step to make sure the bank is relevant in terms of this research, as this study especially focusses on videos. This resulted in a selection of five banks: (1) Triodos Bank, (2) ASN Bank, (3) Rabobank, (4) ING, and (5) ABN AMRO (Appendix A).

All of the five banks manage a YouTube-channel, which regularly publishes videos related to commercial advertising, campaigns, financial activities or CEO’ statements. The use of YouTube in marketing can be considered a wise strategy, as YouTube is the second most visited website in the world (Gray, 2017). *Figure 1* shows statistics of the banks corporate YouTube channels and demonstrates the number of videos that is included in the data collection for this research. The statistics show that although some banks have produced a lot more videos than others, each of the banks provided a series of video relevant to this research.

Figure 1. Statistics corporate YouTube accounts

YouTube channel	Start date	Total of videos	Video selection for data analysis	Subscribers	Views
<i>ING Nederland</i>	12 September 2008	266	9	10.044	17.041.373
<i>ABN AMRO</i>	13 March 2006	151	20	2.773	3.078.203
<i>Rabobank</i>	4 April 2006	1.691	14	5.873	11.730.359
<i>Triodos Bank</i>	22 July 2010	192	11	715	1.938.658

ASN Bank	4 January 2011	26	15	369	1.750.105
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Although material from only five companies seems relatively small, in qualitative research it is not unusual to use a specific selection of material based on the research goal to “explore in-depth the contextual dimensions that influence a social phenomenon” (Silverman, 2011, p. 392). Since this research only focuses on the financial sector, the data can provide highly reliable outcomes based on the specific focus and context. When a bank was both present on the annual sustainability index and fulfilled the availability of visual materials related to CSR, it was added to the data collection. The five companies together provided a total of 55 videos applicable for this paper (Appendix B). Eventually, a video is considered appropriate when:

- (1) the data is sourced or produced by one of the five banks mentioned above, and
- (2) promotes initiatives and/or discusses core values of the company in regard to CSR, and
- (3) is available on a corporate YouTube channel, and
- (4) is produced in the year 2016, 2017 or 2018.

The second phase of the analysis is to examine how the banks approach the concept of CSR by using statements or references on their corporate webpages (Appendix C). These perspectives can influence the way CSR is eventually shaped in the videos. In order to place the findings of the analysis in a broader perspective, it is necessary to create context of how companies approach CSR. As the matter of fact, none of the five companies are explicitly associating themselves with the CSR by using the literal word on their corporate websites, while however entire webpages are dedicated to social initiatives and sustainability. Research on CSR in the Dutch corporate landscape has shown that the concepts of sustainability and corporate social responsibility most of the time are being avoided due to confusing or negative associations and are implemented in expressions of everyday life in the form of ‘green’ and ‘working on the future’ (MVO Trend Report, 2017). Therefore, CSR is often used as an umbrella term that relates to or overlaps with other concepts such as corporate citizenship, business ethics, stakeholder management and (corporate) sustainability (Carroll & Shabana, 2010). In spite of the complex character of the terms that include similarities, CSR is more often consistent with stakeholder expectations, while sustainability is concerned with the long-term impact on humankind and the environment (Van Marrewijk, 2001).

It seems that in order to make sure consumers are not being put off by the complication of the concepts, companies are trying to make it more feasible by categorizing their sociable do-good’s and sustainability policies in recognizable themes. For example, ASN Bank states on one of their corporate pages that “‘sustainability’ is a rather abstract concept”, and that “as of 2017, we will focus

our communication on how we promote sustainable progress in the context of the three pillars of our sustainability policy: human rights, climate and biodiversity” (ASN BANK, 2017). Similarly, the ING website contains the main heading *ING in society*, followed by multiple categories underneath the term *sustainability*, where the subheading *our standpoints* leads to 13 different themes.

On the one hand, this enhances the advantages of an interactive relationship with multiple stakeholder groups and contributes to positive image building (Esrock & Leichty, 1998). At the same time, the extensive websites and the overflow of information that comes along can also drift away the focus from what a company really stands for and raise questions about actual positive impact of their CSR initiatives. In addition, Schmeltz (2013) claims that although people do want to know more about a company’s CSR activities, they are not always willing to look for this information themselves. Someone who is not generally interested in ING or does not share a personal connection with this company, will not likely go to their corporate websites to read all the comprehensive information. Therefore, visual communication can offer new opportunities for companies to effectively embed CSR in their corporate strategies. The next paragraph explains the analytical procedure of the video analysis in detail.

3.3 Data analysis

Although the findings present discourses that are able to answer the research question by means of conducting an overarching discourse analysis, the combination of words and images demand a multimethod approach of theories that combine the analysis of words and images in video messages. Attention has specially been paid to what is shown (visual elements) and what is said (linguistic elements). In regard to the sub-questions of this research, specific attention has been paid to the communication strategies and discursive strategies used in the videos.

The first phase of the analysis is performed using the coding process of Lefsrud et al. (2016), who use visual rhetoric and social semiotics to identify and categorize persuasion strategies in advertisements. For this study, the same frameworks are used in order to identify and categorize different communication and discursive strategies in the videos. Like Lefsrud et al. (2016), this study uses the classic modes of persuasion identified by Aristotle: ethos (appeal to reason), pathos (appeal to emotion), and logos (appeal to logic). During the analysis, the findings were assigned to the different modes. This framework is particularly applied to words, sentences and textual phrases within the videos, but within this study the visual signs are coded within the framework of rhetoric as well.

In order to use the image details, this study borrows an analytical method from semiotics, as there is not yet an analytical toolkit for applying a discourse analyses to images. Semiotics is the

study of signs, where the basic principles have originated from the work of Ferdinand de Saussure. According to Saussure, meanings are shaped through language and are therefore recognized as a system of signs (Hall, 1997). Signs cannot merely be found in spoken or written words but are hidden in anything that communicates or expresses feelings, thoughts, perceptions, opinions, interpretations or ideas. This is supported by the theory that a sign exists of two elements, where the signifier is the actual form and the signified is the mental connection that refers to certain ideas or concepts associated to that form (Hall, 1997). Although both elements generate meaning, the way the signifier and the signified are related to one another determines the representation, stimulated by codes within our cultural and linguistic world. Hall (1997, p. 32) explains this as follows:

If the relationship between a signifier and its signified is the result of a system of social conventions specific to each society and the specific historical moments – then all meanings are produced within history and culture. They can never be finally fixed but are always subject to change, both from one cultural context and from one period to another.

Thus, this arbitrary relationship ensures that meanings are changeable and that there is no question of ‘true’ meanings, which means that within this study, interpretation is a crucial step in the process of bringing meanings to the surface. Interpretation is part of the meaning-making process, where “you interpret someone’s words or actions, you explain what you think it means and how you think it should be understood” (Boeije, 2010, p. 94).

Roland Barthes was the first one to apply semiotics to popular culture. By using the first level of a sign, which includes the distinction from Saussure between signifier and the signified, a second level places the sign in a broader context, making it attached to cultural themes, concepts and meanings (Hall, 1992, p. 38). This first level gives a more simplistic description of the sign that is easy to recognize in general terms, and is called the level of denotation (Rose, 2007). The second level is the level of connotation, existing of multiple interpretations or representations that lead to a higher-level meaning whereby cultural or historical meanings and concepts are linked to the signifier in order to constitute the signified (Rose, 2007).

Thus, in order to understand the meaning of the visual images in the videos, the specific elements of the videos are deconstructed in denotative and connotative signs. This builds on the argument of Machin and Mayr (2012), who explain the interpretation process of images as follows (p. 51):

“What an image connotes may, in some contexts, be a matter of free association. But where image makers need to get a specific idea across, they will rely on established connotators,

carriers of connotations, which they feel confident their target audiences will understand (whether consciously or not).”

For each video, a list of denotations and connotations is created in order to find underlying meanings. However, some videos only provide textual meaning that can be attached to the research questions and therefore not every video exists of relevant visual symbolic elements. An example of a denotation and connotation level can be found in Appendix D.

In second stage of the analysis, the findings are connected to three different discursive strategies based on the framework of Van Leeuwen (2007) and Siltaoja (2009). This study adapts the definition of discursive strategies Siltaoja suggests in her study, in which “discursive strategies mean the use of specific discursive tactics and mobilization of specific discursive resources [by social actors] in order to construct and legitimize the claim to be a responsible organization” (Siltaoja, 2009, p. 193). Her framework exists of 5 types of strategies: authorization, moralization, rationalization, narrativization and normalization. However, the study of Siltaoja (2009) is performed on textual data, so in order to apply her framework on the dataset of this research it is adjusted to the themes established in the theoretical framework.

The last stage of the analysis is to present the discourses which are framed in the videos, relating to the communication and discursive strategies of the previous stages and place these in the broader context of the CSR discourse. In that way, this study sheds light on the applicability of visual communication in relation to CSR messaging and what this means to the execution and understanding of CSR by companies. The next chapter presents the findings of this study that answer the research questions, provided by detailed examples of findings from the analysis.

4. Results

Goodness is the only investment that never fails.

Henry David Thoreau

This chapter presents the findings of the discourse analysis of 55 YouTube videos of five different Dutch banks. Before the main research question *How do banks socially construct CSR in their videos?* can be answered, two sub questions were the leading lines towards the findings. As previous chapters already explained, the analytical approach of the data consists of a multimethod approach, in which visual rhetoric is applied in order to successfully analyze both image and text and their relation to each other.

Thus, this chapter firstly presents the communication strategies that are used in the corporate videos. These strategies are categorized by the rhetoric appeals of *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos* and narrative strategies. Secondly, the discursive strategies depicted from the data analysis are discussed, presenting findings categorized in (i) authorization, (ii) moralization and (iii) narrativization. Lastly, the findings are presented within a broader perspective according to three different discourses on how banks are socially constructing CSR.

4.1 Persuasive appeals

The discourse analysis distinguishes multiple rhetorical instruments that the banks use in their videos to formulate credible arguments about their CSR performances. The persuasive appeals located within the communications strategies of the banks are categorized according to Aristotle's classic rhetorical triangle, in which the appeal to reason (*logos*), the appeal to credibility (*ethos*), and the appeal to emotion (*pathos*) together construct a successful persuasive argument (Higgins & Walker, 2000). For this study, it is important to closely look at the way banks are using persuasive appeals in their videos as "rhetorical strategies act as structural features of discourse" (Castelló & Lozano, 2011, p. 15). Thus, analyzing the rhetorical strategies provides insights in how banks not only address their stakeholders when it comes to CSR, but also how they involve their stakeholders in the process of CSR communication.

4.1.1. Appeal to credibility

As previous literature pointed out, consumer skepticism is an important pitfall in CSR communication. Whether a CSR message can be effective and, most of all, accepted by the audience depends on the source credibility and reliability of the message (Jahdi & Acikdilli, 2009). The analysis revealed that in the videos of the banks, the appeal to credibility is mostly collected through the use of experts or authorial figures in the videos, as well as creating similar values and exposing self-criticism to enhance the “credibility for the role, positioning and characterization of the organization” (Higgins & Walker, 2000, p. 197).

