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The unpredictable CSR in a globalized world

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Abstract

The Corporations role is changing and companies are expected to take more responsibility; it is not enough to gain economic benefits, they should also aim to achieve social and environmental benefits. An increased interest in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has lead to an enhanced focus on organizations acting morally correct. The focus is not in regards to if the corporations work with CSR, but how they do it.

CSR is a well debated subject with no clear definition, which can contribute to the different approaches to CSR. There are many ways in which a company can involve itself in CSR activities, but not all of the corporations gain the desired result. It can result in short term benefits or long term benefits depending on how well CSR is integrated in the corporation. To manage CSR to that extent and to be able to integrate it, strategic CSR is needed. Also, to manage or make an internationalization process easier, this kind of strategic CSR is required as a base in collaboration with other actors such as stakeholder and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's).

From the theoretical perspectives that is been given about CSR, multi stakeholder network, strategy and shared value, this thesis contributes to understanding not only how complex CSR might be, but also the opportunities that CSR can contribute to trough network. The network can be used in an internationalization process depending on how the companies use CSR strategically, and how "network focused" the organization tend to be. Our empirical study elucidates that in some cases a third part such as a NGO can be required to achieve legitimacy on a foreign market. Results have shown that CSR can be a key to enter closed markets such as corrupted countries or a bridge to overcome political and value clashes.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

CSR is a debated subject that has become an important activity in companies (Carroll and Shabana, 2010). The concept of CSR have been around for a long time with different significance through the years (McElhaney, 2010), and still no concrete meaning has been found, instead CSR is like an umbrella with different definitions (Carroll and Shabana, 2010).

According to Reficco through the complexity of the international framework where corporations can conduct their business, more demands are given upon the companies. Certain CSR related issues that supposedly should be handled by the corporations, have earlier been considered as governmental issues (Reficco and Márquez, 2012). These demands and activities have been criticized by many, partly because it contradicts the theory that companies should only focus on profit (ibid).

It has become apparent that growing corporations increasingly have been held responsible for different economical, environmental and societal impacts (McElhaney, 2010). Within the category of CSR, corporations are expected to take actions accordingly to do well in areas such as health, education and human rights. No matter the chosen definition, Corporate Social Responsibility is company's involvement in sustainability (Jutterström and Norberg, 2011).

Abbreviations that will be used throughout:

CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility

SCSR – Strategic Corporate Social Responsibility

CSV – Creating Shared Value

NGOs - Non-Governmental Organizations

1.2 Problem discussion

What companies today have in common is the growing list of expectations and demands that are put upon them. According to Friedman every company should maximize their profits (Kolstad, 2007). Meanwhile, "In recent years business increasingly has been viewed as a major cause of social, environmental and economical problems" (Porter and Kramer, 2011, p.4). Therefore, companies are urged to take their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), and are receiving "...increasing pressure to both maintain profitability and behave in socially responsible ways" (Mohr, Webb and Harri, 2001). "As a result, CSR has emerged as an inescapable priority for business leaders in every country" (Porter and Kramer, 2006, p.78). The main problem for corporate management seems to be based in finding a way to link profits and sustainability together (Porter and Kramer, 2011).

As result of corporate expansions, there is a high level of companies that operate on an international level or have the desire to do so. Hence, different approaches are often used to find a successful way to reach new foreign markets and earn legitimacy to operate on an international scale (Kolk and Tulder, 2010). To reach new markets and to successfully internationalize, companies often use networks (Pinks, Kuss and Hoffman, 2010). Firms are expected to maintain their morals and standards when interacting in new markets with different cultures and values (ibid). This increases the complexity of the challenge, because companies in collaborations with others need to find a middle way where all of the actor's demands and wishes are being met (ibid).

In company's attempts to find a solution to this problem, further obstacles appear in relation to the ambiguities and multiple definitions that surround the concept of CSR (Vogel, 2005). Our main goal with this research is not to define CSR, but to see if it in some way can be used in networking in a firm's internationalization process. This also seems to be a priority to focus upon; "the challenge for business is not so much to define CSR, as it is to understand how CSR is socially constructed in a specific context and how to take this into account when business strategies are developed." (Dahlsrud, 2006, p.6). Nevertheless, this uncertainty leads to a lack in framework to guide company's efforts, and can be the source of negative outcomes such as bad investments or non-beneficial results for all parts involved (Porter and Kramer, 2011).

Speculation in regard to the current dilemma leads to the question;

Is there an approach or a way to use CSR that would help companies in their internationalization process, rather than being the source of the problem? This question must be asked, because “The current focus for companies is not on why they should implement CSR activities but on how they should do so effectively” (Roberts, 2003, p.159).

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to investigate if it is possible for corporations to use CSR in network building, with the intention to reach or to become active on a global scale. Through the use of collected empirical research and the theoretical framework as a foundation, a qualitative analysis will be completed. With the help of our analysis, conclusions will be drawn and presented in reference to our research question.

1.4 Research question

How can CSR be used for business network building for company internationalization?

1.5 Limitations

We made some limitations in regards to how we elected the companies for this study. We decided to use Swedish but internationally operating companies for the interviews. We did not limit ourselves to only interviewing companies within one certain industry; this with the support that CSR is used within all kinds of industry. Also, we wanted a wide perspective of the usage of CSR activities.

What was important was that the chosen companies operated on a global scale, considering that our research question includes the internationalization process. We did not accept companies with headquarters outside of Sweden, with the reason to increase the chances to a face-to-face meeting. When this was not possible our second choice was to use the online communication tool Skype. This was used instead of conducting the interview over the phone, partly because we then got the chance to see the body language of the respondent, which made all of the interviews as comparable as possible. Also, Skype was chosen because it simplified the recording process in comparison to a phone call.

We also made some limitations within our theoretical framework. CSR is a wide concept with still no distinct definition, so an unlimited amount of information can be found on the subject. We limited our research by concentrating on CSR in the term of strategy and collaboration within networks.

2. Method

Considering the ambiguous nature of CSR, our choice of method was to make a qualitative research with an inductive approach. The inductive approach followed naturally when we started planning how to handle our research. We knew from the beginning that we wanted to study CSR in international settings, but the more concrete idea got formed with the help of inductive logic (Payne and Payne, 2004).

