

CSR, Sustainability, Ethics & Governance

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Handbook of Integrated CSR Communication

 Springer

CSR, Sustainability, Ethics & Governance

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Handbook of Integrated CSR Communication

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The Concept of Integrated CSR Communication: Introduction and Definition

The Handbook of Integrated CSR Communication examines the contribution of Integrated Corporate Social Responsibility Communication to the successful management of today’s wide range of communication activities. The editor team’s motivation in crafting this text, with its multidisciplinary approach to CSR, was to provide a new, holistic communication approach to the CSR debate.

Consumers and stakeholders are paying ever greater attention to the CSR activities of companies and NGOs. Effective CSR communication is essential for successful CSR programs. Here, the integration of CSR communication strategies, instruments, and activities across different organizational areas, nations, and media is the key to success.

We define *Integrated CSR Communication* as the harmonization of all CSR-related communication strategies and activities, whereby CSR is understood as the company’s attitudes and behaviors with regard to its perceived obligations and responsibility toward its stakeholders and society.

In the context of mediatization and digitalization, in times of new and traditional communication logics and channels, each statement a company makes—whether directed to its employees, the public, or, in the end, both—should fit with the corporate image of the company. This appears to be even more important for CSR communication, dealing with stakeholder relations based on the allocation and taking of responsibility, aiming at sustainable relations. Therefore, this handbook does not focus on classic silos such as advertising, PR, branding, etc. Instead, it takes an integrated view of different organizational areas. Integrated CSR Communication is seen as a cross-sectional issue which needs a broader—cross-sectional—view. Integration of communication activities is not only necessary across different organizational areas. It is also essential across different cultures and across different ethical standards. Furthermore, companies are challenged to consider

current media developments (such as media convergence), and social change (such as demographic developments), when thinking about Integrated CSR Communication. Therefore, in the chapters in the handbook, while distinct aspects are highlighted, the authors always take an integrated CSR communication perspective.

This handbook is the product of scholars, researchers, and practitioners from different countries, with a variety of disciplinary backgrounds, and its goal is to offer an international perspective on the particular features of CSR. This gives the volume a unique interdisciplinary as well as holistic nature, which is mirrored in the book's chapters.

The innovative perspective of Integrated CSR Communication constitutes the structure of the book and highlights interfaces between the different disciplines presented, as well as the research foci. In detail, this handbook offers a broad spectrum of integrated CSR communication explorations and practical considerations and includes issues that are not frequently addressed in the context of Corporate Social Responsibility Communication.

The five sections forming the structure of the book and their chapters are described in greater detail below in order to provide an overview of the issues addressed in this volume:

The text begins with section "I. Theoretical Foundations of Integrated CSR Communication," which offers insights into theoretical approaches and thoughts referred to as integrated CSR Communication. The chapter entitled "Integrated CSR Communications" written by Manfred Bruhn and Anja Zimmermann, outlines different ways to integrate CSR communication at different organizational levels. Furthermore, CSR Communication is discussed here from a strategic point of view and the authors suggest ways to implement it in order to improve the companies'/ organizations' communicative performance.

"CSR as Common Sense Issue? A Theoretical Exploration of Public Discourses, Common Sense and Framing of Corporate Social Responsibility" by Franzisca Weder, addresses CSR Communication from a content-related perspective and defines CSR as a common sense-related discourse in corporations and organizations as well as for their stakeholders.

Matthias Karmasin and Michael Litschka, authors of the chapter "CSR as an Economic, Ethical, and Communicative Concept," argue that CSR must be understood as an economic, ethical, and communicative concept, represent the organizations can legitimize their actions and strategies to their stakeholders, as well as means by an unlimited and general public.

Sophie Esmann Andersen, Anne Ellerup Nielsen, and Christiane Marie Høvring in the chapter "Communicative Dilemmas of CSR: Towards an Integrative Framework of CSR Communication," conceptually explore CSR dilemmas (self-promotion, identification, and relation dilemmas) in a communication context, in order to achieve an integrative framework that recognizes and interprets the complexity of communicative dilemmas embedded in CSR.

Franzisca Weder and Matthias Karmasin, conclude this first section with their contribution, entitled "Communicating Responsibility—Responsible Communication." Here, they introduce the concept of integrated CSR communication as a

condition for realizing CSR in organizations, while raising and addressing the question of how to communicate *about* CSR and how, at the same time, to do so in a responsible fashion.

Section II of this handbook, “II. Managerial Aspects of Integrated CSR Communication,” begins with the contribution—“Investigating Internal CSR Communication: Building a Theoretical Framework”—in which the authors Sigrid Bekmeier-Feuerhahn, Paula Maria Bögel, and Carina Koch identify basic characteristics for a successful internal CSR communication and highlight how its integration in the work context may be helpful in achieving a participative CSR approach.

It would be a shortcoming of this text not to mention how CSR communication intersects with Public Relations from an organizational communication perspective. This is discussed by Stefan Jarolimek and Franzisca Weder in the chapter “Organizing CSR Communication: Challenges for Integrated CSR Communication from a PR and Organizational Communication Perspective.” Here, they not only underscore interfaces between the two disciplines, but also explain how CSR Communication and PR can be understood as complementary to one another.

Diane L. Swanson and Marc Orlitzky explore two distinct models (value neglect versus value attunement) of executive leadership in the chapter entitled “Toward a Conceptual Integration of Corporate Social and Financial Performance.” Here, they highlight the competitive benefits attunement may produce for socially responsible corporations.

Christian Boris Brunner and Tobias Langner outline in their chapter “Communicating Corporate Social Responsibility for Brands” ten recommendations for integrating and enhancing the efficacy of CSR communications for brands, arguing that the wrong application of CSR communication can lead to considerable damage to the brand.

Alan Pomeroy presents the chapter “Communicating CSR through Corporate Image Advertising.” He details the current status of corporation’s CSR advertising and points out how this practice can be interpreted as a corporate’ identity-building exercise. This chapter concludes section II, providing an examination of how an integrated approach to Corporate Social Responsibility is perceived, adapted, and implemented in the field of marketing and advertising research and practice.

The third section of this volume—“III. Integrated CSR Communication and New Media”—discusses CSR Communication related to Social Media and the World Wide Web. The chapter “The World Wide Web and the Social Media as Tools of CSR Communication,” written by Paul Capriotti, examines the importance of the Internet and its new communicative ways and tools for CSR communication and identifies the impact of the social web on CSR management and communication.

Within this section, it would be unthinkable to not consider the issue of Big Data. The chapter “Big Data and CSR Communication,” fulfills this requirement by addressing the current research status of Big Data. Ramón Reichert discusses future developments, challenges, and implications for specific communication areas, such

as health communication, communication management, and corporate social responsibility.

Building on this discussion, the chapter entitled “Virtual Corporate Social Responsibility Dialog: Seeking a Gap between Proposed Concepts and Actual Practices,” reflects on one of the emerging phenomena concerning CSR: virtual CSR dialog. The authors, Shintaro Okazaki and Hector D. Menendez, demonstrate how virtual CSR dialog can be used as a powerful tool to stimulate and fortify the relationship between a corporation and its clients, based on a preliminary examination of Twitter CSR communications of a global firm.

“IV. Intercultural Integrated CSR Communication” is the fourth section of the “Handbook of Integrated CSR Communication” and is dedicated to the challenges of discussing CSR communication from a cross-cultural point of view. The first contribution to this section, the chapter entitled “Integrated Corporate Social Responsibility Communication—A Global and Cross-cultural Perspective,” addresses the universality of CSR communication in a global context and raises questions about standardization and local responsiveness of strategies in multinational enterprises. Matthias Karmasin and Gerhard Apfelthaler suggest in this chapter that different cultural contexts call for different approaches to CSR and CSR communication.

Andrea Ettinger, Ralf Terlutter, Sandra Diehl, and Barbara Mueller—authors of the chapter “Integrated CSR Advertising—With a Special Focus on the Intercultural Perspective”—provide an overview of existing literature on the status quo of (integrated) CSR advertising research within the context of intercultural CSR communication.

The next four chapters demonstrate how CSR communication is perceived, debated, and applied on four continents. The chapter “Knowledge Integration in European CSR Communication Field: An Institutional Perspective” by Urša Golob, Nataša Verk, and Klement Podnar, deals with the main institutional logics that frame and forge the CSR communication field in Europe. Three different institutional logics—operational/transactional, constructivist, and holistic—play a decisive role in shaping the development of CSR communication in Europe.

Karen Becker-Olsen and Francisco Guzmán, authors of the chapter “Corporate Social Responsibility Communication in North America: The Past, Present, and Future,” provide an overview of the historical development of CSR and CSR communication and programs in the USA, Canada, and Mexico. They explain how and why they evolved and address their possible future challenges.

The authors of the chapter entitled “Practices of Corporate Social Responsibility in China and Hong Kong,” trace the development of CSR and CSR Communication in the Chinese context from a historical and philosophical point of view. Liane Lee and Kara Chan differentiate between Mainland China and Hong Kong, accentuating how dissimilarities in the political systems and economic development of the two areas led to different ways of understanding and practicing corporate social responsibility.

Concluding this section, David Katamba and Cedric M. Nkiko contribute an innovative framework, called “*Kata-Nkiko Framework*,” in the chapter “The CSR

Communications & Reporting Landscape in Developing Countries,” which explains the state of Integrated CSR Communication and Reporting in developing countries. In addition, this chapter traces the relationship between Speech Act Theory (SAT) and Sense-making Theory (SMT) and outlines how this connection might be helpful for stakeholders in developing countries in making sense of this information.

The final section “V. Special Topics of Intercultural Integrated CSR Communication” highlights the challenges, implications, and benefits of an integrated CSR communication approach in different research areas. The chapter “Corporate Social Responsibility and the Portrayal of Minority Groups in Advertising” addresses the implications of portrayals of racial and minority groups in advertising for both society and business. From a theoretical perspective, the authors Charles R. Taylor and John P. Costello argue how socially responsible representations of minority groups are essential in portraying them in a more complete and varied way, as stereotypical presentations not only decrease the effectiveness of advertisements but also pose significant social consequences.

Addressing the relationship between CSR and advertising from yet another perspective, the authors of the chapter—“Corporate Environmental Responsibility Communication: Implications from CSR and Green Advertising Research”—Patrick Hartmann, Vanessa Apaolaza, Clare D’Souza, Jose M. Barrutia, and Carmen Echebarria explain how an integrated concept of corporate environmental responsibility communication (CERC), if adequately implemented, can improve corporate image and also have positive effects on brand equity, stakeholder attitudes, and consumer intentions.

The third chapter in this section is entitled “Integrated CSR Communication of NGOs: The Dilemma to Communicate and Cooperate in CSR Project Partnerships”. In their contribution, Lars Rademacher and Nadine Remus apply the integrated marketing communication (IMC) framework to the CSR communication of NGOs, illustrate the possible relationship and intersections between NGOs and CSR, and clarify the role of CSR for NGOs, while suggesting a communication–collaboration challenge for NGOs in cooperation with businesses.

Maren Beaufort, Tobias Eberwein, and Josef Seethaler shift the reader’s attention to the close relationship between the development of CSR policies and the political environment, in their chapter entitled “CSR and Political Communication,” explaining how this connection can be interpreted as a reason for the increasing stakeholder engagement and citizen participation in political communication.

The next two chapters within this section discuss the intercultural integrated approach of CSR communication with a special focus on consumer responses to CSR. Heribert Gierl and Tanja Schneider, authors of the chapter “Corporate Social Responsibility Communication and Consumer Gender,” investigate the role of gender in CSR communication, giving particular attention to gender-related differences in moral orientation and their influence on the persuasiveness of CSR activities.

Ulrike Krisch and Sonja Grabner-Kräuter outline how different types of CSR communication have different influences on consumer trust and purchase intention, in their chapter “Insights into the Impact of CSR Communication Source on Trust and Purchase Intention” by means of the case of environmental CSR communication and consumers in Hong Kong.

This fifth section ends with the chapter “Health Communication and Integrated Corporate Social Responsibility”, written by Isabell Koinig, Sandra Diehl, and Barbara Mueller. In this concluding chapter, the authors address the potential for CSR appeals to be a fruitful strategy in the field of health communication, using the example of promotional CSR messages for pharmaceutical manufacturers in a cross-cultural setting.

The “Handbook of Integrated CSR Communication” finishes with the chapter entitled “Research Outlook and Conclusion,” which summarizes the desiderata for further research that emerged from the five sections of this book.

The editor team wishes to express their sincere gratitude to all the authors and contributors to this volume and to underscore their key role in making this project successful. We would also like to thank Denise Voci for all her assistance in organizing revisions, and the textbook, as a whole. In addition, we would like to acknowledge the financial support of the Department of Cultural Studies (Kulturwissenschaftliche Fakultät) of the Alpen-Adria Universität Klagenfurt, Austria.

It is our hope that academics, students, and practitioners alike find the book both enjoyable and stimulating. If the material presented in this textbook generates new insights, constructive debates, and subsequent investigations, then we have accomplished our goal.

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Part I
Theoretical Foundations of Integrated CSR
Communication

Integrated CSR Communications

Manfred Bruhn and Anja Zimmermann

Abstract Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has developed over the years from being a mere social idea to becoming a corporate concept and philosophy. In recent years, it has gained a remarkable amount of attention from top management as a strategic concept that is designed to promote the competitive competence of a corporation by espousing the principle of social legitimacy. A company's public commitment to cooperate with a socially accepted ethical code improves its reputation and brand image, enhances its relationships with stakeholders and with the public, and thereby helps it to achieve better long-term performance. To fully exploit its strategic potential, CSR requires—more than any other strategic program or initiative—a credible and consistent communications management system. Although Integrated CSR Communications risks being seen as a vehicle for window-dressing or greenwashing owing to the increasing information and options that internal and external stakeholders have access to, it is, nevertheless, an underestimated strategic tool. This article reflects on different perspectives in managing Integrated CSR Communications at different organizational levels. On the basis of an Integrated Communications concept, it discusses how companies can plan CSR Communications as a strategic communications approach, as well as how they can implement it as a more content-based approach, by targeting specific departments or using specialist CSR teams.

1 Relevance of Corporate Social Responsibility

The necessity of implementing a CSR concept has socio-normative and economic reasons. The socio-normative approach focuses on the legitimation of institutions in society and social responsibility as a “license” for them to operate, whereas in the

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economic approach, the creation of intangible assets, such as reputation or trust, are the credentials of an institution's moral and financial viability. As consumer decisions have become increasingly influenced by ecological, social and economic aspects of sustainability, companies have met this trend by adopting and proclaiming principles of corporate social responsibility. A variety of different studies by academics as well as consultants shows that the majority of managers believe corporate social responsibility and its reporting are vital to a corporation's success, and different business cases prove this correlation (e.g., Hansen & Schrader, 2005; Ingenhoff & Sommer, 2011; KPMG, 2013; Waßmann, 2013). Thus, CSR has become a genuine and strategically important field of research for all types of companies and their affiliates and not only for the typical suspect ones.

1.1 Development of the CSR Discussion

Governments and businesses around the globe are prioritizing CSR objectives. Although CSR has a plethora of definitions and references, and is used as an umbrella term for a variety of linked ethical concepts such as corporate citizenship, sustainable management and corporate social responsiveness, each has its own objectives, scope and functions. The CSR concept today refers in general to a company's voluntary assumption of social, economic and environmental responsibilities exceeding legal compliance for the benefit of society (European Commission, 2001; Waßmann, 2013). Our understanding of CSR today is the result of decades of research on concepts and models for CSR. Historically the academic debate on CSR started with Bowen and his discussion of the social responsibility of the businessman in the United States (Bowen, 1953; for the historic development of CSR and a discussion of similar concepts, see Crane, Matten, & Spence, 2008; Hansen & Schrader, 2005, pp. 375–377; Waßmann, 2013, pp. 11–18). Within Europe, CSR became manifest with the European Union's Green Paper, with the establishment of a European Multi-Stakeholder Forum on CSR (EMS-Forum) and the European Commission's Strategy on CSR for 2011–2014 (European Commission, 2001, 2011). Since the 1990s, the discussion about CSR and the role of companies has intensified due to globalization, increasing environmental problems and economic crime. Today, it is an integral part of a company's oversight operations.

Consumers prefer companies that are perceived as acting sustainably (Interbrand, 2013). Therefore, when CSR initiatives are deployed, companies must ensure that their CSR activities are integrated within their operations and are communicated clearly to their relevant stakeholders. A company has to guarantee that the content of CSR Communications is not only factually correct, but that the information is communicated effectively via suitable channels. Although CSR Communications can be successfully employed to engage consumer interest, many corporations have not yet embraced it as a strategic tool: its acknowledged potential still needs to be realized in general practice (Dawkins, 2004, p. 108; Fieseler, Fleck, & Meckel, 2010; Lewis, 2003). Neither the academic nor the business community presently gives sufficient attention to CSR Communications (Tench, Sun, & Jones, 2014, p. 4).

1.2 The Factual Dimension of CSR

Today, CSR is an acknowledged strategic concept that, when correctly implemented, has the capacity to strengthen a company's competitiveness and long-term-performance as long as the social requirements and the business case are integrated within one approach. In addition, it is vitally important for the success of the approach that the factual dimension of CSR as well as the communication dimension of strategic CSR programs should be integrated. With respect to marketing and communication, as disciplines, which focus on the stakeholders that create and generate value for a company, different applications of CSR have been developed, such as corporate sponsorship, sustainable marketing, and cause-related marketing (Waßmann, 2013, p. 18).

An adoption of CSR as part of the corporate program requires that a number of different fields of action are taken into consideration. In the course of the CSR discussions in the 1990s, the Triple Bottom Line (3BL) organizational framework was proposed (Crane & Matten, 2004; Elkington, 1994), identifying the different spheres of action that companies have to pursue. This model, which also supports the concept of sustainability, obliges responsible companies to consider the social, economic and environmental requirements of actual and future stakeholders. According to Porter and Kramer, the need to integrate the business model with CSR is growing, since many companies have only launched CSR activities in isolated pockets or started programs for specific activities, so that their atomized actions do not achieve the intended social objectives, nor do they serve the companies' goals (Porter & Kramer, 2007, p. 6). The authors call for a "shared value" approach, which means embedding social goals within the goals of the corporation and thereby generating opportunities to enhance the company's competitive advantage by innovating business models that meet social and environmental demands (Porter & Kramer, 2011, p. 6).

1.3 The Communication Dimension of CSR

The more CSR initiatives are launched and achievements are communicated to different stakeholders, the more important credibility and authenticity become in order to avoid "boomerang effects". Aggressive as well as deceptive communications of CSR programs run the risk of scrutiny and criticism, and thus fuel a backlash against the company, especially if the promoted claims do not correspond with companies' actions (Bruhn, 2014a, p. 332). With the changing roles in communication between stakeholders and companies in a Web 2.0 context, where media are no longer owned, and content is no longer offered or supplied, but is, instead, co-created in an interactive community (Fieseler et al., 2010), the communication dimension of CSR becomes even more sensitive to public response and merits increased diligence (Isaksson, Kiessling, & Harvey, 2014, pp. 64–65).

Consequently, the communication of CSR requires professional and strategic effort; it has to involve internal¹ and external communication and should avoid inconsistent and contradictory messages. CSR Communications faces major challenges (Illia, Zyglidopoulos, Romenti, Rodriguez, & Gonzalez del Valle Brena, 2013): (1) There is a general distrust of corporate communications regarding the achievements of CSR—apparent especially in the public skepticism shown towards major companies; (2) CSR issues are highly complex; (3) Company publications are difficult to verify for the stakeholders, owing to a lack of corporate transparency; (4) Stakeholders demand valid information beyond the requirements of legal compliance; and, finally, (5) Certain news media seize on bad, rather than good, news.

Practicing CSR Communications thus involves much more than producing and promoting an ethical claim because of the complex groundwork that is required (Ihlen, Bartlett, & May, 2011, p. 3). Comparing activities with the services sector, CSR Communications is more challenging than other responsibilities, as the stakeholder here can more easily check up on CSR programs while interacting with employees in customer contact and dialogue situations (Bruhn, 2014a).

Due to the sensitivity of the topic, as well as the significance of credibility and trust, it is vital that corporations and organizations avoid contradiction and ambiguity when communicating on CSR. By adopting an integrated approach to CSR Communications, it is possible to achieve consistency across an increasing number of communication instruments and channels, across multiple stakeholders, and across different messages and contents; however, the degree of CSR integration often remains a missing key performance indicator. The question of how to organize CSR Communications is a further challenge that has to be met for the integration of CSR Communications, as responsibilities are often widely spread, from the board of directors to individual communication departments (e.g., PR, Sponsoring, Marketing Communications, and Internal Communications), and specialized CSR teams.

2 Significance of CSR at Corporate Level

The most relevant goals of CSR are gaining a competitive position in the market by ensuring a company's legitimacy and strengthening its reputation with consumers and employees. In view of the range of stakeholders, CSR has to be established as a strategic concept, which is beneficial and linked to the overall corporate strategy as well as to corporate objectives and priorities in order to be successful and accepted (Isaksson et al., 2014, pp. 66–67). Consequently, CSR demands the strategic

¹To get deeper into the topic of internal CSR Communication see also Chap. 6 of this Handbook: *“Investigating Internal CSR Communication: Building a Theoretical Framework”* by Sigrid Bekmaier-Feuerhahn, Paula Maria Bögel, and Carina Koch.

attention of the top management, if it is to be managed systematically. This entails that they analyze and monitor the changing expectations of numerous stakeholders, plan CSR programs along the value chain in alignment with the strategic orientation of the company, and successfully implement them. This, in turn, involves the vital question of communication. Thus, the questions regarding where and how to root and organize CSR are crucial, as they are specific to each company and frequently reflect the significance and relevance of the CSR concept.

2.1 CSR at Top Management Level

Where CSR is appreciated and established in a company as a strategic concept, being integrated in its business model, it will usually be managed and coordinated at top management level; for example, by a CSR Committee, a top management CSR Team, or the Board of Directors (e.g., the CRM-Director on the Board of Directors at H&M, or the Director of Sustainability & Issue Management at MIGROS). Strategic CSR demands the attention and support of (senior) management, if it is to be seen as an investment that is aligned with the business model.

The question of which organizational unit has responsibility for CSR reporting in a company also indicates its strategic status. According to the KPMG CSR reporting study covering over 4100 companies in more than 40 countries, only around one quarter (24 %) of these companies state that the Board of Directors has ultimate responsibility for CSR reporting; in 61 % of the world's 250 largest companies, CSR reporting is managed on a day-to-day basis by a CSR team or by sustainability units (KPMG, 2013). A look at national studies reveals a different picture; e.g., in Sweden, CSR is mostly an upper or executive management task (Isaksson et al., 2014, p. 68). The responsibility for CSR comprises a multistep process involving the following activities: an analysis of the company's motivation and reasons for implementing CSR; fixing CSR objectives; a subsequent evaluation of relevant stakeholders and their demands and expectations; the development and implementation of actions and programs that are capable of meeting these expectations along the whole value chain; and the communication of CSR engagements and achievements to internal and external stakeholders on the basis of CSR. Thus, top management has to ensure social responsibility across the whole value chain of the organization, as well as support the relevant processes necessary for realizing a CSR strategy.

2.2 CSR at Department Level

In practice, many cases empirically demonstrate that all questions and tasks in the context of CSR are delegated to a single department or function that is in charge of handling the topic and thus meeting the expectations of different stakeholders.

Specialized CSR departments, Corporate Communications, and Public Relations may be in charge of the planning, implementation, and communication of CSR. The organization at department level faces the problem that an individual department often has to coordinate its actions without being delegated decision-making authority over other communication functions, and little or no authority over other functions involved in the CSR agenda, such as production, human resources, purchasing, logistics, and marketing. If strategic and operative CSR tasks are delegated to Public Relations as a significant management role (Kim & Reber, 2008), this is often considered to be critical, as internal and external stakeholders might get the impression that CSR Communications is simply a goodwill and reputation campaign (Ihlen et al., 2011, p. 9; Tench et al., 2014, pp. 4–6).

2.3 Integrated CSR Communications at Different Planning Levels

CSR's threefold objectives mean that CSR Communications has to be anchored at different organizational levels, which apply different implementation methods. Following the general options of embedding CSR within the corporation, CSR Communications can also be organized at different levels in a company. Section 4 considers Integrated CSR Communications at corporate level, where CSR is discussed as a strategic value proposition and a vital element in a corporate strategy, which has to be coordinated and integrated with other value propositions. The CSR positioning affects the whole company and it is part of the brand identity of the corporation. Section 5 looks at the planning of CSR Communications at a functional or departmental level. CSR Communications, in this case, is not a strategic positioning dimension for the corporation as a whole, but rather a content platform, which communicates the company's CSR activities using multiple instruments and programs.

Given the different activities and initiatives, which have to be coordinated, companies employ CSR as a form of content marketing. Before differentiating these various levels of CSR Communications management in detail, it is essential to give a brief explanation of the underlying concept of Integrated Communications.

3 Planning and Realization of Integrated CSR Communications

For decades, academics and managers have been looking for ways to coordinate their diverse communications activities in order to increase efficiency and effectiveness. The concept of Integrated Communications has gained importance over the last two decades, and with it, a variety of concepts and definitions have emerged

(Bruhn, 2014b, pp. 36–37). There is an ongoing debate to reach consensus about the meaning of the concept (e.g., Cornelisson & Lock, 2000; Duncan & Mulhern, 2004; Kerr, Schultz, Patti, & Kim, 2008; Kitchen & Schultz, 2009; Kliatchko, 2005; Low, 2000). Integrated Communications is therefore defined here as a strategic and operative process, which involves analysis, planning, organizing, implementing and monitoring, and which aims to communicate a coherent and consistent image of a company or reference object by integrating the company’s distinctive sources of internal and external communications (Bruhn, 2014b, p. 38).

3.1 The Concept of Integrated Communications

In comparison to other concepts, the underlying approach used with Integrated Communications focusses on the management process for integrating internal and external communication and goes far beyond a mere formal integration of communications. Real integration is more extensive, comprising formal integration, the question of timing, and—is the aspect most difficult to achieve—the integration of messages and content in communications. Figure 1 gives an overview of these forms of integration, their underlying targets and tools.

To be successfully managed, Integrated Communications needs to be planned at different levels simultaneously; i.e., strategic planning at corporate level, and the integrative strategic planning of each single communication tool or program at the level of different departments. In order to build an “entity”, which can be easily identified by the corporations’ or the brand’s target groups, it is essential to define a strategic concept of communication at the corporate level. This strategic concept sets the framework for the planning and execution of any single communication

Form of integration		Object	Target	Tools	Horizon
Content Integration	Direction of Integration Levels of Integration	Thematic coordination by connection lines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consistency ▪ Differentiation ▪ Congruency 	Consistent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Messages ▪ Arguments ▪ Statements 	Long-term
Formal Integration		Compliance with formal design principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presence ▪ Conciseness ▪ Clarity 	Consistency of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Branding and Brand Name ▪ Fonts / Sizes ▪ Colours ▪ Key visuals 	Medium- to long-term
Temporal Integration		Coordination within and between planning periods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consistency ▪ Continuity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Timing 	Short- to medium-term

Fig. 1 Different forms of integration (Bruhn, 2014b, p. 144)

activity, program or tool and comprises three basic elements: the strategic objective in the sense of competitive strategic positioning, the key message as a central marketing idea or claim, and the key communication tool to be employed. Once these three objectives are determined, the strategic framework is fixed; however, it is far too abstract and conceptual to be used or implemented in a corporation. Therefore, it has to be broken down for the purposes of a single department, program, or activity.

3.2 Realizing Integrated Communications

The application of the strategic communication concept to a specific case can be supported by establishing a set of guidelines and rules (see Fig. 2), which build the basis for the realization of an Integrated Communications concept and which enable departments to address strategic decisions at their level. These conceptual rules are intended to clarify the communication strategy to everybody concerned and to give it an obligatory character. The guidelines thus structure the implementation of an Integrated Communications concept. A closer look at Fig. 2 and the described rules reveals the principle of this approach. Integration is realized by hierarchization of objectives, messages and tools. For instance, at the level of the message platform, the key message as a central claim communicates a message that is valid for the entire corporation or the underlying brand (e.g., 3M Innovation). This guiding concept or focal message is embedded in the core messages that are developed and designed with respect to the different target groups and stakeholders (e.g.,

I. Strategy Paper
<p>1. Strategy of Integrated Communications Definition of the strategic positioning, leading idea or claim and leading instrument at corporate or brand level</p>
II. Communication Rules
<p>2. Target platform Specification of strategic positioning, objectives at target group level and goals at the level of single communication activities</p> <p>3. Message platform Specification of the leading idea or claim, core message for different target groups and arguments to prove the core message to the audience</p> <p>4. Instrument platform Specification of the instruments in the lead for achieving the strategic position, definition of corporate design and determination of the role of further instruments and media</p>
III. Organisational Rules
<p>5. Rules for Cooperation and Coordination Specification of the organisational structure of communications, single operations and processes. Rules of cooperation and coordination between departments</p>

Fig. 2 Concept paper of integrated communications (Bruhn, 2014b, p. 262)

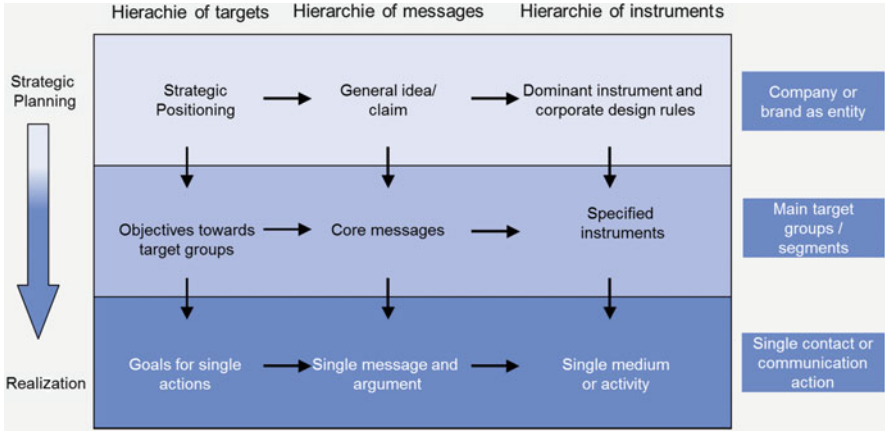


Fig. 3 Ordering system of integrated communications (Bruhn, 2014b, p. 294)

clients, suppliers, employees and partners), whereas single arguments and patterns of argumentation prove the core messages by supplying traceable evidence. This creation of hierarchies should not be seen as a prescription of contents or messages, but rather as a guideline that enables different organizational units to define their communication contents so that these reinforce each other without contradiction.

The approach for Integrated Communications outlined above is efficient and has been implemented successfully several times in German and Swiss companies for the purpose of structuring and ordering the communication systems and thereby making integration manageable (see the best practice cases in Bruhn, 2014b, pp. 515–674). Figure 3 shows the procedural order of the Integrated Communications activities that are necessary for achieving targets, messages and instruments in terms of its strategic hierarchy.

CSR as well as CSR Communications can take place at different levels of an organization. As already mentioned, CSR Communications at corporate level can be integrated on the basis of a strategic concept, whereas at department level, it is managed as content, which has to be promoted through different communication instruments and media.

4 CSR as a Strategic Communication Option at Corporate Level

4.1 The Strategic Communication Concept of CSR

In order to realize Integrated CSR Communications according to the above-mentioned concept at corporate level, the strategic concept of CSR Communications has to be defined first (see Sect. 3.1). This comprises the following activities:

defining the strategic positioning, selecting the key instruments for the realization of the prime targets of CSR Communications, and formulating the corporate claim on CSR. The need for a consistent and convincing link between the strategic positioning of the brand and CSR as a value proposition can only be realized, if the CSR strategy is integrated and embedded in the corporate strategy, which means that there is a natural, credible link between brand identity and CSR positioning for all stakeholders. Using CSR as a focus in strategic positioning is reasonable for companies and brands that seek a niche position (e.g., the Body Shop or the German brand “Frosch”—sustainable cleaning products with a long tradition and a consistently pursued sustainable orientation), and where the focused CSR dimensions are highly relevant to the prior stakeholders as central value and product or service requirement. Furthermore, companies need to have significantly more strength than their competitors. To ensure their credibility, they should only use dimensions that demonstrate proven success through long-term use for their strategic positioning, and avoid short-term solutions (for further requirements regarding strategic positioning, see Bruhn, 2014b, pp. 266–272).

The second element that should be defined in a strategic concept of Integrated CSR Communications is the communication instrument to be used predominantly to achieve the CSR positioning. This key instrument should have a greater capacity to achieve the corporate goal of strategic positioning than other subordinate communication instruments. Based on a worldwide survey of companies, the corporate social report seems to be a leading communication instrument, as 93 % of the largest companies throughout the world and 71 % of the total number of 4100 companies analyzed apply CSR reporting (KPMG, 2013). However, it is not sufficient for a company to simply focus on CSR reporting for public relations purposes, since public relations activities are stereotyped as being misused to polish a company’s image.²

Developing a key message or claim (or a key visual like the frog for Frosch), which is valid for the corporation as a whole and which fits for all stakeholders and competences is the third strategic element that has to be determined. This key message has to translate the strategic positioning into a promotable style and is comparable with a corporate claim or slogan. This claim often has to cover not only the CSR initiative, but also other competitive positioning dimensions, which are strategically relevant to the company, such as innovation or quality. For example, the key brand message of Ford, the leading green automobile brand, to “Go Further” (Interbrand, 2014), is independent of single stakeholders and, as a global, unspecific claim, fits all functions in the value chain. With the help of a concept paper, the three outlined strategic elements of CSR Communications can be

²To the relation between PR and CSR Communication see also Chap. 7 of this Handbook: “*Organizing CSR Communication Challenges for Integrated CSR Communication from a PR and Organizational Communication Perspective*” by Stefan Jarolimek and Franzisca Weder.

implemented in the company's organization and ensure consistency in the brand's internal and external appearance (see Fig. 2).

4.2 Target Platform of CSR Communications

Strategic positioning is the primary communication objective that has to be achieved for the corporation as a whole or for the brand, by employing different communication instruments. Since the strategic positioning objective is rather abstract, it has to be explicated for further communication activities. As explained above (see Sect. 3.2) this can be achieved by hierarchization, which means the strategic positioning objective has to be expressed in concrete terms for the main stakeholders in the CSR strategy, and every single CSR Communications tool has to achieve a certain, predetermined goal. Employees, customers, suppliers, shareholders and owners, political parties and governmental institutions, as well as the public itself can be identified as possible important stakeholders. It is recommended that the positioning platform should focus on the most important stakeholders. Particular communication objectives have to be determined with regard to these stakeholders. The company has to ensure that its communication recipients are provided with the requisite information. It has to inform the public about CSR activities, and it has to build reputation and differentiate its products in order to stimulate its customers' purchase behavior, as well as promote positive word-of-mouth, as an indicator of customer loyalty (Birth, Illia, Lurat, & Zamparini, 2008). The company should have a candid policy that is available to governmental institutions and environmental activists; i.e., these external groups should be motivated to engage in a dialogue with the corporation. For the latter purpose, a corporate CSR blog would be a suitable instrument, as it has the capacity to capture the stakeholders' attention (Fieseler et al., 2010, p. 601). A further CSR objective is to create strong employer branding (von Walter, Tomczak, & Wentzel, 2010). At the level of single communication activities or contacts, clearly measurable targets can be set; e.g., a fixed number of followers on twitter, or comments on a blog entry within 1 week.

4.3 Message Platform of CSR Communications

The message platform allows a general message, such as Ford's key claim "Go further", which is rather abstract, to be translated into a more specific language for the stakeholders. In order to generate content that is beneficial and effective, a value-based system of messages has to be developed for the different stakeholders. The key message thus has to be underlined and put in concrete terms by using a set of core messages, where each targets a particular stakeholder. Prior to developing this system of core messages for particular stakeholders, it is vital to analyze their

specific needs, motives and expectations, by gathering inside data on message acceptance (Buerke & Gaspar, 2014) and becoming familiarized with the language and symbols used in such communications. With respect to individual communication contacts at the project realization stage, the individual message or content has to be defined (e.g., the message of a CSR advertisement). At this stage, it is essential to deliver transparent and traceable proofs and arguments, such as stating the CO₂ savings achieved by switching from using a fleet of cars to using e-cars. A study conducted by NetFed revealed that only 57 % of the analyzed companies, which have a CSR-section on their homepage, do not provide any insights or evidence relating to the performance measurement of their CSR strategy (as cited in Heinrich, 2013, p. 92).

4.4 Instrument Platform of CSR Communications

In addition to the target and the message platforms' development of a hierarchically structured system of objectives and messages at different levels, it is also vital to coordinate the heterogeneous communication instruments and tools employed within CSR Communications. Here it is extremely important to include internal and external communications to support the strategy (Bruhn, 2014a, b; Isaksson et al., 2014, p. 67). The key instrument (for example, the CSR report or the CSR website) is fixed within the strategic concept of CSR Communications with the task of achieving the strategic positioning goal. A closer look at actual business practice reveals that the different CSR instruments are often not coordinated with regard to timing, form or message content, and that this consequently reduces the scores for recall, recognition and brand reputation (Heinrich & Schmidpeter, 2013). The integration of CSR Communications at instrument level requires analyzing the function, which each instrument serves with regard to specific stakeholders and the underlying targets. CSR reports, for example, are mainly structured according the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) standards and are designed to inform and assure shareholders and owners as well as financial accountants about the effectiveness of CSR Communications. Thus, this instrument can be regarded as highly specific to a specialized and highly involved target group, but it also has to be coordinated, for example, with PR activities at the same time. Socio-Sponsoring is another example of a CSR Communications instrument. This CSR instrument does not primarily focus on shareholders, but, instead, targets stakeholders, as clients, and the public as a whole. To establish a coordinated integrated approach, it is essential to define the set of instruments employed, their specific target groups and functions. Furthermore, it is necessary to specify the Corporate Design, which should comprise all the formal rules and offer a second guideline for integrating the instruments. Companies are well advised to introduce a form of media or editorial planning in order to coordinate communications at the level of the single impetus. For the implementation to be successful, it is highly recommended that a

concept paper for CSR Communications involves all the departments from the beginning, so that the concept is planned down-up, and not top-down.

5 CSR as an Autonomous Communication Option at Department Level

5.1 Strategic Aspects of the Communication Option

CSR is not of vital strategic importance in every business context, nor is it always an essential aspect of brand identity. In many cases, the communication of CSR topics is used to set the agenda as part of a brand-enlarging strategy (Brunner & Esch, 2011, p. 32). It may even have no context to brand identity, and only be the result of some initial external pressure, thereby forcing, rather than motivating, companies to put the topic on their agenda. Implementing CSR as a more independent, autonomous communication option focuses on three questions: (1) If and how CSR can generate benefits for the corporate or the product brand, as well as for key performance indicators, such as reputation; (2) how to integrate communication at the level of a specific content; and (3) which instruments and channels should be engaged in different campaigns. CSR Communications according to this approach can often be observed in businesses where CSR has had a crucial impact due to the company's business model or field of action (e.g., oil and coal companies, pharmaceutical businesses, cosmetic industries, and textile companies) and in which public criticism and suspicion is high owing to past scandals and crises regarding the environment and labor conditions (Du & Vieira, 2012). In such contexts, CSR is often organized in the Public Relations department, or in a specialized CSR Team, or in some similar function.

The strategic question here is how a company should be perceived with respect to CSR and its multiple dimensions. In contrast to advertising and promoting CSR as a strategic value proposition, the autonomous CSR Communications option seeks to inform, involve and engage, sometimes also to entertain its target audiences. The content owner makes a strategic decision on which CSR dimensions to employ, e.g., labor conditions, child work, health, education, environmental standards of production,—and the extent to which these dimensions should be enhanced using CSR Communications. The corporation has to be aware of and ensure a fit between the content or topic and the brand image, the corporate culture and the corporate behavior, for its CSR performance to be credible. A benchmark example of successful CSR Communications is the twice-awarded CSR initiative of the German telecommunications provider Telekom. With their campaign “Big changes start small” (“Grosse Veränderungen fangen klein an”), they collected more than 585,758 used mobile phones and made a donation of 2 € per phone to the well-known foundation “A heart for children” in Germany. Prior to the establishment of this content platform, Telekom invested approximately 10 years of work and effort

in their CSR performance and sustainability management before launching the campaign (Andree & Hahn, 2014).

5.2 Objectives, Messages and Instruments Employed by CSR Communications

Using CSR as content also demands a systematic planning and implementation approach. This starts by defining the goals that need to be achieved in order to convince management, to make resources available and to commit and engage employees. Similar to the structure of communication goals within marketing, the objectives here can be differentiated into affective, cognitive and action-orientated goals. Where CSR is employed as communication content, the objectives are not necessarily ambitious or geared to the competition. This attitude can be seen in a study where Investor Relations Managers acknowledge that they do not intend to achieve an outstanding reputation with CSR Communications, but a “good enough” image so that the core values of their companies are not subject to the scrutiny of journalists or hostile actions by stakeholders, such as environmental or consumer organizations (Arvidsson, 2010). The Telekom initiative, in contrast, aimed at mobilizing consumers’ social responsibility (cognitive) by eliciting their engagement asking them to participate in handing back used mobiles (action) and thus improving core drivers of the company’s image (affective). In a study by Kim (2014), the author reveals that a company’s acknowledgement of its self-serving objectives in its use of CSR Communications will help to pre-empt skeptical reactions. The author also favors cognitive measures as well as actions of different stakeholders (2014). Backlash effects are only likely to occur where companies already have a poor reputation for their CSR programs, which are only seen as promoting society-serving motives. Thus, a transparent CSR Communications policy is more likely to generate long-term credibility.

CSR content platforms are an ideal measure for reinforcing the dialogue and interaction between different stakeholders. Content platforms not only enable a good CSR image to be promoted by employing a number of instruments simultaneously in one story, but also enable and encourage dialogue and interaction with stakeholders. It is vital that the central communication message is in line with the strategic positioning statement of the company, as this helps to confirm the credibility of the company’s reputation. Taking stakeholders’ different levels of involvement into account, the style and tonality of the information conveyed in the communication are likely to differ. Shareholder attention is gained by “hard-fact” information, whereas the attention of customers and potential employees is gained by a mix of informative and emotional messages. In view of the increasing variety of online communication platforms, the present need to “define messages” is likely to become obsolete; instead, rules and standards in the sense of CSR

Communications guidelines are likely to replace this need to ensure credible story telling.

A successful realization of CSR as content at a functional level calls for the use of numerous instruments and channels, which have to be coordinated. CSR websites and landing pages (or lead capture pages) are playing an increasingly important role as a key instrument (Fieseler et al., 2010; Gomez & Chalmeta, 2011; Hong & Rim, 2010). Vital communication platforms can be linked to supplementary information, such as downloads of reports, CSR newsletter subscriptions, corporate CSR blogs, and social media channels such as YouTube or Twitter. Research reveals that using interactive communication channels within CSR Communications increases credibility and identification, which in turn leads to enhanced corporate reputation and more intense word-of-mouth.³ On the other hand, however, negative evaluations via these channels have a much greater impact on opinion than positive evaluations, which means that interactive channels have to be closely monitored (Eberle, Berens, & Li, 2013).

6 Conclusion and Future Research

CSR has become an indispensable concept and can no longer be thought away from the manager's agenda. Its business relevance is irrefutable, as demonstrated by various studies on its importance from the perspective of stakeholders, such as customers, employees and others. Companies, which are able to integrate social responsibility and the business model gain a competitive edge. One major challenge, which has been neglected by practitioners and scholars over the years, is CSR Communications. To achieve successful Integrated CSR Communications, the following six principles and findings should be taken into consideration:

1. CSR Communications has to generate benefit for the corporation, via the market and via its stakeholders, and thereby build its reputation and public goodwill in order to involve management and employees in the CSR Communications initiative.
2. Credible Integrated CSR Communications can only be realized with a long-term perspective and with the proviso that it fits with the corporate strategy, corporate culture, corporate behavior and corporate CSR performance. The definition of a strategic concept for CSR Communications and its implementation both have to follow rules and methods similar to those prescribed for Integrated Communications.
3. Compared to other communication challenges, CSR Communications requires dialogue and interaction as well as the simple promotion of CSR achievements: both of these objectives are not easy to integrate from a communications

³To gain a deeper insight into this topic see also Chap. 11 of this Handbook: “*The World Wide Web and the Social Media as Tools of CSR Communication*” by Paul Capriotti.

perspective. Success, here, requires that a corporation has the capacity, not only to be socially responsive to stakeholder expectations and communicate effectively, but also to promote its CSR achievements. The question of selecting suitable instruments for CSR communications cannot be answered without a detailed analysis of the stakeholders involved and the targeted CSR objectives.

4. As with brand competition, companies should devote special attention to a focused, consistent and unique, and not interchangeable, CSR Communications approach. This requires strategic planning and integrated action.
5. CSR Communication has to monitor sensitivities and weak signals among stakeholders and address problems in a timely and appropriate manner without forfeiting its own strategic framing.
6. Finally, the responsibility for CSR Communications should not be delegated to functional units, which might cause utilitarian interests to outweigh ethical objectives, as when Public Relations are used to buoy up Investor Relations.

CSR Communications is a new field that has attracted only limited research interest so far. As a research discipline, it poses several methodological challenges and will also demand an interdisciplinary research approach (Ihlen et al., 2011; Jarolimek, 2012). The following research topics, which are of interest to both scholars and practitioners, need to be addressed: (1) The integration of CSR Communications within a global setting with intercultural differences in stakeholder management; (2) The impact of company structure and company size on the organization of Integrated CSR Communications; (3) The integration of on- and offline channels for CSR Communications (Integrated CSR Communications 2.0); (4) The identification of the CSR reputation drivers in different stakeholder groups at company or sector level; (5) The impact of CSR Communications on the perception of services; and finally (6) Measuring the effects of corporate social performance on overall brand performance.

From a managerial perspective, the concept of Integrated Communications is a helpful framework for structuring and handling CSR Communications. It is vital to gain a conceptual and practical understanding of CSR and its communications aspects. Although this academic venture presents very complex, multi-optional approaches to be followed and highly sensitive issues to be resolved, once a communication framework is established with structures and hierarchies that explain the mechanisms involved in combination with value-adding, authentic and transparent content can generate long-term social and economic success.

7 Exercise and Reflective Questions

1. Explain the two different levels of Integrated CSR Communications and evaluate the different approaches (Pros and Cons).
2. What do you think are the main negative repercussions of CSR Communications to companies?

3. Discuss the main stakeholders for CSR Communications and describe their expectations, values and communication behavior toward corporations.
4. Develop a system of integrated and consistent messages an oil company could provide to its main stakeholders.

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CSR as Common Sense Issue? A Theoretical Exploration of Public Discourses, Common Sense and Framing of Corporate Social Responsibility

Franziska Weder

Abstract The article aims to explore and define Corporate Social Responsibility as common sense related discourse in corporations and amongst organizations and their stakeholder and discusses the potential of CSR as “communication content” for media and communication studies. To theoretically capture CSR as “common sense”, issues in general are conceptualized as ‘fields’ in Bourdieu’s sense, complemented by an innovative concept of framing. From a content related perspective, the theoretical reflections enable the definition of CSR as common sense issue by differentiating it from neutral positions and hegemonic frames.

The term ‘common sense’ comprises common beliefs and implicit knowledge used in every action, interaction and therefore in every interpersonal, organizational and mass mediated communication process. Common sense complements the more explicit expert knowledge and common sense related reasoning and can be described as a core tool of intelligent behavior. In one of the basic and most influential pamphlets of the ‘American enlightenment’ and revolution Thomas Paine (2004) promotes, for example, the idea of the ‘necessity for independency’ as such a common belief. Further back in history, there is a long philosophical tradition with Thomas Reid, G.E. Moore or Roderick Chisholm as key figures which consider common sense beliefs and their central role for the individual and the society: “we cannot give up our belief in them” (Lemos, 2004, p. 1; Reid, 1764/1970). Today, *common sense* is broadly discussed in political science in terms of a ‘democracy-oriented’ principle and as such can be traced back to the concepts of Rousseau (Rousseau, 1997) or Locke (Laslett, 1988). As well, common sense is about rationality (Kant, 2008), it’s about logic (‘horse-sense’, nobody would put it into question), it’s about a general opinion (the majority thinks the same) or, paradoxically, it is *not* about opinion because it is the way it goes, it is *uncontroversial* and *not-reactive*. Though, the ‘problem’ of common sense issues

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is that there isn't a problem, that there are no different opinions, that there is no general debate and with that no public discourse. Common sense is a (socially constructed) ideal which functions as constraint for social behavior. So what if the responsibility of organizations as corporate actor towards the society is common sense? And if so, how can CSR communication be postulated and required? How can we describe CSR as content that "has to be communicated"?

