New Mindsets for Service-Orientated Marketing: Understanding the Role of Emotions in Interpersonal Relationships

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Dedicated to:
My Mother, Christina
My Father, Erhard
Abstract

Over the past 40 years, the marketing discipline has evolved significantly, which becomes evident in the current marketing discussion in relation to a service-logic. Marketing scholars are now referring to goods-logic concepts (e.g. marketing mix), transitional concepts (e.g. relationship marketing) and service-logic concepts (e.g. service-dominant logic). The development towards a more service-orientated marketing perspective created, among others, scholarly interest towards understanding the consequences of this development for the employees of a company.

The service-logic in marketing is strongly related to an understanding of the marketplace from a network and systems perspective. Network and system analogies support the analysis of external marketing relationships between business actors, which have consequently been described as interconnected, dynamic, complex and multilateral. Scholars, who are concerned with the consequences of this development inside the firm, claimed the need for an internal marketing strategy and pointed out the importance of marketing-like attitudes for every employee. Thus, the customer-conscious and sales-minded employee, or part-time marketer, has evolved.

Service marketing scholars have argued that the service movement in marketing requires a new mindset. However, the conceptualization or specification of such a mindset has been largely neglected. A brief examination of the current dominant mindset leads to the conclusion that an understanding of business relationships is mainly based on a rational, static, unilateral, and fragmented perspective of the world, and relationships in particular.

This study aims to understand if the current, dominant rational mindset supports attitudes and behaviours, which have been implied by the development towards a more service-orientated marketing. The primary scope of this study is the internal, or interpersonal, marketing interaction between part-time marketers within a firm, based on a relational understanding of external marketing relationships.
The study has found a reactive emotional understanding among the participants in relation to interpersonal interactions, which allows the conceptualization of an internal marketing perspective with relevance to a network and systems understanding of marketing. However, a reactive emotional understanding of interpersonal business relationships does not support an external marketing perspective, which originates in a network and systems understanding of marketing.

The conceptualization of a reactive emotional understanding contributes to behaviours and attitudes in marketing by highlighting how customer-conscious and sales-minded behaviours and attitudes are related to an interconnected, dynamic and complex perspective of the world. This study suggests that emotions and their understanding in relation to marketing relationships and interactions play an essential role in developing more service-oriented behaviours and attitudes in internal marketing. This research further outlines that the current understanding of emotions is related to a worldview, which does not favour customer-consciousness and sales-mindedness.

In addition, the conceptualization of an emotional understanding legitimizes the idea that marketing is more than just a departmental function, or interface between firm and customer. This thesis concludes that an emotional understanding, based on a service-marketing logic, is a binding element to understand internal relationships with relevance to a holistic marketing perspective.
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Publications Based on this Thesis
Refereed Conference Papers and Presentations


Table of Contents

ABSTRACT ........................................................................................................ III
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ................................................................................. V
PUBLICATIONS BASED ON THIS THESIS .................................................. VI
LIST OF FIGURES .......................................................................................... X
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS ........................................................................... XII
CHAPTER ONE ............................................................................................... 1

OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS ....................................................................... 1
1.1 INTRODUCTION ...................................................................................... 1
1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH ....................................................... 2
1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT .......................................................................... 5
1.4 AIM OF THIS STUDY .............................................................................. 6
1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY .......................................................................... 6
1.6 OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS AND FINDINGS ..................................... 7
1.7 SUMMARY AND OUTLOOK ..................................................................... 12

CHAPTER TWO ............................................................................................ 15

LITERATURE REVIEW .................................................................................. 15
2.1 INTRODUCTION ...................................................................................... 15
2.2 “QUO VADIS, MARKETING?” ............................................................... 17
2.3 INTERNAL MARKETING ......................................................................... 22
   2.3.1 The History of Internal Marketing .................................................. 22
   2.3.2 The Role of the PTM in Internal Marketing ....................................... 24
   2.3.3 The Role of Interaction and Communication in IM ....................... 26
   2.3.4 Summarizing Internal Marketing ................................................... 29
2.4 RELATIONAL MARKETING APPROACHES ........................................ 31
   2.4.1 Introduction ..................................................................................... 31
   2.4.2 The History of Marketing and the Theory of the Firm .................. 32
   2.4.3 The New Market Environment ..................................................... 34
   2.4.4 The New Market Place: Dynamism and Interconnectedness .......... 35
   2.4.5 The Core of Relational Marketing ................................................ 38
   2.4.6 Some Challenges with Relational Marketing ................................. 45
2.5 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL MARKETING ................................................. 46
   2.5.1 Introduction ..................................................................................... 46
   2.5.2 The Relationship between PTM and Organization ........................ 47
   2.5.3 From Networks and Systems to Behaviours and Attitudes ............ 51
   2.5.4 The Role of Interaction and Interconnectedness in Marketing ....... 53
   2.5.5 Internal Marketing as Part of a Holistic Marketing Strategy .......... 55
   2.5.6 A Holistic View of Marketing: Summary ....................................... 58
2.6 A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MARKETING AND MIND .................. 59
   2.6.1 Introduction ..................................................................................... 59
CHAPTER FIVE

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>In-depth Interviews and Retrospective Participant Observation</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1</td>
<td>Assessment of Data</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.2</td>
<td>Analysis In-Depth Interviews</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.3</td>
<td>Findings</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Follow-up Interviews</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.2</td>
<td>Analysis Follow-up Interviews</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.3</td>
<td>Summary Follow-Up Interviews</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>Conceptualizing a Reactive Emotional Understanding</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>Overall Summary Data Analysis and Findings, and Outlook</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Introduction and Overview of the Discussion</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1.1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1.2</td>
<td>Overview of the Discussion</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.1</td>
<td>Interconnectedness and a Reactive Emotional Understanding</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.2</td>
<td>Dynamism and a Reactive Emotional Understanding</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.3</td>
<td>Co-Creation/Value-in-Use and a Reactive Emotional Understanding</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.4</td>
<td>Summarizing the Discussion with relevance to Relational Marketing</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>Contributions to Theory</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3.1</td>
<td>Contributions to External Marketing</td>
<td>276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3.2</td>
<td>Contributions to Internal Marketing</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3.3</td>
<td>Contribution Summary</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4.1</td>
<td>Summary and Conclusions</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4.2</td>
<td>Answering the Research Question</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5.1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5.2</td>
<td>Possible Implications for a more Active Emotional Understanding</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5.3</td>
<td>Evolving Recommendations</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>Practical Implications</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>Suggestions for Further Research</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>Limitations of this Study</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>Final Thoughts from the Researcher</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REFERENCES

APPENDIX – ETHICAL APPROVAL
## List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1.1</td>
<td>Chapter One Overview</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1.2</td>
<td>External and Internal Marketing Symbols</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.1</td>
<td>Chapter Two Overview</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.2</td>
<td>Main Literature and Supporting Literature</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.3</td>
<td>Does the Current Personalized Worldview of PTMs support Relational Marketing Strategies?</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.4</td>
<td>How can Behaviours and Attitudes in Internal Marketing be Characterized?</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.5</td>
<td>From Neoclassical Economics to Relational Marketing</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.6</td>
<td>The Core of Relational Approaches to Marketing</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.7</td>
<td>Networks and Interconnectedness on all Levels</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.8</td>
<td>From Networks and Systems to Behaviour and Attitude</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.9</td>
<td>The Antagonism between Relational Marketing and Rational Mind</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.1</td>
<td>Chapter Three Overview</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.2</td>
<td>Complete Literature Body</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.1</td>
<td>Chapter Four Overview</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.2</td>
<td>Study Participants</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.3</td>
<td>Data Triangulation</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.4</td>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.5</td>
<td>Summarizing the Data Analysis Process</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.1</td>
<td>Chapter Five Overview</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.2</td>
<td>External and Internal Marketing Symbols</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.3</td>
<td>From Symbols to Themes</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.4</td>
<td>Dynamic Marketing vs. Static Emotional Understanding</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.5</td>
<td>Customer-Centricity vs. Egocentricity</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.6</td>
<td>Interconnected Value Perspective vs. Fragmented Emotional Understanding</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.7</td>
<td>Reciprocal Understanding vs. Egocentric Understanding</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.8</td>
<td>Service and Emotions: Higher Order Concepts</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.9</td>
<td>Active and Passive Empathy</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.10</td>
<td>Differing time Perspectives</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.11</td>
<td>Holistic Relational Marketing versus Unconscious Internal Marketing</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.12</td>
<td>Marketing’s Interconnectedness vs. Emotional Separation</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.13</td>
<td>Hampered vs. Unhampered Information Flows</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.14</td>
<td>Relational Marketing and Internal Marketing Perspectives</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.15</td>
<td>The Conflict Between Emotional Importance and Emotional Understanding</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.16</td>
<td>From Ego Primacy to Emotional Exhaustion</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.17</td>
<td>The Conflict Between Empathetic Acting and Active Emotional Understanding</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.18</td>
<td>Emotional Separation of Social Structures and Unconsciousness</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.19</td>
<td>Relational Marketing and a Reactive Emotional Understanding (Figure 5.14)</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.20</td>
<td>Conceptualizing Reactive Emotional Understanding (REmUn)</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 6.1 Chapter Six Overview.................................................................270
Figure 6.2 Emotions as the Basis of Interpersonal Exchange (figure 5.8)........287
Figure 6.3 Conscious versus Unconscious Behaviours and Attitudes ..............293
Figure 6.4 Holistic Marketing........................................................................298
List of Abbreviations

EmUn = Emotional Understanding
IHIP = Intangible, Heterogenic, Inseparable, Perishable
IM = Internal Marketing
IMP = Industrial Marketing and Purchasing
MNC = Multi National Corporation
PTM = Part-Time Marketer
REmUn = Reactive Emotional Understanding
RM = Relationship Marketing
S-D Logic = Service-Dominant Logic
SI = Symbolic Interactionism
SM = Service Marketing
TQM = Total Quality Management
CHAPTER ONE

Overview of the Thesis

A state arises, as I conceive, out of the needs of mankind; no one is self-sufficing, but all of us have many wants… Then, as we have many wants … and many persons are needed to supply them, one takes a helper of one purpose and another for another; and when these parties and helpers are gathered together in one habitation, the body of inhabitants is termed a state. And they exchange with one another, and one gives and another receives under the idea that exchange will be for their good. (Plato, 1941, p. 34ff)

1.1 Introduction

This study aims to present an understanding of how the development in marketing towards a relational network and systems perspective is related to internal marketing, and specific behaviours and attitudes of employees in interpersonal interactions in particular. Chapter One outlines the background to this research and summarizes how this problem has been approached. This chapter also gives a preview of the methodology of this research and the results of this study. Figure 1.1 presents a structured overview of Chapter One.
1.2 Background to the Research

Marketing theory is in a period of significant change. Over the past four decades, transactional marketing has been complemented by relational approaches to marketing. The main difference between transactional and relational marketing is a paradigmatic change in perspective from a static and fragmented understanding of business, towards a dynamic and interconnected perspective. That is, while transactional marketing is based on the neoclassical doctrine, relational marketing is built on a network and systems perspective of the marketplace. Moreover, the new marketing era generated several schools of thought, such as relationship marketing, the work of the industrial marketing and purchasing group, service marketing and the service-dominant logic.

With the rise of relational marketing, scholars increasingly claim the importance of a network perspective and a systems understanding of the marketplace. From this
perspective, the market place is characterized by an inherent interconnectedness and interdependence of business actors (Ford, Gadde, Hakansson, Snehota, & Waluszewski, 2008). The network perspective is a complex view of the market place, which describes relationships between actors from a dynamic angle. The term network is widely used in academic discussion of business practice to characterize some kind of special organizational form at an aggregate level above that of individual companies (Hakansson & Ford, 2002).

Also, relational marketing advocates argue in favour of a systems understanding of marketing (Sheth, 2011; Vargo & Lusch, 2011). It is one of the prerequisites of systems theory, that a system can only identify itself in relation to its environment (Luhmann, 1995). That is, a company, or system, identifies itself in reference to its competitors, customers, society, etc. The idea of such an interdependence between business actors has far-reaching consequences for marketing, as it shapes, for example, the ideas of co-creation and value-in-use, two leading concepts of relational marketing.

Additionally, the marketplace has gained in velocity like never before (Miller & Ireland, 2005). Market stability and predictability have been displaced by unpredictable dynamism and complexity. A static and unsaturated market belongs to the past as a fading ideal. The increasing variety of innovations assures that surprises are no longer surprises but, in a sense, become habitual. A dynamic marketplace is characterized by an emerging future, which does not necessarily build on an extrapolation of past experiences. Rather, the future evolves from past-independent needs and newly emerging perspectives, such as the social networks era, or “facebook culture.”

Even though the economic environment is changing at a fast pace, the members of organizations still strive for safety, stability and predictability, based on individual expectations. The dominant worldview remains rather static and fragmented in relation to a rational understanding of the world. In fact, the focus in business has been much more on the changing realities than on the changing perspectives (T. Clarke & Clegg, 2000). The current personal understanding of the world is built on expectations, which are the consequence of extrapolated past experiences. Sudden
and unexpected, or dynamic, changes are undesirable, as they are related to feelings of uncertainty and doubt.

Almost simultaneously with the foundation of relational marketing thought, internal marketing was born. Advocates of internal marketing have been concerned with the implications from external marketing strategies on the internal marketplace of a company. Based on the influence of service marketing and relationship marketing, internal marketing scholars refer to customer-conscious and sales-minded employees, with relevance to a networks and systems perspective of marketing (Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000). That is, the movement in external marketing towards a relationship marketing paradigm holds behavioural and attitudinal implications for employees on every level (W. R. George, 1990).

The interconnected nature of the network perspective emphasized the need for every employee to assume marketing duties. This statement is based on the assumption that almost every employee is in contact with gatekeepers from other companies, or even customers. For instance, engineers often support sales representatives in a training session for customers, or product managers have personal contact with potential clients at a trade fair. Moreover, every employee is a supplier of information and ideas to other employees, or internal customers. To underline the importance of marketing for the internal market place, Gummesson (2007) calls employees part-time marketers, urging every member of an organisation to assume marketing duties in addition to their traditional job description.

On an external, or abstract level, advocates of relational marketing claim that it is time to adopt a new marketing worldview based on a network and systems understanding of the world (Vargo & Lusch, 2004a). It has been argued that a worldview has significant impact on behaviours and attitudes (Koltko-Rivera, 2004). Part-time marketers are dominated by a fragmented, rational worldview, which is also a consequence of the high degree of specialization and compartmentalization in large-scale industries. It has been argued that specialization, or indirect exchange, masks the fundamental basis of exchange, which is service (Lusch & Vargo, 2006b; Vargo & Lusch, 2008b). As such, specialization causes a loss of the intrinsic sense of interconnectedness among part-time marketers (Senge, 1990).
In summary, marketing has been, and still is, in an episode of significant change. A new paradigmatic perspective towards marketing relationships and exchange, which are perceived as dynamic, open-ended, multilateral and interconnected, characterizes this change. On an interpersonal level, the dominant worldview remains static and fragmented, based on a rational understanding of the world. The terms “customer-consciousness” and “sales-mindedness” have been introduced to urge part-time marketers to adapt their behaviours and attitudes, with relevance to a dynamic and interconnected market environment.

1.3 Problem Statement

It is one of the prerequisites of a rational understanding of the world to fragment the environment into pieces in order to process it meaningfully (Bohm, 1980; Luhmann, 1995). It has been outlined that rationality is a precondition to specialization and industrial evolution. However, it remains unexplored whether a worldview, based on a rational understanding of business and marketing, is adequate for grasping the idea of interconnectedness and dynamism. Interconnectedness and dynamism are inherent in the terms customer-consciousness and sales-mindedness.

Networks can be assessed on different levels, for instance, between firms, business units or departments within a firm. Even though networks are defined on an abstract level in the marketing literature, every action is taken by the employees, or part-time marketers, who constitute an organization. Consequently, the internal marketplace is characterized by an interpersonal network of employees (Gummesson, 2008), who act as internal suppliers and customers of services to each other, such as ideas and information. In fact, it has been noted that all employees are, at the same time, producers and consumers to each other (Vargo & Lusch, 2011). Within an interpersonal network, internal suppliers and customers can be perceived as nodes, which are interrelated via threads, or interpersonal interaction.

So far, it has not been explored whether or not part-time marketers are prepared to adopt behaviours and attitudes, with relevance to the interconnected and dynamic internal and external market environment. The characteristics of a rational worldview appear to lack the preconditions to “grasp” the nature of a dynamic, interconnected,
multilateral and holistic marketing environment. In fact, humans have been characterized as linear and serial processors based on the superiority of the rational mind (Weick, 1989). The rational mind is incapable of comprehending complexity and dynamism, as it must disassemble the environment into parts to assess it (Luhmann, 1995).

To summarize, advocates of internal marketing claim that part-time marketers must adopt customer-conscious and sales-minded attitudes and behaviours. However, an understanding of whether or not part-time marketers are ready for an internal relational marketing perspective has been neglected. The current dominant logic of marketing changed from a transactional understanding of the marketplace towards a relational perspective. On an interpersonal level, the rational worldview remains dominant. At first sight, a rational worldview appears to lack the preconditions required for grasping the idea of interconnectedness and dynamism, two characteristics of customer-conscious and sales-minded behaviours and attitudes.

1.4 Aim of this Study
The aim of this study is to understand how the development towards a relational network and systems perspective in marketing is related to internal marketing and, in particular, to specific behaviours and attitudes in interpersonal interactions. Moreover, it is the purpose of this study to understand how these behaviours and attitudes are related to internal and external marketing, the company and its employees. Even though there have been approaches that have defined behaviours and attitudes, with relevance to relational marketing, this study further aims to determine whether or not part-time marketers are ready for customer-consciousness and sales-mindedness based on a dominant rational worldview.

1.5 Scope of the Study
The scope of this study is the interface between internal marketing and external marketing strategies. The introduction of the part-time marketer indicates that the change in marketing perspective concerns employees on every level, not only full-
time marketers. Part-time marketers build and shape an organization by manifold ways of interaction and communication, and often have contact with gatekeepers of other companies or even customers. Hence, the main scope of this study is the interpersonal interaction of part-time marketers on all levels, with relevance to relational marketing strategies and internal marketing. More specifically, this study focuses on individual behaviours and attitudes in interpersonal interactions. That is, it is argued that behaviours and attitudes between part-time marketers must reflect an external marketing logic on an internal marketing level.

This thesis does not focus on a critical evaluation of the differences between relational approaches to marketing, but aims to elaborate on a common core of relational approaches to marketing (“big tent” approach). Even though relationship-oriented marketing concepts differ to some extent, an understanding of service is one key to understanding the nature of relational approaches to marketing (Grönroos, 1999). It is assumed that relational approaches to marketing are built on common ground and share an interconnected, dynamic and multilateral perspective of the market place, which contains meaningful insights to assist in answering the research question.

1.6 Overview of the Thesis and Findings

After this overview, Chapter Two continues with a critical review of literature pertinent to this research. The review includes 1) internal marketing literature, 2) relational marketing literature, and 3) additional literature with relevance to worldviews in marketing. The latter part of the review focuses on a variety of comments found in the marketing and business literature, which support an understanding of the role of changing worldviews in marketing, in relation to behaviours and attitudes. This includes a critical evaluation of the dominant rational worldview in relation to current marketing knowledge. Chapter Two finishes with a summary and an outlook on the following chapter.

Chapter Three starts with a review of additional literature, which became relevant only during the data analysis process. This study works with a systematic combining approach, which is characterized by a continuous movement between an empirical
world and a model world (Dubois & Gadde, 2002). To assure a consistent assessment of this study for the reader, the emerging matter of emotions is reviewed prior to the analysis and findings chapter (Chapter Five). Emotions became a part of the initial theoretical framework outlined in Chapter Two. Chapter Three concludes with the following research question:

How is the development in marketing towards a relational network and systems perspective related to internal marketing and, in particular, to attitudes and behaviours in interpersonal interaction?

Chapter Four outlines the methodology of this study, which comprises a discussion of the constructivist paradigm assumed by the researcher, quality criteria of this research, and research methods to collect and analyse data. To access information about behaviours and attitudes, it is essential to have an open relationship with interviewees. That is, to gain depth and detail in research it is necessary to get physically and psychologically close to the phenomenon (Perry, Riege, & Brown, 1999). Depth and detail are considered to be key aspects in this research to assess behaviours and attitudes, which are related to beliefs and assumptions about the world (Koltko-Rivera, 2004). Qualitative in-depth interviews and purposive sampling support these requirements and ensure access to meaningful information.

In total, seventeen members from one multi national corporation have been interviewed. The participants of this study have been asked to narrate about their experiences in interpersonal interactions with other part-time marketers. The interviewees, or part-time marketers, came from different hierarchical levels and had different functions. The main focus was not the top management level. Instead, non-management employees and members from middle management have been interviewed, as they account for the largest share of part-time marketers in an organization. The interview data has been approached with a symbolic interactionist perspective to relate individual statements to an external marketing context. Narrations have been analyzed in hermeneutic circles to understand data in a holistic context.

Six of the initial seventeen interviewees have been re-interviewed in semi-structured follow-up sessions to inform or question findings from the first interview round.
Participants have been selected based on the outcome of the first interview sessions and the accessibility of interviewees, which has been evaluated by the researcher. The researcher has been a member of the company for three and a half years, with a year absence between his active time and the period of this research. The pre-understanding of the researcher also contributed to this study in the form of retrospective participant observation, based on an autoethnographic research strategy, to triangulate the findings of this research.

Chapter Five summarizes the interpretation of the interviews in the form of key quotes from the participants to support the reader with a consistent assessment of this research. Throughout Chapter Five, the researcher comments on the emerging themes with real life examples based on retrospective participant observation to provide more detailed context of the interpretation and increase the relevance of the findings. The analysis of the follow-up interview session follows the intermediate conclusions.

The statements of the interviewees have been analyzed with the support of external marketing symbols. That is, interactions between part-time marketers are assessed with concepts and expressions that stem from external marketing literature. Figure 1.2 highlights some of these symbols and the relationships they have with external marketing. Figure 1.2 is also presented in Chapter Five to allow the reader a consistent reading of the data analysis process.
Based on this symbolic logic, an idea or piece of information from one part-time marketer to another is understood as a value proposition. From an external marketing perspective, the value of this idea is determined by the beneficiary, or recipient, of this idea. However, it has been found that a reactive emotional understanding amongst participants is opposed to a relational marketing perspective. That is, a reactive emotional understanding follows a supplier-centric logic and leads to a one-sided value assessment of the part-time marketer who offers a value-proposition. This implies that, even though the beneficiary of an idea, or service, is in charge of value creation, emotional reactions from the internal supplier are incongruent with this perspective.

This is only one example that highlights the differences in value assessment between internal and external customers and suppliers. While relational marketing scholars changed their viewpoint from a firm-centric to a customer-centric perspective to
refine value from a dynamic and relational angle, a reactive emotional understanding amongst part-time marketers follows an egocentric logic. An egocentric logic implies that value is assessed in a one-sided way and is based on a rational and fragmented understanding of interpersonal interactions.

Hence, while relational approaches to marketing are built on a dynamic and interconnected understanding of the external market place, the internal market place is assessed with a reactive emotional understanding, which is related to a fragmented and rational logic. From an external marketing perspective, products are co-created with the customer and value is a concept that is dynamic and multi-perspectival. On the contrary, the assessment of value from an internal perspective is unilateral and static, and follows a reactive emotional understanding.

Emotional reactiveness itself is not a new phenomenon. However, this study outlines a paradigmatic understanding of emotions held by the participants, which is inherently related to a static and unilateral perspective towards interpersonal information exchange. This perspective is based on a firm-centric, or neoclassical logic. The findings outline that this logic leads to a value assessment between internal customers and suppliers that is distinct from a relational and dynamic value assessment.

Chapter Six discusses a reactive emotional understanding with relevance to relational, or external marketing, which is the theoretical origin of customer-conscious and sales-minded part-time marketers. The discussion follows the trend outlined in the analysis and concludes that a reactive emotional understanding does not support an internal supplier-customer relationship based on a relational marketing understanding.

Following the discussion, Chapter Six outlines the contribution of this study. The conceptualization of a reactive emotional understanding (REmUn) contributes to behaviours and attitudes in marketing by highlighting that customer-conscious and sales-minded behaviours and attitudes are related to an interconnected, dynamic and complex perspective of the world, which in turn, is not supported by a REmUn. This study suggests that emotions and there understanding in relation to marketing relationships and interactions play an essential role in developing more service-
oriented behaviours and attitudes in internal and external marketing. This research also suggests that the current understanding of emotions is related to a worldview, which does not favour customer-consciousness and sales-mindedness.

Furthermore, the conceptualization of an emotional understanding legitimizes the idea that marketing is more than just a departmental function, or interface between firm and customer. This research has pointed out that an emotional understanding, based on a marketing logic, is a binding element to understand internal relationships with relevance to a holistic marketing perspective.

Chapter Six continues by recommending an active emotional understanding as an alternative, which supports a relational marketing understanding on an interpersonal level and is related to specific behaviours and attitudes. An active emotional understanding is built on the belief that emotions are conscious and can be controlled. Emotional activeness requires part-time marketers to assume emotional responsibility and, hence, to actively question and navigate their own emotions.

The understanding of the relevance of emotions in marketing is only at its beginning. This study approaches the emotions of internal suppliers and customers with a top-down approach, looking at the internal marketplace from an external marketing perspective. The findings suggest that emotions play a major role in conceptualizing important relational marketing concepts, such as co-creation and value-in-use, on an interpersonal level and in making them meaningful for the part-time marketers of an organization.

1.7 Summary and Outlook

Chapter One gave an overview of this thesis. It highlighted the relationship between external marketing strategies, internal marketing and the dominant rational worldview amongst part-time marketers. This study reveals a reactive emotional understanding among the participants, which can be assessed with a transactional marketing logic. It is argued that the conceptualization of a reactive emotional understanding contributes to understanding the terms customer-consciousness and
sales-mindedness and highlights some problems with these terms in relation to a service-orientated marketing philosophy.

The following chapter outlines a detailed literature review, with a focus on relational approaches to marketing and internal marketing. This review includes a historical review of the development of business and marketing, which is important for this research. Furthermore, business and marketing literature will be reviewed, with relevance to worldviews in relation to business and marketing. Chapter Two closes with a critical summary of the literature review.
CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Practice offers a messy complexity where not even the chicken and egg iterative causality metaphor tells the whole story. Perhaps chicken omelette is a better metaphor. (Gummesson, 2011, p. 192)

2.1 Introduction
This chapter reviews the relevant literature for this study, which is briefly outlined in Chapter One (Introduction to this thesis). This chapter starts with a discussion of the historical development in marketing theory and summarizes the status quo of current marketing knowledge (2.2). Chapter Two continues with a discussion of internal marketing (2.3) and the section concludes that a review of relational marketing literature is necessary to further understand the implications of external marketing strategies on internal marketing (2.4). Section 2.5 deepens the relationship between internal and external marketing and discusses emerging inconsistencies, which lead towards the current gap in research that this thesis aims to fill. Section 2.6 explores some of the comments made in business and marketing literature regarding newly proposed and existing worldviews and paradigms in marketing, which contribute to understanding the emerging research problem. Chapter Two closes with a summary of the reviewed literature (2.7).
Figure 2.1 Chapter Two Overview

2.1 Introduction
2.2 “Quo Vadis Marketing...?”

2.3 Internal Marketing
2.4 Relational Marketing Approaches
2.5 The Relationship Between Internal and External Marketing
2.6 A Relationship Between Marketing and Mind

2.7 Summary of the Literature Review and Outlook

Figure 2.2 outlines the main body of literature, which examines internal marketing (2.3) and relational approaches to marketing (2.4). Additional literature focuses on the link between internal marketing and external marketing strategies (2.5). Finally, section 2.6 reviews literature that became relevant after the material that is outlined in section 2.5. This final section reviews the literature in which a variety of business scholars discuss different modes of mind (consciousness, rational, intuitive, etc.), which are of relevance to frame the research problem.
2.2 “Quo Vadis, Marketing?”

“Quo Vadis Marketing?” is a question once raised by Grönroos (1994b). In the very same headline, he also gave his answer: toward a relationship marketing paradigm. In an additional article from the same year, Grönroos (1994a) expressed the need for a change in marketing: “The globalization of business and the evolving recognition of the importance of customer retention and market economies and customer relationship economics, among other trends, reinforce the change in mainstream marketing.” (p. 4).

The term “mainstream marketing” has been used by a variety of scholars to describe the more mechanistic-transactional 4P era (R. N. Bolton, et al., 2004; Grönroos, 1994a; Ryan, Mitchell, & Daskou, 2008). Relational approaches to marketing, on the other hand, have been referred to as holistic and dynamic. Relational approaches to marketing are characterized through a multilateral perspective instead of considering exclusively unilateral viewpoints (Berghaell, 2003; Ramaswamy, 2008; Vargo, 2008). The multidimensional perspective of market and business actors led to a variety of non-mainstream marketing approaches, which are different from the 4Ps. Relationship marketing (RM), as one of the non-mainstream, relational approaches to marketing, is marketing seen as consisting of relationships, networks and interaction.
(Gummesson, 1994). The industrial marketing and purchasing (IMP) group, another advocate of relational marketing, is challenging the existing conceptualizations of processes that occur within a structure of relationships between companies by introducing the marketing network perspective (Ford & Hakansson, 2006). The rise of relational marketing schools is a result of various changes in perspective, which stem from a shift in economy away from a neoclassical view of business towards an interconnected understanding of the market place (Grönroos, 1999).

It is an inevitable consequence of the neoclassical perspective that firm and customer have been perceived as separate (Lusch & Vargo, 2006b). However, from a relational perspective, it is not a world of individual and isolated transactions between companies. Instead, each business unit is bound together with many others to form the firm (Hakansson & Ford, 2002).

While advocates of transactional marketing have described transactions as being unrelated to past, present and future (Arino, de la Torre, & Ring, 2001), it is more appropriate to speak about continuous processes in the realm of relational marketing, such as “influencING”, “networkING,” and “interactING” (while the ING is emphasizing the importance of processes) instead of inputs and outcomes (Freytag & Ritter, 2005). CEOs, nowadays, often pursue social relationships rather than economic transactions per se and they instinctively feel that these relationships provide potential for strategic development, even though they do not necessarily know the types of exchange that these relationships will result in (Dibben & Harris, 2001).

In the Twenty-first century, financial measures are still the main indicator for corporate success. It has been argued, however, that financial measures, even though they are a symptom of corporate health, are not a predictor or determinant of corporate health (De Geus, 1997). Consequently, scholars became interested in the underlying reasons for successful relationships, which lead to successful transactions. It has been found that it is from a sharing of visions and understandings, and not from economic intent, that most exchange relationships were found to evolve (Dibben & Harris, 2001).
More recently, Vargo and Lusch (2004a) published their constitutional work on the service-dominant (S-D) logic. S-D logic is a re-oriented philosophy in which marketing claims to play a pre-dominant role. Within this service perspective of marketing, knowledge and skills, instead of tangible goods, are the fundamental source of competitive advantage (Vargo & Lusch, 2008b). Goods, when employed, have been described as aids to the service-provision process (Vargo & Lusch, 2008c). Vargo and Lusch answer the “Quo Vadis Marketing” question by strengthening the importance of service as a possible underlying philosophy of marketing.

Relationship marketing has been suggested as a new marketing paradigm of a relationship-type marketing strategy (Grönroos, 1994a). RM supports the perspective that resources have to be bundled to be valuable (Morgan & Hunt, 1999), which accredits the importance of the customer as a company resource. RM can be perceived as a distinct value that puts the buyer-seller relationship at the centre of a firm’s strategic or operational thinking (Sin, Tse, Yau, & Chow, 2002). It is not the need for exchange that necessarily determines important relationships but, rather, it is the relationships between buyer and seller that often drive the exchanges (Dibben & Harris, 2001).

Relationship marketing has been characterized by certain concepts and frameworks, as stressing services marketing and industrial marketing more than consumer goods marketing (Gummesson, 1996). For example, “dialogical interaction” is an important concept in relationship marketing philosophy (Varey & Ballantyne, 2005). It has been argued that dialogue is needed for the co-creation of value (R. N. Bolton, et al., 2004). A relational dialogue has been defined as a process of reasoning together in order for two or more parties to develop a common knowledge platform (Grönroos, 2000). In fact, terminologies such as communication “between” and market “with” have been considered more appropriate in characterizing business relationships than communication “to” or market “to” (Ballantyne, 2004; Lusch, 2007).

It has been noted, however, that not everybody is ready for dialogue (Varey & Ballantyne, 2005). This refusal may be due to relationship marketing having been characterized as a paradigmatic shift in which the direction of causality is not yet evident (Gummesson, 1994). RM shifted the focus of successful exchange from the
discrete transaction to ongoing activity (Lusch & Vargo, 2006b). It has been noted that marketing is in constant flux (Gummesson, 2007), which has urged marketing scholars to claim the need for a new marketing mindset that reflects a relational marketing understanding (R. N. Bolton, et al., 2004; Lusch, Vargo, & Malter, 2006; Vargo & Lusch, 2008a).

A product may be a major part of an extended offering. However, it is seldom enough to fulfil customer expectations (Grönroos, 2009). In the early 1970s the marketing of services started to emerge as a separate area of marketing with its own concepts and models (Grönroos, 1994b). These models included extended offerings, which consist of providing a service to a customer (Grönroos, 2009). Services, in the realm of service marketing (SM), describe intangible goods that are, for instance, sold to the customer over the phone in form of an advice or consultancy.

The school of service marketing is characterized by a perception of firms and customers, which exist in a relational mode (such as the aforementioned example of solving a customer problem over the phone). Within a relational mode, the customers expect something more in addition to the product to satisfy their value needs (Grönroos, 1997). Based on the developments in service marketing, the marketing scope extended from the mere exchange of a product to an extended offering, which considered the needs of a customer during the consumption process of the product.

The development in marketing towards a relational understanding created new research interests such as trust and commitment (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), and individual moral attitudes (Abela & Murphy, 2008). Vargo and Lusch (2008b) have argued that indirect exchange (e.g. receiving money in exchange for a service) masks the fundamental basis of exchange (service-for-service). Abela and Murphy (2008) argue that the service-for-service assumption urges practitioners to consider how to operate when engaging in a direct and reciprocal exchange, because immoral behaviour arises more easily when the victim is distant or hard to identify. In this regard, marketing seems to obtain an altruistic perspective.

Advocates of a holistic marketing perspective expressed the need to understand its implications inside the company (W. R. George, 1990; Grönroos, 2009; Piercy & Morgan, 1991). Scholars acknowledged that successful marketing strategies begin
inside the company with customer-conscious and sales-minded employees at every level (W. R. George, 1990; Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000). Subsequently, the school of internal marketing (IM) outlines the relationship between relational and internal marketing strategies, as well as behavioural implications for employees (W. R. George & Grönroos, 1991). The change in marketing towards a more relational and holistic perspective urged scholars to look at every employee from a marketing perspective (Gummesson, 1991).

The paradigmatic shift in marketing towards a more relational perspective, opposed to a transactional perspective, reflects the discussion of modern sciences versus post-modern sciences. While it has been argued that modern approaches to science are based on mathematical calculus (Bortoft, 1996), advocates of post-modernism urge to explain reality from a more relational angle, where humans and their environment cannot be seen in isolation (Conquergood, 1991; Holt, 2003). It has further been argued that humans perceive the world as confused and fragmentary (Wasserstein-Warnet, 2003), which stems from a positivist perspective that emphasizes exchange value (Penaloza & Venkatesh, 2006).

The question of “Quo Vadis Marketing?” appears to be a question of perspective and whether or not it is transactional or relational. While Kotler and Burden are not “dead” (Zineldin & Philipson, 2007), scholars who act in favour of relational marketing approaches to marketing call for a paradigmatic change in perspective and urge marketing academics and practitioners to see marketing from a more relational viewpoint. It has been argued that the 4P marketing mix is still valid. However, relational marketing approaches build on the 4Ps and are seen as a higher order concept when it comes to an analysis of exchange (Grönroos, 2006). That is, relational approaches to marketing take into consideration an open-ended time perspective, which is inherently related to a long-term exchange understanding and involves a variety of after-sales activities in the form of service performances.

With regards to the terminologies in this research, it is outlined hereafter that the terms “service” and “services” are differentiated throughout this thesis. A critical discussion, which derives from these terminologies, is presented in section 2.4.5. At this point it is mentioned that a difference is made between services marketing and
service marketing. The first one is known as an extension of goods marketing towards the marketing of services (for example a service hotline for certain consumer goods), which has been characterized as intangible, heterogenic, inseparable and perishable (IHIP). The latter, in contrast, from the Nordic service school, can be related to Grönroos (1997) and Gummesson (2007), and has been characterized as an extension that goes beyond a separate assessment of goods and services, and proposes a more holistic perspective of marketing, based on a service-dominant logic.

In the following, this thesis refers to the “4P era,” or the “marketing mix,” and “relational approaches to marketing.” These synonyms have been used throughout this thesis to differentiate between concepts that relate to a goods-dominant logic and transitional, relational, concepts, which go beyond a goods-dominant logic towards a service-dominant logic (see also Kowalkowski, 2010).

To summarize, the importance of marketing for every employee urged Gummesson (1991) to use the term “part-time marketers” (PTMs), to refer to customer-conscious and sales-minded employees on all organizational levels. It has been argued that the service era of marketing has behavioural and attitudinal implications for every employee, which have their origin in the terminologies “customer-consciousness” and “sales-mindedness” (W. R. George, 1990). In the following, IM literature will be reviewed to outline the relevance of the terms “customer-consciousness” and “sales-mindedness” in relation to marketing.

2.3 Internal Marketing

2.3.1 The History of Internal Marketing

Internal marketing is a relatively young discipline, which arose around the same time as relationship marketing (Gounaris, 2005). Since then, there have been various approaches towards a conceptualization of IM (Piercy & Morgan, 1991; Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000; Varey & Lewis, 1998). IM became important with the recognition of the employee as an internal customer (Berry, Hensel, & Burke, 1976). However, the proportion of empirical studies in IM remains rather slim. IM practice is also limited, probably because it lacks a proper underlying philosophy (Gounaris, 2005). IM can
be characterized as the development of a broadened concept and system model, which is capable of providing a means for organizational capability enhancement, to improve the quality of working life for organizational members (Varey & Lewis, 1998).

Internal marketing deals with the relationship between employees and organization, or management. Moreover, IM requires the involvement of a number of departments working in unison (Rafiq & Ahmed, 1993). The concept of intra-organizational marketing consists of organizational units or staff groups, which market their capabilities to other units within the same company (Harrell & Fors, 1992). Harrell and Fors also state that companies devote far too little attention to the concept of intra-organizational marketing of goods and services. There does not exist a single unified concept of what is meant by IM (Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000).

Internal marketing is driven by external marketing strategies, which means that if external marketing is meant to work successfully, then IM has to be aligned accordingly (Piercy & Morgan, 1991). A core resource of IM is the individual employee or part-time marketer (PTM). IM derives, among others, attitudinal and behavioural aspects from external marketing, which arise in the scope of the PTM (W. R. George & Grönroos, 1991).

The part-time marketer represents and embodies the external marketing concept on an inter-personal level throughout the company and he or she sees him or herself in a customer-supplier relationship with other colleagues, suppliers or consumers. Ballantyne (2003) speaks of customer-consciousness and market-mindfulness in the realm of the PTM while Rafiq and Ahmed (2000) likewise call for customer-oriented and sales-minded personnel. Lings (2004) favours the creation of an internal awareness of service quality.

The perspective of marketing has been described as a set of beliefs and skills, and attitudes for communication and service will be central requisites (Varey & Lewis, 1998). Varey and Lewis emphasize that employees, or part-time marketers, have become internal customers and that only if internal customer relationships work can the quality of the outcome be excellent, thus creating satisfied and delighted external customers.
Advocates of internal marketing accredit the service-mindedness and customer-consciousness of every employee as important behavioural aspects of a sound internal marketing strategy (Ballantyne, 2003). This perspective is influenced by the discipline of service marketing, which emphasizes the importance of attitudes and behaviours in service encounters (Grönroos, 1994b). More recently, Vargo and Lusch (2004a, 2008b) extended the service notion beyond pure service providers, and underlined the importance of a holistic service perspective for goods and services. Based on the work of Vargo and Lusch, a service-view and service-mentality of exchange is the pre-condition for relational marketing.

The characteristics of a service-oriented part-time marketer however, remain vague. Specific behavioural and attitudinal implications, in relation to networks and systems, are ambiguous with relevance to the PTM. Even though there has been work in relation to attitudes and behaviours with relevance to relational marketing, which is outlined in the next section, it remains unexplored as to whether PTMs are ready for customer-consciousness and service-mindedness or not. To better understand the role of the employee with relevance to relational marketing, the following section critically reviews internal marketing literature with a focus on the role of the PTM within the IM concept.

2.3.2 The Role of the PTM in Internal Marketing

It has been argued that before a symmetry between external marketing strategies and internal marketing is achievable, firms need to be able to assess their orientation towards their internal marketplace and, where necessary, take corrective actions (Gounaris, 2005). The term “part-time marketer” arises out of knowledge and insights from relational approaches to marketing. In fact, external marketing strategies imply organizational change (Piercy & Morgan, 1991). This becomes more apparent in the following statement:

Finally, there are attitudinal requirements for good service. Every employee has to understand and accept the importance of relationship marketing and the interactive marketing function. Indeed, employees must be committed to dual
responsibilities – that is, responsibility for their “main duties” as well as their “part-time marketing” duties. (W. R. George & Grönnroos, 1991, p. 88)

However, in order to operationalize the ideas of internal marketing, a precise specification of behaviours and attitudes would be beneficial (Lings, 2004). Behavioural and attitudinal characteristics, however, are also related to a certain personalized worldview (Morris, 1988). Human behaviour is powerfully influenced by beliefs and assumptions about life and reality (Koltko-Rivera, 2004) and, hence, not only by marketing perspectives. No evidence of research can be found that elaborates on the fit between behavioural implications that stem from relational marketing and individual worldviews, which are still dominated by the rational, positivistic mind (Liang, 2007). It remains unexplored whether the current dominant rational mindset enables part-time marketers to adopt behaviours and attitudes that correspond with relational approaches to marketing, and a network and systems perspective in particular.

The service-orientation of employees and the need for greater organizational effectiveness are major features of debate within the discussion about sources of competitive advantage and the future form of organizations (Varey & Lewis, 1998). Even though advocates of internal marketing claim that relational marketing strategies should impact behaviours and attitudes of the part-time marketer, gaining an understanding of whether or not employees are “prepared” for market-mindfulness and customer-consciousness has been neglected. The theoretical conceptualization of desired behaviours and attitudes is not sufficient to guarantee the ability of PTMs to adopt such a worldview. Figure 2.3 illustrates the relationship between individual personalized worldviews, relational marketing and behaviours and attitudes, which has not been subject to research.
2.3.3 The Role of Interaction and Communication in IM

Interaction and communication have been determined as the integrative element that contribute to “tearing down functional silos” internally, while closing the gap between the company, its customers and other stakeholders (Duncan & Moriarty, 1998). Duncan and Moriarty further note that parallel paradigm shifts in marketing and communication theory move both fields from a functional, mechanistic, production-oriented model to a more humanistic, relationship-based model.

Internal marketing is based on the understanding that single management functions cannot be effective if they operate in isolation (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003a). The central elements of this interconnectedness of functions are interaction and communication among part-time marketers. Interaction, on an internal level, takes place mainly in form of communication between PTMs. The relationships between PTMs from R&D, the purchasing department, or the marketing department become a strategic issue as
they set an infrastructure, or network, in which the marketing game is played daily (Gummesson, 1991).

According to Gummesson (1991), the emergence of the part-time marketer concept is supported by various theories and concepts, such as services marketing, network/interaction theory, total quality management (TQM), relationship marketing, marketing-oriented company management, and others. A brief review of some of these concepts in relation to the PTM supports the understanding of the different influences of these theories and concepts on interaction and communication between PTMs.

**Total Quality Management**

With the introduction of total quality management, quality has become theintegrator between production orientation and marketing orientation, as well as between technology-driven and market-driven behaviour (Gummesson, 1991). An internal marketing perspective implies that all employees and departments are perceived as internal customers and suppliers to other employees and departments in the firm (Lings, 2004). Hence, a customer-supplier relationship exists between part-time marketers on an internal level, who exchange ideas and information instead of products and services. Marketing scholars describe a movement from a firm-centric to a customer-centric perspective (Gummesson, 2008; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Vargo & Lusch, 2011). Whether or not PTMs are prepared to assume a customer-centric perspective in relation to the internal customer remains unexplored.

The idea of total quality management is a central one for internal marketing, as it deals with the relationship between employees (Rafiq & Ahmed, 1993). Central and widespread elements of TQM, however, are benchmark and certification wherein processes and tasks are broken down into sub-processes and sub-tasks, which can be easily described and benchmarked (Freytag & Ritter, 2005). Freytag also states that TQM, similar to other management tools, came with a fixation on measurement. However, behaviours and attitudes throughout interpersonal interactions are difficult to assess on a quantitative basis.
From Services Marketing to Service Marketing

The well-known IHIPs (Intangibility, Heterogeneity, Inseparability and Perishability) are central to the idea of services marketing (Gummesson, 2007). Under these assumptions, a service performance is created through direct interaction with the customer. The IHIP-nature of a service creates the need for customer-conscious and service-minded employees, which assume front-line duties with customers (e.g. service hotlines). Scholars have claimed that the advances made by services marketing should have a larger impact on marketing, rather than just being a subset of marketing (Vargo & Lusch, 2004b).

If Vargo and Lusch (2004a, 2008b) are right, and service is a super-ordinate concept to both goods and services, then the service philosophy should concern every employee. With the help of service marketing insights, scholars defined the customer-conscious and sales-minded employee. However, the role of “mind” and “consciousness” in marketing, which are part of these terminologies, remain uncharted land, in particular in relation to the part-time marketer.

Networks

A third influence on part-time marketers, which is mentioned by Gummesson, is the network/interaction perspective. Networks are single dyadic business relationships seen as part of an interconnected set of relationships (Ballantyne & Williams, 2008). The study of networks comprises the frequent comparison of the relative behaviours of the actors (Iacobucci & Hopkins, 1992). Different levels in networks are interconnected, which means that change on one level introduces change on another (Freytag & Ritter, 2005). In a network, each firm is dependent on resources controlled by other firms (Ritter, 2000). Ritter continues that firms are interdependent with each other through inter-organizational relationships. However, in a network the role and forms of marketing remain unclear (Grönroos, 1994a). Less attention is paid to how the network and systems perspective influences specific behaviours and attitudes in interpersonal interactions among PTMs.
The internal organization of firms can be seen as an interaction network, which is concerned with the organization of administration, clerical work and production inside firms (P. Bolton & Dewatripont, 1994). While the interaction process is considered the core of relationship marketing, the interaction and communication process supports the development and enhancement of relationships (Grönroos, 2004). However, most marketing literature concerned with communication focuses either on a macro perspective of marketing communication (marketing mix) or a communication between service contact personnel and the customer (Wiener, LaForge, & Goolsby, 1990). Interaction and communication send messages to customers about the firm and its way of serving its customers (Grönroos, 2004).

Preconditions for behavioural and attitudinal implications for part-time marketers are neglected in relation to a network or systems perspective. The role of mind (sales-mindedness, market-mindfulness) and consciousness (customer-consciousness), in internal marketing, is largely undefined. Varey and Ballantyne (2005) refer to behaviours and attitudes from a relational perspective and Ballantyne (2003) elaborates on knowledge renewal in organizations inside the company from a network perspective. However, a network perspective on behaviours and attitudes among PTMs, and the assessment of the necessary preconditions for an adoption, have been neglected. Nevertheless, if marketing scholars claim that marketing is subject to a paradigm shift towards networks and systems perspective (Gummesson, 1994), it is essential to understand such preconditions.

2.3.4 Summarizing Internal Marketing

Internal marketing has been characterized as a concept and philosophy (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003). George and Grönroos (1991) summarize this philosophy as the development of customer-conscious employees and outline that employees have to be prepared and motivated to serve the customers well. As has been highlighted in the preceding sections, behavioural and attitudinal aspects became a common denominator among scholars, who originate largely from the field of service marketing and relationship marketing.
Following this philosophy and within this thesis, internal marketing represents a concept, which stems from a relational and service understanding of external marketing relationships that must have specific behavioural and attitudinal implications for the employees of an organization, based on the terms “customer-consciousness” and “sales-mindedness.”

In order to assess the network and systems perspective of marketing, characteristics of the current paradigm shift in external marketing will be explored in more detail. This section has outlined that the idea of a customer-conscious and sales-minded employee has been introduced by relational marketing scholars based on more service-orientated approaches to marketing, such as service marketing or relationship marketing. In the following section, relational approaches to marketing are critically reviewed to better understand the connection between relational marketing approaches and the internal marketing philosophy.

Figure 2.4 summarizes the relationship between relational marketing strategies, internal marketing, PTMs and behavioural and attitudinal influences. Figure 2.4 has been created based on insights from marketing literature. Accordingly, attitudes and behaviours originate in external and relational approaches to marketing, and these provide a basis to understand relevant implications for part-time marketers.
2.4 Relational Marketing Approaches

2.4.1 Introduction

External marketing, like internal marketing, has a relatively young history. Marketing, known as the 4Ps or the marketing mix, arose around the 1950s (Grönroos, 1994a; Jaworski & Kohli, 1993). Relational approaches, as opposed to the transactional marketing mix approach, were established during the 1970s and are known as service marketing or network approaches (Ballantyne & Williams, 2008; Grönroos, 1994b; Gummesson, 1996, 2007). Since then, relational approaches to
marketing contributed to enhancing the more mechanistic marketing mix perspective (4Ps).

Even though the relational marketing approach generated several schools of knowledge (e.g. relationship marketing, service-dominant logic or the work of the IMP group), they are all based on similar concepts and ideas, which have their roots in network theories and systems thinking. They all share an interdependent, dynamic and holistic view of interactions. This section aims to create an understanding of the underlying core of relational approaches to marketing by way of a broad review or “big tent” approach of current relational marketing literature.

2.4.2 The History of Marketing and the Theory of the Firm
Marketing is perhaps in the midst of its most profound paradigm shift (R. N. Bolton, et al., 2004). Economic science provided the foundation for marketing thought and the impetus for its development. As production moved out of the household and into the factory, consumer and producer were separated (Lusch & Vargo, 2006b). However, with the development of relational approaches to marketing, marketing started to move towards a networking environment and the role of operant resources became essential as humans began to realize that skills and knowledge are the most important types of resources (Vargo & Lusch, 2004a, 2011). While operant resources are typically human (Madhavaram & Hunt, 2008), operand resources are usually tangible, static resources that require some action to make them valuable (Vargo & Lusch, 2008a). This development reaches back over more than a century and can be found in the formation of marketing, on the one hand, and in the development of the theory of the firm on the other (Lipczyński, Wilson, & Goddard, 2005; Morroni, 2006).

The neoclassical view of the firm has been introduced by Marshal (1907, 1919) in his “Principles of Economics.” From this standpoint, Marshall perceives the producer as being far removed from the ultimate consumer. Additionally, Marshal indicates that consumption may be regarded as negative production, which characterizes a separate relationship between producer and consumer. In fact, Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) argue that firm and consumer have the distinct roles of production and
consumption. In this regard, Penrose (1995) concludes that the neoclassical theory of the firm is the theory of perfectly competitive markets.

The neoclassical view of economics is furthermore characterized by an independent and separated perception of business reality. From an ontological perspective, the market has been perceived as a mechanistic construct, which consists of independent “black boxes,” or firms (Lipczynski, et al., 2005). Also, customers have been perceived as autonomous, separate entities. Classical and neoclassical economics have been operating with an atomized, under-socialized conception of human action, continuing in the utilitarian tradition (Granovetter, 1985).

Over time, there have been several academics who questioned the mechanistic, under-socialized and atomized model. This gave rise to a re-thinking of the logic of marketing and led Vargo and Lusch (2004a, 2008b) to their logic of marketing, which is based on a service-understanding of exchange. The service-understanding is based on the assumption that it is never the resources themselves that are the inputs in the production process, but only the services that the resources can render (Penrose, 1995). Grönroos (1997) strengthens this argument: “A product as a more or less prefabricated package of resources and features that is ready to be exchanged has evolved.” (p. 413).

In fact, one has to go beyond the product concept to understand the value-creating benefits of an offering (Grönroos, 1997). “Service” (singular), as intended by Vargo and Lusch, has a different meaning than “services” (plural), while latter are performed exclusively in the service industry and are known under the rubric of services marketing. Rather, the term “service,” as intended by Penrose (1995), or Vargo and Lusch (2004a, 2008b), includes a benefit that is rendered by a tangible or intangible good or resource. Kowalkowski (2010) summarizes Vargo and Lusch’s assumption and states that goods are seen as a distribution mechanism for a service provision.

A distinction is made in the following between service (singular) and services (plural). Thus, service is sometimes also provided indirectly through a good (Vargo & Lusch, 2004b). Furthermore, the service-dominant logic characterizes service (a process) as the application of operant resources – dynamic resources such as
competences (skills and knowledge) that are capable of acting and producing effects on other resources – for the benefit of another party (Lusch, Vargo, & O'Brien, 2007). From a S-D logic perspective, goods are seen as service appliances, and customers, both internal and external, judge the worth of service they experience from goods (Ballantyne & Aitken, 2007).

The idea of a service-dominant logic is based on a change of perspective (Vargo, 2007). It has been claimed that the more the firm adopts a relationship marketing strategy, the more important the understanding and management of service elements becomes (Grönroos, 1994a). Advocates of relational marketing argue that the focus on service requires marketers on all levels to adapt a service perspective of exchange. However, while this paradigmatic change towards a network perspective of markets and service is now widely accepted (Ford & Hakansson, 2006), the influence that a service perspective has on part-time marketers with relevance to a network and systems perspective of the internal market place remains ambiguous. More external marketing literature is reviewed to understand possible consequences of this paradigmatic discussion for employees and their part-time duty as marketers.

2.4.3 The New Market Environment
The change in marketing perspective goes hand in hand with a changing market environment. With economic expansion came increased specialization (Lusch & Vargo, 2006b). Parties appeared to be playing different, specialized roles (Vargo & Lusch, 2011). The specialist, however, looks at carefully isolated phenomena: He is interested in how one thing affects another (Laszlo, 1972). Laszlo believes that specialists are able to compute the effect by looking at things as separate facts connected by some causal or correlative relationship. As competence became more and more specialized, organizations were formed for the internal exchange of micro-specializations that result in macro-specializations (Lusch, et al., 2007). Whenever there is specialization, individuals become interdependent, which is necessary for their own well-being, if not survival (Lusch, et al., 2006).

However, as a consequence to specialization and interconnectedness, individuals are losing their intrinsic sense of connection to a larger whole with increasing complexity
and dynamism of business (Senge, 1990). Marketing theory moves away from the “to-market mentality” (4Ps), towards a “market-with mentality” (Lusch, 2007). Firm and customer are perceived closer together and more interconnected than ever before. Online platforms, in particular, assure active communication between firm and customer, and among firms and customers (Ramaswamy, 2008).

Co-creation (Lusch, 2007; Ramaswamy, 2008), value-in-use (Ballantyne & Varey, 2008) and value-in-context (Vargo, 2008) are some of the terminologies that are regularly used in scholarly articles that are concerned with the future of relational approaches to marketing, and marketing theory in general. All these approaches have in common that their focus lies on interactive processes and continuous flows (Aitken, Ballantyne, Osborne, & Williams, 2006). Scholars describe service as a process, rather than objects of exchange (Grönroos, 2006; Vargo & Akaka, 2009). The process of value creation is now interactive and synchronic, not linear and transitive, which means that more actors and actions can intervene in value creation per unit of time and space than before (Ramirez, 1999).

Scholars argue that operant resources (individual knowledge and skills) play an important role for relational approaches to marketing. Inside the company among part-time marketers, operant resources are applied to co-create a service via interpersonal interaction and communication, which reflect the service-for-service mentality on an intra-firm and interpersonal level. Furthermore, the market environment has been characterized as interconnected and dynamic (Miller & Ireland, 2005), which has important implications for PTMs, and their behaviours and attitudes in interpersonal interactions. So far, it has not been elaborated as to how this interconnectedness of business actors influences (or should influence) mind and consciousness of the PTM in relation to behaviours and attitudes. Therefore, interconnectedness is further elaborated by reviewing relevant external marketing literature.