One significant finding is that banks are using expertise as a strategy to enhance the credibility of the speaker. Triodos Bank has two videos in which the individual is someone with an impressive title, such as *CEO* Peter Blom and *director* Matthijs Bierman. The fact that these people are leading figures of the bank makes the message more credible as they are “competent to speak on the issue” (Lefsrud et al., 2016). ABN AMRO uses the same technique with incorporating a *dialogue manager* in the video and also ASN Bank includes employees in the video with the subtitle of *sustainability expert*. These are signs of explicit forms of ethos, but implicitly visuals enhance this argument as well by the people in the video that look professional, wearing a suite and being situated in an office. This ensures that although the viewer might not exactly be aware of the CSR values or initiatives of the company, or does not even understand what CSR means, the viewer believes what is being said as the viewer trust that a CEO of a large company or a sustainability expert knows what he or she is talking about.

Another way of enhancing credibility is a slightly different technique, in which the speaker uses humor to show the audience that the company is socially aware. In the video *Tim doesn't care about the climate that much...* (ASN BANK, 2018a) humor is used in the form of sarcasm, as it shows a sketch of a young man walking around summing all the reasons why he does not care about social causes. The video ends with the banks stating that everyone can contribute to a better world. The video lists a few societal problems, such as global warming, gas drilling in Groningen and the paradox of quality marks on products. The bank demonstrates that it is aware of contemporary controversies, which makes it more believable that the company is occupied with their role in societal improvement.

Another technique that can be categorized as *ethos* is when similarities between the speaker and the audience are based on similar values, which is conceptualized as similitude (Higgins & Walker, 2012). In the video *The idea behind our sponsorship* (Rabobank, 2017a) emphasis is placed on commonality by the use of pronouns. “*Our country*”, “*You are helping too! Everyone participates*” and “*with each other we contribute*” are detailed examples from the video that create feelings of harmony, cohesion and community among the audience (Higgins & Walker, 2012). In the video

Growing a better world together (Rabobank, 2018a) there is special emphasis on forming a unity with the audience:

Imagine that we help to kick start and scale up the smartest innovations of our clients and partners worldwide. And that we together tackle the largest food issues on 6 continents. Imagine that we together can solve the world food problem. Growing a better world together.

Beason (1991) argues that “whenever speakers use the term “we” to refer to both themselves and their audience, they are claiming group membership with that audience” (p. 331). In this way, the credibility of the speaker in the video is enhanced as it seems as if he represents the values of the bank that are in line with the moral values of the viewer.

The second strategy that is able to enhance the credibility of the banks is to apply a form of self-criticism, as it gives the impression that the organization is open and honest about mistakes or shortcomings that presented themselves in the past or can be accounted on in the future (Higgins & Walker, 2012). The CEO of Triodos Bank demonstrates the art of self-criticism by acknowledging the attitudes of banks in the past:

Banks are in between the common good and the individual good. And they have to play that role more actively. That they say not: ‘if we can make money short-term we do it!’, no: is there a long-term value there? Transformational power of money comes in. Use money in such a way that you can make with your money, the change happens. Our shareholders should be aware that they help us with what we do, but we have a much broader role to play then just making money short-term. And that has to happen more and more. That is, I think, the future of banking and that’s where banks should look at. (Triodos Bank, 2017a)

This shows that the bank is aware of their history as an industry. By acknowledging that they have “a much broader role to play” it shows that the banks are re-considering their existence in society outside merely economic responsibilities.

Another example of this form of self-criticism is produced in the videos of ABN AMRO, where different social entrepreneurs take the floor. In the video *Goed gevonden: deze keer het verhaal van Leo van Loon – Buzinezzclub* (ABN AMRO, 2017a) the social entrepreneur in de video literally says, “If you ask: what can be improved?” followed by an example of what the entrepreneur thinks the bank can do better or improve in the future. The credibility grows as it is more believable than a bank only talking about how successful it is, as openly talk about the shortcomings of a company shows

honesty. Beason (1991) argues that “by appearing to minimize their expertise about their speech topics, the speakers lower their audiences’ expectations, and thus listeners are set up for being surprised and impressed by how much the speakers actually do know” (p. 336).

Interestingly, the use of social entrepreneurs in the videos creates a pattern in the analysis, as all of the banks are using forms of third-party endorsements. A first example is the series of videos from ABN AMRO named *Goed gevonden*, in which social entrepreneurs are telling about their companies providing socially responsible products or services. In each video, the social entrepreneur talks about the relevance and importance of the financial support from the bank, implying that the bank is an important factor in stimulating social responsible practices. An example is when social entrepreneur Drees van den Bosch talks about the bank in a positive way:

Well what the bank is doing very well is that they choose for long-term investing in young, sustainable entrepreneurs and teach them that the ideal is number one, but that a definite number two is that you also have to book good results to be able to stay viable on the long-term. And that is where the bank really helps, because it puts you back with both legs on the ground when you are too narrow-focused on the ideal only. (ABN AMRO, 2017b)

However, although this shows a very explicit way of referring to the bank’s activities, there are also videos in which this communication is ought to be more implicit. In the series of videos from ING *Waar een wil is, is een weg* the viewer is led to social entrepreneur or initiative by Willie Wartaal, a famous Dutch rapper. The presence of a celebrity immediately enhances the credibility of the speaker, a rhetorical strategy that is used a lot within traditional advertising. However, Willie Wartaal shows the viewer what kind of investments ING has made by making conversation with the initiatives that actually received the money. What happens with the money and why is it important that this money is invested in this particular initiative.

By hearing this from not the bank itself, but from social entrepreneurs or other type of stakeholders, the banks do not only show transparency by demonstrating where the money goes, but also create trustworthiness by using third-sourced references. According to a study of Morsing et al. (2008), integrating other stakeholders in CSR communication decreases skepticism as the general public, most likely the viewer of the video, builds their opinion on the representation of the company through the eyes of these other stakeholders. This so-called endorsed CSR communication overpowers the idea of a company communicating their corporate image in a self-complacent manner, as the message is transferred through an ‘expert’ stakeholder group (e.g. social entrepreneurs, NGO’s, employees) that is more familiar with the fulfillment of CSR. In this way, the

finding of the analysis is aligned with existing literature in which source credibility is an important factor when it comes to successfully communicating CSR.

4.1.2 Appeal to emotion

Although establishing the credible character of the speaker in the videos is important to decrease skepticism, it is suggested that the appeal to ethos has to be combined with the creation of emotional responses. Therefore, the second strategy that the banks use in the videos is the appeal to *pathos*, which is mostly used to trigger the emotions of the audience (Higgins & Walker, 2012). In combination with the appeal to credibility, the appeal to emotion is able to move people into action or accept a claim based on how the message makes you feel. According to the findings of the analysis, the appeal to emotion is most often evoked in the videos by using identification techniques.

The first significant pattern that derived from the analysis is that identification is created based on the fight against a common enemy. A clear example in which this happens is the video *Gewoontedier* (ASN BANK, 2018b). In this video, the dog represents the customer and the badger represents a competitive bank. The voice-over states the following:

The creature of habit was doing his banking with the same badger for many years. But the badger was busy with other affairs, which weren't good for the climate. Then, the penny dropped. For the same money you choose the climate bank of the Netherlands.

The badger in the video represents competitors of ASN Bank as the animal wears a necktie, holds a phone and stands behind a tree trunk in the shape of a counter. The symbolic presence of the badger constructs competitors of ASN Bank as the 'bad guy' in the story, as they are not transparent to their clients and have a negative influence on the environment. At the same time, this creates an opposing position for ASN Bank as the 'good guy', who represents the solution for societal and environmental problems. The viewer is likely to identify with the dog, as it does not want the climate to be negatively impacted and is therefore invited to, like the dog, fight against environmental damage by not choosing banks that negatively impact the climate. Likewise, ASN Bank represents itself in the video as a bank that does take the climate and its future impact into consideration, as we do not only hear the voice-over say this, but we also see a squirrel, which is at the same time the logo of ASN bank, climbing in a tree and looking into the horizon. The overall pattern of the common enemy is environmental change and inequality, as the banks use these societal enemies to let the viewer identify with the company. This identified rhetorical strategy in the analysis is consistent to the research of Lefsrud et al. (2016), who argued that this identification technique is an invitation to advocate against fighting the enemy (Lefsrud et al., 2016).

Similar to the third-party endorsement, identification is as well touched upon by the banks openly attaching their names to other brands, organizations, companies, individuals or entrepreneurs. Cheney (1983) named this type of identification technique by organizations the common ground technique. The common ground technique is used when a company openly attaches their name with other brands, entrepreneurs, companies or individuals (Cheney, 1983). Similar to personal stories, the common ground technique is coded as a technique applied by all the five banks. In the video *Billy de Wereldredder* (ABN AMRO, 2017c) there are products of other companies deliberately showed, as the video ends with end credits in which a list of brand names appears on the screen. Likewise, ING literally attaches themselves to an individual by saying “ING stands behind Paul” in their three videos of social entrepreneurs that they are financially supporting. In fact, in almost half of the videos there are other social entrepreneurs, organizations or brands either physically or verbally present. Again, this ensures that the bank shows the viewer that they have similar values to organizations that in fact are specialized in fighting for societal matters, which automatically makes the viewer identify with the bank when they identify with the values of the third-party in the videos.

Another finding in which the banks are evoking emotional responses is by using personal stories. Triodos Bank includes personal stories in the series where the six nominees of the so-called Heart-Headprice are introduced. Every video with the appearance of a child, followed by a grown-up human telling her accomplishments as a social entrepreneur, and ends with the future expectations and goals. The symbolism of a child, complemented by the voice-over of the entrepreneur who talks about the past, creates sympathy and empathy with the viewer. A detailed example is a particular video of Rabobank, as we are introduced to an elderly pair in one of the videos of *Zo lang mogelijk meedoen*:

Jan is a very serious man, very sporty, always on the move. He turned 70 years old 14 days ago. We both love mountain walking, we both love skiing. (Rabobank, 2017a)

By getting to know the name, age and hobbies of a person the viewer can create an emotional connection, which is emphasized by the fact that we see an employee of Rabobank being introduced to us as the daughter of the elderly pair. We see images in which she visits the house, hugs her parents and sit down to eat with them. This also strengthens the emotional appeal as it the viewer is able to identify with the people in the video. ABN AMRO is using this personal story tactic as well with their video series *Goed gevonden*, ING with *Het verhaal van* and ASN Bank uses personal stories of children in their series *Groene Zaken*. Because of this a significant pattern, the analysis identified the use of storytelling as a separate communication strategy. Therefore, although this research

threats rhetoric and narrative strategies differently, it is important to know that there are certain aspects that overlap, strengthen or intertwine with one another. In other words, without the appeal to emotion a story cannot be effective and the appeal to emotion is often strengthened by narrative strategies.