The present article focuses on Corporate Social Responsibility from a content related perspective. CSR is mostly described as the allocation and taking of responsibility by an organization towards the stakeholder (European Commission, 2001) based on the principle of social, economic and ecologic sustainability (Weder, 2012). However, most of the literature on CSR and communication focusses on CSR as content, as something that has to be or is communicated by an organization to legitimize corporate activities and take responsibility itself (see Weder, Karmasin in this handbook) (Heinrich, 2013; Ihlen, Bartlett, & May, 2011; Karmasin & Weder, 2008; Matten & Moon, 2008; May, Cheney, & Roper, 2007). The communication about CSR activities happens mostly through CSR reporting (sustainability report, CSR report, environmental report etc.; see Fifka, 2014). In the media, CSR is more or less invisible (see Tengblad & Ohlsson, 2009; Weder, 2012) except a corporation lacks of responsibility which as a scandal dominates media reporting—mostly for a short period of time. Thus, from a content related perspective, the question arises, why despite increasing CSR activities and communication efforts, there is a lack of "publicness" of CSR as an issue itself. Why is the responsibility allocated to organizations not an ongoing issue in the media, why there isn't as public debate on CSR per se? Is it because it's common sense, as proposed at the beginning?

Indeed, one reason could be that CSR is based on a "common sense belief", that organizations are responsible towards the society. Following this argumentation, the basic question of this article is if CSR as common sense issue has the chance to be communicated in the corporation, amongst the corporation and their stakeholder and further to be debated in the public at all? And what is the condition for the "publicness" of CSR related content if taken as "common sense issue"?

So the theoretical challenge of the discussion of CSR as common sense issue in general is that they are *not* debated in the public—either because of their generality, normativity or just because there exists a hegemonic structure of meaning. To meet this challenge of common sense as *invisible* or *hidden moral structure* of public communication processes, this article is based upon a new concept of issue fields (Sect. 1). With this concept CSR is described in the second section of the article (2) as neither a neutral position nor as hegemonic frame but as a meta structure which can work as a reference for the contextualization of other (publicly debated) issues. The potential and limitations of this are discussed in the conclusion (Sect. 3).

1 Public Discourses and Issue Fields

To define CSR as content that is publicly debated or not, it is necessary to theoretically identify CSR as an issue in the public sphere. Today we have to deal with a growing number of public spheres that are related to a specific issue (Benhabib, 1992; Butler Breese, 2011; Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards, & Rucht, 2002); here, competing interests meet, in addition to society-wide ‘issue-monoliths’ which structure different spheres. New media technologies and with that new social connectivities (Weintraub & Kumar, 1997) lead to new metaphors of spheres, networks, webs, screens or culture (McGuigan, 2005) which “illuminate” public life (Brouwer & Asen, 2010, p. 2f.). This new situation makes it necessary to consider smaller fields of discourse on a structural level. Issue fields as highly particular phenomena (Eder, 2006, p. 608; Weder, 2012) can be described through processes of structuration related to a broader cultural context. To define issue fields on a “level in-between” a synthesis of Bourdieu’s field theory and Giddens concept of structuration is used.

1.1 *Fields and Structuration*

On the basis of the different approaches of the public sphere or their “incarnations” (Butler Breese, 2011, p. 133), here, a public issue field will be defined as a communication sphere marked by a ‘high density of communication flows’ which is more dense on the inside than on the outer limits (Peters, 2007, p. 329). Thus, the public sphere is the totality of all forms of communication and communication structures ‘bunched’ as issues. Furthermore, the public sphere consists of a multitude of publics that are constituted on the basis of shared experiences, shared interests or shared communication intentions (Butler Breese, 2011; Weder, 2012). But how can we grasp the ‘communication structure’ of the public sphere?

The most relevant aspect to theoretically conceptualize issue fields as communication structures clustered as issue seems to be Giddens’ idea of the ‘duality of structure’. Giddens differentiates social systems (macro structure) from institutions (structural meso level) or ‘institutionalized practices’; this enables the aimed description of issues fields as *medium* in which every communicative act is ‘realized’. Then, an issue field would be medium *and* result of communicative actions of journalists, PR-professionals and any other communicators—even corporations. Nevertheless, there remain two questions:

1. What’s first: macrostructure, modalities or (communication) processes?
2. How can the outer limits of this field be defined?

Ad question 1: The duality between structure and action, or more specific: between field and practice, is as well one of the basic components of Bourdieu’s field theory (Bourdieu, 1987; Bourdieu, Beister, & Schwibs, 2001). Bourdieu’s

fields can be described as configuration or constellation which contains a special macrostructure, organizational contexts, agents and their interests as well as their strategies to reach their goals (Bourdieu, 1991). Bourdieu's fields are both, a *space of differences* and a *bunch of interactions and relations*: 'To think of fields means to think relational' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 126). On the one hand, Bourdieu defines multiple societal fields with distinct discourses; on the other hand, he describes the possibility of a shift of discourses from one field to another. For instance, "politicizing" means the discursive attachment of an issue to the political field. This shift as a dynamic moment is labelled as 'trajectoire' (Johnson, 1993); with it, every structure is only a 'snap-shot' in an ongoing process of *restructuration*; or with Giddens: modification and reproduction. This could be an answer to the first question of what's first, macrostructure, modalities or communication processes. There are social relations i.e., between a corporation and their stakeholder, which can be differentiated in 'fields'; but there are processes going on constantly which modify the structures. Fields are reproduced by a special balance or imbalance of power and reproduced because of a tendency to the maintenance of structure. Therefore, issue fields can be dominated by hegemonic arguments based on political or economic power structures (Bourdieu, 1988, p. 38; Benson, 1999, p. 482f). Besides, an issue can be brought up by corporations and drawn from the economic to the political field. This happened to CSR, as today it is an obligation for the big corporation to follow political guidelines (i.e., Agenda 21¹), i.e., CSR reportings are regulated by the GRI indices.² This "trajectoire" of CSR as originally corporate issue to other fields opens up the second question from above:

Ad 2: The second question was about the outer limits of an issue field. With Bourdieu, an issue field is a space structured by relations between two positions or poles (Bourdieu, 1987). Bourdieu's fields are dichotomous or 'chiastic' and are reproduced by the process of *discursive polarization*. The distance between the poles defines the borders (see Fig. 1).

A concept of issue fields inspired by Bourdieu leads to the assumption that the process of polarization is a condition for the maintenance of an issue field. Here, the consideration of frames as schemata which *define* an event, an occasion or circumstance (Entman, 1993; Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes, & Sasson, 1992; van Gorp, 2007) refines Bourdieu's term 'position' in discourses. Frames organize an issue and are therefore the necessary theoretical brick that can be complemented from communication science for the definition of an issue field presented here; frames define the width and the borders of an issue. This will be further explained in the following section.

¹<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/Agenda21.pdf>

²<https://www.globalreporting.org/Pages/default.aspx>

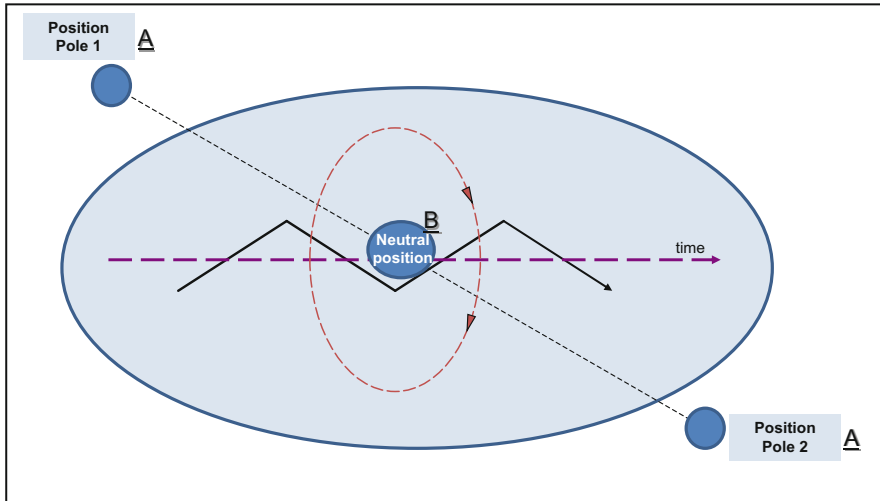


Fig. 1 Issue field and the distance between the poles

1.2 Issue Fields as ‘Event-Frame-Relation’

Related to the standard works of framing research (Entman, 1993, 2004; Gamson & Modigliani, 1987, 1989; Gitlin, 1980; Goffman, 1977/1980; Iyengar, 1991; Matthes, 2009; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Tankard, Hendrickson, Silberman, Bliss, & Ghanem, 1991) two forms of frames can be distinguished, depending upon the level of abstraction. On the one hand several approaches work with a more generalized understanding of a frame in the sense of a selection principle or principle of emphasis (Gitlin, 1980); here the concept of Entman (1993), the description of framing as ‘problem definition’, ‘causal analysis’, ‘moral judgment’ and ‘remedy promotion’ should be noted (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Cappella & Jamieson, 1997). A methodological operationalization of these *master frames*, however, appears just as difficult as other concepts of holistic or generalist frames (Gerhards & Rucht, 1992; Snow & Benford, 1992). On the other hand there are approaches which work with *issue-specific frames* (de Vreese, 2005) which seem to be a necessary complement to the described master frames (Weder, 2012). With Shah, Watts, Domke, and Fan (2002) it is assumed that each subject has different thematic frames. These issue specific frames are the “organizing central idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration” (Tankard et al., 1991, p. 11). So there are two complementary levels of framing:

- The master or macro level of emphasizing or application of *relevance* and *significance* on the one hand and
- The mesolevel on the other hand, the issue-specific frames which represent a special meaning, a position.

This complements the previously idea of an issue field conceptualized with Giddens and Bourdieu. In his concept of duality of structure Giddens describes *signification* as one of the basic structural elements and communication as the related processes of action or interaction (Giddens, 1984, p. 29). More concretely, events like a CSR activity leave frames like “the corporation does not support child labour” as “structural footprints” in the social or cultural context so that future events can be communicatively connected to this organizing element on a cognitive level. Therefore, an event can be described as stimulus for framing as a process of structuration. Once again it seems to be important, to distinguish between master frames as rules, organising principles of communication on a macro level and issue specific frames as positions in Bourdieu’s sense. Then, issue specific frames in the sense of positions can be defined as *modality of communication*. They determine the size and shape of an issue field. The core of an issue field can be described as ‘neutral’ and the *issue-specific frames* (different positions), as *controversial* (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 183; see again Fig. 1). This leads to the basic assumptions of this article:

1. The public sphere in general can be interpreted as *network of and for the communication of issues and opinions, positions or frames related to this issue*.
2. The existence of an issue field is dependent on an event or problem that activates communication about it and
3. The existence of an issue field is dependent on the *diversity and controversy of positions*.

Subsequently, the question discussed in the following section is: how does the new concept of an issue field helps to identify and explore ‘common sense’? In other words: is common sense a master frame which makes a special event relevant for further (public) communication or does common sense represent a dominant issue-specific frame (position) and with this the hegemonic position based on political and/or economic power? And what’s the learning for CSR communication if CSR is taken as issue and therefore content that is communicated by and about corporations?

2 Common Sense Issues Between Neutrality and Hegemony

“The facts of common sense are not particularly interesting” (ibid. 11). This statement contains two important aspects: Firstly common sense is related to facts (occasions, events, circumstances). Secondly the word ‘interesting’ relates the philosophical idea of common sense to communication processes and interest is about attention (Coleman, 1995, p. 250). If something is ‘interesting’ it affects people, it stimulates cognitive and with this communication processes. So the following discussion will show that communication research should consider issues

like Corporate Social Responsibility as common sense beliefs in the sense of a master frame of public communication.

2.1 Common Sense as ‘Neutral Position’?

Common Sense in the philosophical sense implies no special position. In his discussion of C.S. Pierce’s Contribution to the Philosophy of Communication, Bergman explains common sense beliefs as “vague beliefs, which are typically taken for granted and are for the time being ... beyond criticism, arise naturally from practices in which we try to make our way in the world” (Bergman, 2009, p. 258). But does this imply that common sense is similar to a neutral position in the core of an issue field as conceptualized above (see again Fig. 1)? “Common-sense beliefs are virtually always trivial in substance” (Rescher, 2005, p. 26), with it, common sense is something that is communicated implicitly, that is “intrinsically indefinite” but “valuable as such” (Bergman, 2009, p. 267). But this implies that common sense can not turn into a conflictual issue or in one or the other position. Common sense seems to be more like a *reference* for dichotomous positions at the outer limits of the issue field as well as for a neutral position in the core of the field. Reminding that issue fields above were defined by the poles of that field, “which represent the limits of acceptable discursive positions and identities according to the social norms of a given time and place” (Roper, 2005, p. 140), the examination of common sense shows the importance of considering the process of *referring to common sense* in interaction and communication processes. This understanding of common sense as an implicit knowledge which subcutaneously moves along with communication processes leads to the following question: If not the neutral core, is common sense similar to a hegemonic position at the outer limits of an issue field?

2.2 Common Sense as Hegemonic Position?

Issues are created around events “through the competition between the agents involved in [a field]” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 171f.). Thus, in many cases hegemonic structures of meaning can be diagnosed. Hegemony is mostly defined as “the ‘spontaneous’ consent given by great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group” (Gramsci, 1971, p. 12). This actor-related, political interpretation can be completed by the definition of the creation of consent through discourse (Condit, 1994, p. 207). Applied to mass mediated communication processes Evans describes this process in the following way: “People and organizations are shaped by discursive forces,

and the media play a powerful role in that discourse” (Evans, 2002, p. 313).³ With Evans or Mumby (1997, p. 344f.) plurivocal negotiations can achieve hegemony. With that hegemony is not only a top-down domination but a dialectic relationship between groups, *their positions* and their own degree of power; so control (and hegemony) develops through negotiation and accommodation (Evans, 2002, p. 313). Hegemony and consensus sometimes are not easy to differentiate.

On the one hand consensus is the basis for dominant positions with hegemonic character and they are legitimated through consensus (Hall, 1999). On the other hand consensus mediates hegemony “between the individual and the exercise of choice, and hegemony permeates the structures within which choices are made possible” (Jenks, 2005, p. 83), based on the above presented idea of issue fields. This implies that common sense is comparable to a dominant position. Hegemony in particular is conceptualized as not lying on the level of meaning, opinion or different positions, but as a corpus of practises (modalities) and expectations (*habitus*), and so as a tool to order and understand the world and human being (Williams, 1983, p. 190f.). With this, common sense could be explored as a hegemonic structure which can work as a general frame or the ‘reference point’ for different discourses in different (issue) fields, mentioned above. Then, common sense cannot be put on the same level with a neutral or hegemonic and dominant position in the issue field; common sense functions on a macro level and constrains as well as enables communication processes with issue specific frames (positions). Common sense is described as the ‘secret agreement’ (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 36) among independent observers, as consensually agreed beliefs which will thereby emerge as judgementally secure. Different ideals or concepts can form a new, unified discourse which could be accepted as common sense (Hall, 1980). Common sense beliefs are not irresistible, they can change. Thus, common sense moves subcutaneously along with communication. But it can be turned into an explicitly communicated issue. This in other words: A public debate about common sense beliefs is theoretically possible.

2.3 Corporate Responsibility as Hegemonic Structure of Meaning

The theoretical exploration presented above had the result that common sense is neither a special position or meaning nor a neutral position; hence, it can be described as a hegemonic cognitive structure which constrains communication processes and human action in general. Is responsibility such a kind of structure?

³Generally, in communication studies media are perceived as playing an important role related to power and power generating processes in the society (Hall, 1999); they are understood as influential, constructive part of the societal consensus.

Assuming that common sense moves along with every communication process but can be turned into an explicitly communicated issue, the issue of “Corporate Social Responsibility” and related concepts for the administration of this responsibility by entities and individuals is a perfect example to further explore common sense issues. Thinking about corporate responsibility, the allocation as well as taking of responsibility by an organization can be described as common sense belief. Nevertheless, the activities of taking responsibility are divergent, the communication about those activities is not common sense. There are various frame and arguments of and about CSR activities in the media but in the organizational communication (Marketing, PR, social media communication etc.) as well.

More specifically: responsibility as a philosophical term relates to the agency for a person or activity; it can be conceptualized retrospectively, if an action has already be performed, or prospectively, if there is an action or relationship coming up (Fischer, 1986; Weder, 2012). The moral—more than purely causal—responsibility of organisations is defined as “generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper and appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions” (Suchman, 1995, p. 572). So even if there are heterogeneous interpretations of collective responsibilities (Corlett, 2001) and the so called “Corporate Social Responsibility” (overview in Crane, McWilliams, Matten, Moon, & Siegel, 2008; Werther & Chandler, 2006; see also Ihlen et al., 2011; Karmasin & Weder, 2008; May et al., 2007), there is a *generalized belief* or *common sense belief* that every action and every relation between individuals, collectives and individuals as well as between collectives and collectives implies responsibilities (Weder, 2012). It is ‘common sense’ and as such “requires no such extraordinary means . . . there is no knowledge antecedent acquired” (Bergman, 2009, p. 253; see also Rescher, 2005, p. 32). But related to this basic belief there exist *different positions about how to realize responsibility*, about how the idea of perception of this responsibility can be implemented and administered in/by an organization or individuals. Examples related to the common sense belief of the responsibility of entities (corporate responsibility) are issue specific frames like the following: “CSR implies economic profit” as one pole and “responsible behaviour and corporate policy exclude each other” (Weder, 2012). The different frames of organizational behaviour produce and reproduce the common sense belief ‘responsibility of entities’ in the way that they *define the CSR issue field*; in other words: internally and externally communicated CSR content. Thus, firstly, an *integrated organization of CSR communication* is needed; secondly, an *“integrated framing”* in the sense of a coordinated and attuned argumentation of corporate responsibility and related activities seems to be a condition for the explicit communication of CSR in the public.

3 Conclusion

The article started with a conceptualization of issue fields with a synthesis of Giddens idea of duality of structure, and Bourdieu's definition of fields over the distance of positions and frame concepts which are applied in communication research. Related to the basic understanding of public communication and discourses as event-related framing, it was possible to make a difference between two structural levels of an issue field: the macro structural context and the related positions with issue specific frames as their structural 'footprint'. The basic assumption of this article: the bigger the distance between different positions related to a special context, conceptualized as 'communicated frames', the more intense are the communication processes about an issue; as well, the more intense is the 'negotiation process', the discourse and with that the attention of the media and the public.

With the here presented theoretical framework common sense can be understood as subcutane structure of meaning of communication processes. Common sense beliefs are described as social norms or (ethical) principles that are not controversially debated itself; but common sense functions as macro structural context and reference for (controversial) discourses. As it was mentioned above, *controversial frames activate communicative action and interaction*; subsequently, the *value negotiation process* (or in Bourdieu's words: the fight about positions and the power of definition of an event or issue) is the stronger and with that gets more attention, the more controversial the issue specific frames are. There is no controversy about common sense, *but* a controversial discussion *related to* common sense beliefs can reproduce this common sense. Therefore, *an integrated approach to CSR communication in general and framing of CSR is required*.

The limitation of the article is that it is a theoretical discussion only; the debated concepts need further examples and empirical research. Nevertheless, the implication of this article for future communication theory and CSR research in particular is firstly to consider responsibility of entities as common sense belief in the sense of *invisible macrostructures of issues* which can make single positions more significant. Secondly, common sense itself can be identified a hegemonic structure of meaning, created and reproduced by actors (communicators) with the result of being dominant in the societal communication processes. Related to the presented example of CSR this leads to the following conclusion: if companies communicate explicitly that they are responsible in their business reports year after year, the common sense belief that entities are responsible is reproduced and therefore become an implicit assumption which affects future communication processes of the organization itself as well as for other organizations. This again implies the integrated approach to CSR communication, theoretically proven above.

4 Exercise and Reflective Questions

1. Please try to define Common Sense and discuss its relevance for communication studies.
2. Describe the relationship between an event and framing (in the media).
3. Name three common frames for CSR activities and think about others.
4. Discussion: Is CSR newsworthy for the media? If so, under which conditions do the media report CSR activities?
5. How far can CSR be described as “hegemonic structure of meaning”?

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CSR as an Economic, Ethical, and Communicative Concept

Matthias Karmasin and Michael Litschka

Abstract This article gives an overall picture of CSR as economic, ethical, and communicative concept. It differentiates between CSR, Corporate Governance, and Corporate Citizenship, and locates CSR in the heart of organizational strategy. Business ethical considerations demand that responsibility of organizations in a mediatized economy are to be taken seriously by giving ethics a place in organizations. A rational and responsible way to meet these tasks is stakeholder management and integrating ethics on the institutional level of organizations. As organizations are “publicly exposed” institutions, we argue further that the only way of legitimizing organizational actions and strategies is through communication with an (unlimited) public, and this not only via strategic communication, but also with ethical deliberation and via integrated communication.

The goal of the article is to make readers familiar with the history and basic concepts of CSR and to stimulate thoughts about the connection of CSR and (integrated) communication.

1 Introduction

This article deals with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as economic, ethical, and communicative concept. While CSR has been an issue in business administration, management, and business ethics literature for quite a while, the concept has been taken up by communication science only recently. We want to discuss the issue from different angles: First it seems important to locate CSR at the heart of organizations and enterprises, i.e., as core task with influence on an organization’s goals and business strategies. This is done in Sect. 2, where the main differences between the concepts CSR, Corporate Governance, and Corporate Citizenship are

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depicted and the economic viewpoint of these is stressed. Second, CSR always has ethical implications, and therefore it needs to be discussed within the antagonist paradigms of shareholder value and stakeholder management, as well as conceptualized as part of business ethics; this we try in Sect. 3. Lastly, CSR and its communicative features will get more important in a mediatized society; communication of and with responsibility is an issue of some importance to mediatized organizations and CSR in the information society. Section 4 is therefore devoted to the communicative challenges for such “publicly exposed” organizations. If it is true that under the premises of changing expectations and broader responsibilities of corporations CSR is a strategic key concept—and we strongly believe this is true—this has not only implications for the organizational structures and the overall strategy, but also for the communication of these responsibilities. As corporations are more and more publicly exposed organizations, any interaction with stakeholders (from any department) will also be monitored under CSR aspects, thus making integrated CSR communication not only a strategic option, but a necessity.

2 CSR, Corporate Governance, and Corporate Citizenship: Basic Principles

The overall question of responsibility of companies and organizations has been an important part of a steadily growing literature in economics, business administration, organizational studies, public relations, marketing and business ethics, to name only a few academic fields. Unfortunately there are at least three distinctive concepts that are in use to deal with this issue, namely Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Corporate Governance (CG), and Corporate Citizenship (CC). Sometimes they are used to describe the same phenomenon, sometimes they refer to different empirical matters; in addition, some authors see one concept as part of another and vice versa. In order to bring some clarity to the discussion, we try to differentiate between these concepts as follows.

Corporate Governance is a system of rules to steer companies and organizations according to legal, economic, and sometimes ethical considerations. While CG began to gain importance as an answer to countless enterprise scandals, e.g., in the USA (see Enron, Arthur Andersen or Worldcom), and was devised as a tool to protect shareholders and other financiers, today a more encompassing definition of CG as a system “by which companies are strategically directed, integratively managed and holistically controlled in an entrepreneurial and ethical way in accordance with a particular context” (Hilb, 2006, p. 10) is in use. Defined as such, the concept entails questions of legality and legitimacy. Internationally, there were efforts to devise hard law (legal rules) and soft law (guiding principles) to make companies behave in a self-controlled way. Examples like the “OECD Principles of Corporate Governance” (1999, 2004), the “Sarbanes-Oxley Act”

(2002), the “Dodd-Frank Act” (2010), and similar guidelines in Austria (“Österreichischer Corporate Governance Kodex”) and Germany (“Deutscher Corporate Governance Kodex”) show incorporations of these efforts. While they are very different in the contents they provide and goals they want to reach, they are all signs of a “legal” attitude towards governance (even though only few of the regulations are legal in the sense of having become law) and try to impose values from the political realm to the company world. To give a recent example: There have been ongoing discussions as to whether “stock-options programs”, i.e., the payment of bonuses via engaging managers in the profits their company makes (e.g., by giving them stock at a lower than market price), really induce managers to act solely in the interest of a company (and therefore raising its profit rates) or at least partly induce them also to think only in the short run and neglect a lot of duties to stakeholders (see also below), by only giving regard to their shareholders. Many experts saw the latter as being factually the case and therefore recommended cutting those programs. One effect was the putting into effect of the “Guidelines on Remuneration Policies and Practices” by the European Banking Authority, which try to rule out exactly such misbehavior by (in this case) bank managers.

However, it is not only legal requirements (hard or soft) that exercise boundaries on specific management behavior, but also the potential legitimacy of actions. This means that actions can also be governed by influencing management directly, e.g., through continuing education programs or specific management ethics. Organizational structures can also have deep impact on individual behavior as Steinmann and Löhr (1994) have shown in an early work on business ethics. They define ethical problems on the meso-level of an organization, specifically in the organizational structure (e.g., hierarchies, communication, division of labor) and organizational culture (e.g., group think, lacking ethics codex), and demand to give ethical deliberation a “place” in an organization, e.g., by installing an ethics officer or conducting ethics surveys and audits. However, CG rules have been devised first of all to control the behavior of managers as agents of the principals (the shareholders), i.e., to solve the underlying principal-agent problem in capitalist institutions. This is maybe the biggest difference to CSR concepts, as these guidelines focus on individual behavior.

It is exactly the connection of organizations like companies to their social environment, which is at the heart of CSR. The responsibility for stakeholder claims in a time where markets dominate our economic transactions and nation states withdraw from their role as socially responsible actors seems to be left to enterprises and big institutions. Companies are expected to fill the gap governments leave (Roberts, 2006, p. 10ff.) when dealing with internationally mobile capital, environmental disasters or growing unemployment. Ever since the “Greenbook CSR” was published by the EU Commission in 2001, CSR has been denominating social responsibility as voluntary inclusion of social and ecological issues into the economic strategies of a firm (Allouche, 2006, for an overview). Later on the ISO Norm 26000 “Guidance on Social Responsibility” (2010) tried to make CSR operational for company management. One important sign of CSR being alive in organizations is the existence of a “social reporting” (or “triple bottom line

reporting”), i.e., reports trying to give a concrete picture of CSR measures pertaining to social, economic, and ecological goals (Cooper, 2004, for “corporate social performance”). Many guidelines (like the “Global Compact” devised by the UNO under Kofi Annan, or the “Global Reporting Initiative GRI”) show possible ways to report figures and measures beyond what is legally necessary; so called “sustainability reports” are another example of this.

Critique on the concept of CSR has come from different angles. Some authors like (business ethicist Freeman) think that CSR is too often a PR measure to “greenwash” doubtful actions. Also, he sees CSR as gaining attention too late along the value chain, i.e., not when production and basic strategies are concerned, but when it comes to “soften” the possibly negative impact of economic decisions (Freeman, Harrison, Wicks, Parmar, & De Colle, 2010, p. 42). Instead of integrating social and ethical issues into the company strategy, CSR comes as an addition to already profit-maximizing strategies. Therefore (ibid., p. 241), the so called “separation fallacy”, i.e., the (virtual and misguided) separation of “business” and “ethics” is prolonged. Ethics must be placed before the value chain starts and legitimate the kind of value creation a company chooses to follow. The difficult question of whether responsibility is served best when understood as voluntary action on the side of organizations or when legally prescribed (as in some instances of CG) is part of an ongoing debate in business ethics and not to be solved in this introduction to CSR (see Wieland, 2003, p. 16 against arguments for voluntariness). We will get back to this issue, however, when discussing ethical implications of CSR in the shareholder–stakeholder paradigms (see Sect. 3).

Corporate Citizenship has many parts in common with CSR; to differentiate between the two seems difficult (Schrader, 2003, p. 64ff.). The themes of stakeholder orientation and responsibility for more than economic goals are part of both concepts. However, CC can be understood as a broader concept (see Ulrich, 2001; Wieland, 2003) and focuses on the duties of companies and organizations as citizens. The ethics of an “economic citizen” (“Wirtschaftsbürger”), Ulrich (2001, p. 438) argues, is to adjust entrepreneurial strategies with all stakeholder claims a priori, i.e., before the value chain comes into effect. While in the CSR paradigm responsibility should be taken over within the framework of a given economic structure and market order, a firm as economic citizen is a “pluralist value added institution” that may even have to set back profit interests behind legitimate third claims. This understanding of a company’s “license to operate” has its foundations in discourse ethics (which cannot be further explored here) and would define entrepreneurial duties on three levels (Schrader, 2003, p. 64):

- CC in a narrow sense: firms are at the intersection to civil society and should be charitable (corporate giving).
- CC in a wider sense: firms are at the intersection to civil society and the government, and should take over political responsibilities, for instance when competition needs to be restrained (framework order responsibility).
- CC in the widest sense: firms are at the intersection to civil society, the government, and the economy, and should manage the externalities of their

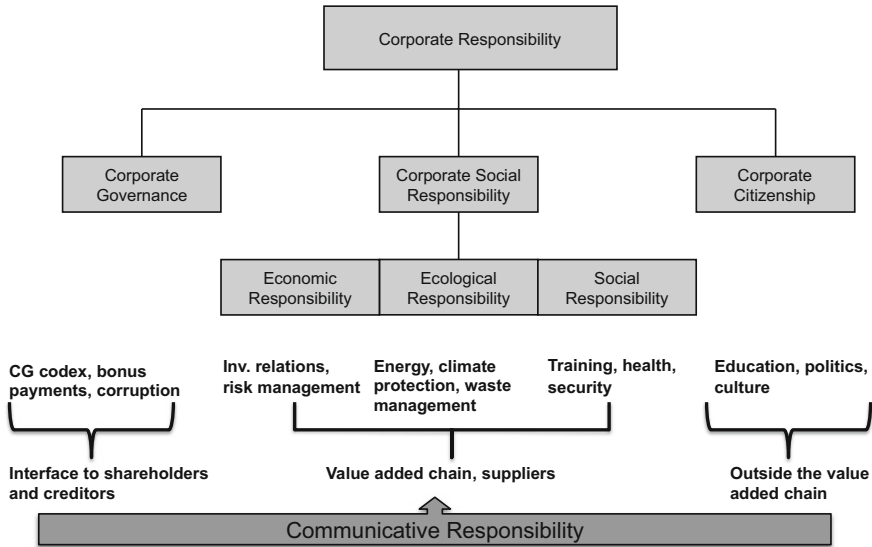


Fig. 1 Corporate responsibility

business along the complete value chain, taking care of sustainability, ecology, working conditions etc. (republican business ethics).

We can draft the overall concept of “Corporate Responsibility”, including CSR, CG, and CC, as depicted in Fig. 1 (adapted from Tokarski, 2008, p. 152):

The basic difference between the concepts can be seen along the value-added chain: While CG deals mainly with internal and external power distribution within organizations and their shareholders/creditors, CSR finds itself along the value added chain, and CC is the embodiment of “republican” duties of organizations outside the value added chain. Encompassing all three concepts is the important topic of “communicative responsibility”, which will be dealt with in Sect. 4.

The criteria for undertaking measures of CSR and CC have three central elements, according to Waddock (2006, p. 24ff.): responsibility, transparency, and accountability. Responsibility is important all along the value chain and product life cycle, and implies the central arguments given above for CSR and CG; transparency needs to be reached by internationally comparable standards (like the above mentioned standards for social reporting); accountability will be reached best when legal prerequisites, like the Dodd-Frank act in the US, make institutions “accountable” for their actions (in the latter example it is e.g., possible for financial managers to be held accountable for wrong information in financial statements).

The economic sense of all three concepts can be seen on the enterprise and the social level and comprises indirect positive effects for companies: Socially, we want stakeholder interests to be safeguarded and principal-agent problems solved, because trust and social capital are important fabrics of economic transactions and GDP in general. All measures deemed viable to prevent firm scandals, company

misbehavior and misuse of trust in big concerns should be taken into account and can at best prevent economic crises, as we have seen during the last years. On the company level (Schrader, 2003, p. 78ff.) we can expect better reputation on the market, rising loyalty on the side of clients, better qualified personnel (that prefer to apply for jobs in companies with high reputation), and better investor relations. While some ethical arguments for CSR (and its neighboring concepts CG and CC) have already been given in this section, Sect. 3 focuses on these arguments by giving an account of the opposing concepts of stakeholder and shareholder management and their implications for CSR.

3 CSR in the Shareholder–Stakeholder Debate: Ethical Issues

The alleged dichotomy between shareholder value orientations and stakeholder management is as old as business ethics itself. Basically, as shareholders are one kind of stakeholders, we could say that stakeholder management is the overall term, also encompassing stockholders. But this would be missing the important key point, namely that the stakeholder approach impersonates a completely different philosophy and demands a different thinking from managers. True CSR, we argue in this section, can only be had by managing for stakeholders. Let's start with a short history of the concept.

The groundbreaking publication of the strategic meaning of the stakeholder approach was Freeman's "Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach" (see Freeman, 1984), where stakeholders were defined as persons or groups of persons having a "stake" (or an interest) in an organization's decisions and actions, because they are influenced by them. In the early days of the approach it was seen as part of strategic management, helping managers to overcome the (possibly damaging) focus on their shareholders (and their demands for high returns on investment). We could call this approach "instrumental", as stakeholders are of instrumental interest for an organization's success. Later on a more comprehensive view came into being, one that is more aligned with ethical considerations in business. In this view, a "stakeholder approach to business is about creating as much value as possible for stakeholders, without resorting to trade-offs" (Freeman et al., 2010, p. 28), which means that one cannot prioritize amongst different claims according to power or financial influence, but only according to ethical legitimization. We could call this approach "intrinsic", as the value of an organization to stakeholders also gains importance.

Nowadays an approach that can be called "convergent stakeholder theory" (Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Jones, Wicks, & Freeman, 2002) seems dominant in business ethics literature. This view comprises three parts: the descriptive, the normative, and the instrumental part. The descriptive part of stakeholder theory describes how organizations actually deal with their stakeholders; the instrumental

part tries to show how this behavior influences the “balance sheet” of an organization; the normative part tries to give philosophical foundations and reasons for why organizations “should” manage for stakeholders. These arguments can be derived from many normative considerations and form the “normative core” of stakeholder theory. Freeman et al. (2010, p. 213ff.) name Kantian approaches (stakeholders as means, not as ends), contractarian theories (enterprises as networks of contracts), discourse ethical considerations (stakeholders must be enabled to legitimate their claims as equal and free persons), social contracts (all stakeholders and an organization agree to cooperate for mutual benefits), liberal theories (personal freedom and voluntary co-operations on the market), or justice theories (e.g., justice as fairness).

It is important to see the realm of stakeholder approaches: they were developed for organizational ethics and questions of strategic management (Phillips, 2003). As such, they cannot solve problems above the meso-level, e.g., questions of human rights violations by enterprises; also, concepts developed for macro level ethics, like social contract theories, are not apt to solve organizational ethical dilemmas (they only provide the groundwork for legitimating the approach itself). This point needs to be stressed, as many critiques of this approach stem from the belief that stakeholder theory is an all-encompassing ethical theory. Similarly, it is not true that all stakeholders need to be treated equally, which of course would make stakeholder management an impossible task in everyday management. The distinctions between primary, secondary, and tertiary stakeholders (see Fig. 2, where the inner circle comprises primary, the outer circles secondary and tertiary stakeholders), or between normative and derivative stakeholders (i.e., those to whom strong moral obligations are owed and those who can benefit or damage the organization, but cannot expect moral obligations, e.g., the media or competitors) show this point clearly.

In an ethical approach, not only primary and secondary, internal and external stakeholders (stakes), which have the ability to affect the company in its portfolio, should be included in business decisions, but also those who are affected by decisions and actions of the company. In an ethical notion of responsibility, or in an “intrinsic approach” (see above), also those stakeholders not able to articulate their interests directly or indirectly should be taken into consideration. For these claims we have (see Karmasin, 2015) suggested the term “tertiary stakes” and “tertiary stakeholders”. These comprise e.g., future generations, the natural environment, fundamental values of human society, or the common good. From a mere economic perspective, these stakes would only be considered in business decisions if they affected the strategic existence of the company. So at least the consideration of these stakes could be exploited as a symbolic difference in the sense of marketing the company as ethical consumer, ethical investor or ethical employer. From an ethical perspective, these stakes (if affected by actions of the company) should be considered out of responsibility or fairness. In our understanding, only the definition and the range of stakes (stakeholders) included in management decisions can prove whether stakeholder management serves only as

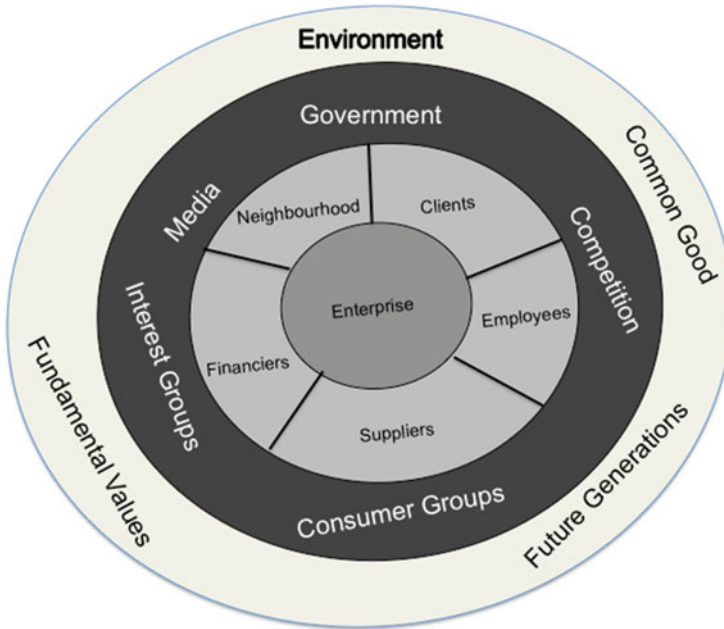


Fig. 2 Primary, secondary, and tertiary stakeholders (*source*: Karmasin, 2015, p. 344)

“Sunshine Value” to claim legitimacy (as long as business is not affected) and as part of “greenwashing”, or whether it is a credible corporate ethical commitment.

For an ethical conception of stakeholder management it is also important to see how the “efficiency” argument comes into play: it is often argued that managing for shareholders only is the “efficient” way of doing (and understanding) business. Management can rely on one (and only one) function of an enterprise, which is maximizing shareholder wealth. This is efficient, because maximizing implies an operational calculation of this value and doesn’t need balancing; it is also efficient as a guideline for everyday management of an organization, as managers can focus on one group and its interests. But efficiency has a normative meaning as well, and maximizing means one cannot do anything else, but satisfy shareholder claims. Would a manager recognize any other claim and try to give it some weight, the whole maximizing effort falls apart: you can only maximize one (and only one) function. As Donaldson and Preston (1995) have put it, you have to declare and make transparent your normative claims, no matter if you are an adherent of a shareholder or stakeholder approach. Freeman and Evan (1993, p. 262) make clear: “The stakeholder theory does not give primacy to one stakeholder group over another, though there will surely be times when one group will benefit at the expense of others. In general, however, management must keep the relationships among stakeholders in balance. When these relationships become unbalanced, the survival of the firm is in jeopardy”. Stakeholder Management is an alternative

within capitalism, not an alternative to capitalism, in order to balance economical and ethical performance.

Taken together, the above arguments seem to speak in favor of stakeholder management as part of CSR, although theorists like Freeman are critical of an equalization of CSR and business ethics (see above), because of business ethics dealing with the complete value chain of organizations and their respective external effects, and CSR being applied too late in the process of value added. However, if CSR argues for an inclusion of social and ecological arguments into a formerly economic and strategic alignment of organizations, the ethical foundations of the stakeholder approach combine strategic and ethical elements of CSR.

There remains an important issue to be dealt with in this approach, namely finding an answer to the itching question of how to operationalize stakeholder management, giving it more flesh by measuring and indicators. We do not have the space here to depict this problem with all its implications (Karmasin & Litschka, 2008, p. 159ff., for a more detailed discussion) but want to hint at some possibilities to reach this goal:

- Economically, one could try to calculate a Return on Investment of stakeholder relations, as Figge and Schaltegger (2000) show with their concept of a “Stakeholder-Value-Added”.
- The Balanced-Scorecard concept (Kaplan & Norton, 1997) shows the relative contribution of different organizational parts to the overall strategy and goes beyond purely monetary indicators.
Ethically, Bowie and Dunfee (2002) show a classification of stakeholder claims and the correct answering strategies by enterprises.
- Bowie and Werhane (2005) give an account of Kantian approaches to stakeholder management, thereby also staying in the realm of ethics, instead of instrumental thinking.

The dominant approach in business administration and neoclassical economics, to always give preference to utility maximization and shareholder wealth, has come under severe pressure during the last decades. Moral misbehavior by managers, financial crises, economic and ecological scandals, rising unemployment rates and gaps between rich and poor, and many more things, may of course not be solved by CSR and stakeholder management. Nevertheless, these two concepts as part of business ethics seem the only possible backlash to the one-sided principle of shareholder-centered management.

4 Communicative Aspects of CSR for Mediatized Organizations

The last section depicts our understanding of companies as publicly exposed organizations and the rising responsibilities that come with this development. As we argued elsewhere (Litschka & Karmasin, 2012), in a mediatized society characterized by ever rising communication possibilities, communicative complexity, and communicative aggregation, where media take over considerable parts of structuring society as a whole, organizations are also subject to mediatization. Media provide information and moral orientation at the same time and have become the most important storyteller about society itself (see Hjarvard, 2008, p. 7). The “mediatization of communication” (Krotz, 2001, p. 19) also touches on the role of economic organizations.

Organizations in general, and enterprises in particular, use media-related ways of generating value added (e.g., in process management, workflows, channel management, customer relationship management, collaborative working environments, etc.; see Doyle, 2002, or Picard, 1989, for media economic analyses including these technological and business model features). Also, the mode of communication with stakeholders is changing, e.g., via social media applications or Web 2.0. Enterprises develop into social contractual and interactive organizations, and it is communicative processes, not only the allocation of resources, which define their boundaries.

In communication science and business ethics we talk about enterprises being “publicly exposed” or “quasi-public” institutions, meaning that no matter if the organizational form (and the means of production) may be private, it always operates in the public and must legitimize its actions within a potentially unlimited public. “Publicity” in this sense is the necessity and possibility to publicly exchange and legitimize views of the world and moral claims. Social claims return to organizations, and organizations determine social claims; this recursive constitution of organization and society, deemed by Giddens as duality and recursivity of structure, can be found in the analyses of e.g., Saxer (1999), Schmidt (2000), or Ortman (2002), who understand organizations as communicative constructs. Via such communicative power (which not only lies in media companies, but any organization operating in the public and with communicative means) organizations also have great responsibilities. If it is true that organizations like schools, universities, media, production companies, financial institutions decide upon possibilities to purchase, chances in professional life, gainful employments, uses of time, structure networks, produce real and social capital, and simply construe the world for us, they automatically become moral instances with ethical responsibility (for arguments that enterprises have such responsibility see e.g., Göbel, 2006; Karmasin & Litschka, 2008; Noll, 2002; Ulrich, 2001).

Taking CSR seriously also in this communicative sense would mean that organizations communicate their responsibility in a transparent and credible way.

This comprises ways to institutionalize ethics within the organization, e.g., by installing an ethics officer or producing an ethics code, and making accountability possible, e.g., by introducing new forms of disclosure. One example for this last point would be triple-bottom line reporting (using indicators for economic, social, and ecological performance). Weder and Karmasin (2011) even suggest a “quadruple bottom line” insofar as the whole issue of institutionalizing ethics and commitment must be understood communicatively, as well. They demand to connect framework order and individual ethics in organizations by communicatively operationalizing ethics (through reproducing it and providing incentive systems); outside the organization must be bounded to society via communicative methods. In this understanding, “Corporate Communicative Responsibility” is the fourth dimension of the triple bottom line; hence the “quadruple bottom line”, depicting the way how responsibility is communicated and how communication is done responsibly. Communicating “with” responsibility would of course include the use of new forms of communication (stakeholder dialogues, stakeholder assemblies, stakeholder participation via social media. . .) and is the other side of communicating “of” responsibility (via e.g., new disclosure methods, see above). This also implies an integrated approach to CSR communication, as any public engagement of the organization will be monitored. The internal labeling and organizational structure (e.g., as marketing, advertising, public relation) is not decisive—the key point is communicating with responsibility in any aspect and via every channel. This highlights the necessity of an integrated strategy for CSR communication that focuses not only on communicating corporate responsibilities but to communicate with responsibility.

5 Conclusion and Outlook

Following Ulrich’s (2001) conception of a republican-liberal duty of economic organizations to legitimize its actions and decisions in front of the unlimited public, the “license to operate” of organizations does not stem from profit goals, but from balancing stakeholder interests and providing value added for all stakeholders. The stakeholder approach seems to take this argument seriously and should be the organizing principle within a CSR-orientated firm or organization.

We tried to give a complete picture of CSR as economic, ethical, and communicative concept: CSR is more than just the question of “governing” power within companies, and it is more aligned to strategic questions than would be a macro-level understanding of Corporate Citizenship (though they share some features like responsibility for non-profit goals). We then discussed ethical implications of CSR within the antagonism of shareholder and stakeholder management and argued for the inclusion of primary, secondary, and tertiary stakeholders in the organizational decision processes. Lastly we connected CSR with the rising communicative tasks (communication of and with responsibility) of organizations in a mediatized economy. The communication of and with responsibility demands new ways of

institutionalization of ethics (giving ethical deliberations a concrete place within an organization) and new ways of communication (two-way communication with stakeholders).

As digitalization and mediatization are only at the beginning and the change of the corporate landscape has just begun, the field has heuristic potential. In our understanding it will be interesting to monitor how companies embrace the new possibilities of communicating responsibility and if there are differences across industries and cultures regarding the degree of integration of CSR communication, the organizational structures, the channels of communication and of course—the content of the communication. We are convinced that this topic will stay on the agenda for quite a while: inside academia, but also in the corporate world.

6 Exercise and Reflective Questions

1. What are the main differences between CSR, Corporate Governance, and Corporate Citizenship?
2. What are the most important ethical arguments for undertaking CSR?
3. What makes stakeholder management different from shareholder orientated approaches?
4. What are primary, secondary, and tertiary stakeholders?
5. To what extent is stakeholder management a “meso-level” ethics?
6. Explain the concept of “publicly exposed institutions” and the responsibilities that come with this understanding of organizations.
7. What is the “recursive constitution” of organizations in a mediatized economy?
8. How can ethical deliberation be given a “place” in organizations?
9. Why does CSR lead to the need for integrated communication?

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Communicative Dilemmas of CSR: Towards an Integrative Framework of CSR Communication

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Abstract Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is said to be resting on a fundamental dilemma: a dilemma between ethical obligations towards society versus economic duties of maximising profits. In other words: A clash occurs between business and morality. In this chapter, we explore how this fundamental dilemma is replicated in CSR communication contexts. The purpose is to conceptually explore CSR dilemmas in communication contexts in order to develop an integrative framework for understanding the complexity of and communicative dilemmas embedded in CSR. Framed by three communication disciplines (integrated marketing communication, organisational communication and corporate communication), we outline how CSR is applied, and how it changes and redefines key concepts within each discipline. CSR generates new stakeholder demands and social expectations towards the organisation; the question is how the organisation manages and communicates this new role of responsibility. On that basis, we discuss how the CSR dilemma manifests as three communicative dilemmas: *A self-promotion dilemma* related to challenges of promoting CSR without simultaneously demonstrating its organisational anchoring; *an identification dilemma* related to the challenges of creating CSR value for employee identification without becoming a normative tool of employee identity control; and *a relation dilemma*, which is concerned with the challenges related to stakeholder engagement and the balancing of how to integrate the multivocality of different, opposing stakeholders without compromising the ideal of representing one unified corporate entity. The insights of the chapter contribute to the literature on CSR and CSR communication by providing a more nuanced understanding of the challenges and complexity of CSR communication, manifested as communicative dilemmas.