2.4.4 The New Market Place: Dynamism and Interconnectedness

The fast changing market place is part of the business and marketing development outlined earlier in this thesis and it is supposed to further accelerate over the next
years. Resources, competencies or capabilities should be dynamic to enable firms to modify themselves to address this radically changing environment (Madhavaram & Hunt, 2008). To adapt to an accelerating dynamism, the ability to respond to changing circumstances is needed in the business environment (S. Clarke & Roome, 1999). Today, firms are required to be sensitive to these changing dynamics of the environment, the marketplace and the evolving goals and objectives of various partners (Johnston, Lewin, & Spekman, 1999). Technological breakthroughs, shortening product lifecycles, and rapidly changing markets are together forcing the pace of a paradigm shift (T. Clarke & Clegg, 2000).

However, breaking free from a dominant worldview is not easy. A dominant logic or worldview is often deeply ingrained into an individual’s mind and has to be unlearned before adopting a new logic or worldview (Bettis & Prahalad, 1995). Different approaches have been proposed to define a sustainable competitive advantage in order to respond to this fast changing environment. The resource-based view offered such an opportunity by proposing that resources have to be valuable, rare, non-imitable and non-substitutable (Barney, 1991). Advocates of the resource-based view further define its competitive resources by its relationships (Lipczynski, et al., 2005). This view, however, is based on the neoclassical idea of markets, which are characterized by a distinct independence and separation of business actors.

From a relational marketing perspective, knowledge and learning are seen as the source of the only competitive advantage (Fulmer, Gibbs, & Keys, 1998). Both market and organizations are knowledge generators (Morroni, 2006). Morroni continues that market and organizations channel learning processes but also provide a setting for the development and selection of new ideas. The service-dominant logic focuses on operant resources as the major building block of a competitive sustainable advantage (Vargo & Lusch, 2004a, 2008a). It has been noted that operant resources are knowledge and skills.

The faster changing environment is a feature of the post-neoclassical era. It stands in opposition to stability and predictability, which is a presumption that stems from the economic development of industrialized countries around the 1950s and 1960s.
(Morroni, 2006). Impacts of this dynamism on the part-time marketer’s behaviours and attitudes, in relation to interpersonal interaction, remain unexplored.

Figure 2.5 summarizes and visualizes the peculiarities of the market development from a neoclassical understanding towards a relational understanding of the market. Cooperation slowly outpaces competition (Hamel, Doz, & Prahalad, 1989) and consumers and firms are perceived as being more interconnected as ever before. The arrows in figure 2.5 indicate that marketing in the 21st century presupposes an interconnectedness of business actors on all levels. Also, the perceived distance between firms and consumers has shrunk, even though the physical distance has remained unchanged.

**Figure 2.5 From Neoclassical Economics to Relational Marketing**
2.4.5 The Core of Relational Marketing

2.4.5.1 Introduction

As has already been outlined, relational approaches to marketing appeared around the same time (1970s). Also, a systems approach seems well suited as a basis for a general theory in marketing (Grönroos, 1994a). More recently, Vargo and Lusch (2011) adapted their “lens” (they call it “zooming out with the linguistic telescope”) and refer to actors-to-actors (A2A), which is consistent with the convention of the IMP group. Ford (2011) agrees that S-D logic and the IMP work have considerable commonality.

Gummesson (2011) argued that S-D logic takes marketing from a mid-range level towards the direction of grand theory, by merging marketing management, service marketing, relational approaches, and systems and network theory into a holistic approach; it draws on ideas from earlier phases in the development of marketing, such as service management thinking, value constellations and IMP network thinking involving value co-creation (Ballantyne, Frow, Varey, & Payne, 2011). Relational approaches to marketing appeared around the same time and are partly interwoven. The following section elaborates on some of the characteristics that these approaches have in common:

Interdependency in marketing relates to complexity, context, systems, networks, many-to-many marketing, relationship marketing, interaction, co-creation of value, resource-sharing and service-for-service, to mention some of the concepts that may help us generate better marketing theory. (Gummesson, 2011, p. 190)

2.4.5.2 Multilateral/Multidirectional/Multidimensional

Ford (2011) emphasizes that the combination of technologies required to cope with any actor’s problem can only be provided by a network of actors. When Vargo (2008) speaks about multidirectional processes, he refers to a concept of resource integration where all parties uniquely integrate multiple resources for their own benefit and the benefit of others. The firm-customer relationship is not bilateral (R. N. Bolton, et al.,
Interactional processes are multidimensional and any change in an exchange-relationship will involve different dimensions and elements of interactions (Andersson & Tuusjaervi, 2000).

The reality of interaction implies that basic conditions are neither general nor externally given (Ford & Hakansson, 2006). Ford and Hakansson continue that basic conditions are subject to interaction between diverse organizations. Within and between organizations, value occurs in interaction with resources (Lusch, 2007). Thus, value cannot be created unilaterally (Vargo & Lusch, 2008b) because it is embedded in interaction and, hence, subject to multidirectional influences. Kowalkowski (2011) states that, often, there are multiple evaluators from all parties involved in the enactment of a value proposition.

Mutual openness and mutual confirmation are two characteristics, or attitudes, of a dialogical learning orientation (Varey & Ballantyne, 2005). Varey and Ballantyne assess mutuality in a dialogue based on a “communication-between” perspective. A mutual perspective or orientation is related to specific behaviours and attitudes with relevance to the dialogue. While it is argued that this perspective is valuable in relation to interpersonal interactions, it is assumed that there are attitudes and behaviours that go beyond the interpersonal dyad and include a super-ordinate network understanding. Mutuality does not appear to address the multidimensionality of networks satisfactorily.

### 2.4.5.3 Interconnectedness/Jointness

Ford (2011), as an advocate of the international marketing and purchasing group, views the structure in which business operates as one of interdependencies and relationships. Jointness and interconnectedness refer to a non-separable or interdependent relationship between two or more entities. Relationship marketing, the IMP approach, the service-dominant logic, or service marketing, all inherently imply an interconnectedness between business actors and negate an existence of business actors in isolation (Ford, et al., 2008; Hakansson & Snehota, 1995). Ford and Hakansson (2005) introduced the term jointness and define it as a key element in an interactive world. From a value creation perspective, the suppliers’ process and the
customers’ corresponding process merge into one joint value co-creation process (Grönroos, 2009).

Organizational goals are determined by the connections and the behaviour of the other parties as it is by the action of the company itself (Canning & Brennan, 2004). The connectedness of business relationships implies an interdependence of business actors (Hakansson & Ford, 2002; Ritter, 2000). On the one hand, interpersonal interactions are said to arise as a result of a pre-existing exchange need between two or more parties (Dibben & Harris, 2001). On the other hand, boundaries are necessary to survive in an increasingly complex world (Baecker, 2006; Luhmann, 1995). Having said this, business partners are interdependent, but have an identity in relation to the network at the same time; there is no true self-sufficiency (Vargo & Lusch, 2011).

With relevance to internal marketing, Varey and Ballantyne (2005) introduce the idea of the “recognition of uniqueness” in relation to a dialogical learning orientation, which refers to the acknowledgement of the individuality of the other. It is assumed that this uniqueness, in an interconnected environment, must have specific consequences in relation to behaviours and attitudes. It is argued that uniqueness is not self-explanatory and the idea remains rather abstract. More research is needed to understand the implications of uniqueness in relation to an interconnected IM environment with relevance to specific behaviours.

2.4.5.4 Co-Creation

Co-creation is related to the interconnectedness-phenomenon but goes one step further. It implicitly represents the interconnectedness of entities and, beyond that, emphasizes the utility of jointness. Vargo and Akaka (2009) argue that value is always co-created. Besides the firm, it is the customer, either internal or external, who is endogenous as a partner in the co-creation of value (Lusch, 2007). It has also been noted that companies will need to understand how to manage co-creation of their offerings together with buyers (Edvardsson, Holmlund, & Strandvik, 2008). There is a movement towards a world in which value is the result of an implicit negotiation between the individual customer and the firm (Prahalad & Ramazwamy,
2004). In this world, the capability and interest to adapt and develop the contents is essential in a process together with the buyer (Edvardsson, et al., 2008).

Ramaswamy (2008) outlines a practical example of co-creation in his Nike case. In his example, he highlights how firm and customer engage simultaneously in the value creation process via an interactional, internet-based platform. The Nike Plus online platform gives customers the possibility to engage in the value co-creation process by exchanging jogging results and product performances. This leads to an exchange relationship where both firm and customer profit from the co-creation of value. For example, customers appreciate the value offered by the platform, which gives them the possibility to profit from an experience exchange with other customers. On the other hand, the firm profits from assessing the customers’ feedback online.

Similarly, part-time marketers exchange ideas and co-create value by mutually discussing and developing these ideas towards products, services, or related solutions. What is needed in marketing is a joint-venture perspective between a customer and a supplier (Sheth, 2011), where customers participate in the co-creation of value through sharing and integration of resources such as skills and knowledge (Ballantyne, et al., 2011).

2.4.5.5 Value-in-use/Reciprocal Value

Research into customer value highlights a trend that moves away from a value-in-exchange view, towards a perspective from which value is produced not by the supplier, but by the customer when using goods and services and when interacting with the suppliers (Grönroos, 2009). Relationships have value beyond the immediate transaction that takes place within them (Ford & Hakansson, 2006) and customers, or beneficiaries, create value during the use of a good or service (Grönroos, 2011). Value-in-use occurs at the intersection of the offer and the customer over time, either in direct interaction or mediated by a good (Lusch, 2007). Buyer value comes from the utility and price a company offers (Kim & Mauborgne, 2004). Value is created in the customer’s processes, and moreover, the customer is in charge of his or her value creation (Grönroos, 2009; Vargo & Lusch, 2008b).
Ramaswamy (2008) refers to value as value through experiences, while value is derived from the service experience of the particular actors in interaction (Ballantyne & Varey, 2006). Vargo and Akaka (2009) note that value-in-use is the real meaning of value. If the customer is seen as a resource of the firm, then the value of a resource comes into play in its combination with other resources (Baraldi & Stroemsten, 2005). Value creation is a process that involves the entire network and that depends in its unfolding on the specific configuration of this network (Baraldi & Stroemsten, 2005). In all cases, the beneficial, or receiving, party plays some role in the value-creation process (Vargo & Lusch, 2011): “From the relationship marketing perspective, the concept of value is the key to understanding how relationship processes develop.” (Lindberg-Repo & Grönroos, 2004, p. 230).

Varey and Ballantyne (2005) refer to a network perspective of communication, which they call “communication between.” Ballantyne (2003) speaks of two-way value propositions among employees, based on a relational perspective of interpersonal interaction. This refers, again, to the mutual and reciprocal relationship between part-time marketers. However, it is assumed that the concepts of Varey and Ballantyne hold potential to further specify behaviours and attitudes to make them more tangible for PTMs on all levels.

2.4.5.6  **Dynamics**

Business networks are inherently dynamic in nature (Freytag & Ritter, 2005) and change by companies and change within companies occur through changes to the structure to the network (Hakansson & Ford, 2002). It has been noted earlier that service can be described as a process (Grönroos, 2006) and the essence of the notion of “process” is provided by the statement that not only is everything changing, but all is flux (Bohm, 1980) as well as marketing (Gummesson, 2007).

Marketing is an adaptive process, and operant resources are dynamic (Lusch, 2007). S-D logic is a view that is inherently a dynamic view of processes (Layton, 2008; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Madhavaram and Hunt (2008) argue that marketing itself is an intangible, dynamic, operant resource. It has been acknowledged that organizations are dynamic processes in networks rather than well-structured
hierarchies and functional silos (Gummesson, 2000a). Behavioural and attitudinal implications on the part-time marketer, in relation to a dynamic marketing environment, remain ambiguous.

2.4.5.7 Summarizing the Core of Relational Marketing

The end of the neoclassical era of business and marketing and the rise of relational marketing approaches during the 1970s are based on similar ontological assumptions about the world. The analogy of networks and a systems view of the (business) world drastically changed the marketing perspective. The features of relational marketing outlined in this section are not exhaustive, but sufficient to characterize a common core of relational approaches to marketing. Figure 2.6 outlines the core of relational approaches to marketing, which has been characterized as dynamic, multilateral and interconnected. Co-creation and value-in-use are two important characteristics of relational marketing.
It is considered important to highlight again that internal marketing has to be aligned with external marketing in order to work successfully (W. R. George & Grönroos, 1991). The idea of the customer-conscious and sales-minded employee has its roots in a service understanding of marketing (Gummesson, 1991, 2007), which is based on the marketing perspective outlined in figure 2.6. However, there is no sufficient discussion available on how this relational marketing perspective affects the part-time marketer in relation to mindfulness and consciousness, with relevance to specific behaviours and attitudes. It might shed more light on the peculiar relationship between external marketing and behaviours and attitudes to review some of the challenges that arise with the new ontological business perspective of relational marketing.
2.4.6 Some Challenges with Relational Marketing

Relational approaches to marketing are of an ontological nature. The service-dominant logic has been described as a “lens” (Vargo, 2007) and a paradigmatic viewpoint (Vargo, 2008). Likewise, relationship marketing has been called a paradigm (Grönroos, 1994b; Gummesson, 1998). Gummesson (1996) refers to “closer” relationships, even though the physical distance between business actors has remained unchanged. The change in marketing starts with an ontological perspective, which is accompanied by a few challenges.

A critical review shows that relational approaches to marketing are debatable. A demonstrative example is the work of Grönroos (2006), who questions the overall applicability and validity of a service-dominant logic. According to him, the validity of a S-D logic is related to the particular business setting. He claims, for example, that the consumption of goods is a black-box and the marketer does not know what the customer is doing. Service, in the eyes of Vargo and Lusch (2008c), is the essential and transcending focus of exchange, whether one speaks about products or services.

Networks have been described as islands and bridges (Vargo & Lusch, 2011), or as interwoven webs of nodes (e.g. companies), which are interconnected through threads, or relationships (Gummesson, 1987). Hakansson and Ford (2002) present the three network paradoxes, which are briefly outlined hereafter. The first of the paradoxes states that the development of threads gives opportunities to both nodes but, at the same time, restricts them. Second, the company is an outcome of its strategies and actions. However, at the same time, the company is an outcome of its relationships and what happens to them. Last, the more a company tries to control the network, the less effective and innovative the network will be. The network perspective is subject to problems, or paradox, which stem from an interconnected perspective of business and marketing.

Also, services have been perceived as aids to the production of goods, value-added activities or a particular type of product (intangible). In contrast, the service-dominant logic views service (process) as the application of operant resources – dynamic resources such as skills and knowledge – for the benefit of another party (Lusch, et
al., 2007). The misunderstandings that arise from the use of the word “service” stem from a perspective that is inherently related with a goods-dominant logic. Fuzzy definitional problems associated with many of the terms used still remain at this stage of the development of S-D logic (Ballantyne, et al., 2011). Consequently, since their introduction of the service-dominant logic, Vargo and Lusch (2008b) have been busy clarifying misunderstandings or misinterpretations. They argue that the problem is that there is not a full and adequate understanding of the concept of service and its role in exchange and competition (Lusch, et al., 2007; Vargo, 2008).

The relational network view of market actors has initiated discussions among marketing scholars. The discussions are based on discrepancies in viewpoints and are largely of an ontological nature. These discussions are about how business reality is perceived, either from a mechanistic-transactional perspective or from a more relational perspective, and what the consequences are. If a relational marketing worldview requires a different ontological perspective, or lens, this perspective might also have important implications on the part-time marketer’s viewpoint towards behaviours and attitudes in internal interaction and communication. More marketing literature is reviewed in the following section, which focuses on the interface, or relationship, between internal marketing and external marketing strategies.

2.5 The Relationship between Internal and External Marketing

2.5.1 Introduction

Internal marketing and external marketing strategies have a close relationship. Marketing cannot solely be the responsibility of one separate function and handled by full-time marketers only (Grönroos, 2009). In order to have a successful external marketing strategy, it has to be compatible with IM (Varey & Lewis, 1998). This is a more integrated approach to marketing, as it operates as a holistic management process to integrate the multiple functions of the firm (W. R. George & Grönroos, 1991).

The alignment of internal marketing and external marketing strategies builds the main argument for a holistic understanding of marketing. Every individual needs to support
the aims of the marketing philosophy inside the company. To align IM, corporate statements have to be transferred to every employee. Both corporate and brand strategy must be related to values, positioning and personality, which support the delivery of the brand experience through consistent behaviour and experience (Dunmore, 2002).

A holistic perspective of marketing requires an understanding of marketing as a function (external marketing strategies) and in terms of behavioural and attitudinal aspects (internal marketing), as well as how they are linked together. From a holistic marketing perspective, all employees have become internal customers (Gummesson, 2000a). This suggests that marketing has its roots in the interaction between employees, the smallest operant “entity” of a firm. Part-time marketers build the foundation of a holistic marketing concept. Interacting and communicating PTMs form an organization, which transmits a unified marketing message to customers. It is not only the full-time marketers that have external contact, but PTMs also interact with gatekeepers from other companies (e.g. purchaser), or even customers (e.g. product manager on a trade fair). Therefore, the relationship between employee and organization is crucial.

2.5.2 The Relationship between PTM and Organization

External marketing starts from within the organization (Grönroos, 1994a). Characteristics that describe a firm, or equally, a relationship between two business entities can be translated to an interpersonal level (Schulz & Gnoth, 2008). This is in line with the core idea of internal marketing, which draws its implications from external marketing strategies (W. R. George, 1990). Layton (2008) works with a similar approach, establishing micro, meso and macro levels of marketing to embed the service-dominant logic into a more holistic marketing system.

Hall (1993) demonstrated that employee-know-how was not only rated one of the most important contributors to business success, it was also rated as one of the most durable resources. Moreover, humility and integrity are essential for healthy business communication; they do not only reside in specific people, but also flow from broader organizational values, preferences, and systems (Vera & Rodriguez-Lopez,
“The framing of a context at the organizational level is a social process. It is carried out by individuals but is coded and stored collectively.” (Hakansson & Snehota, 1989, p. 198).

Marketing, which includes the sometimes forgotten internal marketing perspective, is a relationship development strategy (Ballantyne, 2003). Ballantyne further notes that there is no organizational learning without individual learning. The human actor plays a key role in interactive business processes (Medlin & Toernroos, 2006), which suggests an inherent interconnectedness of individual and organization. Within this interconnected structure, the key mechanism for network change remains in the inter-organizational dyad, or interpersonal interaction (Ryan, et al., 2008). Moreover, Gummesson (2007) claims that all levels of relationships are interlinked.

To understand corporate implications, it is useful to see companies as groups of individuals trying to achieve their vision (Shrivastava, 1995). Business is always conducted by human beings, and value takes the form of perception, in the form of trust (Grönroos, 2009), for example. Tools like the total performance scorecard indicate how closely individual and organization are really linked (Rampersad, 2005). The scorecard outlines that clarity and uniformity of personal and organizational values and principles, which are part of individual worldviews (Koltko-Rivera, 2004), are essential for the active involvement of part-time marketers. Personal visions of employees are important as they form the company. However, there is no concept regarding a unified vision or worldview that supports a relational marketing perspective on an individual level with relevance to behaviours and attitudes of PTMs.

The service-dominant logic is based on an understanding of the interwoven fabric of individuals and organizations that are brought together in networks and societies (Lusch, et al., 2007). One of the main objectives of S-D logic is to increase the firm’s value of its relationships with customers, suppliers and society as a whole (Abela & Murphy, 2008). It has also been argued that these relationships can be compared at the micro (inter-personal, inter-departmental) and macro (firm-firm, firm-customer) level (Schulz & Gnoth, 2008). Therefore, satisfied employees result in satisfied customers (Boyt, Lusch, & Naylor, 2001).
Relationships and networks are the result of the activities of human beings, because neither brig of a firm is collaborating with the other party, but human beings do (Ritter & Gemünden, 2003): “Personal contacts are in many ways at the heart of business interaction.” (Halinen & Salmi, 2001, p. 1). In business-to-business marketing, it is the individual gatekeeper that has a key role in the initiation process of building business relationships (Brennan, Canning, & McDowell, 2007).

It has been outlined that organizations are built throughout interacting part-time marketers who actively shape their environment. Even though PTMs seem to exist as independent actors, they have a key role in forming an interpersonal and interdependent network. Scholars agree that individuals are the foundation of understanding macro relationships. Despite this awareness, marketing scholars continue to contribute largely to the macro marketing disciplines, while internal marketing has been neglected. The impact of the development of external marketing towards a relational understanding of behaviours and attitudes of PTMs remains vaguely specified. Varey and Ballantyne (2005) specify which attitudes are relevant to IM. However, it remains unexplored whether PTMs are actually ready to adopt these behaviours and attitudes.

Figure 2.7 outlines that the network idea of interconnectedness does not only take place between business actors (abstract), but also between individuals, departments, business units, etc. The interpersonal network shapes the organization via interaction and communication, which is represented by the dotted lines in figure 2.7.
How part-time marketers behave depends on a variety of beliefs and assumptions about the world (Koltko-Rivera, 2004), not only relational marketing thought. Just because marketing scholars developed behaviours and attitudes does not mean that PTMs are ready to implement them. For example, the ideas of mutuality, and non-manipulative and non-evaluative attitudes (Varey & Ballantyne, 2005), have not been assessed in relation to a worldview, which has been shaped over the years by many different influences (education, friends, general beliefs about the world and many more) and which is dominated by rational thinking. In the following section, the relationship between behaviours and attitudes, as well as the network perspective, is reviewed.
2.5.3 From Networks and Systems to Behaviours and Attitudes

To understand the link between internal marketing and external marketing strategies, the influences of networks and systems thinking are elaborated in more detail:

Internal marketing is a philosophy for managing the firm’s human resources based on a marketing perspective. This philosophy must be transformed into an internal action program that becomes a continuous process so that a lasting motivation for service and customer orientation among the personnel is achieved. (W. R. George & Gröndroos, 1991, p. 86)

The purpose of internal marketing is to get employees in tune with existing conditions and procedures, thus making them better equipped to handle the external marketing (Varey & Lewis, 1998). Relational approaches to marketing have their roots in systems thinking and network theories (see for example Laszlo, 1972; Luhmann, 1995; Senge, 1990). Senge (1990) discusses impacts on individuals, which stem from a systems perspective of the world. He refers to personal mastery, amongst others, as an essential skill to implement a systems view of the world on an individual level. Senge describes personal mastery as the discipline of continually clarifying and deepening personal visions.

The industrial marketing and purchasing group based their work on network theories and stated that business actors cannot be assessed independently from each other (Hakansson & Snehota, 1995). Concepts related to relational marketing approaches gained importance. Examples are dialogical interaction (Ballantyne, 2004; Varey & Ballantyne, 2005) and the conceptualization of trust and commitment (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Compared to the more mechanistic concept of the 4Ps, these concepts are dynamic and cannot be related to a specific point in time.

As has been noted, and as a consequence of the interconnected nature of business actors, the customer-conscious and service-minded employee was born (W. R. George, 1990). If employees have become internal customers, and if the core contribution from relationship marketing is its emphasis on collaboration (Gummesson, 2000a), then relationships between employees, departments and business units should be seen in the same light as relationships between firm and customer.
Figure 2.8 outlines the idea how a relational marketing perspective leads to behavioural and attitudinal consequences for individuals according to theory. Herein, relational approaches to marketing are based on the idea of interdependent relationships that form networks on the one hand and, on the other hand, relational approaches to marketing are influenced by systems thinking (Vargo & Lusch, 2011). This interdependence implies an interconnectedness of individual and environment, as a system can define itself solely in relation to its environment (Luhmann, 1995).

**Figure 2.8 From Networks and Systems to Behaviour and Attitude**
Networks and systems thinking inherently imply an interconnectedness of actors. What both perspectives share is the idea that a node of a network (system) cannot be perceived in isolation from the network or environment. The relevance of interdependence in networks and systems is further discussed to better understand its role in relation to marketing.

### 2.5.4 The Role of Interaction and Interconnectedness in Marketing

Marketing organization as presented in textbooks shows little development with regard to interfunctional dependency. The subject is sometimes touched upon, but not as a central issue. Yet it is a fact that all activities in a company are interrelated; if they were not, what would they be doing in the same company? (Gummesson, 1991, p. 65)

Interaction is the core element in the concept of service, and the heart of all business development (Ford, et al., 2008). Storbacka and Nenonen (2009) argue that interaction and exchange are core elements of the organization. It has been noted that interaction processes enable the creation of efficiency, learning and innovation (Holmen, Roos, et al., 2005). Interaction is a main element of the service-dominant logic and appears in the form of co-creation (Lusch & Vargo, 2006a; Vargo, 2008) and the notion of operant resources (Vargo & Lusch, 2008b).

To better understand the idea of interconnectedness in marketing, it is worth going back to the marketing mix for a moment. The marketing mix is still valid and helpful in all industries (Zineldin & Philipson, 2007). As has been noted before, relational marketing approaches, rather than substituting the 4Ps, build on them and are seen as a higher-order concept when it comes to an analysis of exchange (Grönroos, 2006). Firms should be interested not only in their business and product mix, but also in their customer (relationship) mix (Storbacka & Nenonen, 2009). The limited number (four) of marketing variables seemed to fit typical situations observed in the late 1950’s and 1960’s (Grönroos, 1994a).
What is easily forgotten is the fact that the 4P model was developed in North America and was mainly concerned with consumer packaged goods and durables (Grönroos, 1989). The marketing mix theory was based on a manipulative approach to mass markets of packaged consumer goods to large US markets (Gummesson, 1991). As a consequence, marketing orientation led to unidirectional messages (Ballantyne, et al., 2011). Advertising, distribution, and product branding, for example, will still be needed, but will also require a host of other activities and resources (Grönroos, 1994a). The marketing mix approach does not reflect the idea of interconnectedness and interdependence between business partners, but focuses on a manipulative “monologue,” as opposed to a mutual dialogue, towards customers.

Relational approaches to marketing are non-linear and, instead, the value-creation process is influenced by a variety of actions and actors. Dialogical interaction has been mentioned as an integral part of relationship marketing, which emphasizes that it is not important what is inside or outside business actors, but “between” business actors (Ballantyne, 2004). Dialogue is an important element in the co-creation view as it implies interactivity, deep engagement and the ability and willingness to act on both sides (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). The locus of the power lies between participants (Varey & Ballantyne, 2005). Service interaction involves the reciprocal application of resources, knowledge and competencies for the benefit of another party (Ballantyne & Aitken, 2007), which also implies the interconnectedness and interdependence of business actors.

The historical development of marketing and the firm shows that business life has significantly transformed from a black-box approach that indicated a separateness between firm and consumer, towards a networking environment in which business entities are perceived as inherently interrelated. This transformation took place on a cognitive level. Firms still have their premises and distances (e.g. in miles) for deliveries to customers remain unchanged. However, technological progress and a networking understanding of business changed the market perspective and companies are now perceived to be closer to the customer.

The term “interconnectedness,” in interpersonal business interactions, is of a philosophical nature. In the era of co-creation and value-in-use, blaming a customer
for not using a product in the right way (for instance, wrong installation of a washing machine), does not appear to be appropriate. Rather, firms must understand how the interaction between the firm and the customer can be improved to prevent further misuse. The focus shifts away from blaming customers towards an active improvement of the relationship between business actors. Marketing scholars claim that value is determined by the beneficiary.

2.5.5 Internal Marketing as Part of a Holistic Marketing Strategy

It has been argued in this thesis, that part-time marketers are the key elements of an organization and shape it through interaction and communication. Interaction and communication between PTMs can be perceived as threads, which describe the connection between nodes in a network. It has been demonstrated that both the individual as a node, and the organization as a whole, are in an interdependent relationship (section 2.5.2).

The relationship between the whole and the parts is a philosophical one (Bohm, 1980; Bortoft, 1996). Heaton and Groves (1999) explained this relationship with the help of Wittgenstein’s example of a tree. A tree itself can be described as an apparently separate entity, which is characterized by size and colour, and different aspects such as its leaves, roots or trunk. However, when seen holistically, the separateness of a tree in relation to its environment does not make sense, as it could not survive without water and sun.

The same accounts for firms in networks and individuals within firms. Size, profitability, products and services, among others, can describe firms. However, a single firm must be viewed in lieu of its relationship to other firms in the network, and the relationship between the other firms and the network (Holmen, Pedersen, & Torvatn, 2005). A firm can be seen as a system, and is as such inherently related to its environment (Luhmann, 1995). According to Luhmann, on a cognitive level, this rational separation between system and environment is necessary to cope with the complexity of the world.
The relationship between the whole and the parts has been widely discussed and what is true of a part is not necessarily true for the whole (Daly, 1990). Today’s technocentric worldview is based on cognitive rationality and helps to separate systems from their environment. Technocentric ontology assumes that the earth is inert and passive and therefore legitimately exploitable (Gladwin, Kennelly, & Krause, 1995). Gladwin, Kennelly and Krause also state that nature is composed of infinitely divisible objects, moved by external rather than internal forces, existing within a field of discrete events. Organic and biotic limits in the natural world are excluded from the realm of organizational science (Gladwin, Krause, & Kennelly, 1995). The relationship between the whole and the parts on an organizational level, on the other hand, can be characterized with a simple and pragmatic observation: “Quite simply, how many organizations could exist in the absence of oxygen production, fresh water supply, or fertile soil?” (Gladwin, Krause, et al., 1995, p. 875).

The discussion about the whole and the parts is strongly related to the phenomenon of interconnectedness and networks in business. It has been noted earlier, that an existence of business actors in isolation is not possible (Ford, et al., 2008). Since organism and environment determine each other, they are mutually dependent on their existence. It follows that the life-process, to be adequately understood, must be considered in terms of the interrelations between organism and environment (Mead, 1934).

Within the realm of a service-dominant logic, the centrality of the human being ensures the integration of ethical and business issues at the core of the theory, thus avoiding compartmentalization; the goal is to increase relationships with customers, suppliers, and society as a whole (Abela & Murphy, 2008). But it is not solely S-D logic that advocates the interrelatedness of business actors:

The IMP approach is built on the fact that no company has sufficient resources to satisfy the requirements of any customer and therefore is dependent on the skills, resources and actions and intentions of suppliers, distributors, customers and even competitors to satisfy those requirements. (Ford, Gadde, Hakansson, & Snehota, 2003, p. 9)
It has already been outlined that cognitive boundaries are necessary to address an otherwise meaningless chaos. The world's infinite complexity can never be addressed with the finite mind, which refers to a phenomenon called “bounded rationality” (Kofman, 2003a). Bounded rationality has also gained the attention of business scholars (Conner & Prahalad, 1996).

However, some strategic management scholars have rejected the rational planning process (Hakansson & Snehota, 1989). Hakansson and Snehota state that bounded rationality (static and fragmented) does not fit a complex and dynamic environment. It expresses the inability of economic actors to properly anticipate the complex chain of contingencies that might be relevant in the long run (Granovetter, 1985). Rational thinking, as a static function of mind, does not support the idea of a dynamic and complex environment. However, without thinking or bounded rationality, individuals would get mad (Luhmann, 1995). The paradox between the need for bounded rationality and its improper functionality to address a dynamic business reality needs more attention.

Even though they are not obvious, alternatives to rational thinking do not only exist, they also caught the attention of a variety of scholars from different schools. Some examples are “meditative thinking,” which has been described as an awareness of what is actually taking place around and in humans, as proposed by Heidegger (Dalle Pezze, 2006), or “intuition” (Klein, 2002; Meyers, 2002; Miller & Ireland, 2005). These concepts exceed the logical and linear rational thinking process and are described as holistic and dynamic. Intuition in managers has been characterized as an indicator for increased creativity and innovation (Andersen, 2000).

The philosophy of the whole and the parts helps to understand three aspects with relevance to marketing: First, it describes how part-time marketers (part) and organization (whole) are in an interdependent relationship and cannot be perceived independently. Second, the philosophy of the whole and the parts also emphasizes the importance of the role of the PTM in a holistic marketing concept, which is currently neglected. Third, the philosophy of the whole and the parts outlines that an interconnected understanding of marketing (based on systems, which interact with other systems in a business environment) starts in the mind, with a systems
understanding of the world (Senge, 1990). However, a worldview based on a rational understanding does not appear to support a relational marketing environment, as it has been described as being static and linear (Bohm, 1980), which results in fragmented knowledge (Laszlo, 1972).

Looking at relational marketing from a holistic perspective inherently involves understanding systems and networks and how they operate. With help from the philosophy of the whole and the parts, it has been made clear that a rational approach is not the most suitable to an understanding of relational approaches to marketing on an interpersonal level. Rational thinking proves to be inappropriate for a systems understanding of the world (see tree example). Other brain functions (e.g. intuition) have been referred to as more holistic and dynamic alternatives. A rational mindset might be inappropriate for introducing behaviours and attitudes, which build on an interconnected and dynamic understanding of the world.

2.5.6 A Holistic View of Marketing: Summary

Section 2.5 emphasized the interconnectedness between firms and customers, among firms and employees, and between employee and organization. The more philosophical discussion about the relationship between the whole and the parts outlined the importance of an interconnected understanding of the world in relation to marketing. It has been demonstrated that a holistic marketing strategy starts with an ontological understanding of the business environment, which has been described with help from the network analogy. The current rational worldview (linear, fragmented thinking) does not seem to support an understanding of this interconnected environment.

The terms customer-consciousness and sales-mindedness support the idea of a close relationship between relational marketing and mind. Section 2.5 concluded possible incongruities between the current rational (technocentric) mindset and the holistic and dynamic nature of business and marketing. However, a detailed understanding of this relationship has not been found. The next section outlines that several scholars have touched on the relationship between marketing and mind, but never deepened it.
Section 2.6 builds on section 2.5 and further elaborates on how mind and marketing are related and where possible gaps or discrepancies exist.

2.6 A Relationship between Marketing and Mind

2.6.1 Introduction
The discussion of “mind” in relation to business and marketing is not new (Kedia & Mukherji, 1999; Meyers, 2002; Mintzberg, 1976). The dominant mode of mind has been characterized earlier as predominantly static and linear, which has been described as the rational thinking process. Western industrialized cultures have been characterized as dominated by rational thinking (Mintzberg, 1976, 1979). Even though Mintzberg’s findings stem from the 1970s, numerous scholars from different fields still acknowledge the superiority of rational thinking (Jeff & James, 2004; Kardes, 2006; Korthagen, 2005; Schipper, 1999; Sinclair & Ashkanasy, 2005).

A characteristic of rational thinking is the fragmented perception of reality (Bohm, 1980). As has been noted earlier, this is a necessary brain function as, without it, the complexity of the world would overwhelm humans and result in madness and chaos (Luhmann, 1995). This condition supports the thesis that an individual perceives him or herself as separated from other individuals, which appears legitimate in Western society (Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, & Lucca, 1988). On the contrary, an alternative to rational thinking is intuition, which has been discussed in relation to business and decision-making processes (Andersen, 2000; Meyers, 2002; Miller & Ireland, 2005; Mitchell, Friga, & Mitchell, 2005). However, it has been argued by marketing scholars that the vast majority of research into non-rational behaviour has had an individualistic slant to it instead of focusing on the relationship context (Bagozzi, Gopinath, & Nyer, 1999).

2.6.2 A New Marketing Perspective
Vargo and Lusch (2004a), in their service-based marketing view, speak of a reoriented philosophy, a fundamental and necessary shift in worldview. In the past, the mechanistic way of producing and delivering marketing value is premised on a
particular set of beliefs about modes of communication within an instrumentally rational mindset (Varey & Ballantyne, 2005). Yet, it is difficult to break free from the constraints of existing, dominant paradigms (Vargo & Lusch, 2008a). Today, however, scholars perceive the need for firms to create and maintain relationships only if a relationship orientation pervades the mindset, values and norms of the organization (Madhavaram & Hunt, 2008).

It has been argued that the sense of an underlying consensus or worldview shared by marketing scholars and practitioners that would provide common ground for the development of both marketing in general and its major sub disciplines such as internal marketing, is missing (Layton, 2008). The marketing worldview is difficult to access because it is so widespread and taken for granted as the current reality (Penaloza & Venkatesh, 2006). A mindset, or worldview, is a combination of existential beliefs, evaluative beliefs and prescriptive/proscriptive beliefs, or values (Koltko-Rivera, 2004). Marketing scholars acknowledge the importance of a worldview at an abstract theoretical level, but the significance for practitioners, or PTMs, remains unclear.

Gummesson (2007) is one of the scholars that expresses interest in worldviews and relates them to marketing. He mentions a “yin and yang” relationship as the necessary balance between competition and cooperation. The yin and yang perspective can be understood as an approach to understanding opposites not as opposites, but as poles of a single whole. For example, Gummesson (2000b) characterizes competition and cooperation as extreme poles of a single whole, which have to be in a dynamic balance.

Gummesson’s philosophical approach to mind and consciousness in relation to marketing and business is unique. His view on marketing appears to be valuable to part-time marketers, but it remains an unexplored and shallow area of study in internal marketing. To better understand the relationship between mind and marketing, the following section highlights literature that relates worldviews and business and expresses how both are connected.
2.6.3 The Role of Worldviews in Marketing

By the 1960s, the rational mode was well accepted as the dominant brain function (Meyers, 2002). Furthermore, the dominant or major mode of Western, industrialized culture is verbal and intellectual, which are attributes that can be linked to rational thinking (Ornstein, 1972). Perceiving the (marketing) world from an interconnected perspective based on rational assessment seems inadequate.

However, a more holistic and dynamic brain function appears to be an adequate support for networks and systems thinking, which have been described as essential to understanding the business environment (Senge, 1990). This does not infer that rational thinking is useless, but, rather, that it has been argued in favour of a balance between rational thinking and a holistic brain function (Milson & Wilemon, 2008). It is more about a harmony between both modes (Bohm, 1980). However, currently the rational mode is dominant in Western cultures.

Mechanistic marketing approaches such as the marketing mix have their origin in rational logic. Relational approaches to marketing (systems thinking, trust and commitment, dialogical interaction) allow one to assume that they require a more holistic-philosophical approach to assess interconnectedness on an interpersonal level. The 4Ps have been characterized as a good start, but their major problem is that they are supplier-centric, and only secondarily consider customer needs (Gummesson, 2007). In other words, the customer is seen as exogenous to, instead of, interconnected with, the company (Vargo & Akaka, 2009). This phenomenon has also been called “firm-centricity” (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). The mechanistic marketing perspective is characterized by a clear separation between business actors.

Internal marketing suffers from a similar phenomenon: it lacks holistic integration into an integrated marketing concept. Marketing has become less a function and more a set of values and processes that all functions participate in implementing (Moorman & Rust, 1999). The role of the part-time marketer becomes crucial in this implementation as PTMs form and shape the organization via interaction and communication. Networks gain immense importance in marketing, and attitudes and behaviours of PTMs are supposed to represent this development on an intra-firm level. This is not unproblematic for individuals:
We can no longer see the consequences of our actions; we lose our intrinsic sense of connection to a larger whole. When we try to see the 'big picture', we try to reassemble the fragments in our minds, to list and organize all the pieces. (Senge, 1990, p. 3)

This indicates that individuals need to appreciate that they are part of a larger system and it has been argued that this is only possible when they become more conscious (Liang, 2007). The role of consciousness will be outlined in more detail later in the next chapter.

Relational approaches to marketing see the customer as an asset (Brodie, Glynn, & Little, 2006). As the customer must no longer be passive (Ramaswamy, 2008), he or she is always involved in production in some degree (Vargo & Lusch, 2004b). In this more holistic picture of marketing practice, the consumer is treated as an active operant resource, which is endogenous to both the exchange and value-creation processes (Lusch & Vargo, 2006a). Advocates of relational approaches to marketing focus on the importance of “threads” between actors and what happens within them. It has been argued elsewhere that value does not reside in nodes but between nodes and is created in-use by both parties.

In summary, it can be noted that Gummesson describes business relationships from a yin and yang perspective and, more importantly, relates them to individual aspects such as mind and consciousness. Similarly, a balance or harmony between rational thinking and more holistic brain functions (e.g. intuition) has been considered as advantageous in grasping the rising complexity and dynamism of business and marketing. However, it has been outlined that the rational mode is dominant in the Western hemisphere. Mechanistic marketing vs. relational approaches to marketing can be compared to rational thinking versus holistic brain function. To further understand the relationship between relational marketing and mind, a review of the service-dominant logic follows, as it claims to be a re-oriented perspective, or worldview, of marketing.
2.6.4 The Service-Dominant Logic: from Marketing to Worldview

The service-dominant logic inspired scholars from different research areas. Among others, it has been used for ethical discussions within marketing (Abela & Murphy, 2008). Also, scholars have referred to S-D logic in relation to values such as humility. A major aspect of humility is its attitude towards service (Vera & Rodriguez-Lopez, 2004). Vera and Rodriguez-Lopez state that humble individuals have the genuine desire to serve. The spirit of service is not just a technique learned in a short seminar, but is a genuine attitude of service that demands a certain degree of humility. It has been argued that all firms, including goods firms, can transform themselves competitively by better understanding how they can serve (Lusch, et al., 2007).

The service concept, as intended by Vargo and Lusch, has been related to inner values and moral standpoints. S-D logic provides a more integrated approach to marketing theory that enables a more ethical foundation for marketing (Abela & Murphy, 2008). Herein the human mind plays a central role: “Developing humility requires self-control.” (Vera & Rodriguez-Lopez, 2004, p. 405).

The service concept introduced by Vargo and Lusch has consequences for every part-time marketer. However, research lacks specific implications as to how the service idea can be operationalized in the form of specific behaviours and attitudes, and where they have their origins.

It is Madhavaram and Hunt (2008) who argue that there is very little research on “masterfully developed operant resources” in marketing. They believe that measuring the mastery of operant resources can be extremely difficult. Nevertheless, Madhavaram and Hunt also believe that it is possible for firms to masterfully develop their operant resources. Operant resources are dynamic resources (Lusch, et al., 2006) and resource integrators consist of intangible capabilities, such as knowledge capabilities or the ability to learn (Varey & Ballantyne, 2005). This dynamism, which is inherently part of a service-dominant logic, can also be found in various descriptions of today’s marketplace:

The managerial implication is that the most important issue becomes real-time action. There is a significant lag time between how fast managers think and how fast consumers are evolving. We need organizations with the peripheral
vision and flexibility that can keep up with these changes, and ideally anticipate them. (Prahalad, 2004, p. 176)

Prahalad notes the need for organizations with peripheral vision, but subsequent implications for part-time marketers are lacking. Additionally, and in relation to operant resources, Edvardsson, Holmlund and Strandvik (2008) argue that “listening” and “understanding” are essential capabilities in relation to starting up new business relationships. An important part in their research is the ability to listen and to understand business partners on an interpersonal level.

These skills are considered to be major aspects in successfully setting up new business relationships. Value co-creation, as an example, demands a change from making and selling to listening, customizing (being responsive) and co-creating (Payne & Storbacka, 2008). However, listening is more than merely an acoustic process. It is a more complex process, as explained by Rosenberg (2001), that builds on Heidegger’s idea of meditative thinking (Dalle Pezze, 2006). This mode of listening requires all receiving channels to be empty and has been described as “empathetic listening” (Rosenberg, 2001). In more marketing-like terms:

By understanding the customer cognition, emotion and behaviour in this broader experiential sense, the supplier can shift the focus from attention seeking to dialogue with customers in support of their experiences and learning processes. (Payne & Storbacka, 2008, p. 88)

Symbolic interactionism, which is also part of the methodology of this study (Chapter Four), also fits well with the current dialogue on the service-dominant logic. Both perspectives consider dynamic experience as context-dependent (Flint, 2006). Flint states that in symbolic interactionism, the human actor can point to himself as a social object and communicate with him or herself. This interpretive self-communicative, reflexive process is often referred to as mind action (Louis & Sutton, 1991). Flint’s contribution on symbolic interactionism, in relation to the service-dominant logic, shows that the worldview plays a central role in relational approaches to marketing: “If a service-centred logic prevails, this logic should fundamentally change the mindsets, schemas, and mental models of the managers and researchers (…)” (R. N. Bolton, et al., 2004, p. 18).
S-D logic, as a re-oriented philosophy and relational marketing discipline, emphasizes a strong relationship between marketing and mind. The terms “humility,” “listening” and “self-reflection” indicate a possible direction to explore the idea of a relational marketing worldview in more detail. S-D logic and other relational approaches to marketing might help in shedding more light on the relationship between relational marketing approaches and behaviours and attitudes in relation to networks and systems. The next section reviews more literature and outlines possible incongruities between marketing and the dominant rational mind.

2.6.5 The Antagonism Between Marketing and Mind

So far it has been noted that Western society is dominated by rational thinking. At first glance, the characteristics of rationality, which have been highlighted as mechanistic, rational and static, do not seem to match the characteristics of a dynamic and holistic business and marketing reality. Simplistic mechanistic frameworks such as the 4Ps seemed largely irrelevant in providing the logical foundations needed for relevance in an increasingly complex, interconnected world (Shostack, 1977). Shostack states that, unfortunately, many marketers are so familiar with product-oriented thinking that they go down precisely the wrong path. Skills and resources, and the way companies use them, must constantly change, which leads to the creation of continuously changing temporary advantages (Fiol, 2001).

The initial part of the literature review included a summary of characteristics that constitute a common relational approach to marketing, which have been referred to as the “core” of relational marketing: multilateral, interconnected, co-creative and dynamic with value as a concept, which is defined in-use (section 2.4.5 The Core of Relational Marketing). It has been noted that the dominant static and fragmented rational brain function might be inappropriate in challenging the interconnected and dynamic reality described by relational marketing. The following section elaborates on the discrepancies between mind and relational marketing approaches (as outlined in section 2.4.5) in more detail.
**Dynamism in Relation to Rationality**

Whenever one thinks of anything, it seems to be apprehended whether as static, or as a series of static images. (Bohm, 1980, p. x)

Extensive linkage, feedback and bi-directionality are considered as dynamic (Mitchell, et al., 2005). The philosopher Erich Fromm (1956) suggested that thinking will not give the last answer to understanding interconnectedness. He states that the only possibility of grasping the world is not manifested in thinking, but in the act and in the experience of being one. Fromm’s idea of “being one” might be compared to Heidegger’s idea of meditative thinking, which has been described as an awareness of what is actually taking place around and in humans (Dalle Pezze, 2006), instead of focusing on the self (egocentric perspective).

In comparison to rationality, it has been noted that relationships, as an important aspect of relational approaches to marketing, change over time and, as such, are not static (Ritter & Gemünden, 2003). As a consequence, the productive opportunity of the firm will be fixed if it is assumed that no change takes place in external conditions, nor any change in knowledge and, as a consequence, no change in the internal supply of productive services (Penrose, 1995). Since the fit between internal and external factors is changing permanently, competitive advantages of the firm are not static (Gouthier & Schmid, 2003).

“Thinking,” as such seems to be a function of mind that is characterized by rather opposite features compared to relational approaches to marketing. However, a business environment without thinking does not make sense. In relation to internal marketing and the concept of the customer-conscious and sales-minded part-time marketer, it appears that the current rational mindset appears too static and fragmented to fulfil the requirements of relational marketing. It remains unexplored as to whether the current dominant mindset provides the necessary preconditions to adopt behaviours and attitudes, such as outlined by Varey and Ballantyne (2005) earlier in this thesis.
**Multidimensionality in Relation to Rationality**

On the one hand, the concept of resource integration is multidirectional and, as such, all parties uniquely integrate multiple resources for their own benefit and the benefit of others (Vargo, 2008). On the other hand, linear, rational thinking is a unilateral process, which has been described as being ineffective (Kofman & Senge, 1993). Seeing interrelationships rather than linear cause-effect chains (Senge, 1990) is a multidimensional concept. It has been argued that a mental model based on unilateral control is obsolete (Kofman & Durig, 2004).

Thinking has been described as linear and ineffective. It is based on cause-effect chains, which seem to be inappropriate in acting in a multidimensional networking environment that is characterized by interdependent relationships. Linear, rational thinking considers one impact at a time (sequential), while the network environment is multilateral (parallel) and consists of numerous incidents that influence the decision-making process. This is one of the reasons why intuitive managers often can not give a logical-rational explanation for their decisions (Andersen, 2000).

**Interconnectedness, Co-Creation and Value-in-Use in Relation to Rational Thinking**

The obsolete model of unilateral control leads to several disputable values like egocentrism and selfishness (Kofman & Durig, 2004). Divisions compete with one another when they ought to cooperate to share knowledge (Kofman & Senge, 1993). Individuals behave in a self-interested and consistent manner, to maximize their utility (Gladwin, Kennelly, et al., 1995). However, the important questions within the marketing discipline seem to deal with issues that do not fit easily into the fragmented and specialized fields that characterize marketing (e.g. 4Ps), which leaves a gap for invited scholars from nearby disciplines to explore (Layton, 2008).

The perception of reality in Western cultures is mainly fragmented and individualistic (Triandis, et al., 1988). The notion that the one who thinks (the ego) is, in principle, completely separate from the reality that he thinks about is embedded in the entire cultural tradition (Bohm, 1980). However, it has been argued that in a networking
environment there is no existence in isolation possible. Without the development of an over-all perspective, humans remain lost in individual investigations (Ornstein, 1972). Fromm (1979) argues that a premise of the industrial age is that enjoyment of the individual egoism creates harmony, peace and wealth. He continues on to state that egoism, instead, is not merely an aspect of an attitude, but of character and it indicates that an individual is hostile vis-à-vis customers, competitors and employees.

Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) note that companies must escape the firm-centric view of the past, and seek to co-create value with customers through an obsessive focus on personalized interactions between the consumer and the company. They also state that this requires managers to escape their product-centred thinking and, instead, focus on the experiences that customers will seek to co-create.

Even if the customer (internal and external) demands only discrete transactions, he is never free from relational participation (Vargo & Lusch, 2004a). Grönroos (1997) also argues that a relational strategy is always possible because there are always latent relationships. Relational exchange is based on the expectation of mutuality of interest. The respective behavioural expectations are fundamentally different (Heide & John, 1992). The precursor to exchange relationships might be an open-minded engagement with other people, an evolution of shared understandings and, from that, an identification of potential business exchanges (Dibben & Harris, 2001).

Humans have also been characterized as serial processors, able to compartmentalize and willing to forget (Weick, 1989). Bortoft (1996) argues that the tacit assumption of linearity is implicit in the logic of reason. He continues that logic is analytical, whereas meaning is evidently holistic, and hence understanding cannot be reduced to logic.

Fulmer and Keys (1998) note that individuals must recognize that everybody has a predisposition to linear thinking (A leads to B, B leads to C, etc.) when, in fact, a lot of change comes from situations where “things get worse before they get better.” (p.37). Rather, identities may need to be continuously fluid, with constantly shifting situated identifications (Fiol, 2001). Because dynamism and cyclicality are fundamental, synthetic, non-linear, and intuitive modes of understanding are required (Gladwin, Kennelly, et al., 1995):
The timeless, machinelike universe of Newton was replaced by a ‘recursive universe,’ in which disorder, non-linear complexity, and unpredictability are the ‘rule’ (whereas order, simplicity, and predictability constitute the exception), and the collapse of the boundaries between observer and observed has stimulated the exploration of theoretical models capable of handling problems of self-reference. (Luhmann, 1995, p. xii)

Figure 2.9 outlines the dilemma of marketing and mind. The 4Ps are based on a mechanistic and static worldview and a rational understanding of the market place. However, relational approaches to marketing have been characterized as holistic, dynamic and interconnected.

External marketing strategies imply behavioural and attitudinal consequences for employees based on the characteristics summarized in figure 2.9. It has been repeatedly noted that based on this assumption, part-time marketers are expected to
behave in a customer-conscious and service-minded manner. However, it has not been investigated how a behavioural and attitudinal integration of relational marketing is possible in relation to the predominantly technocentric (positivistic) understanding of the world.

It should be noted that this thesis does not intend to focus on non-rational approaches to mind, such as intuition or meditative thinking. Rather, this study focuses on understanding whether part-time marketers are ready and capable to understand relational marketing implications, such as outlined earlier in this thesis by Varey and Ballantyne.

Also, the antagonism outlined in figure 2.9 and the idea of a rational versus a non-rational, or relational, mindset is used throughout this thesis as an orientation on the one hand, and illustrative support for the problem statement on the other. The separation between both “modes” is not to be perceived in an opposing, or judgemental, way; rather, both views are perceived as complementary and supportive of each other, and to interpersonal interaction in particular. In the following section, the relationship between marketing and mind is further deepened.

2.6.6 More Marketing Disciplines with Relevance to Mindsets

It has been argued that the problem with today’s body of relationship and network literature is that it is fragmented and at least sometimes is made up of different pieces that do not seem to fit together (Ritter & Gemünden, 2003). Reality is actively constructed by the human actor, who is perceived as an active interpreter and creator of his social reality and self-concept (Flint, 2006). In this reality, everything is created in interaction (Ford & Hakansson, 2006). The perception of this socially created reality can differ and, most importantly, change. In the following, the importance of a new worldview for part-time marketers is further highlighted, by outlining the discrepancy between relational approaches to marketing and the PTM.
**The IMP Perspective**

The IMP approach is a holistic approach to interaction, built on the network perspective. Ford and Hakansson (2005) claim that the examination of single transactions leads scholars astray. Ford, Gadde, Hakansson, Snehota and Waluszewski (2008) further argue that an existence of business actors in isolation is not possible. Ford et al further conclude that “each business unit with its human resources is bound together with many others through relationship.” (p. 137).

Scholars have accepted the IMP approach as of today. The question of whether part-time marketers are able to adopt customer-conscious and sales-minded behaviours and attitudes based on a predominantly fragmented and static understanding of the world, remains unexplored. The perceived dissolution of a fragmented understanding of the world has tended further to erode all basic values, on which the stability of the world order must depend (Griffin, 1988).

**The Relationship Marketing Perspective**

Relationship marketing shifted the focus of successful exchange from the discrete transaction to ongoing interactivity (Lusch & Vargo, 2006b). RM can be perceived as the marriage between buyer and seller (Dwyer, Schurr, & Oh, 1987), where two become one. The relationship development process described by Dwyer, Schurr and Oh highlights how interdependence between buyer and seller grows over time, namely the relationship development process.

Within the school of relationship marketing, the concept of dialogical interaction has caused significant discussion. Dialogical Interaction is dialogue *between* participants based on trust, learning and adaptation, with co-created outcomes (Ballantyne, 2004). Ballantyne continues by stating that dialogue is not the simple concept of verbal and non-verbal communication, but aims to achieve a deeper level of understanding between those involved. Dialogue holds the promise of revealing something new and implies a developmental shift in the relationship between the parties involved (Varey & Ballantyne, 2005). While dialogue takes place, parties build a common realm of understanding together through connectedness (Lindberg-Repo & Grönroos, 2004).
has been noted earlier in this thesis that value co-creation demands a change from making and selling to listening and co-creating (Payne & Storbacka, 2008).

Rosenberg (2001) characterizes dialogical interaction from an empathetic perspective. He proposes four components of non-violent (NV) communication, which are: (1) Observing, (2) emotions and feelings, (3) needs and (4) asking. The essence of NV communication lies within two aspects: to express oneself faithfully and to listen empathically. A relationship dialogue can be seen as a process of reasoning together to develop a common knowledge platform (Grönroos, 2000). Rosenberg’s insights might be helpful in further understanding possible challenges that come with dialogue in relation to a dominant rational mindset, and with relevance to behaviours and attitudes in interaction and communication. It has been claimed that not everybody is ready for dialogue (Varey & Ballantyne, 2005).

Further on in his book, Rosenberg points out the importance of the individual, the worldview, and what it takes to empathetically participate in a dialogical interaction. He argues that if one stays in empathetic contact with the speaker, he or she will be able to get in contact with his or her deeper levels. Later, Rosenberg outlines the source of a good dialogical interaction, the “self.” According to him, if the self is not treated in the right way, it will be very difficult to treat others with empathy and to understand them from the heart. In order to manage business processes, the parties in a relationship will have to be able to share information, listen to each other and not rely on persuasion and manipulation (Grönroos, 2000).