4.1.3 Appeal to reason

Logos is the appeal to reason that is most often used to persuade an audience by means of logical thought, facts and rationality. In order to successfully advertise CSR values and practices, the appeal to reason is a popular persuasive device in CSR reporting, as they mostly consist of statistics, facts and common sense. Although in a few of the videos factual data is still present, the appeal to reason is often combined with the appeal to credibility and emotion, as the videos consist for the most part of third-party endorsements, stakeholder dialogue and factual examples of their CSR initiatives. Thus, this study suggests that *logos* is not the dominant rhetorical strategy used by the banks, but certainly plays an important role in structuring an argument.

In the video *Ons maatschappelijke impact 2016* (Rabobank, 2016a), the Rabobank is literally referring to their annual report and is provides a sum-up of three projects the Rabobank has been working on. The structure of the video clearly refers to argumentations in which a fact is stated, a reason is given, and an example is provided:

“Our population grows fast. That is why we have to handle our food supplies carefully. Thus, together we are working on sustainably caught fish from the Northsea.”

This clearly shows that argumentation, logic and example is combined in order to create an appearance of rationality. Another way is to incorporate data, such as ASN Bank in the video *Leefbaar loon in de kledingindustrie* (ASN Bank, 2018c):

“Regularly, she works ten hours a day for 1 dollar 90.”

“We start a dialogue with 14 clothing companies...”

“Worldwide 47 million clothing workers are working in poor conditions.”

This illustrates that the banks use facts and examples to persuade the viewer of their sincerity towards their corporate ethics.

By providing examples of their social initiatives and using third-party endorsement, the banks show that they are willing to listen to their stakeholders by creating a stakeholder dialogue. This dialogue is also created within the videos itself, as the people in the video (e.g. children, elderly or

social entrepreneurs) tell about their demands, expectations and needs. An example is the *mini-documentary* series from Rabobank, in which we are introduced to different elderly people who are telling the viewer about a personalized service from the bank that satisfied their needs. In the videos, you see an employee from Rabobank visiting elderly people at home, to help them with internet banking. In this case, it indicates that the bank wants to show to other stakeholders that they listen to interests and problems from particular stakeholder groups (e.g. elderly people not being able to do their banking online by themselves), which benefits the society at large. This example demonstrates that the combination of providing specific examples of CSR activities (in this case, the Rabobank provides by showing the viewer that they created a special service for a particular stakeholder group, stakeholder dialogue (the demands of elderly customers) and third-party endorsement (an employee of the bank telling about the idea behind the CSR initiative) enhances the claims the banks make about their CSR implementation. This enhances the appeal to reason, as the banks deliberately demonstrate that they are aware of stakeholder demands and their power to legitimize a company.

4.2 Storytelling

The analysis of the videos presented narrative strategies as a prominent communication strategy used by banks to communicate CSR. Nemčoková (2011) introduces stories as something that “conceptualize our world before we are able to conceptualize it through our own experience” (p. 111). Bennet (2013) discusses the positive influence of storytelling on sustainability marketing and concludes that in order for storytelling to work in advertising, marketers should focus on creating feelings of empowerment among consumers. Storytelling makes consumers feel the hero-in-waiting and lets them believe in a solution by uniting people, using metaphors and entertainment. As a consequence, narrative communication creates a trustful and emotional bond between stakeholders and companies (Colley, 2014; Dowling, 2006), and is more likely to result in positive word-of-mouth by telling others in contrast to factual corporate information (Schutte & Hendriks, 2007).

Schutte & Hendriks (2007) argued that a story is formed by the clear presence of a beginning, middle and ending, which means that they have a triadic structure. This is opposite to traditional advertising, where most of the time random appearances of humans using specific products are showed in order to sell or convince. For example, in the video series *6 dreams, 6 entrepreneurs*, Triodos Bank starts every video with the appearance of a child, followed by a grown-up human telling her accomplishments as a social entrepreneur, and ends with the future expectations and goals. The childhood represents a clear beginning, the middle explains the progress of the social entrepreneur in question and the end is clarified by a renewed set of future goals.

Apart from a triadic structure, an important characteristic of storytelling is that there has to be a hero with a purpose, who creates a journey in which he transforms, is being challenged and makes a return (Schutte & Hendriks, 2007). Following the story of ABN AMRO in *Billy the World Savior* (Appendix D), the identity of the hero is expressed both verbally and visually. The redheaded girl in the video is creating her identity by using the introduction of “my name is”, supported by the co-rollers in the video who are all individually stating the girl’s name, as well as the textual appearance of ‘Billy the World Savior’ on screen. The name of the character is used as a title, which directly indicates that Billy is the main character of the story. As well, ‘world savior’ can also be interpreted as a direct synonym for ‘hero’. As the story progresses, the characteristics of Billy are explicitly brought forward and can easily be identified by the viewer. She is stubborn for doing as she pleases in contradicting the demands of the adults, pushing by taking her own ideas into action and naïve by her childish behavior. She strives for societal change by using products of social entrepreneurs, which can result in a better environment and improved society.

Findings suggest that intertextual references are an important part of the communication processes of the bank. The signs of a cape, a mask and a flying machine create the connotation of a superhero, as through intertextuality the viewer is able to recognize these signs from other texts from which society has created cultural codes. To go further, the sign of a particularly bold red-headed girl who wears braids in her hair and acts rebellious can also refer to the stories of Pippy Longstocking. Pippy Longstocking is a world-famous character in children’s books, television series and films and characterized by her red braids, freckles and strength of a superhero. Pippy is in the series often criticized by adults for her reckless behavior and alternative lifestyle, similar to the character of Billy in the ABNAMRO video. Consequently, it is suggested that the child in the video is used as a metaphor for the bank itself, struggling to get credibility and legitimacy in their everyday practices. The family members represent various groups, such as NGO’s, the media, shareholders, and consumers, who are challenging the role of banks in society. In the video, Billy is persistent in her drive for change by holding on to her beliefs, what leads to the succeed of her goals and conviction of her family members. Similarly, it can be interpreted that the bank is receiving criticism from different sides, but still continues to prove the criticism wrong and make the public open their eyes to their perspectives. Without intertextuality, these meanings can however never be sustained. In this way, “the reference to symbolism not only increases understanding, but also engages emotionally, increases concentration, makes it easier to understand and remember, makes it easy to identify with the message and / or its sender” (Łyszczarz, 2014, p. 226)

Another example of intertextuality is the video *Eendagsvlieg* (ASN BANK, 2018d). The table where the animals are seating and the choice of the animal peacock together with the phrase “he is sitting at the table with Pauw”. ‘Pauw’ is the Dutch word for peacock, but in combination with the

signs and the sentences it creates a reference to the national television show called *Pauw* (2014), in which social matters and every-day events are up for discussion. In the video *Billy de Wereldredder* the text “ABNAMRO presents...” appears on the screen during the opening scene, which is a universally recognized sign for the start of a movie. Most of the time, it is used to introduce the production companies or distribution studios by which the story you about to see is made possible (e.g. ‘Walt Disney Pictures presents’, ‘Universal Studios presents’). The same goes for the end of the video, where ‘starring’ is a well-known way of giving credits to those who were involved in the process of filmmaking and marks the end of a story.

The use of narrative strategy is useful for companies when they need to communicate a rather complex message to stakeholders. Hereby, the structure of storytelling and the implementation of intertextuality can be helpful to transfer (unintended or not) messages. Organizational stories intent to create emotional commitment between the viewer and the organization, increasing “a positive attitude towards the organization, its products or activities and inspiring the recipient to develop stories and/or transfer it to anyone else” (Łyszczarz, 2014, p. 224). In line with the theoretical framework of this thesis, this means that storytelling techniques are able to increase stakeholder skepticism as people are more likely to pass the message on to others.

In this way, the signs and codes referring to these strategies can give us useful information of how the banks are socially constructing CSR with their messages discussing the topic. As we established the use of three significant strategies, rhetoric, identification and narrative, the following chapter places the findings in a broader perspective and analyzes how the companies use discursive strategies to construct certain meanings of CSR.

4.3 Discursive strategies

The previous section revealed the rhetorical strategies in the videos, in which banks focus on the credible character of the message and try to evoke an emotional response by the viewer. According to the video analysis, the banks are mostly doing this by transferring the message through the concept of storytelling and by implementing third party endorsement. From these findings emerged three discursive constructs that illustrate how the banks acquire legitimization through CSR discourse. The categories authorization, moralization and narrativization, developed by Van Leeuwen (2007), are utilized in this study as they provide insight in the social construction of CSR according to the visual and verbal codes of the data.

4.3.1. Authorization

The previous section demonstrates that one of the frequently used rhetorical strategies in the video is the use of authority and third-party endorsement in order to enhance the credible character of the speaker. This recurrent pattern indicates that on a discursive level authorization is then used to legitimate CSR practices by reference to authority. According to Vaara et al. (2008) authorization is defined as “legitimation by reference to the authority of tradition, custom, law, and persons in whom institutional authority of some kind is vested” (p. 988). In the dataset used within this thesis, authority usually appears in the form of corporate leaders or employees, but also in the form of social entrepreneurs, celebrities and NGO’s.

According to the framework of Van Leeuwen (2007), there are different forms of authorization. Personal authority is usually based on the status, which in case of the material of this study refers to the CEO or director of the bank. A ‘CEO’ and ‘director’, in the videos recognized by the subtitle of the person that appears on screen, are signs that are commonly recognized as authorial figures in the corporate landscape, as it refers to someone who is in charge of a large company. Van Leeuwen (2007) explains the use of this strategy as follow:

“Legitimate authority is vested in a person because of their status or role in a particular institution. Such authorities then need not invoke any justification for what they require others to do other than a mere ‘because I say so’, although in practice they may of course choose to provide reasons and arguments.” (p. 94).

This example focuses mostly on the status of a person, but companies might also choose to use authorization in the form of experts. ASN Bank uses this version of authorization as they use employees with the function ‘sustainability expert’ in their videos. The children in the video report

their findings back to these sustainability experts, and because of the credentials the viewer can assume without further evidence that this person knows what he or she is talking about. Moreover, the banks claim a leadership status when demonstrating to contain expertise on CSR. In this case, the bank can be evaluated as an institution who knows what CSR is all about and can be trusted to use this knowledge and perspectives about CSR to determine its most important values.

On a more critical note, this form of authorization can as well enhance the risk of a message being critically evaluated, as the authority used in the video is part of the organization that created the message. Previous studies argue that company controlled-communication can decrease the credibility of the message and increase public skepticism (Du et al., 2010; Morsing & Schultz, 2008; Perks et al., 2012). Therefore, findings of the analysis indicate that when banks use authority in the form of a corporate source, they mostly combine this strategy with other rhetorical appeals such as creating similar values between the viewer and the speaker or using the appeal to ethos, which will be discussed later on, to evoke an emotional response.