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1 Introduction: CSR and CSR Communication

CSR is rooted in philanthropy and has become an umbrella concept for describing activities and practices that support the relationship between business and society (Bowen, 1953; Carroll, 1999). These activities and practices embrace legal, economic and ethical issues (Carroll, 1999; Schwartz & Carroll, 2003) and are categorised into three groups articulating CSR as a general concern for *people, profit, planet*, also known as the ‘triple bottom line’ (Elkington, 1997). The triple bottom line covers a large spectrum of corporate functions included in CSR, i.e., from employee relations, environmental management, market positioning, issues management, corporate governance etc. to supply chain management dealing with global issues such as human rights and corruption (Blowfield & Murray, 2008). Following Van Marrewijk (2003) CSR is approached as set of activities and practices accomplished to attain an overall goal framed as ‘sustainable development’: “Sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Brundtland, 1987). According to recent CSR research, sustainability is practiced as a variant of CSR particularly by larger corporations e.g., in the oil and pharmaceutical industry when publishing their sustainability reports (Ihlen, Bartlett, & May, 2011, p. 6).

The way CSR is addressed by scholars and practitioners (strategic planning, implementation and selection of issues, organisation of activities, etc.) are determined by the context in which CSR is practiced (Dahlsrud, 2008). In the realm of globalisation and with the growing empowerment of corporations, consumers, NGOs and media watchdogs, CSR has become an increasingly important stakeholder issue. The increasing stakeholder pressure on businesses to demonstrate social engagement (e.g., Matten & Moon, 2008) has forced companies to adopt CSR strategies and policies in favour of their employees, suppliers, customers and the local and global community in which they operate. Along with the CSR movement a growing need for disclosure of CSR strategy, policy and operational issues has thus emerged. Hence the increased focus on CSR in communication research and practices in communication industries and disciplines, e.g., marketing, public relation and corporate communication (Nielsen & Thomsen, 2012).

A particular point of interest in CSR revolves around a fundamental ethical dilemma embedded in CSR concerning the question of what motivates corporation to engage in CSR. The literature on CSR tends to identify two main drivers for corporations’ engagement in CSR: (a) corporations have ethical obligations towards society (moral approach) (e.g., Carroll, 1999), versus (b) corporations’ duty is to maximise profits (business approach) (e.g., Friedman, 1970). From a moral perspective stakeholders are framed as allies of corporations and CSR is conceptualised as an act of reciprocity based on the corporation’s obligations towards its stakeholders, whereas from the business perspective stakeholders are

considered partners in a market transaction and as a target of financial performance¹ (Sharp & Zaidman, 2010, p. 51). From a business perspective the challenge of implementing CSR in today's corporations is therefore to be able to balance the societal versus the business agendas in the corporations' behaviours and rhetoric. However, from a moral perspective businesses are expected to live up to stakeholders' needs and expectations in order to gain their license to operate, addressing CSR as corporate social citizenship (e.g., Matten & Crane, 2005). Although the two perspectives are not necessarily in conflict, they reflect different sets of drivers for engaging in CSR: *enlightened self interest* on the one hand and *paying back to society by being a good corporate citizen* on the other.

We argue, that the ethical dilemma has particular consequences when replicated into a CSR communication context with regards to what and how corporations share CSR with their stakeholders. Unfolding this dilemma is the main focus of this chapter. More particularly, the purpose is to conceptually explore CSR dilemmas in order to develop an integrative framework for understanding the complexity of and communicative dilemmas embedded in CSR. We argue, that a deeper understanding of how these dilemmas come into play and are addressed by corporations may help clarify the nuances, challenges and discrepancies in and around CSR communication.

The chapter is structured as follows. First we outline three theoretical approaches for framing CSR communication: *Integrated Marketing Communication*, *Organisational Communication* and *Corporate Communication*. Key concepts, stakeholders and the communicative articulation of the ethical dilemma are described within each of the three framings. Second, we discuss the communicative dilemmas identified from the perspective of integration and present our framework, identifying, unfolding and illustrating the specific CSR communication dilemmas articulated within each of the three framings. The chapter is concluded with an outlining of theoretical, conceptual and managerial implications for CSR communication as well as for future research, and is accompanied by questions for reflections.

2 Three Theoretical Framings of CSR Communication

CSR communication is most often studied from within different communication disciplinary perspectives (Golob et al., 2013). Thus, in order to study how the ethical dilemmas of CSR are replicated in CSR communication contexts and how they emerge, we conceptually outline three main communication disciplines (integrated marketing communication, organisational communication and corporate communication) as theoretical framings for exploring CSR communication.

¹See also chapter "Toward a Conceptual Integration of Corporate Social and Financial Performance" of this Handbook: by Diane L. Swanson and Marc Orlitzky.

Acknowledging that all three disciplines adopt an integrated approach to communication, we argue, following van Riel (1992), that integrated marketing communication is driven mainly by an external stakeholder focus, whereas organisational communication is primarily directed by an internal stakeholder focus. Our approach to integrated marketing communication draws on Schultz and Kitchen (2000) and refers to the integration, alignment and management of all external communication activities, including advertising, sponsorship and public relations (e.g., Pickton & Broderick, 2005). Regarding organisational communication, we refer to Miller's (2006) classical conceptualisation of organisational communication as human resource and work place related communications issues, more specifically defined as communication that occurs *within* organisations, including employee communication, leadership and processes of organisational change and development.

As argued by Cheney, Christensen, Zorn, and Ganesh (2004) organisational communication includes both a more narrow definition being a sub-discipline of communication as well as a broader paradigmatic definition covering and influenced by a variety of sub-disciplines, e.g., marketing and anthropology. In order to include this umbrella-like definition of communication, we draw on Christensen and Cornelissen's (2011) definition of corporate communication as the third theoretical framing for exploring CSR communication. Drawing on Harrison (1995), Christensen and Cornelissen (2011) we describe corporate communication as the management of all communications that involve an organisation as a corporate unity, thus, positioning corporate communication as a strategic management discipline contributing to define corporate reputation (cf. Argenti, 1998; Cornelissen, 2014; Fombrun & van Riel, 2004).

The three communication disciplines can thus, from an organisational perspective, be seen as referring to different strategic levels: Marketing strategy, HR strategy and Corporate strategy, reflecting the different and often conflicting interests and functions, to which CSR communication is expected to add value.² Below we conceptually outline how the different communications disciplines as theoretical framings affect CSR communication, including key concepts, CSR communication activities and embodiment of integration, enabling us to propose how the CSR dilemma is articulated differently within the three communication disciplines.

²It should be noted that our approach to studying the communicative dilemmas of CSR through the theoretical framings of Integrated Marketing Communication, Organizational Communication and Corporate Communication is a purposive choice, in so far as we are able to define their related strategic and organizational levels on the basis of these particular framings, which further adds to the complexity of CSR communication. Not only as issues concerning internal versus external communications, but pointing towards more fundamental organizational challenges. Thus, we acknowledge alternative approaches to and understandings of the field of communication, e.g., more flexible definitions of strategic communication or communication management, which would point towards other challenges and issues of CSR communication.

2.1 CSR Dilemmas from an Integrated Marketing Communication Perspective

From an integrated marketing perspective CSR has become an important driver for businesses' brand positioning and reputation in the market place. Not only do consumers generally care more for the social and environmental impacts of production and consumption processes than previously, they also increasingly attribute value to and engage in brands with CSR assets (Lii, Wu, & Ding, 2013, p. 16). As a result, most businesses are forced to engage in CSR in order to meet both their customers' and suppliers' expectations. Some companies position their brands on CSR more than others. While many companies affiliate their brands with social causes with a competitive purpose such as e.g., L'Oreal, others adopt a more integrated approach identifying the entire organisation through CSR such as e.g., Body Shop (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sankar, 2007, p. 225). Stakeholders' increased level of expectations concerning CSR and the subsequent pressure on corporations to integrate CSR as a competitive advantage (Porter & Kramer, 2006) challenge their capability to adopt appropriate CSR methods and processes that are congruent with stakeholders' desires and values. Accordingly, several studies on consumers' beliefs, attitudes and behaviours towards companies' CSR programmes have appeared in recent years (e.g., Du et al., 2007; Golob, Lah, & Jančič, 2008; Pérez & Rodríguez, 2013; Pomeroy & Dolnicar, 2009; Stanaland, Lwin, & Murphy, 2011). Many of these studies demonstrate how and the extent to which companies' socially responsible activities influence consumer preferences and decisions. Particularly in cases where the price and quality of goods provided is considered to be the same, consumers tend to prefer companies that are socially responsible rather than companies that are not (Banyté & Gadeikienė, 2008; Bronn & Vrioni, 2001; Podnar & Golob, 2007). Scholars therefore consent that in order to capitalise on CSR, businesses should have a more nuanced understanding of how CSR is perceived amongst consumers and other stakeholders. Which determinants of belief of CSR for example are proved to be crucial for their CSR appeal to consumers? A prerequisite for consumers to attribute value to a company's CSR as a brand asset is (not surprisingly) awareness of its CSR programmes and activities. Moreover, consumers' attribution of value to CSR initiatives is argued to be consistent with the company's intrinsic and/or extrinsic motives for engaging in these activities. Shaping CSR beliefs thus "suggests that companies need to 'work smarter' in communicating their CSR initiatives to consumers" (Du et al., 2007, p. 238). In spite of the growing interests of businesses to get insights into consumers' and publics' perception and evaluation of CSR activities and strategies, marketing and public relations research also demonstrates that the disclosure of CSR marketing initiatives may cause suspicion and scepticism by critical consumers (e.g., Elving, 2013; Jahdi & Acikdilli, 2009). Consumer scepticism towards CSR is first and foremost addressed as a tactical issue. Thus the influence of the content and form of CSR communication including the above mentioned value attribution of motives is the object of a study revealing that when companies extrapolate egoistic- and

stakeholder-driven rather than value-driven attributions to CSR, consumer scepticism is elicited (Skarmetas, Leonidou, & Saridakis, 2014). In the same vein a study exploring consumer reactions to CSR advertisements demonstrates that the lowest level of scepticism is registered when consumers are confronted with advertisements from companies with a good reputation and a strategic fit between the business and the CSR activities. It is argued that companies should adopt a more conscious and reflected approach to their use of CSR communication strategies (Elving, 2013). At the strategic level issues causing public cynicism and scepticism towards CSR communication address e.g., the CSR promotion expenditure of advertising at the expense of the cause (Jahdi & Acikdilli, 2009). Or the lack of a strategic approach to CSR is questioned and the whole idea of replicating marketing promotional techniques conceived to improve the positioning and branding of businesses such as e.g., cause-related marketing. When practiced as promotion, CSR is ‘a PR invention’ rather than about “a company’s long-term footprint on society” (Frankental, 2001, p. 23). A more sustainable and integrated approach to CSR communication would imply that companies try to improve their impact on all stakeholders who are affected by their activities regarding their “long-term reputation within the context of the social and ecological sustainability” of their operations (ibid.).

The integrated approach to marketing blurs the boundaries between consumers and public as stakeholder groups. With the move from the instrumental focus on CSR as a business case (Kakabadse, Rozuel, & Lee-Davies, 2005) towards a broader societal conceptualisation of CSR as social engagement and stakeholder dialogue (Pedersen, 2006) the notion of consumers as *citizens* seems to be an appropriate concept for capturing more intense and authentic corporate-consumer relationships articulated in recent studies on CSR communication (e.g., Andersen & Nielsen, 2011; McShane & Sabadoz, 2015). A research study on CSR communication activities practiced in the Pepsi Refresh Project illustrates this type of extension of the corporate-consumer relationship. Arguing that consumers are transformed from individual to connected citizens through new communication practices and strategies applied in cause-related marketing, it is demonstrated how values are created and local commitment installed by Pepsi and consumer citizens through social interactions and bodily engagement as a result of co-creation processes adopted in Pepsi’s Refresh social media cause-related marketing campaign (Johansen & Andersen, 2014, p. 13). This example is thus a point in case for illustrating how mutually beneficial values and benefits are produced through integration and synergy of marketing and consumption processes. Hence potential sceptical voices from critical consumer citizens are subverted.

2.2 CSR Dilemmas from an Organisational Communication Perspective

The internal organisational aspect of CSR is relatively understudied (e.g., Costas & Kärreman, 2013). For instance, some of the more prominent and cited text- and handbooks on CSR and CSR communication (e.g., Ihlen et al., 2011; May, Cheney, & Roper, 2007; Morsing & Beckmann, 2006; Werther & Chandler, 2006) do not include independent sections on employees as stakeholders, despite the fact that human capital is widely acknowledged as the most important asset of organisations. Following this, a report on CSR and HR's role concludes, that "CSR minus HR = PR" (WBCSD/BEP/CPI, 2003), stating that employee engagement and trust towards CSR initiatives are pivotal for its success. In other words: HR does have a share in CSR, and CSR strategies do not only pose responsibilities and duties towards external stakeholders, but towards employees as well.

The rather limited research on the internal organisational communication aspect of CSR seems to adopt two main foci: One stream of research draws on an internal marketing logic and is concerned with how to engage employees to do and practice CSR (Collier & Esteban, 2007), e.g., corporate volunteering programs (Barkay, 2012) or community involvement (Zappalà, 2004) as means to create corporate value and reputation. The second stream of research includes more HR-related aspects of CSR, mainly concerned with how to create organisational value in employer–employee relations through CSR, e.g., in recruitment or staff retention (e.g., Bhattacharya, Sen, & Korschun, 2008) with the purpose of creating not only "bodily-corporate-producers" but also "bodily-corporate-ambassadors" (Barkay, 2012). Consequently, it can be argued that from an internal organisational and HR perspective, CSR is predominantly preoccupied with how organisations can optimise their human resources through CSR and create organisational value and to a lesser degree on how CSR mobilises employees and offers employee value (cf. Costas & Kärreman, 2013). Following this, CSR from a HR perspective seems to ignore the Kantian imperative that humans should never be seen as means to an end, but as ends in themselves (cf. Wilcox, 2006). From a Kantian perspective, there is thus more to CSR and HR than organisational value creation.

In his article "Employee Engagement and CSR" Mirvis (2012) offers a more nuanced perspective, as he applies three different approaches to study CSR for engaging employees, including its impact on motivation, identity and sense of meaning and purpose. The author applies different types of psychological contracts (Rousseau, 1995)—transactional, relational and developmental—to explore different ways in which organisations engage employees through CSR. The concept of the psychological contract presumes the employer–employee relationship to be reciprocal (Morrison & Robinson, 1997), thereby equally highlighting obligations, demands and expectations towards being a responsible employee as well as a responsible employer. From an employee perspective, Mirvis argues, that the three models of engagement outline different forms of benefits of engagement: *The transactional engagement model* offers self-satisfaction: when engaging in

CSR initiatives, basic individual employee needs of self-satisfaction can be met. *The relational engagement model* relates to employee identity: when engaging in CSR, the individual employee is able to express certain responsibility-related values and dimensions of his identity. And finally, *the developmental engagement model* (to a certain degree corresponding to the concept of the ideological contract, Thompson & Bunderson, 2003) helps the employee address “not only ‘who am I?’ but also the larger existential developmental questions of ‘Why am I?’” (Mirvis, 2012, p. 105), activating employees to transform and progress into “responsible corporate citizens” (Mirvis, 2012, p. 93). It can be argued that the development from the transactional to the developmental model of CSR engagement suggests a progression towards a more empowered, self-directive employee. However, from a critical management perspective, it can equally be argued that employee empowerment is mere pseudo-empowerment in the sense that organisations gain increasingly more power and influence over human development. For example, Costas and Kärreman (2013) demonstrate how CSR works as a form of aspirational control that ties employees’ aspirational identities and ethical conscience to the organisation. Through a study of two management consultant companies, the authors show how CSR contributes to identity regulation by “serving the construction of an idealized socially, ecologically and ethically responsible self and providing a clear pathway for living it out” (Costas & Kärreman, 2013, p. 411), causing however at the same time employees to feel guilt and self-remorse for living the prosperous consultant lifestyle. In other words, the corporate CSR employee identity becomes a controlled identity template, leaving no room for alternative voices and critiques, potentially creating new marginalised employee positions. Thus, what initially started as a corporate responsibility practice and offer of ethical values as a means to create value through human resource development and employee identification, may end up causing ethical straitjackets creating conform and uniformly thinking employees (Morsing, 2006). Such corporate practices of normative control may potentially provoke disloyalty, demotivation and even cynicism among employees (Kunda, 1992).

Consequently, it can be argued that as companies strive to enhance employee performance, loyalty and engagement through CSR, new ethical challenges emerge. The increased corporate influence on employee identity and the development of employees into responsible corporate citizens, driven by CSR as a normative standard and a developmental psychological contract as what ties the employee–employer relation together put forward new demands for what it means to be a responsible employer. Can the employer dismiss an employee for not sharing the same values as the company? Can the organisation refuse to use its health insurance, e.g., for abortions for employees, if it conflicts with ethical, ideological or religious values of the CEO? What are the obligations and responsibilities of organisations as an employer in times of crisis? Can the employer dismiss an employee whose identity and ideological values are tied to the corporate brand—or does the employer have obligations beyond the employee life cycle? App, Merk, and Büttgen (2012) propose expanding the employee life cycle to include pre- and post employment phases, thus pointing towards the long-term

commitment of employers, which transforms CSR into a sustainability strategy. Freitas, Jabbour, and Santos (2011) suggest that the HRM discipline has evolved from being merely a question of personnel management to a strategic discipline moving towards sustainable HRM, which aims at creating sustainable value by balancing “economic prosperity, social equity and environmental integrity” (Freitas et al., 2011, p. 232). Such reframing of the corporate responsibility of the employer transcends the organisational boundaries and rearticulates employees as whole human beings to whom the organisation has a responsibility beyond contractual obligations.

2.3 CSR Dilemmas from a Corporate Communication Perspective

CSR communication is recognized as a growing integrated area of corporate communication along with tactical areas, e.g., *corporate design, corporate advertising, media relations* and more strategic areas, e.g., *internal communication, investor relations, crisis management, change communication, issues management*, etc. (Cornelissen, 2014, p. 4). Corporate communication is regarded as an integrated management discipline for managing communication (Cornelissen, 2014, p. 24). Coordinating all internal and external communication with an overall purpose of establishing and maintaining favourable reputations with stakeholder groups is acknowledged as the key function of corporate communication (Cornelissen, 2014, p. 5). Over the years corporate communication has developed from a tactical support function driven by the ‘positioning’ paradigm through advertising and dissemination of information towards a strategic tool driven by stakeholder engagement with advocacy, transparency, interactivity and authenticity as new agendas (Cornelissen, 2014, p. 13). Emerging with a growing pressure from and empowerment of stakeholders, these new agendas are anchored in CSR and explain the growing importance attributed to CSR as corporate communication.

From this perspective CSR communication is practiced as a proactive corporate support of anticipating stakeholder interests and beliefs, becoming hence a new driver for reputation enhancement (Andriof & Waddock, 2002; Brammer & Millington, 2005; Brammer & Pavelin, 2006; Hillenbrand & Money, 2007). Incorporating CSR activities such as CSR standards, philanthropic projects or programmes for establishing and nurturing trustful relationships with stakeholders into the corporation have been considered as proactive tools that constitute antecedents for how to create a good corporate reputation (e.g., Andriof & Waddock, 2002; Fombrun, 2005; Waddock, 2002). More holistic approaches tend to believe that CSR and related issues can be considered as assets in terms of which corporations’ reputation may be evaluated together with other activities such as e.g., crisis management (Hillenbrand & Money, 2007, p. 226). However, attributing a major role to CSR and CSR communication as ‘the’ driver for reputation

enhancement rather than as a more pervasive corporate practice, which is anchored in the overall organisational goal and activities, may leave corporations in delicate situations in case unexpected stakeholder activism or crises occur. The double-edged sword in dealing with stakeholder management as a practice that can provide equal stakeholder opportunity is probably an illusion. Time and again the importance of balancing and navigating stakeholder interests is addressed as a crucial corporate management activity. And yet it is well known that critical corporate issues attract media watchdogs and critical voices keep popping up, threatening to ruin the reputation of an organisation from 1 day to the next, as demonstrated by notorious examples such as e.g., Enron and BP in the past and e.g., the Rana Plaza collapse in Bangladesh in recent times. Hence, the massive resources spent on *risk management* that lives in clover along with the global integration of CSR, sustainability and corporate governance into corporate management.

CSR communication is challenging and its forms and practices have often been subject to media attention by critical stakeholders. Most CSR communication is primarily identified as the communication appearing on corporate websites and in CSR reporting. In these media, corporations tend to present glossy social self-portraits and promotional descriptions of their CSR activities (Cornelissen, 2014, p. 245). The problem with this type of CSR communication is twofold. First, it taps into old-school thinking of how to maintain corporate-stakeholder relationships in which stakeholders are to be 'managed'. In more recent approaches to stakeholder theory relationship building is approached as 'collaboration' and 'stakeholder engagement' addressing stakeholders as social partners. Second, the communicative implication is that, while according to new practices stakeholder relationship building relies on dialogue, opening for iterative corporate interaction with stakeholders, the old practice tends to keep stakeholders at arm's length as passive receivers of one-way communication. Moreover, the discursive and rhetorical practices of CSR communication tend to stick to the narrow goal of image and reputation embedded in the marketing perspective and the positioning approach addressed previously. Thus, in the name of 'transparency' and 'corporate disclosure' corporate communication about CSR programmes and activities are likely to generate backlashes, occurring not only as a result of perceived inconsistency between corporate CSR messages and organisational practices, but also due to unclear, non-reflexive or exaggerated communication strategies, mixing past, present and future CSR performances. This kind of short-term communication practice often leads to more confusion than to clarity and transparency. When some stakeholder interests are complied with more than others, misinterpretation may occur and the opportunity to negotiate, had the communication been addressed through dialogue, may be missed, which again may result in stakeholder tension and conflicts leading to perceptions of hypocrisy and gap hunting (Christensen, Morsing, & Thyssen, 2013). A well-known corporate response installed to cope with this challenge is gap closing, i.e., dealing with conflicts as they occur rather than anticipating their occurrence. However, as one gap may be closed, and one stakeholder satisfied, another gap occurs with a new stakeholder to satisfy, etc. A potential way of coping with this dilemma is suggested by Christensen et al. (2013)

arguing that instead of addressing critical voices and hypocrisy as a negative issue inviting to close a gap between message and action as soon as it appears, the practice of aspirational talk consisting in inviting critical voices to participate and discuss the corporations' CSR ideals and values and trying to reach higher goals and aspirations, may allow them to explore and expand their CSR capabilities (Christensen et al., 2013, p. 15).

3 Discussion: Towards an Integrative Framework of Communicative Dilemmas of CSR

From the perspective of integration, the three theoretical framings point towards three different points or levels of integration:

Integrated marketing communication builds upon an ideal of coordination and integration of all marketing and PR activities in order for the company to speak with one voice, so that the company looks and sounds alike in all promotional activities (Kitchen, Brignell, & Li, 2004). The idea is thus that speaking with one voice and one sound utilises the synergy of repetition and makes promotional messages stronger and more recognisable to the public (Schultz & Kitchen, 2000).

Metaphorically speaking, the 'One voice, One sound' reflects and focuses on the expressive aspects of communication—the externally visible and manifest design and corporate messages. From a CSR perspective, this preoccupation of promoting and expressing CSR messages invokes the classical "walk-the-talk" CSR challenge or what we might call "the self-promoting dilemma" (Coombs & Holladay, 2011). The communicative dilemma occurs because the promotion and expression of CSR values and messages do not automatically incorporate and comprise an organisational anchorage. Consumers and publics may question the intention and authenticity of companies engaging in CSR. On the other hand, speaking with 'No voice, No sound', i.e., not promoting and communicating about CSR initiatives to external audiences may keep the organisation from reaping the strategic values of CSR.

Organisational communication as a communication discipline rests upon an ideal of integrating—or aligning (Morsing, 2006)—employees into the values of the company. CSR contributes with ethical values and thereby forms the basis for more emotional and symbolic expectations towards the employer—and reciprocally: expectations towards more dedicated and loyal employees, with the establishment of strong relational or developmental psychological contracts, posing demands on employees to live and become the brand. While the CSR dilemma of integrated marketing communication is expressed as a concern for the strategic and organisational anchoring of CSR values, the CSR dilemma of organisational communication may be said to occur, when the organisational demands on employee engagement—as part of an organisational anchoring of CSR—become a strategy of employee control and moral straitjackets, creating a uniform and conform staff of

employees. The company represents “one mind”, with which employees must comply and according to which they must mould themselves, thus creating what we might label “a dilemma of identification”.

Corporate communication as a discipline draws on the Latin word for corporate, “corpus”, suggesting a collective entity united into one body, highlighting corporate communication with the goal of communicating the organisation as a whole, a bodily entity (Christensen, Cheney, & Morsing, 2008). Metaphorically speaking, corporate communication thus represents “one body”. Consequently, as argued by Christensen & Cornelissen: “With its notion of integration, corporate communication imposes new types of inflexibility on organisations that subscribe to this ideal and, thus, constrain their ability to respond to changes in environments marked by turbulence and change” (Christensen and Cornelissen, 2011, p. 394). From a CSR perspective, this organisational inflexibility is what causes the communicative dilemma. While the communicative dilemma related to integrated marketing communication concerns the “walk-the-talk” challenge with its embedded “self-promotional dilemma”, the very same dilemma is neutralised because of the corporate integration of communication: Internal and external organisational communication and processes are per definition integrated within a corporate communication perspective. Rather, the dilemma occurs in the relation to stakeholders and their different, often contradictory expectations towards the organisation. Recent stakeholder theories suggest that organisations no longer outline the strategic direction and take the centre stage in stakeholder relations (Steurer, 2006). Instead, issues and challenges develop between stakeholders when stakeholder expectations and contradictory agendas conflict, forming complex stakeholders networks (Roloff, 2008). We might therefore suggest the communicative dilemma to be “a relational dilemma”: The CSR challenge for corporations lies in navigating between and among different stakeholder expectations and interests, without compromising the corporate ideal of coherence, consistency and being “one body”.

Summarising, we have conceptually discussed how the ethical dilemma of CSR displayed between strategic intentions and ethical actions is replicated in CSR communication contexts assuming different forms depending on the communication disciplinary framing. Taking our point of departure in the concept of integration, we have shown how each communication discipline rests on different assumptions and ideals of integration, presenting the organisation with *one voice*, *one sound*, as *one mind* and *one united body*, which seems to intensify the different communicative dilemmas. Framed by integrated marketing communication and the ideal of presenting promotional messages with *one voice*, *one sound*, we have argued that this one-sided focus on the expressive and aesthetic dimensions of CSR causes sceptical consumers and publics to question the intentions of engaging in CSR and whether the advertised CSR messages are nothing but greenwashing: The brand *looks* good, but *is* it good? Framed by organisational communication and the ideal of representing and being *one mind*, we have argued that as organisations strive to create loyal and engaged employees through CSR values and ethical standards, the organisation may end up with a disloyal, unmotivated and uniform staff of employees, who feel forced into complying with a corporately defined

Table 1 An integrative framework of communicative CSR dilemmas

	CSR and IMC	CSR and org. comm.	CSR and corp. comm.
Strategic level	Marketing strategy	HR strategy	Corporate strategy
Key concepts	CSR as a strategy of positioning and differentiation Authenticity through engagement with publics Value and benefits through integration and synergy	Developmental/ideological psychological contract Human resource development through CSR Extended employee life cycle	Balancing stakeholder expectations: proactive versus reactive Reputation and risk management (CSR as legitimacy) Hypocrisy, transparency and consistency
Key audiences	Consumers and publics as citizens	Employees as whole human beings	Stakeholders as partners
Embodiment of integration	One voice, One sound	One mind	One body
The communicative dilemma	Self-promotion dilemma	Identification dilemma	Relation dilemma

moral code of practice. In other words: are CSR values used for taking responsibility as an employer, or as moral straitjackets for moulding employees into a certain corporate mind-set. And finally, framed by corporate communication and the ideal of appearing as *one body*, we have argued that the corporation may lose its flexibility and ability to respond and relate to different, often opposing stakeholder voices and demands. Thus, the question is how a company navigates between its own ideal of consistency and coherence, while at the same time incorporating the multivocality of opposing stakeholder voices.

Following these different assumptions and ideals, we suggest that the communicative dilemma occurs as: *a self-promotion dilemma, an identification dilemma and a relational dilemma*. The communicative dilemmas are summarised in Table 1, which offers an integrative framework of communicative CSR dilemmas:

For many communication scholars, suggestions of how to handle the conflictual stakeholder encounters and stir out of the communicative dilemmas focus on stakeholder dialogue and often with the notion of consensus as an ideal (Pedersen, 2006), arguing that conflicting voices can be persuaded into adopting new positions, consistent with corporate values. As an alternative, Munshi & Kurian introduce the idea of sustainable citizenship, defined in opposition to the discourse of corporate citizenship, as an “idea of active citizenship with an ethical commitment to long-term holistic sustainability grounded in social justice that explicitly recognises and addresses power differentials and marginality” (2015, p. 154). The authors argue that sustainable citizenship is not about dialogue and compromises, but rather about working with the dialectical nature of complex issues, meeting the complexity rather than reducing it. This means that sustainable citizenship as a practice is turned into inclusive processes that highlight marginalised perspectives, issues, and voices as central aspects of decision making (2015, p. 154).

Thus, whereas a dialogue approach often assumes a neutral dialogue platform, underestimating issues of power and marginalisation, while at the same time tending to privilege some (key) stakeholders over others (Hammond, Anderson, & Cissna, 2003; Munshi & Kurian, 2015), the dialectic approach enables the different stakeholder groups to engage with alternative and conflicting positions, exploring new values and entering into new group constellations (Kathlene, 2014; Munshi & Kurian, 2015). The dialectic approach, thus, appreciates and makes a virtue of the necessity of interacting with opposing and conflicting stakeholder groupings, acknowledging the strategic values and innovations that potentially occur in the meeting of oppositions.

From a CSR communication perspective, it can be argued that the concept of sustainable citizenship dissolves or neutralises the communicative dilemmas of integrated marketing communication, organisational communication and corporate communication insofar as the concept includes all roles and positions (employer, employee, citizen, consumer etc.). In other words: The notion of sustainable citizenship dissolves the boundaries between organisation and society, between organisation and stakeholder, and between one stakeholder and another (e.g., Crane & Ruebottom, 2011), claiming all to comply with an agenda of living in a sustainable world.

Consequently, following Munshi and Kurian (2015), sustainable citizenship represents an ethical and conceptual integration compared to an instrumental communicative and pragmatic integration (Suchman, 1995). The question is, however, whether such alternative forms of integration merely close existing communicative dilemmas just to pose new ones.

4 Conclusion and Implications

A key interest in CSR is the question of what drives organisations to engage in CSR, which is often formulated into a fundamental dilemma of CSR: The clash between ethical obligations towards society versus duties towards maximising profits, thus a matter of morality meeting business. In this chapter we have explored how this fundamental dilemma of CSR is replicated in CSR communication. The purpose of the chapter has been to conceptually explore CSR communication dilemmas in order to develop an integrative framework, which identifies, unfolds and discuss different manifestations and characteristics of CSR communication dilemmas.

In order to explore the CSR communication dilemmas, we have used three communication disciplines as framings: integrated marketing communication, organisational communication and corporate communication. These framings have allowed us to conceptually examine how CSR is applied within each of the disciplines, and how CSR changes and redefines key concepts of each discipline, insofar as ethical dimensions generate new stakeholder demands and social expectations towards the organisation, whether met as an employer, a product brand or a global corporation. From the perspective of integration, we have shown how each

communication discipline rests on different assumptions and ideals of integration, presenting the organisation with *one voice, one sound, as one mind and one united body*, which seems to intensify the different communicative dilemmas.

The theoretical contribution of the chapter lies in the nuancing of the CSR dilemma in different communication contexts, concluding that the communicative dilemma is far more complex than just a matter of business meeting morality. We demonstrate how the CSR dilemma manifests as three communicative dilemmas:

- A self-promotion dilemma.
- An identification dilemma.
- A relation dilemma.

Communicating CSR, thus, puts the organisation in situations where the art of balancing different ethical dilemmas is required. A CSR-driven organisation is always par excellence placed in an ethical arena. However, in this chapter we have demonstrated that an organisation must not only relate to whether CSR is strategically anchored, but must constantly be aware of how it propounds different ethical ideals and dilemmas through its communicative practices, constantly finding itself in troubled waters.

Conceptually, the insights of the chapter contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how CSR and CSR communication fundamentally redefine the role of organisations in society and their relations to stakeholders. CSR and CSR communication generate new social expectations towards the organisation, as a brand, as a workplace and as a corporation. CSR has the potential to create strategic value, however, it also makes demands on organisations to act accordingly: to demonstrate its role as a responsible employer, to act ethically and authentically when interacting with markets and to exercise transparency and openness in strategic and communicative processes. And within these new roles and actions a range of ethical dilemmas occur, in which the organisation must constantly reflect on how it promotes itself, how it creates value frameworks for identification and how it meets the interests of different stakeholders.

Several questions, however, still remain: How do the different CSR communication dilemmas relate to each other? Will one dilemma overrule others or will it enhance them? How do organisations navigate between the different communicative dilemmas and how is their urgency prioritised? We propose future research to empirically explore these questions in order to strengthen our understanding of CSR communication. However, based on the insights provided by the current chapter, we anticipate that there are certain challenges related to studying communicative dilemmas of CSR in empirical contexts due to the complexity of CSR communication. First, empirical studies of CSR dilemmas may be facing a *challenge of delimitation*. Communicative dilemmas of CSR are complex by nature, intertwined and interconnected, as one dilemma seems to pose new ones. Thus, one challenge for future research is to propose a valid and meaningful delimitation of what to include empirically, knowing that not every aspect can be included. In continuation hereof, we pre-empt a second challenge that future empirical research may be facing, namely a *methodological challenge* in proposing a research design, which

is able to capture and respond to—rather than reducing and simplifying—the complexity of the field.

5 Exercise and Reflective Questions

1. What characterises the ethical dilemma of CSR? Give an example of a company or brand, which has failed to stir this fundamental dilemma and reflect on the image and reputational costs of this.
2. Why is it important for companies to be aware of the communicative dilemmas of CSR? Can you think of a company or brand that has hit the news because of one or more communicative dilemmas?
3. How does the concept of sustainable citizenship differ from corporate citizenship? Discuss if and how sustainable citizenship may dissolve the communicative dilemmas of CSR.

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Communicating Responsibility: Responsible Communication

Franziska Weder and Matthias Karmasin

Abstract Taking the theoretical concept of CCR into consideration, the following chapter follows an integrated approach to CSR communication. Basically, responsible stakeholder relations are perceived as condition for and outcome of CSR activities; furthermore, CSR is described as both, strategy and framework of internal as well as external communication processes and structures. After providing a critical introduction to CSR, the Quadruple Bottom Line of Responsibility is introduced, where communicating CSR and communicating responsibly complement each other. Thus, the chapter presents and discusses a concept of integrated CSR communication as condition for the realization of CSR in an organization.

1 The Responsibility of Companies: A Critical Introduction

The crucial question addressed to companies today is as old as the idea of a company itself: “what is business for and what contribution does it make to society” (Crane, McWilliams, Matten, Moon, & Siegel, 2008: 3f.)? Therefore, the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility is not only relevant in today’s media and communication society; it also opens up new areas of research and fields of application in the area of management and communication: “corporate social responsibility, corporate citizenship, corporate philanthropy, corporate giving, corporate community involvement, community relations, community affairs, community development, corporate responsibility, global citizenship, and corporate social marketing” (Kotler & Lee, 2005: 2)—all can be considered as important topics in research and practice (cf., amongst others, Weder, 2010: 177ff.).

In academic research, CSR is either described as integrative management function or field of practice (Tengblad & Ohlsson, 2009), influenced by the local as well as the political context of an organization (Matten & Moon, 2008). The groundwork

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for an integrated approach to CSR communication can be found in the studies and concepts of

- Sustainability Communication (Michelsen & Godemann, 2005; Schönborn & Steinert, 2001; Weder & Krainer, 2011), and
- CSR Communication (Bartlett, May, & Ihlen, 2012; Ihlen et al., 2011; Karmasin & Weder, 2008a, b; May, Cheney, & Roper, 2007; Raupp, Jarolimek, & Schultz, 2010; Schmid & Tropp, 2009; Seitz, 2002).

Here, the corporate perception of responsibility, as well as the communication of responsibilities and related CSR activities, is described as divergent from other issues. Therefore, we assume a new era with a communication focus on studying CSR with an integrated approach to CSR communication. Thus, in the present article we address the question how to communicate about CSR and communicate responsibly at the same time. Thereby, the starting point is a differentiated CSR approach (Sect. 1). After that, we introduce a dual concept of CSR communication, the quadruple bottom line of CSR (Sect. 2); the theoretical reflections show that integrated CSR communication has an important organizational communication function (Sect. 3, reflection and conclusion).

2 Corporate Social Responsibility: A Brief Approach

The term Corporate Social Responsibility¹ originates in the Anglo-Saxon area (cf. Grewe & Löffler, 2005: 3), the actual CSR debate in the European area² had its initial spark with the CSR Green Paper of the European Commission in 2001 (cf. Glombitza, 2005: 63; Pinter, 2008: 193), where the regulatory framework for the social responsibility of companies is determined: “CSR is a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis” (European Commission, 2001: 8). In particular, this CSR understanding marks the transition towards the stakeholder management approach, which is one of the basic concepts of the following theoretical reflections (Karmasin & Weder, 2013). Furthermore, we go with an understanding of CSR where the social,³ economic⁴

¹A look into the history of thoughts about corporate responsibility shows that “a new emphasis on political action, public affairs, lobbying, and public relations directed toward ‘strategic philanthropy’ and ‘cause-oriented’ marketing” was already observed in the 1970s in the Anglo-American area (Cheney, Roper, & May, 2007: 5). In this phase, ‘Corporate Social Responsibility’ was so well known that the acronym CSR could stand by itself.

²Related to this see also Chap. 16 of this Handbook: “*Knowledge Integration in European CSR Communication field: an Institutional Perspective*” by Urša Golob, Nataša Verk, and Klement Podnar.

³In German, ‘social responsibility of companies’ is the most popular translation, often also simplified, or rather unidimensionally condensed, as ‘social responsibility’.

⁴“It is interesting that ‘social responsibility’ here is rather associated with social market economy system and therefore produces a given condition. In the United States, ‘Corporate Social

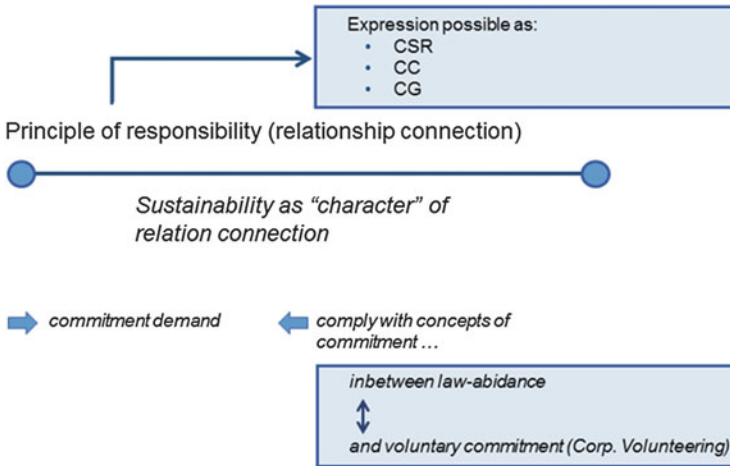


Fig. 1 The differentiation of CSR and sustainability (cf. Weder, 2012: 98). For a deeper insight into the differentiation between CSR, CG, and CC see also Chap. 3 of this Handbook: “CSR as an Economic, Ethical, and Communicative Concept” by Matthias Karmasin and Michael Litschka

and ecological⁵ responsibility jointly form the “magic triangle” (Kuhlen, 2005: 24), or the so-called Triple-Bottom-Line of corporate responsibility; here, the value of the sustainability concept, forming the basic dynamics of the CSR concept, becomes evident. For further theoretical considerations of CSR communication as well as CSR research and practice we introduce a differentiated CSR concept: First of all, CSR is distinguished from the ethical principle of sustainability, because commitment in terms of responsibility perception should be sustainable per se (cf. Habisch, Wildner, & Wenzel, 2008: 13); secondly, we differentiate CSR from a fundamental principle of social share of responsibility as well as from the demand towards corporations for a commitment which leads, or could lead, to the corresponding management concept (e.g., CSR or also Corporate Governance) (cf. Weder, 2012: 97); see Fig. 1.

Thus, there is a basic principle of responsibility, which is perceived as *relational term*; responsibility is allocated and taken between two parties, i.e., the organization and their stakeholder. Stakeholders allocate responsibilities and the organization (corporation) is expected to meet them and take responsibility in different areas (ecological, economic, social and communicative/cultural dimension). Sustainability then is the *character* of the relationship described above. In other words:

Responsibility’ (CSR) rather means active measures and practical programs to facilitate responsible actions in daily business” (Lunau, 2002: 66).

⁵Here it is pointed out that the so-called environmental science, or environmental communication is one of the essential roots of the sustainability and CSR debate in sciences and practice (Cox, 2010; Hansen, 2010, 2011; for climate communication (Boyce & Lewis, 2009; Nerlich, Koteyko, & Brown, 2010).

sustainability becomes a *character of perception of responsibility* (cf. Basu & Palazzo, 2008: 130f.; Weder, 2012: 98). This shapes the practical planning and implementation of CSR as well as CSR-related communication. The perception of responsibility and the idea of sustainability therefore cannot be regarded as isolated issues. Besides the internal perspective on the organization's goals, an external glance at the company towards the expectations they have to meet is needed. Only here the full dynamics of social responsibility are displayed: "These requests seem to come from everywhere and everyone for everything: from nonprofit organizations, public sector agencies, special interest groups, suppliers, potential investors, stockholders, politicians, even colleagues and board members" (Kotler & Lee, 2005: 1). Accordingly, the following aspects can be summarized as a new emphasis of CSR concepts:

- The integration of social and ecological aspects into business activities;
- The voluntariness and self-commitment beyond legal regulations;
- The orientation towards stakeholders;
- The creation of an added value for society and companies;
- The acceptance of responsibility (in social, ecological and economic respects).

All these aspects can be poured into organizational forms (CSR Codices, Ethics Officer, Ethics Committees, and Stakeholder Assemblies) and can be communicated both externally and internally, or perceived communicatively, which we would like to label and elaborate in chapter "CSR as Common Sense Issue? A Theoretical Exploration of Public Discourses, Common Sense and Framing of Corporate Social Responsibility" as *integrated CSR communication*. Thus, the following section discusses the stress ratio between external, relational and organizational internal corporate communication.

3 CSR Communication

Communication operates within organizational structures, just as it embeds an organization into society. Responsibility can be perceived through communication, but again, responsibilities are contoured anew by communications. Therefore, it seems to be necessary to look at CSR from different perspectives and to extract the potentials of strategic communication. In the following sections, we discuss the challenges for CSR communication and introduce the concept of the *quadruple bottom line of responsibility* to elaborate the idea of integrated CSR communication as responsible communication.

3.1 Challenges for CSR Communication

In terms of the communicative embedding of an organization into society, stakeholder relationships and stakeholder relations can be described as communicative

network structures (cf. Karmasin & Weder, 2013; Weder, 2007). If responsibility is further described as an attribution to relations and therefore as a relationship constituent, CSR communication includes the information of stakeholders, and the corresponding relevant segmented publics (cf. Weder, 2010, 2012; Weder & Karmasin, 2013). An appropriate sustainability or CSR report is essential so that “the company’s CSR activities become well-known to the stakeholders and can be evaluated by them” (Kuhlen, 2005: 59). Almost every company listed in a major stock index nowadays publishes an environmental, social or sustainability report (cf. as an example BMU, 2009; Chen & Bouvain, 2008; cf. also: <http://www.ranking-nachhaltigkeitsberichte.de>). Furthermore, CSR or sustainability platforms (as an example, see www.respect.at) play an increasing role in the area of external CSR communication. Here, the question for potentials and limits of communication management arises.

The social commitment of an organization offers communicative opportunities “to strengthen the social reputation and consequently the entire reputation of an organization” (Röttger & Schmitt, 2009: 43). For example, the development of reputation is indeed regarded as a central effectiveness of Corporate Social Responsibility (cf. Hansen & Schrader, 2005: 383); the improvement of reputation is considered as an effect of CSR strategies (Porter & Kramer, 2007: 20).⁶ Approaches beyond that are “so far only basically perceivable. Reporting has established itself the most” (Glombitza, 2005: 63). However, there is still a number of companies, which communicate their social commitment in a comparatively cautious manner; the reason given is that companies do *not* intentionally seek the public. They regard their social responsibility as a matter of course, or rather they do not want to risk being accused that their social commitment serves PR or Marketing purposes; “the suspicion [...] to present only positive aspects of the company’s corporate activities and to withhold disadvantageous facts [arises] easily in public perception” (Clausen, 2002: 80). Furthermore, the reports often lack the consistency or regularity as well as a performance review (cf. Mies, 2009: 199f.) or the object of the report is unclear (cf., amongst others, Weder, Ankowitsch, & Katsch, 2009). Another limitation of CSR communication is that corporate responsibility is notably and increasingly assigned to the executive board or management (cf. Weder & Karmasin, 2011). This is also confirmed by an extensive long-term survey of the CSR issue in German language print media (Weder, 2012). It is shown that CSR is dealt with almost exclusively in terms of individual malpractice in the media, for example in the so-called debate about management salaries and scandals around excessive salaries and bonus payments with moral malpractice at the same time. An actual discourse about dimensions or possibilities of perception hardly takes place (cf. *ibid.*). Accordingly, the question of opportunities and limits of CSR communication brings up general questions of organizational communication (cf. Theis-Berglmair, 2003; Weder, 2010) and business ethics (cf. Karmasin & Litschka,

⁶Social Responsibility as one of the six dimensions contributing to the reputation of a company is also found, for instance, in Fombrun and Riel (2003: 243f.).

2008). In a nutshell: CSR is not an issue like others; criteria such as openness, transparency, dialogue, sustainability, credibility and the corresponding integrative potential of those factors play a special role—the entrepreneurial perception of responsibility is more than pure external communication (publication of CSR ideas, concepts, implementations), it affects more areas of communication management up to the debate about informal communication processes constituting an organization (as well as the ‘non-said’, see, amongst others, Putnam & Nicotera, 2009; Schoeneborn, 2011; Weder, 2010). Today, external CSR communication in terms of reports is an established research object in management and communication studies, whereas communicative perception of responsibility inwards or a reference to communication around or about an organization (cf. *ibid.*) are currently not much discussed in the relevant strategic communication practice. This is where an integrated understanding of corporate communication comes in. The role of internal communication seems to be necessary not only for the development of CSR concepts or strategies, but also for the effectiveness of the CSR management system, as well as structurally for CSR communication. If employees are not informed about CSR measures of a company, they can neither implement the message nor transfer it outwards, so strategies become implausible (cf. Schneider, 2007: 11). Besides the responsibility in social, ecological and economic areas, there also seems to exist responsibility for communication processes and structures—*not only* in terms of communications *inside organizational structures, but also outwards*. With this in mind, the Triple-Bottom-Line of responsibility can be expanded by a *fourth dimension*, which is *communication*. A critical concept is presented in the following.

3.2 *Quadruple Bottom Line*

Stakeholder networks, stakeholder dialogues and corresponding communication channels, multi-stakeholder networks—these are only some of the terms used to describe the integration and organization of scattered resources in the context of appropriate and recent communicative strategies. These considerations are part of an economic-ethical discourse, which identifies companies’ responsibilities in a given relational patterns and establishes potentials for realization. Hence, from a communicative perspective, more basic questions arise:

1. To which extent do responsibilities emerge in the first place due to enterprises’ social embeddedness and are, consequently, related to stakeholders? And, moreover: To which extent are stakeholders involved in businesses’ perceptions of responsibility—or should they be involved at all?
2. Which role does individual-ethical behavior play in this particular kind of relationship management?

Corporate communicative responsibility (CCR), thus, is not only about the communication of taking responsibility. “Doing good and talking about it is not easy at all” (Friedrich, 2007: 18). Only professional communication makes social

responsibility a factor of added value (see Finkernagel, 2007: 64). Thus, an integrated approach to CSR communication is also about the perception of responsibility by way of communication. As a result, from a converged standpoint of CSR and organizational communication, the following two dimensions of a communicative responsibility can be derived:

1. Communication by way of taking responsibility: it is a quite common strategy, whereby coordination and use of the latter occurs in favour of society and in favour of one's own communication.
2. Communication management as responsibility management, with ethics functioning as a procedural product of organizational communication.