This last comment made by Grönroos, the remark made earlier on by Payne and Storbacka on listening, and Gummesson’s remarks regarding yin and yang, all suggest possible starting points for a review and new understanding of the relationship between a dominant rational mindset and customer-conscious and sales-minded behaviours and attitudes, and to defining a more service-oriented understanding in relation to specific behaviours and attitudes among part-time marketers. However, the comments from Grönroos, Payne, Storbacka and Gummesson remain shallow and abstract. Rosenberg’s idea of non-violent communication has been briefly presented to specify some of the ideas expressed by Grönroos, Gummesson, and Payne and Storbacka to make them more “tangible.”
2.6.7 Concluding Comments Regarding Marketing and Mind

It has been argued that the current technocentric worldview performs purely in relation to inclusiveness and connectivity (Gladwin, Kennelly, et al., 1995). Layton (2008) claims that an underlying consensus or worldview is needed to provide common ground for the development of marketing in general and its sub disciplines (e.g. internal marketing). Vargo and Lusch (2004a) argue that a service-based marketing worldview characterizes marketing as a continuous social and economic process in which operant resources are paramount. Vargo and Lusch continue and speak of interactivity, connectivity and ongoing relationships as central ideas of a service-based worldview. They conclude that a marketing worldview remains an abstract concept.

It has been argued that relational marketing starts with a service understanding of interpersonal relationships, which is in line with external marketing strategies. Internal marketing consists, among others, of information and idea exchange between part-time marketers via interaction and communication. Therefore, it can be assumed that attitudes and behaviours such as described by Rosenberg have important implications in further assessing a more service-oriented worldview. The current relational marketing worldview is based on the idea of service as the fundamental basis of exchange. However, it remains unexplored whether or not the dominant rational mindset of PTMs is ready for customer-consciousness and sales-mindedness.

2.7 Summary of the Literature Review and Outlook

What is currently missing is a concept or understanding that closes the gap between a highly abstract marketing worldview based on relational approaches to marketing and the network idea (Vargo & Lusch, 2004a) and explicitly, marketing-like behavioural and attitudinal implications for part-time marketers (practitioners). In this relation, the current dominant brain function, which is rational thinking, has been briefly reviewed in relation to business and marketing, which led to the assumption that the current positivist and technocentric understanding of the world might be improper as
a linking element between a service-based marketing worldview and customer-consciousness and sales-mindedness.

Varey and Ballantyne have been outlined throughout this chapter, as they propose attitudes for employees that are based on a dialogical learning orientation. These attitudes reflect a relational marketing orientation on an interpersonal level. However, it is argued that behaviours and attitudes need to have clear implications for individuals in order to be valuable. In this regard an understanding of whether or not part-time marketers are ready to adopt these attitudes based on a dominant rational worldview has been neglected.

This study works with a systematic combining approach, which is briefly outlined in the next chapter. Based on the existing theoretical framework outlined in the underlying chapter, unstructured, in-depth interviews have been conducted. It was the primary focus of these interviews to reveal meaningful insights in relation to interpersonal interaction that are of relevance regarding networks and systems thinking. The following section reviews more literature, which became relevant after the initial interviews.
CHAPTER THREE

Extended Literature Review and Research Question

It is interesting to note that a very active researcher will come across passive data only. On the other hand, active data will require a more passive (less predetermined) researcher. (Dubois & Gadde, 2002, p. 557)

3.1 Introduction

The continuous movement between empirical world and a model world is called “systematic combining” (Dubois & Gadde, 2002). Dubois and Gadde continue that during this process, the research issues and the analytical framework are successively reoriented based on the findings from emerging data. The data of the underlying study has been approached with the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter Two (a network and systems “lens” with relevance to relational marketing). Based on these assumptions, in-depth interviews have been conducted to assess the interviewees’ perceptions of interpersonal interactions. The aim of the first data collection procedure was to unravel starting points for a concept that has specific implications on behaviours and attitudes for employees with relevance to a network perspective and a systems understanding of the world.

Looking ahead in this research, emotions appeared to be of importance to this study during the data analysis process. The systematic combining approach is characterized by a continuous alternation between empirical world and data. To maintain the context of this research for the reader, emotions are hereafter reviewed in general, and in relation to marketing in particular. This will further support the reader in critically following the data analysis process. After the review of emotions, the research question is presented.
Figure 3.1 outlines the structure of Chapter Three. This chapter starts with a review of relevant literature in the field of emotions, including consciousness (3.2). Section 3.3 summarizes the development of this research, from the beginning of this study to the research question. The chapter finishes with a summary of the research problem and gives a brief overview of Chapter Four.

**Figure 3.1 Chapter Three Overview**

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Emotions

3.3 Towards the Research Question

3.4 Summary and Outlook

Figure 3.2 outlines the aggregate literature review of this study including the extended literature on emotions:

**Figure 3.2 Complete Literature Body**
3.2 **Emotions**

Emotions are ubiquitous throughout marketing. They influence information processing, mediate responses to persuasive appeals, measure the effects of marketing stimuli, initiate goal setting, enact goal-directed behaviours, and serve as ends and measures of consumer welfare. Yet, we are only beginning to understand the role of emotions in marketing. (Bagozzi, et al., 1999, p. 202)

Throughout the interview analysis process (presented in Chapter Five), it became apparent that emotions and emotion-related themes in interpersonal interactions play an important role for part-time marketers on all levels. To extend the initial theoretical framework, which was based on relational approaches to marketing and internal marketing, a critical review of emotional literature is necessary to understanding what role emotions play in relation to interpersonal interactions with relevance to networks and systems.

### 3.2.1 Historical Emotional Background

Griffiths (1997) presents a summarizing and critical review of emotions and their origin. According to him, two large schools can be distinguished: the propositional attitude school and schools related to cognitive psychology. The two major paradigms became behaviourism, which is explicitly concerned with motivated, goal-oriented action (conation) and cognitivism, which deals predominantly with the study of cold, affect-less ideation (Forgas, 2000). Zajonc (2000) also notes that passion and reason were acknowledged as separate domains for at least 2,500 years, with passion emerging as an independent source of conduct, often intractable and harmful.

Plutchik (1970) defers between three different emotional schools. The first one stems from Darwin’s theory of evolution, the second suggested that an emotion is a conscious feeling arising from sensations in the viscera and skeletal muscles (which comes after a state of bodily arousal and not before it) and the third one is based on
Freud’s view that emotions might be considered archaic discharge syndromes that are part of the biological inheritance of man. Avrill (1994) distinguishes between emotional syndromes (such as anger, grief), emotional states (respond in a manner representative of the corresponding emotional syndrome) and emotional reactions (such as facial expressions or overt behaviour). In fact, interest in human emotion goes back as far as philosophy itself (Solomon, 1984).

3.2.2 Differences in Emotional Understanding

The propositional attitude school claims that certain propositional attitudes are necessary for certain emotions. It is based on assumptions of many great philosophers, who have been intrigued by the question of how feeling and thinking, affect and cognition, are related (Forgas, 2000). Cognitive schools support the view that the main component of an emotion is a cluster of mental representations (Griffiths, 1997).

Forgas (2000) is concerned with “affect” and claims that neither of the two mentioned paradigms (behaviourism and cognitivism) assigned much importance to the study of affective phenomena. In addition, emotions or affects (the two terms were seen as interchangeable by Plutchik) may be unconscious and not directly accessible to awareness (Plutchik, 1970).

Reflexes and instincts have been described as quite rigid and stimulus dependent and it has been argued that they are not enough when decision-making and where flexibility in strategy or performance are required (Izard, 1991). Coleman (1995) argues that no psychological skill is more fundamental than resisting impulse. According to Kofman (2003b), emotions have to be controlled to be efficient in interpersonal interactions. Unfortunately, the mental faculties (feeling, knowing and willing) were treated as if they were fundamentally separate and handled as distinct entities that can be studied in separation from each other (Forgas, 2000). The literature review indicates that it is a central question whether emotions can be controlled or not.
3.2.3 Can Emotions be Controlled?

The answer to the question whether emotions can be controlled or not is essential for this study. Peters (1970) talks about the education of emotions. He differentiates between such emotions as feeling cold or anger, and emotions that are fed by a motive, like jealousy. This latter kind of emotion comes over people when they consider a situation in a certain light (expectations). This implies that individuals choose a “starting point” or perspective for their emotions and hence, have a chance to influence/change/challenge this starting point. Some go as far and say emotions can be controlled at all times (Averill, 1994). Uncontrolled emotions lead to uncontrolled emotional reactivity (Keinan & Melamed, 1987; Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

Furthermore there is a discussion of whether or not emotional aspects can and should be compartmentalized (e.g. in behavioural and cognitive aspects). Griffiths (1997) notes hybrid modes, which are meant to integrate different approaches. Aristotle’s predecessor, Plato, divides the human soul into rational and irrational parts. Unlike Plato, Aristotle argues that both necessarily form a unity, and this is particularly true of emotions that involve a cognitive element, including beliefs and expectations about one’s situation, as well as physical sensations (Solomon, 1984).

The secret of emotions remains an “age-old puzzle” that continues to command attention (Forgas, 2000). According to Aristotle, emotions may, at times, be unwarranted, but just as often they may be warranted (Solomon, 1984). It has been argued that reducing the visible signs of emotions is not an effective way to reduce the subjective experience of emotions (Levenson, 1994). Kofman (2006) calls for more emotional activeness in business environments. However:

Feeling that an emotion happens to us rather than being chosen is one of the essential defining characteristics of emotions. We are not capable of easily initiating any emotion we want to feel, nor are we capable of terminating an emotion completely be simple choice. (Ekman & Davidson, 1994, p. 280)

To support Kofman’s idea of more emotional activeness, conscious access to emotions (or pre-emotional perceptions) is necessary, which first requires a perspective that acknowledges the controllability of emotions. The question of
whether emotions can be controlled or not starts with the question of whether an emotion is conscious or unconscious (Solomon, 1984). It has been argued that an emotion can be controlled (even though it is not always easy), and hence, it is assumed that an emotion is conscious. Emotions that are felt cannot be unconscious by definition (Clore, 1994). Clore continues that not only is the conscious experience of emotions important, but also the consciousness of its cause and, hence, its meaning.

Zajonc (1994), on the other hand, shows evidence for unconscious emotions. He describes a state of being depressed or disgruntled without knowing what brought it about. Being more conscious requires the awareness of a feeling and feeling that feeling (Solomon, 1984). Solomon continues that this feeling occurs only after individuals build the second-order representations necessary for core consciousness.

To understand to what extent an active emotional engagement, or control, is possible, one needs to understand the nature of consciousness. Consciousness is a necessary prerequisite to emotional control and therefore, it is necessary to discuss the characteristics of conscious awareness in order to make a more grounded statement regarding emotional control, or engagement.

### 3.2.4 Emotions and Consciousness

Zaltman (2000) argued that conscious events have been studied without an understanding of consciousness itself. Furthermore, Zaltman outlines that consciousness is central to a critical evaluation of past behaviours, with relevance to future behaviours, and finally states that “… the mind is not the possession of the individual.” (p. 425), which highlights the challenge of an active emotional engagement, or control.

Bagozzi (1999) claims that appraisals can be conscious and purposive, but also unreflective and unconscious, depending on the person and the conditions for emotional arousal. It has been argued that the dimension of consciousness is important because qualitative differences emerge in emotional responses depending on the degree of conscious attention available to such reactions (Mayer & Salovey,
Mayer & Salovey continue that “(...) greater complexity and creativity of responses are possible where attention is prolonged.” (p.200), an assumption, which has also been supported by the work of Korthagen (2005) regarding more conscious and more self-aware “reflection.”

While it appears difficult to speak of consciousness in varying “degrees” due to a missing reference point, Mayer & Salovey (1995) propose what they call a “threefold framework,” differing between unconscious emotions (which occur outside of conscious awareness because they operate at a neurological level, as they are automatized or repressed, or for other reasons), low-level consciousness (fleeting awareness attended to peripherally) and higher consciousness, which operates at a reflective, or meta-level. This framework provides further guidance relating emotional control, as discussed in the preceding section, and consciousness.

Coleman (1995) outlines the evolution of emotions and elaborates on the necessity of unconscious, automatic reactions, triggered by emotions. He continues that even though unconscious emotions have been wise guides in the evolutionary long run, the new realities, which are arising rapidly, create difficulties for the slow march of evolution to keep up. Coleman’s observation additionally outlines why conscious awareness is underdeveloped, or works in a narrow band of activation (Zaltman, 2000), and why it is important for emotional engagement in the 21st century.

Mayer & Salovey’s earlier mentioned framework also supports the thesis that emotional control is related to consciousness (Solomon, 1984). Consciousness has also been characterized as the domain of access of the personal self (Baars, 1994). It has also been argued that as soon as one thinks, he is not conscious (Natsoulas, 2000). However, there is no widely accepted definition of consciousness, and clear and concise definition is difficult (Izard, 1991).

Consciousness is a state of mind. As it enhances self-reflection, it does not stand in contrast to rational thinking. Rather, consciousness “organizes” rational thoughts and makes them more aware (Milson & Wilemon, 2008). Louis and Sutton (1991) have argued that thoughts can be made more aware by switching cognitive gears from an automatic to a more conscious mode. It has been noted that higher states of consciousness are a prerequisite for emotional control.
Consciousness has also been described as “a state of restful alertness, in which the body is at rest but the mind is fully alert, poised for but not yet engaged in activity.” (Schmidt-Wilk, et al., 1996, p. 431). It has been argued that the act of simple awareness moderates the emotional mind, allowing individuals to make better decisions and free one’s self from harmful emotional tendencies (Liang, 2007). Furthermore, a person’s emotional state is able to influence awareness and, hence, aspects of information processing, including evaluations, judgments, and creative thinking (Bagozzi, et al., 1999). Awareness is a state of mind, which originates in consciousness.

Wilber (2007) outlines that a state of consciousness often provides profound motivation, meaning and drives, in both the self and others. Ordinary consciousness has been described as a narrow and restricted version of deeper or higher modes of awareness (Wilber, 1997). On the contrary, Izard (1991) describes unconsciousness as a loss of awareness of the world around and a loss of awareness of time and place. Hence, consciousness allows adapting to the environment (Kofman, 2006).

To further illustrate the nature of consciousness, Goethe, who could be described as a phenomenologist by nature, believed that it was important to let the phenomenon become fully visible without imposing subjective mental constructs on it (Bortoft, 1996). He thought Descartes’ attempt to imagine mechanical models behind appearances debased the mind. This emptiness of mind implied by Goethe is another example to describe consciousness. This emptiness reflects a holistic and non-linear perception of reality. Consciousness focuses the human being and as time keeps everything from happening at once, consciousness is nature’s way of keeping individuals from everything at once (Meyers, 2002).

A conscious person creates an atmosphere of togetherness compared to an unconsciousness person, which might create a power struggle (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005). What is referred to as consciousness needs to be brought into the relation between an organism and its environment (Mead, 1934). Conscious individuals have an implicit feeling of interconnectedness with their environment:

Reflection or reflective behaviour arises only under the conditions of self-consciousness, and makes possible the purposive control and organization by
the individual organism of its conduct, with reference to its social and physical environment, i.e., with reference to the various social and physical situations in which it becomes involved and to which it reacts. (Mead, 1934, p. 91)

Becoming more conscious is being mindful of what is happening in the here and now. Consciousness is living in the present, aware of oneself, what one thinks, feels, says and does (Liang, 2007). Hence, consciousness supports a network perspective and systems thinking, as, for both, it is essential to understand the integration of a node or system in relation to the network or environment.

### 3.2.5 Marketing and Emotions

The understanding of marketing and emotions is just beginning (Bagozzi, et al., 1999). Emotions, which are related to research in marketing, comprise mainly consumer behaviour (Chebat & Michon, 2003; White & Yu, 2005). What appears to be of importance to marketers in relation to emotions is empathy (Sin, et al., 2002). However, empathy is merely outlined as a prerequisite to building up and maintaining successful relationships and its specific role on an interpersonal level, between part-time marketers, remains unexplored.

Empathy has been described as an active construct (Kalisch, 1973). It requires the development of non-egocentric or self-transcendent modes of consciousness (Thompson, 2001). The research into internal marketing, in particular, lacks emotional insight. Moreover, it has been argued that the role of emotions in marketing relationships lacks profound research (Bagozzi, et al., 1999). Empathy might play a role in this research, as it is directly related to emotions and consciousness.

Zaltman (2000) argues that

(…) consciousness operates in a narrow band of activation and is sensitive to small changes in activation levels. While not the dominant cognitive state, the conscious mind is currently the primary domain of consumer research, and yet it remains part of the dark continent of our field. (p. 425)
This research aims to contribute to understanding whether or not part-time marketers are ready to adopt customer-consciousness behaviours and attitudes within an internal marketing context, such as summarized under section 2.3.4. Zaltman’s comment suggests that contributions to consumer research might have gone partly astray by assuming a certain “default” mindset. This assumption further creates the suspicion that PTMs might not be ready for customer-consciousness, which is a precondition to behaviours and attitudes from an internal marketing perspective, based on relational marketing.

### 3.2.6 Emotions and Personality

The focus of this study is not on the relationship between personality traits and emotional characteristics, but, instead, on the emotional understanding of part-time marketers in relation to interpersonal interactions. A review of risk-taking and emotions will further highlight the relationship between emotions and personalities, and emphasize the focus of this study. That is, this study does not focus on “emotional nuances,” but a personality-independent understanding, shared by the part-time marketers of an organization.

For example, strong emotional arousal has been related to risky choices, as it abandons the light of rational analysis, which leads to ill-advised decisions (Leith & Baumeister, 1996). Leith & Baumeister continue that the capacity for rational analysis is undoubtedly one of the greatest treasures of human nature and outlines that it is sad to realize how easily emotional distress can induce people to “spurn that treasure.” (p.1265). The personality of the participants is merely an amplifier of these emotional reactions.

Also, fear and anger, two extreme emotional states, have strong effects on risk perception even though being opposed; that is, angry people express more optimistic risk estimates and risk-seeking choices, whereas fearful people expressed pessimistic risk estimates (Lerner & Keltner, 2001). According to Lerner and Keltner, the tendency to adopt more or less optimistic risk-taking is influenced by the personality; however, the overall effects of emotional states on risk taking remain independent of specific personalities.
March and Shapira (1987) have stated that attitudes towards risk are usually pictured as stable properties of individuals. They further argued that efforts have been made to associate risk preference with dimensions of personality. However, March and Shapira conclude that no difference in risk propensity has been found among different groups. Similarly, it is assumed that customer-consciousness or sales-mindedness can be assessed independently from personality-traits, with relevance to specific behaviours and attitudes.

It has also been found that greater anticipated pleasure or optimism tend to produce greater risk seeking, where pessimism leads to greater risk aversion (Mellers & McGraw, 2001). Mellers and McGraw argue that people anticipate the pleasure of their success based on their own personal expectations. Relating these assumptions from Mellers and McGraw to the preceding paragraphs on personality-traits (which appear to have effects on behavioural and attitudinal tendencies, but do not impact in opposing ways), a perspective, or view, on behaviours might be more meaningful for this research then a focus on personality-traits.

Independent of personality characteristics, Shiv, Loewenstein, Bechera, H. Damasio and A. R. Damasio (2005) have argued that “(...) lack of emotional reactions may lead to more advantageous decisions in certain situation (...)” (p.438). Shiv et al have also stressed the importance that human emotions have evolved for survival purposes (see also Coleman, 1995), which nowadays, can be disadvantageous and must be inhibited, so that potentially wiser decisions can be made.

Summarizing, and in relation to risk taking, March and Shapira (1987) have proposed that to encourage risk taking, it might be advantageous to understand how managers “think.” March and Shapira argue that instead, it might be more efficacious to modify managerial attention patterns. In relation to this study and the focus on customer-consciousness and sales-mindedness, an understanding of perspectives, or worldviews, among part-time marketers appears to be of primary interest. Herein, as has been outlined in this section, personality-traits and related emotional “tendencies” are influential, but not a significant focus of interest for the study.
3.2.7 Summarizing Emotions
Emotions can be divided into two large schools, related to cognitive psychology and affects. A central argument between both schools is the controllability of emotions. While it is assumed that affects are largely independent from cognitive functions, the advocates of the cognitive school argue that enhanced consciousness is necessary to control emotions such as jealousy and anger.

It has been noted that consciousness is a prerequisite to changing cognitive gears from a more automatic (mindless) mode to a conscious engagement (Louis & Sutton, 1991). Consciousness is also a precondition for empathy. Consciousness is difficult to characterize, and has been described as the awareness of awareness, which is the exception, rather than the rule of cognition (Zaltman, 2000).

3.3 Towards the Research Question
3.3.1 Introduction
It has been noted that this research is based on a systematic combining approach, where the theoretical framework develops together with empirical observation (Dubois & Gadde, 2002). Emerging data supports the refinement of the initial theoretical framework. However, the research question is based on the literature outlined in Chapter Two. The research question remains unchanged during the research process (as opposed to an emerging research question). In the following section, important aspects of this research are highlighted, which leads to the knowledge gap presented in this thesis and finally the subsequent research question.

3.3.2 Why is this research important?
The internal marketing practice remains limited. So far, there has been no underlying philosophy defined for an internal marketing concept (Gounaris, 2005), which implies space for integrative (external/internal marketing) research (such as the underlying study). Marketing is a social process with far more facets than the marketing mix toolbox (Grönroos, 1994a, 1994b). However, one should be aware of the contrast between under and over-socialized views (Granovetter, 1985). In fact, a
balance between both of them is needed. A mechanistic view of marketing is not wrong, but it does not explain relational aspects of marketing properly (dynamism, interconnectedness, etc.). It has been noted that the 4Ps are not obsolete, but that relational approaches build upon them as a higher-order concept (Grönroos, 2006).

If internal marketing is neglected, relational marketing suffers or fails (Grönroos, 1994a). Much work remains to be done to better understand consumers, marketers and firms at an individual level (Penaloza & Venkatesh, 2006). The literature review unravelled a common core of relational marketing, which has been characterized as interconnected, dynamic, multilateral, based on co-creation and value-in-use. Starting from these insights, the customer-conscious and sales-minded employee has been characterized.

The shift from operand to operant resources as the source of sustainable competitive advantage emphasizes the importance of competencies on the one hand, and some problems on the other: “Be it firms or people, differences can be found between having a capability and the mastery thereof. Many are competent; few are masterful.” (Madhavaram & Hunt, 2008, p. 76).

This research is seen as fundamental, as business and marketing are in an episode of change. The interconnected perspective of business and the marketing environment is based on a network understanding and systems view of actors, and together with the focus on operant resources, requires a stronger focus on behavioural and attitudinal implications in relation to the part-time marketer, which has been largely neglected. The change in perspective from goods to services shifted the focus from products towards processes that render a service. A common marketing worldview/understanding based on relational marketing is lacking.

Adam Smith is the founder of modern economics. Smith is also the author of moral philosophy. Moreover, there is a consensus that his moral philosophy precedes his economic theory not only chronologically, but also systematically (Wallacher, 2009). Wallacher continues that the overarching principle of his moral philosophy is sympathy. With sympathy, Smith refers to a basic human reaction, which is the ability to participate any kind of emotion. Reports of biographers indicate that the
work of Smith can be seen as a comprehensive one in which moral aspects include economics, but both must not be seen in isolation.

The technocentric nature of Western society could be the reason why Smith is known mainly as the founder of modern economics. The positivistic understanding of Western society is based on rationality and has been proven inappropriate to grasp the relational and interconnected business environment. The positivist worldview is based on the assumption of a fragmented and separate reality (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). It appears to be improper to describe a dynamic and interconnected environment. Gumnessson (2007) claims that competition and cooperation have a yin and yang relationship, and that both are two poles of a single reality. Gumnessson’s insights seem to be valuable but remain abstract.

Flint (2006), in his contribution to S-D logic in relation to innovation uses a symbolic interactionist approach. He claims that, regarding interaction, customer contact personnel should attune to customers’ symbolic communication and interactions as clues to their value perceptions. However, how can operant resources be further developed (Madhavaram & Hunt, 2008)? Unfortunately, a variety of studies have established that enhancing knowledge and creating supportive attitudes often have little or no impact upon behaviour (McKenzie-Mohr, 2000). An entrenched logic that is built into the mindset and mental models of managers is difficult to change (R. N. Bolton, et al., 2004).

A rational understanding of the world does not seem to be sufficient in understanding the essence of relational approaches to marketing on an individual level. Networks have been described as being interconnected, but the dominant rational brain function inherently separates entities and functions to make sense of the world (Luhmann, 1995). It remains unexplored whether customer-consciousness and sales-mindedness are concepts that can be internalized based on a dominant rational worldview.

Understanding the impact of the network perspective and systems thinking on interpersonal interactions is essential, as relational approaches to marketing have their roots in them. It has been noted that not only full-time marketers but also part-time marketers have contact with external gatekeepers from other companies. Engineers, for example, often support purchasing personnel regarding buying decisions. Other
examples are product managers at a trade fair, which usually have contact with potential customers. Hence, even though this research focuses on interpersonal interaction within companies, it is directly related to inter-firm interactions. It has been argued that satisfied employees lead to satisfied customers (Abela & Murphy, 2008).

3.3.3 Defining the Research Gap

Not only has the economic environment (organization, management, etc.) remained largely unchanged (Hamel, 2008), but, also, the dominant positivistic rational worldview in Western society (Triandis, et al., 1988). There has been a fundamental shift in the perception of marketing and business reality, but the breaking free from old mental models remains a major challenge (Aitken, et al., 2006). However, it has been argued that when conditions change, a new dominant logic must be developed quickly (Bettis & Prahalad, 1995).

The works of Varey and Ballantyne have been outlined during the literature review. Varey and Ballantyne propose specific attitudes, which are related to relational marketing and are based on what they call dialogical interaction. However, based on the literature review, two assumptions are made: First, no research evidence can be found whether part-time marketers are ready for customer-consciousness and sales-mindedness based on a rational fragmented and static understanding of the world. Second, Varey and Ballantyne’s attitudes appear to be comprehensible from a dyadic perspective, and remain rather abstract. For example, when does a part-time marketer know that he behaves open, non-manipulative and non-evaluative?

The literature review revealed the importance of interpersonal interactions with relevance to the interconnected and dynamic nature of relational marketing. Not only does interaction between individuals influence and shape the processes of the company. Rather, it is the part-time marketers that also maintain interpersonal relationships with part-time marketers from other companies (e.g. purchasers) or customers (e.g. at trade fairs). Hence, the part-time marketer’s perspective on interpersonal relationships offers a good starting point for this research, and leads straight to the adjacent research question of this study.
Research Question

How is the development in marketing towards a relational network and systems perspective related to internal marketing and, in particular, to attitudes and behaviours in interpersonal interaction?

3.4 Summary and Outlook

This chapter shortly presented the idea of a systematic combining approach. Literature on emotions has been reviewed, which became relevant only during the data analysis process. This chapter also outlined the importance of this research for part-time and full-time marketers, which subsequently led to the research question that this study tries to answer, based on the main literature body outlined in Chapter Two.

Chapter Four will present the methodological considerations to answer the research question presented in this chapter. An ethnographic approach is taken to this research. Data has been generated with in-depth interviews (main sessions and follow-up sessions) in a multi national corporation and triangulated with autoethnographic retrospective participant observation, based on three and a half years experience of the researcher in the field. Depth and detail in this study have been considered more important than generalization of results.
CHAPTER FOUR

Methodology

In theory, some of the external reality can be established from a combination of documentation and-or records, interviews and observation. In practice, some of these may not be available. Observation is only possible if the researcher is able to be present at the time. (Bannister, 2005, p. 14)

4.1 Introduction
Chapter Three has extended the reviewed literature pertinent to this study and outlined the research problem arising from existing literature. Chapter Three concluded with the research question of this study: How is the development in marketing, towards a relational network and systems perspective, related to internal marketing and, in particular, to attitudes and behaviours in interpersonal interaction? This chapter justifies the qualitative nature of this study and outlines the dominant research paradigm of the researcher. It proposes suitable research methods to answer the research question outlined in Chapter Three.

Figure 4.1 outlines the structure of Chapter Four. This chapter begins by introducing the main scientific research paradigms and discusses the constructivism paradigm in more depth as the underlying research paradigm of this study (4.2). Because of the qualitative nature of this study, quality criteria to obtain trustworthiness and credibility will be accessed and discussed in detail with relevance to the research design (4.3). Section 4.4 highlights the research execution, which comprises in-depth interviews, follow-up interview sessions and autoethnographic retrospective participant observation. Section 4.5 discusses arguments related to theory contribution, followed by the methodological limitations of this study (4.6). The chapter ends with a summary of Chapter Four and an outlook on Chapter Five (4.7).
4.2 Research Paradigm

4.2.1 Overview of Research Paradigms

Whenever a piece of research is carried out, researchers make assumptions about how the world is (ontology) and how we can come to know it (epistemology). (Easton, 2002, p. 108)

This section discusses current scientific paradigms and examines their ontological, epistemological and methodological considerations. Positivism, interpretivism, including constructivism, critical science and realism versus relativism will be summarized. These knowledge claims seem to be crucial to an understanding of the philosophy of science: Positivism as the end of a continuum and the classical paradigm of natural sciences, interpretivism (including constructivism) as the other end of the continuum, and realism (in contrast to relativism) as part of the
interpretivist paradigm, which assumes one single reality that can never be finally agreed on, but converged.

However, only a few social researchers agree with all parts of one approach (Neuman, 2000). There has been a recent explosion of paradigmatic alternatives in social science (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Hence, more scientific paradigms have been introduced by scholars, which are usually related to the above-mentioned four paradigms. Neuman (2000) proposes positivist social science, interpretivist social science, which includes relativism and realism, and critical social science as superior paradigms. Creswell (2003) refers to four qualitative knowledge claims: Post-positivism, constructivism, advocacy-participatory and pragmatism. Denzin and Lincoln (2005a) outline seven paradigms/theories, namely positivist/post-positivist, constructivist, feminist, ethnic, Marxist, cultural studies and queer theory.

There are various techniques used in social research (sampling, interviewing, participant observation, etc.). However, they are ultimately based on the assumptions of the different paradigmatic approaches outlined above (Neuman, 2000). A paradigm expresses the affiliations, organizations and techniques of the scientific research community (Salmon, et al., 1992). Given its social nature, paradigms have been characterized as highly mutable and dynamic (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). In the following, the main scientific paradigms will be reviewed in more detail.

4.2.2 Positivist Social Science

Of central importance to positivism was the universality of the truth statements that were to be acceptable. (Easton, 2002, p. 103)

Positivism arose from a nineteenth-century school of thought by the Frenchman who founded sociology, Auguste Compte (1798 – 1857) (Neuman, 2000). The term quantitative research is related to a positivist view of the world. It has been argued that technocentrism, a positivistic worldview, which also builds the basis for the 4Ps,
incorporates a fragmented worldview that separates mind and body, subject and object, human and non-human (Gladwin, Kennelly, et al., 1995):

A positivist researcher will precisely measure selective quantitative details about thousands of people and will use statistics, whereas an interpretive researcher may live a year with a dozen people and use careful methods to gather large quantities of detailed qualitative data to acquire an in-depth understanding of how they create meaning in their everyday life. (Neuman, 2000, p. 71)

The positivist vision in social research is located in a world that is independent of local human concerns (Seale, 1999). It has been argued that positivists uncritically accept the assumption about the positing of an external objective world of social phenomena, the validity of quantitative measurement of those phenomena and the capacity to make empirical generalizations and formulate theoretical propositions of increasing abstraction (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003).

The logical-linguistic approach, however, caused difficulties encountered by attempts at logical reconstruction of human knowledge (Salmon, et al., 1992). A situation, unique and often complex, was experienced as problematical (Schipper, 1999). Schipper continues that a problem, thus, needs to be set and formulated by reading the situation, a fact that was overlooked by positivism. Positivism, because of its fragmented worldview, leaves questions open when it comes to complex social phenomena. From a positivist perspective, there is only one way to do science, and any intellectual inquiry must conform to established research methods (Wall, 2008). “The term ‘positivism’ usually refers to a type of strict empiricism in which only those knowledge claims are based directly on experience (i.e., empirical observation) are considered important, useful, and/or scientifically meaningful.” (Peter & Olson, 1983, p. 118).

4.2.3 Critical Social Science

Advocates of critical social science agree with many of the criticisms the interpretive approach directs at positivism (Neuman, 2000). Critical theory, such as Marxist or
feminist perspectives, outlines that the quality of research should be judged on its political effects rather than on its capacity to formulate universal laws (Seale, 1999). Critical research recognizes that claims to truth are always discursively situated and implicated in relations of power (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005). On the one hand, critical social sciences reject positivist value freedom as a myth. On the other hand, critical social sciences also attack the interpretive approach for its relativism (Neuman, 2000). Neumann continues: “In the interpretive approach, the reality of the genius and the reality of the idiot are equally valid and important.” (p. 81).

It has been argued that, similar to realism, the critical approach says that there is only one (or very view) correct point of view and other viewpoints are wrong and misleading. Furthermore, all social research necessarily begins with a value or a moral point of view (Neuman, 2000). History plays a crucial role in critical social sciences. Researchers use their knowledge of what has happened to redirect the course of events, and to change the outcomes (Salmon, et al., 1992). Critical theory resembles a loose coalition of interests more than a united front (Conquergood, 1991).

4.2.4 Interpretivism (including Constructivism)

Interpretive social science is related to hermeneutics, a theory of meaning that originated in the nineteenth century (Neuman, 2000). It is guided by the researcher’s beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005b). It adopts a practical orientation and is concerned with how people interact and get along with each other (Neuman, 2000).

The interpretivist approach begins with the premise that methodological monism is no basis for the study of the social world (Seale, 1999). Interpretive social science can be traced back to Max Weber and Wilhelm Dilthey, around 1900. Dilthey argued that there were two fundamentally different types of science: Naturwissenschaft and Geisteswissenschaft. The latter (interpretivism) is rooted in an empathetic understanding of lived experiences of people in relation to a specific historical setting (Neuman, 2000). Constructivism connects action to practice and encourages experimental and multivoiced texts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005a).
Constructivism relates to interpretive social science and adopts a relativist ontology, a transactional epistemology and a hermeneutic, dialectical methodology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005a). Constructivist researchers believe in pluralistic, open-ended and contextualized perspectives toward reality (Creswell & Miller, 2000). As such, knowledge in constructivism is socially constructed and may change depending on the circumstances (Golafshani, 2003). The human actor is herein an active interpreter and creator of his social reality and self-concept; he does not simply react to stimuli from an external environment (Flint, 2006). “In its strongest formulation constructivism says that scientific facts of a pure and socially unalloyed nature do not exist; but social facts – facts about the existence of the constructions we call ‘scientific facts’ – do exist.” (Salmon, et al., 1992, p. 167).

4.2.5 Realism (versus Relativism)

(Scientific) realism rejects logical positivism (Peter, 1992). According to scientific realism, there is one physical reality (a point that realism shares with positivism) that all individuals perceive in different ways, even though trying to reach agreement on it (Hunt, 1992). Hunt continues that it is the thesis of classical realism that there is a world that exists independently of cognizing experience. A major signpost of critical realism is that in order to be able to explain and understand social phenomena, they have to be evaluated critically, paying attention to contingencies (Easton, 2002). Even if there are multiple types of realism at a philosophical level (Peter, 1992), a single truth and reality in realism remains the centre of interest (Hunt, 1990). Hunt, in his discussion on realism, describes truth as desirable but no one will ever know whether this truth has been reached. He describes this single truth and distinguishes it from Truth, which is a “god’s-eye” view.

On the other hand, as a competing paradigm, relativism expresses concerns over a realism view of reality. There is a scientific fragment, which argues that because meaning varies with belief and conceptual schemes, and because no linguistic characterization of the observable exists, the epistemological questions that have motivated the enterprise of philosophy of science are unanswerable (Salmon, et al., 1992).
The idea of relativism is that everything is relative and nothing is absolute (Neuman, 2000). A relativist ontology implies multiple realities and a subjectivist epistemology (knower and respondent co-create understandings) (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005b). Relativism implies nihilism and solipsism (Hunt, 1990). Solipsism suggests that the only mind that can be known is one’s own (Seale, 1999), while nihilism implies that all claims to knowledge must be grounded on certainty or a god’s-eye view (Hunt, 1992). “Once one is faced with the problem of multiple versions, however, the pitfalls of relativism seem close at hand.” (Seale, 1999, p. 24).

One of the pitfalls is that, after all, nothing is real (nihilism) except one’s self (solipsism). How one chooses to see the world though, depends on one’s attitude towards reality. A major difference between realism and constructivism is the nature of scientific reality because realism assumes science is capable of knowing reality, although not with certainty. On the other hand, the relativist views science as constructing various views of reality (Peter, 1992).

4.2.6 Paradigm Discussion

This study takes place at two business units of a multi national corporation in Germany. The environment can be characterized as highly specialized and compartmentalized and is dominated by numerous guidelines that regulate a variety of processes and behavioural patterns for every employee. The main part of the interviews has been conducted at a production site with approximately one thousand employees. To understand the results of the interviews within the context of the organization, a constructivist perspective has been adopted. This perspective is assumed essential for this study in order to understand the socially constructed reality of the employees and to draw meaningful conclusions throughout this research.

It has been noted that constructivists believe in pluralistic, open-ended and contextualized perspectives toward reality (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Furthermore, the interpretive approach adopts a practical orientation and is concerned with how people interact and get along with each other (Neuman, 2000). A constructivist perspective in relation to this study is important as it helps to develop an
understanding of the different socially constructed realities held by part-time marketers.

Constructivism can also be seen as an attitude of mind when doing research (Seale, 1999). Human group life, such as can be found in firms and corporations, is intersubjective, multi-perspectival, reflective, activity-based, negotiable, relational and processual (Tan & Hall, 2007). A constructivism ontology assists in getting closer to the phenomenon by understanding the socially constructed reality that the probants live in. Worldviews have been characterized as a set of beliefs and assumptions that describe reality (Koltko-Rivera, 2004). Hence, a constructivist viewpoint acknowledges different assumptions held by part-time marketers about social reality.

Constructivism assumes a relativist ontology and a subjectivist epistemology (knower and respondent co-create knowledge), and a naturalistic set of methodological procedures (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005b). This supports the essence of post-modernism in which many ways of knowing and inquiring are accepted as legitimate and that no one way should be privileged (Wall, 2008, p. 147). A constructivist is a passionate participant within the world being investigated (Perry, et al., 1999). This also supports the pre-understanding of the researcher, who has been part of the research environment for three and a half years.

4.3 Research Design

4.3.1 Nature of the Research Question
Research questions, which are of a qualitative nature are usually “how” or “what” questions (Creswell, 2003; Yin, 2003). In contrast, quantitative research asks “why” and looks for a comparison of groups (Creswell, 1998). Non-directional language (words with a directional language) is suggested to avoid words like affect, influence or impact (Creswell, 2003). Qualitative researchers typically approach “why” questions cautiously (Holstein & Gubrium, 2005). Furthermore, qualitative research questions should be open-ended (Creswell, 1998). One of the strengths of an ethnographer is the ability to discern why these patterns and trends occur (Schneider, 2006).
This study deals with employees of a multi national corporation and their understanding of interpersonal interaction in order to assess how their perspective (worldview) affects internal marketing with relevance to relational marketing and networks. Ethnographic research is conducted to set appropriate methodological pre-conditions to approach these questions. The research question of this study is a “how” question that considers the current academic discourse outlined above. The question is formulated with non-directional language.

4.3.2 Justification of Qualitative Research
To gain depth and detail in research, it is necessary, in the eyes of the researcher, to get physically and psychologically close to the phenomenon (Perry, et al., 1999). Gaining deep understanding involves understanding mental models of participants (Senge, 1990). A mental model is, for example, a set of propositions an interviewee understands to be reality. That is, an accurate portrayal of the causes, events and outcomes relevant in the case (Woodside, 2003). This study tries to access current mental models (e.g. one’s understanding of the world and organization), such as mentioned by Senge and Woodside, in order to understand the part-time marketer’s perspective towards interpersonal interaction. This understanding requires a certain openness to emerging themes, which might be meaningful for this study. For example, not everyone will feel comfortable talking openly about unpleasant interpersonal interactions that involve personal emotions.

It has been argued that operational constructs using fixed-point responses developed by researchers often fail to uncover the deep nuances and dynamic interactions between thoughts and actions within and between individuals (Woodside, 2003). Therefore, doing fieldwork requires one’s body to be immersed in the field for a period of time that is sufficient to enabling the researcher to participate inside that culture (Conquergood, 1991). Qualitative investigators, as opposed to quantitative researchers, also think that they can get closer to the actor’s perspective through detailed interviewing and observation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005b).

The researcher of this study has been part of the research environment for three and a half years before conducting the underlying research of this study, after roughly one
year of absence (the characteristics of the research environment are outlined in section 4.4.2). Hence, the researcher holds knowledge not only about the socially constructed reality created by interviewees, but also about the participants of this study. Even though it has already been argued in favour of closeness between the researcher and the phenomenon (depth and detail), pros and cons of this pre-understanding will be discussed in the underlying chapter (section 4.4.3.4). Generally, pre-understanding is perceived as essential to discussing an understanding of interpersonal interaction with participants on a meaningful (deep) level.

It is argued that deep understanding of the actors, interactions, sentiments and behaviours occurring in a specific process through time should be seen as the principal objective not only for the case study researcher (Woodside, 2003), but also for the ethnographer. In particular, this deep understanding is important in relation to worldviews and individual paradigmatic perspectives about perceived reality in interactions. An in-depth study of the phenomenon is considered to be more appropriate than opting for generalizations. Hence, it is not the aim of this research to make generalizations of any kind, but to initiate a wider marketing discussion that considers the role of worldviews in marketing in relation to behaviours and attitudes among part-time marketers. As has been highlighted during the review of scientific paradigms, this aim stands in opposition to a positivist paradigm and thus, a positivist methodology, which opts for generalizations and universal laws.

Another reason for the choice of qualitative research is the sensitivity of the topic. Interpersonal experiences are individual and might contain personal issues, which are meaningful. Especially in relation to interaction, it might be useful to discuss precarious cases to get deeper insights. In this instance, not everyone wants to feel exposed. It is noted again that a pre-understanding of the environment and the familiarity with the employees/participants was considered advantageous in accessing current worldviews (for examples of pre-understanding see Gummesson, 2000b; Schneider, 2006). Further effects of data sensitivity and pre-understanding will be discussed in relation to trustworthiness and credibility of the study in the following section.
4.3.3 Quality Criteria

4.3.3.1 Introduction

Qualitative research usually relies on a few cases and many variables (Creswell, 1998). Positivist criteria such as internal and external validity, are replaced by such terms as trustworthiness and authenticity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005a). Researchers who adhere to an intermediate – that is, partially subjectivist, partially objectivist – ontological position, such as the social constructivist, ensure validity by making use of the classificatory framework, which ensures a harmony between ontology, epistemology, research strategy, data types and data collection and interpretation methods (Houman & Skaates, 2004).

The concept of truth in intermediary (objective/subjective) positions has been specified as being more problematic and arbitrary (Houman & Skaates, 2004). Houman and Skaates state that rather than assuming an empirical world of universally causal mechanics waiting to be uncovered, the social world, which may still contain some regularity, is subject to an ongoing construction process conducted by reflexive actors. Ethnography is an embodied practice, wherein rather than the survey, the questionnaire, or the consensus tape, the researcher serves as the instrument (Conquergood, 1991; Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). Therefore, it is essential that subjectivism in ethnographic research be discussed in more detail, as it builds the foundation of the methodology of this study (see section 4.4.3.4).

A crisis of legitimation in post-modern qualitative research questions traditional criteria used for evaluating and interpreting qualitative research, involving a rethinking of terms such as validity, reliability and objectivity (Holt, 2003). Self-study in autoethnography, for example, represents a trend of movement away from modernism and its assumptions about legitimate knowledge and knowledge production toward broadening what counts as research (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001). The problematic nature of self-as-the-data-source in autoethnography has been described as being complicated because qualitative researchers have long been encouraged to consider how their personal subjectivity influences the investigative process (Holt, 2003). This study triangulates (1) inter-subjective interviews and (2)
follow-up interviews with (3) subjective insights based on the researcher’s pre-
understanding.

It has been argued that traditional research and writing conventions create only the
illusion that the knowledge produced is more legitimate (Wall, 2008). Autoethnography will be discussed in more detail in relation to this study regarding
its possible pitfalls due to its subjective appearance (section 4.4.3.4). However, to
access current perspectives of part-time marketers and other meaningful insights
during interviews the advantages of pre-understanding, from a constructivist
perspective, clearly outweigh the disadvantages.

4.3.3.2 Trustworthiness, Authenticity and Validity
Validity in field research has been outlined as the confidence placed in a researcher’s
analysis and data as accurately representing the social world in the field (Neuman,
2000). This section discusses the following:

Validity cannot be dismissed simply because it points to a question that has to be
answered in one way or another. Are these findings sufficiently authentic
(isomorphic to some reality, trustworthy, related to the world others construct
their social world) that I may trust myself in acting on their implications?
More to the point, would I feel sufficiently secure about these findings to
construct social policy or legislation based on them? (Guba & Lincoln, 2005,
p. 205)

Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability replace the usual
positivist criteria of internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity (Denzin
& Lincoln, 2005b).

Post-modern approaches to research initiate a discussion of subjectivism versus
objectivism and, therefore, must be carefully assessed prior to research. While
modern approaches urge scholars to maintain a certain distance (objectivism) to the
phenomenon under investigation, advocates of post-modern approaches promise
deeper and more valuable insights when the researcher fully emerges into the social
group he researches (subjectivism). This approach requires a careful assessment of quality criteria, which is outlined hereafter.

**Match between Data Types, Data Collection and Interpretation Strategies**

An improper match between data types and data collection and interpretations strategies results in many errors. For instance, a problem in relation to data collection may be the researcher’s non-native familiarity with the environment where the research is undertaken (Houman & Skaates, 2004). A main reason to conduct research at only one multinational cooperation (MNC) was the familiarity of the researcher not only with the company, but also with employees and managers on all levels. The yearlong experience supported deep questioning and openness of interviewees (which is a prerequisite to intimate discussion), while the organizational understanding of the researcher supported a proper understanding with relevance to the data analysis (Chapter Five).

**Language Problems**

Language problems have also been noted as critical when conducting research in a non-native environment (Zalan & Lewis, 2004). Since the company is situated in Germany and the researcher is of German nationality, this was not considered a critical issue. Problems might come up during the process of data analysis, where results have to be properly translated for the English audience of this research. The meaning of data is comprised by more than language (see remarks on hermeneutics and symbolic interactionism in section 4.4.4). Therefore, the reader must have confidence in the researcher regarding proper display of communicated (verbally and non-verbally) data, based on his pre-understanding. Additionally, the translation of quotes will be proof-read by an academic who grew up with a bilingual education (German and English).
Researcher’s and Interviewee’s Expectations

The researcher’s and interviewee’s expectations have been mentioned as a possible bias to analysis and responses (Houman & Skaates, 2004). Follow-up interviews might have such limitations because conflicting perspectives in a setting produce disagreement with a researcher’s observations, and members may object when results do not portray their group in a favourable light (Neuman, 2000).

Interviewees were invited to an interview under the broad rubric of interpersonal business interaction, without knowing details about the content of this study. During all interview sessions there was never the suspicion that a person wanted to be seen in a certain light. This impression could be confirmed based on the pre-understanding of the researcher. In fact, people were unexpectedly open with their replies, by questioning their own beliefs and assumptions, and never gave rise to the researcher assuming extenuations in their narrations.

Also, it has been made clear to the participants that the results and findings of this study will be published anonymously and only the researcher and his supervisors have access to the data in relation to their names. Therefore, it can be assumed that participants did not have specific expectations in relation to the interviews.

Triangulation

Trustworthiness can be enhanced by triangulation (Wallendorf & Belk, 1989). Triangulation of measures implies that the researcher takes multiple measures of the same phenomenon (Neuman, 2000). In this study, in-depth interviews (Arthur & Nazroo, 2003; Schneider, 2006) and follow-up semi-structured interview sessions (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Rubin & Rubin, 2005) are triangulated with self-reflective reports (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001; Sparks, 2000) based on retrospective participant observation (Denzin, 1989; Mobley, Henry, & Plemmons, 2007). It has been argued that triangulation may include (1) direct observation by the researcher, (2) probing by asking case participants and (3) analysis of natural sites occurring in case environments (Woodside, 2003).
Hence, this analysis is based on three pillars: First, in-depth interviews have been conducted based on the initial theoretical framework to find meaningful starting points to investigate behaviours and attitudes with relevance to relational marketing (section 4.4.3.2). Second, the emerging theoretical framework from the first round of interviews has been discussed in the form of follow-up sessions to provide deeper context and to increase the relevance of the findings (section 4.4.3.3). Third, subjective data based on retrospective participant observation by the researcher has been used to triangulate the findings (section 4.4.3.4). Even though autoethnographic reports are highly subjective, in this study they are based on three and half years of the researcher’s experience in the company. The researcher has been working in an interface function (as a product manager) and even though interviewees are from different departments, they have been in continuous interaction with the researcher, which enabled a purposive sampling process as outlined in the following paragraph.

**Purposive Sampling**

Interviewees from different departments have been selected to ensure a certain variety of differing viewpoints among part-time marketers. Even though the case is decided in advance, there are subsequent choices to make about persons, places, and events to observe (Stake, 2005). Sometimes it is appropriate to select the sample on the basis of one’s personal knowledge of the population, its elements, and the nature of the research aim (Babbie, 1998). The qualitative researcher usually selects cases gradually, with the specific content of a case determining whether it is chosen (Neuman, 2000).

Interviewees from different departments have been selected based on the researcher’s pre-understanding, who have been considered willing to discuss sensitive topics, such as critical and emotional interactions at the workplace. In total, nine non-management employees, seven members of the middle management and one member of the top management have been selected for in-depth interviews (17 in total). The focus of this study is not the top management level, but employees and members of the middle management, as they account for the largest part of part-time marketers within a company. The major reason for purposive sampling has been to enable access to
sensitive topics, which might come up during the interviews and are worth pursuing. The sample of this research will be further discussed in sections 4.4.3.2 (In-Depth Interviews) and 4.4.3.3 (Follow-up interviews).

**Follow-Up Interviews**

Follow-up interviews have been conducted by discussing interview content with some of the initial interviewees (Wallendorf & Belk, 1989). The follow-up sessions also had the function of a “member validation,” which occurs when a researcher takes field results back to members who judge their adequacy (Neuman, 2000). Member validations have been done in the form of semi-structured follow-up interviews to re-discuss and clarify emerging themes and to increase the relevance of emerging findings (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

In this study, data from the first interview session has been analyzed, and emerging themes have been pre-arranged. Evolving patterns have been discussed with some of the probants to reassure validity of the results from the first data collection. Quotes from the first interview sessions have been read out to interviewees to initiate further discussion and gain clarification of patterns and categories to enhance validity. The length of the sessions was similar to the first interviews (one hour). Details on interview techniques will be discussed later in this chapter (section 4.4.3).

**Dependability**

Dependability in post-positivist research is similar to the use of test-retest reliability in positivist research (Wallendorf & Belk, 1989). Replicability however, is not seen as a major criterion as field research is virtually impossible to replicate (Neuman, 2000). Multi national corporations in Western, industrialized countries are similar in many ways. In terms of organization, MNCs are usually organized in vertical hierarchies, either in relation to business units or functional responsibilities (M-form) (Gooderham & Ulset, 2002). Similar hierarchical structures, along with similar incentive systems and ways of interaction and communication can be found in many MNCs. Even though replicability is not seen as essential to this study, there is no
reason why the findings of this study cannot be applied to similar settings by other researchers (other MNCs or even smaller companies).

**Integrity**

Problems with integrity may arise when informants fear the researcher, dislike the researcher, or simply try to present themselves in more attractive ways (Wallendorf & Belk, 1989). This problem has been approached in two ways: First, the personal relationship between the researcher and the informants helped to create an atmosphere of openness. Second, the researcher introduced the topic by making clear that there is “no price to win” and that only openness during the discussion would help this study. None of the interviewees gave the impression that they were forced into making any statements, and neither did they try to put themselves in a better light.

**Time**

Time in theory building has been noted as a critical aspect to assess phenomena. Although phenomena exist in and through time, in the organizational behaviour literature, duration and rates of change are often ignored, treated implicitly, or treated explicitly, but in an inadequate manner (J. M. George & Jones, 2000). The data was gathered at a point in time when the world financial crisis (2008/2009) was just past its peak. The pre-understanding of the researcher additionally assured that reported experiences coincide with retrospective observations over a considerable time frame.

**Summarizing Trustworthiness, Authenticity and Validity**

The pre-understanding of the researcher is an essential aspect to this study. The familiarity of the researcher with the field ensures an appropriate sampling of probants, which might deliver deep and meaningful insights based on the trustworthy relationship that they have with the researcher. The pre-understanding of the researcher also ensures a deep connection with interviewees, which probably delivers more insight than could be provided by an external researcher.
The research setting does not ensure dependability. However, it can be assumed that results can be used for further research in similar settings. The structure of MNCs has a variety of similarities all over the world, such as high compartmentalization and specialization, incentive systems, hierarchies, organizational M-form, etc. (which make also part of the initial theoretical framework that is based on systems thinking and a networking perspective). As such there is a high probability that findings of this study might offer valuable insights for other companies with similar structures. Possible limitations of this study, with relevance to its methodology, will be discussed later in this chapter (section 4.6).

4.3.3.3 Credibility

Conducting ethnographic research requires spending sufficient time in a research context to develop an understanding of the phenomenon, group, or culture in broad perspective before a focus on a particular aspect or theme imbedded in that context is possible (Wallendorf & Belk, 1989). To achieve credibility, Charmaz (2005) has defined six criteria to access credibility for grounded theory. Some of these criteria are considered valuable to the credibility of this study and are summarized hereafter.

Chamaz sees it as essential that the researcher has an intimate familiarity with the setting, which has been addressed with the researcher’s pre-understanding of the research setting. Also, Chamaz reminds his reader to critically question the sufficiency of collected data, based on range, number and depth of observation. This claim has been addressed in two ways: First, the number of conducted interviews is based on saturation and empirical references (similar studies are discussed in section 4.4.3.2); and second, familiarity with participants assured a degree of depth, which could not have been realized in one available interview hour without pre-understanding.

Chamaz further claims that systematic comparisons between observations and between categories have to be made. This topic will be covered in detail in the data analysis section (section 4.4.4). He argues that strong logical links are required between the gathered data and the researcher’s argument and analysis. This aspect will be considered during the interview analysis (Chapter Five) when themes emerge,
and during the discussion of the findings in relation to existing literature (Chapter Six). Lastly, Chamaz asks whether the researcher has provided enough evidence for his claim to allow the reader to form an independent assessment, and agree with the researcher’s claim. Chapter Five, Data Analysis, is based on quotes from interviews to ensure that the reader can follow the line of argumentation.

The pre-understanding of the researcher guarantees familiarity with the organizational culture. Cultural anthropologists have proposed a minimum of one year in the field to enhance credibility (Wallendorf & Belk, 1989). It has already been noted that the researcher has been a part of the environment for more than three and a half years. Possible limitations and biases will be discussed in the following sections.

4.4 Research Execution

4.4.1 Systematic Combining
It has been briefly outlined in Chapter Three that the underlying study works with a systematic combining approach. The main characteristic of this type of research is a continuous movement between the empirical world and a theoretical framework (Dubois & Gadde, 2002). The idea of systematic combining is that the theoretical framework and empirical fieldwork evolve simultaneously. Direction and redirection of the study is an important feature in achieving a match between theory and the empirical world. During the first data analysis process, more theory in relation to emotions appeared to be essential to understanding the findings from a meaningful perspective. Hence, even though this underlying document appears as a chronological documentation of events, theory and data developed in the form of a parallel movement.

4.4.2 Empirical Research Setting
It has been briefly mentioned that the research setting consisted of two business units (one major site, one additional site) within one multi national corporation. The company is comprised of 41 factories in 13 countries. Both research settings are in Germany and included interviewees from one German factory (main site, approx.
1,000 employees) and from the German head office (additional site, approx. 2,000 employees). In 2009, the company had a turnover of 8.4 billion EUR. Including sales and customer service firms, the company is made up of 60 companies in almost 40 countries (approx. 40,000 employees) worldwide.

Overall, it can be assumed that the company follows a relational marketing perspective in the consumer goods sector. This becomes mainly evident in the company’s development towards a more sustainable overall philosophy, which goes beyond eco-sustainability but also focuses on sustainable customer satisfaction. Furthermore, the company won the German sustainability award. The relational orientation becomes apparent in the company’s activities to secure long-term satisfaction, with a focus on retaining existing customers, rather than on new customer acquisition.