However, a recurrent pattern in the findings point out that banks are using other ways to avoid this skepticism by using other types of authorities. There is a consistent reference to NGO's or social enterprises in the videos, as banks are using the collaboration with non-profit organizations or the sponsorships of local projects as endorsed communication. Van Leeuwen (2008) recognizes this as role model authority, as social entrepreneurs or NGO's can be categorized in the same peer group due to their corresponding believes in business for a good cause. This indicates that even though the viewer is skeptical about the source of the message, which is company-controlled as the banks are the producers of the videos, the content of the video increases this skepticism by using authorization in the form of third party endorsement and role model authorities.

Based on these findings, this study suggest that the use of visual communication is able to offer a solution for the challenge in CSR communication. Organizations feel the pressure to engage in CSR and are forced to be transparent about their business practices and motives but are at the same time troubled with communicating CSR as public skepticism is increased when they signal self-interested motives. By transferring the messages in the form of videos, companies are able to increase CSR awareness as advertising CSR is more likely to reach a broader audience (e.g. multiple stakeholder groups) and simultaneously overcome the credibility issues by implementing third-party endorsements in the message as diverse authorities are physically present in the messages. At the same time, this presence also covers the expectation from consumers as the study from Kim and Ferguson (2014) shows that CSR beneficiaries are the most preferred communication source and companies should "actively share information about them with external stakeholders" (p. 15).

4.3.2. Moralization

The findings illustrate that the appeal to emotion is an important and common rhetorical strategy that the banks consequently use to evoke emotional responses. As they are most of the time doing this by referring to national and humanistic interests, it is suggested that the banks are using moralization to achieve legitimization. Siltaoja (2009) argues that in light of CSR, “moralization provides a moral or ideological basis for legitimizing the claim of an organization to be socially responsible” (p. 196). According to the framework of Van Leeuwen (2008), this strategy can be recognized as it refers to “value systems” (p. 106) and “commonsense cultural knowledge” (p. 110).

In this study, moralization is often “aimed to make the society think of negative circumstances and how they can be reduced by the introduction of new practices” (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 59). A clear example is provided by the video *Leefbaar loon in de kledingindustrie*. In this video, the viewer is introduced to Dina, a production worker that makes clothes for an unlivable wage. Moral evaluation legitimization is reached by creating a negative comparison in this commercial, as the voice-over tells us that:

Dina is being exploited by her employer. Regularly she works ten hours a day for 1 dollar and 90 cents, while she needs the double amount to live a normal live. A living wage is a human right and with a living wage Dina has money for food, shelter, health care, education, clothing, a reserve for unexpected costs and transportation.

The bank is creating legitimization because they present a humanistic agenda (Siltaoja, 2009, p. 196), as ‘normal live’ and ‘living wage’ refers to moral values that is a ‘human right’ for everyone. The bank represents themselves as the solution to reduce the problems in the clothing industry, and thereby convince the viewer that when they choose to support the bank, they simultaneously make them comply with their own moral social obligations.

Findings of the analyses demonstrate that although a few messages focus on humanistic agenda on an international scale, banks are shifting more to a nationalistic agenda to create moral evaluation. As the rhetorical strategies in the previous section already illustrated, the banks make the viewer feel as if they are a part of something by using people and values that the viewer most likely can identify with. A good example is the use of elderly people in the videos. The healthcare in the Netherlands in regard to the elderly population is recent topic of discussion in politics and among the general public, as elderly care and loneliness among elderly people is considered problematic. The majority of the banks, like ING and Triodos Bank, use images of smiling elderly people or elderly people having company in contrast to being lonely. In this way, the banks use this nationalistic concern as a legitimization technique, as they show that they are willing to take a stand or provide

solutions to this problem. Rabobank is taking it a step further and focuses an entire series of videos dedicated to elderly specific-needs, illustrating that they are occupied with improving this matter that is a concerning matter in the eyes of the general public.

However, the danger with focusing on emotional elements that are usually linked to humanistic agendas is that it can also enhance skepticism as these messages usually not contain transparency of how a company is going to achieve this effectively in practice. The commercial *Growing a better world together* is an example of a moralization strategy gone wrong, as the bank received a lot of criticism with the sentence “imagine that we can solve the world food hunger problems together, and that you can hold us to that promise (stel je eens voor dat we samen het wereldvoedselprobleem oplossen, en dat je ons aan deze belofte mag houden)”. The use of world hunger in their commercial is an attempt to focus on a higher purpose and places the bank in a leadership role when it comes to CSR, but the attempt fails due to lack of credibility and reasoning. This suggests that CSR messages are most successful when they combine rhetorical strategies, instead of primarily focusing on one in particular.

4.3.3. Narrativization

The video analysis revealed a significant pattern in which the majority of the videos contain of storytelling tactics. Siltaoja (2009) argues that narrativization is a discursive strategy used by companies that “refer to how telling a story can provide an example of acceptable and appropriate practice which further legitimizes the claim to be a responsible organization” (p. 198). Van Leeuwen (2007) distinguishes a cautionary tale from a moral tale. In a cautionary tale the hero does not follow the rules of social standards and therefore the story develops an unhappy ending. In moral tales it goes the other way around, as the hero is rewarded with a happy ending for following socially legitimate practices or reinforce the legitimate order.

In the case of *Billy de Wereldredder*, there is a moral tale that forms the discursive strategy. Billy wants to build her machine of sustainable products, but her reluctant family forms an obstacle. When she overcomes this obstacle by earning the support of her family, she succeeds in building her machine. This is also in line with the narrative framework of Schutte & Hendriks (2007), where the reason and motive for the hero are shaped by the ‘promoter’ and the ‘beneficiary’. The promoters encourage or inspire the hero to take action, while the beneficiary can profit from these actions. In this case, the promoter and the beneficiary are overlapping each other, because Billy’s family members are motivating Billy to prove them wrong as well as they are likely to profit from Billy’s success. Arguably, the positive improvement of society benefits everyone in the video. The strives of the hero are to make the world a better place and to change the believes of the public. Thereby, the setback for Billy are the family members surrounding her, since they have a skeptical attitude

towards Billy and are trying to stop her behaviors. The help is given by the products of social entrepreneurs, which Billy is using in the video to build her ultimate machinery device. Finally, the turnaround of the story is marked by the moment that Billy is taking her own-build machine into the air. Her family, who did not have supported Billy's behavior and actions until then, are surprised at Billy actually achieving her goal and end up cheering and rooting for her. The moral story here refers to behave socially responsible and you will receive a happy ending. And being socially responsible means choosing (likewise to the cheering for Billy) for the ABN Bank as it is being socially responsible by investing in social enterprises.

An example of cautionary tales are the commercials *Eendagsvlieg* and *Gewoontedier* from ASN Bank. In the commercial *Eendagsvlieg*, a peacock and a one-day-fly play the central figures of the story. In the commercial, the peacock is trying to make the fly think about the future, as its only focused on today. The conversation between the animals goes as follows:

Peacock: "Do we have to worry about the climate?"

One-day-fly: "Well, the weather report of today is fine."

Peacock: "But after today?"

One-day-fly: "Yes, then it's tomorrow."

Peacock: "But what about your children? Because what you do today, impacts tomorrow."

The denotative meaning of the conversation between the Peacock and the One-day-fly can be implied as the peacock teaching the fly a wise lesson. However, placed in the context of the bank, the connotative meaning changes as the peacock becomes a metaphor for a wake-up-call directed at the bank's stakeholders, as they are represented through the one-day-fly. In addition, a peacock can symbolize guidance and protection in a spiritual sense. The bank therefore becomes a leading figure, that has to inform stakeholders on the impact of their actions today. This is also emphasized by the fact that the fly deliberately is called a 'one-day'-fly, as this species is known to only live for several hours or days. The one-day-fly is therefore not concerned about what might be happening tomorrow, as they are not there to experience it anyway. In a way, it can also be suggested that stakeholders are represented as naïve or even egoistic, as they are only think about their own. Therefore, the bank is there to change their behavior.

In the other video of ASN Bank, we see a dog approaching a badger. The dog clearly represents the stakeholder group of the consumer, as the voice-over states that "The creature of habit has been doing his banking with the same badger for many years." The visual and linguistic elements clearly create a connotative meaning in which the naïve consumer needs a wake-up-call, that they only receive when they stop to blindly stick to one of the competitive banks. The

competitive bank is depicted as a villain, as it is literally damaging the climate by cutting down trees. This encloses the paradigmatic signs of the visual, as the presence of a villain automatically creates the opposition of the hero, which in this case is referring to ASN Bank itself.

Both commercials end with a squirrel climbing up a tree, which overlooks the environment and looks at the horizon. The squirrel here, also being a symbol within the logo of ASN Bank, is a connotative sign of the bank looking beyond what one is able to foresee. It seems that in the case of these two videos, the bank is using cautionary tales as form of mythopoesis. The peacock in the first video refers to what will happen if the fly is not thinking about tomorrow, as its likely to affect their children, and the dog is shown that trees are being cut down if he keeps doing business with the same badger. In that way, when consumers choose to be socially responsible by choosing ASN Bank, it legitimizes the social practices of the bank.

In conclusion, the use of storytelling in corporate communication is increasing, whereas it can enhance their credibility, and strengthen relationships with stakeholders by means of emotional connection (McLellan, 2006). This implies that instead of using standardized facts and figures to communicate CSR to stakeholders, storytelling offers organizations a dimensional approach for transferring messages to stakeholders. Łyszczarz (2014) argues that storytelling should be treated as an instrument for CSR communication, as it not an activity in itself but can in comparison to traditional CSR communication instruments be a means to legitimate CSR initiatives. Supporting good causes or attaching social entrepreneurs to the company increases credibility as the recipient of the message stimulates the license to operate (Łyszczarz, 2014).

4.4 The social construction of CSR by Dutch banks

4.4.1 CSR as shared responsibility

Based on the rhetorical and discursive strategies above, this study argues that the banks are socially constructing CSR as a shared responsibility. This means that although the banks acknowledge that as a business they indeed have a social responsibility, they are only able to fulfill this responsibility with the help of stakeholders. These stakeholders can be customers, other entrepreneurs or even competitive banks. The banks promote this discourse by first using an appeal to credibility, in which the trust and credibility of the bank is enhanced by authorization, self-criticism and similitude. The enlarged credibility of the speaker makes it easier to identify shared values between the organization and the viewer, which in combination with the appeal to emotion creates a discourse in which banks have a leadership role in guiding stakeholders to take responsibility for their societal impact together.

The first argument for this discourse is that the banks are sending direct messages to the viewer in which they make a call for action. In this way, banks invite the viewer to take part in the social responsibility of the bank. For example, take the following sentences from the videos:

Example 1a. “Money has to flow. You can decide which way.” (Triodos Bank)

Example 1b. “You can make the world a better place with your money.” (ASN Bank)

Thus, the bank becomes a means for people to take their social responsibility. The bank takes the lead in creating opportunities to invest money in social causes, but it is up to the viewer to decide if they become a member of the bank and in that way foster positive impact on society at large. The banks first enhance the credibility of the speaker by placing a CEO or social entrepreneur in the video and then use the appeal to emotion to make a call for action.