A quantitative research can also be used in exploration of the CSR-concept, but we did not find that form of research amenable with our thesis. A quantitative approach would include a massive collection of data such as scores, ratings, scales etcetera (Jupp, 2006). This would not give us an answer to our thesis. With reference to the composition of our research question, we decided to focus on the meaning and interpretation of CSR use in the internationalization process. To focus on this social process within this particular context, is a typical qualitative research (Jupp, 2006).

2.1 Our interpretation and approach to the CSR concept

To make this particular research feasible, we have decided not to attempt to create our own definition of CSR. Firstly, this will be avoided due to previous studies that show that it is a complex task to complete. In Dahlsrud's (2006) an analysis of 37 definitions of CSR was conducted, the results showed that even though several attempts have been made to bring about a clear definition, there is still confusion in regards to how CSR should be defined. Secondly, this will also be avoided to evade the risk of adopting a too limited perspective, which in turn could lead to misleading results.

Instead, the chosen approach towards the CSR concept is to include all CSR-related definitions. Also, there are a great amount of interrelated words and concepts that surfaces

when studying this subject. This intertwined relation is reinforced by “The term ‘corporate social responsibility’ is still in popular use, even though competing, complementary and overlapping concepts such as corporate citizenship, business ethics, stakeholder management and sustainability are all vying to become the most accepted and widespread descriptor of the field” (Carroll and Shabana, 2010, p.86).

So to make this research achievable, we have decided not to part these interrelated concepts and words such as e.g. corporate social responsibility, sustainability or philanthropy. Instead, these words will be treated as synonymous, with the support that they already overlap. Hence, these concepts also share similarities in their nature where “Sustainability may be defined broadly” (Brown et al. 1987, p.713) and “CSR has to be broadly defined” (Marrewijk, 2003, p.96). An important part is nevertheless, that in regards to the subject, all the companies “Common screening criteria include environmental responsibility, human rights practices, community participation, and human resources” (McAlister and Ferrell, 2002, p.695) no matter which word that is used.

Not too much focus is needed to be put on the lack of a concrete definition within the subject. Companies are being urged to drop the idea of that one definition of CSR suits all, because this is too vague to be useful in corporate implementation (Marrewijk, 2003). The definition should be customized accordingly to the corporation’s strategy and its circumstances (ibid).

2.2 The Interviews

We contacted the companies via e-mail which lead to a personal interview. During the interview we got the possibility to ask our questions and received new inputs from the interviewee’s point of view. The primary data collection was made through the use of semi-structured interviews. The semi-structure becomes apparent with the use of certain questions that were predetermined and open-ended questions (Payne and Payne, 2004). The latter gave the interviewee a chance to freely elaborate his/her answers. Also, improvised follow-up questions were used by us as interviewers if so needed, e.g. if we wanted the interviewee to elaborate or explain a certain aspect of his/her answer but did not do so voluntarily.

The interviews were conducted with three different Swedish companies that operate on an international scale. The purpose was to obtain insight and knowledge from the companies

through this form of qualitative interview (Holt and Thorp, (Alvesson and Svensson) 2008). None of the interviews were longer than 60 minutes. We always ended the interview before 60 minutes had passed to avoid wasting the time of the interviewee, as well as wanting to avoid collecting too much data that was not linked to the subject. Shorter interviews than 30 minutes was not preferred, because the ambiguity of the subject. A certain amount of time was used to find a consensus in regards to the chosen topic.

There are different ways an interview can be executed, either through the use of surveys, face-to-face, phone or another communication tool such as online interaction (Lewis-Beck, Bryman and Liao, 2004). Two of our interviews were accomplished face-to-face and one was accomplished over the online communication tool Skype. The reason to this was due to one of the interviewees being located in another city. To make the data as comparable as possible we tried to have the same data collection process on all of the occasions.

One challenge when conducting the interviews and processing the collected information, was to make sure that bias did not occur. Bias is usually strongly connected to the researcher's lack of objectivity (Payne and Payne, 2004). The aim to be achieved was a neutral interpretation and a neutral judgment in the analysis of the information (ibid). To avoid bias we chose to always be two interviewers and we also used a recorder at all times. The recordings were then used to be able to replay all of the interviews so that nothing had to be withdrawn exclusively from memory. To make the information more accessible, we also chose to transcript certain parts of the interviews. The entire interviews were not changed into transcripts; this decision was made because of the fact that transcription is a very time-demanding activity and certain parts of the interviews were not out of any interest to the research question (Lewis-Beck, Bryman and Liao, (Poland), 2004).

2.3 Ethical Approach

Before we begun with our study we made the decision from within an ethical approach to provide the interview respondents with anonymity. From the ethical approach four differently ways are described; the demand of information, the demand of approval, demand of confidential and the beneficial demand (www.codex.vr.se). Accordingly to Forsmann (1977) the information that is given during the research should be held as confidential as possible and the received information should not be spread to anyone (www.codex.vr.se)

2.4 Reliability and Validity

Thurén (2005) describes four criteria's for criticism of sources. It is used for the cause to value to sources that are used in the study and to criticize its reliability. The four criteria's are: the *Realness and time connection* that the source is true and not fake. The article should be in present time to be more reliable (Thurén, 2005). We have therefore tried to a far extent to refer to as updated published articles as possible in well-known journals. The best way to find the latest knowledge is by reading the latest research presented in these various journals. *Independent*, it is more reliable if it is on primarily based sources (Thyer 2009). *Partial*, the source should have no personal attitudes that are angled in the article (ibid). For that reason we have been referring to more than one source through our thesis. To establish validity different data collectors or sources should be used (ibid).

We have been reading many articles within the topic we have chosen and have carefully picked the sources that we consider having big relevance for our study. We have further on chosen academic articles from well-known journals we found on scholar, and also through the use of the various data bases provided by our school. Also, other relevant books, e-books and websites were used.

3. Theoretical Framework

This chapter presents a summary of literature relevant to the subject of this essay. To understand the intention of this study, further information on *Corporate Social Responsibility, strategy and network* will be given below.