In this context, communication management as responsibility management is grasped both structurally and procedurally. Structurally, the communicative tackling of responsibility becomes manifested either by a reorganization of existing organization structures (decentralization of decision-making processes in support of one's own initiative and motivation, in support of information and group processes in favour of improved quality in decision-making a.s.o.), or by newly organizing and thus introducing new, additional structures (standardization of ISO norms, SA 8000, social/ecologic product labels, systems for the management of ethics or values, the establishment of ethics commissions or ombuds(women), as well as guiding codices). Procedural changes, which centre on individuals and refer particularly to executives, mean the implementation of communicative responsibility. Concretely, this might be the planning of organizational communication as stakeholder management or the establishment and stabilization of value structures, which enable or allow for self-reflective communication (feedback possibilities, training measures, gender and diversity programs a.s.o.). Thus, organizational communication is to be perceived as a structure-building and -keeping, values-integrating and culture-creating practice.

In general, information is a special way of communicating, a kind of interaction, understood as a way of social acting, for which "the behavior of individuals directly communicating with each other is respectively oriented at the other's behavior, assumed motivations and expectations, his/her desires or reactions" (Türk, 1984: 64). It is thus not only about the publicity-effective and image-building transport of the organization's status within society (in the sense of good corporate citizenship or social responsibility a.s.o.), the preservation of label values or the securing of executives' reputation, and communicating demands (in the sense of operatively conducting stakeholder dialogues, stakeholder assemblies etc.), but also about a communicative restructuring of the organization or rather the reorganization of communication. Only on the basis of these considerations does it become possible to plan responsibility management as communication management. In this sense, the previous triple bottom line of responsibility is extended towards a quadruple bottom line (see Fig. 2).

This conceptualization does not only encapsulate the fact that firms feel responsible for society at large but also, and more importantly, it captures the actual communication of responsible actions, as well as their perception on both an intra-



Fig. 2 Integrating communication: quadruple bottom line of responsibility, Karmasin and Weder (2008a, b, 2013)

personal and inter-personal level. The second question addresses the interrelationship between social and individual ethics or, more concretely, the interplay between an ethical institutionalization on an organizational level and individual-ethical behavior. From a social-ethical perspective, stakeholder approaches offer the possibility to both substantiate and describe responsibility's organization on a structural level. As such, the assumption that responsible stakeholder management involves two important claims becomes central: the first claim involves the strategic and operative design of both the production and utilization of real and social capital in cooperation with stakeholders in individual relationships (Karmasin & Weder, 2013). The second claim deals much less with the integration of stakeholder and/or shareholder interests, but rather focuses on the communicative relations with those groups instead (for instance, see concepts by Frooman, 2010; Roloff, 2008a, b; Rowley, 1997; Weder, 2007). Subsequently, organizations are to be perceived as "normative communities where members share conceptions of the organization and its environment, as well as values and norms for what should be done" (Brunsson & Olsen, 1998: 17, see also Selznick, 1949), implying a common conceptualization of responsibility and its perception respectively. If communication should be responsible, or rather sustainable itself, a reflexive (ethical) internal communication structure, which make sustainable communication processes possible, is needed. Which communicative potentials have not or have not sufficiently been taken into consideration in previous approaches and what is the potential of communication management?

3.3 *Communicative Responsibility and Integrated CSR Communication*

The organization as a communicative relationship connection comprises all communication inwards, outwards and around (or about) it. The interaction structure is not defined by its individual players, but rather by individual communication actions, which again refer to a higher connection (context) or sense (here: perception of responsibility) and therefore also to structural transformation processes in society (cf. Weder, 2007: 33, 2010). Within these network structures, values are stabilizers, “factor[s] strengthening the community”, so they are factors “for the development and consistency of a communication network” (Duval & Wagner, 2005: 241). Only through the combination of individual values in the organizational area, the interconnectedness through—and therefore self-reflexive—communication and the back-bonding to the organizational context, responsibility for them is perceived, and organizational ethics takes place. Likewise, the understanding of organizations as value and meaning-makers and as orientation-providers in society is justified from a communication sciences perspective. Accordingly, perception of responsibility is always two-dimensional:

1. Perception of responsibility as action and
2. The consciousness about and the reflection of responsibility.

Organizational communication therefore also includes the reflection about individual as well as collective action, which is structurally anchored within the organization and consequently also has to be conceptualized as ethics.

The following part outlines some of the most important instruments of entrepreneurial perception of responsibility⁷ and the potential of communicative perception of responsibility inwards and outwards. Waddock and Graves (1997) describe three categories as possible links for CSR activities: inputs (focusing on the intra-company investment in perception of responsibility), internal behaviors/processes (processes in the company, which focus on internal stakeholders, stakeholders in the company network) and outputs (focus on external stakeholders). The first two categories refer to internal business practices, whereas outputs describe the relationship structure to the corporate environment. On the basis of the schematization it becomes clear that many of those instruments are communicated outwards in terms of the image (act good and make it known), but at the same they also carry—often unused—potential of perception of communicative responsibility inside; here the intersection with the current understanding of organizational communication as (constituting) communication inwards, outwards and about organizations (cf. Weder, 2010) becomes evident and operational (Fig. 3).

⁷Fields of implementation are, for example, the UN Global Compact (2009) or also standardizations, as recently discussed for the Social Responsibility Standard ISO 26000:2010 (cf. Winistörfer, 2008: 18).

<i>Instrument/ Institutionalization (Examples)</i>	<i>Legal duty?</i>	<i>Potentials for stakeholders</i>	<i>Problems/Li mitations</i>	<i>Realizable value through integrated communication management</i>	<i>Potential of /for integrated communication management</i>	<i>Effective direction? Responsibility communication or communicative responsibility?</i>
Corporate guiding principles, mission statement, vision	No	Differentiation of the organization from competitors Inclusion of stakeholders/their values	Corporate guiding principles process: Bottom up, top down?	Participation	Discussion forums, panel discussions, stakeholder analyses, stakeholder surveys Communication of corporate guiding principles Advancement	Inwards: perception of responsibility through communication Outwards: communication of perception of responsibility
Code of Behavior, Code of Conduct	No	Action orientation, reliability of expectations Protection of ethical behavior towards the public	Lack of possible sanctions	Co-orientation, cooperation, truthfulness	Public statement (also of mistakes/malpractice) Bonus systems Personalization (of management)	Inwards: perception of responsibility through communication Outwards: communication of perception of responsibility
Ethics manager, Ethics Officer, Ombudsman for ethical issues	No	Contact person, complaints authority coordination	Dependence on persons, capacity limits	Dialogue, mutual communication, feedback, understanding	Interpersonal communication, complaints authority Lectures/discussions (internal, external – publicity!)	Inwards: perception of responsibility through communication
Ethics training/further education, employee trainings	No	Generation of values (of employees, other stakeholders) Ethics as a process Education, information	Financial resources, who takes part, how often?	Dialogue, information/education, understanding	Announcements/internal communication Knowledge management (Social Media)	Inwards: perception of responsibility through communication Outwards: communication of perception of responsibility

Fig. 3 Potentials of/for integrated communication through institutionalized forms of CSR; see Weder and Karmasin (2015)

Reporting/Sustainability, environmental, social reports, GRI (Global Reporting Ind.)	No	Information, integration Reputation (through mentioning/involvement)	Feedback? Collaboration?	Information, image creation, establishment of a brand Reputation	Reports, press releases, press conferences ("classic PR")	Outwards: communication of perception of responsibility
Risk-/ Crisis Management, special Marketing (Cause-related Marketing)	No	Impact assessment, action instead of reaction, individual handling of particular stakeholders	Loss of a unified corporate goal/image	Transparency, objectivity, honesty	Crisis communication (reaction and action/prevention) Issues management Online communication	Inwards: perception of responsibility through communication Outwards: communication of perception of responsibility

Fig. 3 (continued)

Accordingly, the particular challenge for communication management is, above all, to bring together the different efforts—the reason are the special features of CSR communication management:

- Do not rely on short-term persuasion (sustainability);
- Comprehension orientation (dialogue orientation); “‘dialogue’ does not emerge as an excellent communicator simply by talking this way. Nor would dialogue, of whatever type, become all that the organization is”; it is more about “3 constitutive activities that contribute—through the articulation of ideals, values, and horizons—to the continuous enactment of organizational reality” (Christensen, 2007: 452; cf. Weick, 1985);
- Reflection: reflection is increasingly described as a benefit of PR (cf. Jarren & Röttger, 2009; Kussin, 2009) and besides the function as a self-portrait outwards, it is also described as an *effect inwards* (cf. Hoffjann, 2009); it is about the “production and reproduction of identity” (Kussin, 2009: 118), organizational culture becomes a self-control process (cf. *ibid.*), or rather a structuration process in terms of organizational reproduction (cf. Weder, 2007, 2010);
- Negotiation strategies, argumentation offers, participative evaluation processes; “Organizational decisions are inevitably value laden ... Corporate social responsibility and value representation concerns are not about *whether* values, but *whose* and *what* values, are represented in business decisions” (Deetz, 2007: 269); “Much can be gained by focusing more on the decisional processes and responsive choices internal to organizations” (*ibid.*: 270);
- Avoidance of a rhetoric-reality-gap;
- Reactive, observant, evaluative—not vociferous;
- Consistent stakeholder orientation.

The potential and limitations of this approach to CSR communication are discussed in the following critical outlook.

4 Corporate Communicative Responsibility: A Critical Outlook

The previous illustrations have shown that external responsibility, or rather sustainability communication, represents only one facet of the idea of Corporate Communicative Responsibility. Communicative actions in terms of credibility, authenticity, integrity and, therefore, trust understand stakeholders as ‘real’ communication partners, who not only receive information from an organization, but also send it back (cf. Krulis-Randa, 1989: 45ff.); this is complemented by a dialogic concept of responsibility on a democratic foundation (cf. Ulrich, 1998, 2001). In other words: “Good communication rests not in the finding of common ground but in assuring requisite diversity and contestation coupled with the ability to invent creative options that sustain mutual commitment, difference, and mutual accomplishment of diverse goals” (Deetz, 2007: 268). With the theoretical considerations and conceptual groundwork done above we emphasize the connection between social and organizational change with the research potential in the area of organizational communication. Against the background of the three-dimensionality of organizational communication and, therefore, of different potentials for the perception of communicative responsibility, three theses for further development and elaboration (empirical study) of the outlined thoughts are offered here:

1. CSR is strategy *and* framework (constraints, i.e., corridors, limitations, etc. instead of contingency);
2. An appropriate corporate culture and with that a communication culture is a need for an integrated CSR concept;
3. Stakeholder expectations and responsible actions have to match, as well as internal and external communication activities; therefore, a concept of integrated CSR communication is a condition for the realization of CSR in an organization.

From our perspective, this indicates a stronger attention to the non-said, the issues no one is talking about (internally and externally), the omitted information, the non-intentional, non-intended actions and communications in research and practice. For organizational communication practice, integrated CSR communication implies an increase of assessment and negotiation processes, of codices, norms, structures as well as committees to negotiate ethical perspectives, expectations and actions on a management level (Ethics Board) *and* on a lower level through communicative network relations to stakeholders. Future research should analyze stakeholder expectations on the one hand (allocation of responsibility) and how (much) the organization meets the expectations (taking of responsibility) and focus on the role of communication structures and processes on both sides. Moreover, the

basic question should be further debated theoretically, if responsibility can be institutionalized or if CSR is something that is “just” realized in every communication process; this would ask for more studies on sensemaking and negotiation processes and organizational practices in general.

5 Exercise and Reflective Questions

1. Discuss the difference between CSR and Sustainability.
2. Describe major challenges for CSR communication.
3. Describe at least three potentials of/for integrated communication through institutionalized forms of CSR.
4. How does the Quadruple Bottom Line of Responsibility extend existing concepts of CSR?
5. How can the Quadruple Bottom Line help to develop a concept of integrated CSR communication?

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Part II
Managerial Aspects of Integrated CSR
Communication

Investigating Internal CSR Communication: Building a Theoretical Framework

Sigrid Bekmeier-Feuerhahn, Paula Maria Bögel, and Carina Koch

Abstract Using an integrated CSR communication perspective, this chapter examines the role of internal CSR communication in achieving a successful, participative CSR approach. The special characteristics of CSR communication in general, and the distinctive challenges of internal CSR communication in particular, are identified. This allows a focus on and discussion of the challenges of the attitude-behavior gap regarding sustainable behavior in the work context. This perspective produces findings for how best to develop effective internal CSR communication that narrows the attitude-behavior gap. First, employees' attitudes towards sustainability and the consequences for communication strategies that aim at changing these employee attitudes are discussed. Second, we investigate to what extent subjective norms and perceived behavioral control influence sustainable behavior at the workplace, in addition to the influence of attitudes toward sustainability and CSR. These discussions outline that every company has its own CSR specific environment and CSR specific organizational conditions for developing an effective, internal CSR approach. This chapter, however, identifies important antecedents and characteristics, which should be taken into consideration for an effective, internal CSR communication.

1 Introduction

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is encouraged as a strategic approach for companies to promote sustainability and to assume companies' economic, social and ecological responsibilities (Crane, Matten, & Spence, 2008; Muster, 2011). The success of CSR at a company depends, among other things, on stakeholder involvement or endorsement of the CSR program. Stakeholders' perceptions and evaluation of the company's CSR program are significantly influenced by the company's communication regarding CSR. CSR communication constructs CSR meanings (Ihlen, May, & Bartlett, 2014) and, furthermore, effective CSR communication is capable of constituting its own institutionalization in the company (Schultz &

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Wehmeier, 2010). Thus, a CSR program can only be as successful as its communication will be.

This chapter examines the special characteristics of CSR communication in general, and the distinctive challenges of internal CSR communication in particular. An inside-out approach will be discussed, emphasizing the importance of an integrated communicative approach. Furthermore, the chapter discusses how employees' attitudes toward CSR influence the success of promoting sustainable behavior at work. These insights indicate that an attitude-behavior gap is often a problem for CSR and leads to the question of what influences employees to behave sustainably, or not. Our findings regarding this question offer information that is helpful for developing an effective internal CSR strategy. Practical recommendations will be given.

2 Characteristics of CSR Communication

Outlining the challenges of effective CSR communication is a reasonable approach to describing its special characteristics. CSR communication can be characterized as a (1) process-orientated, (2) target-group-specific, (3) dialogical, (4) contextually-dependent and (5) integrated discourse.

- (1) CSR is a strategic approach that generates an ongoing process. In line with this, CSR communication requires a process view for producing awareness, understanding and involvement from stakeholders (Golob et al., 2013; Morsing, Schultz, & Nielsen, 2008). Conversely, a purely functional CSR perspective and approach to communication cannot be sufficient to capture the CSR process and its inherent dynamics.
- (2) & (3) Stakeholder theory (Freeman, 2004) shows that CSR communication needs to be addressed in a stakeholder-specific manner. Every stakeholder group has their own concerns, issues and understandings regarding CSR, which every company should identify before sending specific CSR messages. Stakeholder dialogues are a recommended approach to identifying stakeholder concerns and expectations for CSR and these should be included in the ongoing development of the CSR strategy. Thus, such a two-way exchange of perspectives (Schultz & Wehmeier, 2010, p. 10), constitutes a shared CSR understanding and is, therefore, a powerful communication approach. But, in fact, it is something more: it should be characteristic of CSR communication.
- (4) Due to public interest in CSR, almost every company is being confronted with an ever more "educated body of stakeholders" (Tench, Sun, & Jones, 2014, p. 4). This growing awareness and knowledge about the social and ecological responsibilities of companies, combined with greatly increased media transparency, leads to additional contextual factors that influence the CSR communication process. These factors include political, cultural, legal, technological and

industrial structures (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2010; O’Riordan & Fairbrass, 2008).

The characteristics of CSR communication presented above determine the communicative content and channels appropriate for specific stakeholders. Thus, if a company is attentive to these characteristics, its CSR communication will be better capable of gaining legitimacy (Freeman, 2004), and of increasing its attractiveness to employees (Sen, Bhattacharya, & Korschun, 2006), of strengthening employees’ identification with the company (Kim, Lee, Lee, & Kim, 2010) and their general satisfaction (Bauman & Skitka, 2012), of fostering stakeholders’ loyalty and commitment (Bhattacharya, Korschun, & Sen, 2009; Du et al., 2010; Farooq, Payaud, Merunka, & Valette-Florence, 2014), and of minimizing stakeholders’ skepticism.

- (5) The possible outcomes of successful CSR communication mentioned in the previous paragraph refer to both external and internal stakeholders. However, the borders of this distinction may be fuzzy, as emphasized by Cheney and Christensen (2001, p. 213). Employees, paradigmatic internal stakeholders, also consume external CSR communications, while internal e-mail is easily passed on to external stakeholders. Thus, there can be a continuous exchange process between internal and external stakeholders, and this necessitates an integrated approach to CSR management in general, and an integrated approach to CSR communication in particular. Elving (2013, p. 13) points out that “Integrated CSR is based at all levels of an organization, and it is aimed at all stakeholders and parts of all policies of the organization, which include a series of different CSR domains.” In line with that, an integrated CSR communication should encompass all stakeholders of an organizations, with their special interests and issues. Furthermore, an integrated CSR approach requires reciprocal coordination of all communicative channels and contents in terms of time settings and formal structures for realizing effective CSR communication.

In line with this need for integrated CSR approaches, several researchers, such as Morsing et al. (2008), consider an inside-out approach as appropriate to implementing effective CSR communication, rather than discussing internal versus external CSR communication (Bolton, Kim, & O’Gorman, 2011). Such a process-oriented perspective leads to the positioning of internal CSR communication as the strategic starting point for the overall CSR communication process, with employees likewise understood to be key stakeholders (see Clarkson, 1995; Nielsen & Thomsen, 2009). The characteristics of internal CSR communication, now conceptualized as crucial to CSR overall, will be discussed in the following section.

3 Characteristics of Internal CSR Communication

Employees and their influential role in companies' CSR strategies and CSR communication have recently become an important focus in the CSR research field. Most of the current research projects on internal CSR have focused on the possible outcomes of CSR for either employees or the company (Uusi-Rauva & Nurkka, 2010; Vlachos, Panagopoulos, & Rapp, 2014, p. 991). These outcomes include factors such as organizational commitment (Dhanesh, 2012), employee identification with the company and job satisfaction (Bhattacharya, Korschun, & Sen, 2009). In contrast to such linear, instrumental and functionalistic approaches (Golob et al., 2013), we discuss internal CSR communication from a process perspective, while emphasizing its special characteristics, the communicative strategies it requires, and its distinctive participative approaches. The purpose of this work is to schematically describe the internal CSR process.

Employees constitute a key but diverse group of stakeholders. Internal CSR communication should be aware of the challenges this diversity entails, and should always be cognizant that employees are simultaneously members of the company, members of certain work units. Furthermore, individuals are, also, consumers, often of their own company's products, and also have socially influenced attitudes. Every internal CSR communication process has to face this challenge, which requires an integrated communication strategy. Thus, internal CSR communication can also be described with the characteristics that were attributed to general CSR communication in Chapter "CSR as Common Sense Issue? A Theoretical Exploration of Public Discourses, Common Sense and Framing of Corporate Social Responsibility". On the other hand, internal CSR communication has specific characteristics that arise from the key role employees have as stakeholders and from influential contextual organizational factors. Its *self-referential, involving, and participative* nature, in particular, will be discussed in the following.

As the inside-out approach describes, CSR communication discourse begins with a company's employees, their interests, and their expectations, and it is dependent on the efficiency of its dialogical approach, its ability to involve employees, and gain their participation, and on contextual organizational factors. Therefore, internal CSR can be understood "as a dynamic internal process relying on employee involvement in its development and implementation." (Chen & Hung-Baesecke, 2014, p. 210).

Bolton et al. (2011) understand internal CSR "as an emergent organizational process that places the employee at its center." (p. 61). Based on this understanding, they cluster the whole process into three stages of development phases, which differ in the level of employee involvement attained. These are, namely, the initiation, implementation and maturation process phases. Although these three phases can be recognized, the process is not linear; rather, there is often feedback between the stages, as well as different rates of both advance, and sometimes retreat. Nevertheless, the phased nature of internal CSR communication makes a phase-specific approach appropriate. This, then, requires an ongoing analysis of the CSR

communication process (Chen & Hung-Baesecke, 2014, p. 210; Morsing et al., 2008, p. 102). The observation needs for this ongoing analysis can be challenging to acquire as the phases of the process are emergent, rather than being distinct and linear steps. The initiation stage primarily requires information that is specific both to the company and to the employee(s), because in this phase it is important that employees understand why the company is implementing a CSR strategy. It is useful at this stage to consider, Morsing & Schultz's (2006) terms, a stakeholder information strategy and also, roughly, a stakeholder response strategy. The stakeholder information strategy is characterized by its one-way communication approach, which aims to basically inform stakeholders about the company's CSR efforts. The stakeholder response strategy requests, in addition, the responses of stakeholders but is described as two-way asymmetric, because the emphasis is still primarily on giving them information rather than reacting to their responses. Nonetheless, this strategy emphasizes the integration of stakeholders' responses and concerns compared to the single focus of the stakeholder information strategy on target-groups specifically informing them (Morsing & Schultz, 2006, pp. 326–328). A successful implementation of CSR requires the communication process to reach the third phase, the maturation phase; in other words, successful CSR communication always ultimately requires mutual understanding between employees' CSR expectations and the company's intention to promote CSR. Thus, a fully proactive dialog and therefore, a properly symmetric stakeholder involvement strategy should be realized. "Therefore, the stakeholder involvement strategy suggests that the companies engage frequently and systematically in dialogue with their stakeholders in order to explore mutually beneficial action—assuming that both parties involved in the dialogue are willing to change." (Morsing & Schultz, 2006, p. 328).

When thinking about employees' involvement in CSR communication, participation will appear as a relational approach to promote involvement. Furthermore, the dialogical, two-way, symmetric stakeholder involvement strategy is characterized by participative structures (Morsing & Schultz, 2006, p. 326). In line with these insights, the CSR literature highlights participation as a key approach to CSR success (e.g., Chen & Hung-Baesecke, 2014; Morsing & Schultz, 2006). This in turn reveals another challenge of internal CSR communication: motivating employees to participate in CSR by means of CSR communication. Thus, CSR communication relates to itself for motivating employees to participate: every employee receives information about the CSR strategy and processes this information. Throughout this processing, employees may communicate and talk about it with others. Employees' CSR processing, however, can be understood as a form of sensemaking that refers solely to the employees' own elaboration process. Thus, every communication processing implies a form of self-referencing; however, it should be outlined as a specific characteristic of an internal, participative CSR communication. Furthermore, this form of sensemaking may increase employees' commitment to company's CSR approach and thus, influences the decision to participate in either a cognitive or behavioral manner in the CSR process.

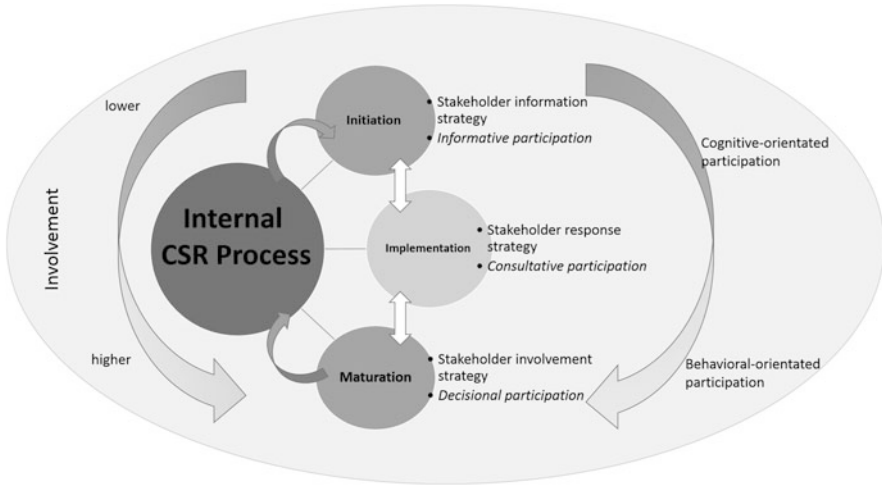


Fig. 1 The internal CSR process

In accordance with the three CSR stages already mentioned (initiation, implementation and maturation) and the three communication strategies (stakeholder information strategy, stakeholder response strategy and stakeholder involvement strategy), the three different participation levels identified by Green and Hunton-Clarke (2003) seem to be appropriate to complete a model that promises to fully depict the internal CSR process (see Fig. 1). Green and Hunton-Clarke (2003) analyzed multiple approaches to participation and identified these three levels of participation for CSR in an organizational context. These three stages are the informative, consultative and decisional participation levels, and lead to the following model, which shows how cyclical and emergent thinking is vital among those involved in CSR to ensure its success. The overlap between the different stages constantly shifts, as do the appropriate communicative and participative approaches. The figure (Fig. 1) shows an internal cognitive CSR process, its different CSR communication strategies, and their particular participative characteristics.

The overall internal CSR process applies to a mutual reinforcing understanding of participation: on the one hand, a cognitive participation in the CSR process, and, on the other hand, behavioral forms of participation.

This schematic overview of the internal CSR process (Fig. 1) represents a cognitive CSR elaboration process that leads to several forms of behavior. It can be assumed that, throughout the three stages, the processing depth and employees' involvement increase. For example, during the first stage, employees receive information about the CSR strategy. The second stage, the implementation phase, allows employees to participate in special communication about the company's upcoming CSR projects, which necessitates a greater depth of CSR information processing than previously required.

Based on these cognitive processes, employees' participation may take behavioral forms, e.g., communicating with others about the CSR strategy (*implementation stage*) or participating actively in a CSR project (*maturation stage*).

These distinct forms of participation could lead to different outcomes, so considering their differences is important. Equally important is the fact that such distinct forms of participation are likely to be provoked and influenced by different antecedents, including factors such as a company's structure or an employee's attitudes. Therefore, studying these antecedents to obtain a perspective on the different types of participation, and thus on the different possible CSR outcomes, is very important. However, heretofore, the distinction between cognitive and behavioral participation in the CSR process has not been discussed in the literature.

The model of the internal CSR processes that has just been developed, outlines, then, the importance of discussing the antecedents of effective internal CSR processes and communication. Few studies (e.g., Mattila & Hanks, 2012; Pail e & Mej a-Morelos, 2014; Slack, Corlett, & Morris, 2015) have emphasized the possible antecedents of employees' reactions to CSR. In this research, the impact of employee's attitudes on their responses to CSR approaches has, however, been indicated (Rodrigo & Arenas, 2007; Slack et al., 2015; Vlachos et al., 2014). In light of such results, we examine employee attitudes to sustainability in general and to CSR in particular and we show how the attitude-behavior gap is a common phenomenon and describe its specific characteristics when it appears in the workplace.

4 Employees' Attitudes Towards CSR

Recent market research studies show that most stakeholders in general feel that sustainability is of high importance, and this move towards sustainable consciousness is an ongoing, upward trend (Nielsen, 2013). In terms of end consumers, Nielsen, a leading global information and measurement company, concludes "You'd be hard-pressed to find a consumer who said he or she didn't care about the environment, or extreme poverty around the world" (Nielsen, 2014, p. 4). A demonstration that CSR is relevant for employees is that studies have found that job applicants take CSR into account as a criterion when searching for a job (Michailides & Lipsett, 2013). Nielsen's third annual global online survey on CSR supports the same concern for CSR among employees, showing that around two-thirds (67 %) of respondents state that they would prefer to work for socially responsible companies (Nielsen, 2014).

Attitudes towards sustainability in general, and CSR in particular, are, however, not always positive. Environmental skeptics, for example, deny the reality of environmental problems and thus reject environmental protection projects. Environmental skepticism has been, so far, a phenomenon that is particular to the US, even if Jacques, Dunlap, and Freeman (2008) have proposed that this skepticism is "diffusing abroad". In any case, it has already become evident that neither all

consumers nor all employees care about CSR. The results of Nielsen's global survey on CSR that show 67 % of employees care about social responsibility reveals at the very same time that 23 % of respondents do not prioritize social responsibility when seeking employment. Slack et al. (2015, p. 540) found, in a case study of a large UK energy company, that some employees had little or no interest in CSR, and some even expressed very negative attitudes towards CSR. Reasons behind such attitudes lie, besides negative opinions about sustainability in general, in the view of some employees that CSR will not contribute to sustainability in general or that particular CSR activities are not credible.

Plank (2011) finds that negative attitudes of employees towards sustainability issues, e.g., climate change, are a barrier to sustainable behavior at work. In his study (p. 52), one of the interviewees stated, concerning climate change and sustainability, "I don't see it as something that's at the forefront of my mind on a daily basis. I don't see it as being that important or something for me to do when I've got a million other things going on." Given testimonies like this, which researchers have found quite broadly, it can be assumed that negative attitudes towards sustainability in general and/or CSR in particular might well be a barrier to employees' participation in CSR.

5 The Attitude-Behavior Gap

Even if stakeholders' attitudes towards sustainability are positive, their actual behavior is often not in line with their expressed attitudes. For example, consumers may be concerned about environmental issues, but still "struggle to translate this concern into green purchases" (Young, Hwang, McDonald, & Oates, 2010, p. 22). In terms of awareness of and knowledge about CSR, empirical research shows a very low level of awareness about companies' CSR activities among consumers, despite these consumers' positive attitudes towards sustainability in general and towards CSR in particular, although not all consumers are very familiar with the latter idea. For example, in a study by Ingenhoff and Sommer (2011), only a third of respondents were familiar with the term CSR. Just 24 % of participants who knew the meaning of CSR were able to name a concrete CSR activity undertaken by the well-known financial and pharmaceutical companies mentioned in the survey. Likewise, Bekmeier-Feuerhahn and Bögel (2013) found that only 9 % of participants in their study were able to name a CSR activity of the popular fashion brand H&M unaided. Even with prompting (aided recall), and despite H&M's intensive CSR communication, nearly one-third of the participants did not report prior knowledge of any of the CSR activities suggested to them. Slack et al. (2015) found in their case study that the same holds true for employees' knowledge about the CSR activities of their own companies. In their interviews, no employees showed a detailed knowledge of their company's CSR policy, even if the company had a "long-established organizational CSR policy and strategy".

In studies of the participation of stakeholders in sustainability in general, and CSR in particular, results are likewise often quite disappointing. Concerning, for example, sustainable consumption, there is an ongoing positive increase in sales rates for sustainable products (Nielsen, 2014); but at the same time, these sales figures remain very small overall. In Germany, organic food represents only 3.9 % of the overall food retail market. In the EU, organic food has an even lower market impact, at 2 % of food sales. In the work context, the situation seems to be even worse than in the private sphere. For example, McDonald (2011) found that even people who recycle their waste at home often do not recycle at the workplace: “although some 95 % of respondents recycled glass at home, their workplace recycling is comparatively low at just under 28 %.” (McDonald, 2011, p.61).

The difference between the often positive attitudes towards sustainability in general and CSR in particular and the actual behavior of people has been referred to as the “attitude-behavior gap” (De Pelsmacker, Driesen, & Rayp, 2005; Ingenhoff & Sommer, 2011; Young et al., 2010).

6 Barriers to Sustainable Behavior: The Specific Case of Sustainable Behavior at the Workplace

The question arises of what causes this attitude-behavior gap in sustainable behavior. Concerning sustainable consumption, this question has gained intensive research interest and studies have identified various barriers to sustainable behavior. For example, Young et al. (2010) interviewed green consumers on their recent purchases of technology products and found that the lack of available information was a primary barrier to green purchasing. The role of information has been confirmed in further studies as being a major barrier to sustainable consumption (De Pelsmacker et al., 2005). Furthermore, lack of time has also been identified as a considerable barrier (Young et al., 2010). In addition, other research shows that sustainability is often seen as merely an add-on benefit for stakeholders. Thus, they are not willing to make concessions regarding other non-green purchase criteria for the sake of sustainability. As the Nielsen (2014, p. 13) report on CSR states, “most consumers are not willing to make efficacy or taste trade-offs as they aspire to go green”. A study on fair-trade coffee confirms this. The authors of this study identify a small group of “fair-trade lovers” for whom the Fair-Trade label is in fact the most salient purchase criterion. In contrast, however, the much larger group of “fair-trade likers”, who also have significantly positive attitudes towards buying fair-trade coffee, still attach a great deal of importance to other purchase criteria, such as company brand or flavor (De Pelsmacker et al., 2005).

Participation in the work context can be seen as a special case of sustainable behavior in general. Studies that examine sustainable behavior at work, e.g., recycling, have been, however, less common than studies examining the same phenomena in the private sphere (Davis & Challenger, 2009; McDonald, 2011).

An additional limitation in the current research is that existing studies tend to focus on forms of behavioral participation, for example sustainable behavior such as recycling behavior. Less attention has been devoted to studying barriers and facilitators of decisional forms of CSR participation, e.g., regarding the research question of which CSR projects are discussed among employees and which projects remain unknown to them. Overall, and notwithstanding the importance of employee participation, Plank (2011) highlights that there is a “distinct gap in research examining the environmental impact of people at work.” In terms of CSR research, employees have, likewise, seldom been the focus of research (Slack et al., 2015).

Although there are very few results on employee CSR in the work context, some findings on barriers to sustainable behavior at the individual level can be transferred to this context. For example, Plank (2011) found that a lack of knowledge is a salient barrier to acting in a sustainable way in the work environment just as in other environments. Scholars tend to agree, nevertheless, that specific research is needed that examines the determinants of sustainable behavior at the workplace. In particular, it has been suggested that besides the personal traits of individual employees, company characteristics also influence social orientation in general and CSR orientation in particular (Michailides & Lipsett, 2013; Marz, Powers, & Queisser, 2003). It has been suggested that the company characteristics with the most influence in this regard include factors at the organizational level and at the supervisor level (Paillé & Mejía-Morelos, 2014). Results from some early studies on these proposals reveal insights into these company characteristics, which will be presented in the following paragraphs.

In terms of determinants concerning the organizational level, previous studies especially suggest that social norms influence pro-environmental behavior at the workplace (Steg & Vlek, 2009). Likewise, in terms of sustainable behavior at the workplace more generally, perceived organizational support in general (i.e., support offered to employees regarding any aspect of their work) and support for behaving in a sustainable way, in particular, have both been shown to influence employees' willingness to engage in such sustainable behavior (Paillé & Mejía-Morelos, 2014). In terms of perceived social norms, group values also seem to play a major role. In a study on the environmental behavior of staff at a particular university, one of the interviewees stated: “We have our staff department meetings every month or every 6 weeks. We never had a talk about this sort of thing” (Plank, 2011, p. 53). Similarly, Slack et al. (2015) found that the embeddedness of CSR and its visibility in the company are important factors for employees' CSR engagement. Other determinants of employees' willingness are the perceived fit between an employee's own values and their company's communicated CSR values (Michailides & Lipsett, 2013, p. 299; Slack et al., 2015), as well as the employee's perceived level of control over their own sustainable behavior (Davis & Challenger, 2009; Plank, 2011). An employee's lack of control has been defined by Plank (2011, p. 53) as “the perception that the individual is unable to change the situation.” This type of perception might arise, on the one hand, due to an actual lack of control, e.g., the fact that the company provides no recycling facilities, or, on the other hand, due to the employee's lack of knowledge (e.g., about the presence or location of

recycling facilities at the workplace), a lack of knowledge that results in a perceived lack of control. Concerning the impact of lack of control, McDonald (2011) shows that the lower rate of glass recycling in the work context, by contrast to recycling behavior at home, is in part due to the (at least) perceived lack of recycling facilities for glass at the workplace. The lack of control, however, also stems from communication issues, particularly if the lack of control is only due to a lack of knowledge. Thus, CSR communication could contribute to improving participation by providing information (e.g., on the presence and location of recycling facilities).

Regarding these findings, it should be noted that the majority of studies dealing with sustainable behavior at the workplace concentrate on waste reduction (Davis & Challenger, 2009), with their main research aim being to identify barriers and facilitators of employee recycling behavior. Utilizing the three participation levels in the model by Green & Hunton-Clarke (2003), as well as distinguishing the different forms of CSR participation (decisional and behavioral participation), it is clear that this research on only one particular sustainable behavior covers a tiny fraction of the actual range of participation forms. Even concerning the specific topic of waste recycling, further steps that could be investigated would, for example, include feedback loops on the recycling options (consultative participation), as well as the active involvement of employees in the development of actions to improve waste recycling (decisional participation). Thus, despite the insights that the early studies mentioned above reveal, the question remains how employees' participation in sustainable behavior at different levels can be improved.

7 Improving Employee Participation: The Role of Communication

In the following section, we will outline two main ways to improve employees' participation in CSR. Steg and Vlek (2009, p. 313) have described two routes to behavioral change as follows:

When behaviour is strongly related to attitudes, one can try to promote attitude changes towards particular pro-environmental behaviour. When contextual factors inhibit particular behaviours, one can try to remove those barriers.

Accordingly, we will first analyze important aspects of the attitude construct in terms of CSR and the potential results of communication strategies that aim at changing attitudes within this context. Second, we will concentrate on how actual sustainable behavior can be achieved in the work context. We will particularly focus on the question of which determinants, besides the employees' attitude toward sustainability and CSR, influence their sustainable behavior at the workplace.

7.1 *Attitudes and Attitude Change*

Positive attitudes among employees towards sustainability in general and a desired sustainable behavior in particular, e.g., recycling behavior, are a necessary precondition for successful interventions that change behavior (Plank, 2011). As outlined above, employees' attitudes towards sustainability and different sustainable behavior may differ greatly. Thus, it is first of all important for companies to develop an understanding of the attitudes of their employees. In doing this, it is important to differentiate between attitudes towards a general target (e.g., sustainability) and attitudes towards specific behavior with respect to the target (e.g., waste recycling in the work context). If the aim is to change a concrete behavior (e.g., glass recycling at work) it is better to concentrate on the specific behavior-focused attitude, as specific attitudes have been shown to be a better predictor of specific behavior than general attitudes (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Furthermore, companies should not only try to understand if employees' attitudes towards specific sustainable behavior are positive or negative, but should also try to get a deeper understanding of the development of these attitudes, as well as how strong they are, and the resulting commitment of employees to the attitude. This background information is of particular importance regarding communication strategies for attitude change. For example, it is important to note if employees have already developed a stable attitude or if, on the other hand, no particular attitude has yet been established. The level to which employees are involved with the relevant attitude is of particular importance, in the first place, with regard to the attitude-behavior relationship: if involvement is high, people are more likely to act according to their attitudes (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). In the second place, employee involvement with an attitude is important when developing different communication strategies for attitude change.

One persuasion theory that takes into account an adaptive model of communication is the elaboration likelihood model (ELM, Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; cf. for a current review Petty, Briñol, & Priester, 2009). The ELM proposes that two variables essentially determine the individual's manner of information processing and, thereby, the effect of the persuasion process; these variables are the motivation of people (involvement, need for cognition) to process information and the their ability to do so (comprehensibility of the message, domain knowledge level and general cognitive ability, degree of distraction). If people's ability and motivation is high and information is processed via the central route, then rational, information-based communication is most effective. In contrast, if information is processed via the peripheral route, then affectively-based cues (such as likeable music), heuristic cues (such as a credible source), the mere number of arguments or potential rewards are most effective. In terms of the application of this general insight to the context of CSR, previous studies on CSR communication have confirmed that stakeholders with high or low involvements differ in their processing of CSR communication and, as a result, display different needs for CSR communication, e.g., regarding their need for detailed information. Stakeholders with high CSR involvement have

been found to demand more detailed information about the CSR activities than stakeholders with a low level of involvement (Bögel, 2015). It, thus, seems likely that the ELM could provide helpful guidance for the development of communication strategies that aim to change employees' attitudes towards sustainable behavior.

Attitude change via the central route is, therefore, in general to be preferred, because the attitude changes resulting from this approach have been found to be more stable and predictive of behavior (Petty et al., 2009). However, due to employees' lack of knowledge concerning sustainability and/or lack of motivation this might often not be possible, as discussed above. Especially because central attitude change is not always feasible, it is crucial to be aware that peripheral attitude change can, in fact, also be a way to achieve stable changes of attitude and behavior. For employees not yet having developed a particular (ingrained) attitude towards the desired behavior, peripheral cues, such as responding to a supervisor as a role model, for example waste recycling, might lead to an initial imitation of (sustainable) behavior. If positive reinforcement is then given, e.g., positive feedback from the supervisor, the employee might repeat the behavior. Then, after repeating it a number of times, the employee infers his or her (rewarded) attitude is grounded in the behavior he or she performed in the past. This approach to forming attitudes is consistent with Bem's self-perception theory (cf. Jackson, 2005). However, that is not to say that if the attitudes formed peripherally evolve sufficiently, they could, in turn, become the basis of communication via the often preferred central route.

7.2 From Attitude to Behavior

As shown above, attitudes not only influence the processing of information, but also influence the intention to demonstrate a certain behavior. The attitude-behavior gap indicates, however, that identifying (or creating) positive attitudes is not alone sufficient in determining behavior. There are other variables that should also be considered for creating behavior and for developing an effective CSR communication strategy.

The theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991, 2011) is not limited to attitudes as influencing factors in employees' decisions to behave sustainably or not. TPB indeed posits *attitudes* towards a certain behavior as relevant factors, but also adds *subjective norms* and *perceived behavioral control* as additional influencing variables.

The importance of attitudes towards CSR has already been discussed. Turning to subjective norms, these influence behavioral decisions because people often rely on the beliefs and judgments of others in their decision regarding a requested behavior. These subjective norms are constituted by the subject's normative beliefs and cultural values as expressed in the given situation. In particular, and in a CSR context, employees will look to others whom they see as trustworthy or informed as

a model of how these general norms might be active in the given situation. A CSR process must take account of such subjective norms.

The TPB additionally posits perceived behavioral control as another important variable in a person's decision process. This variable focuses on self-perceived ability to act in a particular way. In the CSR context, this is the employee's self-perceived ability to perform a requested sustainable behavior. It is important to understand, then, how the employee perceives their own ability to behave sustainably and, furthermore, how the employee perceives the organizational support for improving the behavioral ability. Such insights are important for creating a target-group-specific, participative and self-referential internal CSR communication process that promotes employee involvement in the CSR approach.

These three related variables—*attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control*—determine the *intention* of employees to act in a sustainable manner or not. Intention represents the main variable for predicting a certain behavior. Internal CSR communication has to consider and integrate all the mentioned variables, as these determine the content and channels of the specific CSR communication strategy. Thus, the internal CSR communication process mentioned in Chapter “CSR as Economic, Ethical, and Communicative Concept”, with its three phases and different communication strategies, should look to identify and then influence attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and intentions towards specific sustainable behavior at work.

- During the initiation phase, the stakeholder information strategy informs employees about the company's CSR goals and intentions.
- The implementation phase builds upon the information conveyed in the first phase, and works to develop a CSR-specific understanding and CSR-specific attitudes in employees. Employees may enter into an intercommunication with their company and through this exchange, the company can gain insights on employees' CSR attitudes.
- During the next and final phase of an internal CSR process, the maturation phase, a full stakeholder involvement strategy is recommended. This third stage requires, therefore, genuine two-way communication and participation, whereby the company talks to the employees and their voices may be heard, making a difference to the nature of the CSR program.

It, thus, occurs that the earlier two phases focus on the company's communication about their own CSR strategy, informing employees about the intention and goals of the CSR approach, and how they may be achieved. In the third stage, however, employees are actively engaged in developing the strategy themselves. Therefore, the CSR program at this stage is formed by both, company and employees, emphasizing employees' cognitive and behavioral engagement, often over a long period.

This complex organizational framing leads to a discussion of the extent to which organizational structures influence employees' behavior in addition to the three aforementioned variables of TPB. Thus, further research is required and

organizational CSR communication will particularly benefit from these insights and discussions.

8 Conclusion and Suggestions for Future Research

In this chapter, we have outlined the particular relevance of internal CSR communication for an integrated communication approach. Within a communicative inside-out framework, internal CSR communication is the starting point for an integrated CSR communication strategy and is, therefore of crucial importance for a company's external image. This approach stresses that employees are highly relevant, both as internal CSR stakeholders and as external consumers. Furthermore, if the company places trust in its employees and communicates its CSR to them, they will act as ambassadors FOR the company, strengthening its external image and reputation (Morsing et al., 2008, pp. 103–105). Likewise, effective internal CSR communication to current employees can percolate to prospective employees, thus becoming positively relevant in the war-of-talents, even as it fosters the relationship between employees and the company overall (Bhattacharya et al., 2009).

We have, in this chapter, however, also highlighted the particular challenges of internal CSR communication. Neither employees' attitudes towards sustainability in general and CSR in particular, nor their actual sustainability behavior are as positive as companies wish them to be. Even if employees' CSR attitudes are positive, their actual behavior is often not in line with their stated attitudes. To address this problem, we first discussed ELM-based approaches to changing existing attitudes, which can help employee participation as part of internal CSR communication. Attitude-change possibilities via the central route—using rational, information-based CSR communication—or the peripheral route, using role models, were presented. The attitude-behavior-gap means that attitude change alone is not enough, so we also discussed which additional factors are important to achieve active participation in CSR by employees. Utilizing TPB, we pointed to the particular importance of subjective norms and perceived behavioral control. We then highlighted the role internal CSR communication can play in influencing these two factors, e.g., the way in which information strategies can improve the perceived level of control.

Overall, this chapter shows that the integration of social-psychological theories such as the ELM and the TPB into the field of CSR communication offers interesting potential for a more theoretical approach to CSR research and (hopefully) as a result, for the successful design of both particular communication strategies and general intervention strategies that are adapted to the specific needs of the employees. Several lines for further research can be developed from this approach. First, previous research on the application of the ELM to CSR communication has shown that the CSR communication context has specific characteristics that need to be considered. One example of such a characteristic would be the high

level of skepticism that many consumers have for CSR communication directed towards them (Du et al., 2010; Pomeroy & Johnson, 2009), which results in high demand among consumers for facts and statistics as well as certifications and audits to demonstrate the trustworthiness of companies. Earlier thinking on CSR would have expected such demands for detailed information only from stakeholders with high motivation and capability levels (Bögel, 2015). Thus, further research on the application of the ELM to CSR communication is needed, particularly in the as yet under-researched field of internal CSR communication. Likewise, we have stressed the importance of further research into TPB in the specific CSR-organizational environment. For example, previous studies have shown that the contributions of each of the three factors, attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control, vary depending on the context in which TPB is applied (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). Further research should, thus, examine the relative contributions of these factors with respect to different sustainable behavior, e.g., glass recycling, in the work context. The insights such research would generate would support more specific and therefore, more effective internal CSR communication programs. If, for example, it turns out that employees' attitudes towards CSR are central in determining their participation in CSR, interventions should aim at achieving positive attitudes in employees towards CSR. If, instead, subjective norms, e.g., behavior of supervisors and their anticipated attitudes toward CSR, turn out to be of particular importance, intervention programs should focus on training supervisors.

An internal, participative CSR approach is an especially effective starting point for an integrated CSR communication strategy, contributing to the success of a company's CSR approach. This chapter has outlined the characteristics of integrated CSR communication in general (process-orientated, target-group-specific, dialogical, context-dependent) and of internal CSR communication in particular (self-referential, involving, and participative). It is essential to take these into consideration when developing a company's integrated CSR communication strategy.

9 Exercise and Reflective Questions

1. What are the characteristics of CSR communication in general? Which additional characteristics are particularly relevant for internal CSR communication?
2. What different forms of participation are discussed in the internal CSR process?
3. How might the three variables mentioned in the Theory of Planned Behavior influence employees' recycling behavior at the workplace, e.g., glass recycling?
4. How could these three variables be influenced through internal CSR communication?

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Organizing CSR Communication: Challenges for Integrated CSR Communication from a PR and Organizational Communication Perspective

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Abstract In today's interconnected society, organizations are challenged by new "social" communication structures and internal processes of decision making, communication and sensemaking; accordingly, process and practice approaches to organizational communication as well as public relations and stakeholder management are constantly changing. In parallel, organizations are stimulated to rethink their values as corporate citizen and meet their social responsibility. Assuming that every organization related interaction can be described as process of organizational self-structuring and that, furthermore, every interaction in an organization and between organizations is operated communicatively, in this paper we state that every responsibility is allocated and taken communicatively. Inspired by core values like trust, transparency and dialogue, communication management has to be refined. At the intersection of CSR and Communication theory a new concept of integrated CSR communication arises, fueled by PR theory as well as concepts of managing responsibility. These complementarities of theoretical concepts and practical implications are discussed in this chapter.