Challenging the viewer to take responsibility for their impact is accomplished by making them feel guilty or by using identification techniques in which the gap between the bank as a powerful profit-driven company and the viewer as a customer target is being decreased. The feelings of guilt are evoked by showing images of social entrepreneurs who are telling stories about their efforts and willingness to help making the world a better place (e.g. by creating sustainable products or helping other people in need) or to illustrate that minorities (e.g. people with disabilities, elderly people or third world countries) can receive help if you choose that bank in specific. Seeing someone getting moved by the kind words of his family about all the good things that he did, like in the videos from ING, demands the viewer in a way to think about their own responsibility and the ability to do

good. And, to know that a disabled child can play soccer if you invest your money in a bank points out the role you as a customer have in supporting companies that engage in CSR.

By making the viewer identify with the banks' values or with people within the video is also a way of transferring part of the responsibility to stakeholders. The banks are doing this by creating a national community, in which people with the same values and goals come together to fight for the greater cause of the country or society at large.

Example 2. "Associations, foundations and clubs are important for our country. They bring people together and strengthen society. (...) We do not only support associations financially. We mainly support them in the field of sustainability, health and society. But you are helping too. Everyone participates! That is how we contribute to the wellbeing of the Netherlands together." (Rabobank, 2017)

This example clearly illustrates this appeal to nationalism, constituted by identification techniques. As a viewer you identify with the company, as you as a Dutch citizen want the country to benefit from social initiatives from the companies. *We, you, together*, already creates the feeling that you are part of something, or makes you feel like you *want* to be part of something as you do not want to feel like an outsider. In this way, the bank creates shared values between the company and the viewer that "go beyond the priorities of the firm and instead express the priorities that the firm shares with its customers" (Gneezy et al., 2010, p. 325). Intertextuality plays a significant role here, as the banks and the audience are re-united to support a cause that concerns the whole country. This leads to the interpretation that social responsibility is not something that companies owe their stakeholders, but that social responsibility is something that has to be carried *with* stakeholders. From a historical point of view, this type of old fashioned recruitment tactics is familiar in creating a call to action among the general public. Think of the famous Uncle Sam poster that states *I WANT YOU for the U.S. Army* and the *Your country needs YOU* war posters, in which nationalistic emotions were used as a means to persuade someone to join the army.

Although the above example is mostly focused on customers, the shared responsibility discourse also includes competitive banks. Interestingly, most of the videos included some sort of reference to other banks.

Example 3a. I feel, it's great that other banks also start to go on the journey of sustainability. It's important. And hopefully in the future, all banks will work in that sense. (Triodos Bank)

Example 3b. Banks are also an important driver of sustainability. We as bankers have, with the financial decisions we make today, an important influence on how the world is going to

look like for future generations. Luckily, we see on that point good developments: banks are more and more serious about sustainability. (Triodos Bank)

Competition in the marketplace is often mentioned as one of the reasons to engage in CSR as “financial firms would actually act in more socially responsible ways to enhance their competitive advantages when the market competitiveness is more intense” (Chih *et al.*, 2010, p. 132).

In this way, competitive banks are used to illustrate that CSR is not an individual responsibility of one particular bank, but that the totality of a complete sector is used to legitimize their behavior.

In conclusion, with the combination of the rhetoric appeal to ethos and the implementation of identification techniques, the Dutch banks are socially constructing CSR in a way that allows them to legitimate their corporate existence by visually associating themselves to social initiatives. The risk here is that CSR of banks transforms in simply a form of charity, as they merely invest or donate money to a social cause. However, by using storytelling tactics, the banks construct CSR as something that goes beyond the form of charity. To include actual stakeholders or anecdotes in their videos is to deliberately show the effects of the money flow, and the consequences it has on society, instead of passively reporting this in words or statistics. For this reason, the possibilities of the visual mode in the social construction of CSR and the way it is ought to be communicated has to be acknowledged.

4.3.2 CSR as stakeholder responsibility

The second finding presents the idea that banks construct CSR as a stakeholder responsibility. A globally accepted definition of stakeholder is provided by Freeman (1984), who describes this as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the firm’s objectives” (p. 49). This means not only shareholders, but suppliers, employees, consumers, partners, competitors, and the community all have to be taken into account when business want to maintain a license to operate. Banks intent to focus primarily on stakeholders in their videos, in such a way that it overshadows the presence of the company in the videos itself. Almost in every video the banks expose the viewer to multiple stakeholder groups, varying from consumers to other social enterprises or organizations. This assumes that the banks suggest that CSR is mainly about creating value for stakeholders by engaging them in the stakeholder dialogue and meeting expectations and demands.

The dialogue between a company and its stakeholders is often a symbolic trade, which includes a positive advantage for both sides. Companies provide a valuable service related to societal advantage or the public interest, receiving license to operate and support from individuals or groups in both the business landscape and society (O’Riordan & Fairbrass, 2006). With the introduction of

stakeholder dialogue, firms are able to earn trust from stakeholders by informing them and communicating with them (Kaptein & van Tulder, 2003).

This interpretation of CSR is similar to the CSR approach of Freeman and Velamuri (2006), who argue in their research that the value creation for stakeholders is the prior ambition of CSR, and that companies have the responsibility to answer to the demands of those stakeholders in order to legitimize their business practices. According to the findings of this research, the banks have a particular way of positioning their stakeholders within the CSR discourse. They create a division in stakeholder groups by not only addressing their message to a specific audience, but also by including the stakeholders in the video in the form of people. As a result, CSR becomes something that is socially constructed by the expectations and demands of different stakeholder groups.

Examples of the banks directing the message directly to specific stakeholder groups is when they target children, elderly people or social entrepreneurs. The children in the video of ASN Bank actively ask questions about the CSR activities and the video consciously shows that the bank is listening to their voices by answering their questions and letting them comment on the information they receive. These videos literally present a stakeholder dialogue, when the sustainability expert (the company) discusses questions and demands of the children (the stakeholder).

In view of this inclusion of stakeholder dialogue in the YouTube videos, the CSR communication strategy appears to be in line with the stakeholder involvement strategy of Morsing and Schultz (2006). Their study distinguished three forms of CSR communication strategies. With the stakeholder information theory, a form of one-way communication transfers messages to its stakeholders without the intention of persuading them from something, as the goal is purely to spread information to the public and create awareness among stakeholders. Where the stakeholder information theory aims at merely positive support, the stakeholder response strategy has the intention to specifically adjust public attitudes and behavior. The involvement strategy invites stakeholders to negotiate their concerns and set demands, as “two-way communication builds on processes of sensemaking and sensegiving” (Morsing & Schultz, 2006, p. 325).

Although the videos are produced by the banks themselves, which possibly alarms the skeptic viewer due to lack of third-party endorsement, it allows some kind of interaction with stakeholders by positioning them in the videos. Multiple videos include stakeholders that describe what they need for their social cause and how the bank is providing them help. With this in mind, CSR is not constructed as some sort of ethical obligation the banks have to make the earth a better place to live, but centers around the relation between the company and its stakeholders. This means that the focus on these stakeholder interests come from a managerial driver and thus depend on the context in which CSR is understood (Matten, 2004).

5. Conclusion

If we do not act together, we will surely perish.

Leonardo DiCaprio

5.1 Summary

The business environment of today is not only occupied with generating profit but asks for a thoughtful consideration of the social and environmental impact it brings along, which has evolved in the phenomenon of CSR. The aim is not merely to please shareholders, but to actively anticipate to the expectations and demands of all stakeholders involved. In that sense, there is a need for transparency about a company's intentions and activities to create awareness among stakeholders that foster stakeholder dialogue. However, CSR most often depends on the context in which it is understood, which causes confusion for both corporations and academia in terms of communication and implementation in practice.

As CSR reports and corporate websites are a familiar form for corporations to inform their stakeholders, it also has limitations with regard to range and effectiveness. With an overflow of visual messaging in the world of today, where celebrities are created on photo and video-sharing social networking services such as Instagram and YouTube, it is inevitable for business to incorporate visuals in their communication strategies. Therefore, the intention of this study was to identify a gap in CSR communication literature and to contribute to the CSR discourse and its meaning making processes.

A discourse analysis is performed on a collection of 55 online videos from five Dutch banks (ING, ABN AMRO, Triodos bank, ASN bank and Rabobank) that have a debatable reputation as a financial sector but are in general positively associated with CSR in the eyes of the consumer. In order to comprehend how CSR is socially constructed in videos, the analysis combined semiotic and rhetorical approaches to the data analysis. Findings demonstrated that banks focus on the appeal to credibility and emotion, as it consists of identification strategies, third party endorsement and storytelling. This assumes that visual CSR communication has similarities with commercial advertising, as it focuses on cultural symbols and metaphors. However, commercial advertising is mostly associated with 'selling' and 'misleading' the viewer, which is contradicting the underlying motivation of CSR communication.

Owing to the findings of the analysis, the way banks are socially constructing CSR can be found in two discourses in which CSR is framed as a shared responsibility as well as a stakeholder responsibility. By focusing on discursive strategies of authorization, moralization and narrativization,

banks are positioning themselves as the middle man between stakeholders and CSR performances. Authorization causes to increase the credible character of the bank, as it portrays them as leaders that facilitate the possibilities for other stakeholders to involve with CSR (directly or indirectly). Moralization ensures that the bank and stakeholders have a collective responsibility in which everyone is assigned to a different role. The social entrepreneurs create the social initiative, the form banks the driving force due to their financial and social support and the consumer activates and maintains the existence of the process. Narrativization thereupon enlarges the legitimization by displaying the functionality of the company in terms of societal impact. Thus, the use of video can help companies to build trust in their authority, increase their credibility by showing their corporate values instead of telling, humanize the brand, simplify specific content that is hard to grasp, motivate action among viewers, and provide a mutual value for the viewer (Pedersen, 2015).

In that sense, another discourse arises in which CSR is not a responsibility based on environmental threats and moral sense but is constantly constituted and fostered by the need and expectations of a company's stakeholders. Thus, in the videos of the banks CSR is socially constructed by and based on stakeholders' associations with CSR. The results therefore demand more research to the use of visual communication and advertising in regard to CSR in order to discover ways of understanding CSR by both companies, stakeholders and the general public. Altogether this can contribute to the effective implementation of CSR in business and recognition of the multidimensional character of CSR. However, to examine the effectiveness of visual communication in relation to CSR and extend on the ways visual advertising of CSR can play a role in legitimization and stakeholder dialogue, other theoretical research and analytical methods are necessary for further exploration of this topic.

5.2 Limitations

Due to a significant gap in literature in which visual analysis in CSR communication is neglected, this study encounters several limitations in regard to the theoretical framework, the data collection and the data analysis itself. Although qualitative research is familiar with the researcher as primary instrument for data collection, it is important to recognize the position of the researcher in regard to the results of this study.