3.1 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

As a result of the globalization, companies of all sizes can operate on an international scale. The complex relation that follows from this internationalization highlights how much power and influence corporations have in relation to how they conduct their business. Concerns regarding these effects of business can be traced back to the 1930's and over the years these concerns have turned into a concept referred to as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (Carroll, 1999).

The concept of CSR can be traced back to the 1950's and has a diverse nature (Carroll, 1999). Through increased scrutiny of corporations by governments, activists and the media this has led to increased pressure on companies to be aware of their responsibilities (Porter and Kramer, 2006). CSR includes corporate obligations to handle and avoid negative economical, societal and environmental impacts. Several definitions exist in regards to the concept. To mention a few of them, according to Carroll's four-part CSR definition from 1991 there are four categories of social responsibility: economical, legal, ethical and philanthropic (Carroll, 1999). The European commission definition of CSR is "the responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society" (<http://ec.europa.eu>) and the CSR international organization states that "CSR is the way in which business consistently creates shared value in society through economic development, good governance, stakeholder responsiveness and environmental improvement" (<http://www.csrinternational.org>).

Within these areas where the corporation should do well, there is an aspect that indicates that it is not only about charity which CSR is closely associated with. The dynamic relationship between society and the companies include a mutual dependence or interdependence (Kurucz, Colbert and wheeler, 2008). By reinforcing this relationship and being active with CSR, this leads to different value creation opportunities such as; cost and risk reduction, profit maximization and competitive advantage, reputation and legitimacy, and synergistic value creation (Kurucz, Colbert and wheeler, 2008).

Because of the complexity to manage a business within globalized trade and the influences of rapidly changing surroundings, there are both rules and regulations to be used as aid. This becomes apparent in association with the corporate obligations that are included in CSR; where these obligations are supported by both voluntarism and by law (Carroll, 1999). Certain aspects that are supported by law are e.g. human rights, environmental regulations and rules controlling company accountancy and transparency.

Within management literature both critique and certain weaknesses get identified. Porter and Kramer (2006) have criticized CSR for being too fragmented and detached from business to be able to create these beneficial opportunities for society. Also, Friedman has pointed out that the concepts looseness makes it hard to handle and that a business cannot take responsibility - only people can (Friedman, 1970).

3.2 Strategic approach to CSR

“Corporate social responsibility (policy, programme or process) is strategic when it yields substantial business-related benefits to the firm, in particular by supporting core business activities and thus contributing to the firm's effectiveness in accomplishing its mission.” (Burkes and Logsdon, 1996, p.496).

As an answer towards the criticism and the problems in relation to CSR, a more strategic approach to the concept was presented. This is referred to as Strategic Corporate Social Responsibility (SCSR) and was created by Burkes and Logsdon (1996) to investigate how CSR-activities simultaneously could serve societal and economic interests. Some would say that this approach has been developed further by Porter and Kramer (2006), where their concept of Shared Value is a result of using SCSR with a collective-focused perspective (Atiq and Karatas-Ozkan, 2013).

The idea of Creating Shared Value (CSV) is that the value created should be for both the company and the society, also, where the main value is grounded in economical and societal benefits (Porter and Kramer, 2011). This differs from CSR partly because the main value within this kind of activities is to do well (ibid). This concept was developed to help companies to identify when and where companies could create shared value opportunities; through satisfying unmet needs with new products and in markets, by redefining productivity in the value chain or through enabling local clusters. Also, the concept was presented to help companies to stop thinking and planning in outdated ways. Even Mintzberg (1996) declares that strategy needs to be innovative otherwise it will be harder to find new perspectives. Ironically, one of the greater challenges for companies in regards to this form of sustainability-focused innovation, is to stop doing business the way they have done it in the past (Placet, Anderson and Fowler, 2005).

Studies have been made to prove to firms that it is wiser to handle CSR in a strategic matter, rather than being forced into subject-related investments that might not lead to any benefits at all for the company (Burke and Logsdon, 1996). To avoid these situations, companies are being encouraged to combine sustainability and strategy (Porter and Kramer, 2006). Working with strategic CSR it can strengthen the reputation and companies should study the way that CSR can be a source for innovation, opportunities and a competitive advantage instead of only a given cost (Porter & Kramer, 2006). The information given seems to be of value since

“managers have begun to pay increasing attention to issues of sustainability and corporate social responsibility (and) have made frequent appearances in management discourse.” (Miles, Munilla and Darroch, 2009, p.65 and p.74).

As has been stated previously in our interpretation and approach to the CSR concept, other nearby concepts and word such as e.g.; corporate social responsibility, sustainability or philanthropy will be treated as synonymous. When looking at the definitions of CSV (presumably an outcome of strategic CSR) and strategic philanthropy; both include a focus on organizational core competencies, as well as societal and economic benefits (McAlister and Ferrell, 2002).

It is a process to create sustainability strategies, both time and planning will be needed because it “must be customized to meet an organization’s core competencies, financial situation, skills, resources, and the sustainability challenge it faces” (Placet, Anderson and Fowler, 2005, p.32). The idea that strategy is a process and can appear in many shapes and forms is supported by Mintzberg’s (2002) in his theory about the five P’s. This theory does not only present five different definitions of strategy in the form of; plan, ploy, pattern, position and perspective. These definitions also show different ways on how strategy can be used. Mintzberg (2002) claims that strategy can be; a conscious course of action that are being followed (plan), or a somewhat specific maneuver to outwit a competitor (ploy), an intentional or unintentional consistency in behavior (pattern), the chosen environment for the organization (position) or only the way the world is being viewed (perspective). Mintzberg (2002) also declares that in whichever way a strategy is being created or used (see the above), a mixture of some/all of the above definitions, in no necessary or particular order, can be applicable.

Even though “Strategy making is an immensely subtle complex process ” (Mintzberg, 2002, p.111). By using CSR with a more strategic approach, companies get a chance to find out that CSR can be more than a cost or a constraint, which it so often is viewed as (Porter and Kramer 2006, Hart and Milstein, 2003). In regards to that matter, we will now investigate further if any of these strategic approaches to CSR, by itself or through the opportunities it creates, can be used for networks in a company’s internationalization process?