1 Growing Relevance of CSR and CSR Communication

With the growing public discussion about sustainability, social responsibility became one of the major challenges of corporate communication. More recently, corporate social responsibility seems to be a "must have" in the corporate strategy and corporate communication of multinational enterprises. However, even some of the established corporations have problems integrating responsibility actions in their business and management strategy and are often blamed for greenwashing.

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The communication of sustainability related activities and CSR strategies and projects is even more complex. Here, Public Relations seems to be the link between business and responsible behavior, on an institutional level as well as in every communication process in an organization and between the organization and its publics. Looking at organizations' everyday practice, mostly the PR department is responsible for CSR strategies and activities; besides, Public Relations implies communicating basic values, new issues like green energy, resource management plans etc. and taking responsibility in relation to the stakeholders as well as in internal processes of decision and sensemaking.

Beyond, the increasing amount of literature on CSR communication shows the potential as well as the challenges and limitations to communicate CSR. Here, mostly scholars with a background in PR and/or organizational communication contribute with their reflections on PR functions, communicative responsibilities and PR ethics. In fact, CSR communication is mostly worked out and discussed in the field of public relations and organizational communication (Weder, 2010, p. 177ff.). Initial examinations with communication-strategic questions are found in this context with regard to Sustainability Communication (Michelsen & Godemann, 2005; Schönborn & Steinert, 2001; Weder & Krainer, 2011) or CSR (Bartlett, May, & Ihlen, 2012; Ihlen, Bartlett, & May, 2011; Karmasin & Weder, 2008, 2009; May, Cheney, & Roper, 2007; Raupp, Jarolimek, & Schultz, 2010; Schmidt & Tropp, 2009; Seitz, 2002). This literature shows that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and CSR communication go hand in hand with PR, but are not similar to PR and/or organizational communication. Here, CSR is mostly seen as a distinct management concept, whereas PR is conceptualized as the management of external and internal communications (Clark, 2000; Daugherty, 2001; L'Etang, 1994). In the following section, we will give a short overview of approaches to CSR communication from a communication scientific and, in particular, from a PR perspective. Hereby, organizational communication in general is understood as a process of sensemaking and value creation in an organization as well as between the organization and its stakeholders. This theoretical analysis is followed by a subchapter on how much PR theory has inspired and influenced CSR communication research and vice versa. Furthermore, we will pick several examples to show those influences and interactions between CSR and PR research in detail as well as future research potential, if CSR communication is understood as "integrated communication management".

At the end, it will be obvious that PR and CSR communication are indistinguishable and complement each other; integrated CSR communication means both, communicating CSR activities as well as responsible organizational communication, which is inherent to PR.

2 CSR: Not Without Communication

Individual and collective responsibility is a centuries old philosophical issue; responsibility mostly describes a relation between people or organizations and people or groups of people, their stakeholders. It's about being responsible for someone and the process of allocation of and taking responsibility itself. Especially in western European countries from the 80s onwards, the "green movement" did not only influence political but also economic discourses. Today, the CSR "movement" is no longer an alternative to traditional business concepts, it has already "spread to the corporate mainstream" (Hollender, 2011, p. Xiii).

Responsible activities have always been inherent to corporate behavior; values of business organizations as well as the proper role of business in society are important questions that are addressed within organizations as well as from the outside. Today, organizations and organizational relations to their stakeholders have become more complex; thus, processes of organizing, decision making as well as sensemaking are getting more intense through new core values of trust, transparency, dialogue and participation. Here, *Public Relations* comes into play. In the following two sections we will firstly show major concepts of corporate responsibility and related concepts of communication management while looking at references to PR theory and practice and the idea of responsible in the sense of participatory, transparent communicative behavior in general. In concrete, we will explore the coherences between communication management and CSR.

2.1 CSR: A Conceptual Framework with a Focus on "Organizing Processes"

The idea of corporate social responsibility can be found close to industrialization and the first big companies, e.g., in the steel industry. The term refers to the book by Bowen, "The responsibility of businessman" from 1953. Over the years, there were several discussions on sustainability and responsibilities of corporations, first of all in *business & society* research. Until today there is no clear definition of CSR, while its development was forced by corporate practice (Raupp, Jarolimek, & Schultz, 2011).

In academia, several authors refer to the pyramid of responsibility by Carroll (1979), who systematizes different responsibility areas (economical, juridical, ethical and philanthropical). After that, the definition by the European Commission (2001) was widely spread among communication practitioners and picked up by scientists as well. That definition includes criteria of voluntariness, relation to core business, and stakeholders as well as fitting to concepts of business, management and management communication (European Commission, 2001, 2011).

As said, CSR has a clear connection to the concept of sustainability. The latter started with the report "Our common future" by the United Nations. It focused in

the beginning mainly on ecological topics, more recently it has also begun to include economic and social issues. The three pillars of economical, ecological and social responsibility connect both concepts. Most authors refer to this as the triple bottom line, described by Elkington (1997). Scientists and practitioners from different fields were concerned with the two concepts; therefore, there was a constant process of reframing CSR and the discussion became more and more focused on the organization (Weder, 2015a, b). So, even if “today the conceptualization of CSR as well as the definition of CSR is not stabilized” (Lee & Kim, 2010, p. 288), all definitions have a common core, which can be stated as *organizations as entities have responsibilities towards society*. CSR seems to be an umbrella term (Scherer & Palazzo, 2007), used to describe the dedication to responsibility of an organization in general. Corporates themselves communicate their understanding of the perception and realization of responsibility towards society (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012; Golob et al., 2013; Ihlen et al., 2011, Podnar, 2008). As such, CSR is perceived as a management concept that questions the convergence of economy and society, driven by societal processes of globalization, medialization and also the shift from shareholder to stakeholder thinking in general.¹ Thus, incorporating CSR in management strategy means to take responsible actions in every stage of the supply chain and additionally involves corporate citizenship engagement. In the past, corporations more or less added the responsibility idea to the existing strategy, while more recently, they have integrated it in business and communication strategies. Following the idea of integrated forms of organizational processes, we do assume a constitutive role of communication for organizations (McPhee, 1985; Putnam, Nicotera, & McPhee, 2009; Schoeneborn & Blaschke, 2014); thus, organizations and corporations of all sizes are an effect of communication—not its predecessor (McPhee & Zaug, 2000). Therefore, conceptualizing organizations’ “corporate responsibility” implies an integrated concept of all processes of *allocation* as well as *taking of responsibility*. CSR self-structures an organization, memberships in the organization as well as stakeholder relations are (newly) negotiated, activities are coordinated with different strategic implications and the organizational positioning also gains a new dimension. Furthermore, CSR brings up the difference between communication as “talk” only (worst case scenario: greenwashing) and communication as “action” (processes of allocation and taking responsibility).

Looking back, CSR started with defensive communication strategies, ad hoc interventions mostly oriented at shareholders or governmental institutions—it was mainly about *talking CSR*. In a philanthropic stage, corporations were focused on special communities and CSR was more or less project based (donations etc.). Visser (2011, p. 18f.) describes Marketing and Public Relations as third stage of CSR efforts by business with the general public and therefore a focus on reputation and image—still with a focus on *talking* about responsibility. Today, CSR is more

¹In addition to the original meaning, the familiar concept of corporate social performance (CSP) tries to measure the influence of CSR activities on business performance.

and more implemented in management strategies and influences the products. CSR is getting into *action*. The ideal is also described by Visser (*ibid.*) as “Systematic CSR”, responsibility is realized in business models. Moreover, the European Communication Monitor shows clearly that linking the strategy to business is one of the major challenges in the view of communication managers in the past years (Zerfass, Tench, Verčič, Verhoeven, & Moreno, 2014).

To summarize: There seems to be a general agreement among social scientists and marketers, amongst economists and communication scholars that CSR can be defined as “the organization’s status and activities with respect to its perceived societal obligations” (Beckmann, Morsing, & Reisch, 2006, p. 17; Brown & Dacin, 1997). Taking responsibility management as core strategy of business as well, communication management and public relations in particular have to deal with the allocation and taking of responsibility in organizations. How this is (re)conceptualized in PR theory will be discussed in the following chapter.

2.2 *CSR and Communication*

The overview of CSR concepts shows that they have either a focus on *talking about CSR* or a stronger focus on CSR activities and *action*. The relevance of Public Relations and/or Marketing activities for the realization of CSR is mentioned, but mostly with a “promotional” goal. “[C]orporate sustainability and responsibility is seen mainly as a public relations opportunity to enhance the brand, image and reputation of the company” (Visser, 2011, p. 19). From this perspective, corporations engage in CSR for a better position in the market (stories, corporate brand) (Paine, 2003).

Here, we want to look deeper into CSR as well as PR concepts and discuss the common core and the reasons for coherences. From the author’s point of view, the common core is the engagement in values, more specific: processes of sensemaking, negotiation and with it the establishment of corporate values in (internal and external) stakeholder relations. Stakeholder relations are the basis for corporate responsibility, if we take responsibility as relational term, as described above; additionally, the stability of relations to the organizations’ stakeholders is the main focus of PR, taken as process of relation building. With this in mind, organizational responsibility management can be explained as core process of strategic thinking, decision making in general, organizational change, venturing, enactment of technological change and innovation processes.

A literature review of CSR, PR and newer approaches on CSR communication shows that stakeholder relations is the most used term as well as concept to justify the need for CSR, PR and CSR communication in particular. CSR communication itself is most likely perceived as the communication of CSR activities to different internal and external stakeholders. Indeed, in today’s media and information society there is an “increased pressure to not only engage in CSR efforts but also to communicate about this engagement” (Beckmann et al., 2006, p. 13). Thus,

professional CSR communication means “integrated CSR communication”; CSR communication has to be part of CSR management (Nies, 2013, p. V). Communication is seen as strategic core of CSR, stakeholder relations as groundwork for CSR communication (Heinrich, 2013, p. 65f.). But still, most of the literature deals with CSR communication from a marketing perspective; here, the dominance of a promotional view on CSR communication mentioned above is obvious.

A broader definition is offered by the literature based on communication and media studies. Here, there is a clear connection to public relations and organizational communication. With its combination of CSR topics and the operative PR activities, CSR communication can be defined as “the communication from and about organisations addressing actions within the organisation that are (1) longer term measures (sustainable); and (2) voluntary (not legally bound). The actions reported have (3) a clear connection to the organisation’s activities, but are not their objective. CSR communications can usually be found in all public communications (PR, corporate webpages, corporate magazines, as well as in journalism and in special CSR media like the CSR-report). Issues of CSR communication can be subdivided into social, economic and environmental responsibilities” (Jarolimek, 2014, p. 22). Corporate Citizenship actions should be added.

A communication and media studies based approach to CSR communication also shows that corporations have to communicate responsibly as a meta level of CSR that is described as the quadruple-bottom-line (Karmasin & Weder, 2008, see Chapters “CSR as Common Sense Issue? A Theoretical Exploration of Public Discourses, Common Sense and Framing of Corporate Social Responsibility” and “CSR as Economic, Ethical, and Communicative Concept”) or the ethical dimensions of communication managers (Jarolimek & Linke, 2015). Defining CSR communication from a multi-disciplinary perspective (Beckmann et al., 2006, p. 28) reflects the increased interest in communicating CSR as well as communicating responsibly (Weder & Karmasin, 2014). The PR research tradition has multi-disciplinary approaches as well as a core of theories and therefore can be defined as demarcated research area. We find a systematization of definitions and concepts with more process related perspectives on PR activities (information, persuasion, relation building etc.), an organizational perspective (PR as management function, communication as important for business success etc.), and a macro view on strategic communication activities as type of public communication in general (overview in Heath, 2001; Röttger, Preusse, & Schmitt, 2014, p. 23; Weder, 2010). This helps to understand a concept of “integrated CSR communication” that enfolds everything from the core of an organization to the stakeholder relations. Internal and external legitimation is a condition for gaining social capital, social capital can be captured with concepts like trust, reputation or organizational culture and ethical concepts like transparency and credibility. Internal and external legitimation is also necessary for building and maintaining a core of social values such as participatory democracy while growing, becoming more complex by meeting today’s challenges and still being financially successful. In the following section we will focus on those core concepts of CSR, PR and organizational communication to explore the coherences between PR and CSR communication to show the

contribution of PR research in particular to develop and work with a theoretical concept of integrated CSR communication.

3 PR Concepts in the Debate About CSR Communication—And Vice Versa

As shown above, PR theory influenced the conceptualization of CSR communication; vice versa, the allocation and taking of responsibility by organizations is perceived as something that is not possible without the management of communication. The following examples point out three concepts where *responsibility as intersection* between CSR and PR theory and practice is discussed: trust, transparency and organizational culture. In other words: PR and CSR cannot be discussed without each other, because responsibility is a core character of communicatively constructed internal and external stakeholder relations. Thus, integrated CSR communication works with stakeholder relations (as already suggested above), trust, transparency, reputation and value management as key concepts.

3.1 *Transparency and Trust*

Responsibility as well as the mentioned key values of trust and transparency are essentials of today's concepts of strategic communication. In public relations research there are some theoretical discussions on responsibility and trust, e.g., Bentele and Nothhaft (2011) discuss trust as the core of the responsibility debate in general. But only few scholars discuss transparency systematically. With respect to theoretical concepts and empirical studies, there seems to be a strong connection of these concepts: to communicate responsibly, companies have to be trustworthy and, to be trustworthy, they have to be transparent. Transparency seems to be a core value as well as a basic mechanism in public communication from and about organizations. Transparency is not only an issue for political organizations like political parties (public opinion) or economic organizations such as power companies (in the market), but also for media enterprises. Recently, transparency has appeared as 'new godterm' (Christensen & Cheney, 2011), but it is also seen as crucial in discourses about corporate responsibility (e.g., Nadezan, 2011).

Still, there is "a lack of theory about transparency in the academic PR discourse" (Wehmeier & Raaz, 2012, p. 349). To date, transparency definitions are rare in the PR discourse. Wehmeier and Raaz (2012) systematize two groups of available definitions. The first group of sender-orientated transparency definitions, which means full openness, full information disclosure and accessibility would mean to break down the organization's borders that ensure a reduction of complexity. Transparency in this sense is surely a sincere desire, but unrealistic. "Indeed, the

more that information [. . .] is made available to customers, the more modifications they will be enabled to request.” (Vaccaro & Echeverri, 2010, p. 489) To “know everything” and to process “big data” would mean full complexity that hinders social order. A second group of recipient-oriented definitions highlights aspects of understanding and information for stakeholder actions.

Relating to the criteria in transparency definitions, *clarity* in the first group and *information for action* in the second group meet these connections between systems. PR understood as strategic communication implies information as well as clear and open ways of communication—varying from case to case; here, the professionalization of all communication processes supports its realization. Thus, not only practitioners claim that “good” PR implies information clarity. “Good” PR should ensure success in terms of subsequent actions—and avoid the negative image of earlier days. As Bentele (2008, p. 330) pointed out early on, the postulation of transparency is to deduce from the meta criterion verifiability. If this (possibility of) verifiability is called into question, it is a display of distrust. Sometimes, organizations try to regain confidence by acting and communicating responsibly. Therefore, trust and responsibility need to be included in a theoretical conception of transparency. In other words, trust connects the discussion about transparency back to the stakeholder concept, mentioned above. “Trust shifts from a known entity to an unknown one” (Cheney & Barnett, 2005, p. 79) and backwards; therefore, the authors again point out the need for the perception of an organization as network where the relations are communicatively constructed (Weder, 2010). As well, Bentele and Seiffert discussed the relationship of trust and transparency in an “age of transparency”. And it would be quite natural in every kind of network that people have a growing interest to know who’s in control, who’s in charge (Grigorescu, 2008). Structure oriented concepts in organizational theory perceive organizations as complex entities, which tend to be intransparent; recent concepts point out new perspectives in processes like sensemaking and organizing itself (Hernes & Maitlis, 2010; Taylor & Van Every, 2000, 2011; Weick, 1979, 1995) and deconstruct the complexity. Working with the first concept, the organization itself even lacks internal transparency in the sense of a functional problem and external transparency in the sense of a “normative problem” (Bentele & Seiffert, 2009). The further mentioned second concept, a strong process related, constructivist perspective helps to understand transparency as something that is realized in every communication process—in, from and about an organization. The shift from a “theory of organizations” to “organization theory” with a stronger focus on processes and practices helps to understand how an organized state is achieved; therefore, it seems to be useful to understand the relation between trust and transparency and responsibility as an outcome of trust and transparency; in other words: taking responsibility is only possible with trustful stakeholder relations that are constructed and maintained by transparent communication.

That trust and transparency are closely intertwined is shown by the example of how transparency regarding managers’ and politicians’ salaries should reinforce trust—in the managers themselves, the organizations behind them and the economic system overall. Thus, Bentele und Seiffert describe transparency as a “trust-factor”.

Beside other trust factors, transparency has a special position (Bentele & Seiffert, 2009, p. 56). They suppose that transparency increases the chance of emergence and restitution of trust more than other factors. The reason for this presumption is seen in the very nature of the phenomenon transparency. Only transparency allows stakeholder to trust persons, organizations or social systems in general, because trust is also a reduction of complexity, as mentioned above. Other trust factors like expertise, problem-solving competence, adequacy and consistency of communication, social responsibility and ethics of responsibility itself could only be judged when these processes themselves are transparent and can be experienced by confidants (Bentele & Seiffert, 2009, p. 56). Thus, responsibility as normative concept is connected with transparency and is itself one of the trust factors. Other studies point to the “positive impact of transparency on green, collaborative firm-customer programs since information disclosure is considered necessary to guarantee corporate social accountability and, in turn, to get customers’ trust.” (Vaccaro & Echeverri, 2010, p. 497).

Put in a nutshell, transparency as disclosure of information as well as transparency as core concept of organizational communication helps to understand and realize responsibility to reinforce trust. As well, transparency is a normative core concept for other normative mechanisms in organizations. At the same time, the challenge for an integrative concept of CSR communication is the nature of organizations from a structural point of view and the general “impossibility of transparency”. Knowing the expectations of stakeholders, organizations communicate transparency in the sense of strategic information that stakeholders want to have; but this “only” shows responsiveness; thus, responsibility in the sense of a full transparency of structures and processes has the function as moral guideline or normative concept that all organizational processes should be oriented at; the learning from PR theory related trust and transparency for CSR communication therefore is that corporations but also non-governmental organizations have to communicate loudly and strategically to maintain a clearly defined role in society and the public sphere and to obtain a powerful position in discourse with their communication.

As a hierarchical orientation, trust can be considered as second factor that consists of lower facts, including, e.g., transparency, credibility, selectivity of facts, accuracy (Bentele & Seiffert, 2009; Kohring & Matthes, 2007). Beyond the main function of legitimacy, PR and CSR communication focus on the intertwined goals of transparency, trust and credibility, as well as reputation.

3.2 Responsible Reputation and Integrated Values

By discussing stakeholder relations, trust as relational term and transparency as core value and normative pattern of Public Relations and the CSR debate, it becomes more and more obvious that the intersection between PR and CSR and therefore the learning for a concept of integrated CSR communication are

integrated values and the question of integrating values in and via strategic communication.

We would like to go back to our key question: why do companies engage in CSR and why do they have to communicate their engagement? In the literature, different dimensions of CSR engagement are debated: CSR as risk management (globalization, media, critical stakeholders), as civic positioning (license to operate), organizational functioning (involvement, motivation) and market positioning (corporate dimensions) (Beckmann et al., 2006; Paine, 2003). The market oriented and management literature in particular describes CSR communication as something that has to be done, as duty to get heard, the public has to be informed through the means of CSR reports, events and other communication efforts. Additionally, CSR communication is framed as “strategic”, if it follows the corporate strategy, if it is embedded in the business fields.

Looking at PR concepts of reputation or the concept of reputation analyzed and theorized by PR researchers, we can complement this view on the creation of an image of “responsible companies” by the concept of integrated values in the sense of growing an internal and external organizational culture. Talking about reputation and organizational culture, there are some essential questions (Morgan, 1997, p. 141): What are the shared frames of reference (values, regulations etc.) that make organization possible? Where do they come from? How are they created, communicated, and sustained?

The common ground of PR and CSR research is the distinction of organizational culture and corporate culture. Looking for a concept of integrated CSR communication and answering the questions raised above, management approaches such as Deal and Kennedy’s concept of corporate cultures (1982 see also Toth & Trujillo, 1987) have to be complemented with broader concepts of organizational culture. In Schein’s ‘culture-embedding mechanisms’ communication plays only a minor role (1984, 1985, 2004); furthermore, the typologies of Cameron and Freeman (1991), Cartwright and Cooper (1993a, b), but most of all Hofstede’s considerations (2005, see also Hofstede, Neuijen, Ohayu, & Sanders, 1990) are applied in PR research. Again, for an integrated concept of CSR communication there is the need for a more constructive view on organizational culture; working with the assumption that “organizations are communicatively constituted” (Putnam et al., 2009, p. 1; on this see also McPhee & Zaug, 2009; Taylor, 1993; Weick, 1995) we can refer to every communication process as generating social structure. Taylor describes this constitution process as “coorientation” (Taylor, 2009, p. 155) and as a simultaneous relation to something, which must be done, as well as to somebody else, who must do it. “The product of inter-community coorientation—the “bridging”—is the organization itself” (Taylor, 2009, p. 156). This point of view looks reasonable, in this way coordination is also understood as that recursive mechanism, which generates organizational culture. Without going deeper into this upcoming organizational communication perspective, the learning for CSR communication is that rules and value structures are not always set up and realized through management. Rules and value structures develop in the organization and in the stakeholder

networks (Weder, 2007, p. 33). Values facilitate the development and sustainability of a communications network in an organization and to the stakeholder.

Only by bringing the individual actors' values together within the organizational field, by networking *via*—thus self-reflective—communication, is responsibility taken towards the actors, and does 'culture' happen. This way, the understanding of organizations as creators of meaning and providers of orientation within society is also explained.

Thus, integrated CSR communication only works with a constructive view on communication; organization is culture, culture is organization. In other words: integrated CSR communication implies *communicative coordination* between internal and external values as well as talk and action as said above. Therefore, studies on and theoretical concepts of organizational culture are important for further research on CSR communication. From a PR perspective, organizational culture implies emerging structures and processes of communication in and out of an organization, awareness of being included in the value structures and responsibilities of an organization, common patterns and systems of interpretation. Integrated CSR communication embraces all communicative activities that coordinate values and responsibilities, which means the interaction of organizational structure, individual ethics and business culture.

4 Integrated CSR Communication

As discussed above, a corporate management approach to CSR says that taking responsibility as a corporation can only be successful, if it is a business case (Smith, 2003); there seems to be a positive (indirect) correlation between CSR and financial performance—especially in the way critical stakeholders are treated; dealing with CSR influences the stakeholder outreach. Making CSR a business case implies that it isn't just a "management fashion" (see Guthey, Langer, & Morsing, 2006). In parallel, from a Public Relations perspective, CSR cannot be theoretically discussed and practically realized without including communication strategies, management, instruments and stakeholder relations in particular. For us, integrated CSR communication is a term that covers both, an understanding of CSR as inherent concept of business strategy and management and an integrated approach to communication management.

Talking about trust, transparency, dialogue etc. works with an understanding of organizations as embedded in a broader network of relations to their stakeholders, as already discussed and indicated above. Beyond that, organizations are understood as communicatively embedded in the society. In management studies, the idea to engage in an organization's political-social-economic-network is mostly framed as "stakeholder management approach" (Carroll, 2004; Carroll & Buchholtz, 2003; Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Freeman, 1984). The relation to internal and external groups can be more or less intense and more or less symmetrical.

Furthermore, theories of public relations often try to cover moral requirements and conceptualize ethical principles for individual and organizational behavior and communication (Cheney, Christensen, Zorn, & Ganesh, 2011). Examples include the concept of responsible advocacy and with it professional responsibility (Bentele, 2008; Fitzpatrick & Gauthier, 2001; Förg, 2004), the ideal(istic) model of two-way communication (Grunig, 2000) or holistic models of both, ethically and economic, ‘good’ behavior (Baker, 1999; Ulrich, 2001), which leads to the discourse about Corporate Social Responsibility (Ihlen et al., 2011; Karmasin & Weder, 2008; Raupp et al., 2010). Although the stakeholder concept is often criticized for its ambiguity, most studies focus on the effects of CSR communication on different stakeholder groups.

By acknowledging previous research and the theoretical concept of stakeholder management and stakeholder communication, we go back to our focus on the question of how PR theory as well as CSR research and concepts overlap and can lead to an innovative concept of integrated CSR communication. The previous discussion led to the following assumptions: (1) trust and transparency are basics for stakeholder management; (2) allocation and taking of responsibility happen between the organization and internal and external stakeholders *via* communication; (3) organizational value management can be understood as sensemaking, which is inherently social; (4) strategic CSR communication is “sensegiving” (communicative coorientation). The overall function is good reputation and legitimacy.

The stakeholder relationship is assumed to be an interactive, mutually engaged and responsive relationship (Andriof, Waddock, Husted, & Sutherland Rahman, 2002, p. 9), which shows the focus on dialogue, involvement and participation as key concepts for attached concepts of communication; furthermore, value management, as described above, is perceived as co-creation of shared understanding, as sensemaking process. These are learnings from CSR theory and practical discussions. Bringing it together with PR theory and the concept of strategic communication, the process of sensemaking becomes a process of *sensegiving* (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991, p. 434). The idea of sensegiving has been worked out by Morsing & Schultz (i.e., 2006) and the internal perspective complemented by an external perspective. With this, an integrated approach to CSR communication implies sensemaking processes as well as sensegiving processes, which follows the basic concepts of integrated communication (Bruhn, 1995, 2003, 2006a, b, 2008; Bruhn, Schmidt, & Tropp, 2000; Esch, 2011; Gronstedt, 1996; Kirchner, 2001; Schultz, Tannenbaum, & Lauterborn, 1993; Schultz & Schultz, 1998; Steinmann & Zerfaß, 1995; Zerfaß, 2010).

Integrated communication is described as the coordination and—ideally—perfect matching of internal and external communication processes and activities. Mostly used as integrated marketing communication, we would like to take the term further to our understanding of an organization as communicatively constituted; therefore, integration implies the inclusion of all communication processes that self-structure an organization, all processes of negotiation, activity coordination and institutional positioning (McPhee, 1985). Furthermore, all these processes

not only constitute the organization; in addition, they are affected by other systems, individuals, interests and expectations, and traditions, often described as “stakeholders” and “stakeholder interests”.

Morsing & Schultz describe stakeholder information, stakeholder response and stakeholder involvement strategies and highlight stakeholder involvement as a two-way symmetrical and therefore “ideal” (Grunig & Hunt, 1984) communication concept; here, sensemaking and sensegiving in “iterative progressive processes” (Morsing & Schultz, 2006, p. 326f) imply a pro-active dialogue with the stakeholders as well as value negotiations with the stakeholders; they explicitly demand “pro-active endorsement” (ibid, p. 150) to involve stakeholders. This complements the understanding of CSR communication as promoted by Karmasin and Weder (2008, 2013), of integrating CSR communication (information about CSR activities and responsibilities that are seen by a corporation) and responsible communication (integrity and value management).

Furthermore, integrated CSR communication means not only to focus on existing stakeholder relations, but even on future and optional stakeholder relations that might arise by acting responsibly. As well, we would like to point out, that integrated CSR communication implies an integration of “CSR talk” and “CSR action”, as mentioned with the CSR concepts above. As long we are concerned with the fundamental formative and therefore constitutional role of communication for organizations, we have to consider the relation between talk and action, which, at the same time, marks one of the “new areas of CSR research”. Instead of distinguishing between talk and action (Brunsson, 1989), today, more and more concepts of CSR communication seek to go one step further (Christensen, Morsing, & Thyssen, 2013). Our discussion of the potential of PR theory for CSR communication research in general and a concept of integrated CSR communication in particular should work as “conceptual building block” for this new area of theoretical concepts. Furthermore, for us, CSR communication builds up relationships to new stakeholder as well as relationships to issues the corporation has not been related to before; therefore challenges for issue management, integrity management of organizational members and managers in particular, as well as internal and external social media management arise. Herein lies future research potential.

5 Conclusion and Critical Outlook

Recent developments in CSR communication show tendencies towards integration and linking CSR issues with the “normal” business strategy. There is an increasing number of corporations providing integrated sustainability reports. However, that combination of CSR and business reports cope with the known difficulties of social engagement evaluation. Beside reports, especially in the United States it has become obvious on corporate websites that corporations tend to integrate responsibility actions in their different business areas. Furthermore, responsibility has also become an important topic in recruiting videos. These are indeed only external

observations, but corporations seem to be learning from the massive external pressure from active publics (*via* Social Media and traditional mass media) in order to prevent accusations of greenwashing and reputational damage. The theoretical discussion presented here seeks to promote an integrative approach to CSR communication to meet those challenges by bringing together an ethical framework of corporate responsibility and concepts of strategic communication.

As seen in the previous chapters, Public Relations and CSR have a common core, the concept of business responsibility is described, discussed and realized in PR concepts of reputation management, stakeholder relations or trust management. In other words, taking responsibility through (CSR) communication happens as creation of culture by integration or completion of individual value systems in respect of an overall-cultural context and *via* an organization as a community of meaning and values (Linke & Jarolimek, 2016), which is described here as *sensemaking*. Furthermore, integrated CSR communication embraces all strategic communicative activities that co-ordinate and co-construct values and responsibilities, which means the interaction of organizational structure, individual ethics and business culture, introduced here as *sensegiving*.

Hand in hand with an integrative theoretical concept, there is the need to discuss the overlaps and intersections from a methodological point of view. Examples of CSR communication in practice show a wide range of CSR understandings on corporate websites (CSR, sustainability, compliance, corporate citizenship) or among managers, customers and journalists. In addition, there is a multiplicity of in-company processes and organizational structures, when CSR is seen as part of PR as well as part (communication) management. Furthermore, current studies are difficult to compare, focusing on different countries, forms of communication or stakeholder groups. Future research needs an integrative methodological approach to not only focus on communication processes and structures *or* CSR issues or stakeholder analyses. Triangulation, intervention and action research could be debated and applied in future studies.

6 Exercise and Reflective Questions

1. How does PR theory complement CSR research?
2. What are the core concepts where CSR and PR research complement each other?
3. Describe an integrated approach to CSR Communication.
4. Why is the stakeholder concept the core of CSR and PR research? What are the implications for CSR Communication research?
5. How far are organizations “communicatively constructed”?
6. What role does communication play for allocation and taking of responsibility in an organization and between an organization and its stakeholders?
7. What role does “sensemaking” play for the realization of CSR in an organization and between an organization and its stakeholders?

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Toward a Conceptual Integration of Corporate Social and Financial Performance

Diane L. Swanson and Marc Orlitzky

Abstract We describe the potential for an integrative perspective on corporate social performance in two distinct models. The first builds on previous research to demonstrate the theory building possibilities for conceptual integration. By extension, the second model of *value attunement* shows how an organization can become responsible when the executive strives to embed values in organizational decisions that facilitate the triple bottom line of social, environmental, and economic performance. According to the attunement model, the executive who strives for these goals will necessarily understand the significance of establishing means of communicating value information in the organization and between the organization and its external constituents. We move toward an integration of corporate social and financial performance by summarizing the various competitive benefits that attunement may yield for the socially and environmentally responsible firm.

A growing number of scholars argue that a good reputation for social and environmental performance may contribute to a firm's positive financial performance (e.g., Fombrun, 1996; Mahon, 2002; Orlitzky, Schmidt, & Rynes, 2003; Porter & Kramer, 2006). This convergence of social, environmental, and economic goals is represented in the idea of the triple bottom line (Elkington, 1994; Savitz, 2013). One indication that this idea has taken hold is the ascendancy of the Benefit Corporation that, as of this writing, is chartered in 31 U.S. states for the purpose of joining the profit motive with the goal of making a positive impact on society and the environment (Benefit Corp Information Center, 2015). Additionally, the interest in socially responsible investment that began decades ago now represents an ever larger proportion of all investments in the U.S. and Europe (Orlitzky, 2013). Given

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these developments, the integration of corporate social and financial performance in theory and practice is highly relevant (Swanson & Orlitzky, 2016).

This chapter lays the groundwork for understanding this prospect. We begin with a streamlined review of business and society research, including an historical accounting of corporate social responsibility and a consolidation of corporate social performance topics. Second, we describe a model that integrates these topics and reconfigures corporate social performance in terms of triple bottom line goals. Third, we demonstrate this integration in a model of *value attunement*, which points to the potential for an organization to enact triple bottom line goals when the executive strives to embed values in decision-making designed to facilitate them. According to attunement, the executive who strives for triple bottom line responsibilities will necessarily need to understand the significance of establishing means of communicating value information in the organization and between the organization and its external constituents. We propose that an integration of social and financial performance is feasible in this case. Fourth, we move toward a conceptual integration of corporate social and financial performance by summarizing the various competitive benefits that attunement may yield for the responsible firm. Finally, we conclude by summarizing some implications for research focused on investigating this congruity.

1 Corporate Social Responsibility and Performance in Business and Society Research

Broadly speaking, corporate social responsibility and corporate social performance¹ can be seen as overlapping aspects of business and society research. In this section, we give a historical outlook on corporate social responsibility, followed by a consolidation or snapshot of corporate social performance topics, including early principles of corporate responsibility. Subsequently, we describe a perspective that integrates these topics and reconfigures corporate social performance in terms of triple bottom line goals.

1.1 A Historical Outlook on Corporate Social Responsibility

Frederick (1987, 2008) categorized three distinct, yet related phases of business and society research as *CSR1*, *CSR2*, and *CSR3*. The first phase of *CSR1* took up corporate social responsibility in terms of how executives and academicians called

¹From here on, the term *social performance* should be understood to include environmental performance, since expectations of environmental responsibilities come from society in general and organizational stakeholders in particular.

for it in the 1950s and 1960s. During this time, advocates of corporate social responsibility invoked the stewardship principle to hold that executives should view themselves as fiduciary guardians or public trustees of society's resources. They also called for corporations to pursue social betterment by giving back to society in the form of philanthropy. In contrast to the obligatory tone of CSR1, Frederick showed that the second phase of business and society research represented a more descriptive, action-oriented, and pragmatic outlook. Since approximately 1970, CSR2, or corporate social responsiveness, has emphasized the practical organizational mechanisms and behavioral patterns that allow managers to anticipate and respond to the legitimate concerns of groups with multiple interests in a firm (Ackerman & Bauer, 1976; Sethi, 1975). The idea that managers should be responsive to many groups was a precursor to the stakeholder model of the firm, described later.

Whereas the extent of social responsibility in CSR1 was largely dependent on the conscience of the chief executive officer, CSR2 looked to the implementation of institutionalized policies that were formulated in response to constituent interests (Frederick, 2006) and public policies meant to protect them (Preston & Post, 1975). Consistent with the focus on responsiveness in CSR2 and the call for corporations to work for social betterment in CSR1, the Research and Policy Committee of the Committee for Economic Development (CED) issued *Social Responsibilities of Business Corporations* in 1971. Because this report envisioned the economic responsibility of business to be subject to social and environmental responsibilities, it portended the idea of the triple bottom line (Swanson & Orlitzky, 2016).

The obligatory or normative tone conveyed by CSR1 returned by the mid-1980s in an emphasis on values and ethical principles in organizational life. Management scholars emphasized values by addressing their role in organizational culture (e.g., Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Schein, 1985) and pointed to the influence of executive values on organizational decisions and outcomes (e.g., Hambrick & Mason, 1984). Social scientists added that the value concept is potentially powerful for understanding such decision dynamics because of the cognitive, affective, relational, and experiential qualities ascribed to it (see Frederick, 1995, pp. 14–20).

Overall, CSR3 management research showed that the values enacted in the workplace are largely determined by an organization's culture (Treviño, 1990). For instance, this research revealed that an organization's culture can cause managers to be morally mute or silent about ethical issues (Bird & Waters, 1989) and morally stressed or anxious about the ethical dilemmas they face (Waters & Bird, 1987). Some scholars linked such deficiencies to a failure of leadership that contributes to unethical work climates (Victor & Cullen, 1988), unethical subordinate behavior (Posner & Schmidt, 1984), a lack of employee solidarity and shared understandings (Schein, 1985; Swanson, 1996), and ultimately poor economic, social, and environmental performance (e.g., Frederick, 1995; Schwartz, 1991; Swanson, 1992). These linkages demonstrated that values can unify research areas across levels of analysis (Agle & Caldwell, 1999), a prospect that foreshadowed the attunement model, described later, that depicts the type of

executive capable of leading an organization to pursue the triple bottom line and the receptivity to values required for this effort.

The ethicists who shaped CSR3 research relied on principles found in normative philosophy. Their goal was to identify right and wrong conduct in business, and some invoked social contract reasoning to infer that for business to serve the social good, managers should attend not only to their economic responsibilities, but also to constituents' claims to rights and justice, regardless of a financial cost–benefit analysis (Collins, 1988; Donaldson, 1982). In his stakeholder model of the firm, Freeman (1984) portrayed these constituents as including employees, consumers, business partners, creditors, suppliers, stockholders, political groups, the media, trade associations, unions, governmental bodies, and local communities. According to this model, managers should pursue social betterment by recognizing and striving to meet the expectations of various stakeholder groups and, by doing so, balance economic goals with rights and justice for a plurality of these groups (see DeGeorge, 1990; Werhane, 1985).

1.2 A Consolidation of Corporate Social Performance Topics

Business and society research has also been featured in corporate social performance models that build on each other (Carroll, 1999). From the early days of business and society research, these stationary models, or consolidated classifications of research topics, were viewed as steps toward theory building. According to Jones (1983), the strength of these stationary models was that they showed interrelationships among diverse topics and, therefore, provided an agenda for future research. Mitnick (1993) argued that Wood's (1991) stationary model represented a conceptual breakthrough in this method because it was based on a sorting logic that subsumed all previous classifications. Swanson (1995) added that this logic could be used to assess the field's ability to answer questions central to its mission of finding and developing a constructive business and society relationship by which corporations incorporate stakeholder concerns into decision-making. For these reasons, Wood's static classification has greatly informed theory building and empirical research on business and society, especially since many of its topics are drawn from CSR1, CSR2, and CSR3.

Wood's (1991, p. 694) consolidation of topics featured the following three areas of business and society research:

- (1) Principles of corporate social responsibility expressed at the institutional, organizational, and individual levels of analysis.
- (2) Corporate processes of social responsiveness, or the action counterparts to responsibility: environmental assessment, stakeholder management, and issues management.
- (3) Outcomes of corporate behavior or social impacts, social programs, and social policies.

This consolidation extended and revised previous classifications of corporate social performance (see Carroll, 1979; Jones, 1983; Sethi, 1979; Wartick & Cochran, 1985). The overarching logic of this taxonomy is that principles of responsibilities should guide how corporations respond to society, given the social outcomes at stake. In terms of this logic, the *institutional principle* stresses the need for business to retain social legitimacy by using its power responsibly; otherwise, society may revoke it (Davis, 1973, p. 314). The *organizational principle*, which originated with Preston and Post's (1975) research, takes business and society to be interpenetrating, mutually adaptive systems. Informed by this interpenetrative systems view, the organizational principle holds that businesses are responsible for outcomes related to their primary and secondary areas of involvement [i.e., economic impact] with society (Wood, 1991, p. 48). Finally, the individual principle, informed by Carroll (1979) and Wood's (1990) research, asserts that since managers are moral actors, they are obliged to exercise such discretion as is available to them toward socially responsible outcomes (Wood, 1991, p. 49).

The processes of responsiveness in Wood's model—environmental assessment, stakeholder management, and issues management—harken to CSR2 research that stressed the organizational mechanisms and behavioral patterns that allow managers to anticipate and respond to social pressure. These processes, along with the other topics in the historical and consolidated accountings of business and society research, are embodied in the integrative perspective on corporate social performance, described next.

2 An Integrative Perspective on Corporate Social Performance

Swanson's (1995) perspective on corporate social performance was designed to integrate and extend previous classifications of business and society research for the purpose of theory building. Before this perspective is introduced, it is important to account for the three broad value processes relevant to business organizations that Frederick (1995) formulated during the CSR3 phase of business and society research.

Economizing: refers to an energy transformation process by which organizations convert inputs to outputs efficiently to provide goods and services required for survival and material flourishing.

Ecologizing: refers to symbiotic, integrative linkages between organizations and their host environments that function adaptively to perpetuate the entire community, including human, animal, floral and physical features of ecosystems.

Power aggrandizing or power seeking: refers to status-enforced, self-centered behavior in organizations that seeks to acquire and use coercive power through hierarchical arrangements. This power seeking, which often manifests as empire

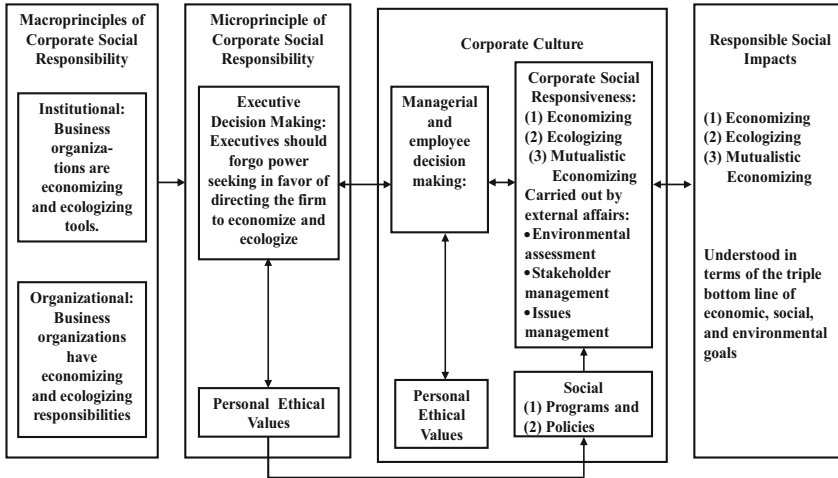


Fig. 1 An integrative perspective on corporate social performance. Adapted from Swanson (1995, 2014). Reproduced with permission

building, diminishes or comes into conflict with economizing and ecologizing (Frederick, 1995, pp. 9–10).

Although these three value processes are subject to tensions or tradeoffs, economizing and ecologizing can also be symbiotic, as in *mutualistic economizing* (Frederick, 1995, pp. 166–179). In this case, the firm seeks its own economic advantage while permitting exchange conditions that allow the other party to gain some benefits. When such mutualisms facilitate both economizing and ecologizing—the latter understood as serving community life and environmental sustainability—they can facilitate the enactment of the triple bottom line of social, environmental, and economic performance (Swanson, 2014; Swanson & Orlitzky, 2016), as shown in Fig. 1. For example, mutualistic economizing is taking place when corporations strengthen ties to local communities by making charitable contributions to non-profit organizations with a social mission, a situation reminiscent of the expectation of philanthropy in CSR1. Another example of mutualistic economizing is when a firm partners with a university to further its mission of producing renewable energy or eradicating dangerous diseases such as cancer and ebola. In such cases, firms may enjoy reputational advantages that pay off financially.

Figure 1 brings three main aspects of business and society research more closely together in that *corporate social responsibility* and *corporate social responsiveness* are shown to be interrelated in decision processes in organizational culture that yield *corporate social performance*. In terms of CSR3 research, the restated principles of corporate responsibility join Frederick's (1995) value theory with social contract reasoning. Specifically, business as an institution is now depicted

as having social legitimacy if corporations pursue triple bottom line responsibilities by economizing, ecologizing, and engaging in mutualistic economizing. Moreover, the new microprinciple of responsibility harkens to the idea, represented in Wood's (1991) model, that managerial discretion counts. It does so by conveying that the executive should forgo power-seeking in favor of directing a firm to ecologize and economize. The long arrow at the bottom of Fig. 1 shows that the executive's ethical values influence his or her ability to do so vis-à-vis the formulation of social programs and policies for stakeholder and issues management, which are activities typically carried out by external affairs specialists. The term *ethical values* in Fig. 1 bridges the values and ethics research in CSR3 by indicating that these two concepts are intimately related, since an individual's values shape his or her ethical beliefs about the rightness or wrongness of behavior (see Carroll & Buchholtz, 2015, p. 205).

This integrative model highlights the role of executive leadership that was introduced in CSR1 and elaborated upon in CSR3 as decision processes that influence corporate culture. At the same time, it takes its cues from the CSR2 research consolidated by Wood (1991) that assigns importance to environmental assessment, stakeholder management, and issues management in the business and society relationship. According to Fig. 1, environmental assessment makes detecting stakeholder preferences possible so that external affairs specialists can communicate them to executives and other employees. This information should be comprehended as representing stakeholder ethical values. For instance, when stockholders assert their *right* to accountability, they are indicating that they *value* it as a *fair* expectation. Similarly, when consumers assert their *right* to safe products and *just* compensation when defective products cause harm, they are communicating that they *value* safety and *justice*. In short, ideas about ethical principles (e.g., rights and justice) are articulated as value preferences. Given this congruity, the terms *ethical values* and *values* will be used interchangeably from hereon.

Figure 1 illustrates that when stakeholder value preferences are communicated to executives and other employees, then internal decision processes in corporate cultures can become infused with value information that can be leveraged to pursue triple bottom line responsibilities. Although employees look to the executive for directing this pursuit, Fig. 1 shows that their ability to engage in it is affected by their personal values. Moreover, two-way arrows in this figure represent the potential for continuous communication of stakeholder value preferences, as well as feedback about the social programs and policies designed to address them. In this way, Swanson's (1995) integrative perspective elaborates on the system's logic embodied in the former organizational principle of responsibility. That is, it emphasizes the internal processes and mechanisms by which firms can interact with and adapt to the external environment. The aim of such adaptive interaction is given by the reformulated organizational principle: Business organizations have economizing and ecologizing responsibilities. The importance of the executive mindset in accepting and carrying out this responsibility is the subject of the next section.

3 The Executive Mindset and Value-Attuned Corporate Social Performance

Swanson (1999, 2008, 2014) extended her integrative perspective on corporate social performance to a prototype of executive leadership.² Before this prototype is described, it is important to emphasize that it is an *ideal type*.

3.1 The Method for Attunement Theorizing

Attunement theorizing relies on the method put forth by German social theorist and political economist Weber (1922/1947), which focuses on a subject's distinctive features so that logical implications can be drawn across levels of analysis. Since this method accentuates a one-sided view of a phenomenon, it can be used to generate theoretical implications from existing classifications of research topics (Bailey, 1994). It is used herein to identify the logic implied by the previously discussed classifications of business and society research topics. Figure 1 illustrates that this logic culminated in the understanding that corporate social responsiveness provides the means for carrying out responsible corporate performance, conceptualized in terms of triple bottom line impacts. Given the stakes, it is important to understand the internal decision processes that preclude or facilitate these impacts (Swanson, 1995). Doing so may provide clues for understanding the nature of the relationship between corporate social and financial performance, a prospect to which we shall return.

Since the method of ideal typing can be used to link implications across individual, organizational, and societal levels of analysis, it can be employed to personify executive leadership in terms of organizational decision processes that can facilitate responsible societal impacts. To preview this personification, Swanson modeled an executive's ability to be receptive to values, referred to as *normative receptivity*, as rendering an organization capable of attuning to the social, environmental, and economic expectations of stakeholders. Put differently, attunement points to the potential that executives have to lead their firms in a quest for responsible social performance, defined in terms of triple bottom line goals.

It is important to stress that this prototype of executive leadership does not represent an actual executive of a specific organization. Nor does it constitute a full-fledged theory. Rather, it represents a system of pure logic that can be used as a point of reference for theory development that incorporates the executive mindset as a driver of responsible social performance. In reality, organizations can be

²Swanson's (1999) article, in which this prototype was introduced, was selected for the Best Article Award by the International Association of Business in Society in association with the *California Management Review* in 2001.

expected to exhibit degrees of attunement, just as executive decision-making can exhibit degrees of normative receptivity.

3.2 Executive Normative Receptivity and the Potential for Value Attunement

An important task for executive managers is to anticipate social problems and work toward their solutions (Drucker, 1968). This is not possible if executives neglect society's expectations of corporate responsibility (Scott & Hart, 1979). With this in mind, Swanson (1999, 2008, 2014) formulated normative receptivity as representing an executive mindset that consciously strives to incorporate the values important to stakeholders in decision making while leading other employees to do the same. Her modeling of this dynamic is given in Fig. 2, where two-way arrows indicate that the executive can direct other employees to transmit information about values throughout the organization and back to his or her office. In this way, organizational decision processes can become imbued with information regarding stakeholder expectations of social, environmental, and economic responsibilities. In the process, attuned responsiveness to these expectations becomes feasible. This scenario epitomizes the potential for an enhanced awareness of value information to be transmitted throughout the informal and formal organization and acted upon by external affairs specialists, executives, and other employees. This potential is illustrated in Fig. 2 in terms of a *hierarchical expansion of value information*, *value-discovery culture*, and *value-expanded detection* of social issues, which are described next.