Also, the company has been acknowledged as one of the best places to work, which helped ensure that the research environment was not biased from the very beginning by an emotionally negative atmosphere. The sustainability award and the award as one of the best employers to work for (related to the work climate), together with the personal positive impression of the researcher, helped ensuring that the research environment was not influencing the mood of the participants from the very beginning in a negative way.

With regards to the service discussion in Chapter Two, the research site was regarded as suitable for this research, as the offering of the company consisted of products in the first place, with services becoming more and more important. Further, the long-term perspective of the company favours a more service and relationship orientated approach.

To summarize, and following the service logic advocated by Vargo and Lusch, and Grönroos, every exchange is a service exchange. The research setting is a good example of a purely transactional focused company, which is now more and more focusing on the existing latent relationships between the company and other stakeholders. Therefore, the research site is considered an appropriate setting, as it has the external preconditions (service-orientation) and the internal prerequisites
(pleasant emotional atmosphere) to investigate the readiness for customer-conscious and sales-minded attitudes and behaviours.

4.4.3 Data Collection Procedure

The following section deals with the procedure of data collection. In-depth interviews are a classical element of ethnography. The preparation and execution of interviews is not self-explanatory and must be based on proper methodological ground. Furthermore, the researcher has been inspired by a relatively new sub discipline of ethnographic studies, namely “autoethnography” (Jones, 2005). Autoethnography challenges the discussion of objectivism vs. subjectivism and motivates the researcher to contribute personal experience and interpretation to the study. Narratives have proven helpful in covering the “auto” part of autoethnography (Sparks, 2000). Narratives have also been applied to management research and are not new in social sciences (Llewellyn, 1999).

Retrospective participant observation (M. Blumer, 1982; Friedman, 1990; Mobley, et al., 2007) is based on pre-understanding and allows the researcher to reflect on personal experiences upon a time, when he was part of the research environment, without being aware that this environment would also be a research environment. Hereafter, pros and cons, especially of autoethnography, pre-understanding and retrospective participant observation, are discussed in depth.

4.4.3.1 Ethnography

Ethnography and Philosophy

Ethnography follows the post-modern, interpretative tradition. It deals with the capturing and interpretation of lived experience and is concerned with meaning (ontology) and experience instead of method (epistemology) and abstract, analytic principles (Denzin, 1989). Originated in anthropology, ethnography, at its core, is a method for learning about human cultures (Kelly & Gibbons, 2008). MNCs are such cultures/organizations.
It is not about capturing an informant’s words alone, which leaves out much of the human experience. Instead, ethnography wishes to capture much more of the human experience (Arnould & Price, 2006). Ethnography aims to explicate patterns of action that are cultural and/or social, rather than cognitive (Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994). Ethnography, as a comprehensive picture of processes, examines the dynamics between individuals and institutions to understand how systems work (Schneider, 2006).

**Qualification as Ethnographic Research**

Even though this study has been conducted in one company, it is not seen as a single case study. Case studies and ethnographies are similar in many ways, as case studies also combine collection methods such as interviews and participant observation (Eisenhardt, 1989; Woodside, 2003). However, interviews and analysis were focused on the part-time marketers within an organizational setting of a multi national corporation, while personal attitudes and behaviours in interpersonal interaction are of primary interest, more so than the actual company setting, which can be found in many other MNCs.

This study focuses on the part-time marketer in large scale multi national corporations, and the interview discussions were not in reference to the company in particular, but to interpersonal interactions in large organizations, which are similarly organized (e.g. hierarchies, procedures). Hence, the study was about interaction and communication between PTMs in MNCs in general, while firm-specific aspects have not been considered to the degree that it would justify this research to be a case study.

**Ethnographic Interviews**

Ethnography involves talking to people and observing their behaviours and activities in their natural settings. Arnould and Price (2006) introduce an ethnographic conceptualization by introducing macro, meso and micro-level ethnography. The difference between meso-level and micro-level ethnography is a more holistic tracking in a cultural field, which includes associated social networks in meso-level
ethnography, rather than focusing on the needs or tasks of a single person. A meso-
level ethnography supports this research, as it focuses on the individual and his or her
perspective towards the interpersonal network through interaction and communication.

**Participant Observation**

Whitehill (2007) introduces different types of ethnographic participant observation,
namely: (1) complete observation, (2) observer as participant, (3) participant as
observer and (4) complete participant. As an “alumnus” of the multi national
corporation and the research site in particular, the researcher is retrospectively
considered as a “complete participant”. During his active product manager duty he
shared the same social reality with his colleagues and learned about it through
extended experience. Retrospective participant observation, as a part of ethnographic
studies, will be discussed in more detail.

**4.4.3.2 In-Depth Interviews**

**Background**

Verbal reports are the second major form of data, besides participant observation,
employed by ethnographers (Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994). Symbolic interactionists
rely on qualitative research techniques that enable the researcher to observe actual
social interaction (Flint, 2006). Flint states that in-depth interviews facilitate access to
actors’ interpretations and intentions as they reflect on recent social interaction.

Unstructured in-depth interviews were considered the most suitable form of data
collection for this study as they were expected to result in deep and meaningful
insights. The initial theoretical framework of this study and the research problem
(accessing individual perspectives on interpersonal interaction) favour in-depth
interviews compared to more positivistic research methods.
**Preparation**

There is no such thing as an efficient number of conducted interviews. The conducted number of interviews should be done according to some kind of saturation that arises during the study: “The sample selection should provide sufficient coverage to understand the processes and issues raised in the research question.” (Schneider, 2006, p. 418).

The saturation indication is reached at the point when emerging themes seem to be confirmed in subsequent interviews. (Retrospective) Participant observation indicates who might be important to talk with (Schneider, 2006). Strong empirical evidence is neither necessary nor sufficient for the successful dissemination of a theory (Peter & Olson, 1983).

Despite the details regarding saturation of data, preceding studies have been reviewed to determine a sufficient number of interviews, which most probably lead to saturation. Also, literature has been reviewed as a frame of reference for the length of interview sessions. In the following section, the structure of the interviews is outlined in more detail.

**Interview Setup**

Similar research projects aimed at conducting around 15 to 20 interviews. Ruth, Otnes and Brunel (1999) for example apply semi-structured in-depth interviews. They conducted 16 interviews, each of a length of 45 to 90 minutes. Similarly, Oliva and Kallenberg (2003) conducted semi-structured interviews that lasted between 60 and 90 minutes based on grounded research practices. In hermeneutics, interviews are indicated with around one to two hours. 10 to 20 interviews are usually sufficient (Wilson & Hutchinson, 1991). Twenty conducted interviews, as an indication, have also been mentioned by Brodie, Glynn and Little (2006). Only Kelly and Gibbons (2008) recommend 30 interviews.

The main reason to choose an interview length between 45 and 60 minutes is related to the circumstances that are found in most industrial settings. Managers and employees are usually short of time and appointments for more than one hour are
difficult to schedule. In total, 17 interviews have been conducted (9 non-management employees, 7 members of the middle management and 1 top manager).

The idea of “grand-tour questions” was adapted to this study in order to initiate a broad conversation with the participants of this study (Ruth, et al., 1999). The main topic for the interviews was interaction. Interviewees were asked to talk about interaction in general, and interpersonal interactions in particular. During the interview, and dependent on the direction the interviewee chose, questions were asked to deepen those comments, which seemed to be relevant to the initial theoretical framework. Interviewees were asked to report about good and bad interactions, and to give examples of some significant interactions in the business environment.

Also, participants were asked to talk about sustainability. First, the participants were asked to talk about sustainability in general. Most of the interviewees intuitively related sustainability to interactions and, hence, deepened the discussion about interpersonal interactions (catalyst function). In case the interviewees did not relate sustainability to interactions, questions have been asked such as: “Does a sustainable interaction between part-time marketers exist and, if yes, how would you describe it?” This had a probing effect, as participants deepened their thoughts on interpersonal interactions.

**Execution**

During the interviews, some of the guidelines used were provided by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009):

1. Give your whole attention to the person involved, and make it evident that you are doing so.
2. Listen --- don't talk
3. Never argue; never give advice
4. Listen to:
   (a) What he wants to say
   (b) What he does not want to say
   (c) What he cannot say without help

5. As you listen, plot out tentatively and for subsequent correction the pattern (personal) that is being set before you. To test this, from time to time summarize what has been said and present it for comment (e.g. "Is this what you are telling me?"). Always do this with the greatest caution, that is, clarify in ways that do not add or distort.

6. Remember that everything that has been said is a personal confidence and must never be divulged to anyone.

(p. 45)

Point number 5 has been considered in the form of follow-up interview sessions (see next section). Once patterns were more clearly visible and can be verified with interviewees (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). A rough interview guide was prepared, which contained rather broad headwords in case the interviews got stuck. It contained questions such as: “Please describe a significant interaction that has occurred to you lately” and “Why was this interaction significant to you?” However, the focus was mainly on the comments arising from the perspective of the participants in the understanding why they play an essential role in their understanding when it comes to interpersonal interaction.

Also, the first round of the interviews took place in regular meeting facilities inside the company. The reason for the choice of the facilities was to create a work-like atmosphere, as participants were asked to comment on work-related experiences regarding interaction and communication. The follow-up sessions, on the other hand, were held at a time after work in a more pleasant and distant (to work) environment, as interviewees were given the chance to reflect on some of the statements made during the first round.
**Interview Sample**

The average age of the interviewed participants was around 37 years. 16 of the 17 interviewees were either non-management members or members of middle management (largest share of part-time marketers in a company). The average time the participants spent in the company is roughly 8 years. Among the 17 interviewees were purchasers, project leaders, marketing managers, product managers, quality managers and administrators. 5 of the 17 interviewees were female participants. It was the aim of the sample process to have a mix of interviewees throughout the company, as all of them are supposed to assume part-time marketing duties. Furthermore, interviewees have been selected based on their accessibility to discuss sensitive topics (personal judgement by the researcher, see also section 4.3.3.2 Trustworthiness, Authenticity and Validity – Purposive Sampling).

The personal relationship between the researcher and the participants was considered the most important aspect to gain depth and detail in research as outlined throughout this chapter. Furthermore, the participants stayed long enough with the company to be familiar with the environment and to share a socially constructed reality inside the company. Also, to emphasize the external marketing aspect, most of the participants have regular contacts with part-time marketers from other companies and customers.

Figure 4.2 presents a more detailed view of the participants in this study. From this overview can be noted that almost every participant has contact with other part-time marketers from inside and outside the company. Also, figure 4.2 outlines the approximate age and affiliation with the company, and indicates the participants who took part in the second round of the interviews.
Figure 4.2 Study Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Internal and external contacts</th>
<th>Management</th>
<th>Age &amp; years in the company</th>
<th>Second interview round</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Prod. manager OEM</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>35/1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Product manager OEM</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>30/3</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Head of organization and processes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>45/20</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Head of quality management OEM</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>28/6</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Product Manager</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>32/4</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Quality Manager OEM</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>30/6</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Administration for product managers</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>27/7</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Head of research and development</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Top</td>
<td>50/10</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Head of innovation development</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>40/15</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Developer</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>40/15</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Head of Laboratory</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>50/30</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Marketing Manager</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>30/6</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Marketing Manager</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>40/10</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Purchaser</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>32/5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Marketing Manager</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>50/20</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Marketing Manager</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>33/6</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Product Manager OEM</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>35/8</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4.3.3 Follow-Up Interviews

Background

Follow-up interview sessions have been conducted based on the findings of the first round of interviews. Emerging themes from the first interview sessions were analyzed to further enhance the theoretical framework (which is based on Chapter Two). Follow-up sessions were conducted in a semi-structured manner to reinforce the emerging themes of this study and to increase the relevance of the findings.

The outcome of the first interviews is a perspective towards interpersonal interactions held by the participants, which is comprised of a variety of emerging themes. The themes emerged rather intuitively, as interviews were conducted in an unstructured manner and under broad rubrics (interviewees were asked to narrate about interaction). Even though themes can be assessed separately, they contribute to this
study only from a holistic perspective (interconnectedness of themes), which is outlined in Chapter Five (Analysis and Findings).

**Execution of Follow-up Interviews**

The follow-up interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner. The main finding of the first interview session can be summarized as a paradigmatic understanding of emotions, in relation to interpersonal interactions, which is rather embedded (not explicit) in the perspective of the participants. For example, one interviewee said:

“In the moment when somebody attacks you (verbally), you are not going to say: “Well, okay, let’s stay calm and talk about it,” but you automatically yell back.”

(Interviewee 2, Atlas.ti, paragraph 48).

It is assumed that the term “automatically” implies that this interviewee does not perceive other reactions, except the described one, as possible (paradigmatic perspective). However, instead of asking this interviewee in the follow-up session a question such as: “So would you say that your emotion is an unavoidable reaction to your experience?” To confirm this assumption, participants have been asked to describe the role of emotions in interpersonal interactions in more detail. Hence, while the findings during the first interview session evolved rather intuitive-implicitly, the follow-up interviews addressed some of the themes more explicitly, without taking them out of the context of interpersonal interactions.

Rigidly structured interviews or questionnaires have been rejected in the scepticism that specific statements are perceived out of context. For example, and in relation to emotions, interviewees were asked to talk about the nature of their emotions instead of asking the question: “Do you think that you can control your emotions? Yes or no?” It seems more accurate to triangulate an answer from a holistic perspective of the participants towards emotions, rather than setting up a yes or no question. As has been highlighted, the second round of interviews took place in restaurant facilities outside the company, to create a more favourable atmosphere for reflection.
**Sampling**

Interviewees for the second interview round have been selected based on the accessibility of interviewees in relation to sensitive topics (such as emotions in interpersonal interactions, based on the researcher’s judgment). This time only part-time marketers have been interviewed (no full-time marketers), as they account for the largest part of marketers in the company and because marketing is not their first purpose (even though an essential purpose, as has been outlined). In total, six interviewees were selected for the follow-up interviews. The follow-up interview sessions consisted of three non-management members, two members of middle management and one member of top management.

4.4.3.4 **Autoethnography and Retrospective Participant Observation**

**Background**

Autoethnography is a newly arising qualitative research method (Jones, 2005; Pelias, 2003; Wall, 2008):

The autobiographical sociologist starts introspectively and inwardly from his/her own experiences, and works outward to larger and broader points of discussion and interpretation. It is the opposite direction of most sociological efforts, which start (and stay) broad, remain shallow, and are highly impersonal, that is, bout nameless and faceless respondents, subjects, or actors. Approaches from both directional extremes are needed for a fuller grasp of and perspective on most aspects of social life, but the autobiographical extreme is much less explored and developed as a valuable method than its opposite. (Friedman, 1990, p. 64)

A cornerstone of ethnographic research is participant observation (Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994; Schneider, 2006). Operation data includes spontaneous conversations of participants and activities engaged in and observed by the researcher (Woodside, 2003). It is ethnography’s distinctive research method, which privileges the body as a site of knowing (Conquergood, 1991). Doing ethnographic participant
observation in a multinational corporation is not easy. Having access to key meetings or real-life negotiations is often impossible, especially when top management attention is present. Also, in this case, pre-understanding of the company environment is an essential advantage and the biggest threat for the researcher at the same time.

It has been argued that academics, similar to tourists, often only manage to go to the surface of any area of inquiry that they pursue, in part, because of the nature of what constitutes full understanding and, in part, because of the habits of academic life (Pelias, 2003). Pre-understanding allows the researcher to comprehend the company from the inside out as he develops rapport with the employees. The quality of participant observation is not based on the number of hours in the field, but on the regular observation of a setting over time (Schneider, 2006).

Autoethnography is an emerging qualitative research method that allows writing in a highly personalized style and drawing on experience to extend understanding about a social phenomenon (Wall, 2008). Autoethnography allows an individual to use himself to get to the culture (Pelias, 2003). Authors use their own experiences in a culture reflexively to look more deeply at self-other interactions (Holt, 2003). Autoethnography gives the researcher of this study the opportunity to use his knowledge, or pre-understanding, of the research setting.

Other scholars have used retrospective participant observation to conduct research. Mobley, Henry and Plemmons (2007) used retrospective participant observation to suggest weaknesses in the existing systems they research. It has been argued that the research community is comfortable with the concept of self-reflexivity (Wall, 2008). After World War II, a number of sociologists wrote studies on units in the armed forces, based on their own experience of war-time service (M. Blumer, 1982). Friedman (1990) utilizes retrospective participant observation as part of ethnographic research to emphasize the researcher’s own personal experiences. Friedman further argues that much more participant observation has been prospective, but a limited account has been retrospective. He concludes:

Expressed more broadly, retrospective participant observation constitutes an autobiographical sociology, whereby the sociologist probes one or more past
personal experiences as a way of identifying and analyzing something sociologically relevant. (p. 61)

Autobiographical sociology requires that the researchers introspectively recollect, reconstruct and interpret the past phenomenon or process they were involved in (Friedman, 1990). The obvious subjectivity of autoethnography needs to be taken seriously and is discussed in the next section.

**Critical Discussion and Possible Biases of Autoethnography**

The potential bias of pre-understanding and autoethnography are possible, mainly because they are so individual and, hence, subjective. It has been argued that one built-in dilemma of autobiographical sociology is that the reader will sometimes perceive a report to be trivial or insignificant, and thinks “so what?” or “who cares?” (Friedman, 1990). Friedman continues that this must be understood and tolerated by the autobiographical sociologist in the hope that, overall, the sociologically useful outcomes of such endeavours will outweigh the useless ones.

The researcher must attempt to reconstruct and interpret the sociologically relevant past experiences as clearly, accurately, cautiously and judiciously as possible, as they might become subject to fictional literary creation and self-invention (Friedman, 1990). To minimize bias and to be more systematic with upcoming considerations, Friedman offers three broad questions, which should be answered:

1) What happened to me and why did it happen?
2) In what ways was my experience similar to and different from others involved?
3) What is the larger sociological significance of the experience?

(p. 62)

It has been argued that emotional detachment and adherence to one particular methodology stymie the development of critical knowledge (Lerum, 2001). Inquiries that connect with real people have been seen as “soft and fluffy” (Wall, 2008). However, Wall continues that this façade of objectivity and freedom has been broken
down by further developing qualitative methods as a whole. In a very contradictory way, ethnographers go to great lengths to become cotemporal with others during fieldwork but, then, deny in writing that these others with whom they lived are their contemporaries (Conquergood, 1991). Based on this contradiction, autoethnography has been characterized as more of a help than a threat in relation to this research.

Moreover, ethnographic texts should display the agonies, the pains, the successes and the deeply felt human emotions of love, dignity, pride, honour, and respect (Denzin, 1989). The problem of objectivity versus subjectivity in qualitative research has been subject to numerous academic discussions (Gummesson, 2000b; Hunt, 1992; Kjell & Olov, 1999; Schneider, 2006; Seale, 1999). There is a movement in social research toward personalized research, which reflects the call to place greater emphasis on the ways in which the ethnographer interacts with the culture being researched (Holt, 2003).

Objectivity assumes independence between knower and known, which naturalistic inquiry takes as impossible (Wallendorf & Belk, 1989). It has been argued that emotional engagement with informants is transformative for researchers and their conclusions (Lerum, 2001). It has also been noted that ethnographers must speak to the world and it must be more than an ethnographic record of human experience (Denzin, 1989). Researchers have to make a choice:

To have values or not to have values: the question is always with us. When sociologists undertake to study problems that have relevance to the world we live in, they find themselves caught in a crossfire. Some urge them not to take sides, to be neutral and do research that is technically correct and value free. Others tell them their work is shallow and useless if it does not express a deep commitment to a value position. (Becker, 1967, p. 239)

It has been argued that objectivism is often based on emotionally detached ideology and that this stance serves to protect the power and privilege of observers (Lerum, 2001). Pre-understanding and retrospective participant observation are key resources to access deep understanding, which is considered essential in dealing with individual perspectives. Retrospective participant observation based on pre-understanding
helped the researcher to guide the discussion and assured a proper classification and integration of interview outcomes into a meaningful context.

Autobiographical sociology (which includes autoethnography) is most individualistic (though not necessarily psychologically reductionist in its specific data, findings, or interpretations). Its approach is deep and stresses the importance of the individual person, recognizing the potential and value of personal experiences (Friedman, 1990). Autoethnographic writings all begin with the researchers’ use of the subjective self (Wall, 2008). Subjectivity can strengthen rather than invalidate an objective stance. This, in turn, can enable researchers to produce knowledge that is both self-reflexive and able to provide critical and structural analysis (Lerum, 2001): “The idea of the person shifts from that of a fixed, autonomous self to a polysemic site of articulation for multiple identities and voices.” (Conquergood, 1991, p. 180).

Barriers to an acceptance of autoethnography include lack of systematicity and methodological rigor (Wall, 2008). It has been argued that linguistic and textualist bias of speech communication has blinded many scholars to the pre-eminently rhetorical nature of cultural performance. It is not just in non-Western cultures, but in many “modern” communities that cultural performance functions as a special form of public address (Conquergood, 1991).

A major advantage of retrospective participant observation is that it is a good alternative to covert participant observation. It has been noted that retrospective participant observation is under consideration to extend the debate of ethical and practical merits in disguised, secret, or covert participant observation (M. Blumer, 1982). Blumer further argues that in retrospective participant observation, the observer is completely immersed in the setting which he or she is studying, but has not yet developed a research interest in it. Hence, no deception of those studied was involved and no breach of informed consent occurred. Blumer concludes: “If poetry is ‘emotion recollected in tranquillity,’ one mode of participant observation might be described as “experience recollection in academia.” (p. 254).

Finally, autoethnography is and will always be subject to critiques. Therefore, researchers are well advised to be persistent in their autoethnographic intentions and be prepared to face rejection and critiques of their chosen genre; resilience and
conviction are essential in the pursuit of this methodology (Holt, 2003). It is argued that to insure validity, subjective autoethnographic retrospective participant observation must be triangulated with inter-subjective methods such as interviews.

In summary, autoethnography is a highly subjective approach to data, which relies on the researcher as one data source. However, this source is considered essential in accessing deep understandings and is triangulated with more inter-subjective data (17 in-depth interviews and 6 follow-up interviews). Hence, despite the afore mentioned criticism, it is argued that the advantages of closeness to the phenomenon outweigh the possible bias.

**Retrospective Participant Observation and Data Analysis**

Retrospective participant observation (autoethnography) can be found in the form of narratives and comments related to emerging themes during the interview analysis (particularly at the end of emerging themes). The researcher triangulates and evaluates data emerging from the interviews by introducing his viewpoint based on past experiences with the interviewees and insides into the research site. He also puts his autoethnographic comments in a meaningful context with the data in relation to the theoretical framework of this study. The pros and cons of retrospective participant observation have been elaborated throughout the section on autoethnography.

**4.4.3.5 Data Triangulation and Summary**

As has been briefly mentioned in relation to the validity of this research, the data collection consists of three different stages (data triangulation):

1. In-depth interviews have been conducted to identify emerging themes relevant to answering the research question. Interviews have been conducted in an open and unstructured manner, to give the interviewee the chance to guide the direction of the interviews.

2. Follow-up interview sessions have been conducted to increase the relevance of emerging data from the first interview sessions. This time, interviews have been
semi-structured, based on emerging themes from the first interview session. Follow-up sessions have also been used for member validation.

(3) Autoethnography based on retrospective participant observation aimed at confirming or disconfirming the emerging interview themes in relation to the experience of the researcher. Retrospective participant observation based on pre-understanding also helped in making meaningful conclusions with relevance to the comments made by interviewees. Figure 4.3 illustrates the data triangulation.

Figure 4.3 Data Triangulation

4.4.4 Data Analysis Procedure

4.4.4.1 Execution of Data Analysis
To facilitate the analysis process, interviews are usually tape recorded and transcribed for analysis (Schneider, 2006). In the manner of an ethnographic researcher, data will first be transcribed and read thoroughly and some paragraphs that appear important
will be selected for analysis (Venkatesh, 2008). The researcher of this study has done the transcription personally in order to get closer to the data and he has abstained from using external help for transcription.

The researcher has also been called a “detective,” as he is looking for trends and patterns that occur across the various groups or within individuals (Venkatesh, 2008). Hermeneutic circles have been described as an effective method in identifying emerging patterns. To start with, the question has to be raised what categories are, and what role they play in analytic processes. It has been argued that categories usually emerge from a close engagement with data and lead to a higher level of abstraction through constant comparison (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007).

After the execution of the interviews, data has been sorted in appropriate groups to compare them and to look for patterns and connections (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). After initial interpretations, the researcher rechecks the data and modifies it if necessary (Foddy, 1993). To support this process, the computer software Atlas.ti has been used for data analysis. It has been argued that software allows the researcher to quickly regroup interview data, enhancing the ability to link concepts and themes, refine them and locate evidence (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). However, a software cannot “analyse” data. Rather, it is a mere support to arrange data and put it in a clear format. Hence, computer software did not serve for “data analysis” per se, but helped to organize and group results.

Insights from three rather similar and complementing doctrines have been considered to support proper data analysis: (1) Hermeneutics deal with the meaning of data, reading social reality as a system of signs. (2) Symbolic interactionism, which includes hermeneutics, supports the ethnographic approach and also deals with the meanings of signs. (3) Finally, a phenomenological attitude has been adopted to approach the data as openly as possible without more pre-assumptions then necessary and to be “prepared” for unexpected, but meaningful findings. All three doctrines are outlined in figure 4.4 and their influence on the data analysis will be discussed in the following sections.
### 4.4.4.2 Hermeneutics

#### Hermeneutics as a Methodology

Interpretive social science is related to hermeneutics, a theory of meaning that originated in the nineteenth century. (Neuman, 2000, p. 70)

Hermeneutics, as a methodology, is based on the assumption that social reality has to be understood by reading it as a system of signs (Noorderhaven, 2004). Methods of literary interpretation (hermeneutics) are now used to interpret and read cultures as social texts (Denzin, 1989). Consequently, hermeneutics offer a solid basis for in-depth data analysis, especially in the realm of interaction, which consists of signs and relies on the sense-making ability of the method. Hermeneutics emphasize a detailed reading or examination of text, which could refer to a conversation, written words, or

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hermeneutics</th>
<th>Symbolic Interactionsim</th>
<th>Phenomenology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go in Circles to Understand Emerging Themes</td>
<td>Understand Meaning</td>
<td>Be open for the Unexpected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Why?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading and understanding data in circles to modify and synergize topics and codes that emerge during the process of data analysis.</td>
<td>What do individuals refer to e.g. when they say &quot;difficult interaction&quot;. Meaning is often related to the socially constructed environment of MNCs.</td>
<td>Analyzing the interviews, the researcher has to be as open as possible towards emerging data. Data that seems irrelevant to the initial theory, might however contain meaningful insights.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
pictures (Neuman, 2000). Herein, pre-understanding of the environment seems to be essential:

The social nature of the process of sense-making underscores the additional difficulties encountered by an outsider trying to make sense of a social reality that is exterior to him or her (...) Interaction processes in (international) business can only be understood if we carefully ‘read’ the meanings produced, communicated and negotiated by the practitioners involved in these processes. (Noorderhaven, 2004, p. 88)

Hermeneutics in Organizations

In philosophical hermeneutics, the problem of bridging the distance between the interpreting subject and the phenomena interpreted is given a central position. (Noorderhaven, 2004, p. 85)

This section summarizes the chapter “Hermeneutic Methodology and International Business Research” taken from “The Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods for International Business” (Noorderhaven, 2004):

Interpretation is perceived as an act of understanding in which phenomena are taken to be signs referring to a meaning. What a social phenomena is depends on what it means to the members of a social group, and this social nature of the interpretation and enactment process puts limits on the recreation of meaning. Social phenomena are in general equivocal and can be interpreted in many different ways. This creates an uncertainty that people in organizations have to cope with, and creates an even larger uncertainty for researchers of organizations, who are usually outsiders of the organizational reality they study.

In the world of signs, there is not transcendent reality ordered in a particular way; actors have to make their own order. Organizational phenomena are
bound to be interpreted by the people around them as signs. This is important because the meaning one attributes to an organizational phenomenon has a bearing on one’s behaviour. Organizational phenomena can be interpreted in many different ways, because there is no distinct link between the sign and its meaning; this creates an uncertainty that people in and around organizations will have to cope with, and it creates even larger uncertainty for researchers as they are usually considered as outsiders to the organization reality.

**Hermeneutics as a means of data analysis**

In the hermeneutic circle, the interpreter moves from an understanding of single elements to an understanding of the whole. In interpreting texts, the elements are the individual words which, alongside their general meaning, have a specific meaning within the text. The meaning within the text can only be understood by looking at the context, but the meaning of the context, of course, can only be grasped with reference to the meaning of the words out of which it consists. (Noorderhaven, 2004, p. 89)

The hermeneutic circle (Dreyfus, 1980; Gummesson, 2000b; Korthagen, 2005; Ring & Van De Ven, 1994) is considered to be a key aspect in analyzing qualitative interview data. During this process, the researcher tries to absorb or get inside the viewpoint it presents as a whole, and then develops a deep understanding of how its parts relate to the whole (Neuman, 2000). The hermeneutic circle describes a constant re-reading of qualitative data, or interviews, to refine, synergize and modify data:

Interpretation, in the sense relevant to hermeneutics, is an attempt to make clear, to make sense of an object of study. This object must, therefore, be a text, or a text analogue, which in some way is confused, incomplete, cloudy, seemingly contradictory – in one way or another, unclear. The interpretation aims to bring to light an underlying coherence or sense. (Taylor, 1971, p. 3)
It has been argued that the interpretation of phenomena as signs is only possible in a dialogue between the worldview of the self and the worldview on which the object to be interpreted is based (Noorderhaven, 2004). It was noted earlier in this study, that the worldview of the researcher is based on a constructivist reality, which is related to an interconnected network understanding of the world in general, and of business and marketing in the more specific.

**Hermeneutics: A Summary**

Hermeneutic circles are about understanding the relationship between the data as a set, or a whole, and individual statements (parts and quotes) within the data. Data will be analyzed in circles until meaningful patterns originate and quotes can be related to emerging themes. The next section further discusses the meaning of emerging data based on symbolic interactionism.

**4.4.4.3 Implications from Symbolic Interactionism**

A symbol is meaningless without knowing the larger context. (Kelly & Gibbons, 2008, p. 281)

An interpretive approach, such as the constructivist one, is associated with the symbolic interactionist (Neuman, 2000). Beyond that, the ethnographic approach is informed by symbolic interactionism (Tan & Hall, 2007). According to Blumer (1969), human society consists of people engaging in action. Mead (1934) argues that mind arises through communication by a conversation of gestures in a social process or context of experience, not communication through minds.

The symbolic interactionist holds a constructivist view of the human actor. The individual is seen as a creator and active interpreter of social reality and the self (Flint, 2006). Flint continues that symbolic interactionists are not passive and do not simply react to an external environment. He notes that symbolic interactionism
requires a conscious mindset in order to interpret symbolic communication in interactions by taking the roles of other actors, forming one’s own responses (response-ability) and predicting reactions from other actors to one’s own communication.

As an example, management also becomes much less concerned with the imperatives of control, and more with meaning and symbolic behaviour, which reflects shifts to networks (T. Clarke & Clegg, 2000). The knowledge of organizations is fundamentally shaped by the subjective worldviews through which individuals can perceive data (Astley, 1985). (Inter-) Subjectivity is a consequence of a socially constructed reality in organizations. As such, a symbolic interactionist view supports this research and favours the pre-understanding of the researcher, which helps in identifying symbols.

An ecocentric view implies that humans are both ontologically and phylogenetically unseparated from the rest of the nature. In reacting to technocentrism, ecocentrists hold a worldview that is holistic, integrative, and less arrogantly anthropocentric (Gladwin, Kennelly, et al., 1995). However, the result of a market-oriented worldview has been the ontological and epistemological separation of the two main actors: marketers and consumers (Penaloza & Venkatesh, 2006). Symbolic interactionism is considered essential in this study to access current worldviews of part-time marketers in understanding how they perceive interpersonal interactions. It is expected that individuals use symbols in relation to their socially constructed reality, which are important to interpret.

Within marketing theory, positivists have most typically emphasized exchange value, while interpretivists emphasize use value (Penaloza & Venkatesh, 2006). The positivist vision in social research has been described as a world that is independent of local human concerns (Seale, 1999) and thus delivers a fragmented view of reality. Interpretive methodologies on the other hand, such as symbolic interactionism, focus primarily on understanding and accounting for the meaning of human experiences and action (Fossey, Harvey, & Davidson, 2002).
In this study, implications taken from the theory of symbolic interactionism are essential to helping the researcher understand meaning during the analysis process of the interviews and even throughout the interviews to follow possible leads.

4.4.4.4 Insights from Phenomenology

Philosophy-wisdom is the philosophizer’s quite personal affair. It must arise in his wisdom, as his self-acquired knowledge tending toward universality, a knowledge from which he can answer from the beginning, and at each step, by virtue of his own absolute insights (…) And so we make a new beginning, each for himself and in himself, with the decision of philosophers who begin radically: that at first we shall put out of action all the convictions we have been accepting up to now, including all our sciences. (Husserl, 1999, p. 2ff)

Phenomenology is based on a transcendental philosophy. Approaching a study phenomenologically implies putting preconceptions aside and perceiving phenomena as unbiased, or as unbiased as possible. This does not necessarily exclude an a priori socially constructed reality, such as is found in businesses and organizations. This research does not aim at analyzing or understanding organizations and how they emerge. However, based on a given socially constructed reality, interactions have been accessed with a phenomenological attitude:

To reach the phenomenological standpoint, and through reflexion to fix its distinctive character, and that also of the natural viewpoints, in a scientific way, this is the first and by no means easy task which we must carry out in full, if we would gain the ground of phenomenology and grasp its distinctive nature scientifically. (Husserl, 1931, p. 41)

It has been stated that a fundamental position of phenomenology is that it presupposes nothing, not even the concept of philosophy (Husserl, 1931). Phenomenology thus helps to understand a concept or phenomenon from scratch
Creswell further argues that within the phenomenology paradigm, a researcher relies on intuition and imagination to obtain a picture of the experience. It has been noted elsewhere in this thesis that it is not easy to break free from existing mental models. It is argued that phenomenology is an essential aspect in this study to determine possible starting points for a detailed understanding of interpersonal interactions with relevance to behavioural and attitudinal implications based on a relational marketing perspective.

Especially the internal aspect of marketing has remained largely unchanged. Gary Hamel (2008) asked the question of why management as a social technology has remained unchanged, while academic advocates came up with so many new concepts over the past 50 years. It is argued that the predominant rational management paradigm is ingrained in the current social society and approaches like phenomenology are essential to break free from them:

That we should set aside all previous habits of thought, see through and break down the mental barriers which these habits have set along the horizons of our thinking, and in full intellectual freedom proceed to lay hold on those genuine philosophical problems still awaiting completely fresh formulation which the liberated horizons on all sides disclose to us – these are hard demands. Yet nothing less is required. (Husserl, 1931, p. 43)

Phenomenology is intended by Husserl to be a theory of essential Being, dealing with transcendentally reduced phenomena. Phenomenological science makes things become manifest as they show themselves without forcing individual categories on them (Bortoft, 1996).

The aim of this study is to investigate the phenomenon of the relationship between relational marketing based on networks and systems, and behaviours and attitudes in interpersonal interactions between part-time marketers. A phenomenological attitude during data collection (interviews) and data analysis is considered helpful in being open to emerging insights without being restricted to preconceptions. Phenomenology has bee described as a complex system of ideas (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005b) where human consciousness actively constitutes objects of experience (Holstein & Gubrium, 2005). A phenomenological study describes the meaning of the
lived experiences of several individuals about a concept or the phenomenon (Creswell, 1998). Creswell further continues:

> Researchers search for the essential invariant structure (or essence) or the central underlying meaning of the experience and emphasize the intentionality of consciousness where experiences contain both the outward appearance and inward consciousness based on memory, image and meaning. (p. 52)

An identical fact can be expressed in a manifold of ways (Sokolowski, 2000). Sokolowski also notes the idea of “present” and “absent” in relation to phenomenology. He argues that there are many human dispositions or emotions that cannot be understood except as responses to a given absence. The idea of the absent might play an important role in assessing symbolic descriptions of part-time marketers.

It has been pointed out that scholars have noted a relationship of business/marketing and mind (worldview). Some speak of yin and yang, some of market-mindfulness, sales-mindedness and customer-consciousness. Others mention the necessity of a change of mindset in order to adapt to a more service-oriented marketing. To understand how worldviews can be conceptualized in the most meaningful way, this study is approached with a phenomenological attitude to be perceptive and sympathetic to every possible direction, which might lead to essential insights.

### 4.4.4.5 Data Analysis - Summary

The data analysis procedure does not only support a qualitative approach to data, it is also in line with the researcher’s paradigm (interpretivism/constructivism) and the idea of depth and detail in research, which has been noted earlier as essential to this study. Figure 4.5 summarizes the three approaches to data, which have been mentioned in this section. While symbolic interactionism and phenomenology are applied as “lenses” or “perspectives” to approach data, hermeneutic circles characterize the actual process of reviewing the data.
4.5 Theory Construction

4.5.1 What Constitutes a Theory?

Constructivist theory has been described as substantive-formal and relies on quality criteria such as trustworthiness, credibility, transferability and conformability (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005a). For theory construction, it is usually considered important that the study is not limited to one case, but offers enough ground to be valid in other, similar environments:

The methodical effort of the scientists distinguishes itself through the fact not to explain single phenomena in isolation, but to look for common principles which give us a causal explanation for the relation of further spectra of observed phenomena. (Wallacher, 2009, p. 438)

It has been noted earlier that this study is considered an ethnographic study, not a case study in the classical sense. In the underlying study, individuals are “considered” cases, as the aim is to show that individuals share common perspectives in an assumingly “standardized” Western-type organization. A multiple case study in the classical sense would require more than one organizational location in order to show similar occurrences throughout the locations (either a multiple case study with different companies or an embedded case, which includes e.g. more than one business
unit). It is assumed, however, that Western industrialized multi national corporations offer similar organizational settings, which do not necessarily allow generalizations, but do allow assumptions, which build the basis for more research in similar research settings. Hence, the individual is the “case,” based on whom generalizations will not be made, but theory extensions will be proposed.

Theory has been described as connections between phenomena, which creates a story about why acts, events, structure and thoughts occur. It has been said that a theory is not merely references, data, variables, diagrams and hypotheses (Sutton & Staw, 1995). Traditionally, authors have developed theory by combining observations from previous literature, common sense, and experience (Eisenhardt, 1989). It has also been argued that theory is about finding a set of factors and understanding how they are related (Whetten, 1989). A successful theory has been described as one that is treated seriously and studied by a significant portion of the research community (Peter & Olson, 1983). This consequently underlines the aim of this study to not make generalized assumptions, but to initiate a wider discussion regarding behaviours and attitudes among employees with relevance to marketing.

The philosophy of science complicates discussions of formal theory in sociology (Freese, 1980). The question within the area of social sciences remains: What is a theory? Discovering truth has been described as a matter of creatively incorporating events into theories to make sense of them (Astley, 1985). Bohm (1980) explains a theory as looking at the world as a whole (i.e. a worldview) rather than as absolutely true knowledge of how things are.

From that standpoint, every theory is primarily subjective. It is, first of all, a question of external validity where a domain is established in which a study’s findings can be generalized (Yin, 2003). Finally, it is the issue of inter-subjective agreement of reality. However, theories and models should be grounded in real-world observations rather than be governed by established deductive research (Gummesson, 2000b). Yin’s concern has been addressed by relating findings to the domain of internal marketing, while Gummesson’s request has been considered in the form of a phenomenological approach to data. Even though this study does not aim at making generalizations, it is argued that it expresses an understanding of interpersonal
interactions, which is a general characteristic of Western industrialized multi national corporations.

Prior conceptual theory (internal marketing, relational approaches to marketing, emotions) has been reviewed to inform the literature review and to develop the research question. Data collection and analysis will further elaborate what, how and why findings contribute to theory construction in internal marketing and marketing as a holistic and broadened organizational concept. Contributions to theory will be discussed in Chapter Six.

This section outlined important aspects regarding theoretical theory contribution. The next section further elaborates on theory contribution from the angle of “theory attractiveness” and the “interesting factor.”

4.5.2 “Wow, That’s Interesting!”

A theory is not only considered great because it is true, but because it is interesting (Davis, 1971). Davis continues that all interesting theories constitute an attack on the taken-for-granted world of their audience. A contribution has to be interesting and provocative in the central points of a manuscript (Smith, 2003). Davis (1971) examined a number of interesting theories (theories that have been in wide circulation) and found that the most interesting proposition was the negation of an accepted one.

A theory is interesting when comprised ideas challenge assumptions, which are taken for granted in a particular area, especially in managerial practices or beliefs (Smith, 2003). Worldviews and understandings constitute such beliefs. They are often based on a dominant logic, which is ingrained into an individual’s mind such as the current dominant rational worldview. In stable competitive environments a dominant logic helps because it is internally existent (Prahalad, 2004). It has been argued, however, that the current economic environment is neither static, nor based on competition. Some of the taken-for-granted assumptions might have to be challenged in order to make way for a more service-oriented mindset.
Davis (1971) mentions that a phenomenon is interesting when “what seems to be an individual phenomenon is in reality a holistic phenomenon.” (p. 316). Understandings about phenomena appear to be individualistic. They influence behaviours and attitudes (Koltko-Rivera, 2004) in interpersonal interactions. It is argued that interpersonal interactions on all levels shape the organization. As such, this study is not only assessing individual understandings about phenomena in interactions, but elaborates impacts on organization and external marketing.

An interesting point in this thesis is the interrelatedness of seemingly unrelated phenomena (Davis, 1971). In Chapter Two, the main body of literature has been outlined as the interface between internal marketing and relational approaches to marketing (section 2.5). Also, the current dominant rational worldview has been briefly reviewed with relevance to relational approaches to marketing (section 2.6.5). From this review it has been concluded that a rational worldview might lack characteristics to apply insights from relational approaches to marketing to the interpersonal level. Therefore, phenomena might arise, which do seem unrelated to marketing, but might have important implications for this study.

### 4.6 Methodological Limitations

This section discusses limitations in relation to methodology. More general limitations to this study are discussed in Chapter Six Discussion and Conclusion (section 6.5).

#### 4.6.1 Bias Related to Researcher’s Subjective Understanding

It has been noted that retrospective participant observation based on an exclusively autoethnographic analysis can be considered a “trap” of possible bias due to its seemingly subjective nature. However, it has been argued by post-modern advocates that the researcher’s closeness to a phenomenon can be, and even must be, considered to gain deeper and more meaningful insights. Post-modern scholars have criticized the natural distance between researcher and researched phenomenon. Similarly, pre-understanding is a purely individual and, as such, purely subjective construct.
However, both sources are considered essential to gaining depth and detail in this research. The constructivist paradigm supports an ontological adaptation towards the researched phenomenon to deeply understand characteristics of the socially constructed reality of a culture or organization.

The problem of subjectivism is tackled by combining the subjective results, which originate from autoethnographic retrospective participant observation, with inter-subjective data that stems from in-depth interviews and subsequent follow-up sessions. Objectivism vs. subjectivism and inter-subjectivism has been discussed earlier in this chapter. While it is argued that pure objectivism does not exist, difference exists between subjective methods of data collection (such as autoethnographic participant observation) and inter-subjective methods (interviews, follow-up sessions). This triangulation assures more validity in this study.

### 4.6.2 Generalization of Results and Sample

The lack of generalization of results could be considered to be a major limitation of this study. The aim of this study, however, is to gain depth in, and detail of, the researched phenomenon instead of generalizing results. However, it has also been argued that the participants can be seen as “cases,” as the results are independent from the specific organizational setting and can most probably be found in similarly structured Western-minded organizations. Within these organizations, similarities like hierarchical structures and incentive systems allow assumptions about generalization. At the least, there is no reason why this study cannot be pursued in similar organizations.

Also, the sample of 17 interviewees and 6 follow-up participants is not considered to be representative in making generalizations. Gender and age might have an impact on the results of this study in relation to emotions, which have been discussed with interviewees. However, even though the emotional perspective between participants of gender and age might vary, this study focused on a tendency (trend) of emotional understanding, not differences between participants or the assessment of emotions in relation to an absolute reference point.
4.6.3 Final Remarks on the Limitations
This study adopts a post-modern perspective and a reader with a positivist worldview might not be comfortable with this approach. Chapter Four outlined a detailed discussion of objectivism versus subjectivism. Hence, this study requires a certain openness of the reader who is able to acknowledge the importance of the researcher’s closeness to the researched phenomenon.

4.7 Ethical Considerations
This research uses in-depth interview techniques and recognizes the importance of protecting the participants of this study and the firm from any negative consequences resulting from their involvement in this study. Therefore, this research follows the ethical guidelines outlined by the University of Otago, and has been approved by its Ethics Committee. The approval document is the Appendix of this thesis.

4.8 Summary and Outlook
This chapter discussed the research paradigm taken by the researcher and contrasted it with the main scientific research paradigms. It also outlined the research execution and research analysis methods, which are: (1) considered appropriate to answer the research question and (2) are in line with the constructivist research paradigm and the aim of this research. One focus of this chapter has been the discussion of possible biases due to post-modern methodological approaches, namely autoethnographic-based retrospective participant observation. This issue has been tackled by triangulation of subjective data from retrospective participant observation with intersubjective data from in-depth interviews and follow-up sessions.

Chapter Five, Analysis and Findings, outlines themes that are emerging throughout the data analysis process. Data has been approached in hermeneutic circles to make holistic sense of individual quotes. Data has been analyzed with a phenomenologist attitude in order to understand which comments are meaningful in relation to the initial theoretical framework. It has been argued that deductive research primarily
tests existing theory, whereas inductive research primarily generates new theory (Gummesson, 2000b). This research is considered mainly as inductive based on in-depth interviews to generate data, which is meaningful in relation to the theoretical framework. Follow-up sessions and retrospective participant observation have been conducted to triangulate these findings (deductive).
CHAPTER FIVE

Data Analysis and Findings

We think we know what it means for a thing to be given to us in the flesh, so to speak. (Sokolowski, 2000, p. 37)

5.1 Introduction

This chapter applies the data analysis methods outlined in the previous chapter. Data has been reviewed in hermeneutic circles to identify specific patterns in relation to the initial theoretical framework, which can be assessed in a holistic and meaningful context. The aim of interpretation has been defined as sense-making out of records of observed behaviours and verbal expressions of subjective experience (Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994). Insights from symbolic interactionism and phenomenology build the basis for understanding behaviours, expressions and experiences in this study.

Figure 5.1 outlines the main sections of Chapter Five. First, data generated from in-depth interviews will be analyzed and informed with comments based on retrospective participant observation (5.2). The focus herein lies on emerging themes and categories, which help to answer the research question. Second, based on emerging themes and an enhanced theoretical framework, data from the follow-up sessions is analyzed to triangulate data (5.3). Section 5.4 summarizes the data analysis process and findings of this study. Section 5.5 summarizes Chapter Five and finishes with an outlook of Chapter Six.
5.2 In-depth Interviews and Retrospective Participant Observation

5.2.1 Assessment of Data

5.2.1.1 Presentation of Data

The findings of this study are presented in the form of original quotes, which are commented on by the researcher based on his personal experiences. Every emerging theme concludes with comments from the researcher based on autoethnographical retrospective participant observation to inform, disconfirm or complement interview data (triangulation). The alternation between quotes from interviewees and comments from the researcher will help the reader to follow the interpretation of the researcher. Quotations have been translated into English and proof read by a language expert (German and English) to insure that the core message of quotes is correctly transferred into the English language.
5.2.1.2 Marketing and Emotions: A Symbolic Interactionism Perspective

It has been outlined in Chapter Four (section 4.4.4) that this analysis is partly based on a symbolic interactionist perspective. To summarize, in its original sense, a symbolic interactionist perceives meaning as arising in the process of interaction between people (H. Blumer, 1969). More recently, Flint (2006) outlined that symbols have meaning and, when used, they are intended to convey a shared meaning to a receiver, who incidentally can be one’s self. In the following section, a symbolic interactionist lens is used to engage the reader in a symbolic, self-reflective process.

More specifically, interpersonal interactions have been approached with an external marketing understanding and with relational marketing terms, or “symbols.” The symbols are based on the relational marketing literature, as discussed in the literature review, and were utilized to interpret the interviewees’ utterances. During the interview process, it was quickly discovered that interviewees brought up the topic of emotions intuitively but also recurrently. An understanding of emotions further supported an internal relational perspective of interpersonal interactions. Some of the symbols used are outlined in figure 5.2. Those symbols will be further discussed in the realm of the emerging themes outlined hereafter.
5.2.1.3 Working in Hermeneutic Circles

The following section briefly outlines the data analysis process, which has been approached in hermeneutic circles (see also section 4.4.4 Data Analysis Process). The analysis has been supported by the use of the computer software Atlas.ti (qualitative data analysis software) to organize and rearrange data. This process started with roughly 40 initial symbols, or codes, that stem from the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter Two. Therefore, all initial symbols were related to relational approaches to marketing.

Emotions have been identified as appropriate in characterizing relational marketing phenomena, such as co-creation and value-in-use, on an interpersonal level. Therefore, and because of the constant re-assessment of the data, new symbols, with relevance to emotions, have been utilized and blended with marketing symbols to generate meaning with relevance to the research question. At the end of this process,
11 themes remained, which are outlined hereafter in this chapter. Even though the final themes suggest purely emotional relevance, the individual assessment of the themes will demonstrate to the reader what the nature of the relationship between relational marketing and emotions is. Figure 5.3 outlines the analysis process, which started with approximately 40 marketing symbols and generated 11 final themes, grounded in data.

**Figure 5.3 From Symbols to Themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbols based on Existing Marketing Knowledge (Based on Chapter Two)</th>
<th>Marketing Symbols Blended with Emotions (Based on Chapter Two and Three)</th>
<th>Emerging Themes (Grounded in Interview Data)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interconnectedness</td>
<td>1) Empathy (Interconnectedness, Co-Creation, Value-in-Use, Manipulative, Listening)</td>
<td>1) Static Reactive Behaviour and Expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>2) Static Understanding (Complexity, Dynamism, Continuity and Change, Service, Passive Emotions)</td>
<td>2) Egocentricity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable Competitive Advantage</td>
<td>3) Separateness (Interdependence, Money, Firm-Centric, NeoClassical Perspective, Ego-Primacy)</td>
<td>3) Personal Emotional Background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogical Interaction</td>
<td>4) Sustainability (Sustainable Competitive Advantage, Operant resources)</td>
<td>4) Emotional Exhaustion</td>
</tr>
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<td>Mutuality</td>
<td>5) Emotional Exhaustion</td>
<td>5) Emotional Superiority</td>
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<tr>
<td>Complexity</td>
<td>7) Time Perspective (Dynamism, Continuity and Change)</td>
<td>7) Static Time Perception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamism</td>
<td>8) Trust (Communication “Between”, Marketing “With”)</td>
<td>8) Sustainable Interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulative (4Ps)</td>
<td>10) Hierarchies (Network Perspective, Systems Perspective, emotional reactiveness)</td>
<td>10) Emotional Separation of Social Structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational vs. Transactional</td>
<td>11) Dominant Logic (EgoCentricism, Customer-Centricity, Worldview)</td>
<td>11) Emotions and Hierarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multidimensionality</td>
<td>12) Mutualism (Dialogical Interaction, Cooperation and Competition, Relationships, Behaviours and Attitudes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multilateral</td>
<td>13) Relational (Multilateral, Multidimensional)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication “Between”</td>
<td>14) Emotions (Value-in-Experience, Reactivity)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing “With”</td>
<td>15) Ontological Humility (Emotional Percepcion, Sender/Receiver Model)</td>
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</table>
5.2.2 Analysis In-Depth Interviews

5.2.2.1 Findings in Form of Emerging Themes

**Theme 1: Static Reactive Behaviour and Expectations**

This theme builds the foundation for this study and the themes that follow. To summarize, the underlying theme describes a perspective or understanding held by the participants towards emotions, which has been characterized as static and reactive. A reactive emotional understanding (REmUn) builds the groundwork for integrating and understanding the subsequent themes and for making holistic sense of them with relevance to marketing.

Emotional reactiveness has been observed in organizations and described as a chain reaction that goes from one person to another (Giuffra, 1980). It can be characterized as the event of getting unconsciously and automatically emotionally aroused in response to an external event, such as an important upcoming management presentation, a pay negotiation with the boss, or simply an unpleasant verbal comment made by a colleague.

However, as has been noted, a difference is made between the actual emotional arousal and an emotional understanding, while the latter does not necessarily have to be reactive in relation to the former. Interviewees express a viewpoint or perspective towards their own emotions (reactive emotional understanding), which reveals how the participants of this study understand their emotions in relation to interpersonal interactions. This emotional “lens,” as will be demonstrated, can be assessed with a relational marketing understanding (theoretical framework).

To illustrate how interviewees understand emotions in business interactions, the following introductory quote is presented:

“It gets unpleasant when we are in Italy, for example, and we are talking about quality issues and our quality manager in Strasbourg (company site in France) has different expectations then an Italian (supplier) … Accordingly the feelings run high.”

(Interviewee 2, Atlas.ti, paragraph 30).
The above situation described by this interviewee might be considered natural and legitimate. At the end of her narrative, the interviewee uses the expression “accordingly” to underline the irrevocable relationship between the described situation and the emotional reaction in form of an unpleasant arousal.

Later on, she adds:

“There are very different issues during a project that come up again and again, which postpone deadlines and quality matters, and accordingly the mood is tense. And this is an uncomfortable situation, because the discussion gets louder and at some point, because some kind of limit is reached, you better stop, because it almost comes to a fight, because people verbally attack each other. This is the worst case of uncomfortable interaction.”

(Interviewee 2, Atlas.ti, paragraph 30).

Again, this interviewee uses the term “accordingly” to express the relationship between emotional arousal and her reaction (attacking each other). She perceives a certain emotion as inherently related to a specific event and a subsequent reaction. From the way she describes this relationship, it appears emotionally and rationally justified.

From the first quote of interviewee 2, it is assumed that she uses the term “accordingly” with relevance to her past experiences. Based on her past experiences, she describes an upcoming business meeting and extrapolates her experiences to “forecast” emotional conditions, and subsequent “re-actions.” She further states:

“In the moment when somebody attacks you (verbally), you are not going to say: ‘Well, ok, let’s stay calm and talk about it,’ but you automatically yell back.”

(Interviewee 2, Atlas.ti, paragraph 48).

The term “automatically” implies that this interviewee does not (at least consciously) consider an alternative way to react to this situation. Her view can be characterized as “passive,” as it expresses an automatic reaction to a perceived situation. From the perspective of this interviewee, “yelling back” is the only way to respond.
though marketing scholars speak of actors and not re-actors, on an interpersonal level, interviewee 2 seems to understand emotions as passive re-actions instead of actions.

Analyzed through an (external) relational marketing lens, the exchanged information or ideas between part-time marketers in such a meeting described by interviewee 2 can also be perceived as a product or service delivered to, and received by, an internal customer. From a relational marketing perspective, companies mutually co-create value-in-use (see for example section 2.4.5 on co-creation). Likewise, PTMs are supposed to mutually co-create intellectual property based on the input (information) from both actors. From a relational perspective, value is determined by the beneficiary (Vargo & Lusch, 2008b). From an internal perspective however, interviewee 2 shows a reactive understanding in relation to the beneficiary. “Yelling back,” from an external perspective, appears to be irrational based on the assumption that value is determined by the beneficiary.

Another interviewee says:

“If you are responsible for a certain topic or area and somebody continuously corrects you within this topic, and you are supposed to have some free space and people tell you to do things, but at the end, they correct you anyway, according to the wishes of upper management or as they would like to have it, then you are not in the mood anymore to contribute ideas. Then you just do it their way.”

(Interviewee 3, Atlas.ti, paragraph 58).

The expectations of this part-time marketer remain continuously unfulfilled. Accordingly, he is emotionally displeased, which becomes further obvious in the way he expresses his feelings and emotions in this interview. He holds on to a static expectation, while the environment around him continuously changes beyond his influence. It is assumed that this participant is not aware of this change. This comment highlights how the external environment (e.g. his boss) continuously influences the emotions of this participant until it leads to frustration and reluctance. Based on his understanding, the unfulfilled expectation of “some free space” leads
into an emotional reaction and, at the end, to renunciation. This chain of events, expectation, non-compliance with expectation, disappointment, appears to be ingrained into his mind.