3.3 The internationalization process through the use of networks

Internationalization is a process made with the intention to increase growth and entering international markets (Johanson et al. 2002). To successfully fulfill the internationalize process it is important for the company to be involved in relevant network relationships (Johanson and Vahlne, 2009). Occasionally companies engage in collaborations with non-traditional actors to receive information, or to gain new possibilities by the collaboration that would not be possible through an independent action (Reficco & Marquez, 2012). An approach about the importance of the business involvement in the environment is presented in Reficco and Marquez (2012) is the ecosystem concept. It is based on the idea of the biological ecosystem, that companies are much weaker on their own than when they are integrated in their environment. "Organizations cannot evolve isolated from their environment" (Reficco & Marquez, 2012, p. 516)

Studies indicate that companies are involved in close collaborations with customers, actors or other partners, which can be considered as the network for the company. It is through the network that companies can by collaborations with other actors contribute to each other's development into new markets, this collaboration is due to the common interest they share. This can also result in supporting each other in the involvement in new international markets (Johanson et al., 2009).

3.4 Actors in a network

Several actors also referred to as stakeholders, can participate within these international networks. Stakeholders are individuals or groups that are influenced by an organization (Freeman, 2010).

Stakeholders can be categorized in many ways. Non-governmental and another society actors need to explain their stake in the company to be recognized as a stakeholder (Roloff, 2008). According to Roloff (2008) one way to categorize stakeholder is to view the relationship the stakeholder have with the organization. It is not always the collaboration is welcomed by the organization but it can sometimes be the only solution to approach a complex problem (Roloff, 2008).

One actor with increasing importance is the NGO's (non-governmental organizations). NGO's increased importance is due to the legitimacy it can offer companies that is involving in development countries. Though the increasing involvement among business and NGO's, the collaboration is still limited and it's a small amount of companies that is in the business-NGO involvement (Honders and Nijhof, 2007). If an organization wants to enter a foreign market and the new market's information and resources are not working properly it can be costly for a company to enter the new market (Reficco and Marques, 2012).

By engaging in NGO or other social entrepreneurs the costs can be reduced. Interaction with the organizations environment is described as a concept called Inclusive Network by (Reficco and Marques, 2012). The Inclusive network consists of the interaction between companies, organizations and communities to create some predictability in a non-stable environment and create opportunities for economic activity. Together with others organizations or actors, the organizations become stronger than if they would operate independently (Reficco and Marques, 2012).

According to Fiorentino (2012) it is important to create alliances with non-profit organization when entering new international markets. Through the non-profit organization the companies can get the vital information or general information such as important needs of the new market (Fiorentino, 2012).

3.5 Collaboration between the actors of a network

To create these kinds of networks, collaboration between the different actors is needed. This collaboration can be described and explained through the use of Multi Stakeholder Network theory. Multi Stakeholder actions are a procedure in which different actors come together and try to find a common approach to a cause in which they all are affected by (Roloff, 2008).

According to Roloff (2008) the stakeholder network management is an approach to reduce or minimize risk to the organization and can also be a plateau for new business opportunities. The stakeholder management is a way of explaining how several stakeholder groups such as NGO's, business groups, supranational institutions or organizations are involved in a common activity. The approach can be described as a way for actors to gather around a certain problem and together in collaborations find a way to approach it. The reason for the actors to come

together is because of to the problem they share it's too complex to solve without any collaboration. (Roloff, 2008). The network between multi-stakeholders can be of help in the “development of legitimate policies for the interaction between the business and society” (Roloff, 2008, p.235). Additionally the benefit that can be gained from the network and collaboration is that a learning gap can be overcome, through the interaction with other actors from different regions together new technology, methods and rules can be created (Reficco and Marques, 2012).

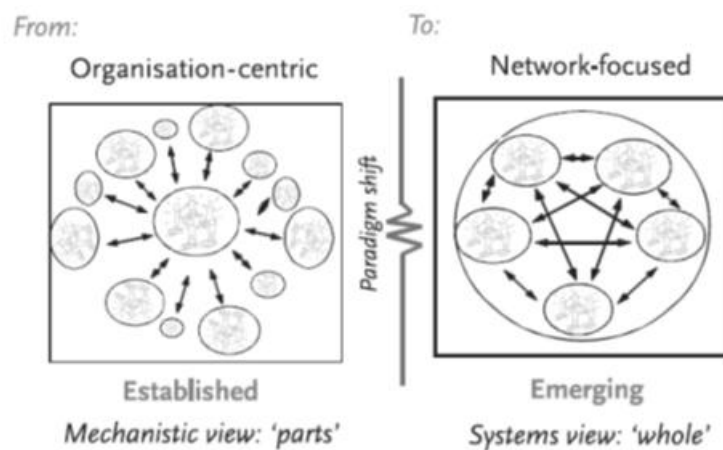


Figure 1: An illustration from an organization centric approach management to a network focused approach management. (Svendsen and Lagerberg, 2005, p.97)

The network focused approach shows that the organizations benefits from the shifting, if the organization have a problem that is common to other actors. In the network focused approach the organizations do not have control for the system that they are involved in with other actors. They are instead participants in a whole system (Svedsen & Lagerberg, 2005). The system contains of several actors with a common issue in which the communication with each other is important. (Roloff, 2008). The participating organizations are strongly focused on the common problem they share and in the network approach trust and understanding of the common issue or complication is demanded from all the actors (Svendsen & Lagerberg, 2005).

The disadvantage in the shift from a centric to a network approach is that the network process requires time (Roloff, 2008). In the organization centric approach the organization are the centers of many bilateral relationships (Svendsen & Lagerberg 2005). The disadvantage with

the centric organization approach can be that that organization is put in the center and consequently other actors that can be important to the organization is being neglected (Roloff, 2008).

3.6 The correlation between SCSR and networking

CSR can be used strategically by companies, even though strategy can be a time-consuming process this may lead to long term benefits.