Executive value premises greatly influence decision making in the formal or hierarchical organization (Schein, 2010; Simon, 1957). In terms of directing attunement in this realm, executives can encourage a hierarchical expansion of value information by mandating that such information be detected by external affairs employees and included in reports, memos, agendas, and other official means of communication. That done, it becomes possible for stakeholder expectations to be detected and considered in a timely manner. Another formal means of leading attunement is that executives can direct human resource managers to hire candidates adept at value receptive decision making, train them further in this skill, and structure annual performance evaluations to reward it (Orlitzky & Swanson, 2006; Savitz, 2013). Additionally, executives can formally encourage the transmission of value information by establishing an anonymous whistleblower hotline and utilizing an ombudsperson who can work with employees to ensure that internal value conflicts are resolved in a timely manner. Otherwise, the suppression of information relevant to triple bottom line goals may occur, as when a concern for product or environmental safety in one department comes into conflict with a drive to meet production deadlines or sales quotas in another (see Schein, 2010).

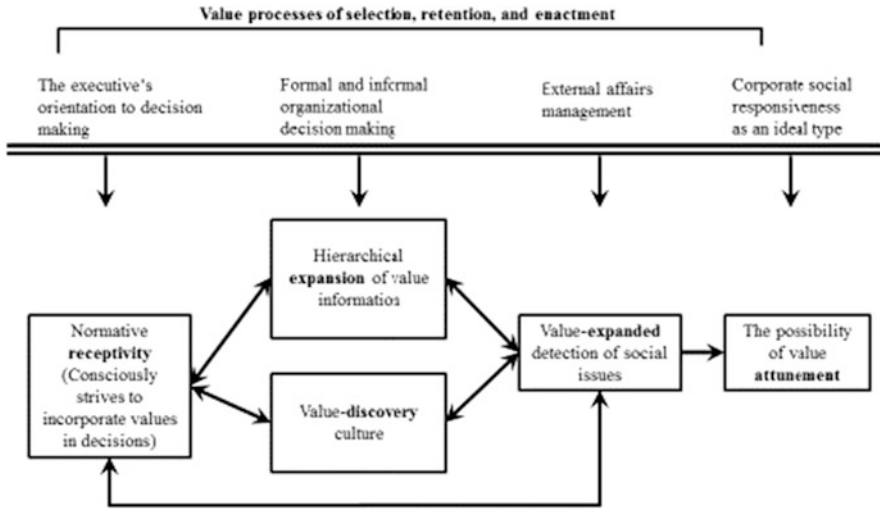


Fig. 2 The potential for organizational value attunement. Adapted from Swanson (1999, 2014). Reproduced with permission

In terms of the informal organization, Swanson (2014) asserts that one of the most important ways that executives can encourage a value-discovery culture is to walk the talk and embody normative receptivity in word and deed. For example, if an executive handles a product or environmental crisis swiftly to address stakeholder concerns, then the object lesson for employees is that attunement in action is prioritized. Another informal means for supporting attunement is that executives can mentor employees to be receptive to value information and establish organizational rituals that reinforce this attitude. For instance, executives can arrange for an annual event at which employees who excel at detecting and communicating value information are publicly recognized.

Adapting Weick's (1969) perspective on decision processes, the variety of value information in the formal and informal organization can potentially increase as subordinates select, retain, and enact the normative receptivity of the executive. This likelihood, illustrated by the top bracket in Fig. 2, depends on the ability of external affairs employees to detect the values represented by stakeholder preferences and communicate them to other employees. This dynamic makes it possible for an organization to embody the same degree of information variety that is represented by its stakeholder environment. This, in turn, makes adapting to that environment possible (see Ashby, 1962), a prospect shown in Fig. 2 as value attunement that is bolstered by a value-expanded detection of social issues by the office of external affairs.

3.3 Some Implications for Research

A more complete modeling of attunement awaits a better understanding of the individual and organizational values that can serve responsible social performance. Swanson (2014) broached this subject by looking to CSR3 research to propose that the personally held values of broadmindedness, capability, courage, helpfulness, honesty, imagination, independence, and sense of responsibility among employees may facilitate their enactment of triple bottom line goals. She proffered that certain organizational values may also serve these goals, including compliance, efficiency, economic growth, employee cohesion, innovation, learning, productivity, product quality, safety, teamwork, cooperation, communication, transparency, and trust (see also Frederick, 1995; Savitz, 2013).

Future attunement theorizing will need to account not only for personal and organizational values but their interactions as well. For instance, it is important to understand the values that can be synergistic in pursuing triple bottom line goals and those that may come into conflict. An example of the latter case was given previously as the possibility that a concern for product or environmental safety in one department may clash with a drive to meet production deadlines or sales quotas in another. Moreover, it is important to understand conditions under which employees need to question value assumptions. For instance, if employees assume that the importance of teamwork means that they cannot question consensus, then their silence could detract from value discovery and attunement. Notwithstanding the need for further research in these areas, executive normative receptivity can be seen as a necessary but insufficient condition for attunement and a point of reference for exploring the conceptual integration of corporate social and financial performance that has characterized the trajectory of corporate responsibility research in recent years (see Carroll, 2008).

4 Explaining the Relationship Between Corporate Social and Financial Performance

Theoretically, Fig. 1 depicts corporate social performance as the simultaneous pursuit of social, environmental, and economic goals. Empirically, the relationship between corporate social performance on the one hand and corporate financial or economic performance on the other is still under investigation, following decades of research. This section uses Swanson's (1999, 2008, 2014) prototype of value attunement as a conceptual benchmark for considering the empirical relationship between corporate social and financial performance, beginning with the possibility of a tradeoff.

4.1 *A Tradeoff?*

Some economists and ethicists consider the pursuit of value attunement as harmful to financial performance because executives do not have the necessary skills—especially when compared to elected government officials and public servants—to make informed decisions about social and environmental problems. Consequently, according to this view, shareholder funds targeted for social benefits that are uncorrelated with economic performance would be inefficient and wasteful. The implication of this reasoning proposed by, among others, Friedman (1970), is that the more value-attuned the corporation, the lower its financial performance. Viewed from this perspective, value attunement would come with significant economic tradeoffs because the attuned organization would often use scarce resources that cannot be linked with enhanced financial performance (Porter & Kramer, 2011). This view can, in a misunderstanding of Friedman's (1970) arguments, be invoked to justify a single-minded pursuit of shareholder wealth maximization that is unencumbered by ethical expectations from a plurality of stakeholders.

4.2 *A Complementary Relationship?*

In contrast, a second view, which is primarily based on stakeholder theory (Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Freeman, 1984), implies that a value-attuned corporation needs to evaluate its impact on society comprehensively and act on socially responsible principles and values of protecting and improving its social and natural environments. Such an attuned organization would, in line with Fig. 2, develop internal structures and processes capable of responding constructively to a wide variety of stakeholder concerns, ranging from product safety to pollution prevention to employee work-life balance. From this vantage, value attunement can be seen as the outcome of an interactive relationship and trust-building process between the organization and its internal and external constituents (Calton & Lad, 1995; Frooman, 1999; Johansen & Nielsen, 2011). This perspective is compatible with instrumental stakeholder theory (Jones, 1995), which conveys that an organization is more likely to achieve its economic goals if it tries to satisfy its various stakeholders' needs and interests in a balanced way. In terms of attuned social responsiveness, a corporation may be able to enhance its economic effectiveness by gaining a favorable reputation for fair business dealings, which can attract more customers (i.e., increase sales revenues) or better and more committed employees (i.e., increase labor productivity). In turn, higher financial performance may allow organizations to spend more money on social or environmental causes (McGuire, Sundgren, & Schneeweis, 1988). Hence, these complementarities between social and financial performance could be expected to result in self-reinforcing cycles of overall organizational effectiveness or success.

4.3 Or Independence?

A third strand of theorizing implies an independent (or null) relationship between social and financial performance based on the notion that the provision of corporate social responsibility, like other normal goods, is largely determined by forces of supply and demand (Mackey, Mackey, & Barney, 2007). The implication is that market forces will cause the overall relationship to be zero, or null, although a number of contingencies (e.g., firm size or innovation) may also cause it to be positive or negative (Barnett, 2007; McWilliams & Siegel, 2000, 2001). According to this economic worldview, corporate social performance that can be considered irresponsible may sometimes have clear financial pay-offs because market forces, such as ruthless cost competition, may demand it from a utilitarian cost–benefit perspective (Shleifer, 2004; Swanson, 1995). At other times, it is the value-attuned firm that might be able to increase its own prices and profits, because of customers' willingness to pay more for sustainable products; or it might incur indirect competitive advantages by forcing its rivals to incur higher costs in order to compete with other socially responsible firms (McWilliams, Van Fleet, & Cory, 2002). Overall, the association between corporate social and financial performance is indeterminate, according to this third interpretation.

4.4 General Empirical Findings and Some Implications for Research

The award-winning and highly influential meta-analysis by Orlitzky et al. (2003)³ suggests that value attunement may serve as a foundation for a corporation's high economic performance. Through the use of time lags, Orlitzky and his colleagues demonstrated not only that responsible social performance tends to be a positive determinant of future financial performance, but also that high financial performance generally leads to the availability of corporate funds for activities related to value attunement (e.g., stakeholder dialogues, organizational climate surveys, ethical training programs, and environmental initiatives that go beyond legal mandates). Arguably, these meta-analytic findings indicate that a value-attuned

³This meta-analysis won the 2004 Moskowitz Award for outstanding quantitative research relevant to the social investment field for practical significance to practitioners of socially responsible investing, appropriateness and rigor of quantitative methods, and novelty of results. It has also become the most widely cited article ever published in *Organization Studies*. As of September 2015, this article has been cited 951 times on the Web of Science and 3676 times on Google Scholar. In general, meta-analysis is an empirical quantitative integration of the findings of previous research and corrects for certain study artifacts, such as sampling error or measurement error (Schmidt & Hunter, 2015) and has become the standard method in most quantitative sciences (e.g., medicine, physics, psychology) for drawing overall conclusions in a research area (Hunt, 1997).

business can develop mutually beneficial relations with stakeholder groups, which, according to these findings, may sometimes—but not always or inevitably—pay off for the value-attuned firm surprisingly fast—within a relatively short period of time, often within 1 year.

Corporate social performance and financial performance are most likely positively correlated because value attunement may boost managerial competencies in general (Waddock & Graves, 1997) and enhance corporate reputation (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Roberts & Dowling, 2002). Due to a company's constructive (rather than adversarial) relationships, its organizational constituents may perceive the company favorably and show their loyalty in commercially beneficial ways. For example, internal stakeholders, such as employees, may become more committed to the attuned organization, and external stakeholders, such as customers, may become more willing to buy its products or pay a premium for its goods or services. Granted, the meta-analysis suggests that competency-building is less important than reputation for the economic effects of value-attunement. Nonetheless, attunement theorizing suggests that socially responsible organizations develop internal learning mechanisms to deal with the uncertainties presented by stakeholder pressures, such as the detection and communication of social issues by the office of external affairs management discussed previously.

Organizational activities related to value attunement may also be economically beneficial by lowering business risk. Indeed, the meta-analytic findings reported by Orlitzky and Benjamin (2001) suggest that this risk-related benefit is mediated by organizational reputation. By balancing a multitude of stakeholder interests, a firm may increase various constituents' confidence that it will be able to resolve stakeholder conflicts deftly. In turn, this expectation may reduce variability in accounting rates of return and share prices—two common operationalizations of risk—because investors who lack such confidence might respond to temporary organizational set-backs by selling their stock. This area is ripe for further research, given that panic-selling increases the variability of stock prices and, thus, business risk.

Another set of meta-analytic findings sheds light on how a lack of attunement might destroy economic value. By using a meta-analysis of event studies, Frooman (1997) shows that the disclosure of irresponsible and illicit corporate actions may lower shareholder wealth in general. This inverse relationship between firm behavior that is deemed illegitimate and shareholder wealth highlights the danger of losing touch with stakeholder expectations of responsible behavior, a prospect congruent with attunement. The corollary is that irresponsible corporate conduct is no recipe for long-term economic success.

Considered altogether, moving toward attunement seems to be in a company's best financial interest. Importantly, this prescription is not limited to large multinational corporations. That is, meta-analytic findings show that not only large but also small companies can reap economic rewards when they engage in behaviors that are consistent with value-attuned management practices (Orlitzky, 2001). The causal logic recalls the potential benefits of constructive stakeholder relationships proffered before. In this case, a value-attuned small company may, for example,

infuse greater trust in its relationship with other firms in its supply chain and, as a result, reach more economically beneficial agreements.

Overall, Orlitzky et al.'s (2003) meta-analytic findings indicate that the variability in empirical observations across studies is, on the whole, more apparent than real. For example, sampling and measurement errors alone accounted, on average, for 24 % of the variance across studies. Similarly, contingency factors, such as the operationalization of variables, may help explain a considerable proportion of variance. For instance, reputation measures of social performance were better predictors of financial performance than social audit disclosures. Or, as another example, the effect size of improved social performance was larger for accounting measures than market measures of economic return.

Yet, three crucial caveats apply to Orlitzky's research on the empirical compatibility between social and financial performance. First, each discipline-based research community can be shown to find exactly what it sets out to find (Orlitzky, 2011). If this phenomenon of hypothesis confirmation bias applies to particular research communities (be they economists, accountants, ethicists, management researchers, and so on), we may conclude that empirical truth is made or, expressed more pejoratively, manufactured instead of discovered. In turn, such a conclusion would reduce our epistemological confidence in the generalizability of not only the findings contained in primary studies, but also those of secondary studies, such as the meta-analyses summarized before. Further studies should seek to assess whether confirmation bias affects empirical studies that indicate a compatibility between social and financial performance.

Second, we cannot necessarily assume that the maximum amount of value attainment necessarily pays off the most. Some studies show the empirical relationships between social and financial performance to be curvilinear (Barnett & Salomon, 2006). Curvilinear results imply that there is an economically optimal level of responsible social performance because its association with financial performance can best be portrayed as an inverted U rather than a straight line. The latter would indicate continuously increasing pay-offs to a firm, while the former indicates pay-offs *only up to a point*. Although a normative prescription might be that a business firm should continually strive for more value attainment, empirical evidence suggests that there may be decreasing returns to shareholders', investors', or business owners' economic interests once an optimal level has been reached. This is an area ripe for further empirical research.

Third, value attainment is extremely difficult to capture and observe accurately—especially for firm outsiders. The temptation in the contemporary business climate may be for some corporate executives to embrace the appearance of attainment without a genuine commitment to it. Such appearance could lead to asymmetric information in product, labor, and equity markets based on different perceptions of value attainment. This introduction of what may be called *noise* in various markets could be exacerbated by the difficulty outside stakeholders have in accurately assessing the execution of value attainment. Hence, rather than reducing risk, the appearance of value attainment may, in fact, drive up stock market volatility and inflate stock prices artificially (Orlitzky, 2013). If this happens,

market risk (i.e., the risk engendered in entire financial markets) can be expected to go up rather than down. This final caveat underscores that it is not valid to generalize conclusions from one level of analysis (the firm) to another (the entire financial market) without further investigation.

5 Summarizing Prospects for Integration

The empirical research to date largely supports the view that that corporate social and financial performance can integratively manifest, in tandem, the goals of the triple bottom line. The model of value attunement provides theoretical support for the role of the executive manager in leveraging this relationship. However, a more complete understanding of the conceptual integration of social and financial performance awaits further theoretical and empirical inquiry. To summarize some of our previous points, theoretical research needs to shed more light on the role of employee value assumptions while accounting for an inventory of personal and organizational values and how their interactions that can facilitate or detract from attunement. In terms of empirical research, it is important to reassess if prior studies are biased toward finding a positive relationship between social and financial performance. Other areas for investigation include discerning if there is an optimal level of attunement for a firm, whether financial markets can accurately assess it, and if market risk increases if attunement is misattributed to firms.

Some reflective questions associated with this research stream are given next.

6 Exercise and Reflective Questions

1. How can external affairs employees communicate stakeholder value expectations to executives and other employees?
2. What value-based expectations do consumers, stockholders, employees, suppliers, and regulators have of corporations?
3. To what extent can values-based expectations be ascribed to collectives (such as entire stakeholder groups) versus only individuals?
4. Under what circumstances could corporations face tradeoffs between social, environmental, and economic goals?
5. What would happen to society if corporations abandoned attunement efforts?
6. Describe some circumstances that could cause some values to come into conflict with others in organizational life.
7. What personal or organizational values may be complementary in facilitating attunement?
8. Could public policy play a role in corporate attunement? If so, how?
9. What would the business school curriculum look like if organized around a conceptual integration of corporate social and financial performance?

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Communicating Corporate Social Responsibility for Brands

Christian Boris Brunner and Tobias Langner

Abstract Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has developed to become one of the top priority issues in brand management and research. Brands can benefit from CSR activities and its communication in many ways such as an improvement of reputation, an increase in willingness to pay and intention to buy. However, inappropriately applied CSR communication can significantly harm the brand. To ensure a positive effectiveness of the CSR engagement, the article provides an extensive set of guidelines for brand managers.

1 Corporate Social Responsibility as a Brand's Success Factor

In the last decade, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has developed to become one of the top priority issues in brand management (e.g., Hillenbrand, Money, & Ghobadian, 2013). Brands such as Fairphone cell phones or Patagonia outdoor equipment employ CSR to position themselves in highly saturated markets and to differentiate themselves from competitors. These companies align their whole business strategy to CSR. At every touchpoint, they communicate their social and environmental friendly activities successfully to consumers who in turn respond with a favorable attitude towards these brands. However, even traditional corporations such as Henkel or Procter & Gamble frequently use CSR activities to strengthen their brands.

By applying CSR, companies aim to achieve a variety of different objectives, such as increasing their brand reputation and generating goodwill in the public opinion, differentiating their brand from competing brands, enhancing consumers' attitudes

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towards the brand, fostering brand loyalty, and increasing consumers' willingness to pay higher prices for the brand's products or services (e.g., Chernev & Blair, 2015).

Unsurprisingly, there has been a huge research effort on CSR in academia. The number of papers exploring the success factors of CSR strategies has dramatically increased over the last decade. While a huge number of studies demonstrate the positive effects of CSR, there are also opposite findings that emphasize the risk of inappropriately applied CSR activities. If consumers, for instance, mainly assume egoistic motives for a brand's CSR activities, consumers consider these as 'greenwashing' and may punish the brand with a wide range of negative reactions such as negative word of mouth or consumer boycotts. For instance, the electrical power group RWE launched the "Green Giant" campaign in which the company stressed its engagement in sustainable energy in 2009. However, at the same time, the company did not change its business and farther relied on coal, nuclear power, and agro fuels. Hence, the brand did not 'walk the talk'. The result was that non-profit organizations such as Greenpeace launched a campaign against RWE's greenwashing. Subsequently, RWE experienced a storm of indignation on the Internet. Thus, CSR has to be considered as a coherent part of how the brand behaves and not as a mere marketing tool to increase the sales rate. If CSR is not an integrated part of marketing communication, CSR activities may exert negative backfire effects on the brand due to inconsistent brand messages.

2 Defining Corporate Social Responsibility

The idea of CSR is not new. Initial attempts at CSR, such as corporate philanthropy or donations to charities, have been already observed at the end of the eighteenth century in the US (e.g., Brønn & Vrioni, 2001; Sethi, 1977). In these times, mainly those companies engaged in CSR activities that were able to afford it (Brønn & Vrioni, 2001). Later, during the Industrial Revolution in the nineteenth century, business leaders began to take care of the workers and their families' needs, providing them with housing and other amenities in the vicinity of the factories. Factory towns such as Bourneville and Port Sunlight in Britain or George Pullman's town in the US are examples of these early CSR activities (Smith, 2003).

In the 1950s, Bowen introduced CSR to modern management literature. His publication "Social Responsibilities of the businessmen" received great attention regarding a company's responsibility towards its stakeholders: "It refers to the obligations of businessmen to pursue those policies, to make those decisions, or to follow those lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society"(Bowen, 1953, 6; similar: Davis, 1960; Frederick 1960; McGuire, 1963). Later, Davis extended this understanding of CSR, arguing that institutions and companies are also citizens of society that need to take the consequences of their decisions for society into account (Davis, 1967). Particularly in the late 1960s and early 1970s, business organizations such as The Conference Board in

Corporate philanthropy	An activity above and beyond what is required of an organisation and which can have a significant impact on the communities in which a company operates (Lerner & Fryxell, 1988; Mullen, 1997). Giving to charities in the form of a percentage of pre-tax earnings, it provides a concrete measure of the social effort of corporate managers. Corporate philanthropy is likely to enhance the image of companies that have high public visibility (84% of American adults believe that CRM creates a positive company image).
Social disclosure	Refers to the company's performance in providing information on societal initiatives undertaken by the firm. To the extent that corporations provide data on their societal programmes, they are responding to societal needs and expectations regarding social disclosure (Lerner & Fryxell, 1988).
Company's environmental record	Pro-social positioning of many firms is identified with their pro-environment policies that affect air and water (Mullen, 1997). This increasing concern with environmental issues is explained through (1) the influence that consumers' environmental concerns have on product offering, (2) the multidimensional character of these issues (Osterhus, 1997).
Workforce diversity	Percentage of woman and minorities on the board and/or in the organisation are perceived as aspects of a company's humanistic contribution to equality in the workplace (Mullen, 1997).
Financial health and tendency to grow	Raters attempting to judge a company's social responsibility generally recognise the importance of that company's financial health. Stanwick and Stanwick (1998) provide evidence to support the view that profitability of a firm allows and/or encourages managers to implement programmes that increase the level of CSR; in other words, a corporation's level of social responsibility is affected by the firm's financial performance. The financial angle, however, is not enough to judge the level of CSR. A company may have excellent employee benefits but if it goes out of business those benefits become meaningless. Instead, growing companies are perceived as more pro-social, as they can offer employees more opportunities for advancement (Fombrun, 1998).
Community involvement	Companies that score highest for their community involvement appear to make more charitable contributions, encourage more employee volunteer programmes, and have greater local economic impact (tax revenues, jobs, educational programmes and investments).

Fig. 1 Concepts associated with CSR. *Source:* Brønn and Vrioni (2001, 210)

the U.S. or the Confederation of British Industry in the U.K. emphasized the importance of CSR (Smith, 2003).

The current understanding of CSR can be summarized as “the organization’s status and activities with respect to its perceived societal obligations” (Brown & Dacin, 1997, 68). In this view, companies have responsibilities towards all their stakeholders that go beyond their legal obligations (Brønn & Vrioni, 2001). Thus, CSR can include several concepts as shown in Fig. 1.

From a managerial point of view, CSR activities are often seen as investments into the brand’s reputation to generate goodwill in the consumer’s mind (e.g., Chernev & Blair, 2015). However, consumers are in general skeptical about CSR. They often question the motives behind CSR activities.

3 Strategies for a Successful CSR Communication

3.1 *Brand Positioning: The Cornerstone of Brand Management*

Similarly as for every brand related marketing activity, the key for CSR success is based on a brand’s positioning. CSR strategies and communication activities have to be aligned to the brand positioning and managers have to ensure that CSR activities fit the brand. Thus, a brand positioning needs to be defined first. After that, product design, packaging, communication, distribution channels or pricing have to follow the brand’s positioning.

In the brand positioning strategy, companies define the position the brand should gain in the consumer’s mind related to its competitors (Keller, 2013). It “involves identifying and establishing points of parity and points of difference [. . .] to create the proper brand image” (Keller, Apéria, & Georgson, 2008, 94). Thus, brand positioning refers to the associations consumers learn to connect with a brand and its products or services. To create a strong brand, the targeted associations have to fulfill three requirements (Keller, 2013; Kroeber-Riel & Esch, 2015):

- (1) *Brand positioning associations should be different*: The associations should differ from associations which competing brands communicate. Ideally, positioning associations are perceived as unique.
- (2) *Brand positioning associations should be relevant*: Relevant means that these associations should make the brand attractive for customers. Thus, they should stress brand characteristics that generate strong functional and/or emotional benefits.
- (3) *Brand positioning associations should be long-lasting*: In general, brand positioning should address customer needs that are relevant for a long time.

Beiersdorf, for instance, meets these three requirements with regard to the position of its body care brand Nivea: The brand has become a synonym for being “gentle,” “protective,” and “caring” (Keller, 2013). Similarly, the brand Milka stands for ultimate tender alpine milk chocolate (Langner, Brune, & Fischer, 2013).

3.2 CSR Strategies for Brands: How to Align CSR and Brand Positioning

Like every decision in brand management, the decision for a specific CSR strategy should follow the brand positioning. Companies have to address the question of which role CSR should play for a particular brand. Basically, there are three different approaches to employ CSR activities for brands (Fig. 2; Brunner, 2010, Brunner, Esch, & Ullrich, 2015; see for another differentiation: Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2007a). The decision for these approaches depends on the needs of the target groups a brand addresses. Thus, consumers’ buying motives determine which role CSR should play within a brand strategy.

CSR is the Core of Brand Positioning This strategy promises success, if the purchase decisions of a brand’s target group are primarily driven by values that relate to CSR. These ‘CSR brands’ are purchased because they meet the high social and environmental requirements of their customers. Within this approach, a brand is positioned primarily on a CSR criterion (e.g., Du et al., 2007a). Fairphone is an example for this strategy: These smartphones are produced in an environmentally friendly production chain; employees and suppliers are treated in a socially responsible manner. Against this extremely high CSR standard, Fairphone customers are even willing to accept the technical inferiority of these smartphones compared to the market leading products of Apple and Samsung.

CSR is a Supplement of Brand Positioning Brands that are primarily positioned on functional (e.g., product quality) or hedonic (e.g., brand experience) benefits can employ CSR as a supplement of their positioning. Brands using this strategy extend their positioning via CSR activities (e.g., social charities, environmentally friendly packaging). For instance, the corporate brand Henkel was originally positioned via the superior quality of its product brands. Then the company extended its corporate positioning and included CSR. The slogan was changed from “Quality from



Fig. 2 CSR strategies for brands. Source: adapted from Esch and Brunner (2010)

Henkel” to “Quality and social responsibility from Henkel”. These two positioning attributes are communicated in all brand touchpoints (e.g., TV commercials, print ads).

CSR is not Part of Brand Positioning The third strategic approach is appropriate for brands addressing target groups that are not primarily influenced in their purchase behavior by CSR activities. These consumers are not interested in a brand’s CSR background. They purchase the products or services of a particular brand primarily due to the functional and/or emotional needs these products satisfy. However, even for these brands, CSR activities might be helpful. For instance, if a brand offers products or services in a category in which gentleness-related attributes are valued by consumers (e.g., a baby shampoo has to be soft), CSR activities might enhance the perception of these product benefits (Luchs, Naylor, Irwin, & Raghunathan, 2010). Conversely, CSR activities might harm product evaluations, if consumers may infer a mediocre product quality due to CSR. For instance, in product categories such as dishwashing liquids or car tires, consumers’ associations to sustainability might decrease a brand’s perceived performance (Luchs et al., 2010).

3.3 *Integrated Marketing Communication: How to Embed CSR into an Integrated Marketing Approach*

Across all different brand touchpoints, the different messages of a brand should be coordinated. As far as possible, the brand’s positioning should be conveyed at every single contact point to ensure the building of a coherent brand image (Langner, Brune, & Fischer, 2013). This ‘one voice policy’ requires that product design, packaging, communication, distribution, and pricing have to be aligned to the brand’s positioning (e.g., Belch & Belch, 1998). If CSR is a part of the positioning as it is for the strategies “*CSR is the core of brand positioning*” and “*CSR is a supplement of brand positioning*”, CSR activities have to be embedded into a brand’s integrated marketing approach.

A good example for an integrated marketing communication process, in which CSR is an important part of the brand’s positioning, is provided by Patagonia. The brand stands for outdoor clothes and equipment, aiming to build the best products for people who love nature while being concerned about environmental and social issues. The management defined the following mission statement for the brand: “Build the best product, cause no unnecessary harm, use business to inspire and implement solutions to the environmental crisis” (Patagonia, 2015). The idea of saving the environment and acting responsibly towards society is reflected within the whole company and supply chain: Patagonia ensures that its products are produced under safe, fair, legal and humane working conditions. Furthermore, the company permanently examines its environmental footprint to minimize its negative effect on the planet along the whole supply chain. For instance, Patagonia uses

organic cotton, grown in the US, and selects partners for wool sourcing that ensure a strong and consistent approach to animal welfare.

These CSR values are communicated across all customer touchpoints in an integrated manner. To address consumers in a pre-purchase phase, the brand uses campaigns with short and simple messages (e.g., “buy less to save the planet”) that quickly convey the brand’s CSR positioning. On the website, consumers receive detailed information about the products and their CSR qualities. In a very transparent manner, Patagonia gives detailed information for each product about its supply chain and the contributions each supplier provides to the environment and to society. In the post-purchase phase, Patagonia provides helpful instructions on how to care for the products to ensure their longevity. Patagonia also offers a lifelong repair service for each product (“buy less, repair more”). To further strengthen the idea of a long-term product usage, the brand helps customers to sell used clothes to other consumers. Patagonia shows how CSR can be effectively embedded into an integrated marketing approach that supports the brand positioning along all customers touchpoints across the whole customer buying cycle.

4 Internal CSR Communication: How to Establish a CSR Culture Within a Company

4.1 The CSR Iceberg: CSR Culture and CSR Communication

Before starting to communicate CSR activities, companies need to ensure that these activities are anchored in their corporate culture. Management and employees have to match their behavior to the CSR activities. For example, companies that engage in and communicate CSR activities to reforest the rainforest should generally encourage their employees to maintain an environmentally friendly behavior. These companies should follow general CSR rules in their daily business. Otherwise, they risk becoming the object of serious brand crises in which consumers might even boycott the brand. Thus, employees have to understand CSR values and to adjust their behavior to these, internally and externally.

During the last decade, several brands have started to communicate CSR activities to consumers via advertising or CSR reports with the aim to increase reputation or to generate ‘goodwill’ among the public (e.g., Murray & Vogel, 1997). Thereby, the internal perspective of CSR has often been neglected. Employees have not been addressed by internal communication to ensure that their values and behaviors are consistent with externally communicated CSR values. Consequently, consumers frequently perceived CSR activities as a brand’s egoistic behavior aiming to persuade consumers to purchase their products or services rather than being truly engaged to contribute to society (e.g., Skarmeas & Leonidou, 2013).

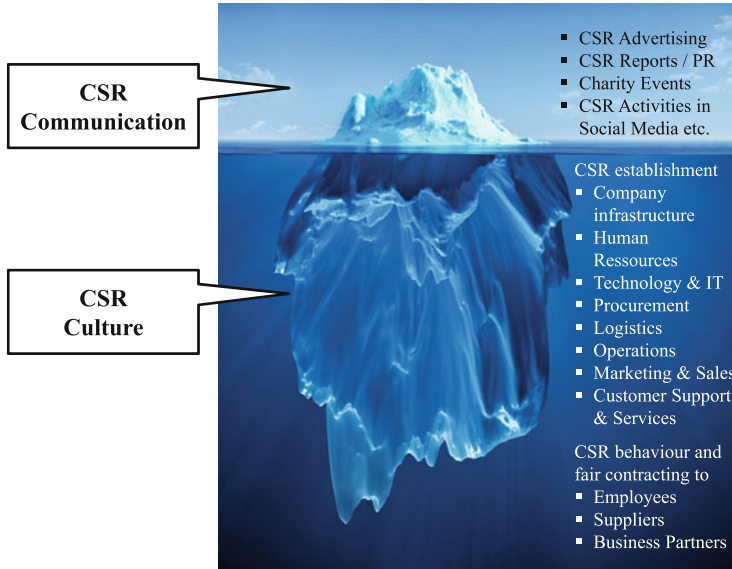


Fig. 3 CSR Iceberg: differentiation of CSR culture and CSR communication. *Source*, adapted from Brunner (2010) (Picture: iStock.com/cosmin4000)

Thus, one should differentiate between two entities of CSR based on the receiver of the CSR message: CSR communication to external stakeholder groups and CSR culture within a company. Depending on the type of receiver (e.g., internal versus external) different CSR messages need to be adopted. Therefore, we employ the metaphor of an iceberg (Fig. 3): Above the surface of the water, we find *CSR communication*, which is visible for external stakeholder groups through marketing communications. Thereby, consumers become aware of a company's CSR activities. CSR communication encompasses one-sided communication activities such as advertising, PR activities, CSR reports, point of sale activities, charities or sponsoring activities, but, also two-sided communication activities such as sales conversations with customers, events and fairs, or social media activities (Brunner, 2010).

Below the surface of the water, one finds the *CSR culture* that includes the general sustainable socially responsible behavior of a company towards its environment and/or society. This responsible and/or sustainable behavior is practiced every day within the company, but is often not visible for external stakeholders. The challenge for external stakeholder groups is to recognize whether a brand, which communicates its CSR activities through advertising, genuinely acts in a socially responsible and/or sustainable manner within the company and its processes. For instance, it is nearly impossible for consumers to evaluate whether a company pays fair wages to employees or suppliers. In contrast, there might be companies that act in a socially responsible and/or sustainable manner, but do not communicate such activities to external stakeholder groups. A reason for this might be that the

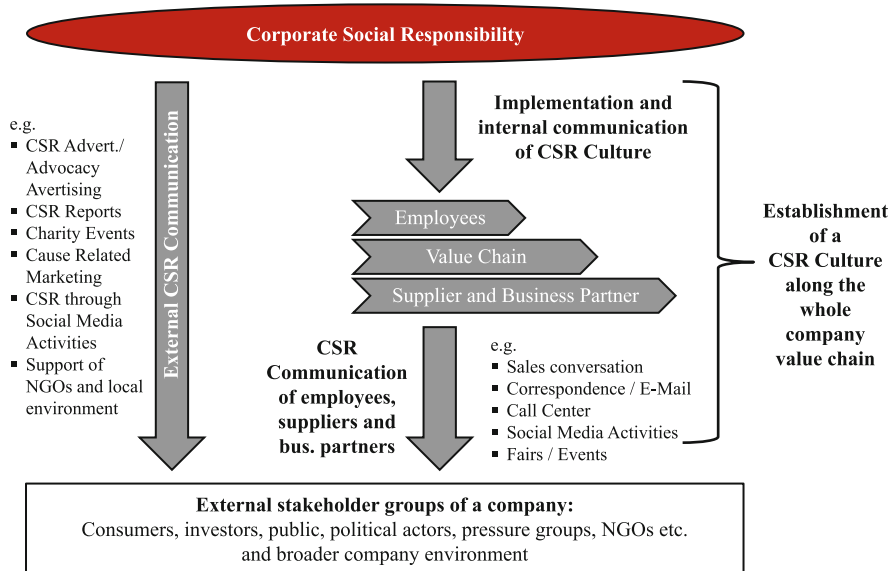


Fig. 4 Internal and external CSR communication. Source: Brunner (2014, 355)

management does not intend to be seen as opportunistic when communicating CSR, or managers might fear that a CSR positioning would decrease consumers’ perceptions of the quality of their products (see Chapter “The Responsibility of Companies: A Critical Introduction” for details).

4.2 Means for Implementing a CSR Culture

In order to establish a coherent CSR culture within the company and along its supply chain, a company needs to monitor its processes and activities in regard to sustainability, ethical standards and its impact on the environment and society. Based on this initial evaluation the processes and procedures have to be aligned with the required CSR standards. Hereby, it is important to include employees within this process to evaluate current standards and to discover possibilities for improvement. Furthermore, especially if external CSR advisors are included in this process, employees’ acceptance is important, because in a coherent CSR culture each employee needs to ‘live’ the sustainable and ethical idea in his/her daily life.

When introducing a CSR culture, the management needs to set up clear sustainable and ethical aims. Then internal communication is the key: The CSR culture needs to be communicated to internal stakeholder first, particularly to employees, suppliers and business partners. Hereby, the management has to act as role models for their team. In this internal CSR communication process workshops, storytelling, and conversations with employees should be included. Additionally, internal

marketing communications such as internal campaigns and internal mailings should be used. Especially employees who have contact to the customer should receive special training, since their behavior has a strong impact on the company's reputation (Fig. 4).

5 External CSR Communication: How to Communicate CSR Activities Successfully to External Stakeholders

After a CSR culture is successfully established within a company internally, CSR activities have to be communicated externally. Several factors need to be taken into account to ensure that external CSR communication is effective. In the following chapter, we specify a process with several steps that brand managers need to consider when deciding to communicate CSR externally (Brunner, 2010).

First, a brand manager needs to consider whether the communication of CSR activities might harm the perception of product benefits. Second, it is essential to explore how CSR fits to the brand's core business and the brand image. Hereby, it is important to consider the brand strength as well. Third, it is essential to take the target groups and their needs into account: Is CSR relevant for the target group and are consumers involved with CSR? For target groups of The Body Shop, for instance, CSR is highly relevant, while it might be irrelevant for the target groups of other brands. Further, the brand identification of the target group can enhance the effectiveness of CSR. In addition, the situation in which the product is used might be important, especially if it is consumed in public. Further, when making tactical decisions about a concrete CSR activity, managers need to decide from which sender the CSR activity should be communicated to consumers. This is essential as the credibility of a message might change depending on the source of communication. Finally, the consumers' anticipated motives of the brand's CSR communication are essential. These requirements will be discussed in the next chapters in more detail.

5.1 Decisions Regarding the Brand

5.1.1 Considerations Regarding the Core Business and Product Benefits: Does the CSR Activity Fit the Brand's Core Business and Does It Harm the Brand's Key Benefit?

Managers need to take into account whether CSR is linked to their core business. Several studies show that a high fit between core business and CSR can enhance the effectiveness of a CSR activity (Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, & Hill, 2006; Ellen, Webb, & Mohr, 2006; Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998). Furthermore, Sen and

Bhattacharya (2001) found that consumers perceive a brand as more favorable, if the CSR activity is relevant to its core business.

Concerning the perceived benefit of a brand, Luchs and colleagues (2010) point out that whether sustainability is an asset depends on the type of benefit a product provides to customers. In categories in which strength as a brand attribute is valued (such as laundry detergents, automobile tires, and liquid hand sanitizer) sustainability might even be a liability, since consumers may infer that the product performance is lower. In contrast, in product categories in which gentleness-related attributes are important (e.g., baby shampoo) ethicality can be an asset when evaluating product performance (Luchs et al., 2010). However, if managers decide to communicate CSR activities for brands in a product category in which strength of the product is important, additional information has to be provided that stresses the high quality of the brand. Otherwise, managers risk that the brand's key benefit might be mitigated by the CSR communication (Luchs et al., 2010). Thus, even though several studies report positive findings of CSR on the brand (e.g., Brown & Dacin, 1997; Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001), managers need to carefully consider the impact of CSR on brand benefits.

5.1.2 Brand Image-CSR Fit: Does the CSR Activity Fit the Brand Image?

The paramount importance of fit has been shown in many marketing areas. A positive fit between a brand and its extension leads, for example, to positive consumer responses such as a favorable attitude towards the brand and the new product (e.g., Dawar, 1992; Keller & Aaker, 1992; Park, Milberg, & Lawson, 1991; Roedder John, Loken, & Jojiner, 1998; Völckner & Sattler, 2006).

Thus, it does not surprise that the fit between a company or a brand and the CSR activity is probably the factor that has been discussed most in the CSR literature (e.g., Alcañis, Càcares, & Pérez, 2010; Menon & Kahn, 2003). Several studies found that there is a positive relationship between fit and consumer response (e.g., Becker-Olsen et al., 2006; Ellen et al., 2006; Pracejus & Olsen, 2004; Rifon, Choi, Trimble, & Li, 2004). Becker-Olsen and colleagues (2006) showed, for instance, that a low fit between brand and CSR activity negatively affects consumer attitudes (independent from anticipated company motives). In line with this, Strahlivitz (2003) observed that the more ethical consumers evaluate a brand to be, the more altruistic they consider the brand's behavior in general. Therefore, brands considered as being ethical may profit more from CSR activities than other brands.

However, the results for the impact of fit on the effectiveness of CSR activities are mixed. There are studies indicating that a high fit between a CSR activity and the brand image might not always be advantageous. A high fit can stimulate the consumers to infer that the CSR activity is (economically) very beneficial for the brand (e.g., leading to increased revenues or product sales). Consequently, consumers might be more skeptical about the brand's motives to engage in CSR (Ellen, Mohr, & Webb, 2000; Forehand & Grier, 2003; Yoon, Gürhan-Canli, & Schwarz,

2006) and may respond negatively towards the brand (Becker-Olsen et al., 2006). This might be an explanation for those studies in which a high fit between CSR and brand did not lead to significantly more favorable brand responses (e.g., Hamlin & Wilson, 2004; Lafferty, 2007). Thus, the assumed motives behind the CSR engagement are a key moderator of the effectiveness of CSR activities that has to be considered in several strategic decisions.

5.1.3 Brand Strength: How Strong Is the Brand?

Due to positive experiences, consumers relate strong associations to strong brands. As a result of these past conditioning processes, strong brands signal credibility to consumers (e.g., Erdem & Swait, 1998; Erdem, Swait, & Valenzuela, 2006). Thus, consumers are less skeptical towards well-known than towards unknown brands. Consequently, consumers reason less critically about the motives of a well-known brand for engaging in CSR activities and, thereby, CSR can exert a stronger impact (Ellen et al., 2000; Yoon et al., 2006). This effect has been observed in several studies: For instance, Du and colleagues (2007b) demonstrated that trust (which is affected by brand strength) mediates the relationship between CSR activities and brand attitudes (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2007b).

5.2 Decisions Regarding the Target Group

5.2.1 Consumers' CSR Involvement: Does the Target Group Reward the Brand for Its CSR Engagement?

The prerequisite of a successful use of CSR in brand communication is that the target group has at least a mediocre CSR involvement. Such consumers consider CSR as a relevant aspect of a brand's policy. Highly CSR involved consumers can even be strongly influenced in their purchase decisions (e.g., willingness to pay, intention to buy) by a brand's CSR activities. In order to understand the impact CSR can exert in a purchase decision, Mohr and colleagues (2001) identified four different consumer groups:

- (1) *The 'Precontemplators'*: These consumers have a low CSR involvement (Andreasen, 1995; Mohr, Webb, & Harris, 2001). CSR has a limited or no influence on their purchase decisions. This target group does not believe that companies should engage in CSR in general. In their view, companies should rather focus on offering high quality products (Mohr et al., 2001). Furthermore, these consumers focus their attention during a purchase decision on traditional criteria such as price, quality, and convenience and ignore CSR. They have never thought about rewarding a socially responsible company by purchasing

its products or punishing an irresponsible company by boycotting it (Mohr et al., 2001).

- (2) *The ‘Contemplators’*: These consumers generally consider CSR as being positive and, thus, show some CSR involvement. However, CSR does not actually influence their behavior. They think that basing their purchase decisions on CSR has a limited impact on society in general (Mohr et al., 2001).
- (3) *The ‘Action Group’*: This target group has a sound knowledge about CSR and most members of this group are active in boycotting and recycling. However, these consumers are very skeptical about a brand’s CSR engagement in general. Therefore, CSR is not a key driver in their purchase decisions (Mohr, Webb, & Harris, 2001; see also Gürhan-Canli & Fries, 2010). A reason for this behavior is that these consumers think that they do not know enough about specific brands and their CSR engagement to be able to reward brands for their CSR engagement. Additionally, some of these consumers are even skeptical about the media, wondering if CSR information in media reports is true (Mohr et al., 2001).
- (4) *The ‘Maintainers’*: This target group considers CSR as very important. They focus on CSR information when making purchase decisions. They act due to their concern for environmental (e.g., by recycling and buying recycled content, boycotting polluters) and/or health issues (e.g., buying organic food). Therefore, they are committed to rewarding a brand for its CSR engagement or punishing it for irresponsible behavior (Mohr et al., 2001). Furthermore, this kind of consumer is often concerned about huge corporations having too much power and being focused too much on profits and shareholder interests.

In order to adjust CSR communication to the role CSR plays for their particular target group(s), brands should analyze the CSR involvement of their customers before they start communicating their CSR activities. Studies about the relation between general consumer characteristics and CSR involvement are rare and the results are mixed. For instance, Youn and Kim (2008) found that younger people feel attached to those brands that support charities, whereas Basil and Weber (2006) report that older people (and women) in particular reward CSR activities of brands. Thus, further research to clarify the relations between general consumer characteristics and CSR involvement is needed (see also Gürhan-Canli & Fries, 2010).

5.2.2 Consumers’ Brand Identification: Do the Target Consumers Identify Themselves with the Brand?

Identification with a company is another important factor for a consumer’s evaluation of a CSR activity. Organizational identification is considered as the overlap of a person’s self-perception with his/her perception of the organization (e.g., Lichtenstein, Drumwright, & Braig, 2004). Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) point out that consumers can be particularly attracted by a brand identity, if it satisfies three basic self-definitional needs: self-continuity, self-distinctiveness, and self-enhancement.

Hence, the attractiveness of the brand identity depends on (1) how similar the identity is perceived to the consumer's own identity (i.e., identity similarity), (2) the distinctiveness in traits that a consumer values (i.e., identity distinctiveness), and (3) the prestige of the brand identity itself (i.e., identity prestige) (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). Sen and Bhattacharya (2001) observed that consumer brand identification acts as a mediator between CSR activities and the attitude towards the brand.

To sum up, a consumer's identification with a brand can enhance the relationship between CSR and the evaluation of the brand. Additionally, CSR activities can also help to build up consumer identification with the brand. For instance, if a brand does not possess a well-known reputation and has a weak bond to its customers, CSR engagement might help to build up and strengthen consumer identification. In this context, Sen and Bhattacharya (2001) stress that "nonproduct aspects of a company (Brown & Dacin, 1997), such as its values and demographics, its social responsibility efforts, and the networking opportunities" can help to create a stronger bond between consumers and the brand (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001, 86).

5.2.3 Consumers' Consumption Situation: Is the Product Mainly Consumed in Public or in Privacy?

Besides personal consumer characteristics, the situation in which a product is consumed can be important. Luchs et al. (2010) asked in a choice experiment to use one of two different liquid hand sanitizer designed to kill bacteria and viruses (e.g., H1N1, i.e., swine flu). At the time of that experiment, concerns about viruses were highly salient and therefore important for the respondents. In two different treatment groups (public versus private consumption), participants had to choose between the two hand sanitizers "Up & Up Green (Eco Friendly)" and "Up & Up White (Regular)." In the public consumption condition, another person sat close to the respondents, while in the private consumption situation, respondents did not realize that they were being observed. In the private condition, 73 % of the participants used the regular product. However, if the confederate was in front of them, 72 % of respondents used the eco-friendly product.

Aagerup and Nilsson (2015) conducted a similar experiment in which consumers could choose between fair trade coffee and regular coffee. The results show similar effects: When being observed most consumers selected the fair trade coffee, even when the price was double (Aagerup & Nilsson, 2015). These studies underline the importance of socially acceptable behavior for CSR. If products are consumed in public, consumers are more likely to act in a socially and environmentally responsible manner and, thus, CSR may have a stronger impact than in private consumption conditions.

5.3 Decisions Regarding the Execution of CSR Communication

5.3.1 Sender of CSR Information: How Credible Is the Brand as a Sender of the CSR Activities?

Studies on persuasive communication showed that a message from an independent neutral source is perceived as being more credible (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953). In line with this, it has been observed that a CSR activity that is communicated by the brand itself is perceived as less credible than the communication of an independent source (e.g., Simmons & Becker-Olsen, 2006; Yoon et al., 2006). This can be explained by the fact that the message's receiver anticipates egoistic motives. Consequently, the credibility of the message itself is lower (e.g., Dawkins & Lewis, 2003; Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2010; Elving, 2013).

However, the familiarity of the sender is important for the receiver's evaluation of the message credibility. In their meta-analysis Eisend and Küster (2011) found that a persuasive message (e.g., an advertisement) from a well-known brand is perceived as more credible than the same message conveyed by an unknown independent source. In this case, consumers have built up trust for the well-known brand due to previous positive experiences (e.g., Erdem & Swait, 1998; Erdem et al. 2006). Therefore, a strong brand can communicate its CSR activities on its own via advertising, whereas an unknown brand should employ sources perceived as being neutral to support their CSR communication.