According to the research design in chapter 3, the data collection contains a list of videos selected by pre-established criteria in regard to the research purpose. However, I relied on my own judgement regarding the collection of videos. In this sense, only videos relevant to the goal of this study have been taken into account while assembling the data and have led to possible ignorance of

other relevant material. This also has to do with the fact that the videos adopt different shapes in regard to their marketing purpose, as the videos vary between being a television commercial and being part of a larger advertising campaign, or function merely as internal communication messages. During the first stages of the analysis, there was a continuous process of both removing videos that did not fit the research purpose, as well as adding videos that seem valuable along the way. As a result, not all the videos available on the corporate YouTube account have been included, as the primary function of the video could not always be recognized as the intended or unintended communication of CSR. However, the Method section provides standards used for the selection of the videos that increase the reliability of this research.

Continuously, further limitations are recognized in the criteria where the banks have to appear in the 2017 Sustainable Brand Index ranking list of the Netherlands, as this recognizes the positive CSR reputation of the bank. However, the reputation of the banks is discussable in public debate, as corporate images can vary in the eyes of the consumer and the media. For example, last year ING was declared the most sustainable bank in the world (“ING meest duurzame bank”, 2016), but is recently charged by multiple environmental organizations for their finance of fossil energy companies (“ING onder vuur”, 2017). This controversy can be linked to the fact that it is problematic to actually measure the outcomes of a company’s CSR initiatives, whereby most academic research builds frameworks on stakeholder responses (Turker, 2009).

Likewise, the method of the analysis is accompanied by limitations, as existing frameworks on visually analyzing CSR lack in academic research. Even though a few studies focus on images in CSR reports and corporate websites, methods for analyzing moving images in relation to CSR are yet to be constructed. Due to this gap in literature, this paper combined different approaches derived from other disciplines within CSR communication and rhetorical theories to increase the reliability of the findings. Needless to say, recommendation of future research centers around this established gap in literature. At the same time, the frameworks used within this study enhance the reliability and validity as they originate from different disciplines in literature and are solid frameworks to apply in any future studies.

Another limitation is that the videos are only selected from the corporate YouTube channels from the companies. Even though some of the videos are as well available on the corporate websites, other videos produced by the companies that are presented on media channels such as Facebook, Twitter or other webpages can be overlooked. On the other hand, it can be assumed that published videos from companies on other channels are most likely to be uploaded on their corporate YouTube channel as well, but videos published on YouTube can not necessarily be retrieved from other sources.

Finally, the geographical context is limiting the data to the Netherlands to investigate specifically the trend of visualizing CSR in the Dutch corporate landscape, and to be able to execute a more reliable study without having to take into account cultural differences and language barriers. At the same time, the focus on one specific industry is also limiting this research. An important notification here is that the data used for this particular research is context-based, whereas it is not per definition representative for other countries or every industry but is able to provide insights in the concept of CSR communication and the way it can be understood.

5.3 Future recommendations

Due to several gaps in literature regarding the aim of this research, it is necessary to discuss recommendations for future research that can extend the presented research findings or anticipate on limitations this study has encountered.

The first recommendation is aimed at the focus of CSR literature in regard to the method of data analyses. In current CSR research, visuals are overshadowed by the focus on CSR reporting and textual variants of communication such as corporate websites, statements in the media and surveys (Kim, 2017, Beauchamp et al, 2012, Schmeltz, 2012). Breitbarth et al. (2010) recommended in their research to look at other forms of communication that could provide new insights in the possible emerge of a new language triggered by the specific communication of CSR. They encourage the importance of visual communication in CSR reporting, stating that this is equally valuable to textual communication in the creation of meaning and opinions on companies' non-financial performance. Likewise, Garcia and Greenwood (2015) are emphasizing the visual component in corporate publications with the ability to influence a stakeholders' understanding of a company. According to Höllerer et al. (2013), visuals are more likely to be universally understood and are able to reach a much more broader audience with their ability to make messages comprehensive and less time- and space consuming. In that sense, there is a need for more research on visuals in CSR communication research, as it creates the possibility for a universally understood language that opens up new opportunities for communication tools, strategies and devices. Especially now the world is being surrounded by technological developments that provide consumers to be exposed to content every time and every place, visuals can have an advantage over textual communication as they hold the attention of the viewer and can transfer a company's values with convincing evidence (Rämo, 2011). However, the theoretical models are most often based on textual data, which makes it difficult to apply on visuals. Discourse analyses and rhetoric are most often still used for quantitative methods on texts, such as interviews, articles or CSR reports. Therefore, it is essential to build frameworks and

methods that can be applied on visual data in relation to CSR.

An additional suggestion is to extend research in which CSR is communicated through videos. Even though recent studies already acknowledge the positive influence of online communication through investigating corporate websites and social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter, the lack of focus on videos is problematic. The use of videos in marketing can “enhance the public’s impression of the organization’s products or services, put a human face on the organization, and ultimately build the brand” (Waters & Jones, 2011, p. 249), which is also likely to enhance the positive responses to a company’s CSR messages. Therefore, it is suggested that video incorporation in CSR communication offers a relevant strategy for companies to transfer CSR-related content to multiple stakeholder groups, while at the same time reduce the chance of skeptical attitudes. Research on stakeholder responses to CSR in video messages might contribute to the effect of external CSR communication and content analysis of corporate videos and commercials can help understand the framing of CSR in the online environment.

A second recommendation is to explore the integration of video communication in different industries and their influences on the social construction of CSR through visual communication. This research purposely aims attention at the financial sector, as the position of banks in society changed after the financial crisis and their strategies significantly stood out. However, it might be useful to research a range of companies that is already known for their positive relation with CSR in order to compare this to an industry that struggles with their credibility. When the video communication of different industries and companies is investigated, it can likely create guidelines for companies that want to make use of visuals in their CSR communication strategies.

A final recommendation is to focus studies more on the voice and representation of the ‘other’ in organizational CSR communication, especially considering the growing importance of stakeholder dialogue and stakeholder theories. Following Catellani (2017), who claims that the representation of stakeholders is always connected to “strategic aims and rhetorical construction” (para. 4), the findings of this study suggest that the positioning and representation of ‘the other’ (meaning stakeholders, the general public or everyone but the organization itself) in CSR communication has to be further investigated.

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7. Appendices

Appendix A – Background information of the banks

ABN AMRO. ABN AMRO, founded in 1991, is the third-largest bank in the Netherlands. The bank is recently started to offer full funding to business customers that want to make their buildings fully sustainable (“ABN AMRO biedt zakelijke klanten”, 2017). Not only does the bank provide access to multiple annual reports concerning their CSR activities, they also offer the possibility to subscribe to a newsletter that “illustrate sustainable activities and dilemmas” (<https://www.abnamro.com/>).

ASN Bank. Founded in 1960, the bank was founded as a savings bank for trade unions. Their purpose was to invest union money in a socially responsible manner, which resulted in the sustainable bank that they are now, with emphasis on human rights, climate and biodiversity. Their newest goal is to be the first bank in the world that is climate positive, which means that the totality of their finances and investments need to have positive impact on the climate by 2030 (“ASN Bank: in 2030 de eerste klimaatpositieve bank”, 2018). On their website you can find a guide with sustainability criteria and policy documents per theme and sector (<https://www.asnbank.nl/>).

ING Nederland. ING Group is founded in 1991 and nowadays serves on a global scale. Recently, the bank is proclaimed to be the most sustainable bank in the world according to Sustainalytics (“ING is sustainability leader”, 2016). This is contradicting immensely the sounds of earlier years, as they previously were blamed to be the most environmentally damaging bank of the Netherlands (“ING meest klimaatschadelijke bank van Nederland”, 2015). However, the bank is actively working on a positive image as they recently decided that employees cannot lease relatively polluting cars (“ING laat medewerkers”, 2017) and started to invest millions of moneys in green European shipping (“ING en EIB maken 300 mln vrij”, 2018). On their corporate website they extensively talk about sustainable business, as it is divided into subsections referring to sustainable products and services, their environmental impact, their employees, sustainable results and their standpoints on different sustainable topics. On their website you have also access to multiple annual reports (<https://www.ing.com/>)

Rabobank. Rabobank is founded in 1972 and specifically finances food and agriculture worldwide as their fundamentals can be found in small farmer loan-banks. Recently the bank received a massive amount of critique when they launched a new commercial in which the bank suggests, among other things, to solve food hunger around the world (“Rabobank krijgt klacht over misleidende reclame”,

2018). Their corporate website provides large number of subsections that offer facts and figures about their sustainable policy and links to documents and webpages containing strategies, statements and updates in regard to sustainability (<https://www.rabobank.nl/>).

Triodos bank. Founded in 19080, Triodos bank claims to be the most sustainable bank in the world and distinguish themselves from other banks with their ethical banking and their triple-unity approach in which people, planet and profit are central. Recently they launched a 600-million-euro investment in cooperation with a.s.r, an insurance company, to finance sustainable entrepreneurs and businesses (“a.s.r. en Triodos Bank investeren 600 miljoen in duurzame bedrijven”, 2018). The first thing you see when you go to their corporate website is a big button that links to their annual report 2016 (<https://www.triodos.com/>).

Appendix B – Statements on the banks’ corporate websites

Bank	Digital path	Statement
ING	<p>ING in Society > Sustainability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Our direction > Our own operations > Sustainable business > Society’s transition > Our Stance > The world around us 	<p><i>Sustainable business</i></p> <p>“Being sustainable is not just about reducing our environmental footprint, it’s in all the choices we make – as a lender, as an investor and through the services we offer our customers. As a bank, we believe our role is to facilitate and finance society’s shift to sustainability. In other words: contribute to progress – environmental, economic, and social. We facilitate the transition to a fairer, greener economy by financing sustainable projects and supporting clients that help solve environmental and social challenges.”</p>
ABN AMRO	<p>Sustainable banking ></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > strategy and policy > Sustainable real estate > Our focal points > Finance and investment > Stakeholders > Business operations > Reporting and publications > Newsletter 	<p><i>Business operations</i></p> <p>“Sustainable operations are an important part of ABN AMRO’s strategy, and our activities increasingly reflect our ethical, social and ecological policies. Take, for example, our plain language campaign, our transparent conditions, our sustainable HR policy and our commitment to reducing our ecological footprint. All of these contribute to responsible core activities and help us make a direct and positive impact on society.”</p>
TRIODOS BANK	<p>Who we are > Mission > What we stand for</p>	<p><i>Sustainable banking</i></p> <p>“Our approach to banking is based on the fundamental belief that money can help to create change. We value people, planet and profit - and take all three into account in everything we do.</p> <p>We call this sustainable banking. Sustainable Banking to us means using money with conscious thought about its environmental, cultural and social impacts. With the support of our savers and investors we want to make a difference, by meeting present day economic needs without compromising those of future generations.”</p>
ASN BANK (translated)	<p>Over ASN Bank > Duurzaamheid</p>	<p><i>Sustainability</i></p> <p>“We follow the definition of the United States: ‘Sustainable development is development that connect to the needs of the present, without jeopardizing the</p>