Mintzberg (2002) developed the five P's; plan, ploy, pattern, position and perspective to describe how strategy is a process. CSR can be considered as such a process which helps e.g. the internationalization. To be able to implement the internationalization strategy successfully the companies need to seek out the relevant networks. Without these networks the strategy will come to a halt. Therefore it is beneficial if the strategy is used to coexist with relevant networks to gain access to new markets. New markets is not the only benefit but also strength in the form of collective actions that can contribute to safety in unsafe environments. A third party such as a NGO can help to create legitimacy in a network which in other case would have been disregarded. The third party can possess information about a certain business/market that a company is lacking.

4. The Empirical Data

To protect the identity of the respondents and the brand of the companies, pseudonyms will be used throughout.

4.1 Shipping AB

The respondent will be referred to as "Lisa" and the company will be referred to as "Shipping AB".

Shipping Company AB has a world leading expertise in maritime sectors such as technical service and economic parts such as marketing. The head office is located in Gothenburg and so are the three parent companies.

According to Lisa, the definition of CSR is that it is an approach to contribute to society, in access to create less negative impacts on the environment and to remain as an organization in the long-run. Consequently the Company will be better of surrounded with a good environment. The Three Words that permeate the whole organization are care, innovation and performance. According to Lisa, personally she do not consider sponsorship as a CSR activity. CSR is according to the respondent an activity with economically benefits along with an approach to make it better for the environment and to receive social benefits. According to Lisa sponsorship is more of a giving act with possible benefits, such as marketing gains.

Shipping AB had a huge problem along the African coast with pirate attacks. The approach to this problem was that they got into a collaboration with seven other shipping companies, in order to solve the common problem that all of the involved shipping companies had. The cost of the pirate's attacks became huge for Shipping AB; one of the costs was the extra fuel to go around Africa's coast in order to avoid the attacks. Another cost was given because of the raised insurance premium around the problem area. They also took further precaution such as of arming the ship with sprinkler system and guards onboard. The safety for the staff onboard was also a huge problem when they had to risk their lives to be onboard. The problem outside the Somalia's coast was due to the problem Somalia had on land. Somalia did not have any stable government. Instead of defending themselves through an increased cost in higher safety trough sprinkler system, guards and other protections they went in collaboration with seven other shipping companies in co-operation with FN. Together they chose the village that had the most recruits by the pirates, and tried to offer the young people other jobs in reason that young possible recruits instead would be given another option than becoming a pirate. Shipping AB was in need of the collaboration, for the reason that they did not have the qualifications to enter Somalia alone.

Another CSR activity made by Shipping AB due to the safety of the employees is being a part of an educational program. A network involving nine marine institutions in eight countries and three continents was created. Trough experience from each other the program would contribute to increase the quality and standards of the Shipping AB marine education. It's a huge benefit for Shipping AB because they have employees from all over the world, and consequently the education will be equal in all the institutions. This is also beneficial to other countries because of the spreading of knowledge and sharing experience about security and shipping. When asked if their CSR activities have led to any business opportunities and new

market shares the given answer by Lisa was that there are cases which their CSR activities has led to new business operations. Shipping AB received new business opportunities through new contracts because of their leading position in security service. Many of their CSR activities are around service.

4.2 Construction AB

The respondent will be referred to as “Mike” and the company will be referred to as “Construction AB”.

Our second Swedish international company is Construction AB which is one of the world’s leading within their industry. With expertise in construction and project development, Construction AB is active within countries such as the USA, Nordic region, Latin America and in the UK.

According to our respondent Mike that works as a Vice President of Ethics at Construction AB, they do not work with CSR but with sustainability. This choice was made with the reasoning that the latter concept is easier to define in the aspects of economic, environmental and social sustainability. Mike explained that sustainability sometimes is CSR, can be perceived as CSR, or not be CSR at all. Their approach within this kind of activities is to always find a balance between the three different aspects of the concept. The company avoids conducting business in the way that it is beneficial within e.g. the social aspect, if this is at the expense for the environmental aspect. This balance is what defines their sustainability perspective. Mike declares that he does not believe that a corporation can survive and function in the long-run if there is too much of an imbalance between the three different aspects; also that it is the long-run perspective that matters.

In regards to how Construction AB sustainability work takes form, Mike explained that these projects and activities are being fulfilled through the use of both collaborations and independent work. One certain project was conducted to lower the reoccurrence of so called “under the table employments”, and was done in corporation with Sweden’s construction industries, the Swedish tax agency and the police. This was a typical project that is best performed together with a different form of authority. Construction AB is also a part of anticorruption networks, where the corporation is between companies that are active in both

national and international markets. In reference to social sustainability, corporation is done both with other companies as well as non-governmental organization. The only problem within these networks is to find good partners that have matching set of values and policies that are being followed within the business. Another problem is to avoid being blamed for competitor collaborations. Other than that, it does not matter if the collaborating company is from the same industry or not, as long as these issues are being avoided.

Currently Construction AB is involved in networks such as The World Economic Forum Partnering Against Corruption Initiative (PACI) and work together with others in regards to corruption issues. The goal is to reach political influence or exchange of experiences, but at the same time avoid being connected with competition based collaboration. Within the network PACI there is a big focus on collective actions. These activities are based on companies coming together to declare demands upon governments to change certain laws and rules for the better, otherwise consequences will follow e.g. that the companies will stop being active on a certain market connected to the problem area.

There is a varied level of influences that Construction AB can exert, depending on what form of actors that are included in the network. Construction AB is also a member of the United Nations Global Impact. Here, with this form of network including an NGO, Construction AB has e.g. no influence on what members that can join the network. Mike also declared that the criteria to join this kind of network is very low, as well as there is not much control from the NGO's side to see if the members of the network are doing approved sustainability work.

For 1, 5 years ago Construction AB decided to go in to Romania and do a business case. This was done to see if possibilities existed to conduct construction or projects in the country, while at the same time avoiding getting involved in or reinforcing corruption. The business case was based on communication between other Swedish companies (already established in the country), to hear what they had to say in regards to potential changes they would like to make, and what they thought about Construction AB joining the market. All questions asked to the companies were very corruption focused. Despite the efforts, Construction AB decided not to establish their business in Romania. Further on we asked if it would be possible for Construction AB to enter a political unstable country as Romania through a network. The given answer was that it would be possible with collaboration if the foreign government

would support Construction AB's laws and ethics. With the network collaboration and the joint leverage, this would provide a bigger chance to influence the government.