Kofman (2003b) argued that most people think and act according to the traditional theory of human behaviour, which consists of stimulus and reaction. He also states that this theory denies free will, responsibility and accountability, stating that people, and their behaviour, are entirely determined by external factors. In this regard, the extended literature review (Chapter Three) concluded that the control of emotions is possible, though not self-evident.

The nature of expectations becomes more evident in the following statement:

“And the next day he asked me if I was stressed out. And I said yes, and that everything is too much at the moment, and we should have had it ready at midday but we also have several other topics to work on. And then he replied by saying that I set my priorities wrong. And this is what I thought was really aggravating because I was telling him that it is too much... You know, there is this one time where I raise a flag, and then it is my fault that I have too much work. This is what I find hard.”

(Interviewee 5, Atlas.ti, paragraph 82).

This interviewee, from her perspective, had a work overload. She has also been perceived, by the researcher, as being very emotional during this interview and particular narration. She decided to discuss the situation of her work overload with her boss. From her narration that follows, she expected a certain answer or reaction from her boss, which led to disappointment. Her expectations remained unfulfilled. Interviewee 5 is frustrated and surprised by the response of her boss. However, from a relational marketing perspective a surprise in a dynamic market environment seems irrational: “The surprise to me is not that there has been and will continue to be surprises, but that we are surprised that there are surprises.” (Donald Rumsfeld, cited in R. Z. George, 2004, p. 385).

Rumsfeld’s comment underlines that stability and predictability in a dynamic environment are illusionary. His statement reflects the marketing reality of the 21st
century, which has been described as dynamic and multilateral, and is an essential characteristic of the theoretical framework of this study (see sections 2.4.1 to 2.4.4 on change and dynamism in the 21st century market environment). However, on an interpersonal level it can be observed that this interviewee is used to predictions and expectations (static), which are ingrained in her emotional understanding. More importantly, from her perspective, predictions are inherently related to certain emotional reactions.

Later on, the same interviewee was asked if she could have reacted differently. Her answer is:

“No, in a way I will always react emotionally hurt.”

(Interviewee 5, Atlas.ti, paragraph 90).

This comment further highlights the understanding of an inherent relationship between her expectations and emotional reactions. Rather intuitively, the first 3 interviewees described a passive, or paradigmatic, and reactive (no choice of alternative actions) emotional understanding. Terms like “automatically” or “accordingly” have been highlighted to support the idea of an ingrained reactive emotional understanding.

The next Interviewee (7) appeared to be more reactive than other interviewees based not only on her comments, but also from her gestures and mimics during the interview. From her narration, it becomes apparent that every action taken by her interaction partners, that was not in accordance with her expectations, triggered different, rather strong, emotional reactions.

She further describes the following situation: She was part of an expert panel during a training course, together with other male colleagues. The behaviour of her male colleagues who, for example, answered questions that were addressed to her, suggested to her that they considered her of minor importance:

Interviewee 7: “I don’t understand it, I feel a bit stupid. If participants address me with their questions, he does not need to answer for me, he should let me give the answer.”
Researcher: “And what kind of emotions do you have at this moment?”

Interviewee 7: “I get angry … because I can’t understand why he is doing that.”

(Interviewee 7, Atlas.ti, paragraph 54).

A service has been characterized as a dynamic (Grönroos, 2006; Vargo & Akaka, 2009), intangible, heterogenic, inseparable and perishable (IHIP) process (Gummesson, 2007; Lusch & Vargo, 2006b). In different words, a service employee does not know what to expect when a customer calls him or her. Every service encounter is unique and unfolds dynamically. So far, this study reveals that certain preconceptions among participants seem to lead to static expectations, which are expressed in the form of emotional reactions (static).

Interviewee 7 argued that she gets angry because she does not understand her male colleagues. Her emotions appear to follow a rational logic. It has been argued that networks are complex and multidimensional, and that the rational mind is not capable of assessing this complexity properly. Hence, attaching strong emotions (and thoughts) to an incident neglects the understanding of network complexity. Rather, strong emotions imply that an individual assumes that he or she is able to process complexity, which is impossible (bounded rationality).

It has been argued that this perception becomes problematic when strong emotions derail thought processes (Kofman, 2006) and self-reflection (Korthagen, 2005). In this state of mind, actions taken by part-time marketers (nodes of the interpersonal network) are based on individual emotions and not on collective network needs, which require conscious self-reflection.

Another interviewee states:

“When I talk to somebody for 3 hours and we are talking on different levels (wavelengths), or about different time periods and we don’t get along with each other, this leads to nothing and then, of course, there are emotions, negative emotions, which means that both partners are frustrated.”

(Interviewee 8, Atlas.ti, paragraph 82).
The same understanding of a relationship between a certain situation and a specific emotional reaction (expressed for example in gestures, mimics and words) can be observed continuously throughout the interviews of this study. More importantly, interviewees understand their reactions as a matter of course, which implies a lack of alternatives. It is assumed that, most probably, interviewees do not consciously adopt a reactive emotional understanding, but, by following their comments, an alternative (a more active understanding) appears to be unavailable to the participants of this study. Interviewees intuitively “blame” external circumstances for stressful and unpleasant experiences, based on unfulfilled expectations.

Interviewee 13 narrates:

Interviewee 13: “I remember a colleague, who sent me an email once, which made me really angry.”

Researcher: “Why were you angry?”

Interviewee 13: “Because, in my opinion, it was not her right to write something like this. And it is still in my head, because I am still angry.”

(Interviewee 13, Atlas.ti, paragraphs 44 ff).

An email of his colleague emotionally aroused this interviewee. Also, in a further chat, adjacent to the interview, it became more obvious that this email is causing the interviewee stress for several weeks now. His reaction to this email is an unpleasant emotional feeling, which is inherently related to his assessment of the situation (this assumption will be elaborated under theme 3 Personal Emotional Background). Based on the expectation that he had of this email, he remains aroused.

The literature review (Chapter Two) outlined that the relational marketing environment is dynamic and constantly changing (Achrol, 1997; Gummesson, 1996; Kedia & Mukherji, 1999; Lusch, et al., 2007). Based on a network perspective, it has also been characterized as multilateral, which implies numerous incidents on a node at the same time (complexity). A consequence of this environment is uncertainty and unpredictability (Lipczynski, et al., 2005; Morroni, 2006). Interviewee 13, however, in relation to his emotions, describes a unilateral perspective of this situation, as he
neglects a series of possible incidents in the network, which he is not, and cannot be, aware of.

On an interpersonal level, this study lets one assume that an EmUn can be characterized as rather static and linear in relation to an interpersonal exchange perspective. If a manager assumes that just because he sold a certain model of car for the past 30 years successfully (experience), that he will also sell it successfully for the next 10 years (static projection), the business community would call him a “dreamer.” That is, the future changes at a high pace and predictability is hampered by an increasing complexity, which implies that more impacts occur per unit of time.

Another interviewee talks about emotions and how difficult it is for him to control them. He describes his lack of control as being like a “chemical process” that is a default, which cannot be influenced. However, he believes that emotions can be partly controlled by meditation techniques. He perceives the main emotional reaction as largely out of his control:

“To a certain extent you cannot control them (emotions). The feeling inside me, often I cannot control it; that, what is going to be produced. There is some kind of process running and I can only control it to some extent. I can start to do some breathing exercises, and start to meditate, to calm myself down. That is what I can do, but the other process is still running. And this is what I cannot influence, I can only reduce the outbreak, or guide it, or to repress some parts of my character.”

(Interviewee 10, Atlas.ti, paragraph 62).

Meditation is not about repressing emotions or feelings. Meditation sharpens awareness and consciousness and helps individuals to perceive one’s self as part of the environment (Schmidt-Wilk, et al., 1996). Meditation techniques have also been noted by Gummesson (2000b), in relation to business and marketing, who claims that contemplative meditation techniques help to expand one's mind and consciousness.
Theme 1 Static Reactive Behaviour and Expectations: Summary and Retrospective

Participant Observation:

Marketing and Emotions
Participants of this study report on the emotions that arise in interpersonal interactions. The initial theoretical framework suggested a common core of relational marketing, which comprised, among other characteristics, a dynamic and complex specification of the market place. Terms such as “holistic” and “dynamic” are frequently used to characterize the marketing environment from a relational perspective, which changes pace at a high rate.

In relation to emotions, and on an internal level, the first theme reveals that the participants show a rather static emotional understanding of interpersonal interactions based on a general reactive emotional understanding. While marketing scholars have supported a dynamic understanding of the external market place, the internal market place can be characterized as rather static based on a REmUn. Figure 5.4 contrasts a dynamic relational marketing perspective and a static emotional understanding of interpersonal interactions in relation to theme 1:

Figure 5.4 Dynamic Marketing vs. Static Emotional Understanding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relational Marketing Perspective</th>
<th>Internal Marketing Perspective</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The marketing perspective of business relationships is dynamic and future oriented</td>
<td>The emotional understanding of interpersonal interaction is static and past oriented (expectations)</td>
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To summarize this theme, it is assumed that information exchange between part-time marketers is static and passive from an emotional perspective of the participants,
while external marketing suggests a dynamic and active perspective of marketing. If a customer calls the service-centre of a company and is emotionally aroused because of a problem with his new car, does the customer want the service employee to “automatically yell back?”

Retrospective Participant Observation on Static Reactive Behaviour and Expectations

From the perspective of the researcher, the findings presented in theme 1 describe the existing reality in large industries. It has been observed by the researcher that the high specialization and hierarchical structures found in most multi national corporations lead to some sort of “blame” towards the environment and a feeling of separateness, which is strongly related to individual expectations. Retrospectively, a number of situations can be described based on such expectations. Hereafter, an example from the researcher is presented based on his experience in the company:

The introduction of a new payment system required the re-evaluation of the salary of each employee. The two possibilities of this re-evaluation was a possible over- or underpayment depending on the evaluation of the workplace. Almost every employee went into this interaction with his or her boss to discuss this re-evaluation with a certain expectation. The result was a large amount of frustrated part-time marketers due to salary cuts that resulted from the reassessment of the workplace. In the consequence, numerous employees have discussed this re-evaluation during the work time; most of these discussions were based on unpleasant emotions.

Even though this example is not directly related to interpersonal interactions, it demonstrates, first, the static nature of expectations and emotions and, second, the impact such an understanding might have (in this case, the whole company). It has been argued elsewhere in this thesis that satisfied employees lead to satisfied customers. Based on a reactive emotional understanding, it is assumed that a static emotional understanding, such as described in the retrospective example, has a direct influence on external customers. For example, a sales manager (part-time marketer)
that is frustrated because of a salary cut might behave differently in his next negotiation with a customer.

Theme 2: Egocentricity

The term egocentricity expresses a certain perspective on the world, which refers to the belief that the highest state of human consciousness is within the context of ego cognition (Koltko-Rivera, 2004). It has been noted elsewhere in this thesis that a lens, or paradigm, expresses certain assumptions about the world in general, or about a phenomenon, more specifically. The first theme outlined that an emotional understanding expresses a certain perspective, or paradigm, towards the interpersonal world. Kofman (2006) argues that different mental models create different interpretations, feelings, opinions and actions.

This second theme outlines the general nature of mental models among participants, which have their root in a rational understanding of the world (see Chapter Two). The 4Ps originated from a rational worldview, which led to a mechanistic-transactional approach to the market (Grönroos, 1997; Lusch, et al., 2006). However, relational marketing scholars claim that it is time for a new, more relational, marketing worldview. This worldview remains rather abstract and implicit.

As do firms, part-time marketers have an identity, or ego. The network approach implies that this ego does never exist in isolation (Ford, et al., 2008; Hakansson & Snehota, 1995) and must be perceived as dependent-arising in relation to the interpersonal network. It is suggested by systems theory, that a system, or ego, can define itself solely in relation to its environment (Luhmann, 1995). For instance, a sales manager can only be characterized as a sales manager in relation to his company and a product that he offers. Therefore, it is assumed that there is a high interdependence between the employees and the interpersonal environment.

An interviewee states:

“I can also be explosive, but I don’t feel it in the moment, but I can observe it in others. I also take things personally or I think: ‘What does he want from me now?’”
With her last phrase, this interviewee expresses emotional frustration, which could also be observed from her gestures and tone of voice during the narration. The way in which she formulates this frustration implies that she draws a strong emotional line between the “I” and “no I” (between her and other nodes in the network). It has been noted that people, who draw this line, may be insufficiently aware of the synergy in networks (Korthagen, 2005). The network perspective implies that even though a part-time marketer is in a dyadic relationship, he or she must acknowledge that his or her counterpart is also subject to multilateral influences, or other nodes in the network. This understanding, inherently leads to the conclusion that unilateral blame towards one person neglects an understanding of the complexity of networks.

On the contrary, the term ego-transcendence (Koltko-Rivera, 2004) characterizes an understanding or view of the world, which accredits the superiority of and, respectively, the interdependence with the network and, hence, other part-time marketers. However, the term egocentrism characterizes an individual’s perspective on the world, which is based on the positivist idea of separateness between individual and environment.

The same interviewee was asked about the importance of her objectives. She states:

“It plays a very important role (the individual expectation). The expectation, my objective, which I want to reach today, plays a significant role. First of all, I want to achieve my own target… and if this is not possible, then we have to see if we can reach a common denominator.”

(Interviewee 2, Atlas.ti, paragraph 64).

The company often induces personal targets, for instance, through incentive systems and company goals. On an individual level, these targets become personalized and are related to specific emotional reactions in the case of interviewee 2, which imply that the value of information is assessed as being one-sided, or egocentric.

Vargo and Lusch (2004a) described marketing from scratch in relation to their S-D logic. When participants were asked why they go to work, they replied, for instance:
“I need to earn money, I need to support my family.” (interviewee 14, Atlas.ti, paragraph 88). It seems that interviewees do not question the function of money, which, according to Vargo and Lusch’s service-for-service logic, is only an exchange facilitator and cannot be possessed.

Vargo and Lusch’s proposed logic inherently leads to an interconnectedness of actors, who exchange goods and services. Hence, economically, actors do not exist in isolation (Hakansson & Snehota, 1989). This understanding of interconnectedness appears to be absent on an interpersonal level. Participants claim that they go to work to earn and possess money (egocentric perspective), not to exchange a service for another service. So far, none of the interviewees has expressed a deeper understanding for service exchange throughout the interviews and in relation to emotions (see also the following themes).

This type of understanding also becomes apparent in the following comment:

“In the past it was self-evident that a good company will not pollute any waterways, and it was normal to keep air pollution to a minimum. You did not win any trophy for that. Only if you didn’t do it, you attracted attention and got punished. And today you win a prize. If this is really necessary or not, I don’t know.”

(Interviewee 11, Atlas.ti, paragraph 155).

It is interesting to observe how this interviewee describes a change in perspective, which he perceived over the years. Sustainability, in the eyes of this interviewee, should be seen as something natural, an attitude or behaviour that is morally ingrained into the individual. However, from his perspective, part-time marketers have to be motivated to see sustainability beyond their own perspective, which he implicitly describes as egocentric.

Incentive systems are so tied to individual part-time marketers that this understanding is not surprising. Increased specialization led to a perspective on the world in which phenomena are perceived independently and in isolation (Laszlo, 1972). The increasing complexity that arises with specialization leads to a loss of an intrinsic sense for interconnectedness (Senge, 1990).
Interviewee 3 expresses:

“Personally, I need this (interconnectedness), being together with people, knowing what everybody does. That has to do with acceptance, with appreciation, with my personality…”

(Interviewee 3, Atlas.ti, paragraph 44).

Interviewee 3 was very open during the interview, due to his personal relationship with the researcher. The participant expresses disappointment in relation to a conflict with his boss. Interviewee 3 initiated a weekly meeting with the purpose of interpersonal information exchange and had to observe how his boss takes advantage of this meeting for his own purposes. Interviewee 3 admits that the success of the meeting is important for how he feels emotionally. These emotions are directly related to his boss. During the entire interview, interviewee 3 notes that personal acknowledgement is very important for his emotional state. He states that he needs this acknowledgement in order to feel good.

Relational marketing and business scholars have accepted the importance of a network perspective towards the external market place. If the same perspective accounts for interpersonal networks and value is co-created “between” actors, then an egocentric perspective appears inappropriate in characterizing interpersonal interactions. On the contrary, an ego-transcendent perspective supports the interpersonal network idea. Ego-transcendence has been described as stepping out of one’s self and joining something, in this case the network, beyond or outside the normal ego boundaries (Kasparow & Scotton, 1999).

The extended literature review in Chapter Three briefly outlined the idea of “consciousness” in relation to emotions. It has been noted that consciousness does not only enhance self-awareness, but also other-awareness (Liang, 2007). Consciousness does not just apply to the individual, but can be developed in an organization (Schmidt-Wilk, et al., 1996) and, as such, it supports ego-transcendence. To be more specific, consciousness prevents individuals to get caught up in emotional reactions and enhances self-reflection, which is necessary in staying interconnected with the environment (Korthagen, 2005).
Interviewee 6 was asked about the motivation one has to do his or her job accurately (according to quality standards). He replied:

“Sure, on the one hand it is simply the money, and you know when you make a mistake, you can get punished, it has negative consequences. That would be, for example, at the assembly line that he knows, when he gets a warning, the next time he is out, which is a high motivation for him. Another type of motivation would be a bonus payment. That is a motivation that would also affect blue-collar workers.”

(Interviewee 6, Atlas.ti, paragraph 68).

The views of this interviewee outline how individual targets, such as a project deadline, create behaviours based on an egocentric perspective. From his intuitive understanding, money, once intended to facilitate exchange, overwrites the need to “serve” the super ordinate network. However, it has been noted that marketing requires humble individuals with a genuine desire to serve (Vera & Rodriguez-Lopez, 2004). The egocentric paradigm seems ingrained in the participant’s mind. It is assumed that it builds the foundation of an emotional understanding, which is passive and reactive and based on individual, or egocentric, expectations (see also theme 1). Put differently, emotional reactions could be characterized as an expression of “emotional judgment” based on an egocentric perspective.

However, a service understanding of exchange, as intended by Vargo and Lusch (2004a, 2008b), would require part-time marketers to step beyond the current egocentric perspective and understand money as an exchange facilitator, not as a tangible “good.” What is exchanged on an interpersonal level are ideas and information that are co-created, which lead to monetary remuneration, only as a consequence of this information exchange, or service exchange.

Another interviewee comments:

“And then there is the monetary issue, which is the most important one in business and there is the counter value (what I get in return for my money), which is becoming more and more important or at least the majority of customers see it as important.”
Interviewee 9 also highlights the tangible nature of money, which became an independent and available good from the perspective of the participants. Since the creation of the monetary system, more and more exchange occurred indirectly (Vargo & Lusch, 2011). The perspective of money as a tangible good is a by-product of the present dominant rational worldview (static, fragmented), and does not support a service-for-service understanding of interpersonal relationships. Rather, a rational worldview based on egocentricity further suggests an emotional separation between human actors.

Interviewee 9 further says:

“Interaction is always stimulated by money or other aspects.”

(Interviewee 9, Atlas.ti, paragraph 32).

Interviewee 9 was also asked to describe why interactions could be problematic. He stated:

“Humans often think too idealistically, and the bit of reality that is missing, that prevents humans from producing an ideal product, the loss of reality, the own mind. We cannot jump over our own self. We cannot break free from our self. We are captured in the dimensions that we are able to realize.”

(Interviewee 9, Atlas.ti, paragraph 111).

Interviewee 9 argues that it is not possible to break free from one's own self. It appears that he explains egocentricity as the current dominant paradigm, as he generalizes his assumption (“we cannot”). Egocentricity has been defined as “the general level(s) where one is identified exclusively with “me,” or with the bodily self and its impulses.” (Rentschler, 2006, p. 7).

From a relational marketing perspective, scholars discuss co-creation (Ramaswamy, 2008) and value-in-use (Ballantyne & Varey, 2008), and refer to customer-centricity (Brodie, et al., 2006) and balanced-centricity (Gumnesson, 2008). On an interpersonal level, the current worldview appears to remain egocentric, and can be
compared to a firm-centric, or neoclassical, view in external marketing. Just as the old business and marketing paradigm assumed that the firm builds the centre of the value creation process, participants of this study perceive the internal marketplace from an egocentric perspective. Emotional reactions are characterized as a consequence of an individualistic, or egocentric, assessment of the world.

Another interviewee has a similar view:

“Conflicts often originate from the fact that people work in different areas and their success is measured with different scales. They have different orientations. And that goes as far as including personal attitudes or personal views... they simply don’t do certain things or they don’t see the point in doing certain things.”

(Interviewee 12, Atlas.ti, paragraph 28).

This interviewee highlights the emotional tension that arises in relation to individual targets. His perspective appears comprehensible, as part-time marketers need to draw a line between themselves and their environment to identify themselves in relation to the environment, which is an assumption based on a systems perspective. Rationally, and from an analytical perspective, this view is also necessary to survive in an otherwise meaningless chaos (Luhmann, 1995). However, this rational perspective is inherently related to expectations and emotional reactions (theme 1), which are individual (node), and not collective (network).

**Theme 2 Egocentricty: Summary and Retrospective Participant Observation**

**Marketing and Emotions**

Reviewing the relational marketing literature (Chapter Two), it becomes evident that a relational marketing worldview shifted from a company-centric perspective towards a customer-centric perspective (Prahalad & Ramazwamy, 2004). Gummesson (2008) suggests a multi-party approach to marketing based on the network perspective. The focus moves away from the supplier of a good, service or information towards the
receiver, or beneficiary, of a service (customer centricity) or, even more specifically, towards the interface “between” both (balanced centricity).

This theme highlights that the emotional understanding of the participants is based on an egocentric assessment of relationships. This becomes more obvious in the comments of some of the interviewees, who argue that certain emotional reactions are inherently related to an individual, or egocentric, understanding of the world. Assuming that value is determined in-use and by the beneficiary (Vargo & Lusch, 2008b), the receiver of information or an idea is in charge of the value creation process. Hence, it appears essential to break free from an egocentric perspective, to understand the value creation process from the perspective of the beneficiary. Figure 5.5 compares a relational marketing perspective with an interpersonal perspective.

Figure 5.5 Customer-Centricity vs. Egocentricity

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relational Marketing Perspective</th>
<th>Internal Marketing Perspective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relational marketing approaches assume a customer-centric perspective: the customer is the centre of the value creation process</td>
<td>A reactive emotional understanding assumes an egocentric perspective: the internal supplier (employee) is the centre of the value-creation process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Internal marketing scholars have characterized the part-time marketer as customer-conscious and sales-minded based on insights and understanding, which stem from a service-perspective of relational approaches to marketing. However, and in relation to theme 1, the passive and reactive behaviour described by interviewees implies a rather unconscious, or passive, attitude towards internal customers.
Retrospective Participant Observation on Egocentricity

An egocentric perspective appears to be an inherent consequence of an individual remuneration system. For example, product managers are judged by their ability to introduce a product in a specific market at the right time, while a quality manager is judged by his ability to launch a product at the lowest possible call rate (complaints per 100 customers). Consequently, a situation evolves where the product manager is ready to launch the product, while a quality manager might still perceive the need to improve the product or process quality. In practice, this often results in emotional conflicts. However, other examples, such as the following experience described by the researcher, might be less obvious:

A common situation that can be observed is the appearance of envy in relation to new product innovations in research and development departments. In this case development engineers (PTMs) complain that they had an idea years ago, but nobody would listen. Now, it is not them, but somebody else that is known as the innovator. As a consequence, PTMs might lose their desire to contribute to such an innovation. The problem from a company perspective is that these emotions, which stem from an egocentric perspective, do not only create a tense mood inside the company; they also hamper the product development process.

From an internal marketing perspective, an egocentric behaviour hampers the co-creation of ideas and information, which lead to new products and services. As Vargo and Lusch (2004a, 2008b) outlined, it is the skills and competencies (operant resources) that are the fundamental basis of exchange. Hence, if a customer-centric perspective pervades the relational marketing understanding, it should also pervade the individual understanding of interpersonal exchange. It is not necessarily assumed that egocentricity leads to emotional reactions. However, emotional reactions follow an egocentric logic, which follows from the explanation of these themes.

Theme 3: Personal Emotional Background

The participants of this study do not seem to question their emotional reactions. This assumption also becomes apparent in theme 1 when individuals express a
paradigmatic emotional understanding. It has been observed in theme 1 that interviewees appear to exclude other opportunities than a reactive emotional understanding in interpersonal interactions. This has been concluded from comments found in theme 1, where interviewees used expressions such as “accordingly” and “always” to undermine their perspective. This section highlights some quotes that outline what and how much interviewees know about their own emotional world.

The following participant has been asked whether he was better off to exclude emotions from business interactions and to stay focused on the facts. Even though it is impossible to exclude emotions from an interaction, as emotion and reason are inseparable (Damasio, 2006; Kofman, 2006), this expression is used in common speech to describe whether it is possible to control emotional arousal or not. Her answer is:

“I think that doesn’t work. I once had a seminar about this. One should always remain on a more rational level, but it is difficult to maintain that. I tried to maintain it after the seminar on all levels, the private level and so on.”

(Interviewee 2, Atlas.ti, paragraph 40).

Marketing scholars note that value, from an external marketing perspective, needs a new definition. From a relational marketing perspective, based on co-creation, an unsold product has no value, and neither has a product that remains unused by a customer (Gummesson, 2008). This view contradicts the idea of transactional value, or the idea of a value-added chain, where value is continuously added in different working stages inside the company and “destroyed” by the customer (Ramirez, 1999).

From a relational understanding, value is determined by the beneficiary, or recipient of a product or service (Vargo & Lusch, 2008b). With the evolution of relational approaches to marketing, the value perspective changed. However, on an interpersonal level the value perspective remains unchanged, and value of information, or an internal value proposition, is assessed from an egocentric perspective (theme 2). That is, the supplier of a value proposition, or information, judges the value perception of the recipient, as he reacts to the customer’s value
determination. It simpler terms, how a recipient of information determines the value of that information should not be related to emotional reactions from the supplier and, in particular, not towards the beneficiary. It has been noted earlier that such emotional reactions interrupt the self-reflection circle and prevent holistic, or ego-transcendent, decision-making. Hence, it is necessary to understand the nature of emotional reactions in order to transcend an egocentric perspective and perceive value from the perspective of the beneficiary.

Seminars in industry about interaction and communication do not teach participants about the origins of emotions. They usually remain shallow and are concerned with the “manipulation” of emotions, a term that is also used in relation to a transactional marketing perspective (Grönroos, 1994a). From the answer of this participant, it can be assumed that she is not convinced that emotions can be sufficiently controlled in interactions.

Not knowing the source of her emotions, this participant further states:

“But in the moment when everything happens, you can’t do anything.”

(Interviewee 2, Atlas.ti, paragraph 60).

It appears to be a common belief that emotions are automatic, or reactive, and part-time marketers are “helpless” in relation to the subsequent reactions, which they usually address to other nodes, or internal customers, in the multilateral network (see theme 1). A reactive emotional understanding appears ingrained into the participants’ minds (paradigmatic) and, so far, remains unquestioned. In relation to a new marketing worldview with relevance to relational approaches to marketing, it has been argued that the breaking free from old mental models, which inhibits the development of new competencies, is not trivial (Aitken, et al., 2006). Emotional reactions are expressed from an egocentric perspective, which is based on a rational perspective of the world.

Another interviewee was asked where his negative feelings, or frustration, come from and what he could do to handle them better. He says:

“No, I have no idea where that (frustration) comes from.”
The reactive emotional understanding appears to be not consciously present in the participants, or at least, its origin remains unquestioned. From the narrations so far, it is assumed that a reactive emotional understanding is the only possible alternative. The comments in this theme affirm this assumption, as emotions are perceived as an automatic and uncontrolled (and uncontrollable) reaction.

Interviewee 5 describes a situation in which she was stressed and went to her boss to seek help and understanding (see also theme 1). She had certain expectations of the reaction of her boss. These reactions where contrary to her expectations and she was emotionally hurt, which led her to blame her boss. Later on she has been asked if she could have reacted emotionally differently in this situation.

Her answer is:

“No, in a way I will always react (feel) hurt.”

(Interviewee 5, Atlas.ti, paragraph 91 – see this comment also in theme 1).

So far, participants appear to be convinced that they are “surrendered” to the reactive nature of their emotions and its consequences, such as blaming the boss. The participants of this study perceive themselves not only as passive emotional re-actors in interpersonal interaction, but also as unable to change. It is assumed that this perception is intuitive, based on a paradigmatic understanding of emotions.

Interviewee 9 noted how difficult it is to overcome the own self (see theme 2). This is a common expression used to indicate the difficulty of changing habits, which have been evolving over years. He also states that some part-time marketers are better at interacting and some worse, in relation to emotions (some get more emotional, some less). When he was asked to express this difference between the two types of persons, he says:

“I have no idea. He has a better overview, there are surely some points that you can measure, I have no idea. I am sure that the Humanities offer a variety of tests that can measure if someone has a better overview of things or not.”
A “manual” on how to navigate reactive habits does not appear to exist according to this interviewee. His knowledge about the source of emotions remains rather limited.

Another interviewee (10) outlines that emotional reactions happen fast and are uncontrolled. He has been asked why this happens:

“I have no idea. No idea where that precisely comes from. I have not researched yet where that exactly comes from.”

(Interviewee 10, Atlas.ti, paragraph 42).

Interviewee 10 is further convinced:

“We are all the product of our experiences. That means that you have made specific experiences and that your reactions to these experiences are in a certain way.”

(Interviewee 10, Atlas.ti, paragraph 46 – see this comment also in theme 1).

The above comment also relates to the preceding sections on expectations, reactions and egocentricity. This interviewee characterizes himself and his emotional reactions as a product of his interpersonal environment. However, this leads him to the assumption that emotional reactiveness is unavoidable. Moreover, his understanding can be described as passive, as he “surrenders” himself to his emotions.

Interviewee 10 perceives past experiences as the source of his emotional reactions, which highlights his emotionally passive understanding. From his comments, it can be assumed that this perspective is so ingrained into his mind that it is accepted and tolerated by him, without being questioned. However, this perspective is also passive, as it does not leave space for engagement – things are as they are.

Interviewee 10 concludes by saying:

“I don’t know if I really control it, or if it is something that is simply there.”

(Interviewee 10, Atlas.ti, paragraph 84).
Interviewee 13 speaks about pride in business interactions:

“On the other hand I also have my pride and I will not call her for two weeks trying to get her on the phone. In my opinion it is also her task to stand behind what she has said. And this shows me that she is not doing it and is too much of a coward to tell me to my face.”

(Interviewee 13, Atlas.ti, paragraph 52).

This interviewee speaks about pride, a value that is very individualistic (focused on the node). Pride relates to egocentricity and implies intolerance towards other perspectives. Pride also implies a reactive emotional understanding in relation to other PTMs, and relates to an egocentric perspective outlined in theme 2. Pride lets assume an egocentric and one-sided value assessment.

Theme 3 Personal Emotional Background: Summary and Retrospective

Participant Observation

Marketing and Emotions

Findings in theme 3 suggest that the participants do not possess a distinct understanding of their emotions. The narratives indicate that the interviewees do not only have a paradigmatic, or passive, emotional understanding such as outlined in theme 1, but they also appear to lack the necessary background of emotional knowledge (for example: where do emotions come from and how can I engage them?) to engage emotional passiveness.

The rise of relational marketing approaches challenged the idea of the mechanistic marketing paradigm (4Ps). Even though products are still produced and sold for money, the definition of value changed from transactional value to value-in-use. On an individual level and in interpersonal interactions this would imply that value is not contained in the information, or value-proposition from one part-time marketer to another, but is assessed by the recipient, or beneficiary, of the information. Schulz and Gnoth (2008) characterized this process as idea development. However, the current reactive emotional understanding implies that value is assessed from an
egocentric perspective. Figure 5.6 contrasts relational marketing and a reactive emotional understanding:

**Figure 5.6 Interconnected Value Perspective vs. Fragmented Emotional Understanding**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relational Marketing Perspective</th>
<th>Internal Marketing Perspective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The understanding of value-in-use is dynamic and interconnected</td>
<td>The understanding of emotions is inherently related to a one-sided and fragmented value assessment (egocentric)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is assumed that a part-time marketer cannot “possess” ideas (internal marketing assumption), in the same way that they cannot “possess” money (external marketing assumption). It is argued that the sharing and discussion of ideas or information, or service, is what makes them products or services. Emotions, on the other hand, appear to distract employees from the value of ideas, which is assessed by the recipient, or internal customer. Varey and Ballantyne (2005) expressed that the locus of power in dialogue lies “between” participants, while Lusch (2007) outlined that the customer is always a co-creator of value. However, this theme suggests that the assessment of value between PTMs is not explicit.

**Retrospective Participant Observation on Personal Emotional Background**

The following example underlines the assumption, that the personal emotional background of part-time marketers is rather limited:

This example stems from an experience of the researcher, made at an assessment centre for junior executives, who are PTMs with potential to be
become future leaders of a company. One of the objectives of this assessment centre was to find out how PTMs behave and act in stress situations. After two days of induced stress situations, all participants had the opportunity to talk to a relaxation expert about stress; where it comes from, symptoms, etc. From the questions raised by the interviewees it became obvious that almost everybody is concerned with emotional reactivity and nobody knows the source of a REmUn. Questions were asked such as:

“Why is it so difficult to resist emotional arousal?”

“Where does emotional arousal come from?”

Also, the expert focused on advising individuals to prevent stress and to cope with stress symptoms, but did not elaborate where the core of it lies.

It has been argued that employees need to assume a marketing-like attitude (W. R. George & Grönroos, 1991). However, a reactive emotional understanding does not correspond with the external marketing world. For instance, the assessment of value is one-sided instead of multi-perspectival, which is an external marketing assumption. Theme 3 and the above real life example outlined that the current emotional background remains vague to engage with, or “respond” to, this perspective.

**Theme 4: Emotional Exhaustion**

Emotional reactivity leads to emotional exhaustion. In the worst case, emotional reactivity results in acute hearing loss or the burnout syndrome (Keinan & Melamed, 1987; Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Both conditions, hearing loss and burnout syndrome, are, among others, a consequence of excessive emotional stress. Hearing loss refers to the loss of the ability to hear, either permanently, or temporarily; the burnout syndrome is also a consequence of emotional stress, which results in dizziness, extreme tiredness, or lack of motivation, for example.

This theme outlines how participants intuitively accept, as a consequence of their reactive emotional understanding, that emotional reactivity remains largely passive and, hence, out of their individual control. Emotional exhaustion is a foreseeable
consequence to emotional reactivity. However, emotional reactivity is based on a passive and reactive understanding, which remains unquestioned by the participants (theme 3). This theme highlights some quotes, which outline that participants are aware of emotional exhaustion. However, this theme also suggests that it is an inherent consequence of a REmUn.

Emotional exhaustion is not directly related to the initial theoretical framework outlined in Chapter Two, and only became apparent as a meaningful contribution to this study during the data analysis process. In relation to the preceding topics it has an overarching relevance for this study, as it emphasizes some consequences of a reactive emotional understanding (in Chapter Six, these consequences are related to specific implications for academics and practitioners). In relation to an assumed dominant REmUn among the participants, emotional exhaustion is an inherent “by-product” of themes 1 and 2. Theme 3 implies that the interviewees cannot actively avoid emotional exhaustion, as they seem to lack the necessary emotional knowledge background.

This theme outlines that the participants of this study report a “waste of energy” or “loss of energy” in relation to unpleasant emotions. Given the insights from theme 3, there is only little chance that the participants are able to actively prevent emotional exhaustion, which has been characterized as an inherent consequence of emotional reactivity. One participant was asked to describe an unpleasant interaction. He narrates:

“That I have an unpleasant feeling in my stomach, it seems that I am burning a lot of energy. That means once I come out of such a negotiation I am really tired. Even if I have reached my target it takes me a while to be happy, simply because I am exhausted. Hence, you are using a lot of energy and this is exactly what makes it unpleasant.”

(Interviewee 4, Atlas.ti, paragraph 48).

In retrospective, and based on the experience of the researcher, this participant describes a rather common situation in business: Different targets and, subsequently, different expectations, can lead to emotionally “unpleasant” interactions, which are
characterized as tiring for the participant. While themes 1 and 2 highlighted how it comes to this point, theme 3 outlined that the participants of this study do not seem to possess the necessary knowledge of emotions to avoid emotional exhaustion.

Interviewees appear to subconsciously accept emotional exhaustion, by intuitively assuming a reactive emotional understanding, which has also been characterized as a paradigmatic understanding of emotions (see theme 1). The process of expectations leading into emotional reactions, which results in emotional exhaustion, appears to be supported by a passive, or paradigmatic, emotional understanding. This appears to be related to the belief that individuals are independent and detached from each other (see theme 2 Egocentricity).

Interviewee 9 describes emotional exhaustion as a common and natural consequence of a phone call with one of his suppliers:

“There is a certain point where I am simply tired. After a 2 hour phone call with this supplier I want nothing but a cup of coffee and a dark room to relax. There is a point where all the energy is simply gone.”

(Interviewee 9, Atlas.ti, paragraph 127).

From adjacent discussions with this interviewee it is noted that he regularly calls this supplier with negative expectations. Due to unpleasant experiences from the past, this interviewee “predicts” an emotionally exhaustive interaction. This static emotional perspective does not leave him space to consider other options, except being emotionally displeased during and after the phone call.

**Theme 4 Emotional Exhaustion: Summary and Retrospective Participant Observation:**

**Marketing and Emotions**

As has been outlined in the beginning of this theme, the phenomenon of emotional exhaustion is not new. However, it is important to highlight, as it strongly influences internal interaction and communication. This theme must be assessed in relation to themes 1 to 3 to be of relevance to this study. The worst cases of emotional
exhaustion are hearing loss or burnout syndrome, which are both well-known diseases in Western societies. Unfortunately, medical practitioners only recommend stress reduction, less work, and more leisure time. A more active emotional understanding remains neglected.

To draw a parallel to external marketing, this exhaustion might be comparable with a marketing communication strategy that is based on a company-centric perspective. If a company chose a marketing communication strategy based on firm-centric insights, or that was exclusively reliant on sales numbers (past), there would be a high probability that communication strategies would fail and lead to monetary “exhaustion,” or miss investment, without success.

Instead, advocates of relational approaches to marketing focus on what the customer has to say (customer-centric perspective). If the customer has a negative comment, it is used in a positive way, as feedback, to improve the product or service. On an interpersonal level, negative feedback in relation to an idea or information often leads to frustration (see preceding themes). The findings of this theme are summarized in figure 5.7:

**Figure 5.7 Reciprocal Understanding vs. Egocentric Understanding**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Relational Marketing Perspective</strong></th>
<th><strong>Internal Marketing Perspective</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reciprocal assessment of value to avoid misdirected investments (“monetary exhaustion”)</td>
<td>Egocentric assessment of value leads to emotional exhaustion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Retrospective Participant Observation on Emotional Exhaustion**

Retrospectively, it is important to mention that diseases, such as a hearing loss or burnout syndrome are not only widespread, but also neglected. This comment relates back to the example outlined in the last theme (theme 3 Personal Emotional Background). From the questions of the participants from the assessment centre described above, it is assumed that part-time marketers suffer from the consequences of emotional reactiveness. Some of these questions were:

“I sometimes have shaking hands in stress situation. What can I do to avoid that?”

“I often get cold hands prior to a management meeting. Where does that come from?”

The questions do not only reconfirm the assumption made in theme 3 (Personal Emotional Background), but also outline that many part-time marketers are affected by emotional exhaustion. Some other members of the assessment centre described a tone in their ear, not exactly knowing what caused it, and asking for clarification and background. From the affirmative comments of the other PTMs, and the slightly tense mood in the room (it appeared to be an unpleasant topic to talk about), it became apparent that emotional exhaustion might be more that just an occasional phenomenon.

Based on a relational marketing understanding, a company approaches value not from a firm-centric perspective, but from a customer-centric perspective. Multi-perspectival value assessment prevents companies from monetary miss investments. Individually, emotional reactions emphasize that too much importance is placed on the individual assessment of value, which appears to be projected on the part-time marketers. For example, if a management committee rejects a presentation or is unhappy with the results, there is no point in being disappointed or directing blame. The interpersonal network is far too complex and multilateral for taking in all the emotional blame on oneself, or, as directing it outward in a specific direction.
**Theme 5: Emotional Superiority**

This theme outlines that interviewees intuitively characterize emotional feelings as the foundation of good and benevolent interpersonal interactions. This has mostly been observed implicitly in a variety of statements outlined in this theme. The success of business however, is still largely assessed with measurable variables such as turnover, profit or contribution margin.

The following comments highlight that the participants of this study consider emotions at least as important as the rational aspect of an interaction, which consists of information or ideas. Even though it has been argued that both emotion and reason cannot be approached in isolation, the analogy of the separation of emotions from rational facts is used in common speech to outline the importance of either one of them.

A participant was asked about the ingredients of a good interaction. Her answer is:

“The prevailing mood should be relaxed. It also depends on the topic. But yeah, a positive basic attitude on both sides.”

(Interviewee 2, Atlas.ti, paragraph 76).

The first aspect mentioned by this participant is a pleasant basic atmosphere. What she refers to is a friendly and loose emotional environment. She narrates about a certain feeling that resides inside her. From her comment, it can be assumed that she perceives this feeling as predominantly triggered by external circumstances (pleasant partners, pleasant facilities, etc.), even though the feeling originates inside her. This assumption is also informed by the preceding themes and refers back to a reactive emotional understanding.

Another participant noted the importance of a weekly team meeting for him. He was asked why such a team meeting is so important. He says:

“Social relationships. Relationship networking. Especially for me it is important. A relationship-type of person lives off of relationships. I feel more fulfilled. In a positive relationship environment, I am able to deliver a good performance.”

178
Advocates of relational approaches to marketing have claimed that the service perspective is a higher-order concept that does not replace the 4Ps, but rather, relational marketing approaches build on the 4Ps when it comes to an analysis of exchange (Grönroos, 2006). On an individual level, the rational mind is dominant (see Chapter Two). This could also be observed in the preceding themes, which imply emotional boundaries between part-time marketers. However, the first two interviewees claim that emotions build the foundation of successful interpersonal interaction and, as such, emotions might also be described as a higher order concept compared to the rational aspect of an interaction, at least from the perspective of these participants.

The following participant also refers to the importance of a solid social basis in interpersonal interactions, which he describes in the form of a harmonic network of relationships in the workplace. Similar to the first comment in this theme, this interviewee refers to an emotion, which resides inside him. He goes as far as saying that he needs this feeling, as it is a form of personal acknowledgement for him.

He further states:

“And if I pay attention only to the facts, then I do not have the people with me. And that is why I try to adapt the standard or at least to create a mix of facts and personal well being, or how the department feels. Hence, a mix, and I try to underline that before I concentrate only on the facts, or the factual, I try to make that happen. I personally see the human behind all that a lot and with some harmony.”

(Interviewee 3, Atlas.ti, paragraph 70).

Another interviewee was asked what role interaction plays in her daily business:

“Interaction is obviously vital for our job. Without interaction we couldn’t make it. That is why it is really important. And, of course, there are a lot of things that can go wrong. And that is why it is important to treat each other well.”
The same interviewee further states:

“Emotions play an important role for me – unfortunately. I am a very emotional person. My boss is not an emotional person, he can be very factual, he says: this is how it is, no discussion… maybe it is a men – women thing. Men can be relatively factual, women are generally more emotional. Well, I have also cried in a conversation with my boss, because I am emotional in certain situations. Both to negative and positive feedback, I sometimes react very emotionally and this is something that I cannot just quit so easily.”

(Interviewee 5, Atlas.ti, paragraph 94).

Interviewee 5 notes that emotions are passively created and dependent on the (re-) action of other part-time marketers. She feels unwell in this situation and uses the term “unfortunately” in relation to her emotional reaction, which implies that she would influence her reactions, if she could. She also states that an emotionally pleasant feeling is essential for her in interpersonal interactions.

Interviewee 8 was asked what would be important for him when choosing a business partner. His answer is rather spontaneous:

“That I like my partner as a person. The first thing is always whether he understands his business, what he can offer. But then the understanding on an emotional (human) level is important. It is going to be more and more difficult when the emotional (human) side is not working.”

(Interviewee 8, Atlas.ti, paragraph 54).

Interviewee 8 notes how important the emotional side is for him in interpersonal business interactions. In his eyes, it is a prerequisite for good interactions. Finally, he states:

“Most of all because we are humans, emotions play an important role.”

(Interviewee 8, Atlas.ti, paragraph 80).
This comment summarizes this interviewee’s opinion that emotions are the basis for interpersonal interactions.

Interviewee 9 describes a pleasant emotional atmosphere as a prerequisite to successful and fruitful interaction:

“They all speak the same language, otherwise the product wouldn’t have been that successful. It is once again good communication between individuals. To come back to the starting point: If things in the company don’t go well, there is no good output.”

(Interviewee 9, Atlas.ti, paragraph 54).

Interviewee 9 expresses his perspective of why a successful company makes good products. He refers to the prevailing mood and atmosphere in interaction and communication processes as the key to successful products. However, the fact that emotions build the basis for business interactions appears disadvantageous, considering that a part-time marketer’s emotional understanding has been identified as passive and reactive (themes 1, 3 and 4).

Interviewee 9 was also explicitly asked about the importance of emotions in interactions. He says:

“Big (the importance). Emotions show the direction. Emotions are needed to navigate.”

(Interviewee 9, Atlas.ti, paragraph 76).

Another interviewee narrates:

“If the interpersonal component doesn’t work and people don’t treat each other in a human way, then the whole thing doesn’t work, then it is not sustainable.”

(Interviewee 11, Atlas.ti, paragraph 175).
Interviewee 11 refers to the importance of the emotional side in interpersonal interactions. He confirms the assumptions that participants of this study perceive emotions as a pre-condition for interpersonal business interactions.

**Theme 5 Emotional Superiority: Summary and Retrospective Participant Observation:**

**Marketing and Emotions**

Advocates of relational marketing have claimed that service is a higher order concept in relation to the transactional exchange perspective (Grönroos, 2006). Theme 5 appears to support the idea that emotions are a prerequisite (higher order concept) to rational decision-making in the eyes of the participants of this study. From their perspective, the interpersonal network seems only to work successfully, once it is based on a positive emotional experience. The emotional foundation of an interpersonal interaction, similar to the service-oriented network perspective, could be characterized as a higher order concept.

Also, Ramaswamy (2008) speaks of “value through experiences.” His focus on customer experiences, instead of exchange value, underlines a shift from a mechanistic idea of value creation towards an emotional experience of value co-creation. In relation to theme 3 (Personal Emotional Background) and theme 1 (Static Reactive Behaviour and Expectations), this raises questions such as: “If emotions are considered so important by the participants of this study, why do they know so little about them?”

Figure 5.8 contrasts a relational marketing perspective with the emotional superiority as perceived by the participants. Even though outcomes in business are largely assessed in relation to quantitative aspects (e.g. time lines, profit, turnover), interviewees perceive emotions as the fundamental basis of interpersonal information exchange. Both appear to be a higher order concept in relation to transactional exchange (marketing) and interpersonal exchange (emotions).
Retrospective Participant Observation on Emotional Superiority

Even though most of the business meetings are designed to generate quantitative output, such as cost targets and start sales dates for a new product development, it is assumed that they do not have to be emotionally tense. However, the researcher has observed the following situation:

Interactions with conflict potential are usually emotionally tense and are often avoided. It is an unwritten rule in multi national corporations that interpersonal interaction should be preferably face-to-face. If that is not possible, the telephone is the next option and only then, emails should be written. This rule accounts specifically in relation to difficult or important topics. It has been observed that part-time marketers avoid personal contact (face-to-face, phone), in the case that bad emotional experiences have been made and are projected to a meeting or even a specific person.

This sort of behaviour is an indicator of the influence of emotions on internal interactions. Based on retrospective observations, this implies that emotions have a significant influence on the internal efficiency related to information flow. It could be argued that business needs to be done anyway, with or without pleasant emotions, which might be a genuine statement. However, emotions appear to enhance the willingness to engage with problems or challenges in a more direct and hence, a more efficient, way.
**Theme 6: “Pseudo” Empathy**

Interviewees relate to empathy as a precondition for a good interaction. In the following, key quotes are highlighted, which outline how interviewees consider empathetic behaviour, either implicitly or explicitly, as essential for good interpersonal interactions. However, this information alone is not a new insight. In subsequent follow-up interview sessions, which follow later in this chapter, interviewees have been asked to discuss empathy in more detail, based on some of the comments outlined in this theme. During the follow-up sessions, part-time marketers have, for instance, been asked how they can influence, or navigate, their degree of empathy towards others to understand whether empathy is perceived as passive (no influence on the degree of empathy) or active (the degree of empathy can be influenced).

To anticipate an assumption of this theme, this first interview session suggests that interviewees are aware of the importance of empathy in interactions. However, based on a reactive emotional understanding (theme 1) it is also assumed that the participants refer to empathy as a passive construct, which is more or less apparent, but cannot be actively navigated. Theme 3 (Personal Emotional Background) suggests that participants do not know enough about their own emotions to actively influence and “navigate” empathetic behaviour. Therefore, this theme is called “Pseudo” Empathy.

One of the interviewees states:

“I try to communicate certain things to him in a different way than I would do it with other colleagues; to evaluate his reaction on certain things in advance.”

(Interviewee 1, Atlas.ti, paragraph 50).

Another interviewee says:

“And of course there are different targets, which are not always congruent, and this is what you have to pay attention to. Hence, understanding and consideration for the personality and interests of other persons.”
Participants perceive empathy as important to business interactions. In fact, empathy is essential for relational marketing, as it involves the ability to view the situation from the other part’s perspective (Sin, et al., 2002). This “otherness” perspective is crucial in networks in order to understand the impacts of the adjacent nodes on the environment. It also supports a multi-perspectival value perception that was mentioned earlier in this section.

Interviewee 10 was asked why he tries to arrange and understand different characters and their emotional reactions in interactions:

“You have to (arrange the characters). If you don’t do it, you are lost. The reaction of the other one to my action leads to another reaction. Or the other way around: the other one acts and I need to know how to react. Do I have to react in a calm manner because I know that otherwise it would only drive the other one crazier? Or do I know that the other person needs the heat, he has to ‘fight,’ and he needs an open and straightforward discussion to clarify the position. Or will he be upset if I tell him that I have a different opinion? Will his feelings be hurt and will we be unable to communicate anymore? And hence, the better I know the other person, the better the conversation can be.”

Interviewee 10 explains why empathy is so important for him in interactions. Follow-up interviews will further reveal how participants perceive empathy in relation to emotions (passive or active).

Interviewee 10 continues:

“For me it is important to have tolerance of the one that thinks differently. This is one of the fundamental arguments for me. To accept the other one, the way he reacts.”
Interviewee 12 was asked what is necessary in order to have more pleasant interactions. This is what he believes he can actively do:

“To put myself in the shoes of the other person, trying to understand him. Very often that means putting yourself in his shoes, and asking: What would I do in his situation?”

(Interviewee 12, Atlas.ti, paragraph 58).

Another interviewee said:

“It would be nice if one had empathy; that one realized that it (the words spoken) got through to the other person or not and that one shows interest. I think showing interest is really important for the other person.”

(Interviewee 14, Atlas.ti, paragraph 56).

Another interviewee, more implicitly, described empathy as an essential basis for interaction:

“I have the opinion that if he understood my reasons and supports them, and is able to support them, that his self-motivation is higher as well to support these targets; higher than if he had just been told to do so and he is fulfilling them reluctantly. This means that to connect with the people and convince them about their contents is an important part of my motivation strategy.”

(Interviewee 15, Atlas.ti, paragraph 52).

Interviewee 15 relates empathy to interconnectedness among part-time marketers. Empathetic behaviour requires emotional control in order to remain emotionally responsive to the emotions of others (Rosenberg, 2001), which appears to not be a part of the current emotional understanding of the participants. Emotional arousal interrupts self-reflection and, hence, the responsiveness towards others (Korthagen, 2005).

Interviewee 15 is considered an emotionally advanced person. This also becomes also apparent in a comment made by one of his colleagues:
“Principally everybody has the skill (to listen), but it is more developed in some than in others. I know a colleague (Interviewee 15) where I think this skill is excellently developed… he manages to integrate people very well.”

(Interviewee 16, Atlas.ti, paragraph 54).

Further on in the interview, interviewee 15 was asked how he could claim that he is a good listener:

“There are several components (to being a good listener). I would link it to the fact that I listen and I want to understand others. Hence, it starts with this, the will that I want to understand.”

(Interviewee 15, Atlas.ti, paragraph 76).

In relation to co-creation, marketing scholars have noted the importance of “listening” (Payne & Storbacka, 2008). Both being empathetic and listening to another part-time marketer appears to be a major ingredient to a successful interpersonal business interaction in the eyes of the participants. However, as will also be discussed later in this study, listening is more than an acoustical process.

**Theme 6 “Pseudo” Empathy: Summary and Retrospective Participant Observation:**

**Marketing and Emotions**

Empathy is considered to be one of four behavioural components in a relationship marketing orientation, besides bonding, reciprocity and trust (Yau, et al., 2000). Empathy has been characterized as an active behaviour and the ability to understand the current feeling of an individual and not the feelings of yesterday and before (Kalisch, 1973). Therefore, emotional arousal prevents individuals from being empathetic towards the feeling of others. This has been called a passive, or “pseudo,” empathetic mode. Emotional reactions can interrupt the understanding of another’s feelings, when emotions become too dominant and prevent conscious reflection (Korthagen, 2005; Rosenberg, 2001). Interestingly, no participant related empathy to his or her own emotions, at least not explicitly.
Empathy will be discussed with some of the interviewees in more detail during a follow-up session, which is outlined later on in this chapter, to further explore what participants know about the relationship between empathy and emotions. Empathy supports a relational marketing perspective as it shifts the importance from the node, or individual, to threads, or interactions. Moreover, empathy is an active process (Kalisch, 1973).

From a relational marketing perspective, empathy is an indispensable characteristic in co-creating value with customers. Taking into consideration that customers are not always aware of their own needs, it is essential to be perceptive of them. Empathy also supports the understanding of internal customer needs and the background in which it is transmitted. Figure 5.9 illustrates empathy from a relational marketing perspective versus an emotional perspective:

**Figure 5.9 Active and Passive Empathy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relational Marketing Perspective</th>
<th>Internal Marketing Perspective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Empathy is essential to understand situations from a relational perspective (the other part’s perspective) – it is an active perspective</td>
<td>Empathy is perceived as essential to interpersonal interactions. However, it is a passive perspective (degree of empathy cannot be actively influenced)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Empathy is inherently built on an ego-transcendent perspective of interactions, which stands in opposition to theme 2 (Egocentricity). Moreover, a reactive emotional understanding (theme 1) does not support an emotionally active understanding of empathy. Therefore, it is assumed, at this point, that empathy is a passive perspective and is called “Pseudo” Empathy. It is assumed that participants do not know how to navigate empathy, which will be further explored in the follow-up sessions.
Retrospective Participant Observation on ‘Pseudo’ Empathy

Retrospectively, part-time marketers appear to be “too busy” to be empathetic. PTMs seem to be too concerned with their own personalized tasks and challenges to be empathetic and reflective towards others. The following example outlines this situation:

During his active time as a product manager, the researcher often observed comments after a business meeting, such as the following: “Well, that was a waste of time; another meeting where everybody said what they had to say and left.” This comment was accompanied by a certain degree of frustration because of a lack of consensus during the meeting. Focus seems to be primarily on “sending,” or talking, instead of “receiving,” or listening. Pressure in business for constant innovation and cost decrease to remain competitive is transferred from a societal level, to an industry level, to a firm level, and finally to an individual and interpersonal level. Part-time marketers emotionally identify with tasks and challenges. The perceived time pressure leaves no room for active listening.

Compensating time pressure by cutting back on the receptive part of an interaction appears to be contradictory based on the assumption that value is determined by the beneficiary (Vargo & Lusch, 2008b). Certainly, if one person talks, others have to listen. However, it has also been noted that to listen empathetically, a person needs to be perceptive on all channels (Rosenberg, 2001). Part-time marketers, in order to say what they have to say, often project half finished ideas and thoughts from other PTMs on their own perspective, and relate them to their emotional experiences.