		<p>ability of future generations to meet their own needs.’ That’s what we do with words and with deeds. With an extensive sustainability policy. And with banking activities that meet these requirements. It is no coincidence that we have scored high in the Fair Bank Guide for years in a row. We manage your money with respect for people, animal and nature. And with an eye on the future. Because we want to make a difference today, and tomorrow.”</p> <p>(We volgen de definitie van de Verenigde Naties: ‘Duurzame ontwikkeling is ontwikkeling die aansluit op de behoeften van het heden, zonder het vermogen van de toekomstige generaties om in hun eigen behoeften te voorzien in gevaar te brengen.’ Dat doen we in woord en in daad. Met uitgebreid duurzaamheidsbeleid. En met bancaire activiteiten die daaraan voldoen. Niet voor niets scoren wij al jaren hoog in de Eerlijke Bankwijzer. Wij beheren je geld met respect voor mens, dier en natuur. En met oog voor de toekomst. Want we willen vandaag en ook morgen het verschil maken.”)</p>
RABOBANK	About Us > In society > Sustainability	<p><i>Sustainably successful together</i></p> <p>“Sustainable development is most likely to succeed when individuals and businesses join forces to pursue this goal together. Rabobank aims to empower customers and strengthen their communities by providing financial services in conjunction with access to its knowledge and networks. Experience has taught us that caring for people, the climate and the environment often goes hand in hand with the creation of new income opportunities.”</p>

Video selection Triodos Bank

Title of the video (original & translation)	Publication	Duration	Link
Wat gebeurde er met uw geld in 2017? <i>What happened to your money in 2017?</i>	February 22, 2016	2:14	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VeSaQ6veWII
Waarom wij met Buy The Change zijn gestart? <i>Why did we start with Buy The Change?</i>	December 16, 2016	1:10	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FBhC0c5ISlw
Wat gebeurde er met uw geld in 2016? <i>What happened to your money in 2016?</i>	January 10, 2016	1:49	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dYrbG-HU-No
“Een bank is er niet om alleen geld te maken” <i>“A bank is not merely there to make money”</i>	May 11, 2017	4:20	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DM3uYYWaYnY
Utrechts Monumenten Fonds is genomineerd voor de Hart-Hoofdprijs 2017 <i>Utrecht Monumenten Fonds is nominated for the Heart-Headprice 2017</i>	April 6, 2017	1:16	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=slmCtW6D4yo
De Terp is genomineerd voor de Hart-Hoofdprijs 2017 <i>De Terp is nominated for the Heart-Headprice 2017</i>	April 6, 2017	1:11	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Ami5dbxoP0
Siza is genomineerd voor de Hart-Hoofdprijs 2017 <i>Siza is nominated for the Heart-Headprice 2017</i>	April 6, 2017	1:12	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1v_mHwyfYpU&t=1s
Herman van Veen Arts Center is genomineerd voor de Hart-Hoofdprijs 2017 <i>Herman van Veen Arts Center is nominated for the Heart-Headprice 2017</i>	April 6, 2017	1:38	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7cIR6RnBizk
Charlie + Mary is genomineerd voor de Hart-Hoofdprijs 2017 <i>Charlie + Mary is nominated for the Heart-Headprice 2017</i>	April 6, 2017	1:18	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ip5OktyhUas
Slim Opgewekt is genomineerd voor de Hart-Hoofdprijs 2017 <i>Slim Opgewerkt is nominated for the Heart-Headprice 2017</i>	April 6, 2017	1:23	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d6nA4BAq9wk

Video selection ASN Bank

Title of the video (original & translation)	Publication	Duration	Link
TV-commercial Eendagsvlieg <i>TV-commercial One-day-fly</i>	April 3, 2017	0:30	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iV748BgT-Dc
TV-commercial Gewoontedier <i>TV-commercial Creature of Habit</i>	January 3, 2018	0:21	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_QankFs6ULI

Hoe duurzaam is H&M? <i>How sustainable is H&M?</i>	February 20, 2018	11:07	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Amqzmbabers
Hoe duurzaam is KLM? <i>How sustainable is KLM?</i>	February 19, 2018	8:25	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fXQJKL3DWRO
Wat gebeurt er met ons afval? <i>What happens to our waste?</i>	February 19, 2018	09:07	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aPu1QZr5MOW
Hoe duurzaam een chocoladefabriek? <i>How sustainable is a chocolate factory?</i>	February 19, 2018	8:58	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0R-2jH2oYfU
Tim geeft niet zoveel om het klimaat... <i>Tim doesn't care much about the climate...</i>	February 14, 2018	0:34	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aeBkBVSB_S_Q
Leefbaar loon in de kledingindustrie <i>Living wage in the clothing industry</i>	February 14, 2018	1:25	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VsUruL9SmVo

Video selection Rabobank

Title of the video (original & translation)	Publication	Duration	Link
Growing a better world together NL <i>Growing a better world together NL</i>	November 23, 2017	1:00	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZfpRjXeYSi4
Bas Rüter <i>Bas Rüter</i>	May 26, 2017	2:05	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hadYMLHndVU
Het idee achter onze sponsoring <i>The idea behind our sponsoring</i>	May 15, 2017	1:17	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ola_BC4XOPU
Elze Vonk over IkWoonLeefZorg.nl <i>Elze Vonk about IkWoonLeefZorg.nl</i>	March 22, 2017	1:00	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mgOBz9Gv6MU
Onze maatschappelijke impact 2016 <i>Our societal impact 2016</i>	March 17, 2017	1:05	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PiiJhUdhgSY&t=6s
Zo lang mogelijk mee doen – mini documentaire <i>To participate as long as possible – mini documentary</i>	January 19, 2017	2:08	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZNYbjhJiqHM&t=27s
Zo lang mogelijk mee doen – mini documentaire <i>To participate as long as possible – mini documentary</i>	January 16, 2017	1:38	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7mPIXbWWdnM&t=2s
Zo lang mogelijk mee doen – mini documentaire <i>To participate as long as possible – mini documentary</i>	January 16, 2017	2:09	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=POu9kXoav6s
Zo lang mogelijk mee doen – mini documentaire <i>To participate as long as possible – mini documentary</i>	December 20, 2016	4:21	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NGsxjCwHUyW

Video selection ABN AMRO

Title of the video (original & translation)	Publication	Duration	Link
ABN AMRO Duurzame Investeringsstool <i>ABN AMRO Sustainable Investment tool</i>	June 7, 2016	3:03	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9V6f1eyJkcg

Billy de wereldredder <i>Billy the World Savior</i>	December 23, 2016	1:15	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W00g50207po
Giving Voice to Value - Circulair Paviljoen <i>Giving Voice to Value – Circular Pavillion</i>	March 16, 2017	1:39	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7x30UNF-FNI
Giving Voice to Value - Mensenrechten <i>Giving Voice to Value – Human Rights</i>	March 16, 2017	1:28	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uaRTF8_ZmdE
Giving Voice to Value - Gebarentaal <i>Giving Voice to Value – Sign Language</i>	March 16, 2017	1:15	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yHQRYkF7Eck
Giving Voice to Value – Terug naar de Maatschappij <i>Giving Voice to Value – Back to Society</i>	March 16, 2017	1:23	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GQQ45JUW9YU&t=12s
Giving Voice to Value – Econic <i>Giving Voice to Value - Econic</i>	March 16, 2017	1:55	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zl7-HRvskOA
Giving Voice to Value – Green Bonds <i>Giving Voice to Value – Green Bonds</i>	March 16, 2017	1:23	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zVP24uYWewY
Giving Voice to Value – Connections <i>Giving Voice to Value - Connections</i>	March 16, 2017	1:23	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pm2aih1Ag7E
Giving Voice to Value – Fraude Film Festival <i>Giving Voice to Value – Fraud Film Festival</i>	March 16, 2017	1:28	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Lkp72aZMx4
Giving Voice to Value – Rond de tafel voor het klimaat <i>Giving Voice to Value – Around the table for the climate</i>	March 16, 2017	1:46	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t4sQchC_Wc4
Giving Voice to Value – Tikkie <i>Giving Voice to Value – Tikkie</i>	March 16, 2017	1:08	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t4sQchC_Wc4
Giving Voice to Value – Kees van Dijkhuizen <i>Giving Voice to Value – Kees van Dijkhuizen</i>	March 16, 2017	2:46	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sMfP83Uwcbg&t=1s
Goed gevonden: deze keer het verhaal van Michael van Loenen - YouBeDo <i>Well found: this time the story of Michael van Loenen - YouBeDoo</i>	March 24, 2017	2:04	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Ch_mmAVEpQ
Goed gevonden: deze keer het verhaal van Alec Clement - WAAR Nederland <i>Well found: this time the story of Alec Clement – WAAR Nederland</i>	March 24, 2017	2:42	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7c1YaDRbyWo
Goed gevonden: deze keer het verhaal van Leo van Loon – Buzinezzclub <i>Well found: this time the story of Leo van Loon - Buzinezzclub</i>	March 24, 2017	2:23	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l4cihzMpR5E
Goed gevonden: deze keer het verhaal van Drees van den Bosch - BeeBox	March 24, 2017	2:40	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s1hT2VkeqmA

<i>Well found: this time the story of Drees van den Bosch – BeeBox</i>			
Goed gevonden: deze keer het verhaal van Jan van Betten – Nudge <i>Well found: this time the story of Jan van Betten – Nudge</i>	March 24, 2017	2:54	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=247o_VFZ8Y8

Video selection ING Nederland

Title of the video (original & translation)	Publication	Duration	Link
Waar een wil is, moet een weg zijn <i>Where there is a will, there must be a way</i>	December 19, 2016	0:35	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ahfjSsp9h7U
Aflevering 1 'Waar een wil is': QualityWash <i>Episode 1 "Where there is a will": QualityWash</i>	January 3, 2017	2:10	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=drj_6D_hz6s&t=2s
Aflevering 2 'Waar een wil is': G-voetbal <i>Episode 2 "Where there is a will": G-soccer</i>	January 9, 2017	2:54	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CAYVMqIKoSc
Aflevering 3 'Waar een wil is': Máxima Medisch Centrum <i>Episode 1 "Where there is a will": Máxima Medical Centre</i>	January 17, 2017	2:44	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=118eoqMxPvQ
Aflevering 4 'Waar een wil is': Reddingsbrigade <i>Episode 4 "Where there is a will": Rescue Brigade</i>	January 23, 2017	1:54	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wYI8KGUGOWg
We helpen het G-Voetbal vooruit <i>We are helping the G-soccer progress</i>	April 11, 2017	1:21	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sa1jRFsOEsY
Het verhaal van Atilla Aytekin, Dutch Dream Foundation <i>The story of Atilla Aytekin, Dutch Dream Foundation</i>	April 14, 2017	1:43	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGExdQE5R8E
Het verhaal van Daniël Roos, directeur van JINC <i>The story of Daniël Roos, director of JINC</i>	May 4, 2017	1:53	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d2YhLVLgGAE&t=11s
Het verhaal van Paul Feldbrugge, Manager Resto VanHarte <i>The story of Paul Feldbrugge, Manager Resto VanHarte</i>	May 4, 2017	1:30	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TwrzqxhdArs&t=2s

Appendix D – Example of the semiotic analysis

Video transcript ABN AMRO – Billy the World Savior (Billy de Wereldredder)