When asked how all these networks opportunities appeared, Mike said it was based on coincident. Except from the exchange of ideas and tips these networks made room for, these networks could also lead to business collaboration outside the framework of the sustainability projects. This often occurred through communication between the managers of the corporations.

4.3 Communication AB

The respondent will be referred to as "Carl" and the company will be referred to as "Communication AB".

Communication AB is a Company that is offering electronic communication service in Scandinavia, Baltic, growth market in Eurasia, Russia and Spain. Communication AB is a Swedish Company active on a global scale.

We met Karl who is the manager for sustainability at Communication AB. According to Karl, Communication AB work with sustainability and the definition is a strategic work with sustainability activities. When asked what their strategic work is based on, the answer was that it is based on economic, social and environmental benefits. When we asked if Communication AB have any CSR activities Karl answered that they do, but they do not speak of CSR instead the word sustainability is used. The respondent said that in every country where they have affiliated companies they have CSR activities.

CSR is more of a charity to Communication AB according to Karl. The respondent said that is hard to define CSR and sustainability. Communication AB has lately had problems with their sustainability activities. Communication AB has been involved in scandals based on corruption, and in order to solve these problems they created an educational program in ethics and compliance for all of the employees. This is to educate all of the employees about their rights, obligations and to integrate sustainability in all parts of the company. Their interference in scandals and complications in sustainability activities have been because of the doubtful project Communication AB have been supporting. They have not been careful and

have not made enough research on the supported Projects with the involving partners according to Karl. Their new commission is to integrate sustainability in every part of the Company.

In all of their sustainability activities they collide with some kind of network or partnership, mostly an NGO. In some countries where it is not allowed with NGO's, Communication AB alternately has collaborated with the state. The collaboration is made because of the licenses that are necessary to Company AB to operate within certain countries. When they get the legitimacy in the foreign country, then they can begin with the CSR activity to improve their brand. The purpose of the CSR activities is a long-term reinforcement of the brand in the Community where they are operating. When they collaborate with an NGO such as e.g. Childhood, it makes them more reliable in the society they operate in, but even in their mother country Sweden. Later on Karl claimed that they want to work with strategic CSR, as a way to reinforce the brand and to become a reliable actor.

Karl declared that they do not collaborate with a partner or NGO if some of their competitors also are doing this. That was to not be connected to their competitors. Contradictory, Karl mentioned that the only collaboration they have with their Competitors is business co-operations. This kind of co-operation is because of the common problem with freedom of speech, that the whole business they operate in struggle with. Solution to the problem cannot be made alone without the network in this case.

5. Analysis

Within this following section, our empirical founding will be analyzed with the support of our theoretical framework. To avoid repetitive conclusions or argumentations in certain aspects of the analysis, founding's within the research will be presented based on themes.

5.1 Respondents definitions

Due to the ambiguity of the concept that our research question is based on (CSR), we asked all of three respondents to give their/the company's view of the concept. When the various explanations of the company's corporate responsibility work was compared, we could see both similarities and differences between some of the companies.

It was only Shipping AB that said that they worked with CSR. Both Construction AB and Communication AB claimed that they did not work with or used the term “CSR”. Instead the term “Sustainability” was used. A difference between the two latter was found in the independent definitions of this concept.

According to Construction AB, sustainability includes a focus on economic, environmental and societal aspects. The main goal of this is to find a balance between these three aspects without focusing too much on one at the expense of another. According to Communication AB, their definition of the concept was to conduct their business in a respectable manner in reference to the three dimensions of economics, societal and law. Also, charity or philanthropic actions was included in this concept. Meanwhile, according to Shipping AB their definition of CSR was to contribute to society, decrease environmental impacts and ensure the organizations functionality in the long-run.

In reference to Shipping AB and Construction AB, we noticed similarities between their definitions and to Porter and Kramer’s (2011) definition to Creating Shared Value (CSV). In comparison, both were strongly focused on the concepts aim to be both economically beneficial for the company and socially beneficial for the society. Another similarity was that the two companies had a long-term perspective of their corporate responsibility work, this which also is of great importance within the CSV concept. In reference to Communication AB, similarities were found between this company’s definition and Carroll’s (1991) four-part definition of CSR. Both have a focus based on economical, legal and philanthropic aspects of the concept.

5.2 Strategy

In our interviews with the different companies, we found that all of the company’s CSR work could be described with the help of Mintzberg’s (2002) five P’s theory. This theory will be used below to either point out the occurrence of strategic approach, or to point out the lack of it, with reference to the five P’s theory being various definitions of strategy.

Both Shipping AB and Construction AB showed similarities in using their CSR activities as a plan for how they should conduct their business. Even though the respondent Lisa for Shipping AB never declared that they use CSR with a strategic approach, the company never

engages in any activities that do not create benefits for both the company and the society. Meanwhile, the respondent Mike for Construction AB declared that they never do business with companies with different policies than them, or within countries which's laws clashes with the policies of the company. Through the fact that these two companies are avoiding interaction with actors or environments that are not compatible with the company's sustainability approach, this shows on a conscious course of action which according to Mintzberg (2002) qualifies as a plan.

In contrast, in our interview with Karl for Communication AB he declared that they had somewhat of an experimental approach to their sustainability activities. According to Karl they can not engage in nor do, the same CSR work as other companies. This is one of the reasons to why Shipping AB is not viewed as using their CSR activities as a plan.

Communication AB did not seem to have a well thought out plan or idea, when the company after a short while of being established in a new country, got involved in a scandal regarding supporting an ethically doubtful project. Almost no similarities could be drawn between Communication AB's CSR work and Mintzberg's (2002) definition of strategy as a plan. Nevertheless, this experimental approach could be qualified as a strategy, through being a ploy. Through the fact that Communication AB knew in which country they wanted market shares, but did not know how to do this in a successful and in a sustainable way, this trial-and-error approach is a strategy in the form of ploy in reference to Mintzberg (2002).