As a consequence, Rosenberg argues that “talkative” part-time marketers “take away” the emotional experience of other PTMs, by transferring it to their own perspective. For instance, a PTM reports about the difficulties of solving a technical problem and before he is able to finish his statement, another PTM says: “Yes, I know this problem, we had this last year. What we did is…” Instead of asking about more details of his problem, which would imply being empathetic, he transfers it to his own emotional perspective and continues to talk. This, according to Rosenberg, is not
empathetic. This perspective is passive and, to be actively empathetic, PTMs need to control the reactive nature of emotions, which, in this example, is related to time pressure.

**Theme 7: Static Time Perception**

This theme outlines that an emotional understanding can be related to a certain time perspective. The underlying theme is closely related to theme 1, as a static perception of interpersonal exchange is implicitly related to time. Theme 1 outlined that future expectations are built through an extrapolation of past experiences. Expectations and, specifically, the subsequent emotional reactions, have been characterized as static and reactive. Expectations do not account for the infinite possibilities of emerging futures, which are an inherent consequence of the complexity of networks.

Interviewee 7 was asked why a regulated and organized day is important to her. Her answer is:

“Well, I know what I have to do, when I have to do it and where I have to do it. Otherwise I wouldn’t know what was expected of me every day. I would be running into the dark and wouldn’t know what happened. Could be something good, could be something bad.”

(Interviewee 7, Atlas.ti, paragraphs 241).

One of the characteristics of relational marketing is a dynamic and open-ended time perspective towards exchange. Consequently, external marketing scholars are not focused on one point in time, or transactional exchange. Instead, time has been characterized as an ongoing process (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). The idea of developing mutual trust in relationships (see Ballantyne, 2003) or the concept of trust and commitment (see Morgan & Hunt, 1999) are such processes that evolve over time. For example, Morgan and Hunt (1994) argued that communication fosters trust by aligning perceptions and expectations, which are related to emotions.

On an external marketing level, dynamism is well accepted as a characteristic of the relational paradigm. In this regard, it has been noted that marketing is in flux
(Gummesson, 2007). Interviewee 7, however, expresses why she strives for stability and predictability. Time, which in the case of interviewee 7 is the future, is related to emotions and fears about her workplace. Interviewee 7 appears to require clarity about the future to feel comfortable. However, as Medlin (2004) noted, time cannot be perceived as being static but is a dynamic construct. There is only a continually moving present, and future and past have only meaning in the present.

Interviewee 8 comments:

“...I cannot make a plan for 10 years, at least not here (this company, this environment). But I have to be able to offer the employees some security for about 1 to 2 years.”

(Interviewee 8, Atlas.ti, paragraph 42).

Interviewee 8 is in a top management position. Planning for the future plays a predominant role for him. At the same time, he is aware of change in the environment and the stability that his employees request from him. Dynamic change, on an individual level, has been described as exhausting (see theme 1 Static Expectations and 4 Emotional Exhaustion). Letting one thing go and getting used to another is perceived as stressful and unpleasant. This, however, appears to be disadvantageous in an environment that is dynamic and characterized by change.

Interviewee 10 explains:

“Once I know that this is my target for the next 5 years, then I will plan that way, because I cannot continue to put too much energy in it. I need to find a way that I do things once and then they just keep going until the end. If you always have to invest additional energy, that is not good.”

(Interviewee 10, Atlas.ti, paragraph 99).

This interviewee highlights energy that he has to invest, in case his expectations remain unfulfilled. Therefore, every deviation from his expectations leads to an adjustment in perspective, which is related to physical and mental energy consumption. However, these changes, which represent an ongoing dynamism, correspond to a relational marketing reality that is in constant flux.
business environment is characterized by ongoing change and dynamism, the current perspective of the internal market place is related to a static understanding of time. More importantly, this time perspective is related to inherent and predetermined emotional reactions in a dynamic environment.

Theme 7 Static Time Perception: Summary and Retrospective Participant Observation:

Marketing and Emotions
In relation to theme 1 (Static Reactive Behaviour and Expectations), it is assumed that emotions can be approached with a certain understanding of time, which is related to a relational marketing perspective. Interviewees describe situations where they attend meetings and “forecast” emotions with the help of past experiences. Other participants described fear of upcoming management presentations. Even though the past and the future are merely a memory stream in peoples’ minds, they actively influence the well-being of part-time marketers in the present. Therefore, it is assumed by the research that the previously characterized reactive emotional understanding is inherently related to a certain, ingrained understanding of time.

A reactive emotional understanding can be characterized as static in relation to time, as it refers to past experiences or specific, desired, versions of an emerging future (static expectations). On the contrary, and from an external marketing perspective, the idea of relational marketing exchange is an open-ended process (Varey & Ballantyne, 2005). It has also been noted that from a service perspective, the time logic becomes open-ended (Ballantyne & Aitken, 2007). The concept of value-in-use implies that a product or service unfolds its use over time while a consumer uses it. Likewise, the reaction, or value assessment, towards information is only an episode in an open-ended process of information exchange. Strong emotional attachment to a specific event is therefore disadvantageous, as it follows a static and linear logic.

Likewise, interpersonal interactions can be perceived as episodes that belong to a constantly changing environment. However, a reactive emotional understanding is static and fixed on one point in time. The time logic of marketing, which is also
related to the idea of value-in-use, appears to stand in opposition to a static perception of interpersonal interactions. Figure 5.10 highlights the contrasting time perspectives of relational marketing and interpersonal interaction:

**Figure 5.10 Differing time Perspectives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relational Marketing Perspective</th>
<th>Internal Marketing Perspective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exchange is characterized by a dynamic and open-ended time perspective</td>
<td>Exchange is characterized by a static understanding of emotions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Retrospective Participant Observation on Static Time Perception**

Retrospectively, and with reference to the comment of interviewee 8, targets in the form of product launch dates, product development milestone meetings and many more dominate the business environment. This is a necessary prerequisite of business success and to satisfy consumers, who might expect a certain product at a certain date (see for example the Apple Ipad and customers sleeping in front of the store). However, these targets appear inherently related to emotional reactions and can lead to unpleasant and emotionally exhausting interactions if an expectation remains unfulfilled.

Among part-time marketers, the time phenomenon is often discussed, which can be demonstrated with the following example:

In Germany, a maximum amount of working time per day of 10 hours is not legal (exceptions apply). However, part-time marketers often come close to 10 hours. Comments can be observed such as: “Man, I wished the day would have two more hours.” On the contrary, comments like this can be observed:
“Man, everybody knows that even if the day is twice as long, you would never get everything done.” There seems to be a conflict in the perspective of time, which often results in emotional stress. PTMs perceive time strongly related to the fulfilment of targets, which are linked to emotional reactions.

Generally, it can be observed in industry that time is perceived rather passively. A passive time perspective is characterized by a certain feeling of dependence of time, and could be expressed in the form of a statement such as: “Sorry, I cannot talk to you now, I don’t have time!” A more active perspective would be: “Sorry, I cannot talk to you now, I do not want to take my time now!” The latter expression, assessed with the current mindset, might be perceived as rude. However, it is argued that the latter statement expresses an attitude towards time, which is more active and represents integrity in the form of clear statements.

**Theme 8: Sustainable Interactions**

In Chapter Four (section 4.4.3), “sustainability” was presented as an interview catalyst for this research. That is, interviewees have been asked to discuss sustainability and sustainable interactions with the researcher, to gain more depth and detail in this research. It was interesting to report how participants linked sustainability to interaction, even though this theme is not directly related to a reactive emotional understanding.

Before the participants were asked to discuss sustainable interactions and, in particular, they were invited to describe what comes to their mind when they hear the term “sustainability.” Even though the interviewees were biased by the sequence of topics, in which sustainability succeeded interaction, their statements underline the importance of emotions in interactions, as perceived by the participants.

Interviewee 1 was asked to explain his perspective on sustainability. He says:

“I am not sure if it (sustainability) is a different topic after all (different to interaction). But sustainability has its source in good interaction.”

(Interviewee 1, Atlas.ti, paragraph 78).
Later, the same participant described sustainability in relation to interaction in more detail:

“A sustainable firm is, as I described before, (one) with constantly good performance, with constantly good products, that builds a good internal atmosphere with constantly good working conditions.”

(Interviewee 1, Atlas.ti, paragraph 82).

This interviewee relates sustainability to a pleasant atmosphere and hence, feelings and emotions. He uses sustainability to express the need of consistently positive emotions in interpersonal interactions.

Another interviewee was asked what she could do to be more sustainable in her way of acting:

“The same as I said in relation to communication and interaction, that I pay attention not to leave others behind (with what I am doing), and to show that I care about them. It is important to involve the others and to be considerate with others. Because I want to work together with them in the long run.”

(Interviewee 2, Atlas.ti, paragraph 101).

Interviewee 2 describes empathetic behaviour in relation to sustainability. Often, it became obvious that interviewees appear to reply to sustainability in the same way as if they were asked about a positive, or pleasant, interaction. Therefore, the discussion related to sustainability had a probing effect and confirmed how important participants perceive emotions and feelings to be in relation to interpersonal interactions (theme 5 Emotional Superiority) and sustainability.

Another interviewee linked interaction and sustainability:

“Good communication, for example the proper exchange of information, that is what I criticize, was does not work well enough.”

(Interviewee 9, Atlas.ti, paragraph 95).
Even though the researcher explicitly asked the interviewees to comment on sustainability, independently of the first discussion topic, interaction, most of the participants made this connection intuitively. The way in which the participants connect interaction to sustainability shows an awareness of the importance of a pleasant atmosphere in interactions among part-time marketers. Having an awareness of the importance of emotions (theme 5 Emotional Superiority), but not possessing sufficient emotional knowledge (theme 3 Personal Emotional Background), appears to be a major contradiction. This might be a subconscious-intuitive contradiction, which will be elaborated on later in this section.

Another interviewee states:

“Very clearly… this relates back to the topic of interaction… most probably. How do I deal with them (a supervisor with his employee), do I support them (the employees), how do I give them feedback? Am I fair? Such things. Sure, this is also subjective, yes, but I think I do give clear instructions, this is the topic again: What do I really want or am I wishy-washy with what I want, so that I find a way out of what I said afterwards, like: ‘This is not what I meant!’ This is what I think is really sustainable, because clear instructions are very sustainable. If everyone has the same understanding of something.”

(Interviewee 14, Atlas.ti, paragraph 141).

This interviewee labels an interaction sustainable if it is clear and explicit. She describes a self-reflective attitude as being conducive to a better connection with other individuals. Clear commitments, in the eyes of this interviewee, help to create a sustainable interaction. From the perspective of this interviewee, clear commitments help to deal with emotions.
Theme 8 Sustainable Interactions: Summary and Retrospective Participant Observation:

Marketing and Emotions

The term “sustainable competitive advantage” is used throughout marketing literature and is related to relationship marketing and service (Ballantyne & Varey, 2006; Lusch, et al., 2007; Ramaswamy, 2008). From the narrations of the participants of this study, it can be assumed that the term sustainability refers to an emotionally pleasant atmosphere in relation to interpersonal interaction. Also, clear and open ways of communication have been highlighted, which relate to integrity in interactions.

Another interesting aspect is the implicitness with which individuals link sustainability and interaction, despite the alignment of interaction and sustainability, which have been presented to the participants in this sequence. This reconfirms theme 5 (Emotional Superiority), which outlines the importance of positive emotions for part-time marketers at work. Emotions and feelings, as such, could offer a starting point for future research to define a sustainable interpersonal interaction concept, in relation to a dynamic interpersonal environment.

Theme 9: Unconsciousness

In relation to this theme, interviewees described, rather intuitive-subconsciously and implicitly, that “conscious awareness” is a necessary prerequisite for a good interpersonal interaction. However, the interviews also outline that the participants perceive consciousness as a passive attitude. That is, consciousness, similar to empathy, is understood as non-influenceable and context-dependent. This assumption is made in relation to theme 1 (Static Reactive Behaviour and Expectations), which highlights the reactive nature of emotions. Theme 1 implies that the participants perceive emotions as externally triggered and, hence, largely out of their control (see also theme 3 Personal Emotional Background). Consciousness, however, is an active state of mind (see Korthagen, 2005; Louis & Sutton, 1991) that requires emotional activeness and the belief that emotions can be controlled (see also section 3.2.4).
Interviewee 2 learned communication techniques in a seminar, which were intended to help her to “navigate” her emotions in challenging interpersonal interactions. In the seminar she learned that interactions get difficult when one person becomes defiant and emotionally reactive. She narrates:

“Allerdings I tried to remember what I learned (after the seminar), but you forget it. I mean you don’t forget it, but you can’t control it.”

(Interviewee 2, Atlas.ti, paragraph 48).

In a seminar, this interviewee learned to categorize basic emotions and what they mean. She notes, however, how difficult it is to apply this knowledge to her daily interactions. Furthermore, she narrates that she forgets what she learned. She describes how difficult it is to keep in mind what she learned and to control emotions in interactions.

Another interviewee describes the “misery” of an automatic mode of mind:

“First of all, I think the human, as he or she is made, is going to his workplace to earn money. He is going in there, and I am convinced that 60% leave their brain at the main gate and do things out of habit. They go to their workplace, don’t think too much and just do what they have to do, the work that has to be done, and this is okay. But they do not really consider looking left or right and ask themselves what they do here all day long: ‘How I can do things better? How does the environment around me look like in the adjacent departments?’ Or who is my successor in what I am doing, in what I am producing?”

(Interviewee 3, Atlas.ti, paragraph 101).

In retrospective, this participant describes the consequence of specialization and compartmentalization in large-scale industries (see section 2.4.2), which lead to monotonous work and subsequently, an automatic, or unconscious, mode of mind. However, Louis and Sutton (1991) argue that a conscious mode of mind is the more important one. They also claim that the automatic mode of mind is more dominant. Similarly, Korthagen (2005) favours a conscious mode of mind as way of enhancing self-reflection.
Interviewee 4 characterizes conscious versus unconscious behaviour:

“I have to pay attention to what happens around me, and I have to integrate these thoughts into my daily life. Then, I make my decisions accordingly. I think some do not even have these thoughts. Some have them, but they leave them at the main gate and pick them up again in the evening…”

(Interviewee 4, Atlas.ti, paragraph 107).

Similarly, interviewee 6 mentions:

“You have to be more or less free, also in your mind. If nothing distracts me, then I can focus on what I am doing.”

(Interviewee 6, Atlas.ti, paragraph 104).

Even though the participants of this study might not explicitly intend to relate to consciousness, the comments outlined in this theme demonstrate an understanding of the importance of conscious awareness. However, the passive and reactive understanding of emotions outlined in the preceding themes allows one to assume that the interviewee’s understanding of conscious awareness is passive, or paradigmatic, similar to the understanding of empathy (theme 6 “Pseudo” Empathy).

It has been argued that empathy requires an active understanding of emotions. The extended literature review in Chapter Three revealed that emotional reactivity is related to consciousness. Participants also describe how difficult it is to stay conscious. It is assumed that interviewees do not perceive the relation between conscious awareness and emotional reactivity, which is also concluded in relation to the preceding themes. This relationship will be further deepened in the follow-up interview sessions of this study.

Interviewee 8 explains the difficulty of conscious awareness:

“She was surprised because I was not aware of certain things and it is different to what I have in my mind.”

(Interviewee 8, Atlas.ti, paragraph 36).
Thoughts often appear unconsciously (Rinpoche, 2002), and so do emotional reactions related to those thoughts (theme 1 Emotional Reactiveness). From the preceding themes it can be concluded that the participants of this study perceive themselves as being “surrendered” to these emotional reactions. The interviews highlight that the participants do not seem to perceive the relationship between unconscious automatism and emotional reactivity.

Interviewee 9 mentions that energy can get lost in interactions. He was asked to describe what he means by that:

“Energy gets lost in communication, when the mode of communication is inaccurate. For example, when you change tooling. You can still have a nice product at the end. Could be that one needs 10 changes because he forgot something or because he was working under time pressure, I don’t know, and then again, it could need 20 or 30 changes, this is where the energy gets lost. This is were money gets lost.”

(Interviewee 9, Atlas.ti, paragraph 103).

Interviewee 9 describes corrections in a project as stressful with subsequent emotional exhaustion (theme 4). It has been highlighted earlier in the preceding themes that unexpected changes lead to a higher energy output in the eyes of the participants. This seems to be related to the static and automatic time perspective (theme 7). However, a state of conscious awareness has been described as dynamic and necessary in order to adjust to constantly changing circumstances (Korthagen, 2005). It can be assumed that more conscious part-time marketers are less emotionally surprised by the changing circumstances. The comment from interviewee 9 implies that this participant is constantly surprised by unexpected changes, which exhaust him. It is assumed that he is unknowingly unconscious.

Interviewee 11 explains that only individuals can be sustainable, and not objects or companies. He was then asked to describe a sustainable individual:

“The non-sustainable individual does probably have some problems at the moment. He is in a bad mood or woke up on the wrong side of the bed. He might have had some bad experiences and brought them into the meeting.”
With the comment “he brought some bad experiences in the meeting,” interviewee 11 refers to a part-time marketer, who is bothered by unconscious negative thoughts that distract him from the present meeting. According to this participant, non-sustainable PTMs tend to relate to emotions, which are the result of a bad night or other unpleasant experiences, or thoughts. Being conscious, however, is the act of simple awareness that moderates the emotional mind to enable better decision-making and free individuals of harmful emotional tendencies (Liang, 2007).

Interviewee 14 mentioned:

“In any case do I need good communication skills… and again, empathy, I would say. Because I have to understand if he got it or not. The skills of observing as well, which include listening, observing…and a clear language.”

(Interviewee 14, Atlas.ti, paragraph 147).

Another interviewee narrates:

“When you act consciously, you know what you are doing, and you know what effects it has and that I am doing it. Hence, it is not an affect, it is not just happening and maybe I know while I am doing something, that this has an effect on others. Hence, maybe I have been thinking about it.”

(Interviewee 16, Atlas.ti, paragraph 107).

This interviewee describes consciousness in business interactions.

Theme 9 Unconsciousness: Summary and Retrospective Participant Observation:

Marketing and Emotions
Consciousness is a complex idea and not easy to characterize (see also section 3.2.4). This theme outlined quotes of the participants of this study, which leads one to assume the nature of consciousness behind the spoken words. This theme aimed at outlining the importance of consciousness for part-time marketers on the one hand,
and the difficulties with consciousness in relation to the preceding themes on the other hand.

The idea of consciousness appears to support networks in different ways. It has been noted that consciousness is necessary to relating an individual to his or her environment (Mead, 1934), just as a node needs to be perceived in relation to the network. A state of consciousness also implies being aware of unity (Natsoulas, 2000), such as is represented by a network. It is assumed that the participants of this study perceive consciousness as difficult to maintain. However, they also perceive its importance and pitfalls in interpersonal interactions.

On the one hand, the interviewees describe a more automatic mode of mind, where unconscious thoughts distract them from the task at hand. On the other hand, participants narrate a more conscious mind function, which some interviewees describe as being very similar to empathetic behaviour (see theme 6 “Pseudo” Empathy).

However, it is assumed that in relation to the preceding themes, interviewees do not know how to actively “navigate” consciousness. Consciousness is closely related to emotional reactivity (see section 3.2.4). In relation to the current emotional understanding (theme 3 Personal Emotional Background), it is assumed that consciousness is a rather passive, or a largely uncontrollable appearance that is either present or not. The interviews demonstrate that participants are aware of a state of consciousness, but it appears to be out of their active control. Consciousness is also subject to the follow-up interview sessions to further elaborate the understanding of consciousness among participants (passive or active). Figure 5.11 contrasts the difference between a relational marketing and an internal marketing perspective:
Consciousness also drew attention to the comments made by marketing scholars. Especially Gummesson (2000b) who mentioned contemplative traditions and meditation in relation to marketing, created interest in the matter of consciousness and awareness in relation to marketing and management. The particular role of consciousness in internal marketing remains unexplored. However, it is somehow embedded in the terms “customer-consciousness” and “sales-mindedness,” in relation to behaviours and attitudes.

Consciousness is also a topic of the follow-up interview session. However, at this stage of the analysis it is assumed that consciousness is a passive, or non-influenceable, concept.

**Retrospective Participant Observation on Unconsciousness**

High specialization and compartmentalization such as can be found at the research site, often lead to monotone work tasks, which result in unconscious and mindless behaviour. This can be observed in a variety of actions at the workplace and is illustrated with the following example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relational Marketing Perspective</th>
<th>Internal Marketing Perspective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relational marketing is a holistic approach to marketing, characterized by the network analogy and a systems understanding of the market place</td>
<td>Consciousness is a holistic approach to interpersonal interaction, characterized by a dynamic understanding of the internal market place. However, its understanding remains passive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A variety of meetings in industry are held on a regular basis and at a regular
time. These meetings comprise of, for example, all kinds of status meetings in
different areas, such as research and development meetings, which discuss the
progress of current projects. It can be observed that, as soon as the location or
the time changes, individuals keep going to the initial meeting rooms at the
initial time, even though they were informed that the location/time changed.

The example also outlines that unconsciousness is related to a static understanding of
the environment and the processes, which shape the environment. This example
outlines how past experiences lead to “automatic,” or unconscious re-actions of the
participants.

In interpersonal interactions, this automatism can be observed in form of unconscious
emotional reactions in relation to an unexpected course of events (see also preceding
themes). At this point of the study it is assumed that participants are not aware of the
nature of consciousness. Moreover, it is assumed that consciousness is essential to
interpersonal business interactions to act from an ego-transcendent perspective, as
opposed to an egocentric perspective (see also theme 2 Egocentricity).

**Theme 10: Emotional Separation of Social Structures**

The emotional separation of work and private life is another theme, which emerged
during the analysis of interviews and does not obviously relate to marketing and the
initial theoretical framework. All of the interviewees, who mentioned work and
private life, perceived an emotional separation between both. The idea of a separation
of work and private life is often used in common language and, hence, it is not
surprising that interviewees referred to it. During the analysis process it became clear
that this separation includes an emotional aspect, which is of relevance to this study
in relation to a holistic understanding of marketing.

Theme 10 was also subject to the follow-up interview sessions.

Interviewee 4 says:
“And many do not have a problem with that (separation), because they see it as two worlds; the work world and the private world. And these people, who can make a clear cut between them are those who can be nice in their private life and at work they are a real jerk.”

(Interviewee 4, Atlas.ti, paragraph 109).

In retrospective, this quote reflects a common opinion of participants. While interviewees describe an emotional harmony in their private life, work life appears to be emotionally more difficult. Moreover, this participant refers to varying behaviours and attitudes (“… and at work they are a real jerk”) of the same person depending on work and private life, which exemplifies that this perception is related to integrity.

In theme 5 (Emotional Superiority), interviewees of this study outline how important they perceive an emotionally pleasant atmosphere in relation to interpersonal business interactions. However, participants perceive and describe it as more difficult to maintain this emotional harmony at the workplace compared to private life.

Another participant mentions private life as a necessity to balance stress:

“But I think if one is under extreme stress and he builds up a wall around himself, where he cannot perceive anything anymore. In order to break that wall he is looking for a valve. That could be private life, sport, family, to be more open and receptive to the environment.”

(Interviewee 5, Atlas.ti, paragraph 46).

This interviewee perceives private life as the positive emotional counter pole to work life. This implies that the environment at work is perceived as more emotionally tense, which needs to be balanced.

Interviewee 5 continues:

“I also have to be fresh in my mind as well, and that is something that I can only reach through a balanced private life. And those are the two pillars (work and private life) that are necessary to sustain the situation better.”

(Interviewee 5, Atlas.ti, paragraph 64).
Gummesson (2007) refers to competition and cooperation from a yin and yang perspective. He (2000b) also outlines that yin and yang are not opposites that belong to different categories, but are extreme poles of a single whole. He continues by saying that what is good is not yin or yang but the dynamic balance between the two of them. Gummesson’s comments suggest, from an emotional perspective, that even though private life and work life are perceived as separate (this is a rational assumption, which is a necessary prerequisite for systems theory). This does not necessarily imply an emotional tension between both. Rather, it is argued that they are part of a single reality. However, the comments in these interviews outline that work and private life are emotionally labelled, instead of being considered as part of a single, pleasant reality.

Interviewee 9 makes a similar comment:

“You always need two worlds, you need a balance. Once you have your dream job, then you are going to make it so miserable for yourself and you don’t have a place to retreat to anymore. You need a job that you enjoy, no question, but it should not be your dream job. You always need an opposite pole. The individual always needs the possibility to break free from what she likes.”

(Interviewee 9, Atlas.ti, paragraph 133).

According to this participant, the job should not be too much of a pleasure. He claims that work life should be demanding to have a balance at home. However, these emotional tensions imply a variety of unpleasant “side effects,” such as emotional exhaustion and the possibility of a subsequent burnout syndrome (see theme 4 Emotional Exhaustion).

The separation of work and private life outlines the function of a private life, which serves to balance the more stressful work life. This perspective appears ingrained in the participants’ minds. It is argued that this understanding is a consequence of the current static and fragmented worldview (see section 2.6.5), which draws not only strong rational boundaries, but, also emotional boundaries (theme 2 Egocentricity). Rational boundaries are necessary to surviving in an otherwise meaningless chaos.
(Luhmann, 1995). Emotional boundaries appear to be a consequence of the positivist understanding of the world.

Another interviewee says:

“The whole thing starts when you talk to a person, when you get something back. It could be that you just feel that this other person listens to you, that he answers your question, or gives you input to a problem that you are having. It is also extremely helpful if you have a relationship with these people after work, far from the factual topics, if you get along well. That means that you can also talk about something different, like New Zealand, and this other person is also interested in your private life, not only your work life. That helps.”

(Interviewee 12, Atlas.ti, paragraph 34).

Senge (1990) argues that it is an illusion that the world consists of separate, unrelated forces. The literature review outlined the inherent interrelatedness of whole and parts and individuals and organizations (section 2.5.2). Moreover, organizations are embedded into society as a whole. The interviewees of this study describe work life more as a “must” and private life more as a “pleasure.” Emotionally, they do not appear to belong to one, single, balanced reality.

Another interviewee adds:

“This is only about the job, not about your life or something like that. It is only a job.”

(Interviewee 13, Atlas.ti, paragraph 58).

This interviewee goes as far as not seeing the job as part of real life. This is common language to express that the job is merely a necessity to earning money in order to live a pleasant private life. The same interviewee says the following:

“It (the job) is part of my life, but it is not my life. But I only think like this now. I saw that differently six or seven years ago. I thought about this completely differently then, that the job is my life. And this is what I mean
with mental greatness. Some thinking processes happened (he means over the years) and this is why I don’t take things to heart anymore.”

(Interviewee 13, Atlas.ti, paragraph 60).

Interviewee 13 describes the job as something that it is nice to have. He seems to take it emotionally easier compared to other individuals. However, retrospectively this part-time marketer left the company approximately one year after this interview because he was extremely unhappy with the interpersonal interactions at work. In an adjacent conversation after the interview, it became more obvious that work life was a great constraint to him compared to private life. By stating: “it is only a job,” it is assumed that this participant characterizes work as not necessarily related to emotions. Rather, he perceives work as a “need” to survive.

Theme 10 Emotional Separation of Social Structures: Summary and Retrospective Participant Observation:

Marketing and Emotions
The relational marketing paradigm does not characterize the market place as fragmented, but as interdependent and interconnected. Senge (1990) introduced his famous “The Fifth Discipline” to challenge the assumption that the world is created of separate, unrelated forces and to encourage systems thinking to understand interrelationships, rather than linear cause-and-effect chains. Theme 10 is further discussed with participants in follow-up interview sessions.

From an external marketing perspective, Vargo and Lusch (2004a, 2008b) claim that indirect exchange masks the fundamental basis of exchange, which is service. A long time ago, and before the era of mass production introduced specialization and compartmentalization, individuals exchanged goods for goods, and services for services. It has been argued that the sense for a good-for-good or service-for-service mentality got lost when production moved out of the household. It is assumed that a consequence of specialization is the emotionally diverse perception of work and private life, which is expressed by the participants of this study.
The separation of work and private life, which has been outlined by participants of this study, indicates that a sense of interconnectedness that is either lacking on an emotional level or offers space for improvement. Figure 5.12 contrasts the relational marketing interconnectedness with a fragmented emotional understanding:

**Figure 5.12 Marketing’s Interconnectedness vs. Emotional Separation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relational Marketing Perspective</th>
<th>Internal Marketing Perspective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A holistic understanding of marketing requires an understanding of cooperation and competition as part of a single reality (yin and yang)</td>
<td>A reactive emotional understanding leads to a fragmented perception of social structures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Retrospective Participant Observation on Emotional Separation of Social Structures**

The emotional separation of work and private life is illustrated with the following example by the researcher:

Retrospectively, it can be noted that some part-time marketers perceive after-hour contact with other PTMs from the same company as often being reserved. One interviewee raised the issue that contact with PTMs in private life could influence one’s work life in a way and that decisions are influenced by emotional conflicts. For example, when it comes to covering a group leader position at work, it might create discrepancies when the boss has to decide between a PTM, who he might consider more appropriate for this position than a PTM that he has a good private relationship with. Generally, relationships with the same person at work and in a private environment have often been perceived as different, which implies a lack of integrity. This has
specifically been observed between part-time marketers from different hierarchical positions.

These situations cannot only be observed between bosses and their employees, but also between part-time marketers from different departments. Behaviours and attitudes at work are often different compared to behaviours and attitudes, for example, at a bar after work. In conversations, PTMs often say something like: “He is a totally different person at work.” Or: “He is much nicer when we are sitting at the bar together.” These comments imply a certain non-authentic behaviour depending on the environment.

Theme 11: Emotions and Hierarchies

This theme outlines that the participants only express an emotional tension between work and private life, but also in interactions between different hierarchical positions inside the company. Some of the participants referred to hierarchical issues in relation to interactions between them and their bosses, for example. Participants perceive an emotional distance from their supervisors within the company compared to other PTMs on the same hierarchical level, which they verbally express in their interviews.

Interviewee 1 states:

“With superiors, it is a little bit different. With Thomas, my direct superior, it is not like that, because we know each other. But when I talk to Schmidt (superior of another department) or Reichel (superior of the interviewee’s superior), if I see that relationship, it is maybe a bit more distant.”

(Interviewee 1, Atlas.ti, paragraph 28).

This interviewee uses the term “distant” to characterize the relationship between him and a part-time marketer on a higher hierarchical level. He describes it as emotionally less pleasant compared to other interactions with colleagues on the same hierarchical level.

Another participant says:
“And just because he is one step up in the hierarchy, he thinks he needs to say something more. I think this is an area where much can be done to have a more sustainable interaction, this hierarchy thinking and job (career) thinking.”

(Interviewee 5, Atlas.ti, paragraph 147).

Interviewee 5 has been observed as extremely reactive towards her supervisor (see also preceding themes), which appears to be related to certain expectations that she imposed on her behaviours and attitudes towards him.

Interviewee 7 has a similar issue with hierarchical differences, which she expresses with emotional reactive behaviour. She says:

Interviewee 7: “I want him to let me explain my stuff and let me finish what I have to say. I want to do my stuff without his help. And I want him to accept me like he accepts Steve and Simon. I was more the person for everything, I made my presentation and he interfered and answered the questions for me.”

Researcher: “And what is the difference between you and the other two guys?”

Interviewee 7: “I don’t know, they are men and product managers and I am a woman and an administrator, I don’t know, maybe that is the reason.”

(Interviewee 7, Atlas.ti, paragraph 62ff).

Interviewee 7 has been perceived as very emotional during this interview when she reported these events. Gender and age might have a certain effect on emotional reactivity. However, these findings are not assessed in relation to an absolute emotional reference point. Rather, cases like this one serve to demonstrate a reactive emotional understanding, more illustratively in relation to other interviewees.

Other participants refer to hierarchies as a barrier to interaction, which will be further outlined in this chapter in the analysis of the follow-up interviews. The consequence of this emotional understanding of hierarchies is an emotional reaction, in which participants feel hampered, patronized and less liberated. The status of superiors is
often inherently related to certain emotional feelings, which are passive and reactive as described in theme 1. The follow-up interview sessions aim at exploring, in more detail, where these reactions come from.

Interviewee 10 was asked to describe a less sustainable individual. He says:

“They don’t have to execute their decisions (and live with the consequences). Individuals often do not have the necessity to first, execute their work and, second, they lack the experience of what happens when you implement sloppy work. They don’t feel the pain, they don’t have the experience. It is very painful if you try to implement sloppy work and it doesn’t work out.”

(Interviewee 10, Atlas.ti, paragraph 109).

In retrospect, the problem this interviewee describes is a very common one in large industries. Part-time marketers execute their work, but the responsibility for the outcomes remains, to a large extent, with their supervisors. This furthermore appears to increase the perceived distance and separation between part-time marketers on different hierarchical levels.

**Theme 11 Emotions and Hierarchies: Summary and Retrospective Participant Observation:**

**Marketing and Emotions**

Marketing scholars argue that marketing should be more than just a departmental function (Kotler & Levy, 1969; Moorman & Rust, 1999). It has also been noted during the literature review that, if service is a dominant concept, it should affect every employee. However, a relational marketing concept can only be successful if a relational mindset prevails over the organization (Achrol, 1997). This implies that marketing interaction with an external customer starts at the bottom, with every part-time marketer, or internal customer of a company. Interactions on every hierarchical level emit messages to the next level and, at a certain point, which is not necessarily the marketing department, reach the customer (e.g., a R&D manager, who is interacting with a potential customer on a trade fare). As much as emotional tensions
between firm and customer are disadvantageous, so are emotional tensions between internal suppliers and customers.

Hierarchies, however, are necessary to organize and canalize communication and encourage effective interaction in large organizations. This topic will be revisited during the follow-up interview sessions to better understand its meaning in relation to a holistic marketing idea. Figure 5.13 outlines relational marketing and internal marketing in relation to an unhampered information flow:

**Figure 5.13 Hampered vs. Unhampered Information Flows**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relational Marketing Perspective</th>
<th>Internal Marketing Perspective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relational marketing requires an unhampered information flow throughout the company, and between firm and customer</td>
<td>The internal (vertical) information flow is hampered by a reactive emotional understanding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Retrospective Participant Observation on Emotions and Hierarchies**

Interviewees perceive interpersonal interactions between part-time marketers from different hierarchical levels as often being inherently related to emotional tensions, which they relate to the person in a higher hierarchical position. It appears that the relationship between PTMs and, for instance, their superiors affect an authentic behaviour, based on integrity. The following is an example of this emotional tension:

In practice, comments have been observed such as: “If I could, I would tell him what I really think about that!” In retrospect, it has been observed that interactions between PTMs on the same level appear more authentic than between different hierarchies. Often, a lack of integrity has been observed, especially in relation to emotionally challenging topics. As a consequence,
part-time marketers hold critical information back because they fear an emotional conflict. This behaviour appears to raise integrity issues and leads to an inefficient information flow because some critical information might only be communicated when the part-time marketer feels under pressure.

This behaviour does not seem surprising in relation to a hierarchical system that has remained unchanged for so many years. However, from a marketing perspective it implies that interaction and communication are hampered on a vertical level, where information flows from part-time marketers on lower levels, to PTMs in higher positions, until it leaves the company and reaches the customer.

Even though it can be observed that over the last years, behaviours and attitudes became a bit more loose between different hierarchical levels, there still is and probably always will be a certain emotional distance. The researcher, who has been part of three multi national corporations, makes this assumption. A more authentic flow of emotions appears to be desirable from both a marketing perspective and an individual perspective. Holistically, an authentic information flow ideally starts at the “bottom” of the company, or even with its suppliers, and flows throughout the company and across hierarchical structures, before the marketing message leaves the company and reaches the customer.

5.2.2.2 Final Comments in Retrospective to this First Interview Session

A few of the core themes, such as empathy, are considered as essential to interpersonal business interactions. However, it appears that there is no time in business to be empathetic, or, at least, part-time marketers often do not take their time to be empathetic. Very probably, if a part-time marketer was invited to reflect on the latter perspective, he would get defensive and reply with something like: “You believe I do not take my time for you? That is not true, but I have a full agenda today and need to go now! Do you want to have a look at my agenda?” This type of comment is a very common one in business and this study does not aim at suggesting a different time management. However, time can be approached with an active attitude, which will lead PTMs to a more active perspective of interpersonal interaction.
Most of the emotional problems observed by the researcher were of a minor degree, such as a comment received from the boss when he was in a bad mood. Because of the reactive nature of emotions, the subsequent “mood swings” often lead to a variety of small comments and discussions, where part-time marketers might say: “Man, he is in a bad mood again… I just don’t like him when he is like this.” PTMs spend time dealing with emotional problems, which could be utilized more creatively. Often, this happens alongside the regular business life, over lunch, in the kitchenette of the department, or parallel to some monotonous task on a PC. Minor discussions of the sort create an unpleasant atmosphere amongst PTMs. Some of the question that arise during this interview session are:

“Can my boss yell at me while I keep an inner smile (pleasant emotions)?”

“Can my ideas be rejected and I perceive this as something positive?”

“Could I go to my boss and tell him that I disagree with his management style?”

The answer that the interviews suggest is: “No, I couldn’t!”

In a nutshell, and from the researcher’s perspective, it can be assumed that the comments made in this interview session and the themes that emerged, appear plausible and comprehensible from the perspective of a socially constructed reality of Western-minded multi national corporation. Emotions appear always and everywhere, but they are also, most of the time, passive and reactive, not considering the numerous influences from the multilateral network. More interestingly, emotions can be approached with an external marketing logic

5.2.3 Findings

5.2.3.1 Executive Summary of Findings
Throughout the interview analysis it became apparent that emotions in interpersonal interactions play an important role in this study. More interesting than the actual emotional situations described by part-time marketers, are how the participants address and understand their own emotions in relation to their environment and with relevance to an external marketing perspective. This phenomenon has been called
emotional understanding (EmUn). Independently of how participants actually (re-)act emotionally in interpersonal interactions (the arousal), they all share a similar common understanding of how emotions “work.” This understanding has been identified and characterized as a passive, or paradigmatic, and reactive emotional understanding (REmUn) in relation to the theoretical framework based on relational approaches to marketing.

Throughout the analysis section of this first interview round, emotions have been approached from a marketing network and systems perspective (theoretical framework). Gummesson (2008) argued that not only are organizations perceived from a network perspective, but so too are the part-time marketers of a company. During the analysis process, external marketing “symbols” were used to approach the emotional understanding from a relational marketing perspective. Emotions occur between part-time marketers, or in PTMs in relation to their environment, which characterizes a certain interconnectedness such as is described by relational marketing scholars. As have been PTMs, firms and customers have always been inherently interconnected. However, in relation to the business environment, this perspective has changed towards a customer-centric, or network, perspective, while on an interpersonal level, the egocentric understanding of emotions remains apparently unchanged.

The concepts of co-creation and value-in-use have been applied to the level of ideas and information, which are seen as products and services, and are exchanged between part-time marketers. It has been assumed that an idea is only a value proposition, or service to other PTMs, while the beneficiary, or receiver of this idea determines its value. Ideas and information reside “between” part-time marketers, who jointly co-create an idea to become a product or service. The emotional understanding of the participants often indicates that PTMs “claim” the value of an idea based on an egocentric emotional understanding, which can be compared to a firm-centric perspective on an external marketing level. A reactive emotional understanding does not appear to support the idea of co-creation, as this requires a multi-perspectival assessment of value.
Since the 1970s, scholars used network perspectives and systems thinking to characterize a marketing reality, which is distinct from a transactional perspective. This reality has been called dynamic and business actors have been characterized as inherently interconnected with their environment. This interconnectedness evolved towards a relationship view in marketing. Consequently, scholars from the school of service marketing became aware that this development should affect employees on every level. The customer-conscious and sales-minded employee was born in the realm of internal marketing.

Scholars saw the need to align relational marketing approaches with internal marketing to successfully implement external marketing strategies. Employees have been characterized as internal customer and supplier to each other in order to emphasize the importance of marketing for every organizational member. As a consequence to the networking perspective, there have been behavioural and attitudinal implications for part-time marketers. The findings indicate that emotions play an important role in relation to behaviours and attitudes with relevance to marketing. However, the findings also demonstrate that PTMs are not ready for customer-consciousness and sales-mindedness. Specific consequences for behaviours and attitudes are discussed in-depth throughout Chapter Six, Discussion and Conclusion.

5.2.3.2 Assessment of Findings Based on the Initial Theoretical Framework
The following section analyzes the findings of this study in relation to the initial theoretical framework outlined in Chapter Two. In section 2.4.5 of Chapter Two, the core of relational approaches to marketing has been characterized as:

- Multilateral/Multidirectional/Multidimensional (2.4.5.2)
- Interconnectedness/Jointness (2.4.5.3)
- Co-Creation (2.4.5.4)
- Value-in-Use/Reciprocal Value (2.4.5.5)
- Dynamism (2.4.5.6)
The themes that emerged during the data analysis process have all been related to the field of emotions, with relevance to the above outlined core of relation marketing. Emotions have been assessed from a marketing networking perspective at the individual level. Employees have been approached with the help of external marketing symbols as if they were an abstract business actor such as a firm in a relational marketing network. It has been highlighted in Chapter Two (section 2.4.5) that the list of five attributes, to describe relational marketing is not considered exhaustive, but sufficient to describe the core of relational marketing.

**Emotions in a Dynamic Environment**

*Theme 1: Static Reactive Emotional Behaviour*

*Theme 7: Static Time Perception*

Theme 1 and theme 7 characterize emotional understanding as a static appearance. However, the literature review highlighted that networks are dynamic. This dynamism has been outlined in section 2.4.4. A main characteristic of a dynamic environment is the unpredictability of future events, which makes the rational planning process rather difficult. In fact, studies reveal that rational decision-making strategies struggle to reach the 50% success mark (Sinclair & Ashkanasy, 2005). The future becomes unpredictable as a consequence to the fast changing environment.

The findings of this study indicate that an emotional understanding appears to follow the logic of the rational planning process. Participants described how emotions can be “forecasted” based on past experiences (theme 1 Static Reactive Behaviour and Expectations), which lead to expectations about the future (see also theme 7 Static Time Perspective). It is assumed that even on an interpersonal level, influences on a node, or part-time marketer are multilateral and infinite. However, the interviews highlighted that emotional reactions are perceived as unilateral, or have a point of reference in one or a few experiences. One interviewee complained about the writing style of an email that he received and it bothered him emotionally for weeks (see theme 1, interviewee 13). Another interviewee expected a certain reaction from her boss and blamed him for his unexpected behaviour (see theme 1, interviewee 5). What none of the participants seemed to consider is the multilateral nature of
interpersonal networks, which is as complex and interconnected as networks of suppliers, firms and customers.

On an interpersonal level, emotions are perceived as static and reactive. It could be observed in the interviews that emotions are related to rational assumptions about the world. For instance, if a meeting was perceived to be unpleasant in the past, it is predicted that it will be unpleasant again. This understanding appears to be naïve, considering the complexity of networks, which is infinite and dynamic. Rationality is necessary in order to navigate a complex environment. However, it is argued that a reactive emotional understanding does not necessarily have to follow a rational, egocentric logic.

Co-Creation and Value-in-Use from an Egocentric Perspective

Theme 2: Egocentricity

Theme 6: “Pseudo” Empathy

Co-creation and value-in-use are two key terms used in the relational marketing era. They imply that value is created in the threads of a network, or between actors, and is determined by the customer, or beneficiary, who uses a product or service. It has been noted that the marketing perspective shifted from a firm-centric view of value-creation towards a customer-centric view. In the past, value has been characterized as “added” to products and services in internal firm processes, and this procedure has been described as a value-added perspective. However, from a relational perspective, the beneficiary that receives a product or service determines value based on the firm’s value proposition in the form of products or services.

On an interpersonal level, emotional reactions imply a one-sided value assessment of information. Theme 2 (Egocentricity) outlined that the assessment of the value of an information or idea between part-time marketers appears to follow an egocentric emotional perspective. During the interviews, some of the participants referred to money as an important aspect of business interactions. Interviewees perceive money as an independent good that is desirable to be “possessed.” Even though this perspective is plausible based on common sense, money, from a service perspective,
is a resource or an exchange facilitator. Hence, money is a dynamic resource and cannot be possessed.

It has been assumed that egocentricity leads to static expectations and a reactive emotional understanding. Egocentricity appears to build the foundation of a REmUn, or at least, a REmUn follows an egocentric logic. Even though empathy (theme 6 “Pseudo” Empathy) has been outlined as essential to interpersonal interactions by a variety of participants, the findings imply that part-time marketers are not aware of the relationship between emotional reactivity and empathy, which lead to characterization of empathy as passive, or not actively influenceable. It is assumed that PTMs are not aware that empathy requires active engagement (see Kalisch, 1973), as opposed passive reactiveness. The PTMs’ understanding of empathy has been further explored in the follow-up interview session.

**Fragmented Emotional Realities**

*Theme 10: Emotional Separation of Social Structures*

*Theme 11: Hierarchies and Emotions*

Interdependence and interconnectedness are two dominant characteristics of relational approaches to marketing and key terms of the theoretical framework outlined in sections 2.4.5.3 and 2.5.4, amongst others. It has been argued during the literature review that the nodes, or individuals, of a network cannot exist in isolation. Rather, they must be assessed in relation to their environment. Also, Gummesson (2007) used the analogy of yin and yang to express that competition and cooperation have to be understood as poles of a single and transcendent reality. Boundaries between business actors have been characterized as fuzzy, which further emphasizes Gummesson’s assumption of “unity” (Kedia & Mukherji, 1999; Penrose, 1995; Sousa & de Castro, 2006; Storbacka & Nenonen, 2009).

Participants of this study draw emotional boundaries between social structures such as work and private life, and functions such as hierarchical differences, which belong to one single reality. This emotional understanding hampers the information flow, as it appears to disrupt inter-hierarchical interaction. The emotional separation between work and private life is a good example of these emotionally expressed boundaries.
Participants make a clear distinction between work and private life, while usually, private life is perceived as the more pleasant emotional experience. Work life is referred to as the more exhausting, emotionally challenging part. The findings also highlight that interactions with the same person at work and during private life are perceived differently.

It has been noted elsewhere in this thesis that specialization, specifically in multinational corporations, is necessary with relevance to economies of scale and financial well-being. Specialization is required for efficient processes and one of the reasons for economic growth (Lusch & Vargo, 2006b; Lusch, et al., 2006; Lusch, et al., 2007). Part-time marketers enjoy economic growth, usually in form of adequate monetary remuneration. Work life, however, is perceived as more unpleasant and, more exhaustive. One interviewee even described it as not being part of his real life (see theme 10, interviewee 13). The findings indicate that emotional boundaries are not fuzzy, but distinct.

Both themes 10 (Emotional Separation of Social Structures) and 11 (Emotions and Hierarchies) will be subject to the follow-up sessions to understand the meaning of emotional separation more explicitly in the context of this study. It is assumed that even though the post-modern marketing world has been characterized as interconnected and dynamic, participants of this study perceive the parts of this world as emotionally fragmented and static. Retrospectively, it can also be noted that during work time, part-time marketers express a certain understanding of postponed project deadlines due to unexpected problems, while in their private life the same persons show no understanding for postponed product launches.

**Unilateral Emotions**

*Theme 1: Static Expectations and Reactions*

*Theme 9: Unconsciousness*

The participants of this study expressed an awareness of an unconscious versus a conscious mode of mind, which is outlined in theme 9. Interviewees characterize the difficulty of staying conscious and mindful, but are also aware of the “bad habits” of an automatic mode of mind. Consciousness has been part of the reviewed literature
and is outlined in section 3.2.4. As has been highlighted, consciousness is a prerequisite to avoiding emotional arousal and necessary to staying interconnected with the environment in the form of conscious self-reflection. Consciousness will also be discussed in follow-up sessions with some of the interviewees to investigate how profound their understanding is in relation to consciousness (for instance whether it is a passive or active concept). It has been noted that consciousness can be increased via meditative techniques (Gummesson, 2000b; Schmidt-Wilk, et al., 1996).

Consciousness is also necessary to “monitor” (Solomon, 1984) and control (Peters, 1970) emotions. However, the preceding themes imply that interviewees are not aware of the relationship between consciousness and emotions, which is further elaborated in the follow-up sessions. From an individual networking perspective, consciousness can be characterized as a prerequisite to staying interconnected with the environment, or other part-time marketers. Unconscious PTMs are subject to emotional reactiveness, which leads to a disruption of self-reflection, which is a precondition for holistic decision-making (Korthagen, 2005).

Based on the comments of the interviewees, it is assumed that the current rational mode of mind is rather unconscious, or mindless. Interviewee 8, for instance (see his comments in theme 9), outlined how mentally exhausting adaptations are in relation to a change of his initial time schedule for a new product innovation. Consciousness implies, however, that changes are perceived as emotionally more neutral, as change is perceived as normality.

Conscious awareness appears to be an essential individual skill, which is necessary to staying interconnected with the environment and engaging in its complexity (Schmidt-Wilk, 2000; Schmidt-Wilk, et al., 1996). However, the dominant mode of mind has been characterized as unconscious and automatic (Louis & Sutton, 1991). The findings demonstrate that the participants are not aware of an active mode of consciousness, which can be influenced and navigated. This is concluded in relation to a reactive emotional understanding (theme 1) and limited emotional knowledge of the participants (theme 3).
Theme 1 (Static Expectations and Reactiveness) also underlines that emotions are not only perceived as static, but are unilateral in a multilateral environment. Expectations are usually based on an extrapolation of just a few past experiences. However, in a network, the emerging future is influenced by multilateral coherences, which cannot be grasped with the rational mind (on bounded rationality, see, for example Granovetter, 1985; Kjell & Olov, 1999; Kofman, 2003a).

5.2.3.3 Reactive Emotional Understanding and Relational Marketing

It has been argued that the main insight of the findings of this study is the overarching idea of a reactive emotional understanding among the participants of this study, which can be approached from a relational marketing network and systems perspective. Analysing the narrations of the interviewees from a network perspective, it is assumed that part-time marketers understand emotions from a certain “angle,” or through a certain “lens.” This lens has been characterized as passive and reactive.

The academic marketing fraction initially commenced marketing from a transactional angle, which is based on a neoclassical view of business. From this perspective, the competitive advantage of a firm was created in isolation and behind the “closed doors” of a firm. On the contrary, relational marketing scholars claim: “Collaborate with your competitors – and Win!” (Hamel, et al., 1989, p. 133). Industries appreciate the idea of permeable boundaries and bundle resources with competitors (Chesbrough, 2003). On an external marketing and business level, there is an active understanding of interdependencies and fuzzy boundaries between business actors.

Relational approaches to marketing are paradigmatic (Grönroos, 1994a, 1994b) and have been characterized as “lenses” (Vargo, 2007). Similarly, it has been argued that emotions can be approached from a certain perspective and with a certain paradigmatic understanding. The current understanding expressed by the participants of this study emphasizes the emotional boundaries between part-time marketers. It
remains unclear as to whether or not there is a different perspective on emotions available, that supports the idea of relational approaches to marketing, and how it might affect behaviours and attitudes of PTMs. This will be discussed in the following chapter (Chapter Six Discussion and Conclusion).

It has also been noted in the literature review (section 2.6.3) that marketing scholars claim it is time for a new marketing worldview (Vargo & Lusch, 2004a). Worldview dimensions are based on opposing poles, similar to emotions. To illustrate a possible conceptualization of a relational marketing worldview based on the findings, an excerpt of worldview dimensions is outlined hereafter. This sample of worldview dimensions stems from Koltko-Rivera’s (2004) “big tent” approach to worldviews. The worldview dimensions are highlighted in the brackets, which follow the worldview options:

1) Ego-primacy vs. ego transcendence (Consciousness)
2) Tolerable vs. intolerable (Otherness)
3) Individualism vs. collectivism (Relation to group)
4) Dependent vs. independent vs. interdependent (Connection)
5) Competition vs. cooperation vs. disengagement (Interaction)
6) Many vs. one (Unity)

(p. 29ff)

Based on this excerpt of worldview dimensions, it is assumed that some of the dimensions coincide with a relational marketing perspective. Relational marketing has been described as interdependent and superordinate to exchange. Interdependence requires tolerance towards the different-minded in, and an ego-transcendent understanding of, networks. The tendency that cooperation outpaces competition (Chesbrough, 2003; Hamel, et al., 1989) indicates that marketing takes a collectivist slant.

However, a reactive emotional understanding supports an independent environment (e.g. emotional separation of social structures), which is based on ego-primacy, or
egocentricity. One-sided value assessment based on emotional reactions expresses an intolerant attitude based on individualistic behaviour. The passive emotional understanding demonstrates that participants perceive the interpersonal environment as emotionally fragmented, which Koltko-Rivera characterizes as “many.” The excerpt of worldview dimensions further highlights the discrepancy between the relational market environment and a REmUn.

5.2.3.4 **Summarizing Reactive Emotional Understanding**

Figure 5.14 summarizes the findings based on the idea of a reactive emotional understanding and contrasts it with beliefs and assumptions that stem from relational marketing (initial theoretical framework). Figure 5.14 is also a summary of the figures outlined after each theme. It highlights the relationship between relational approaches to marketing and a REmUn.
5.2.3.5 *Arising Discrepancies*

The analysis process did not only reveal the idea of a reactive emotional understanding in relation to internal marketing, but also disclosed some discrepancies that appear to be of importance to this study and the idea of emotional understanding in particular. The discrepancies have been highlighted throughout the analysis process but are outlined hereafter, specifically, as it is assumed that they are characteristics of a REmUn.

Participants perceive pleasant emotions as essential for interpersonal business interactions (theme 5 Emotional Superiority). Theme 8 (Sustainable Interactions)
underlines this assumption as participants refer to emotionally pleasant interaction and communication as a cornerstone of a sustainable interaction. On the contrary, theme 3 (Personal Emotional Background) highlights that participants do not possess sufficient knowledge about the nature of their emotions to actively “navigate” them. This indicates that pleasant and sustainable interactions remain passive and occur rather coincidental. Figure 5.15 visualizes this inconsistency and underlines it with some sample quotes from the interview sessions.

**Figure 5.15 The Conflict Between Emotional Importance and Emotional Understanding**

![Diagram showing the conflict between emotional importance and emotional understanding]

*Sample Quote 1:*
“That I like my partner as a person. The first thing is always if he understands his business, what can he offer. But then the understanding on an emotional (human) level is important (...) it is going to be more and more difficult when the emotional (human) side is not working.”

*Sample Quote 2:*
“Big (the influence of importance). Emotions show the direction. They serve to... emotions serve to navigate.”

*Sample Quote 1:*
“No, I have no idea where that (frustration) comes from.”

*Sample Quote 2:*
“I have no idea. No idea where that (emotional reactions) precisely comes from. I have not researched yet where that exactly comes from”

On the one hand, interviewees describe an emotionally pleasant experience in interpersonal interactions as essential. On the other hand, it can be assumed that participants do not know where emotions come from or how to actively “navigate” them. From the rare knowledge about emotions amongst participants (theme 3 Personal Emotional Background), it is assumed that interviewees have intuitively
accepted emotional reactivity and do not question it (paradigmatic). However, as the extended literature review (section 3.2.3) outlined, it is argued that emotions are controllable to some extent, which is an active perspective.

Furthermore, participants appear to intuitively accept the consequence of a reactive emotional understanding, which is emotional exhaustion (theme 4). Emotional exhaustion is not new to the business environment and consequences like acute hearing loss and burnout syndrome are well-known diseases (see for example Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Emotional exhaustion is a by-product and unavoidable consequence of an emotionally passive understanding of interpersonal business interactions. Figure 5.16 outlines how the chain of events, as described by the participants, leads from static expectations, which are based on an egocentric value-assessment, to emotional reactivity and, in the worst case, to emotional exhaustion.

**Figure 5.16 From Ego Primacy to Emotional Exhaustion**

- **Theme 2: Egocentricity**
  
  Leads to

- **Theme 1: Expectations and Emotional Reactions**
  
  Leads to

- **Theme 4: Emotional Exhaustion**

  **Sample Quote:** “Personally, I need this, together with humans, knowing what everybody does. That has to do with acceptance, with appreciation, that you... that has to do with my personal structure (personality)...”