The video starts with a shot of the back of a girl walking on a bridge, accompanied by the text: “ABN AMRO presents...”. In the following shot, the girl is filmed from the front, showing a young, redheaded girl with two braids in her hair, a yellow cape wrapped around her shoulders and a big brutal smile on her face. The voice-over of the kid starts: “My name is-”, but is overlapped by a series of shots in which family members are shouting “Billy!” in an annoyed or irritated voice. Showing an image of Billy jumping out of her bed, the voice-over of Billy is introducing herself as “a woman with a mission”. At the same time, a textual presentation of her name appears on the screen reading “Billy, the world savior”. Billy sneaks out of bed, as exciting music is playing. Billy says: “A real superhero, so to speak”. We see Billy taking a crate from the kitchen under the eye of an annoyed looking mother, telling the viewer that “they are calling it mischief, I say it is heroism.” We see Billy running up to a shed, adding the crate to her collection of items while her voice-over is saying: “because I think using organic products makes sense”. The items are wrappings of Tony Chocology bars and bottles of the brand Dopper. “Take care of a slave-free world,” tells the voice-over of Billy, after which she offers her sister some chocolate who replies with an irritated look. “And illuminate the world with solar-energy too,” continues Billy, while refusing her brother’s request to come to dinner. Billy brings her grandfather a cup of tea with a handful of used teabags inside, as she says “environmental friendly is my cup of tea”. In the meantime, we see Billy going back to the shed, tinkering with something and offering water from her Dopper bottle to the dog, when her voice-over tells: “I share safe drinking water with everyone”. As the tone of the music is louder and faster, we see shots of Billy running through a field and jumping on the dining table as her family is screaming her name. “I am a world savior. Because by using products of social entrepreneurs, we can make the world a better place in 2017.” Simultaneously, when the family is counting down to the start of a new year, shots of Billy trying to get her own-build machine of products by social entrepreneurs into the air. When she does succeed, her family is cheering for her and the video ends with Billy flying into the air with her machine, fireworks on the background. There is both a textual as voice-over reference for finding products “for a better world”, followed up by the name of the ABNAMRO bank stating that they are a “supporter of social entrepreneurs”. Closing up is a list by social entrepreneurs by using the sign “starring”.

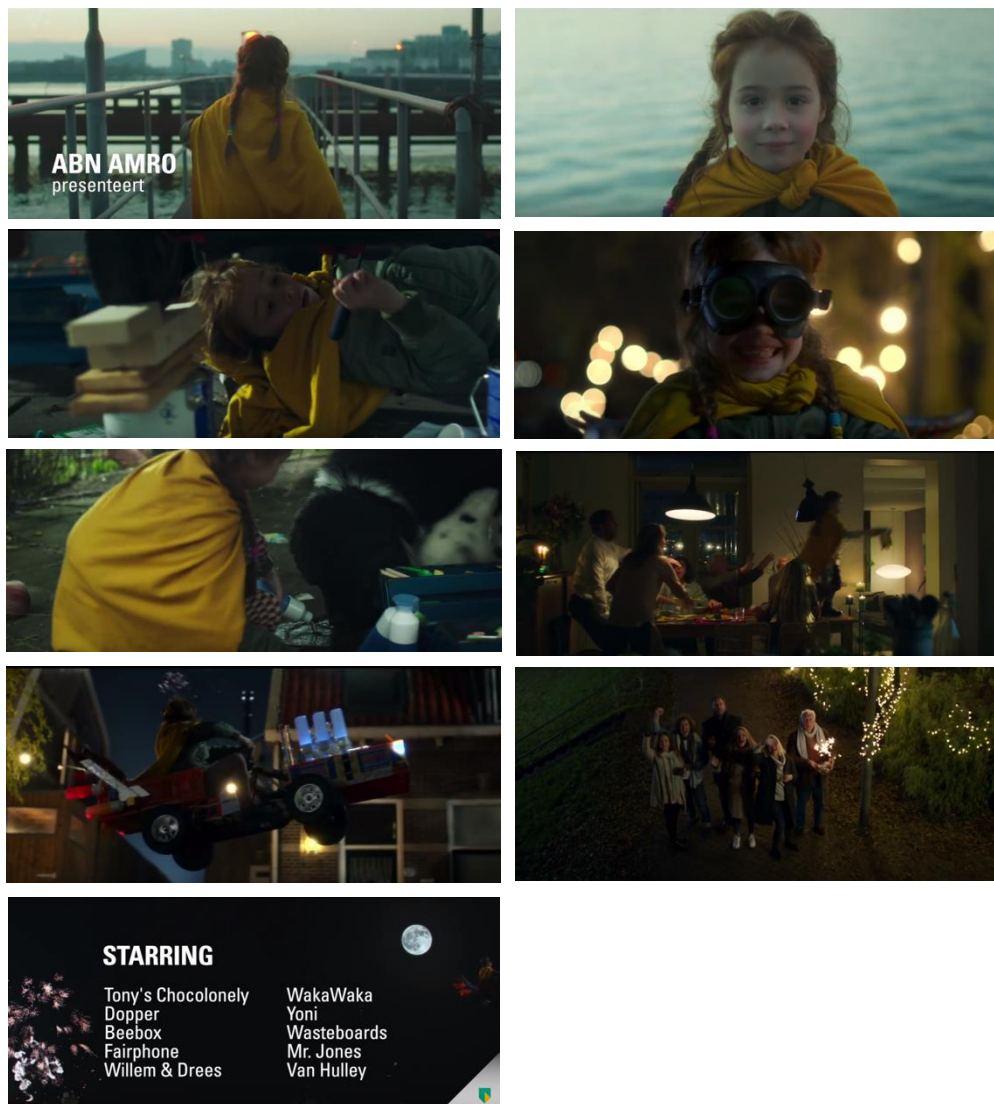


Figure 1. Billy de Wereldredder [Billy the World Savior] (ABN AMRO, 2017).

Denotative signs	Connotative signs
ABN AMRO presents (ABN AMRO presenteert)	Start of a movie, the creator of the video
Cape, mask	Hero, supernatural, protector from harm, power
A child	Innocence, the future
Red-headed girl with freckles wearing braids	Pippy Longbottom, strength, individuality
Striped pyjamas	Prison
Dopper, Tony Chocolonely products	Sustainability, organic
Annoyed family members	Discouragement
Girl working with tools	Independent, individuality, cleverness
Feeding water to the Dog	Caring, thoughtful, environmental concern
Jumping on the diner table	Mischief, rebelling
Flying machine	Supernatural, the future, progressive

Fireworks	Celebration, recognition for accomplishments
Cheering people	Support, motivation, reward
Starring (...)	Cinema, fame, celebrity, lead
Full moon	Nature, enlightenment, a new period of time

The video starts with a close-up from a man standing in front of the camera. The space surrounding him is completely blank, which makes him the center of the room. At the same time, a women's voice is telling us that "This is Paul. He thinks he is here to tell his story..." On the screen, the name of the man and his profession appears: Paul Feldbrugge. Manager Resto VanHarte. He asks if he can look into the camera, followed by the voice-over completing her previous sentence with "... but others can do this much better." We see a woman appear behind Paul, introduced by the on-screen text as Pia Feldbrugge, mother. "Hi, Paul," she says, as we immediately see signs of both surprise and recognition into Paul's face by his smile and teary eyes. "I want to tell something about you from the past," she continues, while Paul is still looking straight into the camera, without turning around to see her. When she speaks, the camera is focused on Paul's face, only portraying a blurry silhouette of the mother behind his shoulder. Then suddenly the shot switches to a shot in which the blurry silhouette behind Paul has changed into a man, who is subtitled as "Jan Feldbrugge, brother". He starts talking to Paul: "Quite early in our youth we were involved with a project to help people in Rumania." Again, the shot switches back to the mother as if she is continuing the story: "with clothing, with food supplies, shoving this in boxes." During the talk of the brother and mother, we see images of a young boy sitting with his mom on the floor next to the Christmas tree, selecting clothing and putting them in boxes. "We all said: that was the best Christmas ever." Another person is introduced as Dennis Gijsbers, friend, and adds: "Paul thinks it is important that what he does has social value." Hans Hoogveen, titled as "colleague", and dressed with a red apron with the logo of 'Resto VanHarte', elaborates with: "You can complain that things in the Netherlands are not going so well while sitting on the couch..." Paul's mother continues: "You do not look away. You look at it and think: what can I do about it? And then the ideas come." Other individuals are starting to appear, completing or supplementing each other sentences. Walter van Dalen, another friend, says: "Some are absolutely not doable, but there are also always strong things in between." Shots of smiling elderly ladies having dinner are shown, with logos of Resto VanHarte on the table. "Resto vanHarte cooks mostly for people in suburbs," tells Hans Hoogveen. Then, when Anke Slager, his fiancée, starts talking, Paul tears up. "You have really something to add to the world. You make the world a bit better on macro-level," says his fiancée. When she walks away, we see Paul whisper "thank you". "And in that sense, it is also a privilege to work with him," closes Hans Hoogveen. "Beautiful, Paul," is the last sentence from his mother, making hand gestures as if it is the end of the story. Next, people start to collectively walk towards Paul, lining up behind him. "ING stand behind Paul," says the voice-over, while Paul finally turns around and starts greeting the people who are there for him. The video ends with the orange logo of ING, with the lines of the campaign: "Where there is a will, there must be a way."

Video transcript ASN Bank – One Day Fly

The commercial starts with a peacock and a fly in the woods. There is a wooden bole between the animals. “Dayfly is sitting at the table with Peacock,” starts the voice-over. “Do we have to worry about the climate?” asks Peacock the Dayfly. “The weather seems fine today!”, answers the fly. “But, after today?”, replies the peacock. “Well, then it’s tomorrow,” says the dayfly. “But what about your children? Because what you do today, has effect on tomorrow,” continues Peacock. “I’ll check the weather report for tomorrow right away!” ends the Dayfly, as we see him fly away from the Peacock. “For the same price, you have a bank that thinks of the next generation. That is how money brings happiness. ASN Bank,” concludes the voice-over.

Video transcript ASN Bank – Creature of Habit

The commercial starts with a dog walking through the forest as he approaches a badger in a tree trunk. A voice-over tells: “This is the ‘creature of habit’. He has been doing his banking business for years with the same badger. The badger, wearing a tie and talking on the phone, turns his back on the dog. The voice-over says: “Meanwhile, the badger is busy with other things. But again, changing banks takes a lot of effort.” While the badger walks away and draws white crosses on trees, the voice-over continues: “The badger financed practices with bad influence on nature. The forest started to look very different from what the Creature of Habit was used to.” We see the worried dog watch trees with white crosses falling down, as it suddenly lifts its head up when the voice over says: “Thén, the penny dropped. Sometimes change is needed to keep the world the way it is.” The dog turns his back on the badger and sweeps with its paws backwards before he starts walking away. “And for the same price, you can choose a sustainable bank. That is how money brings happiness. ASN Bank.”