One thing that differs between the Shipping AB, Construction AB and Communication AB, is that the latter is the only company claiming to support philanthropy. Also, in contrast to the latter company, both Shipping AB and Construction AB have strong similarities to Porter and Kramer's CSV perspective. This perspective focuses on societal and economical benefits (Porter and Kramer, 2011). Meanwhile, Communication AB has a more multi-dimensional perspective such as Carroll's (1991) four-part definition of CSR, which include an economical, ethical, legal and philanthropic focus. Karl for Shipping AB admitted that during the past few years there have been some bad investments and sponsoring. In strategic philanthropy, a company should focus on organizational core competencies, as well as societal and economical benefits (McAlister and Ferrell, 2002). By focusing too much on philanthropy, the Communication AB's lack of strategic approach in their sustainability activities has made them experience the costly side of the concept (Porter and Kramer, 2011). One source to these experienced costs can be because of their sustainability definition being

too vague and general, which could have made the concept hard to implement (Marrewjik, 2002). Customizing is a key importance to turn sustainability activities into strategies. This shows that having a too general view of CSR instead of customizing it, which Communication AB seems to have done, leads to a non-strategic approach to CSR.

Both Lisa for Shipping AB and Mike for Construction AB spoke of the long-term perspective being of great importance in regards to this kind of CSR work. Due to the fact that both companies are using CSR as a guideline or a set of rules (a plan), and expecting these rules to control and influence the consistency of the company's behavior in how they do business; this will in the long-run result in a certain pattern according to Mintzberg (2002). Mike for Construction AB also mentioned some of these patterns, were the company have and always will, try to choose which countries to approach and find market shares, in alignment with their sustainability approach. This reinforces the idea of Shipping AB and Construction AB is using SCSR, because a pattern is also a form of strategy (Mintzberg, 2002).

In reference to Construction AB, it seems as if the sustainability approach pervades the entire organizations, this which can be counted for as a perspective. According to Mintzberg (2002), strategy can be a perspective when this is shared by people in an organization through their actions and intentions. Also, Shipping AB claimed that the entire organization worked according to their CSV perspective. In contrast and in reference to Karl for Communication AB, the entire organization does not seem to share the same perspective due to the fact that they have certain offices that handle their CSR activities. This leads to the concept not pervading the organization as a whole. When a perspective is shared with others (actors outside of the organization included) and market shares are gained through this interaction, this can lead to a new or an additional environment for the organization. According to Mintzberg (2002), an environment is also counted for as a strategy.

An important aim with this analysis is not only to highlight that all of the companies have different levels of strategic approaches to their CSR activities. The aim is also to see if these various levels affect, how or if, CSR can be used in business networking that companies often do with the goal to reach new market shares (as a part of the internationalization process). What needs to be analyzed is the idea e.g.; if Construction AB is making networking easier through sharing their perspective in the form of a strategy, or finding others that share the same perspective. Or if Shipping AB's approach to CSR activities, which can be interpreted

as a way of letting CSR influence their strategy or even be a strategy, are helping them in their networking. Considering that Communication AB is the company with the less strategic approach, as well as that Karl declared that the company is reconsidering to start working with sustainability in a strategic way. What is left to be analyzed in this case is if Communication AB's lack of strategic approach is helping them or having a counter effect in their networking. In reference to Karl's statement, implications have been made that a strategic approach to CSR might be a necessity. Nevertheless, the effects of having a strategic approach to CSR will be analyzed below.

5.3 Networking

Through their strategic approach to CSR in the form of CSV, Shipping AB managed to become leading within their field through the use of networking and an educational program that they developed with the help of a certain network. This network was created together with nine other corporate institutes. It started with Shipping AB wanting to higher the level of education of the staff within this field of work, and at the same time gain new market shares. This network in hand lead to Shipping AB being able to contribute to higher education within developing countries, which these countries could not provide for on their own (societal benefits), as well as giving Shipping AB more staff within the organization but located in other countries (economical benefits).

According to Lisa this SCSR activity has lead to new business contracts, due to the increased demand of personnel with this educational experience. In reference to Johanson and Vahlne (2009), it is through CSR networks that a company can reach new employees and collaborations with foreign countries, which is of great importance in a successful internationalization. To make a network function and at the same time reach new market shares, developing countries are a great strategic choice in the sense of opportunities due to the high amount of unmet needs (Porter and Kramer, 2011). This relation gets reinforced in reference to all of the unmet needs in regards to education within these countries that Shipping AB started networking with. This so called inclusive network, where organizations interact creates predictability and economic activity (Refficio and Marcques, 2012). Shipping AB is an example of this, where these nine corporate institutions got the opportunity to develop while Shipping AB became able to expand through this collaboration.

Our second company Construction AB, did also experience the importance of being active within a relevant network when internationalizing (Johnson and Vahlne, 2009). According to Construction AB it is of no bigger relevance to them if the actors or partner in their collaborations are within the same line of business or not. Companies within different lines of business have shown to have similar problems as Construction AB, and through a network the companies have been able to exchange experiences to help solve these problems. Even Reficco and Marques (2012) emphasizes that network interaction can provide with information in regards to learning gaps. Shipping AB's project is also an example of this.

Construction AB underlined that an important factor is that companies in the network need to share the same set of values, to avoid being connected to competitor collaboration. An inclusive network consists of an interaction between companies, organizations, and communities to create some predictability in a non-stable environment and create opportunities for economic activities (Reficco and Marques 2012). As mentioned before, Construction AB is a member of this kind of inclusive network called PACI. Organizations within this network collaborate with the common goal to change certain rules and regulations, to make different industries better for all parts involved. If CSR networks such as this did not exist, these collected actions would not be able to take place. An absence of these collective actions could lead to organizations reaching a stand-still in their ways of solving problems connected to their business.