  **Sample Quote:** “It plays a very important role (the expectation). The expectation, my objective, which I want to reach today... plays a big role. Well... first of all, I want to achieve my own target”

  **Sample Quote:** “That I have an unpleasant feeling in my stomach, it seems that I am burning a lot of energy. That means once I am coming out of such a negotiation I am really tired, even if I have reached my target it takes me a while to be happy, simply because I am smashed. Hence, you are using a lot of energy and this is exactly what makes it unpleasant.”
This sequence appears to be ingrained into participants’ minds, as it remains unquestioned.

It has been argued that empathy requires an active emotional understanding. Empathy has been characterized as the ability to listen to interaction partners with all receiving channels empty (consciousness) (Rosenberg, 2001). Empathy has also been described as “borrowing” the feelings of another to really understand them, but never losing one’s own identity (Kalisch, 1973). This requires part-time marketers to understand empathy’s relatedness to a reactive emotional understanding and consciousness to control one’s own emotions. However, findings indicate that empathy is perceived as an attitude, which is primarily shaped by life experience and is dependent on the personality of people (passive “Pseudo” Empathy). This implies that PTMs perceive empathy as non-influenceable. Figure 5.17 summarizes how empathy, and the importance given to it, is not supported by the ignorance of an emotionally transcendent understanding.
Sample Quote 1:
"For me, a good interaction is when I have the feeling that the other understands me. I mean really understands me, even if his opinion, for example in a discussion, is different. That is a really important point for me; that I understand what the other wants to tell me after all. And the message consists not necessarily of what he is saying."

Sample Quote 2:
"And of course there are different targets, which are not always congruent, and this is what you have to pay attention to. Hence, understanding and consideration for the personality and interests of other persons."

Sample Quote 1:
"I think that doesn’t work (control emotions). I once had a seminar about this. One should always stay on the factual level, but it is difficult to maintain that. I also tried to maintain it after the seminar on all levels, also on the private level."

Sample Quote 2:
"The human often thinks too ideally, and the bit of reality that is missing, that prevents humans from producing an ideal product: the loss of reality; the own mind. We cannot jump over our own self. We cannot break free from our self. We are captured in the dimensions we are able to realize."

The sample quotes in figure 5.17 on the left highlight how interviewees understand and characterize empathetic behaviour in interpersonal business interactions. The sample quotes on the right summarize how participants either doubt emotional control, or never thought about it. Sample quote two, on the right, highlights the egocentric perception of reality in networks. It is assumed that the expression “overcoming one’s own self” indicates that this interviewee perceives it as extremely difficult to “borrow” the feelings of another to be truly empathetic. Being empathetic
requires active questioning of emotional reactions and emotional control to truly understand different viewpoints (Kalisch, 1973).

Also, interviewees talk about the emotional separation of social structures (theme 10), and emotional tensions between part-time marketers on different hierarchical levels (theme 11). For participants, the “rational” perception of work and private life is related to certain emotional reactions. Figure 5.18 illustrates the tensions between a separate emotional perception of social and hierarchical structures and the idea of consciousness as a holistic state of mind.

**Figure 5.18 Emotional Separation of Social Structures and Unconsciousness**

**Sample Quote 1:**
“But I think if one is under extreme stress and he builds up a wall around himself, where you cannot perceive anything anymore. In order to break that wall he is looking for a valve. That could be private life, sport, family, to be more open and receptive for the environment.”

**Sample Quote 2:**
“And just because he is one step up in the hierarchy he thinks he needs to say something more... I think this is an area where much can be done to have a more sustainable interaction... this hierarchy thinking and job (career) thinking.”

**Sample Quote 1:**
“The prevailing mood should be loose. It also depends on the topic. But... yeah, a positive basic attitude on both sides.”

**Sample Quote 2:**
“I have to pay attention to what happens around me, and I have to integrate these thoughts into my daily life; then I make my decisions accordingly. I think this is... well, some do not even have these thoughts; some have them, but they leave them at the main gate and pick them up again in the evening...”
Sample quote one, on the left in figure 5.18, outlines a situation where private life serves to balance emotional stress, which stems from work life. Interviewees have been arguing that private life is generally and emotionally more pleasant than work life, partly because interaction partners in private life can be chosen, while business partners are often predetermined. Even though this separation appears to be understandable in common practice, it is argued that this view is passive. Work life has been intuitively accepted as more tense emotionally than private life, while interactions with individuals from different hierarchical levels are perceived as being inherently and emotionally restrained compared to interactions with PTMs from the same hierarchical level. The origin of these emotional tensions remains unquestioned.

Also, interactions with the same person at work and in private life are perceived as being emotionally different. Sample quote 2, on the right, outlines that individuals recognize the importance of consciousness in business interactions, but do not demonstrate an active understanding of it. The emotional separation of social structures, and the emotional tensions between different hierarchical levels have been subject to further investigation in follow-up interview sessions. In summary, it is assumed by the researcher that the above-outlined discrepancies are an inherent part of a reactive emotional understanding.

5.2.3.6 Concluding Thoughts on the First Interview Round

The network perspective of relational marketing implies a certain interconnectedness and dynamism among business actors. However, as outlined in Chapter Two, the dominant rational mindset has been predominantly characterized as linear, static and fragmented. It has also been noted that it is necessary to draw rational boundaries between systems in relation to an environment to deal with complexity. The findings indicate that the rational understanding appears to be inherently linked to a rational and egocentric perspective, which often leads to undesired emotional states.

In order to draw conclusions and implications from the findings, it is necessary to understand some of the assumptions of a reactive emotional understanding more
explicitly, as findings evolved rather implicitly. Therefore, emotions have been discussed explicitly with some of the participants in relation to the emerging themes. In follow-up interview sessions, some of the assumptions, which have been made in this section, are revisited with some of the participants to a) re-affirm the nature of a reactive emotional understanding and b) shed more light on the discrepancies between different emerging themes outlined in the preceding section.

5.3 Follow-Up Interviews

5.3.1 Introduction
The follow-up interviews were conducted to provide more context for emerging themes and to increase the relevance of the researcher’s assumptions, which stem from the first interviews and retrospective participant observation. Also, the follow-up themes aimed at reaffirming the discrepancies outlined in section 5.2.3.5, which are characteristics of a reactive emotional understanding. Reaffirming the discrepancies is essential in to drawing conclusions and implications from the findings (see Chapter Six Discussion and Conclusion).

The detailed follow-up procedure is outlined in more detail in Chapter Four (section 4.4.3.3). Follow-up interviews have been conducted in a semi-structured manner in order to leave interviewees space to comment on the themes. For example, during the first interview round, theme 10 (separation of work and private life) emerged rather subconsciously, as it was not specifically asked for. Instead of asking interviewees rather closed questions such as: “Do you perceive an emotional difference between work and private life?”, participants were asked to narrate about work and private life and what these terms mean to them. Their answers have then been assessed holistically and in relation to the first interview round.

5.3.2 Analysis Follow-up Interviews
Follow-up interviews have been clustered into semi-structured themes. These themes were selected based on the inconsistencies outlined in the last section to further inform and re-affirm the current reactive emotional understanding revealed in the first
interview analysis process. Theme A aimed at re-affirming the general nature of a REmUn. Themes B to E focused on emerging inconsistencies, which play an essential role in characterizing the current emotional understanding:

A: Emotional Understanding

B: “Pseudo” Empathy in Interaction

C: Emotions and the Separation of Social Structures

D: Emotions and Hierarchies

E: Understanding Consciousness

F: General Emotional Remarks

It is important to note that it was not the aim of the follow-up interviews to offer an alternative to the inconsistencies highlighted in section 5.2.2.5. Rather, the aim was to “amplify,” or highlight these inconsistencies, as it is assumed that they make up a part of the current reactive emotional understanding held by the participants. Chapter Six, Discussion and Conclusion, further discusses the inconsistencies and outlines possible academic and practical implications based on these inconsistencies and a REmUn with relevance to internal and external marketing.

**Theme A: Emotional Understanding**

This time, six of the initial participants (for sample selection see sections 4.3.3.2 Trustworthiness, 4.4.3.2 In-Depth Interviews and 4.4.3.3 Follow-up Interviews) have been consciously invited to discuss emotions and emotional reactions during the first part of this follow-up interview session. The interviewees were asked to narrate specifically about emotions and their role in interpersonal business interactions. Furthermore, the participants were asked to reflect on some assumptions, which have been made in the last section.

Interviewee 1 (referred to as interviewee 6 in first interview session) was asked, why he starts to get emotionally aroused in interpersonal business interactions. His answer is:
“I am getting aroused because… I do not have anything specific in my mind. But the thing is, is that I know precisely that he, who I am speaking to, that he knows himself that he is wrong.”

(Interviewee 1, Atlas.ti, paragraph 31, follow-up).

Interviewee 1 describes how he gets emotionally aroused due to the expectation he has based on a certain assumption he makes, which is related to his past experiences with this person (theme 1 Static Reactive Behaviour and Expectations). In this situation he describes how a supplier in an interpersonal interaction is not telling him the truth. Independently from the question of whether interviewee 1 is right or wrong in his perception, he associates a certain emotional feeling with it, which in his eyes is reasonable (theme 2 Egocentricity). It is a negative feeling based on a one-sided value assessment. This interviewee extrapolates past experiences to a possible future outcome, which he relates to specific and personalized emotional reactions. It is assumed that the relationship between expectations and emotions is part of the current reactive emotional understanding in interpersonal networks.

Interviewee 1 was further asked if he perceives his emotional reaction as a regular, or natural situation. He states:

“Yes, I guess it is a normal situation because you know that there is something unfair in the air, unfair to me…”

(Interviewee 1, Atlas.ti, paragraph 39, follow-up).

Compared to the first interview session, interviewee 1 was now consciously asked to reflect on the relationship between the situation he is in and his perceived emotions. This participant has a different perception of reality than that which is held by another person, which he judges to be a lie and a conscious act against him (theme 2 Egocentricity). This, for him, is inherently related to an emotional reaction. Moreover, his reaction is based on the supposition that his assumption is right, which implies an ignorant attitude towards his counterpart.

It has been argued that emotions affect holistic decision-making, as they “cut off” the relationship with the network by suppressing reflective thoughts (Korthagen, 2005).
It has been noted that a deeper understanding of the relationship between observations and emotional reactions is a prerequisite to empathy (Rosenberg, 2001). However, the interviews indicate that observations are related to specific emotional reactions, which remain unquestioned.

Emotions have been related to time (theme 7 Static Time Perception). Interviewee 1 was asked provocatively why he gets nervous even though he is aware that it is of no help for him:

“Well, you get nervous because you are afraid of what could be coming.”

(Interviewee 1, Atlas.ti, paragraph 147, follow-up).

He continues:

“And once you realize that you cannot reach your targets, personally or in business life, or whatever, then you get nervous.”

(Interviewee 1, Atlas.ti, paragraph 149, follow-up).

His comments outline that the current time perspective appears to be inherently related to emotions.

He goes on to say:

“I do not see the point in destroying myself at work or letting emotional things get to me in a way that bothers me and that will make me sick. I am trying, but it is difficult. If I realize that, in my job, most of the time I am talking to myself, and nothing happens, it is difficult to alter processes, and nobody supports me, which is really incriminating. In that case I would say well, ok, then I will do something different.”

(Interviewee 1, Atlas.ti, paragraph 43, follow-up).

Interviewee 1 characterizes a difficult situation, which inevitably leads to emotional exhaustion. He mentions that he cannot let emotions “get close” to him. His only way out, which he describes at the end, is looking for a different task or job (“then I will do something different”). This implies that emotions are more situation-dependent
and less a matter of self-control, and can only be navigated by avoiding certain situations. His perspective is passive and reactive in relation to the environment.

Also, interviewee 1 intuitively comments on the separation of work and private life (…”destroy myself at work…”, theme 10), which will be outlined in more detail later in this section. His comments regarding work life indicate that he perceives his emotions in relation to his work environment as a passive reaction (theme 1 Passive Reactions and theme 10 Work and Private Life).

In relation to theme 3 (Personal Emotional Background), Interviewee 1 was also explicitly asked if he believes whether it is possible to influence undesirable emotions in interpersonal interactions or not. He states:

“Well, how can I do that? How would I do that? Difficult… I think I would just feel bad… that is what I would say spontaneously… I would feel bad.”

(Interviewee 1, Atlas.ti, paragraph 69, follow-up).

Interviewee 1 does not consider any opportunity to alter his undesirable emotions in difficult and unpleasant interactions (theme 3 Personal Emotional Background).

Interviewee 2 (Interviewee 4 in the first session), likewise speaks about the link between emotional reactions and expectations:

“Well, everybody has a certain attitude depending on their state of knowledge and their expectations, how the counterpart reacts in a conversation. And if he behaves in the expected manner, then emotions will follow accordingly, as expected.”

(Interviewee 2, Atlas.ti, paragraph 20, follow-up).

In the eyes of this participant, emotions are related to observations and expectations and lead inherently (“accordingly”) to emotional reactions. The relationship between certain expectations and certain emotions is static.

Interviewee 2 distinguishes between an expected emotion and a spontaneous emotion, or affect. He explains:
“When you walk along the street and an accident happens right in front of you, you are surprised, and you can’t plan it, and the emotion just happens, and you certainly did not expect it.”

(Interviewee 2, Atlas.ti, paragraph 24, follow-up).

The extended literature review (Chapter Three) outlined there are differences between an affect and an emotion (see sections 3.2.2 and 3.2.3). Also, emotions will always be related to the external environment, as nodes of a network have been characterized as interdependent. However, a reactive emotional understanding demonstrates that emotional reactions are out of an individual’s control. This indicates a complete independence, as opposed to interdependence, of part-time marketers in relation to their network. However, it is assumed that part-time marketers actively “co-create” the environment, as they have an integrity in relation to the network.

Interviewee 2 further states:

“I am programming myself. I know when I go there, my brain has already experienced all that and knows: ‘Oh my god, this is going to be exhausting.’”

(Interviewee 2, Atlas.ti, paragraph 34, follow-up).

Again, expectations based on past experiences lead to a projection of emotional states and leave no space for dynamic emotional developments (theme 1 Static Reactive Behaviour and Expectations). Interviewee 2 perceives the mere fact that it was already an unpleasant interaction in the past as an emotional “provocation” in relation to an emerging future. Moreover, this interviewee knows about the exhaustive consequences of emotional reactions, but does not know how to influence them (theme 3 Personal Emotional Background).

Interviewee 3 (interviewee 8 in the first interview round) narrates:

“The higher you put your targets/expectations, either internal or external targets, the deeper you fall once you realize you cannot meet your expectations. That creates stress.”
Interviewee 3 also links negative emotions to unfulfilled expectations (theme 1 Static Reactive Behaviour and Expectations), which is a static perspective. Expectations are not necessarily related to an emotional pitfall, as there are positive surprises as well. However, as has been argued earlier, relating strong emotions to a target that lies in the future excludes the numerous alternative possibilities that the future could unfold into instead (the multidimensionality of networks). Aims and visions are necessary to progress in the economic environment. However, strong emotional expectations in relation to these aims remain questionable.

Interviewee 3 also considers emotions as essential to every business interaction:

“I can compensate factual and technical problems. But if it doesn’t work between humans, a company has no chance. It cannot work.”

(Interviewee 3, Atlas.ti, paragraph 37, follow-up).

Even though interviewee 3 outlines the importance of emotions and feelings for interpersonal interactions (theme 5 Emotional Superiority), his passive understanding of emotions does not seem to support this importance (theme 3 Personal Emotional Background).

Interviewee 3 also illustrates the consequences of passive, emotional reactiveness:

“At a certain point it becomes too much if you do not react within reason, and if it goes astray, then you have a chain reaction. And a chain reaction, a nuclear power plant is the best example, means the thing explodes.”

(Interviewee 3, Atlas.ti, paragraph 43, follow-up).

Interviewee 3 describes the consequence of reactive emotional behaviour. If part-time marketers merely reacted to external influences, relationships would probably get out of control. To prevent “chain-reactions” such as described by interviewee 3, the idea of emotional reactiveness appears unsupportive (see also theme 4 Emotional Exhaustion).
Interviewee 4 (interviewee 1 in the first session) described the first meeting between him and his boss’s boss:

“With Reichel (boss’s boss) I have the feeling that when he asks me a question, he is looking for some topic just for the sake of talking with me.”

(Interviewee 4, Atlas.ti, paragraph 24, follow-up).

Interviewee 4 describes a situation in which emotions are evoked between him and his counterpart. He describes his emotions based on speculative expectations, or an ego-entered value assessment. The way his boss’s boss looked at him and talked to him provoked an unpleasant emotional feeling in him. This behaviour is reactive and passive (theme 1 Passive Reactiveness). The hierarchical difference appears to amplify this feeling (theme 11 Hierarchies and Interaction). Even though the interpersonal network is multilateral, this participant’s emotional reactivity leads to a unilateral emotional assessment between him and his boss.

He was asked how he feels in that moment:

“We are not at all on the same level… Bad. I am just thinking: ‘What kind of relaxed or laboured conversation is this?’”

(Interviewee 4, Atlas.ti, paragraph 26, follow-up).

This emotional reactive behaviour is ingrained and entirely passive. He justifies these emotions based on his individual assessment of the situation (theme 2 Egocentricity). The researcher then raised the possibility/question that interviewee 4 interprets what the other person feels or thinks. He replies:

“Maybe it is also just my interpretation. But when I also see how he talks to Thomas (the interviewee’s boss)…”

(Interviewee 4, Atlas.ti, paragraph 28, follow-up).

Interviewee 4 stays in a passive mode, now comparing the behaviour of his boss’s boss towards him, and the behaviour of his boss’s boss towards his boss. This comparison confirms that his emotional perception appears largely passive and out of his control. The expression “maybe” supports his weak emotional background (theme
3 Personal Emotional Background). Instead of searching inside him for the reason for his emotions, he keeps looking for them outside of himself.

Interviewee 5 (originally interviewee 14 in the first session) was asked to reflect on one of her comments from the first session. During the first interview, she noted that she feels unpleasant if she does not perceive any visible signs (mimics, gesture, verbal comment) from her counterpart in an interaction. She was asked to comment on this situation in more detail:

“I perceive it in a negative way. The first impression is obviously that I perceive that he is not interested in what I am saying. The other possibility is that he is not really in the mood to talk to me.”

(Interviewee 5, Atlas.ti, paragraph 24, follow-up).

She was further asked where this emotion comes from:

“This happens, because a certain thing annoys me. Something that I would never do the same way in my life.”

(Interviewee 5, Atlas.ti, paragraph 32, follow-up).

Her emotions are closely linked to her own understanding of reality (theme 2 Egocentricity), even though it is impossible to rationally grasp the complexity of interpersonal networks, or networks in general. Her value assessment is one-sided. It is one of the pillars of socially constructed realities, that reality is perceived and assessed differently and is multi-perspectival. The emotional reaction of interviewee 5 implies a certain intolerance towards her boss. Intolerance has been noted earlier in this theme in relation to interviewee 1 and in section 5.2.3.3. Section 5.2.3.3 outlined that a reactive emotional understanding can be related to a certain understanding of the world.

Interviewee 5 further describes:

“I have expectations of individuals who have a certain hierarchical position. And I have certain expectations of my superior. I expect that after he comes to ask me something, that after a certain time he is going to find the information
on his own, without bothering me every two minutes to ask me again. Because this annoys me in my daily routine, and then I get emotional if somebody bothers me every five minutes. No matter what I am doing: telephone, conversation, it annoys me.

(Interviewee 5, Atlas.ti, paragraph 36, follow-up).

It is probably common sense to state that part-time marketers have expectations of their supervisors. It can be observed in these follow-up sessions, the first interview sessions and the retrospective comments that these expectations often lead to frustration. This implies that an expectation is inherently linked to certain emotional reactions. This statement confirms the emotionally passive perspective of interviewee 5. Interviewee 5 has also been perceived as being extremely emotional in her narration during this interview process.

Interviewee 6 (originally interviewee 3) expressed during the first interview session that his social environment and positive emotions are extremely important to him in interpersonal interactions (theme 5 Emotional Superiority). In this follow-up session, he states:

“Personally, I consider the social component as very important, which is related to feeling comfortable and being accepted. That also has to do with acceptance and is not a simple matter of rational themes.”

(Interviewee 6, Atlas.ti, paragraph 26, follow-up).

“Acceptance” is an aspect, which interviewee 6 already mentioned in the first interview round. For him, it is related to an emotionally pleasant feeling. The feeling of acceptance makes this participant entirely dependent on his environment. This perspective has been characterized as an egocentric, or one-sided value assessment.

He further notes:

“The thing that bothers me most is the fact that he (his boss) only pays attention to rational themes, and that is how he treats people.”

(Interviewee 6, Atlas.ti, paragraph 44, follow-up).
During the interview it could be observed that this interviewee was emotionally aroused. He was emotionally affected by the behaviour of his boss, even during this interview session. This emotional reactivity reflects his extremely passive understanding towards emotions.

**Theme A Emotional Understanding: Summary**

In this follow-up interview theme, interviewees were asked more directly to reflect on emotions, expectations and reactivity in relation to interpersonal interaction. Participants were asked whether they believe they can influence their own emotions or whether certain emotional reactions were avoidable (among other questions). The statements confirmed assumptions made during the first interview session and related specifically to theme 1 (Static Expectations and Reactive Behaviour), theme 2 (Egocentricity), theme 3 (Personal Emotional Background) and theme 5 (Emotional Superiority).

It is assumed that interviewees have a reactive emotional understanding, which can be characterized as passive and reactive. Future expectations, which stem from past experiences, are strongly related to certain emotional implications. The personal emotional background appears to be insufficient in actively influencing and navigating emotions. This knowledge has consequences for the personal understanding of empathy and consciousness. It can be assumed that both concepts are passive. This implies that consciousness and empathy are attitudes, which cannot be actively navigated (for instance, to consciously increase empathy). Empathy and consciousness will be discussed later in this section.

**Theme B: “Pseudo” Empathy in Interpersonal Interactions**

To understand whether interviewees understand the relationship between emotional reactivity and empathy, participants have been asked to comment on whether or not empathy can be actively influenced or navigated. This type of question appeared to be more appropriate than asking interviewees about the relationship between emotions and empathy explicitly. It is considered to be essential for this study to
understand whether interviewees relate their own emotions consciously to empathy. It has been outlined that emotional reactivity affects empathy and self-reflection (Korthagen, 2005).

Interviewee 1 was asked, whether empathy could be trained or improved and, if so how. He says:

“You want to be more empathetic? That means you would have to think about your colleagues and how they react...”

(Interviewee 1, Atlas.ti, paragraph 105, follow-up).

Interviewee 1 mentions rational reflection (thinking about his colleagues), which was also repeatedly asserted by other interviewees, which will be highlighted throughout this theme. The participants of this study generally assume that to improve empathy, more self-reflection is necessary. However, it has been argued that the process of reflection requires conscious awareness, as emotional reactions affect reflection (Korthagen, 2005). However, this interviewee is not consciously aware of the relationship between emotions and empathy.

Interviewee 2 was asked whether empathy could be taught and learned, and how it could be improved. He states:

“I have to ask myself the question: What situation is the other person in at the moment and what are the general conditions, and why is he reacting the way he reacts.”

(Interviewee 2, Atlas.ti, paragraph 92, follow-up).

Similar to interviewee 1, this participant characterizes self-reflection as the core of empathy. Emotions, however, are not mentioned. It is assumed that this perspective is related to a dominant rational mindset. The insights from themes 1 (Static Reactive Behaviour and Expectations) and A (Emotional Understanding) imply that part-time marketers are not aware of the role of emotional reactivity in relation to empathy. Interviewees assess empathy from a rather rational perspective.
In relation to empathy and how it can be improved, interviewee 3 relates to his previous speakers with his own opinion:

“I have to be aware that something like this exists, and by analyzing conversations, by trying to analyze and apply this to myself.”

(Interviewee 3, Atlas.ti, paragraph 61, follow-up).

Interviewee 3 also mentions the term “awareness” as a prerequisite for empathy. However, from previous comments, it can be assumed that he is not aware of the relationship between conscious awareness and emotional reactiveness. From his perspective and those of preceding part-time marketers, being more empathetic is a rational choice.

Interviewee 3 holds one’s own individual personality responsible for empathy:

“It is, to a certain point, education, experience and affinity and orientation of the personality.”

(Interviewee 3, Atlas.ti, paragraph 87, follow-up).

Interviewee 3 argues that personality, shaped over time, determines emotional understanding and, hence, empathy. However, a reactive emotional understanding does not contribute to empathy. The current REMUn suggests that from a part-time marketer’s point of view, the degree of empathy is innate and cannot be actively influenced (see also theme 6 “Pseudo” Empathy). However, it has been argued that empathy requires an active understanding of emotions (Kalisch, 1973).

None of the interviewees mention the importance of personal emotions in relation to empathy. However, it has been outlined that emotional control plays a significant role to be more empathetic, which has been referred to as active empathy in theme 6.

Interviewee 4 was asked how empathy could be improved. He says:

“You have to know what an emotion is. You have to know how you should be considerate with comments and you should know how other individuals function, how they react to certain behaviours.”
Interviewee 4 is the first one to outline an understanding for the importance of emotions in empathetic business interactions. However, he talks more about emotions that are evoked in, and are related to, other part-time marketers. He was also asked how he could improve his empathy:

“The studies of certain characters, certain humans, NLP. Let’s put it like this: Just because I read a book about empathy or emotions does not make me an empathetic person. But I have a certain sensitivity in relation to certain aspects.”

While the first interviewees outlined in this theme argue that empathy is a rational matter of more self-reflection, Interviewee 4 argues that there is more than that. For him it is a process of studying different characters, or learning a skill such as NLP (Neuro Linguistic Programming).

Interviewee 5 states:

“On the one hand you have to listen carefully of course, on the other hand you need to observe. You need to observe what the other one is doing and how he behaves.”

Interviewee 5 highlights “listening” and “observing” as two important aspects to empathy. The importance of listening in marketing has been outlined during the literature review (Payne & Storbacka, 2008). However, none of the interviewees reported on the importance of being able to actively navigate their personal emotions and, hence, empathy.

Interviewee 6 also narrates about listening:

“I perceive empathy as being closely related to active listening, where I am telling myself: ‘Ok, now is the time to take a five minute break from talking
so I can try to understand the background of my counterpart with some questions that I ask and to understand why he needs it and why he wants it.”

(Interviewee 6, Atlas.ti, paragraph 70, follow-up).

**Theme B “Pseudo” Empathy in Interpersonal Interactions: Summary**

Throughout this study it has been noted that empathy is an active concept. It has been argued that to influence empathy, one’s personal emotional world is at least as important as the emotions of the other person. This part of the study does not aim to show how empathetic part-time marketers can be characterized. Rather, this section aims at exploring how participants prioritize “measures” to improve and actively navigate empathy. The ability of being empathetic is, foremost, influenced by emotional reactions, which prevent the PTM from being empathetic. To improve empathy, PTMs need to become more self-conscious of their own emotions to be perceptive towards the emotions of others. From the comments above this awareness is not given.

This idea of passiveness, in relation to empathy, is also reflected in the preceding themes of the first interview session. Theme 3 (Personal Emotional Background) implies that the participants of this study do not possess sufficient knowledge about the reactive nature of emotions to engage actively in empathy. Themes 1 (Static Reactive Behaviour and Expectations) and A (Emotional Understanding) underline that emotions are perceived as passive, which indicates that empathy is passive.

**Theme C: Emotions and the Separation of Social Structures**

Throughout the analysis of the first interview sessions, participants intuitively narrated about between work and private life, and some of the perceived differences between both. Often, this separation was related to emotional aspects, and private life was characterized as a balance to emotional stress at work. This separation was discussed in more detail with participants in the underlying theme, as it is an illustrative example that boundaries appear not only to exist on a rational level, but also on an emotional level. Interviewee 1 outlined the importance of intimate
relationships in his private life. Subsequently, he was asked why he couldn’t have intimate relationships at work.

He answers:

“I can have them too, but the fear that you have, that the relationship, that actions at work, are influenced and are less rational than they are supposed to be…”

(Interviewee 1, Atlas.ti, paragraph 127, follow-up).

Interviewee 1 is afraid that emotions at work could influence rational decision-making. However, this behaviour appears to lack an essential integrity towards life. It seems that interviewee 1 is unable to behave in the same way with the same person, either being at work or being in a leisure mode.

He further elaborates:

“Well, at this point, a close relationship, which means a good relationship, could be hindering, or it could be damaged if a person takes it too personally.”

(Interviewee 1, Atlas.ti, paragraph 133, follow-up).

Interviewee 1 highlights a certain risk, if individuals take interactions personally. By taking something personally, individuals usually refer to emotional reactions in common language. Integrity insures that all personal actions are based on a universal, or holistic value system (Kofman, 2006), which is usually related to a worldview (Koltko-Rivera, 2004). If a value system is universal and based on certain absolute values (for example, moral values such as honesty, humility, etc.), integrity might help not to engage in an emotional conflict between two “worlds,” which belong to one single reality.

Interviewee 3 states:

“Well life is different. I have an environment, which is predetermined, completely predetermined.”

(Interviewee 3, Atlas.ti, paragraph 99, follow-up).
Interviewee 3 refers to regulations and predetermined processes in companies. These regulations are often inherently related to a restricted emotional feeling. Interviewee 3 outlines that this feeling arises because interpersonal interactions often cannot be chosen, but have to be accepted, while in private life there seems to be more freedom of choice what “friends” I make. However, why this feeling arises remains unquestioned and is a passive perception.

In relation to work and private life, interviewee 4 narrates:

“And you have things at work that worry you. Might be because of time pressure or other things. And I need to separate that. I do not want to transfer that to my private life, because I can’t relax anymore and because maybe I cannot get rid of the pressure, which results from work life. I need to generate energy for the next day.”

(Interviewee 4, Atlas.ti, paragraph 90, follow-up).

Time pressure is well known in business in general, and among part-time marketers in particular. However, it is a very passive and reactive relationship to time (see also theme 7 Static Time Perspective). This perspective implies an emotional dependence on time and leaves no room for active engagement. Listening more carefully to the interviewees, they perceive time pressure as unpleasant and related to future expectations, which might have uncomfortable consequences if they remain unfulfilled (see theme 7). Yet, from a dynamic time perspective, participants worry about a future that has not yet unfolded, but exists in their heads as a memory stream.

Retrospectively, it has been observed numerous times that product managers or product development managers were emotionally aroused in the form of anger, fear or stress because a milestone in the product development process had to be postponed. In the rarest cases, it became a serious problem for the company. However, from this perspective it is comprehensible that interviewee 4 does not want to take his time pressure at home. The reactive emotional understanding “forces” him to draw an emotional line between work and private life.

Interviewee 5 narrates:
“Maybe it would be ideal to realize this separation by remembering positive situations at night after work, and then actually finding closure. You drink a cup of tea every night, this is the time where you allow yourself to reflect, but then you stop, you make a point, and now it is time for different things. And then I am dedicated to my private life.”

(Interviewee 5, Atlas.ti, paragraph 74, follow-up).

Interviewee 5 wants to actively keep up the separation between work and private life. From her narration it can be assumed that work life is perceived as more emotionally tense and needs balance from an emotionally positive perception of private life. It has been highlighted that this perspective stems from a passive perception of emotions.

**Theme C Emotions and the Separation of Social Structures: Summary**

The theme of the emotional separation of work and private life is a good example in demonstrating that the emotional understanding of participants follows the rational idea of a systematic fragmentation (positivism, rationalism). This theme implies that part-time marketers are not ready for a service-for-service mentality. Vargo and Lusch (2006b) illustrated the “simpleness” of the service-for-service idea by explaining that specialization forced individuals to move production out of the household and into factories. In ancient times, when a baker traded a fish for a loaf of bread (and of course the fisherman a loaf of bread for a fish), the service-for-service principle was easy to understand and, more importantly, to experience (emotions). Each party was clearly doing something for the other (Vargo & Lusch, 2011).

However, in the Twenty-first century, it becomes harder to perceive this service-for-service mentality but it is still present, despite mass production and complex networks. During the day part-time marketers serve in the form of labour, which they provide to the market. In the evening and on weekends, PTMs consume services, in the form of shopping or a restaurant visit. As Vargo and Lusch (2004a, 2008b) noted, indirect exchange (e.g. money for a good or service) masks the fundamental basis of exchange, which is service. It might help, on an individual emotional level, to recall that every part-time marketer is a baker or fisherman and, without specialization and
compartmentalization, it still is a service-for-service economy. This is true, in particular, in multi national corporations (high compartmentalization, high specialization), it appears to be difficult for PTMs to perceive this service-for-service logic, which implies a single and interconnected reality. The understanding of service might help PTMs to engage a reactive emotional understanding.

**Theme D: Emotions and Hierarchies**

During the first interview session, interviewees referred to emotional tensions between part-time marketers from different hierarchical levels. It has been argued, however, that marketing starts with customer-conscious and sales-minded employees on every level (Ballantyne, 2003; W. R. George & Grönroos, 1991; Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000), which is necessary to ensure a consistent and smooth transition of the marketing message from employees to customers. It has also been argued elsewhere in this thesis that satisfied employees lead to satisfied customers. The emotional “hurdle” between PTMs from different hierarchical levels appears to hinder trouble-free interaction and communication (see also theme 11 Interaction and Hierarchies).

Interviewee 1 was asked how he characterizes emotions between him and his boss. He narrates:

“To a certain degree, you are dependent on this person. And this dependence leads to a certain tension in communication and interaction.”

(Interviewee 1, Atlas.ti, paragraph 141, follow-up).

Interviewee 1 describes himself as dependent on his boss regarding his professional career. The hierarchical situation, for him, is inherently related to a certain emotional situation, which is predominantly negative and expressed as a tension. He perceives his career development in direct relation to his superior. In a network, however, influences are not unilateral and linear-simplistic. Networks have been described as multilateral and holistic-complex. Hence, this interviewee bases his emotional reaction on a “rational bit” of information, while networks are dominated by infinite complexity.
He was also asked why interaction with his colleagues on the same hierarchical level is different. He stated:

“Well, I do not have that dependency. Not necessarily. Sometimes I do. With your colleagues you can be more direct and you do not have to think about what could happen…”

(Interviewee 1, Atlas.ti, paragraph 143, follow-up).

Again, the participant describes an emotional dependency between he and his boss, compared to a more relaxed emotional relationship between he and his colleagues. He perceives his boss and other part-time marketers in higher hierarchical positions as essential for his further career. However, in a network there are many incidents (multilateral) that could influence his career, which he does not consider. For him, these alternatives are not consciously present. Examples of incidents could be a job offer from a competitor or an unexpected disease of his boss. A network is characterized by an infinite number of impacts on a node at the same time. However, a reactive emotional understanding inherently precludes the complexity of networks.

Interviewee 2 was asked about the emotional discrepancies that might occur between different hierarchies:

“Restraint. Emotional Restraint. Or the inability to overcome one’s inhibitions, which have built up. But I think it also depends on how the hierarchical difference is communicated.”

(Interviewee 2, Atlas.ti, paragraph 166, follow up).

Interviewee 2 has a similar understanding compared to the previous interviewee. With his comment: “it also depends on how it is communicated,” he implies passiveness. He refers his emotions back to the way his superior interacts and communicates with him.

Interviewee 4 says:

“Those individuals are only humans as well, but they are in a different position. And you don’t know these people, you never talked to them, and you
do not have a common basis, which you could build on. You only have this business background and maybe that strange feeling that he is in a higher position compared to you and that you need to make a good impression.”

(Interviewee 4, Atlas.ti, paragraph 100).

This is another example of an emotionally passive statement. The fact that interviewee 4 does not know an individual in a higher hierarchical position personally is related to a negative emotional feeling. He does not question this feeling (theme 3 Personal Emotional Background).

Interviewee 5 was asked if she could explain why she is anxious about an upcoming encounter with a top manager of her company. She narrates:

“I have asked myself this question a couple of times, why encounters with these people are more uncomfortable. Because the other person has a lot of influence. And if you do something wrong, you are worried because the consequences could be more intense compared to a confrontation with somebody from the same hierarchical level. But at the end I think it is nonsense.”

(Interviewee 5, Atlas.ti, paragraph 84, follow-up)

This comment is similar to what interviewee 1 outlined earlier in this theme. Considering the fact that the business environment is dynamic and multilateral, this emotional reaction outlines that dyadic relations appear to be emotionally “overrated” and do not create a yet undefined and complex future room to emerge. The rational fixation on a predictable future influences the emotional reaction of the interviewees.

Interviewee 6 was asked where this emotional reactiveness comes from:

“I don’t know what the reason is, but I can also feel it. Some kind of fear of losing something. I also tried to find out why. Maybe it is the fear of saying something stupid. I don’t really know.”

(Interviewee 6, Atlas.ti, paragraph 94, follow-up).
Interviewee 6 feels these emotions, but does not know where they come from or how to change them (theme 3 Personal Emotional Background).

**Theme D Emotions and Hierarchies: Summary**

The follow-up discussion of hierarchical differences, in relation to emotions and feelings, re-affirmed some important assumptions made after the first interview session. Most importantly, this theme affirms the static and unilateral dimension of a reactive emotional understanding. Also, it once more demonstrates the reactive nature of emotions as understood by the participants of this study. A network, because of its infinite complexity, will never be predictable. Even though rational assumptions reduce the uncertainty of the upcoming future, the emerging future has been and will always be unpredictable. On the contrary, a REmUn understanding inherently implies a static perception of the future.

Moreover, from a holistic marketing perspective, which assumes that every employee is a part-time marketer, the interaction process is emotionally hampered and not fluent. External marketing has developed an active understanding of co-creation, where negative comments from customers are also perceived as being positive and as having the potential to improve. However, inside the firm negative comments are personalized and emotionally labelled. This inhibits the vertical information flow between PTMs from different hierarchical levels in particular.

**Theme E: Understanding Consciousness**

The participants of this study described consciousness, rather intuitively, during the first interview sessions (theme 9 Unconsciousness). They either explicitly used the term consciousness or implicitly characterized it. However, the first interview round demonstrates that participants refer to a passive idea of consciousness. That is, consciousness is desirable, but it remains influenceable. Interviewees also described an “automatism” of emotions in the first interview round. Participants were narrating about other part-time marketers or about themselves as they subconsciously carry out tasks. Consciousness, as has been noted in the extended literature review in Chapter
Three (section 3.2.4), is related to emotional control. Interviewees have been asked to reflect on some of their quotes that refer to consciousness, and to further elaborate on them.

Interviewee 1 was directly asked if he could simply be conscious, hence not being distracted by other thoughts. He states:

“It is difficult. Back then I did one task, and another task just needed to be done. And this is how it went on.”

(Interviewee 1, Atlas.ti, paragraph 171, follow-up).

Interviewee 1 describes how a variety of incoming that occur at the same time (multilateral) make it difficult for him to focus consciously on the task at hand. From his narration it can be assumed that he does not have a solution for this problem.

Also, interviewee 2 narrates:

“It depends on how thoroughly I evaluate my decisions. The same as I said in the first interview: If I do not consider it, I cannot include it into my decision.”

(Interviewee 2, Atlas.ti, paragraph 198, follow-up).

He further describes:

“It always has to be somehow present. If I do not consider it and only take the input that was given to me, then that is a bit sparse, most of the time.”

(Interviewee 2, Atlas.ti, paragraph 206, follow-up)

Interviewee 2 tries to characterize consciousness. He understands it as the ability to have certain information always present, so that they can be considered for upcoming decisions. This refers to the reflection circle outlined by Korthagen (2005). Korthagen argues that conscious awareness is necessary to an understanding of essential aspects related to decision-making. He also notes that emotional reactivity negatively influences the ability to reflect. As such, with the current
reactive emotional understanding, consciousness, as described by interviewee 2, is difficult to navigate actively.

Interviewee 5 says:

“I think it is also attention. Many people are not able to listen because they have many other things on their mind. Which means they are not in the real situation, and hence they do not pay full attention to their counterpart. They are busy thinking about other things and do not listen carefully.”

(Interviewee 5, Atlas.ti, paragraph 66, follow-up).

She was also asked if she could avoid negative emotional feelings:

“It would be nice, yes, I think you can do that. But you have to be very conscious of what you are doing. And we already discussed that. Very often you do things subconsciously. You are running around, have lots of things to do, and the consciousness for what I am currently doing is not there. In this very moment, emotions are negative, in that moment I do not realize it, I am falling back into my habits. But it would be good if you could train myself.”

(Interviewee 5, Atlas.ti, paragraph 68, follow-up).

Interviewees all characterize consciousness in similar ways. What they all leave out is the relationship between consciousness and emotional reactivity, or emotions in general. Instead, they relate to the external environment that impedes consciousness. Part-time marketers are aware of the importance of consciousness but similarly to empathy, it is assumed that they do not perceive the relationship between consciousness and their own emotions (see also theme 6 “Pseudo” Empathy and theme B “Pseudo” Empathy in Interpersonal Interactions).

Interviewee 6 describes a conscious person:

“I believe it is strongly related to the personality. And how strongly somebody is interested in his own environment. Topics, persons, things… things that I have heard of and it would be interesting to know more about it. A general
interest in knowing more things. Or at least an interest in what happens around me.”

(Interviewee 6, Atlas.ti, paragraph 114, follow-up).

**Theme E Understanding Consciousness: Summary**

Interviewees narrate about consciousness in relation to decision-making or a high workload (multilateral influences, see also theme 9 Unconsciousness). Their comments indicate that it would be desirable to be conscious. However, participants describe it as difficult to remain in a conscious mode. Interviewees perceive consciousness as a state of mind that is sometimes more present and sometimes less present, depending on the external circumstances. Similar to the idea of empathy and a reactive emotional understanding in general, it is assumed that consciousness is not perceived as an active property.

During the interviews, the researcher asked the participants to reflect on some of their statements from the first interview session in relation to consciousness. For instance, participants were asked to describe what they mean when they say: “There was one task and then there was another one and I couldn’t just keep up and got stressed.” Interviewees were also asked to reflect on their statements in order to make consciousness more tangible. None of the interviewees characterized it as an active mode of mind but as a state of mind that is context-dependent.

On an external marketing level, consciousness is essential to “connect” to the customer, hence the term customer-consciousness. Customers require attention and they are unforgiving if a firm does not pay attention to their needs. On an internal marketing level, every part-time marketer is a customer and a supplier of information and ideas to other PTMs, which, at the end, become products or services. Consciousness is therefore considered an essential state of mind in interpersonal interactions.
Theme F: Concluding Thoughts from the Interviewees

Interviewee 1 was directly asked to comment on the idea that part-time marketers do not know much about their own emotional apparatus (Theme 3 Personal Emotional Background). He was also asked to reflect on the statement that emotions are perceived as being passive (theme 1 Passive Understanding):

“The prevailing mood is certainly… more or less accidental, depending on the people who communicate with each other.”

(Interviewee 1, Atlas.ti, paragraph 177, follow-up).

In a final conclusion, interviewee 2 underlines his perceptions about emotions:

“How I grew up, how I have been educated, what experiences have I had (all influence my perceptions). And change is very difficult. First, you need to make yourself conscious of what you want to change. But I think it needs a lot of attention. This requires self-reflection, again and again.”

(Interviewee 2, Atlas.ti, paragraph 242, follow-up)

Interviewee 2 notes that past experiences shape the individual character. While it is assumed that this statement appears plausible, it is argued that this perspective is passive and static, and leaves no room for active improvement, or navigation. Perceiving emotions entirely in relation to experiences from the past does not give part-time marketers much room to actively engage consciousness or empathy.

Interviewee 4 noted that business could also be conducted on a purely factual level. He was therefore asked why emotions, or feelings, are important to him. He says:

“However, if you only collaborate on a rational basis and it is all about business, then there is a point where it is just no fun anymore.”

(Interviewee 4, Atlas.ti, paragraph 38, follow-up).

This comment reconfirms the assumption made during the first interview session, that positive emotions build the basis for rationality (theme 5 Emotional Superiority). It is assumed that it is desirable for part-time marketers to actively navigate their own emotions to balance strong emotional reactions.
Interviewee 4 was asked to reflect on his earlier statements. He noted that emotions are dependent on certain external situations. He comments:

“That is correct, it might happen automatically, but the emotion happens in me. That means I am responsible for it. And maybe I can learn to control it.”

(Interviewee 4, Atlas.ti, paragraph 134, follow-up).

Interviewee 4 is the only participant that demonstrated the beginning of an active emotional understanding in interpersonal interactions. Even though feeling responsible for his own emotions, the term “maybe” also implies that this participant appears to not know how to actively navigate his emotions (theme 3 Personal Emotional Background).

Interviewees 5 and 6 were both asked to discuss the contradiction that individuals perceive emotions and feelings as being extremely important in interpersonal relationships (theme 5 Emotional Superiority), but, at the same time, they perceive them as being reactive and passive (theme 1 Static Expectations). This implies that emotions are dependent on situations and interaction partners, and are largely out of the sphere of the concerned individual. Both interviewees 5 and 6 agreed to this comment and had nothing to add.

**Theme F Concluding Thoughts from the Interviewees: Summary**

Despite some contrary comments in the earlier themes, interviewee 3 was the only participant who described the possibility of more emotional activeness. He questioned the paradigm of emotional reactivity and stated that emotions can be controlled to a certain extent, independently from the environment. However, he did not demonstrate an understanding of how this change in perspective could take place. The concluding comments (theme F) further highlight the nature of a passive and reactive emotional understanding.
5.3.3 Summary Follow-Up Interviews

During the first round of interviews a phenomenon emerged, which has been characterized as a reactive emotional understanding. A REmUn enabled the conceptualization of interpersonal interactions from a network and systems perspective, based on relational approaches to marketing. Quotations have been highlighted, which demonstrate a passive and reactive understanding of emotions in interpersonal networks.

During the second round of interviews, interviewees were asked to reflect on this emotional passiveness and related themes, and were asked to elaborate on their thoughts from the first interview round. The follow-up interviews strengthen the assumption that the current understanding of empathy and consciousness remain passive. That is, part-time marketers do not possess sufficient understanding to actively navigate, or improve empathy and consciousness. Moreover, participants do not intuitively perceive the relationship between their own emotional reactivity and important adjacent themes, such as empathy or conscious awareness.

Structured interview questions were not used in the follow-up interview sessions, as it was the purpose of this study to explore a rather subconscious-intuitive and inherent, or paradigmatic, emotional understanding. It is assumed that this understanding is inherent in the perceptions and understanding of the interviewees in relation to business interactions and the world in general. Therefore, it was the aim of the interview process to demonstrate that this understanding is inherent in the perceptions and understandings of the participants. It was not the purpose to understand whether the participants were more or less emotionally reactive. Rather, the idea was to highlight an emotional understanding, or paradigmatic perspective, which contributes to understanding the relationship between relational marketing and specific behaviours and attitudes.

The follow-up interviews also affirmed the discrepancies outlined in section 5.2.3.5, which characterize a reactive emotional understanding. First, a conflict exists between the perceived importance of emotions amongst the participants of this study (theme 5 Emotional Superiority) and the necessary emotional background (theme 3 Personal Emotional Background) required to navigate emotions (see also figure
Second, even though a REmUn inherently leads to emotional exhaustion (theme 4 Emotional Exhaustion), the current emotional understanding follows an egocentric perspective, which leads to expectations and emotional reactions (see figure 5.16). Third, the importance that participants assign to empathy in interpersonal interactions (theme 6 “Pseudo” Empathy) stands in contrast to an egocentric understanding of emotions (theme 2 Egocentricity) and a lack of emotional background (theme 3 Personal Emotional Background). Moreover, empathy remains a passive (not perceived as influenceable) idea (see figure 5.17). Last, the emotional separation of social (theme 10 Emotional Separation of Social Structures) and organizational (theme 11: Emotions and Hierarchies) structures is opposed to the importance that participants assign to emotions in interpersonal interactions (theme 5 Emotional Superiority). Also, consciousness, which is necessary for a holistic assessment of networks, remains passive (not consciously influenceable).

Overall, a reactive emotional understanding, as found in the first interview sessions, can be confirmed by the narration of the interviewees during this second round of interviews. Figure 5.19 outlines again the findings of the first interview session, which have been highlighted in figure 5.14:
Figure 5.19 Relational Marketing and a Reactive Emotional Understanding (Figure 5.14):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relational Marketing Perspective</th>
<th>Internal Marketing Perspective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) The marketing perspective of business relationships is dynamic and future oriented</td>
<td>1) The emotional understanding of interpersonal interaction is static and past oriented (expectations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Relational marketing approaches assume a customer-centric perspective: the customer is the centre of the value creation process</td>
<td>2) A reactive emotional understanding assumes an egocentric perspective: the internal supplier (employee) is the centre of the value-creation process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) The understanding of value-in-use is dynamic and interconnected</td>
<td>3) The understanding of emotions is inherently related to a one-sided and fragmented value assessment (egocentric)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Reciprocal assessment of value to avoid misdirected investments (“monetary exhaustion”)</td>
<td>4) Egocentric assessment of value leads to emotional exhaustion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Service is fundamental basis of exchange</td>
<td>5) Emotions are the fundamental basis of interpersonal information exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Empathy is crucial to understand situations from a relational perspective (the other part’s perspective) – it is an active perspective</td>
<td>6) Empathy is perceived as essential to interpersonal interactions. However, it is a passive perspective (degree of empathy cannot be actively influenced)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Exchange is characterized by a dynamic and open-ended time perspective</td>
<td>7) Exchange is characterized by a static understanding of emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Relational marketing is a holistic approach to marketing, characterized by the network analogy and a systems understanding of the market place</td>
<td>8) Consciousness is a holistic approach to interpersonal interaction, characterized by a dynamic understanding of the internal market place. However, its understanding remains passive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) A holistic understanding of marketing requires an understanding of cooperation and competition as part of a single reality (yin and yang)</td>
<td>9) A reactive emotional understanding leads to a fragmented perception of social structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) Relational marketing requires an unhampered information flow throughout the company, and between firm and customer</td>
<td>10) The internal (vertical) information flow is hampered by a reactive emotional understanding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The impact of a reactive emotional understanding in relation to marketing theory and practice will be outlined in the next chapter (Chapter Six Discussion and Conclusion) together with academic and practical implications.

5.4 Conceptualizing a Reactive Emotional Understanding

Analyzing the emotional understanding amongst the participants of this study from a network and systems perspective, a relationship between emotions and relational marketing becomes apparent. While the business environment is dynamic,
interconnected and multilateral, the emotional understanding of the participants has been characterized as static, dependent and unilateral. An emotional perspective of interactions supports the idea of networks and systems, as emotions are related to dynamic processes, or interactions, which occur between interaction partners, or nodes.

Advocates of relational approaches to marketing highlight some challenges that stem from a network perspective of the market place (see section 2.4.6 Some Challenges with Relational Marketing). An emotional understanding appears to encounter similar problems, or paradox. On the one hand, part-time marketers need to be perceptive of the emotions of other PTMs in order to be empathetic. On the other hand, every PTM has an identity in relation to the network and is not entirely dependent on his or her interpersonal environment.

A reactive emotional understanding supports a transactional marketing perspective, as it is based on an egocentric, or firm-centric, view of the internal market place. A REmUn appears to inform manipulative mass marketing, which has been characterized as distant and separate, as the current emotional understanding also follows an egocentric logic (see theme 2 Egocentricity). From a 4P perspective, interaction and communication is one-sided instead of co-creational. The current REmUn reflects the transactional marketing perspective on an interpersonal level.

Figure 5.20 summarizes the findings of this chapter and differentiates between characteristics of a REmUn, and behavioural and attitudinal indicators, which are important in answering the research question, which aims to explore how the development of marketing towards networks and systems is related to specific behaviours and attitudes:
The static and fragmented understanding of emotions suggests a type of empathy that is rather passive, or given and non-influential. (themes 6 and B “Pseudo” Empathy). Also, a reactive understanding of emotions implies a passive perspective towards consciousness (themes 9 and E Unconsciousness). However, participants perceive consciousness as essential in interpersonal interactions. Scholars from different fields claim the importance of consciousness, but have also defined the unconscious reactive mode as dominant (see for example Korthagen, 2005; Louis & Sutton, 1991; Mintzberg, 1979; Ornstein, 1972).

The fragmented understanding of emotions appears to follow an egocentric understanding of the world, in which individuals draw a distinct line between them and their environment. This is assumed by the researcher, as emotional reactions are specifically addressed to other persons, or other external factors (for instance “time”). Interviewees perceive emotions as being almost entirely dependent on their interpersonal environment, which underlines the passive nature of a reactive
emotional understanding. The implications of a REmUn will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Six Discussion and Conclusion.

5.5 Overall Summary Data Analysis and Findings, and Outlook

The findings of this research enable an emotional assessment of interpersonal networks inside a company with a relational marketing understanding. It has been argued that a network and systems perspective is not only appropriate in describing external marketing relationships. Part-time marketers can also be characterized as an interpersonal network from an internal marketing perspective (see also Gummesson, 2007), which is interconnected via interpersonal interaction (see section 2.5.2 The Relationship Between PTM and Organization). The findings also indicate that the current emotional understanding is characterized as being opposed to relational approaches to marketing.

Moreover, analysing the themes from a holistic perspective and in relation to each other, some inconsistencies became evident, such as: Why do participants know so little about their emotions if they are so important to them? It is assumed that these inconsistencies have important implications for the discussion and conclusion of this study (Chapter Six). The results of this research are summarized in the form of an emotional understanding, or paradigmatic perspective, of participants towards interpersonal interactions, which has been called a reactive emotional understanding.

The next chapter discusses the findings in relation to reviewed literature (Chapter Two and Chapter Three). Based on the findings in this chapter, behavioural and attitudinal implications will be proposed with relevance to existing relational and internal marketing literature. Chapter Six finishes with implications for academics and practitioners, and concludes with personal comments from the researcher.
CHAPTER SIX

Discussion and Conclusion

Value co-creation demands a change in the dominant logic for marketing from “making, selling and servicing” to “listening, customizing and co-creating.” (Payne & Storbacka, 2008, p. 89)

6.1 Introduction and Overview of the Discussion

6.1.1 Introduction

The understanding of the external marketing environment changed dramatically over the past years. The network and systems perspective urged marketing scholars to radically adapt their viewpoint. Together with a super ordinate service perspective, this ontological adaptation has been expressed with a change from a firm-centric perspective towards a customer-centric perspective.

This change of perspective created a variety of new insights into the business and marketing world: Co-creation, value-in-use, open innovation, value-in-experience, customer-consciousness, sales-mindedness, market-mindfulness, co-production, jointness and interconnectedness are only a few of the concepts that the new marketing era generated. Companies utilize information technology, such as social platforms, to make use of this dynamic and interconnected perspective.

Despite the developments in external marketing, the inter-organizational world remains largely untouched. Recently, Hamel (2008) claimed that management must be reinvented. Hamel addresses a generally unchanged reality of the internal marketplace in his keynote speech. He outlines that, despite the dramatic changes in the business environment, management technologies remain largely untouched. He speaks about employees rating their bosses with the results available to everyone in the organization (integrity). He also suggests that thousands of people from outside the company help draft the internal corporate strategy (interconnectedness). He
finally presents an idea for a company environment without titles or hierarchies inside the organization. Hamel concludes that every employee has the right to say yes or no to any request.

While the external perspective has changed dramatically, the internal understanding and structure of information exchange remains largely unchanged. Business scholars adopt a customer-centric perspective towards the external marketplace, while part-time marketers assess internal relationships from an egocentric, or supplier-centric perspective. This chapter discusses the consequences of an internal supplier-centric viewpoint, in the form of a reactive emotional understanding, with relevance to external and internal marketing.

6.1.2 Overview of the Discussion

This study aims to understand how the development in marketing, towards a relational network and systems perspective, is related to internal marketing and, in particular, to behaviours and attitudes in interpersonal interactions. The literature review highlighted the interconnected, dynamic and complex nature of business networks and contrasted it with the rational understanding, or worldview, of reality. A rational worldview has been characterized as being static and fragmented, which appears to be inappropriate in grasping the idea of an interconnected and dynamic business environment, and interpersonal exchange, in particular.

A series of in-depth interviews was conducted to unravel starting points for an interpersonal concept, which supports specific behaviours and attitudes, in relation to a dynamic and complex marketing context. Interpersonal interactions have been approached with the support of relational marketing symbols to ground behaviours and attitudes in existing external marketing knowledge. The understanding of emotions enabled a network and systems perspective between internal suppliers and customers, with relevance to an external marketing understanding.

This research concludes with a newly proposed concept called reactive emotional understanding (REmUn), which builds on a paradigmatic understanding of emotions amongst the participants of this study. That is, a REmUn is characterized by a static,
unilateral and emotionally fragmented assessment of the internal marketplace, and interpersonal interactions in particular. These characteristics stand in opposition to a network and systems perspective, which is dynamic, multilateral and interconnected.