5.3.2 Receiver's Assumed Motives of the CSR Engagement: Do Consumers Primarily Assume Egoistic or Altruistic Motives?

Following attribution theory (Jones & Davis, 1965; Kelley, 1973), human beings reason why others behave in a certain way and what factors drive them in their behavior. Similarly, consumers ask for a brand's motivation to engage in CSR (e.g., Becker-Olsen et al., 2006; Du et al., 2007a; Ellen et al., 2006; Groza, Pronschinske, & Walker, 2011; Sen, Bhattacharya, & Korschun, 2006; Walker, Heere, Parent, & Drane, 2010; Yoon et al., 2006). Vlachos and colleagues (2009) identified four different brand motivations for engaging in CSR activities: egoistic-driven, values-driven, strategic-driven, and stakeholder-driven motives.

The assumed motivation for a brand's engagement in a CSR activity may exert multiple effects on consumers and their behavior. The attribution of primarily egoistic motives to a CSR activity may harm a brand's reputation and consumers' attitude towards the brand. Alcañis et al. (2010) point out that altruistic motives attributed to a CSR engagement can have positive effects on a brand's credibility. The motivation attribution may even affect consumers' evaluation of product quality. In a recent study, Chernev and colleagues (2015) found that even when

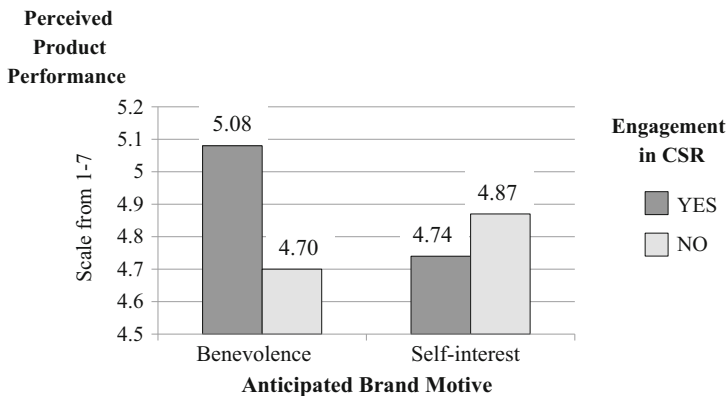


Fig. 5 The moderating impact of assumed CSR motives on product quality. *Source:* adapted from Chernev and Blair (2015, 1418)

the CSR activity (charity giving) had no obvious link to product quality, its evaluation was significantly influenced by the consumers' belief of the company's motives to engage in CSR (see Fig. 5).

6 Conclusion: Eleven Recommendations to Improve the Effectiveness of CSR Communication for Brands

Many studies show the positive effects CSR can have for brands and companies. Consequently, CSR communication has become an important issue for the management of many brands. However, CSR communication can also harm brands, if it is applied wrongly. To avoid negative consequences of CSR communication, managers should take care to observe the following guidelines:

- (1) *Align CSR to the brand positioning:* Managers thinking of applying CSR communication for their brand always have to consider their brand positioning first. Brand management has to decide whether CSR values should become an integral part of the brand positioning or not. Consumers' buying motives determine which role CSR can play within a brand strategy.
- (2) *Establish a coherent CSR culture within the company:* The CSR communication should start with an internal communication to establish a CSR culture within the company. If internal CSR communication is successful, employees will understand the CSR values and will adjust their behavior in their daily business, internally and externally.
- (3) *Ensure the fit between CSR and brand core business:* CSR communication may exert an impact on consumers' perceived brand quality. Therefore, brand management has to address the question whether CSR is generally suitable for the core business of the brand. A high fit between core business and CSR is

likely to improve the effectiveness of a CSR activity, whereas, a misfit can decrease perceived brand quality.

- (4) *Consider the fit between CSR and brand image:* A high fit between brand image and CSR activity can increase the effectiveness of CSR communication. However, the research results are mixed and indicate that the assumed motives behind the CSR engagement are an important moderator of this effect.
- (5) *Consider the brand strength:* Strong brands are often considered as being more credible than weak or unknown brands. Therefore, consumers are less skeptical towards well-known than towards unknown brands and CSR can exert a more positive impact on strong brands.
- (6) *Analyze the CSR involvement of the target group:* The prerequisite of a successful use of CSR is that the target group possesses a sufficient CSR involvement. Consumers highly involved in CSR are likely to reward brands for their CSR activities (e.g., increase in willingness to pay higher prices, increase in intention to buy). Consumers involved at a low level often do not take any notice of CSR activities, but sometimes they even consider a brand's CSR activity as negative.
- (7) *Consider the target group's brand identification:* The identification of a consumer with a brand has a positive impact on CSR effectiveness. CSR activities can also help to strengthen consumer identification with a brand.
- (8) *Consider the typical consumption situation:* The effectiveness of CSR is often influenced by the question whether the brand is consumed in public or in privacy. Due to peer group pressure, consumers tend to choose CSR brands more often in public consumption conditions, whereas, in private consumption conditions, 'regular' brands might be more successful.
- (9) *Consider the necessity of a neutral CSR sender:* Since consumers tend to be skeptical about CSR communication, the use of a neutral source as a proof of the CSR activity may be helpful in CSR communication. However, in the case of a strong brand, the brand itself might be sufficient as message sender, since strong brands are considered as being more credible.
- (10) *Ensure altruistic motives of CSR engagement:* The motives consumers anticipate behind a brand's CSR engagement are essential for the effectiveness of a CSR communication. The attribution of primarily egoistic motives to a CSR activity may significantly harm a brand's reputation and consumers' attitude towards the brand.
- (11) *Embed CSR into the brand's integrated marketing communication approach:* Last, but not least, it is of paramount importance to embed the CSR communication into the brand's integrated marketing approach ('one voice policy'). If CSR is an integral part of the brand's positioning, the CSR values have to be communicated in a coherent manner together with the remaining brand values along all customer touchpoints.

7 Exercise and Reflective Questions

1. It is often argued that the core function of brands is to make profit. Is this point of view still true for modern brand management? Base your arguments on the current discussion of CSR in the branding context.
2. Within the broad literature on CSR there are several definitions and facets of CSR. Which understanding of CSR do you think is most appropriate for modern brand management?
3. CSR can play an important role for brand positioning and can help to establish strong brands in the consumers' minds. For which kind of brands is CSR relevant and in which ways can companies employ CSR to position their brand (s) successfully? Which risks can arise for brands, if CSR is inappropriately applied?
4. The CSR Iceberg consists of two different concepts: CSR culture and CSR communication. With which concept should managers start to develop the brand strategy? Please discuss why the internal communication is essential for the success of CSR.
5. Several success factors need to be considered when establishing an external CSR communication. It is, for example, of paramount importance to embed the CSR communication into the brand's integrated marketing approach. What can brand managers do to ensure a 'one voice policy'? Which further CSR success factors have managers to take into account regarding the brand, the target group, and the execution of the CSR campaign? Please provide examples from the branding practice for each of these factors.

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Communicating CSR Through Corporate Image Advertising

Alan Pomeroy

Abstract The purpose of this chapter is to review the state of play in regard to corporations' advertising of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, policies, and/or achievements as an identity-building exercise. An organisation's use of advertising to lay claim to socially-responsible operations is bound to be contentious and inspire responses of scepticism and/or cynicism, especially if such advertising claims appear at odds with stakeholder perceptions of the organisation's performance. The contentiousness of CSR advertising claims is enlarged by confusion over what constitutes CSR and what does not. Cause-related marketing campaigns, for example, are a form of sales promotion technique yet are enlisted in the hope of a corporation addressing its responsibility to society. Ultimately CSR performance must stand on impacts and outcomes, and anything less will be adjudged spin, greenwashing, or mere impression management. This chapter regards CSR advertising, and indeed other elements of the brand's integrated marketing communications, in this light.

A corporation's advertising of its socially responsible (CSR) initiatives, policies, or achievements is an identity-building exercise. It is a communicative act signalling the firm's business model, that is, the architecture of its creating, delivering, and capturing value (Teece, 2010). As one aspect of the organisation's identity, CSR is to be included in the amalgam of informational inputs that engender the image that various stakeholders fluidly construct of the organisation. A corporation's image is the "totality of a stakeholder's perceptions of the way an organization presents itself, either deliberately or accidentally" (Markwick & Fill, 1997, p. 396). These informational inputs are manifold, and also include, for example, viewed through the perspective of *corporate marketing*, the organisation's culture, character, constituencies, conceptualisations and covenant (Balmer, 2006, as cited in Balmer & Greyser, 2006, p. 735). CSR advertising, as with advertising in general, is about the statement of claims. The veracity of these claims will be challenged, tested, and possibly rejected out of hand in line with how they stack up against the competing

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amalgam of informational inputs that make up the stakeholder's evaluation and response. The purpose of this chapter is to review the *state of play* in regard to corporations' advertising of their CSR initiatives, policies, and/or achievements as an identity-building exercise.

1 Corporate Social Responsibility

Before examining corporations' communication of their CSR by using the technique of advertising it is important to clarify what CSR refers to, as this is generally held to be an ambiguous and contested term (e.g., Garriga & Melé, 2004; Secchi, 2007). For the purpose of this discussion, the term CSR will be used to describe how businesses go beyond economic criteria, such as creating products and profits, to pursue broader societal and environmental goals. This pursuit of broader societal and environmental goals is to be understood as involving efforts that go beyond minimum legal requirements to minimise negative externalities and maximise beneficial impacts on society (Preston & Post, 1975).

One example of a typology of domains that capture such goals and initiatives, developed by the socially-responsible investment index Socrates: The Corporate Social Ratings Monitor and discussed in extant literature (e.g., Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001), includes the six broad domains of: (1) community support (e.g., housing initiatives for the economically disadvantaged and philanthropic giving); (2) diversity (e.g., gender-, race-, and disability-based diversity initiatives within and outside the firm); (3) employee support (e.g., concern for safety, job security, union relations and employee involvement); (4) environment (e.g., environment-friendly products and production processes, and recycling); (5) international operations (e.g., overseas labour and materials sourcing practices and operations in countries with human rights violations), and (6) product (e.g., product safety and innovation, and marketing/contracting controversies). Harmful and addictive products of *sin industries*, such as tobacco, military weapons, firearms and nuclear power are negatively screened from such indices (e.g., Domini Social Investments, 2015).

For the purpose of this discussion, which will concentrate on corporate image advertising, it is also important to discriminate between what CSR is and is not, that is, which aspects of a corporation's image should not be construed as CSR. The literature identifies two forms of promotion related to causes. The first is *cause-related marketing* (CRM), defined by Varadarajan and Menon (1988) as, "basically a marketing program that strives to achieve two objectives—improve corporate performance and help worthy causes—by linking fund raising for the benefit of a cause to the purchase of the firm's products and/or services" (p. 59). While the advertising of such campaigns may add to a corporation's image, in essence, as will be explained in the following section, such advertising should not be considered *corporate image advertising*. Rather, as the above authors note, the corporate contribution to the cause specified within the campaign is made "on behalf of those customers who engage in revenue-producing transactions with the firm during

a specified time period and comply with other terms of exchange” (p. 59), and should more correctly be referred to as a sales promotion, that is: “The media and non-media marketing pressure applied for a predetermined, limited period of time at the level of consumer, retailer, or wholesaler in order to stimulate trial, increase consumer demand, or improve product availability” (American Marketing Association, 2015).

Varadarajan and Menon (1988) highlight that the amounts expended by the firms on the promotion of CRM programs, through which corporations stimulate demand for their brand(s) “tend to be substantially higher than their promised maximum contribution to the cause” (p. 59), and provide the example of the American Express Company’s 1983 CRM program in support of the renovation of the Statue of Liberty. Though American Express reportedly spent \$6 million on promotion of the campaign its contribution to the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation was a mere \$1.7 million.

The short-term nature of the CRM offer, effectively a form of sales promotion aimed to stimulate immediate demand for a particular item from a corporation’s product mix, along with the moot criticism that it is, in effect, the consumer that is acting philanthropically rather than the corporation, precludes it from the following discussion.

The second, positioned more closely to the advertising of a corporation’s CSR than CRM, and drawing on one of the six broad CSR domains listed above, is *corporate societal marketing* (CSM), defined as encompassing “marketing initiatives that have at least one non-economic objective related to social welfare and use the resources of the company and/or one of its partners” (Drumwright & Murphy, 2001, p. 164). A further variant of CSM is *social-cause marketing*, defined as promotional activities that “prominently and publicly identify a company’s association with a particular sport, entertainment event, nonprofit organization or social cause” (Bloom, Hoeffler, Lane Keller, & Basurto Meza, 2006, p. 49). These authors also refer to this promotional technique as *affinity marketing*, as it attempts to “demonstrate an affinity with consumers interested in sports teams, entertainment events and social causes” (p. 49). Since 1992, for example, Avon’s *Breast Cancer Crusade* has worked to help research, prevent, and treat this disease, providing more than US\$175 million to breast cancer research projects around the world (Avon Foundation, 2015).

Unlike CRM, wherein a brand’s association with a cause is typically limited in time and the amount contributed to the cause is constrained by the level of consumer sales, the key to these CSM promotional approaches is that they feature “company initiatives involving the provision of money, resources and/or publicity to socially beneficial causes in a way that seeks to create an association in the minds of consumers between the cause and the company or one of its brands” (Bloom et al., 2006, p. 50). CSM efforts’ support for a cause may be strategically aligned with the interests of key consumer groups, and hence designed to build an affinity with those groups, hopefully one that results in stronger and more profitable relationships.

We might therefore see each of these techniques as a form of corporate image advertising, although subtle differences exist between these techniques and advertising that specifically states claims in relation to the corporation's minimising of its negative externalities and maximising of beneficial impacts on society through the way it conducts its operations. This latter form of advertising, *CSR advertising*, the subject of this discussion, goes beyond associational benefits with the philanthropic giving and support outlined by Bloom et al. (2006) above. In Fig. 1, below, Patagonia's *Common Threads Initiative*, for example, went further than association with a cause, making claims around the brand's business model; the architecture of how it was creating, delivering, and capturing value (Patagonia, 2015).

The benefits of CSR are broadly rationalised within such theories as: institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983); organisational ecology theory (Hannan & Freeman, 1977); the resource-based view of the firm theory (Penrose, 1959); and signalling theory (e.g., McDonald & Oates, 2006; Spence, 1974). Specifically, being perceived as socially responsible may: build bonds between the firm and its stakeholders, influencing the supply of resources (Maignan & Ferrell, 2004); create a halo effect for a firm's products and services (Brown & Dacin, 1997); buttress against condemnation in the wake of business failings, such as product-harm crises (Klein & Dawar, 2004; Ricks, 2005); improve brand equity (Hoeffler & Keller, 2002); engender customer loyalty (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003); enhance brand differentiation (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001); provide a degree of competitive advantage (Porter & Kramer, 2002); and, through the mediating effect of reputational capital, lead to improved financial performance (Orlitzky, Schmidt, & Rynes, 2003). Such results are, naturally, conditional rather than assumed.

On the surface, the correlation between informing stakeholder audiences about a brand's CSR initiatives and achieving the types of positive marketplace responses listed above appears a simple one, but this likelihood will be moderated by the information the corporation is able to communicate about its CSR record and impacted by the different informational constituents, potentially both positive and negative, that complement the amalgam mentioned above. Maignan (2001) has argued that CSR information can distinguish firms pursuing authentic CSR programs from those merely paying lip service to CSR, but while responses to firms' CSR initiatives are information-dependent, the quality of CSR communication is critical, a view echoed by O'Riordan and Fairbrass (2008). Referring to consumers, Mohr and Webb (2005) observe that if such positive responses to CSR were so predictably reliable, "most or all companies would have embraced the concept by now" (p. 124). Accepting the paramount importance of effective CSR communication in securing positive responses to corporations' CSR initiatives, the discussion now turns to the specific communication technique of advertising.

DON'T BUY THIS JACKET



It's Black Friday, the day in the year retail turns from red to black and starts to make real money. But Black Friday, and the culture of consumption it reflects, puts the economy of natural systems that support all life firmly in the red. We're now using the resources of one-and-a-half planets on our one and only planet.

Because Patagonia wants to be in business for a good long time—and leave a world inhabitable for our kids—we want to do the opposite of every other business today. We ask you to buy less and to reflect before you spend a dime on this jacket or anything else.

Environmental bankruptcy, as with corporate bankruptcy, can happen very slowly, then all of a sudden. This is what we face unless we slow down, then reverse the damage. We're running short on fresh water, topsoil, fisheries, wetlands—all our planet's natural systems and resources that support business, and life, including our own.

The environmental cost of everything we make is astonishing. Consider the R21 Jacket shown, one of our best sellers. To make it required 135 liters of

COMMON THREADS INITIATIVE

REDUCE

WE make useful gear that lasts a long time
YOU don't buy what you don't need

REPAIR

WE help you repair your Patagonia gear
YOU pledge to fix what's broken

REUSE

WE help find a home for Patagonia gear you no longer need
YOU sell or pass it on*

RECYCLE

WE will take back your Patagonia gear that is worn out
YOU pledge to keep your stuff out of the landfill and incinerator



REIMAGINE

TOGETHER we reimagine a world where we take only what nature can replace

water, enough to meet the daily needs (three glasses a day) of 45 people. Its journey from its origin as 60% recycled polyester to our Reno warehouse generated nearly 20 pounds of carbon dioxide, 24 times the weight of the finished product. This jacket left behind, on its way to Reno, two-thirds its weight in waste.

And this is a 60% recycled polyester jacket, knit and sewn to a high standard: it is exceptionally durable, so you won't have to replace it as often. And when it comes to the end of its useful life we'll take it back to recycle into a product of equal value. But, as is true of all the things we can make and you can buy, this jacket comes with an environmental cost higher than its price.

There is much to be done and plenty for us all to do. Don't buy what you don't need. Think twice before you buy anything. Go to patagonia.com/CommonThreads or scan the QR code below. Take the Common Threads Initiative pledge, and join us in the fifth "R," to reimagine a world where we take only what nature can replace.



TAKE THE PLEDGE

If you sell your used Patagonia product on eBay and take the Common Threads Initiative pledge, we will co-list your product on patagonia.com for no additional charge.

Fig. 1 Patagonia's 2011 Black Friday Advertisement in The New York Times

2 Advertising and CSR

Advertising might be defined as: “The placement of announcements and persuasive messages in time or space purchased in any of the mass media by business firms, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and individuals who seek to inform and/or persuade members of a particular target market audience about their products, services, organizations, or ideas” (American Marketing Association, 2015). The advertising of CSR initiatives, policies, and/or achievements is understood to relate to informing and persuading about the organisation rather than individual products or services, and is therefore regarded as corporate image advertising. Corporations seek the recognition of their (corporate) brand names, however, “the primary objective is to build and sustain overall positive attitude towards the company” (Percy & Rosenbaum-Elliott, 2012, p. 195). This form of advertising, these authors argue, is “not aimed at specific decisions on the part of a target audience” (p. 196), but rather, “companies want people to like them.” (p. 195).

The potential benefits that might accrue to corporations perceived to be creating, delivering, and capturing value in a socially responsible manner rely upon awareness and conviction among key stakeholder audiences. Corporate image advertising provides an opportunity to create this awareness and conviction.

Patagonia’s Black Friday, 2011, launch of its “*Don’t buy this jacket*” advertising campaign was aimed at informing stakeholder audiences, most prominently consumers, about its *Common Threads Initiative*. The campaign opened around Thanksgiving with a full-page advertisement in the *New York Times*, and over the following 2 years, annual sales grew by almost 40 % (Bloomberg Business, 2013). Apparel consumers obviously liked what they saw about the company.

Did Patagonia tap into the prevailing *zeitgeist*, or did consumers finally become aware of a brand that offered a better alternative than its competitors on the key criteria influencing their apparel consumption choices? The Cone/Echo Global Corporate Responsibility Opportunity Study (Cone Communications/Echo, 2011) reported 96 % of respondents considered it important that companies change the way they operate, 93 % that they raise awareness and educate, and 91 % that they develop partnerships (p. 15). Further, 94 % of consumers reported that were likely to switch brands to one associated with a good cause, when price and quality were about the same (p. 20). The consumer picture was little changed when followed up in 2013, with 96 % of respondents indicating that when companies engage in CSR, they would have a more positive image of the company, 94 % would be more likely to trust that company, and 93 % and would be more loyal to that company (Cone Communications/Echo, 2013, p. 19). The preferred methods for consumers to learn of corporations’ CSR initiatives, policies, or achievements was on-product labeling, followed by media coverage, and then advertising, ahead of company websites and social media (p. 33). It would appear Patagonia reaped the reward of its CSR advertising.

Patagonia’s campaign was attention-getting and provocative. It informed of what the brand was doing, creatively personalising claims of its initiatives with

“WE”, and it informed the consumer what he or she was required to do in order to reduce, repair, reuse, recycle, and reimagine, in line with the *Common Threads Initiative*, with “YOU”, ordaining that “together we can reimagine a world where we take only what nature can replace” (Nudd, 2011). The zeitgeist, reflected in the Cone-Echo market sounding, suggests the brand’s advertising, and the initiative it was designed to promote, was appreciated by consumers. The corporate advertising of CSR initiatives, policies, or achievements is, however, far from a straightforward exercise. While consumers may indicate that advertising is one of the most-preferred means for CSR communications, it is a problematic informational conduit. For example, advertising is found to be the means of communication that inspires the greatest level of scepticism (Obermiller & Spangenberg, 1998; Obermiller, Spangenberg, & MacLachlan, 2005).

Corporate image advertising, along with public relations and sponsorships, provide firms with opportunities for “manufactured publicity” (Rossiter & Bellman, 2005, p. 375), in order to claim “what we say we are” (Balmer & Greyser, 2006, p. 735), and project the *desired identity* (Van Rekom, 1997). Corporate image advertising may differ from the more factual identity that may be communicated by channels the corporation has less control over, as will be discussed below, but the wider the discrepancy between the desired identity and the actual identity, found in Balmer’s (2006) *Conceptualisations*, or ‘What we are seen to be’, the less effective, less persuasive the advertising might be expected to be. Balmer’s (2006) six-element corporate marketing mix is to be interpreted to inform organisational philosophy and permeate organisational members’ thinking and behaving, rather than to merely provide a tool-box for a corporate marketing department (see Balmer & Greyser, 2006, p. 734 for a discussion). Polonsky and Jevons (2006) echo this, noting, “CSR activities must be supported by other core brand and product attributes” (p. 342). For this reason, overly positive corporate-image claims, particularly in the non-economic domain, are likely to inspire increased scrutiny and even a backlash (Ashforth & Gibbs, 1990; Blomqvist & Posner, 2004). We expand this corporate communications conundrum further in the next section.

3 The CSR Appeal in Corporate Image Advertising and Brand Positioning

The firm’s corporate communications, ‘What we say we are’ (Balmer, 2006), form a significant part of the corporation’s brand positioning, that is, “the way consumers, users, buyers, and others view competitive brands or types of products” (American Marketing Association, 2015). Corporate image advertising, which includes advertising of firms’ CSR performance, is created in order to achieve communication effects, such as the stimulation of category need, brand awareness, brand attitude, and, ultimately, brand purchase intention (e.g., Percy & Rosenbaum-

Elliott, 2012). The intent with CSR-based corporate image advertising is to position one's brand favourably on CSR criteria, relative to competitive brands.

The issue of CSR brand leadership is taken up by Lindgreen, Xu, Maon, and Wilcock (2011), who seek to identify the core components necessary for development of a CSR brand and the capabilities the firm needs in order to implement a CSR-related brand strategy. These authors define a CSR brand as a "stakeholder-based, strategically integrated orientation toward ecological and social well-being" (p. 969), at the heart of which lies a socially responsible dimension intended to differentiate a firm, and its products or services, from its competitors. The likelihood of success in attempting to position a brand along CSR lines is anticipated to be a function of the consistency across the various dimensions of the corporation's identity, that is, the degree to which it is integrated across the brand's marketing communications, especially the gap between the desired identity and stakeholder conceptualisations of how the brand is seen to be (Balmer, 2006). These conceptualisations may be based on, for example, stakeholders' first-hand experience with the corporation and/or its products or services, or impressions formed via socially-networked configurations. This point, along how CSR-based advertising as just one component of a brand's integrated marketing communications efforts might be used as both 'sword and shield', will be returned to further on, but it is useful, at this point, to consider the mechanisms and challenges in achieving effective CSR-based advertising and positioning.

4 CSR-Based Corporate Image Advertising

CSR-based corporate image advertising, or CSR advertising, is prone to a number of challenges, including heightened scrutiny (Ashforth & Gibbs, 1990), scepticism, or disbelief of the stated claims (Pomeroy & Johnson, 2009), cynicism toward the motives for the firm engaging in CSR and/or disclosing its CSR involvement and performance (Ellen, Webb, & Mohr, 2006). Drumwright (1996) observes that advertising with a social dimension is among the most controversial of marketing approaches, with some seeing it as marketing's "greatest contribution to society," and others marketing's "most unabashed exploitation" (p. 71). In line with the resource-based view of the firm, this contribution can result from stakeholders endorsing 'good' corporations and withholding resources from 'bad' competing firms. Responsible consumption is one such example (Hansen & Schrader, 1997).

Such responsible patronage, however, has been found to be tempered by stakeholders' affinity for the social or environmental dimension identified in the firm's CSR initiative (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001). Recent research also suggests that corporations' candidness with stakeholders about socially responsible intentions can backfire. Based on an experimental study, Newman, Gorlin, and Dhar (2014) counter-intuitively find that information about a firm's product being better for the environment by design is perceived less favourably than if the same environmental benefit had come about by accident. Such counter-intuitive results seem to be at

odds with Patagonia's Common Threads Initiative campaign experience. Another recent study by van Rekom, Go, and Calter (2014) finds that if customers perceive that a corporation's intended societal contributions are in line with the organisation's characteristics, they are more inclined to believe that CSR advertising fits the organisation and that the organisation is authentic. While dealing with different measures, such findings suggest that CSR advertising is a vexed question, in need of further clarity. The next two sections seek to assist this understanding by exploring issues of CSR advertising's executional complexity and use as an impression management and diversion communication tactic (Perks, Farache, Sjukla, & Berry, 2013).

5 CSR-Based Corporate Image Advertising's Executional Complexity

The purpose of CSR-based corporate image advertising is to project a 'manufactured', desired facet of the corporation's identity to stakeholder audiences in order to achieve the broad aim of assisting in the building, or positioning, of a positive image of the corporate brand in those stakeholders' minds. To achieve this, the advertising needs to achieve a series of communication effects: it must stimulate need for the product category, create an awareness of the corporate brand, and develop a positive attitude toward that brand (e.g., Percy & Rosenbaum-Elliott, 2012). Before looking at each of these effects in turn, as they apply to CSR advertising, it is useful to consider the steps that need to be gone through on the way to attitude change, as proposed by McGuire (1969), in order to gain insight into the challenges at hand in developing effective CSR advertising communication.

McGuire explains that the potential for attitude change is the result of a series of compounding probabilities, including the probability of: being exposed to the message; paying attention to the message; comprehending the message; yielding to the message; retaining the intention; and behaving in line with this intention. The first of these steps will be achieved via the advertising's media schedule, a discussion of which is beyond the scope of the discussion at hand. The next three steps are critical for achieving the sought communication effects, and are more to do with the creative elements of the advertising message itself. Patagonia, for example, ensured it achieved attention to its Common Threads Initiative advertisement in the *New York Times* by booking the full page and taking the audience by surprise with the instruction to not buy the brand's jacket. The use of "WE" and "YOU" (capitalised in the Patagonia advertisement) are straight from the copywriter's handbook: "Write to one individual" and "use the word 'you' liberally" (Drewniany & Jewler, 2014, p. 132). This advertisement might be presumed to have been comprehensible to the publication's readership as the Common Threads Initiative was explained in clear language and a minimal amount of copy. Yielding might be expected to be at a high level, as the copy was presented in a contractual style,

suggesting what each party agreed to do so that a world of waste minimisation and optimal resource management might be reimagined, together (Nudd, 2011). The need for counter-argument from audience members is largely negated by the headline, “Don’t buy this jacket”, and the contract implied by the text in the advertising copy. The sales effect over the following 2 years, reported above, suggests that this advertisement might have played some part in achieving McGuire’s final two steps for the brand.

But not all social initiatives are as simply communicated. If we stop to consider the communication effect of stimulating category need, it is apparent that there are in fact two ‘product’ categories that need must be stimulated for: the corporate brand, in whichever product category or industry sector it is located, and the need for a particular social issue to be attended to, and by a corporation, an organisation that may normally be associated with delivering economic utility and value. The next communication effect, brand awareness, is also about awareness of two brands, the corporate brand and the ‘social issue’ brand, as is brand attitude. CSR advertising claims confront consumers with a mixed-motive information-processing task (Drumwright, 1996), requiring respondents to evaluate both an organisation’s economic and non-economic, pro-social performance. This process is even more complicated when there are three brands to be processed in the one advertisement. Though essentially a cause-related marketing (CRM) campaign, consider the recent advertising of Swiss watch manufacturer TagHeuer featuring one of the brand’s watches, Leonardo DiCaprio as the celebrity endorser, and the cause the brand is supporting in the CRM campaign, variously Green Cross*, or NRDC**, with the copy line, “A partnership to help protect our planet” (Fig. 2). *Green Cross International, was founded in 1993 by (former USSR) President Mikhail Gorbachev, “to foster a global value shift toward a sustainable and secure future.” (Green Cross, 2015); **An “environmental action group,” the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) was founded in 1970 in USA with the mission, to “protect our air, land, and water from the forces of pollution and corporate greed. We protect. We defend. We lead the way” (NRDC, 2015). This trio of ‘brands’ potentially necessitates a very demanding processing task for the respondent, who must also respond to the processing demands of the other executional elements of the advertisement.

Indeed, the complexity of many social issues presents audiences with information-processing challenges. The step of comprehending the message often demands that the CSR advertising audience member is sufficiently familiar with the social issue being engaged with by the firm through its CSR initiative to appreciate the firm’s efforts in grappling with this social issue. This is not always the case. In several studies, consumers have been found to be unaware of the ethical features of different brands’ products, and have little knowledge and understanding of those ethical issues in spite of their regular coverage in the media (Auger, Burke, & Devinney, 2003; Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004; Pomeroy & Dolnicar, 2009). To facilitate the necessary comprehension, some level of educating of the advertising respondent may be necessary, running the risk of cognitively overloading the respondent. Cognitive load and working memory are two likely constraints on



Fig. 2 Leonardo DiCaprio’s celebrity endorsement of TagHeuer and Green Globe

CSR advertising processors as they attempt to make sense of ‘social topic information’ (Pomeroy & Johnson, 2009), *en route* to calculating corporations’ efforts in relation to particular social topics. Adding a social dimension to commercial messages increases the complexity of the consumer’s processing task, potentially beyond one’s capacity for efficient cognitive processing, or “sufficiency threshold” (see Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, pp. 330–333 for a discussion). For this reason, James (2002) has argued that the communicating of the firm’s CSR commitment, and the benefits of the societal initiatives within CSR advertising claims can never be as tangible to the consumer as more functional benefits. Kahneman and Tversky

(1973) find that heuristic processing replaces more elaborative processing as the processing task moves from a simple to a more complex task. A positively-perceived celebrity endorser might assist this process. The addition of a third-party endorsement for the firm's CSR claims, for example, an NGO, adds another layer of processing demands for the advertising recipient, but this reportedly increases admiration of firms so endorsed (Dawkins, 2005). Trust in the third-party endorser may heuristically provide the firm and its CSR claims a halo effect, but the depth of this effect, in terms of whether this admiration translates to the firm achieving the advertising's sought communication effects, remains unclear.

Those mavens with much existing knowledge of a social topic featured in a firm's CSR advertising might be advantaged in the processing task in that they might more easily deduce the gravitas of the corporations' efforts, but, equally, their expert knowledge might lead them to find explanations of the corporation's efforts insignificant and/or inappropriate, and counter-argue the claims set out in the firm's advertising. Those with insufficient familiarity of the social issue may struggle to comprehend the barest minimum level of social topic information in the advertising, and therefore will be unlikely to yield to the message, negatively affecting their attitude to the brand, or indeed, brands. A promising line of research to provide greater clarity in this aspect of CSR advertising is proffered in the area of cognitive resource matching theory (Coulter & Punj, 2004).

The complex CSR advertising processing task described above imposes challenges on to the advertising's creative designers as well as the advertising processors. Motivations for yielding to advertised brands, or more often their specific products, is typically explained dichotomously, perhaps as negative versus positive, or informational versus transformational (e.g., Percy & Rosenbaum-Elliott, 2012; Rossiter & Percy, 1997). The former, negative or informational motivations, provide information in order to solve or avoid a problem, and typically use a *logos* appeal, while the latter, positive or transformational motivations, aim to create a positive feeling in the message recipient, transforming him or her by creating an authentic emotional experience, and hence typically employ a *pathos* appeal (see Percy & Rosenbaum-Elliott, 2012, pp. 9–10, for a discussion). A mixed-motive (Drumwright, 1996) advertising appeal, for example, the conveying of social topic information to explain the magnitude of the issue the corporation is endeavouring to mitigate along with uplifting information on the brand's mitigation efforts, poses creative design challenges. (Note: appeals to one's altruism raise the question of whether this will be seen as an opportunity for the perceiver to solve a problem or enhance their own status through their sacrifice, however, while the reader might find the discussion surrounding prosocial motivations, including altruism and egoism, of interest, this discussion is beyond the scope of this chapter. The reader might see, for example, Holmes, Miller, & Lerner, 2002).

Percy and Rosenbaum-Elliott (2012), explaining the similar mixed-motive decision to purchase a new car—requiring liking the car and its functional attributes (negative/informational), and feeling positive about how they are likely to be seen by the world behind the wheel of such a car (positive/transformational)—argue that this is at least a two-stage process, and recommend two separate advertisements to

address the two dichotomous motivations. This is not easily achieved with CSR-based print advertising, however, as separating the social topic information from the corporation's record on that social issue would create two very different advertisements; the first, merely about a social issue, and the second boasting CSR claims in a particular domain without the social topic anchor needed to permit the recipient to interpret the firm's claims, similar to a map without a key. Overcoming the mixed-motive processing challenge may be more realistically achievable in electronic advertising, for example, video/cinema/internet, where greater creative flexibility is on offer.

Consider the mixed-motive video CSR advertising example of Australia's Westpac Banking Corporation, an early entrant into CSR-based corporate image advertising. Westpac was the first Australian bank, and one of 10 founding signatories globally to adopt the Equator Principles (Westpac, 2015). It communicated this across the nation's television screens a decade ago. The commercial opened to scenes of water birds covered in a layer of oil, logging, deforestation, and factory emissions, and displayed the copy: "some of the biggest problems in the world today were financed by banks". A few seconds and more shots of environmental misery later, the copy states: "in 2003, 10 of the world's banks signed the Equator Principles. . . .agreeing not to fund projects that endanger communities or the environment". The commercial then cuts to images of the bank and its employees, and reveals, "only one Australian bank was among them". A white screen then introduces the bank's logo and the strapline, "every generation should live better than the last", a twist, it would seem, on the sustainable development notion that the needs of the present should be met "without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p. 43), before this is replaced by the bank's name, and a second strapline, "Australia's first bank", and the URL, "everygeneration.com.au" (Westpac Banking Corporation, 2015). This message is conveyed in 45 s. The viewer may be left wondering what the Equator Principles are and how effective banks, especially Westpac, may have been in their quest. Viewers may also have had their suspicions as to why this bank was choosing to speak of its CSR performance at that time.

6 CSR Advertising as Impression Management and Diversion Communication Tactic

The Westpac advertising described above came about at a time when Australian banks were experiencing serious erosion of their reputational capital (Beal & Delpachitra, 2005). Given the parlous state of banks' corporate images in Australia at this time, due to such practices as branch closures and downsizing, the extent to which such commercials could salvage the corporate image of Westpac among many stakeholder groups is questionable. Much of this CSR

advertising was directed more toward internal stakeholders, particularly employees (Pomeroy & Dolnicar, 2009). Being signatory to a list of vague lending principles or policies is not considered as informative as description of the outcomes and impacts of CSR initiatives (Wood, 1991). As such, CSR-based corporate image advertising that features mere pronouncements of policies and practices, rather than evidence-based claims of CSR outcomes are more likely to inspire scepticism toward the brand's claims and less likely to achieve sought communication effects (Pomeroy, Johnson, & Noble, 2013), and may also lead to cynical questioning of the corporation's motives for the campaign, especially if its timing coincides with a challenge to the corporation's legitimacy.

Firms' use of CSR advertising at times when business as usual is challenged may suggest to audiences that the CSR is being used to paper over legitimacy cracks. Suchman (1995) has defined legitimacy as 'the generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions' (p. 574). Legitimacy crises are sparked by *trigger events* (Kernisky, 1997), such as unsafe products or business practices at odds with societal norms. Just as stakeholder audiences need to be informed about a corporation's CSR performance in order to be aware of their records, the withdrawal or challenging of legitimacy presents a crisis requiring an effective communication response.

Such communicative responses are subject to heightened scrutiny, however, as CSR is a contested and controversial concept, with considerable argument that it is a construct designed to promote business interests and power, at the expense of society (Banerjee, 2008). Critical management scholars suggest this societal subversion is achieved through CSR communications, such as advertising, creating a *false consciousness*, or false interpretation of social reality (Prasad & Holzinger, 2013). Claims of CSR initiatives within controversial industry sectors (Wilson & West, 1981) highlight CSR's conceptual contestation, raising the question of whether a corporation or, indeed, an industry can be simultaneously considered socially irresponsible and socially responsible. So-called 'sin' industries in particular, such as gambling, alcohol, and tobacco, are known to contribute to social misery and loss of capacity within communities, yet are legal, though often heavily regulated, as a matter of public policy, and, along with extractive industries, are among the most vocal of CSR corporate communicators. A recent special issue of the *Journal of Business Ethics* (2012) focused on how such organisations "gain or sneak legitimacy through their CSR policies and initiatives" (Lindgreen, Maon, Reast, & Yani-De-Soriano, 2012, p. 394). Such CSR advertising is bound to inspire debate as corporations and their stakeholders attempt to resolve the equation of how much 'good' is needed to compensate for the 'bad'?

The operation of registered clubs in Australia is one example of this contentious compensation conundrum. Australia's registered clubs, more than 6500 of which are represented by the peak body Clubs Australia, are "not-for-profit, member-based organisations that exist to provide infrastructure and services for the community, and further a core purpose, such as the promotion of sporting activities or veterans' welfare" (Clubs Australia, 2015). These community-based organisations

are operated on a business model that pursues revenue principally through the operation of electronic gaming machines that mainly target their communities' most disadvantaged and vulnerable (Peatling, 2012). In 2011–2012, excluding online gambling, adult Australian gamblers lost over A\$20 billion (Polites, 2014), with approximately 60 % lost to electronic gaming machines, predominantly operated by registered clubs (Productivity Commission, 2010).

The attempt to protect, reinforce and develop the corporate identity to be perceived as one that conforms to legitimacy expectations and is socially responsible might be described as impression management (for example, Elsbach, 2003; Elsbach & Sutton, 1992). Is it a reasonable expectation that CSR advertising might be called into service in order to mask socially irresponsible initiatives, products or actions? In the race to manage corporate impressions, is the rhetoric of CSR advertising more important than the firm's actual CSR performance? CSR might legitimately be used both proactively and reactively, as both sword and shield, but does the hollowness that the term 'impression management' might convey bring the concept of CSR, and therefore CSR advertising, into disrepute? Recent work by Schoeneborn and Tritten (2013), venturing CSR communication beyond transmission to be more aptly seen constitutively sheds light on the answer to this question.

According to Schoeneborn and Tritten, CSR advertising might be considered 'transmission', that is a "mere instrument" that ignores the "formative role of communication in constituting, altering, and perpetuating organizations" (p. 194), that is, "the 'communication constitutes organizations' (CCO) perspective" (p. 198). Unlike transmission approaches, such as CSR advertising, which reduce communication into a linear, unidirectional process of dissemination of information (Axley, 1984), the CCO view proposes a number of findings. These four findings are included here as they provoke consideration of CSR advertising's capabilities and limitations, in relation to alternative marketing or corporate communications that might be employed.

First, CSR-related advertising must resonate with other communications that are central to how the organisation creates value. Second, speech acts can bring the communicative reality they promise into being. Third, the process of CSR communication can extend organisational boundaries, especially when third-parties are encouraged to endorse those communicative boundaries and various organisational members engage in dialogue with stakeholders and the wider public in social media. Lastly, texts, scripts, processes and routines act to constitute and stabilise the organisation over time. Hence, the CCO view might be understood as the antithesis of the notion of false consciousness (Prasad & Holzinger, 2013). But can CSR advertising deliver a 'true' consciousness? Based on a study of young Danish consumers, Schmeltz (2012) argues it can, but a "much more direct and open approach is called for instead of the currently recommended subtle, indirect way of communicating CSR" (p. 44).

7 Conclusion

This question also brings this discussion full-circle, to the discussion of business models, value creation, and the elements that make up a corporation's identity, and recognition that, working with Balmer's (2006) *six Cs* of corporate marketing, Conceptualisations, 'what we are seen to be', has the ability to moderate the corporation's various attempts to manufacture one, desired identity, leading to one, universally-held, desired corporate brand image. The gap between the desired identity and conceptualised identity needs to be as narrow as possible, and only CSR that is true to the firm's business model that creates, delivers and captures value in legitimate, socially responsible ways will achieve this. Anything less will be adjudged spin, greenwashing, or mere impression management.

CSR is about delivering societal—social and/or environmental—outcomes, and these outcomes, and their impacts, are what is of interest to stakeholders, and should be at the heart of corporations' CSR initiatives and integrated marketing communications, including CSR advertising. Anything less will be subject to scrutiny and possibly adjudged as mere hollow rhetoric. Stakeholders, keen to distinguish authentic pronouncements of CSR from mere promotional posturing, are right to cast a filter of scepticism over such hollow claims. This is especially so for consumers, who provide corporations with the resources and legitimacy they crave via their purchase decisions, but to improve marketplace efficiencies through consumer ability to act as rewarding and punishing agents of firms' CSR performances (Hansen & Schrader, 1997), information about CSR achievements, impacts and outcomes is needed.

8 Exercise and Reflective Questions

1. How is CSR advertising similar and dissimilar to CRM and CSM?
2. What is needed for CSR advertising to be an effective form of marketing communication?
3. CSR advertising is described as presenting a mixed-motive processing challenge. Explain why this is the case.
4. How does CSR advertising fit into Balmer's (2006) corporate marketing mix?
5. Discuss the pros and cons of advertising approaches such as Patagonia's 2011 Black Friday Advertisement in The New York Times.

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Part III
Integrated CSR Communication and New
Media

The World Wide Web and the Social Media as Tools of CSR Communication

Paul Capriotti

Abstract The increasing development of the Web 2.0 and the Social Networks has opened a wide range of tools for communication and public relations. Today, online communication has become a key aspect in the Integrated Communication management of every organization, changing the way they communicate and establish relationships with their stakeholders.

The impact of the Internet in CSR communication has a relevant difference before and after the massive access to the web technology, moving from unidirectional CSR communication to interactive CSR communication.

This chapter points out the main traits that define the communication of Corporate Social Responsibility through the Internet. This may contribute to identifying the key challenges that the communication has as a relevant function in the management of corporate responsibility, nowadays and in the near future.

1 The Importance of the Internet for Integrated Strategic Communication

Brønn (2004) points out that the Internet is one of the principal media that companies have at the international level for communicating their activities. The increasing development of the Internet has had an important impact on every aspect of organizational life (Heinze & Hu, 2006; O’Kane, Hargie, & Tourish, 2004) and has revolutionised the way people and organizations communicate (Capriotti, 2009; Springston, 2001). It has opened a wide range of tools for communication and public relations (Hajtnik, Uglesic, & Zivkovic, 2015; Zerfass, Tench, Verčič, Verhoeven, & Moreno, 2014). These digital tools and platforms of communication are transforming the way that people obtain information, communicate and engage in relationships with organizations (Guillory & Sundar, 2014; Heinze & Hu, 2006). The growing importance of social platforms (such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.) has surpassed in many cases the degree of influence of the traditional press (Zerfass & Schramm, 2014). Zerfass et al. (2014) point out that

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the results of the *European Communication Monitor* demonstrate the movement from analogic to digital communication, and these authors affirm that the online tools and channels are leading the list of the most used instruments of communication in the last years. Studies by Vocus (2014) and the Arthur Page Society (2014) recognize that the Communication and Public Relations industry is moving toward the acceptance of digital as part of its fundamental definition. Moreover, the results of the *European Communication Monitor* (Moreno, Navarro, Tench, & Zerfass, 2015) indicate that the perspectives for the near future are that the social networks will substantially increase their presence as a communication tool in the years ahead.

Thus, the rise and consolidation of the online communication and its impact on the whole communication system of an organization should help communicators to evolve towards a more comprehensive idea of “Integrated Strategic Communication”, understood as the management of all internal and external communications of an organization in an integrated, synergic, coherent and consistent way. This helps it to improve its reputation and manage the long-term relationships with its stakeholders (Capriotti, 2013; Christensen, Fuat, & Cornelissen, 2009), and contributes decisively to decision-making in the overall strategy, where communication is fully linked to long-term objectives (Cornelissen, 2004).

2 The Internet and CSR Communication

Researchers affirm that the Internet has become a powerful communication medium for companies (Esrock & Leichty, 1998, 1999; Kelleher, 2006; Kim, Park, & Wertz, 2010; Park & Reber, 2008; Scoble & Israel, 2006), basically serving as a vehicle for image building and for managing their corporate reputation. In other words, the Internet tools are mainly oriented to inform and persuade the stakeholders about organizational performance (Jo & Jung, 2005).

Esrock and Leichty (1998) conclude that companies are using their presence on the Internet to improve their CSR reputation through informing about their CSR engagement and activities. Organizations must assume, then, a higher commitment to transparency and honesty, accepting the stakeholders' points of view, comments and critiques and providing solutions to their problems. This is changing the way that corporate CSR communication is understood and the models that have inspired the CSR communication until now.

The impact of the Internet in Corporate Communication (and in CSR communication) has a relevant difference before and after the massive access to the web technology. These tools of communication (mainly social media) are creating blurred boundaries between senders and receivers, between new and old media, and between information and communication and, consequently, some of the old paradigms that guided communication among organizations and their stakeholders in the industrial era have been changed (Heinze & Hu, 2006; Holtz, 2002; Phillips, 2001). Capriotti (2011) identifies two main changes (Table 1) generated by the impact of the Internet and Social Media on the Corporate Communication:

Table 1 Communication before and after the Internet

Before the Internet	After the Internet
Stakeholders as passive receivers of information	Stakeholders as active senders of information
Information control and distribution	Information overload and knowledge-sharing

On the one hand, there is a change from passive receivers to active senders. Senders multiply exponentially and now each person is able to become a potential sender in the communication process between a company and its stakeholders. Web 2.0 allows people (and of course, the stakeholder groups) to connect with other people (in the same stakeholder group or in other groups). It also allows people to easily create, access, publish, share, distribute and track contents. This facilitates new mechanisms of communication among people through social networks (such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube or Wikipedia). On the other hand, we can observe a change from information control to knowledge sharing. In traditional communication, the management and distribution of information between an organization and its stakeholders was highly controlled by the organization, which selects and disseminates the information it deems more convenient. Today, the Internet allows people and organizations to make available data, information and knowledge. Thus, the company cannot easily manage the “agenda” about the issue.

3 From CSR Communication 1.0 to CSR Communication 2.0

The research about the organizational use of the Internet has been mainly oriented toward the websites characteristics and capabilities to disseminate information and to establish relationships between an organization and its stakeholders (Ho, 2001; Jo & Jung, 2005; Kent, Taylor, & White, 2003; Kim et al., 2010; McAllister-Spooner, 2009; Padilla & Del Águila, 2013; Park & Reber, 2008). Several studies have extended this line of inquiry to Web 2.0, by investigating the use of dialogic principles in blogs (Kent, 2008; Seltzer & Mitrook, 2007; Sweetser & Metzgar, 2007; Yang & Lim, 2009) in Facebook (Dekay, 2012; Di Staso & McCorkindale, 2013; Kim, Kim, & Hoon Sung, 2014; Sevick-Bortree & Seltzer, 2009; Waters, Burnett, Lamm, & Lucas, 2009) and in Twitter (Armstrong & Gao, 2010; Di Staso & McCorkindale, 2013; Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010).

On the one hand, the Internet 1.0 has become, in a very short time, an indispensable mass communication tool for organizations, since it expands the organizational capabilities to massive dissemination of information worldwide in a quick, easy, and controlled manner (Hearn, Foth, & Gray, 2009; Holtz, 2002; Jo & Kim, 2003; Phillips, 2001).