Our third company Communication AB, also shared Construction AB's view of avoiding competitor collaboration, even to the extent where interactions with competitors appeared not to take place even in certain CSR activities. This shows that Communication AB seems to have an organization –centric approach (Svedsen and Lagerberg, 2005) rather than a network focused approach such as Shipping AB and Construction AB. The disadvantage of this organization-centric approach is that stakeholders and actors that could be relevant for the company are being neglected (Roloff, 2008). This has led to Communication AB being dependent on collaborations with NGO's to enter new international markets, to gain licenses that is required to operate within certain markets. This example is reinforced by companies that have an organization- centric approach, are often the center of many bilateral relationships (Svedsen & Lagerberg, 2005). Karl for Communication AB mentioned the importance of involvement with a NGO, or other trustworthy partners, when entering a foreign market due to the legitimacy the collaboration can achieve. What should be noted is

that according to Karl, the important CSR activity- collaboration is only necessary after establishing a foothold in a new market, and not during the establishing process. But according to Fiorentino (2012), it can be of importance to form an alliance with an NGO even during the establishing process of internationalization.

Karl mentioned that activities (such as philanthropy) did occur without the significance to any networks. Karl also mentioned that not enough research has been made, about the NGO's they are collaborating with or other potential actors. This lack of commitment can be one of the reasons to why they have had troubles with their CSR activities. Because Communication AB is not using CSR strategically enough to incorporate it and use it to build networks, this leads to a loss in information from the networks. According to Reficco and Marcques (2012), Communication AB could benefit from being active in a network, because the cooperation would make the company stronger than if they would operate independently.

The usage of networks can give different result depending on the common issue. According to Lisa for Shipping AB, through a network, they might have managed to reduce or even prevent the pirate attacks interfering with the shipping industry. The results have been experienced as promising, but they are currently waiting for an evaluation report giving concrete numbers in regard to this. Within stakeholder management, networks are often used to reduce risk. This is exactly what Shipping AB's goal was when they started this collaboration with FN, to reduce risk in the shipping industry. The stakeholder management (Roloff, 2008) is a way of describing how several stakeholder groups such as NGO's, in shipping AB's case FN, are involved in a common activity. The approach can be described as a way for actors to gather around a certain problem and consequently find a way to approach it. According to Reffico & Marques (2012) the action could not have been achieved independently. During the interview Lisa even said that they did not have the qualification to solve the problem without the collaboration.

In a network focused approach that has been described above, the organization benefits from a collaboration if the organization is experiencing a common problem with other actors (Svedsen and Lagerberg, 2005). This collaboration did not contribute to any internationalization for Shipping or any new market shares for Shipping AB. The collaboration was made to solve the problem trough CSR. According to Roloff (2008) the collaboration can be done only in order to solve a complex problem, the collaboration is not in

all cases wanted but necessary. This shows that using SCSR might not always help with the internationalization process, but can also give other positive outcomes.

Also Construction AB experienced positive results from their networking. According to Mike it would be possible to enter non-stable countries through collaborations, in order to change rules in which business is being conducted within that country and industry. One major problem is usually when the country is corrupt. This was the reason to why Construction AB did not enter Romania. To operate in a corrupt country, this usually means that the company has to adapt its values and rules accordingly. According to Reficco one of the benefits of multi stakeholder collaboration, is that new methods and rules can be created (Reficco and Marques, 2012). Construction AB chose to do an investigation and evaluation on the current situation in Romania, but decided not to enter it. This could partly have been avoided because it can be costly to enter a foreign market that is not working properly (Reficco and Marques, 2012). To evade problems like this, through an interaction with relevant stakeholders in the inclusive network the cost can be reduced (Ibid). So Mike said that if this still would be of interest for the company, an idea would be to collaborate with an NGO and other actors, to then be able to contribute to legitimacy in that chosen developing country (Honders and Nijhof, 2007).

5.1 Conclusion

The subject we have chosen is wide, interesting, but also well-debated. Considering the big selection of articles written about Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), this has made it difficult and of great importance to limit our study. Consequently our study is only scratching on the surface of the chosen subject. Nevertheless, in our analysis based on three interviews from companies operating on a global scale and within different industries, we have reached these conclusions.

In regards to the individual definitions of CSR, practical and empirical evidence has been gathered that this concept is still ambiguous and complex to handle. All the companies above agreed on that CSR can be everything or (perceived as) nothing. With support of the empirical data as well as previous research, it seems as if companies should focus on customizing their CSR definitions, instead of accepting or treating it as a “one-size-fits-all”.

With the support found in Shipping AB's and Construction AB's cases, it seemed as if a company can be more successful and get better outcomes by turning their CSR approach into SCSR. Through the clear rules and regulations that the SCSR creates, the companies are minimizing their risks and are creating a foundation for companies to communicate. The counterevidence of this is the Communication AB, which currently is not using SCSR but a vague approach to the concept. After the involvement in scandals the company is now discussing and considering starting using SCSR. By using SCSR, companies can use their customized approach with clear rules and goals, to find compatible actors in a network.

The reasons behind involvement in CSR have appeared as being an important factor. If the reason is a common problem with the involved companies, such as the pirate attacks outside Somalia, internationalization is not always the goal but more a mean to secure their market. In these cases, collaboration with competitors is accepted and not viewed upon as cartel forming. Assuming that the organization involves in a CSR activity by reason of a common interest, then the focus can be on development or/and internationalization. This can be due to organizations power in who to collaborate with and focus in a common interest. In these cases a third party e.g. an NGO can be required if the collaboration is involved with the organizations competitors. The NGO can also contribute to legitimacy within the collaboration and in the new foreign market. Things that can go wrong in a CSR involvement which often requires a network approach, is if the company still insists in holding on to a centric approach. The involvement will not be integrated fully in the company and this can interpret as being contradictory.

By using SCSR, that transforms CSR and makes it graspable as well as clear. This uncomplicates the connection between action and effect. In a network a company needs to find compatible actors, this which will become an easier process through using SCSR. The companies common interests and problems will have a chance to get solved in a way that benefits all the parts involved as well as society. Creating Shared value (CSV), also known as an outcome of SCSR, is used to find opportunities to new markets shares, and networking is a way for companies to find access to new foreign markets. So by using SCSR as a foundation in a network, the chance to a successful internationalization will rise.

These conclusions are drawn and based upon our own empirical data, for a result to be generalized a greater amount of data needs to be analyzed. There is also a limited amount of

previous research on SCRS due to its slow development. Considering its potentially increasing importance in firm's network building in their internationalization process, further research should be done within this subject.

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