This chapter discusses the results outlined in the previous chapter, with relevance to existing external marketing knowledge. The reader is reminded at this point that internal marketing has been characterized as a philosophy (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003b), which originates in a paradigmatic understanding, or perspective, that relates to a relational understanding of external marketing interactions. Therefore, and before outlining the contributions of this thesis in relation to internal and external marketing knowledge, the findings of this research will be discussed with relevance to a worldview, which originates in, and is inherent to, a relational understanding of marketing relationships. Figure 6.1 gives a structured overview of Chapter Six, which also includes conclusions, recommendations, limitations, suggestions for further research, practical implications and final thoughts from the researcher.
6.2 Discussion

The associated meanings of the terms “customer-consciousness” and “sales-mindedness” play a major role in this research. Both terms explicitly indicate the relevance of a mindset, or worldview, in relation to attitudes and behaviours. That is, both ideas motivated the review of the marketing and business literature, with relevance to worldviews and mindsets. Moreover, both terms originate in external marketing and service marketing, in particular.

The literature review highlighted that a rational worldview is dominant in Western industrialized multi national corporations (MNCs). A rational worldview is characterized as static, one-sided, linear and fragmented. Vargo and Lusch (2008b), and Lusch and Vargo (2006b) argue that the high degree of specialization in MNCs further supports the perception of separateness between part-time marketers, which
leads to a loss of the sense of interconnectedness (Senge, 1990). In the following section, the emerging concept of a reactive emotional understanding is reviewed, with relevance to relational approaches to marketing.

6.2.1 Interconnectedness and a Reactive Emotional Understanding

The findings of this study suggest that the current emotional understanding follows the logic of the superiority of rationality of the human mind. This study finds that participants assess their emotional reactions from an egocentric perspective and draw a distinct line between actor and environment, which they express in the form of emotionally reactive statements. The participants’ expectations are often related to a one-sided value assessment of information in interpersonal interactions, which is supplier-centric and fragmented. Moreover, expectations often lead to specific, and predetermined emotional reactions. Therefore, a reactive emotional understanding has been characterized as passive. The participants of this study trace emotions to the external environment, which they hold responsible for their reactions. This internal supplier-centric perspective has been compared to an external firm-centred perspective of business and marketing.

From an external marketing perspective, the notion of networks and systems, in business and marketing, indicate an inseparable and interdependent relationship of actors. As a consequence, Vargo and Lusch (2004a, 2008b) argue that a service, such as goods, services, ideas or information, can only be exchanged for a service. Sheth (2011), and Vargo and Lusch (2011) support a systems understanding of marketing with service as the fundamental basis of exchange, which further presupposes an inherent interconnectedness of business actors.

The current reactive emotional understanding of the participants of this study does not support the idea of interconnectedness between internal customers and suppliers, as it follows a fragmented, and individualistic assessment of the internal market place. This study finds that a reactive emotional understanding follows a rational logic and separates the self from the environment, and other part-time marketers. Even though Luhmann (1995) argues that this rational separation is necessary to survive in a complex network, it has been found that this perception leads to a one-
sided value assessment of information in interpersonal interactions, with relevance to marketing.

In relation to interconnectedness, this study also outlines that participants draw a distinct line between work and private life. The findings highlight that this distinction follows a reactive emotional understanding, which is related to a fragmented emotional experience of interactions at work and during private life. However, interpersonal networks are interconnected and the employee, or part-time marketer who offers a service, or value-proposition, is the same person that purchases products, or services, in his or her leisure time. Vargo and Lusch (2011) argue that part-time marketers contribute to a production or service and consume either their own service, or the services of others. Vargo and Lusch’s perception, among other relational marketing scholars, contradicts the distinct emotional line that the participants of this study express between themselves and their environment.

From an external marketing and business perspective, Gummesson (2007) questions the separation of two seemingly opposed poles. Approaching business and marketing with a holistic and interconnected understanding, Gummesson notes that competition and cooperation have a yin and yang relationship and that one cannot survive without the other. Gummesson (2000b) also argues that it is a matter of “both-and” instead of “either-or.”

In relation to Gummesson’s comments, and from an internal marketing standpoint, a reactive emotional understanding follows an “either-or” logic, based on a reactive emotional understanding, which results in separate emotional realities. The understanding of work and private life as separate realities does not support the idea of interconnectedness in marketing. One interviewee described different emotional perceptions and experiences with the same person at work and in private life. However, these emotional “poles” belong to a single reality. Other participants expressed that they need to create a balance with, or distance from work during their private life.

Lusch and Vargo (2006b) outline, on an abstract level, how specialization in industry and society as a whole leads to a separate perception of firm and consumer. As production moved out of the household and into firms, consumer and producer were
perceived as being separated. As a consequence of specialization, Senge (1990) argues that individuals lose their intrinsic sense of interconnectedness. A service-for-service understanding of business and marketing, or society in general, implies an inherent interconnectedness of both worlds. Advocates of the service-dominant logic claim that increased specialization is counterproductive to a service-for-service understanding (Lusch & Vargo, 2006b; Lusch, et al., 2006; Vargo & Lusch, 2008b).

The participants of this study also make an emotional difference between interactions with colleagues and interactions with part-time marketers on different hierarchical levels. Internal marketing advocates argue that the success of marketing starts with customer-conscious and sales-minded employees on every level (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003b; W. R. George & Grönroos, 1991; Lings, 2004; Rafiq & Ahmed, 1993). Interpersonal interactions between part-time marketers also imply that an internal customer might be in a higher hierarchical position than an internal supplier. In this case, the emotional tension between part-time marketers from different hierarchical levels impacts the free flow of the marketing message throughout the company, before it reaches the customer.

George and Grönroos (1990) argue that a holistic understanding of marketing requires the alignment of internal and external marketing. If a service-centred mindset prevails within the company, then this should change the worldview and mental models of part-time marketers (R. N. Bolton, et al., 2004). A reactive emotional understanding does not support a worldview that stands for interconnectedness such as those that are intended by relational approaches to marketing. A REmUn has been characterized as egocentric, fragmented, intolerant and individualistic, with regards to worldviews (section 5.2.3.3).

6.2.2 Dynamism and a Reactive Emotional Understanding

This study reveals that a reactive emotional understanding relates emotions to future events, based on past experiences. Expectations are egocentric and static, and they do not account for an emerging future, which is characterized by the complexity implied by the nature of networks. For instance, participants of this study forecast the development of a business meeting with a REmUn, which is based, for instance, on
experiences related to the persons that participate in it. However, the future emerges in a dynamic and rationally unpredictable way, as it is subject to multilateral influences, which stem from other nodes in the network. Interpersonal networks are subject to the same complexity as abstract marketing networks between firms and customers. Despite this complexity, which is an inherent part of networks, participants aim at predicting a future based on emotional reactiveness, or an extrapolation of past experiences.

Freytag and Ritter (2005), amongst others, outline that networks are inherently dynamic in their nature. Also, Grönroos (2006), and Vargo and Akaka (2009) characterize service as a dynamic process and not a static property. To underline the dynamism of time from a marketing exchange perspective, Medlin (2004) speaks of past (singular) and futures (plural). This indicates that in contrast to the past, which has already occurred, the future evolves dynamically as a consequence of an infinite number of incidents in the network. These assumptions are a contradiction to the current reactive emotional understanding of the participants, which is inherently related to a static perception of time. Expectations are related to a point in time (static), such as a management meeting, which lies in the future. However, in the moment when participants assess the future with a REmUn, it is already influenced by the ongoing incidents in the dynamic network.

Kofman (2006), and Korthagen and Vasalos (2005) argue that the reactive emotional understanding expressed by the interviewees of this study is related to a dominant unconscious mode of mind. The term unconsciousness is explicitly opposed to the idea of customer-consciousness and sales-mindedness. George (1990) characterizes customer-conscious and sales-minded behaviours and attitudes as part of an active approach, which has its origin in external marketing.

Mintzberg (1976), among other scholars, outlined the importance of consciousness in business a long time ago. More recently, Meyers (2002), Schipper (1999), and Sinclair and Ashkanasy (2005) relate to consciousness, with relevance to less rational, and more intuitive modes of mind. Korthagen (2005), and Louis and Sutton (1991) agree that even though the conscious mode is more important, an unconscious mode is dominant. Interviewees express an awareness of the importance of
consciousness in interpersonal interactions, but it remains a passive concept. That is, participants do not know how to “switch” actively from unconscious to conscious. The findings demonstrate that 1) emotions are inherently perceived as reactive and 2) that the personal emotional background is not sufficient to engage consciousness actively.

A reactive emotional understanding is unilateral or one-dimensional, as it focuses on one possible desired future based on past experiences. Interviewees describe an emotional perspective that follows the logic of bounded rationality. Kofman (2003a) claims that bounded rationality prevents the capturing of multilateral influences, which occur on a part-time marketer as part of a network. Interviewees express emotional reactions in relation to one or a few events, which also occurred at one or a few points in time, in the form of experiences.

On the contrary, the external business environment is multilateral, complex and dynamic, which summarizes the current business and marketing perspective. The marketplace is characterized by a paradigmatic realignment of exchange relationships. Grönroos (2000) argues that a relational perspective requires suppliers and customers to be able to share information and listen to each other, and not to rely on persuasion and manipulation. Grönroos (1994a) also claims that marketing needs a less manipulative perspective, in which the (internal) customer is the focal point.

A reactive emotional understanding does not address the multidimensionality of the network perspective implied by relational marketing. Andersson and Tuusjaervi (2000) characterize interaction processes as multidimensional and any change in an exchange-relationship will involve different dimensions and elements of interactions. However, the findings demonstrate that a REmUn follows a one-dimensional, supplier-centric logic. Interviewees address emotional reactions to specific incidents, neglecting the multidimensional influences of the network. Also, emotional reactions lead to static and one-dimensional future expectations, which do not account for the complexity of networks.

Based on a rational logic, which is related to a dominant rational worldview, participants predict a future via extrapolating past experiences. In this moment, part-time marketers intuitively neglect the multidimensionality of networks, which shapes
an emerging future. Emerging futures that deviate from this restricted “forecast” are often related to unpleasant emotions. Luhmann (1995) argues that rationality is necessary for the survival in an otherwise meaningless chaos. It remains questionable if a reactive emotional understanding must follow a static perception of time. Bohm (1980) argues that the rational thinking process is inherently static and represents a series of static images.

The findings indicate that a static, one-dimensional emotional perspective is related to certain behaviours and attitudes. Some participants expressed their emotions with “blame” towards unexpected and unsatisfying futures. For instance, interviewee 5 (theme 1) blamed her boss for a reaction that she did not expect. From an external marketing perspective, blame is obsolete as the future is subject to an infinite number of influences in a complex network, which cannot be captured with rationality. Hakansson and Snehota (1989) characterize business actors as nodes of a network, which cannot be assessed in isolation.

On the other hand, the findings of this study imply that part-time marketers do not perceive emotions as controllable, which is, in fact, a central prerequisite to emotional activeness. On the other hand, a more conscious and active understanding of emotions in interpersonal interactions would acknowledge the dynamic and multidimensional nature of interpersonal networks, and the fact that a rational worldview has limitations in respect to a network perspective of interpersonal interactions.

### 6.2.3 Co-Creation/Value-in-Use and a Reactive Emotional Understanding

Participants assess value one-sidedly. That is, based on an egocentric understanding, or logic, of information exchange. Information has been characterized as the central value-proposition in this exchange of services between one part-time marketer and another. A reactive emotional understanding inherently leads to a unilateral understanding and static perception of value.

Vargo and Lusch (2008b) outline that value is determined 1) by the beneficiary and 2) when the service is used. This implies that the customer is in charge of the process
of value creation. Customers use the value-propositions, in the form of products and services a company offers, and determine its value while using the product or service. Consequently, Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) criticise a firm-centred view, while Rust, Zeithaml and Lemon (2000) claim that a customer-centred perspective requires a change in focus towards the beneficiary of a service.

Lusch and Vargo (2006a) outline that a customer-centric view is inherently co-creative, as the customer is endogenous to the value co-creation process. Payne and Storbacka (2008) claim that the co-creation of value demands a greater need to listen to the customer. Lusch (2007) argues that the customer is endogenous as a partner in the co-creation of value. It follows that the co-creation process is a consequence of the inherent interconnectedness of the nodes in a network. Vargo and Lusch (2004a, 2008b), among others, argue that value is always co-created.

The results of this study outline that a reactive emotional understanding is related to an egocentric logic, based on a rational worldview. A REmUn is related to expectations, which have their root in a worldview that is based on egocentrism. From this perspective, value-assessment is made in reference to one’s own beliefs and assumptions about the world. An egocentric perspective can be compared to a firm-centric perspective, such as is outlined in the preceding paragraph. This study demonstrates that beliefs and assumptions that reside in the internal customer are assessed based on egocentric beliefs and assumptions of the internal supplier, which originate in a REmUn. On the contrary, Grönroos (2011) argues that the role of the supplier, either internal or external, should comprise value facilitation and co-creation. However, an emotional reactive understanding does not facilitate value creation, as it is based on a supplier-centric value assessment.

Vargo and Lusch (2011) question the idea of a customer who is rather conservative and uses “stuff” (products, services). Grönroos (2009), and Vargo and Lusch (2008b) argue that value is created in the customer’s processes and, moreover, the customer is in charge of his or her own value creation. However, the current reactive emotional understanding in interpersonal interactions implies that value is assessed by the supplier of a value-proposition, or information. Interviewees assess the value of their
own information, or service, in relation to the value assessment of the beneficiary in the form of an emotional reaction, which is based on the suppliers’ expectations.

Vargo and Lusch (2008b) argue that an internal supplier cannot deliver value, but can only offer value propositions. Grönroos (2011) outlines that the customer is “the” creator of value. Ballantyne (2011) also concludes that the reciprocal understanding of value is an all-inclusive reckoning, where participants share the creations of value. However, this study finds that a reactive emotional understanding hampers the co-creation of value on an interpersonal level, as information, or value-propositions are assessed as being supplier-centric.

In summary, value, on an interpersonal level, is assessed as being supplier-centric, fragmented, or one-sided. The idea of value-in-use between employees would require part-time marketers to assume an ego-transcendent perspective in interpersonal relationships. Also, the co-creation of value requires PTMs to understand their contribution, or information in interpersonal interactions as a value-proposition, in which value is assessed by the beneficiary, or internal customer, of that information.

6.2.4 Summarizing the Discussion with relevance to Relational Marketing

The discussion of the findings focuses on the external marketing literature reviewed in sections 2.4 to 2.6. However, the research question presented in Chapter Three refers to an internal marketing knowledge gap and specific behaviours and attitudes with relevance to interpersonal interactions. Nevertheless, internal marketing, and the idea of customer-consciousness and sales-mindedness, in particular, originate in external marketing literature. Therefore, the findings of this study have been discussed in relation to external marketing literature, to legitimize assumptions in relation to the contribution of this thesis with relevance to specific behaviours and attitudes.

George and Grönroos (1991) argue that an internal marketing orientation requires employees to create favourable attitudes toward marketing. In this regard, Varey and Ballantyne (2005) introduced the idea of a dialogical interaction. Varey and Ballantyne propose specific attitudes that originate in the idea of a relationship
marketing orientation. They propose the following attitudes, with regards to a dialogical-learning orientation: mutual openness, non-manipulative, recognition of uniqueness, mutual confirmation, turning toward and non-evaluative. It has been argued in the literature review that more research is needed to understand whether or not the current dominant rational worldview supports customer-conscious and sales-minded behaviours and attitudes, such as proposed by Varey and Ballantyne.

This study finds that a reactive emotional understanding does not support a relational marketing exchange philosophy on an interpersonal level. This does not imply that Varey and Ballantyne’s proposed attitudes are ambiguous. On the contrary, the findings of this study propose an emotional component, which has implications for part-time marketers with relevance to the attitudes outlined in the preceding paragraph.

The following section outlines the contribution of this study in relation to internal and external marketing, based on the discussion in section 6.2 and the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. The contribution originates from the discussion of a reactive emotional understanding and external marketing.

6.3 **Contributions to Theory**

The results of this study show that a reactive emotional understanding does support an understanding, or perspective, of emotions in business relationships, which can be associated with a transactional marketing philosophy. A transactional marketing philosophy is represented by the 4P era or, more generally, a goods-dominant perspective as outlined in sections 2.2 and 2.4.

The discussion in the preceding section has highlighted that the internal emotional understanding, held by the participants of this study, does not support an external relational marketing perspective. The conceptualization of a reactive emotional understanding with relevance to a relational marketing worldview has a variety of theoretical implications for external and internal marketing, which will be elaborated hereafter.
6.3.1 Contributions to External Marketing

As has been outlined elsewhere in this thesis, the term part-time marketer originates, among others, from the fact that the employees of a company also have contact with customers and gatekeepers from other companies, for example at trade fairs. The participant overview of this study, outlined in figure 4.2, further strengthens the argument that every employee has part-time marketing duties, showing that almost all of the participants have external and internal interpersonal interactions on a regular basis.

Following the assumption that most employees have contact with part-time marketers from other companies or customers, a differentiation between internal and external marketing is ambiguous, as marketing becomes a more holistic function, which acts on all organizational and inter-organizational levels. Therefore, even though the contributions to theory are differentiated between external and internal marketing, this differentiation is more of an “orientation” than a distinct separation.

A New Mindset for a Service-Oriented Marketing

The discussion about a new mindset, or worldview, in marketing, which represents the development of marketing towards a network and systems understanding, has been outlined in sections 2.6.2 and 2.6.3. Various scholars have claimed that it is time for a new mindset in marketing (R. N. Bolton, et al., 2004). However, its conceptualization has been neglected.

A reactive emotional understanding, despite appearing disadvantageous not only for grasping a relational marketing perspective, but also from an individual perspective (emotional exhaustion, burn out, frustration, etc.), offers the opportunity to conceptualize a worldview, or understanding, among part-time marketers with relevance to marketing. At this stage, the findings indicate that part-time marketers lack the preconditions to adopt a service-oriented understanding of relational marketing exchange inside the company.

This worldview, or mindset, in relation to an emotional perspective, offers the possibility to understand marketing relationships on all levels, based on an
interconnected and dynamic network and systems perspective. Currently, this perspective is predominant on an external marketing level, while it does not correspond to an internal emotional understanding of marketing relationships. Hence, an emotional understanding closes the gap between external and internal marketing by proposing a perspective of relationships on all levels, which originates in an interconnected and dynamic view of the world.

This thesis contributes in two ways to an understanding of mindsets based on the academic discussion, which followed Vargo and Lusch’s (2004) original contribution. First, the findings of this thesis suggest that part-time marketers are not ready to adopt a customer-conscious and sales-minded understanding of interpersonal marketing relationships. Second, the proposed conceptualization of an emotional perspective, which is summarized in figure 5.14, supports a deeper understanding of the service idea on an interpersonal level and its implications for PTMs.

This thesis proposes a conceptualized structure of an emotional understanding, which has clear paradigmatic implications with relevance to worldviews and mindsets in marketing. These conceptualizations offer starting points for developing a more relational mindset among practitioners. Also, academics, who are searching for a definition of a more service-oriented marketing mindset, will benefit from the emotional perspective presented in this research. Based on the findings of this study, a more active emotional understanding will be recommended later in this chapter.

**Holistic Marketing**

Kotler and Levy (1969) and Moorman and Rust (1999) have been mentioned throughout this thesis in relation to their vision to redefine marketing as a function, which goes beyond the interface between full-time marketers and customers, and, instead, becomes a more holistic organizational function that affects every member of an organization.

The conceptualization of a reactive emotional understanding reveals an understanding, which proposes a perspective that allows analyzing external marketing relationships and internal marketing relationship with the same “lens,” or
understanding. Based on Gummesson (2008), who speaks of networks on all levels, a REmUn reveals a perspective, which is equally valid on an internal and external level, and comes with clear implications for every part-time marketer. A REmUn is based on a worldview, or understanding of business relationships, which does not make a discriminate between internal and external business actors. Hence, an emotional perspective contributes to a more holistic understanding of marketing, and offers further opportunities for research to close the gap between a relational marketing exchange perspective and an interpersonal exchange perspective. Suggestions for further research in relation to a more holistic understanding of marketing will be provided later in this chapter.

6.3.2 Contributions to Internal Marketing

It has been noted that the distinction between internal and external marketing is not unambiguous. However, in the following, the focus is on the internal marketing literature stream, with relevance to behaviours and attitudes. It has been outlined that the terms customer-consciousness and sales-mindedness would benefit from a refinement, to make these terms more “tangible.” For example, part-time marketers would profit from clear indications that make them understand what it is that actually makes their behaviour more customer-conscious. Also, a refinement of the terms would support academics to further close the gap between positive and normative theory.

Refinement of Customer-Consciousness and Sales-Mindedness

It has been found that a reactive emotional understanding is based on an egocentric assessment of the world, and internal marketing relationships in particular. Within their discussion on dialogical interaction, Varey and Ballantyne (2005) propose a variety of specific behaviours and attitudes with relevance to a relational marketing orientation. For example, they speak of mutual openness, non-manipulation and the recognition of uniqueness of the other. However, the conceptualization of a reactive emotional understanding detailed in this study, suggests that these behaviours and
attitudes might not be easy to adopt, as behaviours and attitudes are related to a perspective about the world (Koltko-Rivera, 2004).

A reactive emotional understanding adds an emotional component to Varey and Ballantyne’s work, which supports a further refinement of their perspective and offers the possibility of emotional feedback. That is, strong emotional arousal is in contrast to their idea of mutuality and uniqueness of the other, as it narrows the individual perception towards an egocentric assessment of interpersonal relationships.

In relation to section 3.2.3 (Can Emotions be Controlled?) and 3.2.4. (Emotions and Consciousness), it is assumed that consciousness plays a critical role when discussing the contribution of marketing scholars regarding customer-conscious and sales-minded employees. This study proposes that a reactive emotional understanding does not support an active understanding of consciousness, which is a central prerequisite to customer-consciousness.

The conceptualization of a reactive emotional understanding supports a deeper understanding of behaviours and attitudes such as proposed by Varey and Ballantyne, and highlights possible problems with the implementation of customer-conscious and sales-minded behaviours and attitudes in organizations. Based on this deeper understanding, customer-consciousness and sales-mindedness can be further developed in relation to an emotional perspective and with relevance to an interconnected marketing understanding of interpersonal relationships.

**Emotions in (Internal) Marketing**

While approaches exist to help categorize emotions in relation to consumer research, emotions have not yet been explored with relevance to an internal marketing perspective. Bagozzi et al (1999) conclude their research on emotions in marketing by highlighting further research potential, which this study is partly responding to. One of the questions Bagozzi et al raise is: “How do emotions function to influence the behaviour of salespeople and managers?” (p. 202). Salespeople and managers are part-time marketers, who have customer contact or contact with part-time marketers from other companies. Attitudes and behaviours, which are based on a reactive
emotional understanding, do not support an active empathetic behaviour, which has been highlighted as an essential aspect of relationship marketing (Iglesias, Sauquet, & Montana, 2011; Sin, Tse, Yau, & Chow, 2002).

Bagozzi et al further claim:

An area neglected by marketers, but at the heart of the discipline, is the role of emotions in marketing exchange and relationships. How do emotions initiate, maintain, or sever marketing relationships? Can emotions and marketing relationships be studied more dynamically as they evolve in real-time and in context? (p. 202)

This study outlines that a reactive emotional understanding might hamper marketing exchange and relationships, based on a static and disconnected understanding of the environment. The conceptualization of a REmUn indicates some key points which impact marketing relationships and exchange in relation to emotions. These aspects include a static understanding of time in interpersonal marketing relationships, a polarized view of business actors (either interpersonal or inter-organizational), or a separate perception of social realities. For example, it has been outlined that a passive understanding of empathy, an egocentric perspective and a static time logic are likely to result in emotional conflict, which will increase the perceived distance between actors, or part-time marketers.

6.3.3 Contribution Summary

The conceptualization of a reactive emotional understanding highlights that customer-conscious and sales-minded behaviours and attitudes are related to an interconnected, dynamic and complex perspective of the world, which is not supported by a REmUn. This study suggests that emotions and their understanding in relation to marketing relationships and interactions play an essential role in developing more service-oriented behaviours and attitudes in internal and external marketing. This research also suggests that the current understanding of emotions is related to a worldview, which does not favour customer-consciousness and sales-mindedness.
Furthermore, the conceptualization of an emotional understanding legitimizes the idea that marketing is more than just a departmental function, or interface between firm and customer. This research has pointed out that an emotional understanding, based on a relational marketing logic, is an essential element to understand internal relationships in relation and with relevance to a holistic marketing idea.

6.4 Conclusions

6.4.1 Summary and Conclusions
Emotions are a central element of this study. Human emotions are complex and there is no unified concept of emotions available that can be used as a point of reference to make assumptions such as: “He is now 70% emotionally aroused.” A main interest of this study consisted of understanding whether or not emotions can be actively engaged. Sections 3.2.3 and 3.2.4 highlighted that emotional navigation is possible, even though it is not self-explanatory. A difference has to be made between more conscious emotions and unconscious affects.

Having this distinction between emotion and affect in mind, the current knowledge of emotions implies that there is no such statement as: “He is able to control his emotions.” Emotional control, or mastery, is not an absolute state of mind that can be reached. Rather, it is a relative concept with constant potential for improvement. Emotional control can be compared to Hunt’s (1990, 1992) expression of a god’s-eye view on “Truth” in marketing, which can neither be finally reached nor is anybody able to give feedback on how close one gets to it.

An emotional understanding is strongly related to a belief system about the world. However, a reactive emotional understanding is strongly related to a fragmented understanding of the world. This separation appears to be deeply ingrained into the understanding of the participants of this study, as has been outlined throughout the emerging themes in Chapter Five.

Vargo and Lusch (2004a, 2008b) propose a marketing logic, which implies a rethinking of marketing philosophy and raises the discussion about a new mindset in marketing. Following Vargo and Lusch, and other “post goods-dominant” theories,
scholars have been discussing the consequences for the employees, or part-time marketers of an organization in relation to attitudinal and behavioural changes that are more or less appropriate. Finally, the need for customer-conscious and sales-minded employees has been expressed, and PTMs have been urged to adopt “marketing-like” (George and Grönroos, 1991) attitudes.

However, it appears that scholars have neglected to understand that worldviews and attitudes, which influence behaviours and attitudes, have been largely shaped by a society (family, friends, school, etc.) that has been emphasizing the need for a separated, static and unilateral perception of the world, to make sense of it. The adoption of attitudes and behaviour, which originate in a dynamic and interconnected understanding of the world, appears to require more than the “friendly advice” to act customer-conscious. It must also be added that a reactive emotional understanding is not always inappropriate, or unwished for. It may be that there are good evolitional reasons for an active emotional understanding, as emotional reactiveness was, and still is, necessary for survival (Shiv et al, 2005; Coleman, 1995). From a classical goods-dominant understanding, and a neoclassical business perspective, which can still be found in many companies, a REmUn might still be legitimate, or even favoured, in relation to the predominant company culture. In some company situations, emotional conflicts may be perceived as fruitful and inspiring, instead of being a burden to the employees of an organization. For example, an emotional interaction might be perceived as a competitive situation similar to a sports competition, where emotional debates are perceived as an enrichment, or motivation. Also, Shiv et al (2005) have argued that reactive emotional responses can help the normal decision making process by “(…) narrowing down the options for actions, either by discarding those that are dangerous or by endorsing those, that are advantageous” p.438).

However, and in relation to the “service-movement” in marketing, Theme Nr.5 has fundamental significance for further research based on this study, and with relevance to the contributions outlined in section 6.3. That is, an understanding of emotions, similar to the service idea, is related to a process, which is happening “between” actors and both concepts are related to a holistic understanding of exchange.
To summarize this research, the participants of this study appear not to be ready to easily adopt customer-conscious and sales-minded attitudes and behaviours. This study outlines why, and proposes the conceptualization of an emotional understanding, which might further support a deeper understanding of marketing exchange, not only on an interpersonal, but also in relation to an external marketing perspective.

6.4.2 Answering the Research Question

To summarize this research, the research question can be answered as follows:

**Research Question:** How is the development in marketing towards a relational network and systems perspective related to internal marketing and, in particular, to attitudes and behaviours in interpersonal interaction?

**Answer:** A reactive emotional understanding, held by the participants of this study, does not support the development of relational marketing
towards a network and systems perspective. A REmUn is inherently related to a static, unilateral and fragmented perspective of internal marketing relationships, which does not reflect an external marketing philosophy. Behaviours and attitudes, which are based on a REmUn and an egocentric assessment of the world, lack the necessary preconditions to support customer-consciousness and sales-mindedness.

6.5 Recommendations

6.5.1 Introduction
The findings of this study invite an examination of the possibility of a more conscious, or active, alternative to a reactive emotional understanding, as they lead to a central question: If a reactive emotional understanding is not appropriate in adopting a customer-conscious and sales-minded understanding of the internal market place, how does a more active emotional understanding support a network and systems perspective of relational marketing and affect specific behaviours and attitudes?

The extended literature review on emotions, outlined in Chapter Three, indicates that controllability, or mastery of emotions is a central argument in relation to an active emotional engagement. Kofman (2006) and Korthagen (2005) claim that emotional control is a prerequisite to consciousness. With relevance to management and marketing, Gummesson (2000b) notes that increased consciousness holds untapped potential for gaining insight into management phenomena.

This section proposes an active emotional understanding, based on the literature reviewed in Chapter Three, and a network understanding of interpersonal interactions outlined in Chapter Two, which could be useful for further research related to an emotional understanding on marketing. Specific behaviours and attitudes will be proposed in relation to a more active emotional understanding of part-time marketers.
6.5.2 Possible Implications for a more Active Emotional Understanding

Call for Consciousness

Kofman (2006) and Damasio (2006) emphasize that emotions cannot be assessed independently from rational thinking. However, they can be assessed, and more importantly, perceived more actively. Rosenberg (2001) outlines that observations and expectations do not necessarily lead to certain emotional reactions. However, participants express that expectations and emotions have an inherent, or paradigmatic relationship, which has been characterized as a reactive emotional understanding.

It has been outlined in section 3.2.4 (Emotions and Consciousness) that emotional control is only possible with increased consciousness. Based on Schipper’s (1999) work on self-reflection, consciousness can be characterized as a heightened sense of awareness that reflects on and monitors interactions. Korthagen (2005), and Louis and Sutton (1991) emphasize that an increase in consciousness is not easy. Consciousness is also an emerging theme in the interview sessions. This study finds that participants are aware of the importance of consciousness. However, the research also highlights that consciousness is a rather passive concept, as the participants express no understanding of an active, or higher (Mayer & Salovey, 1995), mode of consciousness in interpersonal interactions. The fact that consciousness is a passive concept is also concluded in relation to a reactive emotional understanding, in general. A REmUn does not support active consciousness.

Louis and Sutton (1991) highlight that a more unconscious and automatic mode is dominant, which has been elaborated in more detail in section 3.2.4. In relation to unconsciousness, Korthagen (2005) argues that, with a gradual development of consciousness, the ego boundary can be pushed back once at a time. Natsoulas (1992) argues that consciousness enables the monitoring of non-conscious processes, such as emotional reactiveness, and is a first step to an ego-transcendent perspective of interpersonal interaction. Baars (1994) characterizes consciousness as having access to the personal self.

An active understanding of consciousness, which supports emotional control, would require part-time marketers to understand the relationship between consciousness and
emotional reactiveness. The findings of this study indicate that this understanding is either not present or currently underdeveloped in PTMs.

From “Pseudo” Empathy to Active Empathy
Empathy and consciousness are closely related. Based on the literature review outlined in section 3.2.5, it is assumed that both consciousness and empathy require an active, or controllable, rather than a passive, or reactive, understanding of emotions. The findings of this study indicate that participants perceive empathy as essential for interpersonal business interactions. However, the findings also outline that interviewees hold a passive, or reactive, perspective of empathy. That is, interviewees do not consciously perceive the relationship between empathy and their own emotional reactiveness. This implies that participants do not know how to actively navigate, or improve, empathy. Empathy is a core attitude of a relational marketing orientation (Sin, et al., 2002). However, an understanding of its deeper function, in relation to internal suppliers and customers, has been neglected.

Rosenberg (2001) notes that empathy is related to listening. Rosenberg further specifies that this mode is “empathetic listening,” and highlights the importance of consciousness. Payne and Storbacka (2008) argue that relational marketing requires an understanding of listening, customizing and co-creating, but do not deepen their remarks. Compared to the mere acoustical process of receiving information, empathetic listening captures feelings and emotions from the other party without premature assessments based on emotional reactions (Rosenberg, 2001). This implies that an active emotional understanding supports empathy.

From Egocentrism to Ego-Transcendence
A reactive emotional understanding follows an egocentric logic, which implies that part-time marketers, or internal marketing actors, can be assessed independently and are separated from their environment. However, Ford et al (2008) argue that no business actor exists in isolation. Egocentrism is related to a fragmented ontological perception of the world, based on a rational worldview and a neoclassical logic of
business. This study highlights that egocentrism creates expectations and subsequent emotional reactions, often followed by emotional exhaustion. Egocentrism also leads to a supplier-centric value assessment of an idea, or service. An egocentric logic does not support a network perspective of the internal marketplace.

Koltko-Rivera (2004) describes ego-transcendence as an alternative to egocentricity, in relation to a worldview. It is the awareness of the superiority of networks in the form of the acknowledgement that every part-time marketer is interdependent with the environment as well as other part-time marketers. Ego-transcendence requires an active understanding of consciousness to engage emotional reactivity. Consciousness is a prerequisite to a holistic and dynamic perception of reality.

Consciousness, empathy and ego-transcendence are closely related. All of them require an active emotional understanding and all of them support a holistic, dynamic and interconnected understanding of interpersonal marketing interactions. Consciousness builds the foundation to master one’s own emotional apparatus in order to step beyond the ego-boundaries and become more perceptive and reflective towards the interpersonal environment.

**From Reactive Emotional Understanding to Active Emotional Understanding**

**Attitudes and Behaviours**

The findings of this study imply that emotions serve as a “navigator” for part-time marketers in interpersonal networks, with relevance to behaviours and attitudes. It has been outlined that emotions are an indicator of interconnectedness between part-time marketers. Emotional reactions, as such, have to be critically questioned, as they lead to unconscious and reactive attitudes and behaviours, which indicate a separation of actors. Blame and ignorance are highlighted in this study as examples of emotionally reactive attitudes towards other PTMs in the network. The findings of this study confirm that emotional reactions remain largely unquestioned.

The emerging themes outlined in Chapter Five originate in relation to a networking and systems understanding of interpersonal interactions, which has been highlighted in section 2.4.5. However, the current reactive emotional understanding can be
compared to the neoclassical perspective of business and marketing, which is characterized by a fragmented, static and firm-centric assessment of the marketplace.

A reactive emotional understanding has been discussed in relation to interconnectedness, multidimensionality, dynamism, co-creation and value-in-use, which are the pillars of a relational marketing perspective. In the following section, and based on a more active understanding of emotions, specific conscious behaviours and attitudes are proposed for further research, and in relation to the findings of this study with relevance to relational approaches to marketing.

**Conscious Attitudes and Behaviours**

Assuming a more active emotional understanding, Kofman (2006) introduces three conscious attitudes and three conscious behaviours, which originate in “emotional mastery,” an idea that can be compared to Senge’s (1990) remarks on “personal mastery.” Kofman’s concept is based on conscious individuals and his concept offers an alternative to a reactive emotional understanding by stating clear behavioural and attitudinal implications.

Conscious attitudes and behaviours support the conceptualization of an emotional understanding in relation to a more service-orientated marketing. Conscious behaviours and attitudes build on a more active emotional understanding that can be related to the findings of this study. For example, it has been found that “emotions are the fundamental basis for interpersonal information exchange.” (figure 5.8). This finding supports a more active emotional understanding in interactions. Also, ontological humility calls for a more active understanding of empathy (Theme 6) and consciousness (Theme 9). In the following, conscious behaviours and attitudes are elaborated in relation to the findings of this study. Figure 6.3 outlines conscious attitudes and behaviours proposed by Kofman and contrasts them with unconscious behaviours and attitudes, which are related to a REmUn:
Unconditional Responsibility

Earlier in this study, a reactive emotional understanding has been related to “blame.” The participants of this study tend to blame the external environment, or hold it responsible, if the future does not unfold according to their expectations. However, conscious attitudes and behaviours suggest that instead of blaming the environment, part-time marketers must take responsibility for their emotions and actively shape an emerging future through authentic communication and constructive negotiation.

Kofman makes a distinction between action and reaction. An action follows an active emotional understanding and is characterized by a response-ability towards the environment. A reaction, instead, is unconscious and passive towards the environment. Marketing is characterized by actors, not re-actors. The term re-actor, in relation to marketing, would imply a form of passiveness and dependence, which does not correspond with the relational marketing philosophy.
Unconditional responsibility supports a dynamic understanding of emotions, as it responds to the inherent dynamism of the business environment and the multidimensionality and complexity of networks. Responsible part-time marketers do not blame their environment. Rather, unconditional responsibility requires a change from complaining and blaming, towards an active engagement that will enable a co-creation of the future with other PTMs through constructive negotiations. Instead of being emotionally surprised by unexpected incidents, conscious PTMs engage them and act upon them. The attitude of unconditional responsibility responds to the idea of dynamism and multidimensionality in interpersonal networks on an internal marketing level.

**Essential Integrity**

This study highlights the observation that some of the participants alter their behaviours and attitudes depending on the environment (work or private life), or the hierarchical position of the other part-time marketer. Based on essential integrity, PTMs are advised to act in accordance with a value system, which is deeply ingrained into PTMs and does not vary with different situations (universal value system).

In relation to a holistic understanding of interpersonal interactions in the realm of a reactive emotional understanding, the idea of yin and yang has been highlighted throughout this thesis based on Gummesson’s (2007) perspective of cooperation and competition. The yin and yang philosophy supports the idea of essential integrity, on an internal marketing level, by approaching interpersonal interactions based on a consistent and holistic value system.

From a networking perspective, essential integrity assures that every node has an identity in an interconnected environment. This also corresponds with the assumption that relational marketing is built on a systems understanding (Sheth, 2011; Vargo & Lusch, 2011). On the one hand, unconditional responsibility implies a certain dependence on the network, in the sense that what happened cannot be changed, but has to be challenged. On the other hand, essential integrity implies that part-time marketers can, and have to, actively shape an emerging future. Essential integrity responds to the interconnected and holistic nature of interpersonal networks.
Ontological Humility

A reactive emotional understanding follows an egocentric understanding of the world and interpersonal interactions, in particular. In relation to a socially constructed reality, part-time marketers are urged to acknowledge that ontological perceptions of reality vary, and are perceived and evaluated differently. Hence, an egocentric understanding does not support a network perspective and stands in opposition to ontological humility.

Ontological humility implies that every part-time marketer is constantly aware that other PTMs in the network assess the environment based on his or her socially constructed reality. Vera and Rodriguez-Lopez (2004) outline that humility is an essential characteristic of a service understanding of marketing, as humble individuals have a genuine desire to serve. Ontological humility responds to the interconnectedness of networks on an interpersonal level.

Authentic Communication, Constructive Negotiation and Impeccable Coordination (Conscious Behaviours)

Authentic communication highlights that significant facts, opinions and feelings are outspoken, while the other person is seen as a legitimate partner who deserves to be heard and who can make his or her own decisions freely and with full information. Constructive negotiation is an approach to conflict management based upon the attitude of mutual learning. Last, impeccable coordination requires part-time marketers to make and fulfil commitments in the face of uncertainty and change.

Conscious attitudes are inherently related to conscious behaviours. Also, all behaviours are related to an active emotional understanding, which can be assessed by part-time marketers to actively engage in interpersonal interactions from an ego-transcendent perspective. Conscious behaviours and attitudes build on the idea of a more active emotional understanding, which relates them to a network perspective of relational marketing on an internal level between PTMs.
Emotional Mastery and Consciousness

Ultimately, conscious behaviours and attitudes are based on emotional mastery and an active emotional understanding, which are necessary to enhancing individual consciousness. The key to emotional mastery is to reengage awareness and choice, which disable the emotional fight or flight mechanism and, consequently, allow for an expansion in consciousness (Kofman, 2006).

Emotional mastery and consciousness build around a core question in this study: Can emotions be controlled or not? The discussion outlined in section 3.2.3 concludes that emotions can at least be partly mastered, which is a prerequisite to an active engagement of consciousness. It is an essential finding of this study that this belief is currently not consciously present among the participants. A change from a reactive emotional understanding to an active emotional understanding would support Kofman’s conscious behaviours and attitudes, which, in turn, appear to support the relational marketing network idea on an interpersonal level. However, this assumption would need additional research, based on the findings of this study.

6.5.3 Evolving Recommendations

Scholars from different fields claim that consciousness is a necessary prerequisite for emotional control and a holistic and dynamic state of mind (Korthagen, 2005; Mitchell, et al., 2005; Schipper, 1999; Schmidt-Wilk, 2000; Sinclair & Ashkanasy, 2005). Moreover, consciousness is part of the term “customer-consciousness,” which further indicates a relationship between marketing and mind.

An emotional understanding, in relation to consciousness, is a good starting point for further investigating behaviours and attitudes for an internal marketing concept, which are grounded in customer-consciousness and sales-mindedness. A reactive emotional understanding has proven inappropriate in this study as a foundation to adopt customer-conscious and sales-minded behaviours, as it follows a rational logic, which is static and linear.

An active emotional understanding might further enhance internal marketing with specific behaviours and attitudes that appear to support the terms customer-
consciousness and sales-mindedness, which have their origin in external marketing. That is, a more active emotional understanding relates to a perspective shared by external marketing, based on interconnectedness, dynamism and complexity. The idea of conscious part-time marketers seems to support an active emotional understanding in relation to internal marketing, in the form of specific conscious attitudes and behaviours.

Varey and Ballantyne are two main contributors to internal marketing in the form of specific behaviours and attitudes. A more active emotional understanding related to conscious behaviours and attitudes would support their dialogical relationship orientation (Varey & Ballantyne, 2005), knowledge exchange in networks (Ballantyne & Varey, 2006), dialogical interaction (Ballantyne, 2004) and the internal marketing cycle (Ballantyne, 2003). Further empirical research in relation to a more active emotional understanding could enhance these concepts by adding an emotional component to these concepts.

For instance, Varey and Ballantyne (2005) discuss mutual openness (sense of responsibility, mutuality) and confirmation (acceptance over the other) in relation to a dialogical relationship orientation. The idea of essential integrity would support their orientation of mutual openness, which is related to an authentic communication. Similarly, mutual confirmation would support ontological humility.

Based on the findings of this study and the assumption of a more active emotional understanding, more research is suggested that builds on the concept of this study but focuses on an active emotional understanding. At first sight, conscious behaviours and attitudes are supported by Varey and Ballantyne’s work, and the assumptions about the hidden potential of consciousness, outlined in section 3.2.4.

Figure 6.4 outlines the idea of a holistic marketing, based on the philosophy of a more active understanding of emotions in relation to (interpersonal) marketing interactions. The upper part of the figure shows existing marketing theory and the development of the idea of internal marketing, and specific behaviours and attitudes, which stem from a relational understanding of external marketing. The lower part in figure 6.4 proposes a possible theory extension, which is not directly supported by the data of this study, but implications can be found throughout this thesis. Conscious
behaviours and attitudes, for example, are supported by existing internal marketing literature, such as those outlined above.

Also, conscious behaviours and attitudes would support a “bottom-up” perspective of a holistic marketing idea, building on an individual perspective, or worldview, which is based on characteristics that support relational understanding of marketing relationships. More specific additional research is needed to support this concept. Some indications for further research can be found in the next section.

Figure 6.4 Holistic Marketing

6.6 Practical Implications

It has been noted earlier in this study that individual emotional expectations often lead to emotional dissatisfaction. Not only does dissatisfaction negatively influence
the part-time marketer (emotional exhaustion), it also affects the entire interpersonal network and, therefore, the organization. The following section highlights some of the consequences of a reactive emotional understanding, in relation to the intra-firm network, which includes departments and business units, and proposes a more active emotional understanding as an alternative.

**Health Issues**

Levenson (1994) argues that chronic autonomic reactivity links emotional factors with early disease processes and disease onset. Consequences of emotional reactiveness can be acute hearing losses and burnout syndromes (Keinan & Melamed, 1987; Maslach & Jackson, 1981). In this regard, interviewees characterize unpleasant interpersonal interactions as physically and mentally exhausting.

Health prevention plays an important role in the industry. Employers acknowledge that a sick employee is a non-negligible cost issue. In the case of a disease, the company has to pay a wage continuation and might have to cover additional costs for postponed project deadlines. Hence, a passive and reactive emotional understanding is directly related to the cost and efficiency of an organization. A sick part-time marketer disrupts the interpersonal network and, hence, internal interaction processes. An active emotional understanding is a precondition to health prevention and employee satisfaction.

**Satisfied Employees Lead to Satisfied Customers**

Satisfied customers are more important than profit itself in the long run (Hawkins, Mothersbaugh, & Best, 2007) and satisfied employees result in satisfied customers (Abela & Murphy, 2008). From an internal marketing perspective, every employee is a supplier and a customer of information, in relation to other part-time marketers. Gummesson (1987) notes that it is the satisfied customer that counts, irrespective of whether he is external or internal. PTMs have contact with customers, or potential customers, for instance, a sales representative, or product manager, who attend a
trade fair. Therefore, a satisfied PTM influences not only internal customers but, also, external customers.

Even though emotional satisfaction is not directly related to a firm’s balance sheet, there is agreement that positive emotions contribute to the success of a company, which starts inside the firm with satisfied employees. The interviews of this study also outline that participants perceive emotions as the basis for a good interpersonal interaction. Based on these assumptions, managers are advised to communicate a more active emotional understanding to their teams. Emotional active teams, or departments, are likely to perceive and communicate crises situations as challenges, instead of problems.

**Openness to Dynamism and Change**

Unfulfilled expectations lead to emotional arousal in the form of anger and disappointment. With a more active and dynamic understanding of emotions, unexpected incidents in interpersonal interactions can be approached as a normality of Twenty-first century marketing and business. Hence, instead of hampering internal interaction processes with unconscious emotional reactions, part-time marketers are able to consciously reflect on “emotional surprises” and adapt more quickly to them.

The paradigmatic assumption amongst the participants, that stability and predictability create safety, has to be critically questioned. This is foremost, because safety and stability do not exist in business and marketing (see section 2.4.4). Not only department heads, but also human resources managers are advised to communicate the consequences of a dynamic and interconnected environment together with suitable behaviours and attitudes to engage dynamism and change with positive emotions. Meditation techniques have been highlighted to increase consciousness and to implement conscious behaviours and attitudes.

**Contemplative Traditions in Business Environments**

Gummesson (2000b) discusses contemplative traditions, such as meditation, in relation to business and marketing. Outcomes suggest that the development of the
abstract, inner value of consciousness can have far reaching practical implications for business and industry. Examples are increased holistic thinking or enhanced creativity (Schmidt-Wilk, et al., 1996).

Consciousness and meditation still remain mystical to many. However, Zen meditation, for instance, is a very pragmatic methodology of self-understanding, which makes it easy to adapt to new environments and cultures (Liang, 2007). With relevance to a more active emotional understanding, human resources managers are advised to communicate meditative practices together with the necessary background of its function and potential. Meditation enhances consciousness, which is a prerequisite to more satisfying interpersonal interactions with outcomes that affect the whole organization.

6.7 Suggestions for Further Research

Internal Marketing
This researched focused on behaviours and attitudes that are grounded in external marketing knowledge. It has been outline in this thesis, how conscious behaviours and attitudes support existing internal marketing knowledge. However, it is assumed that more research is necessary to further integrate the findings of this study in the form of behaviours and attitudes in existing knowledge. It has been suggested that an active emotional understanding could serve as an underlying philosophy of internal marketing. However, this needs more research to integrate existing internal marketing knowledge and the findings of this study.

Relational Marketing Worldview
This study highlighted that an active emotional understanding is inherently related to a certain perspective about the world, and interpersonal business interactions in particular. This relationship between a more active emotional understanding and a worldview has been briefly highlighted in section 5.2.3.2. Even though an active emotional understanding supports some of the worldview dimensions outlined in this
study (ego-transcendence, tolerance, collectivism, cooperation, etc.), more research is suggested with relevance to a conceptualization of a relational marketing worldview.

**Marketing and Human Resources**

It has been argued that “Internal marketing is a philosophy for managing the firm’s human resources based on a marketing perspective.” (W. R. George & Grönroos, 1991, p. 86). The findings of this study suggest that more research is needed to relate marketing and human resources. Conscious behaviours and attitudes appear to further “blur” the boundary between business actors, and marketing and human resources in particular. This research focused on the interface between internal and external marketing. More research, with relevance to behaviours and attitudes is suggested, with relevance to the interface between marketing and human resources.

### 6.8 Limitations of this Study

**Methods**

Limitations in regards to research methods have been discussed in Chapter Four, Methodology. To summarize, this is a qualitative study with a limited number of interviewees (17 interviews and 6 follow-up sessions) from one multi national corporation, triangulated with retrospective participant observation (autoethnography). This type of qualitative research does not aim at making universal generalizations. Rather, the aim of this study was to go for depth and detail to unravel the roots of behaviours and attitudes in interpersonal interactions. Also, the limited number of interviewees in qualitative research does not support generalizations. However, literature indicates that a reactive emotional understanding could be widespread and a consequence of the dominant rational worldview.

**Emotions**

It was not the aim of this study to understand whether a complete control of emotions is possible or not. An answer to this question would have been impossible. However,
it is assumed that there are emotions such as anger and jealousy, which are more likely to be controllable than a subconscious affect such as an emotional arousal in relation to an unexpected incident. This study aimed at establishing an attitude or understanding towards emotions to encourage part-time marketers to actively engage their interpersonal network.

Also, emotional reactivity is influenced by a variety of other factors, such as education or culture. Therefore, an active emotional understanding contributes to emotional mastery, but is not a panacea to avoid emotional reactions. This makes it also rather difficult to measure. However, it was not the aim of this study to define emotional control, but to assess behaviours and attitudes that support a relational philosophy, based on a network and systems understanding of marketing.

**Behaviours and Attitudes**

Similar to emotions, behaviours and attitudes are complex and influenced by a variety of beliefs and assumptions about the world. This study does not aim at discussing the difficulties of introducing conscious behaviours and attitudes into a company environment. Rather, this study proposed behaviours and attitudes based on a perspective of the world, which has been called active emotional understanding.

Therefore, introducing the idea of an active emotional understanding does not change behaviours and attitudes, but is a first step towards it. It has been outlined that a perspective, or understanding, about the world has a significant impact on behaviours and attitudes (Koltko-Rivera, 2004) and hence, a reactive emotional understanding has important behavioural and attitudinal implications for part-time marketers. Further research is necessary in order to understand the difficulties involved in applying a more active emotional understanding with relevance to existing knowledge in behavioural sciences.

**Measurability**

It has been noted in this study that business is fixated on the quantitative measurement of financial success. Measuring the impact of an active emotional
understanding is rather difficult in relation to the aforementioned limitations. Employee surveys are one possibility in trying to assess an employee’s opinion in relation to satisfaction. This gives an employer the chance to gain feedback, for example, on meditation programs or other measures taken in relation to developing a more active emotional understanding.

6.9 Final Thoughts from the Researcher

The overall outcome of this research appears to leave a negative notion on a reactive emotional understanding, which has been influenced by a rational understanding of marketing relationships. The recommendations of the thesis (section 6.5) suggest that to stay competitive companies have to change the minds of the part-time marketers.

However, and also relating to ethical considerations with relevance to this research, this thesis suggests that a more active understanding is not a matter of “changing” the employees of a company; rather, an active emotional understanding is perceived as a consequence of a corporate culture, which focuses on a holistic understanding not only of the marketing function, but of business in general.

An organization which has no hierarchies, open rating systems and free communication channels, would inherently require a certain understanding of interpersonal relationships that favours an active emotional understanding. Some of the existing barriers towards a more emotionally active understanding, such as the need to protect information about their own personal income, would naturally not support a reactive emotional understanding. For example, part-time marketers would have to deal with being publicly compared (interconnected) in relation to their income.

In summary, an active emotional understanding is considered neither to be a “brain wash,” nor does it involve any subliminal techniques to have more efficient operant resources available. Instead, an active emotional mindset, or worldview, is considered as an understanding of business relationships, which will be shaped and naturally evolve within a corporate company culture that focuses on a service-dominant logic. In this final chapter, a few possibilities have been proposed to foster this company
culture, such as a closer relationship between the marketing department and human resources, or meditative techniques.

Apart from a supporting company culture, change from a reactive emotional understanding towards an active emotional understanding is not easy and requires constant and conscious engagement from every part-time marketer. The idea of a more active emotional understanding requires PTMs to question emotional arousal and direct it inward, instead of blaming the environment. An active engagement could be expressed with a statement such as: “My god I am really angry with him. Why does that happen with me?” However, comments are often outwardly directed: “My god I am really angry with him. He is such an idiot!”

The marketing reality has changed dramatically. More precisely, the way in which the marketplace is perceived, changed dramatically. The perception and meaning of exchange has been entirely redefined by marketers to gain deeper insights into the exchange process of marketing. However, the perceptions of internal suppliers and customers has remained largely unchanged and has nothing in common with an interconnected, dynamic and holistic idea of service exchange. Internal marketing scholars advise part-time marketers to be customer-conscious and sales-minded, but neglect the reality that both concepts are not easy to adopt.

A reactive emotional understanding is ingrained in the current worldview of part-time marketers. Meditative practices have been suggested to engage emotional reactivity and to actively develop consciousness. Consciousness still remains rather mystical to many. However, Heidegger’s meditative thinking, for instance, has been characterized advantageous in trying to observe, to ponder and to awake an awareness of what is actually taking place around and within individuals (Dalle Pezze, 2006). Meditation builds the “muscles” an individual needs to become more conscious, and it helps to develop the ability to observe the ever-changing environment calmly and objectively (Liang, 2007).

Zen meditation, for instance, focuses on experientially verifiable methods of knowing and understanding, not on belief systems (Liang, 2007). Meditation is a learning process that outlines how individuals can work effectively with their spirit to reach calmness, comprehension and liberation of negative states of mind (Rinpoche, 2002).
Another reason for choosing the Zen practice is its pragmatism, making it easily adaptable to new environments and cultures (Liang, 2007). Meditation is a simple, natural mental technique (Schmidt-Wilk, et al., 1996). The Zen philosophy relates well to the philosophy of relational approaches to marketing insofar as the teaching emphasizes that everything in and beyond the universe is interdependent, co-arising and co-ceasing with everything else (Abe & Heine, 2003), which is a prerequisite of systems thinking (systems can identify themselves only in relation to their environment).

The main lesson of this study is that the rational mind does not have the last answer to everything, and that it remains difficult to simply “switch” from unconscious and mindless to customer-conscious and sales-minded, which is essential to grasping an interconnected and dynamic environment. This study outlines that customer-conscious and sales-minded behaviours and attitudes are not as self-explanatory as they may sound. Consciousness requires active engagement of the mind, for example in the form of transcendental meditation or other meditative practices. For Goethe, for instance, meditation consisted of lingering through his gardens and sorting his stone collection. Doing that did not bore him; rather, it was his way of sharpening a conscious mind.
References


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319


Appendix – Ethical Approval

Assoc. Prof. J Gnoth
Department of Marketing
Division of Commerce
School of Business

15 September 2009

Dear Assoc. Prof. Gnoth,

I am again writing to you concerning your proposal entitled "Research of mindsets in interactions and relationships within an industrial setting", Ethics Committee reference number 09/066.

Thank you for sending to me the revised application which clarifies the funding of the research and the revised Information Sheet and Consent Form amended in light of comments from the Committee.

Thank you also for sending to me the line of questioning in the interviews and for the explanation of the management of the potential conflict of interest.

On the basis of this response, I am pleased to confirm that the proposal now has full ethical approval to proceed.

Approval is for up to three years. If this project has not been completed within three years from the date of this letter, re-approval must be requested. If the nature, consent, location, procedures or personnel of your approved application change, please advise me in writing.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

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cc: Assoc. Prof. K R Deans  Head  Department of Marketing