By applying Internet technology, organizations have developed several tools to establish communication flows with their stakeholders. First of all, the Internet became a great mass communication tool for companies, since they can reach their

stakeholder groups all over the world, 365 days a year, 24 h a day. However, it also became a great “one-to-one” communication tool, since it facilitates the personal contact between the companies and each person/group, thus increasing the personal experience of people with the companies.

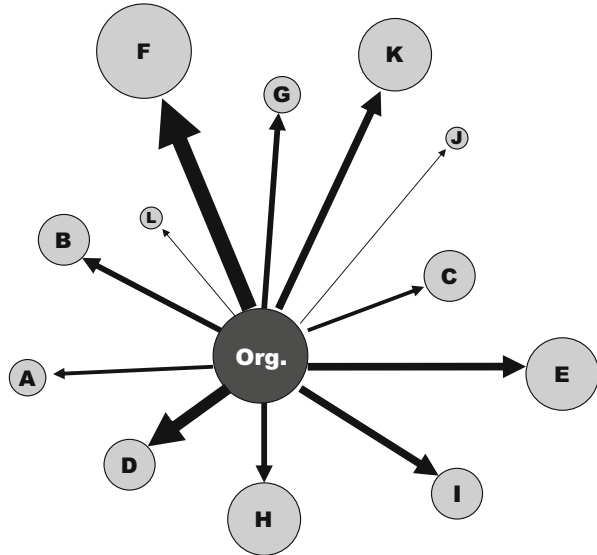
The Internet allows organizations to design their own messages and to communicate them to their stakeholders without being controlled, altered or manipulated by gatekeepers (mass media, opinion leaders, etc.) (Chaudhri & Wang, 2007; Holtz, 2002; Jo & Jung, 2005). It is a mass communication tool that offers organizations growing flexibility, personalisation and time savings with regard to the needs and interests of several stakeholder groups (Hearn et al., 2009; Jo & Kim, 2003; Kent et al., 2003; Kent & Taylor, 1998; Taylor, Kent, & White, 2001).

Before the massive access to the Internet, traditional CSR communication tools (massive and non-massive kinds) did not possess enough flexibility and they could not facilitate symmetrical communication between an organization and its stakeholders (Grunig, 1992). In traditional CSR communication, an organization creates messages and disseminates them to all of its stakeholders, with the objective to inform or persuade them about its identity, values, products/services and organizational activities (Holtz, 2002). Thus, the traditional means of CSR communication basically involve the digital advertising, the digitalized CSR annual report, the CSR brochures and the press releases in pdf and so on. This kind of communication can be characterised as mainly unidirectional, asymmetrical and orientated toward the dissemination of information (Capriotti, 2009, 2011) (Graphic 1):

- *Monologic/Unidirectional (one-way)*: communication travels mainly from the sender/organization to the receivers/stakeholders.
- *Asymmetrical*: there is an unbalanced relationship and preponderance of the sender/organization over the receivers/stakeholders, due to a higher information control and availability.
- *Radial (one-to-many)*: information flows principally from a central node (the company) toward many peripheral nodes (its stakeholders), oriented to the dissemination of information.

A critical change has arrived with Web 2.0, which has facilitated the expansion of social media and collaborative tools, such as blogging (Blogger, Wordpress), microblogging (Twitter), social networks (Facebook), collaborative tools (Wikipedia) and sharing tools (YouTube, Picasa, Flickr). The blogosphere and the social networking sites, beyond affecting interpersonal and mass communication, reflect a global societal change (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Cobo and Pardo (2007: 15) clearly described the change as follows: the digital web is no longer a mere window of multimedia contents but an open platform built on the users’ participation. Blogs and social media have changed the way that people and organizations communicate and engage in relationships, facilitating the bidirectional and symmetrical communication among organizations and stakeholders that allows a balanced relationship through the exchange of information and the negotiation in conditions of equilibrated power.

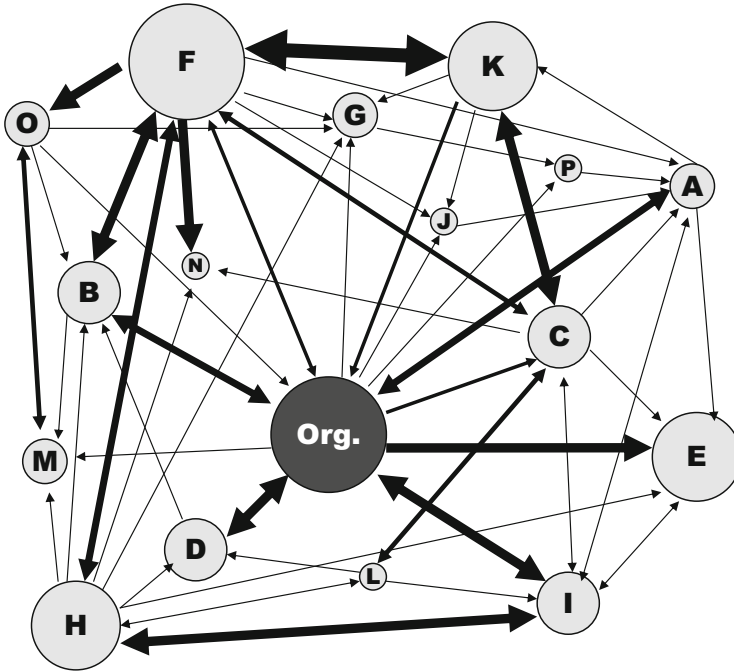
Graphic 1 CSR communication 1.0



In this way, Web 2.0 is taking on increasing relevance in communication programmes, since it offers practitioners new opportunities to engage in dialogue with different stakeholder groups (Hajtnik et al., 2015; Jo & Jung, 2005; Kelleher & Miller, 2006; Kent, 2008; Phillips, 2001; Seltzer & Mitrook, 2007; Sweetser & Metzgar, 2007; Zerfass et al., 2014). One of its most distinctive feature is the ability it gives an organization to build an interactive relationship with stakeholders through two-way and symmetrical communications (Jo & Jung, 2005; Kim et al., 2010; Park & Reber, 2008; Taylor & Kent, 2014). Thus, it facilitates the personalization of the relationships between the organization and its stakeholders, since the available tools allow the establishment of direct and personal interactions between a company and a stakeholder group (or with each stakeholder), even in real time. The rise of the Internet as a massive communication tool and the impact of Web 2.0 (mainly through the blogs and social media) satisfy the demand for two-way, interactive, and symmetrical communication (Guillory & Sundar, 2014; Jo & Jung, 2005; Kim et al., 2010; Taylor & Kent, 2014) and promote the organizations-stakeholders dialogic relationships.

Web 2.0 brings some relevant changes in the organizations-stakeholders relationships, helping to develop the interaction and negotiation among them and, thus, opens the way to interactive communication (Guillory & Sundar, 2014; Taylor & Kent, 2014). Murgolo-Poore and Pitt (2001) affirm that if an organization wants to have long-term success, it should develop clear, open and symmetrical communication with its stakeholders. With the different Internet tools, interactive communication is becoming easier.

In this way, through the Internet tools, all the stakeholders can be senders and active receivers, so CSR communication becomes dialogic, symmetrical and multidirectional (many-to-many) (Capriotti, 2009, 2011) (Graphic 2):



Graphic 2 CSR communication 2.0

- *Dialogic/Bidirectional*: communication is “conversational”, since there are two-way information flows from companies and stakeholders (both of them as senders and receivers).
- *Symmetrical*: the relationships and the information exchange are balanced between the company (as sender and receiver) and its stakeholders (as senders and receivers).
- *Reticular* (“from many-to-many”): information generation and dissemination is not limited to one central node (the organization), but there are many key nodes (company and stakeholders) with the ability and capacity to create and spread information about organizational issues. Communication becomes multidirectional.

However, beyond this important feature, the actual revolution of Web 2.0 is that it has a fundamental impact at the level of interpersonal communication and relationships. With the proliferation of the collaborative tools, Web 2.0 promotes the relationship among the different stakeholder groups and among the people belonging to the same stakeholder group. Therefore, the Internet (in general, but mainly through the social media) facilitates *any-to-any* communication (Guillory & Sundar, 2014; Heinze & Hu, 2006; O’Kane et al., 2004), which helps the flow of information in all directions and among several stakeholders. Moreover, these digital tools facilitate the move from focal relationships between the organization

and its stakeholders (*one-to-one* y *one-to-many*) to multilateral relationships (*many-to-many*) (Guillory & Sundar, 2014; Heinze & Hu, 2006; Springston, 2001; Taylor & Kent, 2014): among the organizations and their stakeholders, among the members of the same stakeholder group, and among the different groups of stakeholders.

Although the Internet has revealed itself to be a powerful communication tool for companies, they have not substantially changed their communication beliefs and habits. It could be affirmed that organizations neither facilitate nor stimulate the interactivity with their stakeholders through the digital tools, since organizations are not currently taking adequate advantage of the tools' full potential. They are not using all of the advantages that the Internet technology offers as an interactive, multidirectional and symmetrical means of communication (Brønn, 2004; Springston, 2001). Despite the interactive features, several works (Chaudhri & Wang, 2007; Jo & Jung, 2005; Kent & Taylor, 1998) have found that companies (and of course, communication professionals) are failing to increase interaction between the organizations and their stakeholders through the Internet. In relation to blogs, most studies arrive at the same conclusions (Seltzer & Mitrook, 2007). Along the same line, Waters et al. (2009) found that non-profit organizations are not using the majority of Facebook applications, and conclude that Facebook is used, basically, for information dissemination strategies. There is also a lack of creativity in exploiting the possibilities that the Internet offers in terms of multimedia and interactivity to support corporate messages (Chaudhri & Wang, 2007; Coope, 2004; Pollach, 2003). Holtz (2002) suggests that Internet technologies are used to duplicate the functions of existing technology. Many organizations have merely created electronic versions of print-based materials. Many developers of digital media have focused on the display aspects of communication, rather than on the content and on audience needs. New technologies are used in communication simply as new ways of re-creating and presenting old media (e-press releases, e-annual reports, e-CSR reports, e-newsletters, e-brochures, e-magazines, etc.). Thus, in many cases, companies are reluctant to apply all the potential of these tools (such as blogs or forums), since this implies an important loss of information control by the companies.

4 Communicating CSR Through the Internet and Social Media

For companies, communicating their responsible behavior to their stakeholders is of vital importance. The communication function, therefore, is a key element in the management of corporate responsibility. In the last decade, different authors (Ihlen, Bartlett, & May, 2011; Isenmann, 2006) have analysed this function, and have tried to clarify the principles and techniques for the effective communication of corporate responsibility.

The Internet reveals itself as a powerful communication tool for the achievement and the success of this function. This text presents the main impacts that the Internet has on CSR communication, which can help us to understand the magnitude—and the implications—of the changes that have been produced in organizations by the evolution from traditional CSR communication to interactive CSR communication among the organizations and their stakeholders, and how it is contributing to the development of more corporate transparency and more corporate responsible behavior through aligning both of them.

As a powerful communication tool for organizations, the Internet can also contribute decisively to CSR communication. The majority of the research about CSR communication through the Internet has been oriented to analyse the capabilities of the web-based tools to disseminate CSR information and to evaluate the dialogic and interactive possibilities of these technologies for CSR purposes.

On the one hand, the main recognized benefit of the Internet for CSR communication is the huge impact on the dissemination of information about organizational responsibilities (Capriotti & Moreno, 2007a; Chaudhri & Wang, 2007; Esrock & Leichty, 1998, 2000; Isenmann, 2006; Maignan & Ralston, 2002; Moreno & Capriotti, 2009), both internally and externally. It offers unlimited space for communicating CSR organizational principles, policies and activities. Hence, the Internet is a great option for corporations to set and present their agenda on CSR, and then companies can place CSR information in prominent sections of their Internet tools (Chaudhri & Wang, 2007). The majority of studies developed are mainly focused on studying what type of content is available on corporate websites, be it through the different Internet tools or through the various reports that are made available (Annual Reports, CSR Reports, Sustainability Reports, etc.). Rodríguez-Bolívar (2009) suggests that the use of the Internet for corporate disclosures has allowed firms to meet most stakeholder needs in an efficient way, offering high flexibility in the presentation and quality of the information supplied. However, there is little research dedicated to analysing how such content is organized and presented (Capriotti & Moreno, 2007a, b; Moreno & Capriotti, 2009). According to Isenmann (2006), CSR communication is moving away from a traditional practice of providing general printed or audiovisual materials prepared for all the stakeholders, towards an advanced online approach offering a set of tailored or even personalised tools (e.g., reports, brochures, leaflets, slides, presentations, podcasts, video clips, etc.) for each stakeholder group, that are provided online and/or can be downloaded.

However, the most strategic benefit of the Internet for CSR communication is that it allows an ongoing and interactive communication process, rather than a static information disclosure (Capriotti & Moreno, 2007a; Chaudhri & Wang, 2007; Dekay, 2012; Di Staso & McCorkindale, 2013; Esrock & Leichty, 1998; Kim et al., 2014). Esrock and Leichty (1999) pointed out that the Internet allows organizations to engage in multi-stakeholder dialogue, which is a critical issue in CSR. So, a critical aspect of the research about the diverse Internet tools (websites, blogs, social networks, collaborative tools, etc.) for CSR communication should be oriented toward the study of their main interactivity features (usability, information

architecture, interaction tools) that enable and expand the capacity of the organizations and stakeholders to generate permanent feedback and to engage in relationships.

However, it is debatable if organizations are exploiting the full potential of the Internet tools for CSR communication. With the new digital tools, CSR communication must go beyond the traditional forms of communication, and communicators must develop innovative applications of the new technologies to facilitate it. Web technology has not significantly changed the way that CSR is presented. One of the earliest studies about CSR information through the Internet (Esrock & Leichty, 1998) found that corporate websites were not used to their full potential to communicate CSR activities. Coope (2004) points out that even when CSR information is disclosed on websites, CSR materials are difficult to find or are presented in huge pdf files. Chaudhri and Wang (2007) affirm that companies are not doing a good job when using the Internet's potential for their CSR communication. Rodríguez-Bolívar (2009) suggests that few companies use their corporate web-based communications tools to engage stakeholders in a two-way dialogue on CSR issues. Capriotti and Moreno (2007a, b), in research investigating the CSR information on the websites of Spanish companies, have found that organizations are not using the full potential of the websites tools to establish bidirectional and symmetrical relationships with their different stakeholders. Some research studies about social networks (Dekay, 2012; Kim et al., 2014; Padilla & Del Águila, 2013) are delivering the same kind of results.

On the whole, we can suggest that the different Internet technologies are merely and mainly being used as a communication tools to disseminate CSR information, but not to engage in dialogue with stakeholders about the CSR activities and their corporate social behavior.

5 Web 2.0 and Social Media as a Tool for CSR Activist Groups

Web 2.0 has furnished the people (and the stakeholder groups) with the capability to be in contact each other without the organizational control, to obtain and exchange information and opinions among each other, to compare the available corporate information with other information coming from other companies, stakeholders, groups and people, to evaluate the company behavior based on more (but not necessarily better) information, and to establish relationships with other people and groups that are also in contact with the organization without the filter of the company.

People are able to look for information about products, services or CSR activities and they will find a huge number of opinions (critiques and/or recommendations) about them, from all over the world and from “people like myself”. This originates, then, a geometrical growth of the “word-of mouth” (the traditional interpersonal

relations) to become “massive interpersonal relations” (Capriotti, 2011; Villanueva & Armelini, 2007) by means of the massive use by people of the web technologies (e-mail, blogs, microblogs, forums, wikis, social networks, etc.).

Web 2.0 multiplies, empowers and magnifies the communication among the members of the same stakeholder group and among the members of different groups of stakeholders (Capriotti, 2011):

- Intra-group relations (more organization): these new technological tools allow members of the same public to establish different levels of communication among themselves without the control of the company, which encourages the internal organization of the stakeholder group.
- Inter-group relations (more coordination): the web-based tools facilitate the direct contact among the different stakeholder groups of a company, allowing them to share a great amount of information about the organization, and establishing different levels of interaction among them, which helps stakeholder groups to achieve better coordination among themselves.

Most of the research done recognizes the importance of the Internet as a communication medium for these stakeholders that do not have enough economic resources or easy access to traditional mass media (Kang & Norton, 2004; Naudé, Froneman, & Atwood, 2004). The Internet gives them the possibility to have a ubiquitous means of communication that is quite inexpensive (compared with traditional media), direct and controlled (since their messages can directly reach their audiences as originally constructed).

Many of the studies have been oriented to analyse how activist groups are using the Internet (Diani, 2000; Lovejoy, Waters, & Saxton, 2012; Waters & Jamal, 2011; Zoch, Collins, Fussell-Sisco, & Supa, 2008). On the one hand, the Internet can help advocacy groups to give support to business practices, creating places to advocate company products or activities. On the other hand, the Internet tools serve to protest against business practices, as a means of opposition or social resistance to companies, controlling, evaluating and commenting the socially irresponsible practices of companies and/or the information about CSR activities (CSR reports, CSR information on the websites, etc.).

The ubiquity of the Internet has been recognized as a key aspect that gives activist organizations the opportunity to make information accessible throughout the world, and so, it serves for their self-presentation all over the world (Diani, 2000; Zoch et al., 2008). In a seminal study, Esrock and Leichty (1998) affirm that the Internet helps activist groups to reach active audiences that seek and process information more than the passive stakeholder groups (who are basically reached through traditional mass media). Zoch et al. (2008) affirm that many public relations practitioners in activist groups have turned to the Internet as their main communication vehicle, because it is non-mediated. The Internet allows activist groups to become more powerful since they have a medium that lets them structure their messages and maintain their accuracy through time, avoiding the problem of distortion that occurs with mediated channels. Activists groups are able to control the content, availability, and frequency of posted materials (Coombs, 1998; Diani,

2000; Reber & Kim, 2006; Zoch et al., 2008). In this way, organizations like Greenpeace are ever available to create their own unique way of messaging as part of their role as environmental stewards. However, despite the critical contribution that the Internet can make to activist organizations, Zoch et al. (2008) conclude that public relations professionals in these kinds of entities are not using the full potential of the Internet to communicate with their targeted groups. Similarly, Sevick-Bortree and Seltzer (2009) affirm that advocacy groups are failing to use the full potential of dialogic strategies that social networking sites offer.

The consumers also use the Internet to receive information about companies, which helps them to easily compare the products and services of different competitors. The Internet's viral and social capabilities have created a new forum for consumers. Moreover, through the web-based technologies available, the consumers have become, information and opinion producers about the products, services, activities and corporate behavior. Thus, consumers become *prosumers*: consumers at the same time as content and opinion producers about the products, services or the own company. "Markets are conversations" affirm Levine, Locke, Searls, and Weinberger (2000), where consumers actively participate with their own voice. This implies a strategic change in the corporate and marketing communication management, based on a new participatory, interactive and collaborative consumer.

At the internal level, employees can use the Internet tools to receive and manage information about the CSR activities of a company. These new technologies allow mountains of information to be made available and introduce *any-to-any* communication within the company (O'Kane et al., 2004), which helps the flow of information in all directions (ascendant, descendent and horizontal). In a study of social movement networks (Diani, 2000) points out that the Internet can also play an important role in internal communication for activist groups, since they can inform, mobilize and obtain resources from a dispersed and unorganized membership body. They can also encourage the circulation of information from inside to outside the organization using the collaborative tools or platforms to publicly comment and/or evaluate the company behavior.

Then, the Internet in general (and specially the social media) has also become a relevant communication tool for the stakeholder groups, and not only for the organizations. Some active stakeholders in the social media (such as activist groups, consumers, employees, or even Internet fans—bloggers, facebookers, twitters, etc.-) are able to use the Internet tools to advocate or to oppose business practices (Martin & Kracher, 2008; Sevick-Bortree & Seltzer, 2009).

6 Conclusions and Future Outlook

It is very difficult to predict the future effects of the Internet and the Social Media on CSR communication. The Internet has affected all kinds of organizations and will go on to influence even more in the future. It has had an impact upon many

aspects of organizational structures and processes, and it has also affected the way in which organizations and stakeholders communicate with each other. The Internet tools are also becoming mobile very quickly (Pardo, 2010), which implies even more massive access. We are moving towards the famous expression: “always on”. This opens some interesting challenges for CSR communication through the Internet and three key trends can be identified:

First, from Monolithic CSR Communication to decentralized CSR Communication. With the Internet tools and Social Media platforms, the number of senders in the communication process (the people that can speak about an organization) has changed, but the amount of information circulating about a company has also varied. The advent of social media tools such as blogs, Facebook and Twitter has made an individual’s voice louder than ever before. The web-based technologies basically affect the interpersonal communication, exponentially multiplying the communication among stakeholders without the organization’s control. Thus, we are moving from the public discourse “of” an organization (the communication generated by the entity itself, which speaks about itself and disseminates the information that it considers relevant) to the public discourse “about” an organization (all that is publicly said about a company, that is, all the information available that is circulating in the communicative ecosystem, including the information from the company but also the information that other companies, other groups and other people have spread about this company). Companies speak about their CSR commitments, policies and actions (through the information available in their websites, blogs, etc. and their downloadable CSR reports), but there could be a multitude of groups or people speaking about the responsible behavior of the companies, advocating or criticizing the companies’ information.

Second, from decentralization of CSR Communication to the loss of “controlled” CSR Communication. Companies can manage and control their organizational information, but they cannot control and manage all the information sent by other actors with regard to the organization. There is no longer a unique source of information (the “official voice” of the company), but multiple voices (all the people or stakeholder groups speaking about the company –employees, consumers, activists groups, journalists or others). The organization is another actor (among all the actors in the social web) in the extended communication process among the organization, the stakeholders and the people, and not necessarily more or less important and credible than the other sources of information. Therefore, organizations lose the “control” of the communication among them and their stakeholders, and the information is not only circulating through the organization’s controlled channels, but through multiple channels that are beyond organizational control. This loss of information and channel control also implies a loss of power in their relationships with their publics. In Castells’s (2001) definition of the *information society*, the term *information* refers to a specific form of social organization in which the generation, processing and transmission of information becomes the basic source of power. Castells (2009) considers that the power is built on the communicative processes and it is based on the information and communication control. Organizations cannot control all the conversations that are being developed

in the social web about the companies, their products, services and activities. Then, organizations have lost control of the information about themselves, and it is quite difficult for them to manage the agenda about the issues or topics that they are interested in or affected by. Companies must renounce the formal control of “what is said” about themselves. We are moving from “controlling and managing” the communication of the organization towards “monitorizing and evaluating” the public discourse about the organization.

And third, from Controlled CSR Communication to Responsible Corporate Behaviour. As the power relations among organizations and stakeholders become more balanced, communication should be oriented to promote dialogue and interaction with stakeholders, to facilitate the negotiation processes and the commitment among the different parts to obtain consensus and mutual benefits. Morsing and Schultz (2006) point out that the stakeholder involvement strategy in CSR communication implies a concurrent negotiation among the stakeholders and the company to explore their concerns, rather than imposing a particular CSR initiative on stakeholders. So, CSR communication must evolve from communicating CSR commitments, policies and actions towards helping stakeholders and organizations to engage in dialogue and joint decision-making processes about CSR issues. Furthermore, communication professionals should leave their role of information gatekeepers in the organizations, to become dialogue facilitators to help joint decision-making processes about CSR issues. In this way, Heath and Coombs (2006) affirm that collaborative decision-making has important mutual benefits and it forms the basis of the two-way symmetrical model of public relations. Because of the loss of informative control in the relationships with their stakeholders, organizations must be focused on “doing well”, since every time it becomes more difficult to hide the organizations’ failures and irresponsible behaviors. Organizations must evolve from information control to management transparency. Companies must move toward greater transparency, being transparent about business operations, future goals and the treatment of the workforce. Nowadays, organizations are more controlled by their stakeholders, and for this reason companies are forced to provide a greater transparency of their conduct, since their stakeholders can freely and massively disseminate information about the irresponsible behavior of organizations. In the past, companies were able to hide their failures or mistakes, but now any person can create a blog and post the “secrets” of the firms, can contribute comments in forums, upload photos or videos to websites like YouTube or Flickr, and/or discuss the companies within a group of friends on Facebook, or generate a trending topic in Twitter. Of course, this implies that a lot of people become aware and perhaps adopt an active behavior against the irresponsible behavior of the firm. Even when the organization can act quickly and modify their behavior, the problem is already there, in the digital public arena (the cyberspace). In this way, it is better to be transparent, to recognize the failures and problems from the beginning, and explain how the company will improve their behavior. Therefore, openness, transparency and trust should become more important CSR communication values for organizations, more than traditional values such as power and information control.

In the near future, more and more sophisticated tools and platforms will emerge, that will provide new and more flexible options for communication among organizations and their stakeholders. These new tools will not only create new means of communication, but they will also modify the way that the old channels are used (Pardo, 2010; Scolari, 2009). Companies and communicators should be alert to all of these changes and should adapt their traditional messages and communication actions to the evolving digital social conversation, and researchers must focus on how the evolution of the social web can impact on CSR management and communication.

With the web-based tools, CSR communication must go beyond the traditional way of communicating, and practitioners must develop innovative forms to facilitate and promote the dialogue and interaction among organizations and their stakeholders. The challenge is to evolve from CSR communication as a tactical tool for the CSR management (communication as the last stage in the CSR management process, oriented to disseminate the corporate CSR commitments, policies and activities and to inform the stakeholders about the responsible behavior of the company and/or how the firm is working to improve it), towards CSR communication as a strategic part of the CSR management (communication as a tool to facilitate and promote the collaborative building of the CSR: establishing dialogic communication channels among the organizations and their stakeholders to ask about the stakeholders' needs and to jointly define the corporate responsible behavior, and stimulating participation and collaborative decision-making about CSR issues).

However, the implementation of the Internet and Social Media tools must not be viewed as a panacea that can solve all of the problems or challenges of corporate CSR communication. They must be considered as a relevant component of effective CSR communication strategy, but should be complemented by further offline communication activity to gain attention and promote the usage of the Internet tools. To maximise their impact, organizations must develop all of the advantages of the Internet and Social Media and integrate them with the existing traditional media into their (CSR) communication strategy. The challenge for researchers and practitioners is to study and analyse how online and offline tools can create (or not) synergies in CSR communication, and to develop an integrated CSR communication system that covers all forms (offline and online) of communication.

7 Exercise and Reflective Questions

1. Is “Stakeholders’ Dialogue” (a key topic in CSR) empowered by the use of the Web 2.0 platforms in CSR communication?
2. Are institutions and other organizations (like NGOs) communicating their CSR through Internet and Social Media channels?
3. Are the Internet (in general) and Social Media platforms (in particular) giving more power to the people to publicly debate about the CSR of companies? Or are

they merely new and powerful tools for companies to disseminate their CSR message?

4. Are organizations really integrating online and offline CSR communication?
5. Can you identify some good and bad practices in communicating CSR through the Internet and Social Media channels in your city, region and country? What are their main strengths and weaknesses?

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Big Data and CSR Communication

Ramón Reichert

Abstract This chapter discusses corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the area of digital media culture. Social media networks and online platforms are massive data collectors and have become the most important data source for collecting statistical data. A large amount of data (i.e. big data) can be generated from all online communication. These data are, for example, used to identify moods and trends. Big data research has become very diversified in the past years by using machine-based processes for computer-based social media analysis. This article first summarizes current research on social networks, online communication and big data. Then three case studies are presented, focusing on (1) health monitoring and big data aggregated from Google search and social media monitoring, (2) Facebook data research and the analysis of data structures generated from this social network, and (3) big data research on Twitter. Finally, future developments, challenges and implications with regards to health communication, communication management and CSR are discussed.

Influential theoreticians investigating corporate social responsibility (CSR) agree that the rise and broad diffusion of social media has not only been accompanied by a transformation of everyday communication, but that it can also be regarded as an indication of the fundamental process of change that society is undergoing: “Corporate social responsibility (CSR) can be perceived as a reaction to this ongoing process of societal change.”¹ Against this backdrop, recent studies of academic CSR have given rise to a debate about the relative importance of communicative strategies within the field of digital media culture.² Most authors are united in

¹Bernd Lorenz Walter: Corporate Social Responsibility Communication: Towards a Phase Model of Strategic Planning, in Ralph Tench, William Sun, Brian Jones (ed.) *Communicating Corporate Social Responsibility: Perspectives and Practice* (Critical Studies on Corporate Responsibility, Governance and Sustainability, Volume 6) Emerald Group Publishing Limited 2014, pp. 59–79, here: 59.

²Oliver Meixner/Elisabeth Pollhammer and Rainer Haas: The communication of CSR activities via social media. A qualitative approach to identify opportunities and challenges for small and medium-sized enterprises in the agri-food sector, in: Jivka Deiters, Ursula Rickert, Gerhard Schiefer (eds.), *Proceedings in Food System Dynamics and Innovation in Food Networks 2015*, pp. 354–362.

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believing that the communication with stakeholders is of great importance, particularly in the discursive sphere of social media. However, many actors remain convinced that they must convey communication in a top-down direction, in order to optimize communicative processes:

Obviously, the possibilities and limitations of social media are misinterpreted and mainly connected to traditional marketing purposes. The experts assume that most of the social media tools like Facebook or Twitter are applied because the enterprises want to increase sales or improve the overall image of the company. The mistake here is that the responsible persons want to manage the processes like in the past as was with other media channels. But the professional application of social media demands a lot of authenticity and much higher efforts; enterprises must be willing to interact with their stakeholders.³

According to recent theories relating to Social Media Research, sustainable communication in the sphere of social media must engage with the digital communication culture, which deviates significantly from the diffusion of information and manipulation of opinion as evinced by traditional media channels and formats. Most authors represent the view that following key factors lend structure to the development of social media business communications geared towards sustainability: transparency, credibility, authenticity, and non-hierarchical communication can have a significant impact on the positive image of a corporation. However, this appraisal only applies to the user-generated interface of social media. Within the context of Big Data, on the other hand, a perceptible shift of all listed parameters has taken place, because the acquisition, modeling and analysis of large amounts of data, accelerated by servers and by entrepreneurial individuals, is conducted without the users' knowledge or perusal. Consequently, the socially acceptable communication of Big Data research seeks to integrate the methods, processes, and models used for data collection in publication strategies, in order to inform the users of online platforms (Facebook Data Team), or to invite them to contribute to the design and development of partially open interfaces (Twitter API).

Over the past few years, big data research has become highly diversified, and has yielded a number of published studies, which employ a form of computer-based social media analysis supported by machine-based processes such as text analysis (quantitative linguistics), sentiment analysis (mood recognition), social network analysis, or image analysis, or other processes of a machine-based nature. Given this background it would be ethically correct to regularly enlighten users of online platforms about the computer-based possibilities, processes, and results associated with the collection and analysis of large volumes of data.

The buzzword "big data" is on everyone's lips and not only describes scientific data practices but also stands for societal change and a media culture in transition. On the assumption that digital media and technologies do not merely convey neutral messages but establish cultural memory and develop social potency, they may be understood as discourses of societal self-reflection.

³Ibid, p. 359.

The research methods of big data research, such as text, sediment, network and image analyses, are based on the insight that the social net has developed into the most important data source in the production and application of knowledge for government and control purposes. First, I would like to discuss the current state of research, as well as include some case studies and a discussion of future developments, paying particular attention to the challenges and implications for health communication, communication management and corporate social responsibility.

1 Media and Technologies

In the era of big data, the status of social networks has changed radically. Today, they increasingly act as gigantic data collectors for the observational requirements of social-statistical knowledge, and serve as a prime example of normalizing practices.⁴ Where extremely large quantities of data are analyzed, it now usually entails the aggregation of moods and trends. Numerous studies exist, where the textual data of social media has been analyzed in order to predict political attitudes, financial and economic trends, psycho-pathologies, and revolutions and protest movements.⁵

Large quantities of data (big data) are being generated in all areas of Internet communication. Since the late twentieth century, digital big science with its big computer centers and server farms has been one of the central components of the production, processing and management of digital knowledge. Concomitantly, media technologies of data acquisition and processing as well as media that create knowledge in spaces of possibilities take center stage in knowledge production and social control. In their introduction to the “Routledge Handbook of Surveillance Studies”, the editors Kirstie Ball, Kevin Haggerty and David Lyon draw a connection between technological and social control on the basis of the availability of large quantities of data: “Computers with the power to handle huge datasets, or ‘big data’, detailed satellite imaging and biometrics are just some of the technologies that now allow us to watch others in greater depth, breadth and immediacy.”⁶ In this sense one may speak of both *data-based* and *data-driven* sciences, as knowledge production has come to depend on the availability of computer infrastructures and the creation of digital applications and methods.

This went along with a significant change in the expectations towards twenty-first century science. In these debates, it is increasingly being demanded that the

⁴Berg, Kati Tusinski/Kim Bartel Sheehan: “Social Media as a CSR Communication Channel: The Current State of Practice”, in *Ethical Practice of Social Media in Public Relations*. Eds. Marcia W. DiStaso and Denise Sevick Bortree, New York : Routledge, 2014: pp. 99–110, 103.

⁵Cf. Gerard George/Martine R. Haas/Alex Pentland: “Big data and management”, in *Academy of Management Journal* Vol. 57, No. 2 (2014), pp. 321–326.

⁶Ball, Kirstie/Haggerty, Kevin D./Lyon, David, *Routledge Handbook of Surveillance Studies* (London: 2012), p. 2.

historically, culturally and socially influential aspects of digital data practices be systematically studied, with a view to embedding them in future science cultures and epistemologies of data production and analysis. A comparative analysis of data processing that takes into account the material culture of data practices from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century shows that mechanical data practices had a substantial influence on the taxonomic interests of scientists by the beginning of that period—long before there were computer-based methods of data acquisition.⁷ Further investigations work out the social and political conditions and consequences of the transition from the mechanical data counting of the first censuses around 1890 through the electronic data processing of the 1950s to today's digital social monitoring. However, the collection of large quantities of data is also entangled in a history of power of the data-based epistemes.⁸ At the interface between corporate business models and governmental action, biotechnology, health prognostics, labor and finance studies, risk and trend research experiments with predictive models of trends, opinions, moods or collective behavior in their social media and Web analyses.

As a buzzword, big data stands for the superposition of control knowledge grounded in statistics with a *macro-orientation* towards the economic exploitability of data and information grounded in media technology.⁹ In most cases, exploring very large quantities of data aims to aggregate moods and trends. However, these data analyses and visualizations usually merely collect facts and disregard social contexts and motives.¹⁰ Nevertheless, the big data approach has been able to establish itself in the human, social and cultural sciences.

Due to the Internet and the increasing popularity of social media services, research approaches for handling digital communication data are gaining in relevance. However, analog methods, e.g., surveys or interviews that were developed for studying interpersonal or mass communication, cannot simply be transferred to the communication practices in the Social Net. Richard Rogers, an influential researcher in the field of social media research, advocates no longer applying only digitalized methods (e.g., online surveys) in studying the network culture, but concentrating on digital methods to diagnose and predict cultural change and societal developments.

Thus, digital methods can be seen as approaches that do not adapt existing methods for Internet research but take up the genuine procedures of digital

⁷Cf. Driscoll, Kevin, "From Punched Cards to 'Big Data': A Social History of Database Populism." *Communication*. Vol. 1, No. 1, 2012. Online: <http://kevindriscoll.info> (accessed 20.06.2015).

⁸Cf. Leistert, Oliver/Röhle, Theo (eds.), *Generation Facebook. Über das Leben im Social Net.* (Bielefeld: 2011).

⁹Oliver Meixner/Elisabeth Pollhammer/Rainer Haas: "The communication of CSR activities via social media A qualitative approach to identify opportunities and challenges for small and medium-sized enterprises in the agri-food sector", in *Proceedings in Food System Dynamics* (2015): pp. 354–362, 357.

¹⁰Cf. Rick Edgeman, "Sustainable Enterprise Excellence: towards a framework for holistic data-analytics", in *Corporate Governance* Vol. 13, No. 5 (2013), pp. 527–540.

media.¹¹ According to Richard Rogers, digital methods are research approaches that, on the one hand, use large quantities of digital communication data produced by millions of users in the Social Net every day, and, on the other hand, filter, analyze, process and present this data using computer-based techniques. In the tradition of the actor-network theory, numerous representatives of Internet research postulate digital actors such as hyperlinks, threads, tags, PageRanks, log files and cookies, which interact with each other and with dataset subjects. The actor networks can only be observed, recorded and assessed using digital methods, though they often turn out to be unstable and ephemeral events. This gives rise to a novel methodology, which combines aspects of computer science, statistics and information visualization with research approaches of the social sciences and humanities. However, the vision of such a native digital research methodology, whether in the form of a “computational social science”¹² or of “cultural analytics”¹³ is still incomplete and demands an epistemic inquiry into the digital methods. Against this background, the objectivist and positivist postulates of big data research will be data-critically queried with respect to technological infrastructure, the pragmatics of research and the politics of knowledge using three practical case studies.

2 Case Study: Health Monitoring

In the research field of “social media data,” health diagnostics has emerged as an evidence-based prevention practice that influences the institutional development of state-run preventive health care and the cultural techniques for making life choices. Preventive health care observes with great interest how millions of users worldwide use the Internet search engine Google daily to search for information on health. When influenza is rampant, search queries on flu become more frequent, so that conversely the frequency of certain search terms can yield indications on the frequency of flu cases. Studies on search volume patterns have found a significant connection between the number of flu-related search queries and the number of persons with actual flu symptoms.¹⁴ This epidemiological structure of relationships can be expanded to cities, regions, countries and continents and represented in detail to allow for early warning of epidemics. With the epidemiological evaluation of textual clusters and semantic fields, the Social Net acquires the status of a big

¹¹Cf. Rogers, Richard, *Digital Methods* (Cambridge/MA: 2013), p. 13f.

¹²Lazer, David et al., “Computational Social Science.” *Science*, Vol. 323, No. 5915, 2009, pp. 721–723.

¹³Manovich, Lev, “How to Follow Global Digital Cultures: Cultural Analytics for Beginners,” in *Deep Search: The Politics of Search Beyond Google* Becker, Konrad/Stalder, Felix (eds.) (Edison/NJ: 2009), pp. 198–212.

¹⁴Cf. Freyer-Dugas, Andrea et al., “Google Flu Trends: Correlation With Emergency Department Influenza Rates and Crowding Metrics,” *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, Vol. 54, No. 7, 2012, pp. 463–469.

database that reflects social life in its entirety and thus affords a representative data source for preventive health policymaking.

Most monitoring projects that study large quantities of data in the Social Net are being carried out by computer linguists and computer scientists. They generally interpret the communication as collectively shared and culturally specific knowledge structures with which individuals try to interpret their experiences. The investigation of these knowledge structures aspires to gain socially differentiated insights into public debates and socially shared discourse networks. The research begins by creating a digital corpus consisting of terminological entities that are usually categorized as “canonical.” Thus, some hypotheses only result from the empirical resistance of the big data and then develop in the process of description. In this way, the category catalogues at first sight suggest scientific objectivity, but in view of the huge quantities of data, a precise validation of the terminological choices, i.e., of the interpretative selection of the big data, often remains unclear and vague. This uncertainty in hypothesis formation is due to the fact that the extensive dataset no longer allows for an overview and thus can no longer be linguistically coded. Often the quantity of data acquired is so extensive that further weighting and restriction are required to reduce the complexity after an initial exploration of the material. This methodological restriction of big data monitoring has been criticized on the basis of the fact that the resulting findings merely provide an atomistic view of the data and thus necessarily largely forgo a contextualization of the text material and hence also a context-sensitive interpretation of the use of signs.¹⁵

The evaluation of the data from Google trends can be extended to other trend developments. There are now numerous studies that investigate the textual data of social media to make early predictions of *political attitudes*,¹⁶ *financial trends* and *economic crises*,¹⁷ *psychopathologies*,¹⁸ *uprisings* and *protest movements*.¹⁹ From the systematic evaluation of big data, prognosticians expect more efficient company management with statistical assessments of demand and sales markets, customized service offers and improved societal control. The algorithmic prognosis of collective processes is particularly significant politically. In this context, the Social Net

¹⁵Cf. Boyd, Danah/Crawford, Kate, “Six Provocations for Big Data. Conference Paper, A Decade in Internet Time: Symposium on the Dynamics of the Internet and Society” [presented in September 2011, Oxford]. Online: http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1926431 (accessed 27.12.2013).

¹⁶Conover, Michael D. et al., “Predicting the Political Alignment of Twitter Users” [presented at 3rd IEEE Conference on Social Computing 2011, forthcoming]. Online: http://cnets.indiana.edu/wpcontent/uploads/conover_prediction_socialcom_pdfexpress_ok_version.pdf (accessed 27.12.2013).

¹⁷Gilbert, Eric/Karahalios, Karrie, “Widespread Worry and the Stock Market” [presented at 4th International AAAI Conference on Weblogs and Social Media (ICWSM), Washington, DC 2010].

¹⁸Wald, Randall/Khoshgoftaar, Taghi M./Sumner, Chris, “Machine Prediction of Personality from Facebook Profiles” [presented at 13th IEEE International Conference on Information Reuse and Integration, Washington 2012], pp. 109–115.

¹⁹Yogatama, Dani, “Predicting the Future: Text as Societal Measurement,” 2012. Online: http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~dyogatam/Home_files/statement.pdf (accessed 27.12.2013).

has become the most important data source for producing government and control knowledge. The political control of social movements thus shifts to the Net when sociologists and computer scientists jointly take part e.g., in “riot forecasting”, using the collected text data of Twitter streams: “Due to the availability of the dataset, we focused on riots in Brazil. Our datasets consist of two news streams, five blog streams, two Twitter streams (one for politicians in Brazil and one for the general public in Brazil), and one stream of 34 macroeconomic variables related to Brazil and Latin America.”²⁰

Big Data offers a specific method and technology for statistical data evaluation, which arises at the epistemic interface of business informatics and commercial data management and combines the fields of “Business Intelligence,” “Data Warehousing”²¹ and “Data Mining”.²² The discussion about the significance of big data for technology, infrastructure and power indicates that the numerical representation of collectivities is one of the fundamental operations of digital media and constitutes a computer-based knowledge technique that allows collective practices to be mathematically described and thus quantified. The determination of the multiplicities using numerically structured quantifications serves mainly for orientation and can be interpreted as a strategy that translates collective data streams into readable data collectives. In this sense, social network media like Facebook, Twitter and Google + act in the public media sphere as a mirror of the general state of the economy²³ or as a prognostic indicator of national mood swings.²⁴ To this end, they themselves form arenas of popular attention and popularizing discourses that ascribe certain exterior roles to them—e.g., as indicators of economic cycles and social welfare.

Social Media Monitoring represents a new paradigm of *Public Health Governance*. While traditional approaches to health prognosis operated with data collected in the clinical diagnosis, Internet biosurveillance studies use the methods and infrastructures of *Health Informatics*. That means, more precisely, that they use unstructured data from different Web-based sources and targets using the collected and processed data and information about changes in health-related behavior. The two main tasks of Internet biosurveillance are (1) the early detection of epidemic

²⁰Yogatama, Dani, “Predicting the Future: Text as Societal Measurement,” 2012, p. 3, Online: http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~dyogatam/Home_files/statement.pdf (accessed 15.04.2015).

²¹Data warehousing is an infrastructural technology that serves to evaluate data inventories.

²²In the commercial sector, the term “data mining” has established itself for the entire process of “knowledge discovery in databases.” “Data mining” refers to the application of exploratory methods to a data inventory with the aim of pattern recognition. Beyond representing the data, the goal of exploratory data analysis is to search for structures and peculiarities. It is thus typically employed when the problem is not well-defined or the choice of a suitable statistical model is unclear. With data selection as its point of departure, its search comprises all activities required for communicating patterns recognized in data inventories: problem definition, selection and extraction, preparation and transformation, pattern recognition, evaluation and presentation.

²³Cf. Bollen, Johan/Mao, Huina/Zeng, Xiaojun Zeng, “Twitter Mood Predicts the Stock Market,” *Journal of Computational Science*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 2011, pp. 1–8.

²⁴Cf. Bollen, Johan, “Happiness Is Assortative in Online Social Networks,” *Artificial Life*, Vol. 17, No. 3, 2011, pp. 237–251.

diseases, biochemical, radiological and nuclear threats and (2) the implementation of strategies and measures of sustainable governance in the target areas of health promotion and health education.

Internet biosurveillance uses the accessibility to data and analytic tools provided by digital infrastructures of social media, *participatory sources* and *non-text-based sources*. The structural change generated by digital technologies, as main driver for Big Data, offers a multitude of applications for sensor technology and biometrics as key technologies. Biometric analysis technologies and methods are finding their way into all areas of life, changing people's daily lives. In particular the areas of sensor technology, biometric recognition processes and the general tendency towards convergence of information and communication technologies are stimulating Big Data research. The conquest of mass markets through sensor and biometric recognition processes can sometimes be explained by the fact that mobile, web-based terminals are equipped with a large variety of different sensors. More and more users are thus coming into contact with the sensor technology or with the measurement of individual body characteristics. Due to the more stable and faster mobile networks, many people are permanently connected to the Internet using their mobile devices, providing connectivity an extra boost. With the development of apps, application software for mobile devices such as smartphones (iPhone, Android, BlackBerry, Windows Phone) and tablet computers, the application culture of biosurveillance changed significantly, since these apps are strongly influenced by the dynamics of *bottom-up* participation. Andreas Albrechtslund speaks in this context of the "Participatory Surveillance" (2008) on the social networking sites, in which biosurveillance increasingly assumes itself as a place for open production of meaning and permanent negotiation, by providing comment functions, hypertext systems, ranking and voting procedures through collective framing processes.²⁵ Therefore, the algorithmic prognosis of collective processes enjoys particularly high political status, with the social web becoming the most important data-source for knowledge on governance and control.

3 Case Study: Facebook Data Research

While there has been much public speculation about how the social network Facebook transforms the online behavior of its members into metadata, relatively little is known about the actual methods used by Facebook to generate this data knowledge. The data-structures modeled by Facebook therefore need to be analyzed methodologically. Two areas in particular require attention: first, the positivism of large-scale data analyses; second, the status of theory in the online research

²⁵Anders Albrechtslund: "Online Social Networking as Participatory Surveillance", in: *First Monday* Vol. 13/3 (2008), Online: <http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/viewArticle/2142/1949>

carried out by the Facebook data team. How is Facebook to be understood in the context of the “digital turn” in the social and cultural sciences? And how does the methodology underlying big data research bear out in concrete data practices?

Which music will one billion people hear in the future when they’ve just fallen in love, and which music will they hear when they’ve just broken up? These questions prompted the “Facebook Data Team” to evaluate the data of more than one billion user profiles (more than 10 % of the world’s population) and 6 billion songs of the online music service Spotify in 2012, using a correlative data analysis that determines the degree of positive correlation between the variable “relationship status” and the variable “music taste”.²⁶ This prognosis for collective consumption behavior is based on feature predictions expressed in a simple causal relationship using data mining. Led by sociologist Cameron Marlow, the group of computer scientists, statisticians and sociologists investigated the statistical relationship behavior of Facebook users and on February 10 of that year published two hit lists of songs that users heard when they changed their relationship status, succinctly calling them “Facebook Love Mix” and “Facebook Breakup Mix”.²⁷ The back end research group not only distilled a global behavioral diagnosis from the statistical investigation of “big data”,²⁸ but also transformed it into a suggestive statement about the future. It asserted: We researchers in the back end of Facebook know which music one billion Facebook users will want to listen to when they fall in love or break up.²⁹ Under the guise of merely collecting and passing on information, the “Facebook Data Team” research group establishes a power of interpretation with respect to users, by prompting users via the automatically generated update mode “What’s going on?” to regularly post data and information.

However, the Facebook Data Team’s statements about the future are only superficially mathematically motivated; they point towards the performative origin of future knowledge. Despite the advanced mathematization, calculization and operationalization of the future, the performative power of future knowledge is always drawn from the speech acts and propositional orders that can differentiate into literary, narrative and fictional forms of expression.³⁰

The format of the hit list with its ten most popular songs tries to allow complex facts to be represented at a glance. It is a popularizing future narrative that is meant

²⁶Facebook Data Science, <https://www.facebook.com/data> (accessed 28.12.2013).

²⁷Under the title “Facebook Reveals Most Popular Songs for New Loves and Breakups,” “Wired” raved about the new possibilities of data mining; see www.wired.com/underwire/2012/02/facebook-love-songs/ (accessed 28.12.2013).

²⁸Wolf, Fredric et al., “Education and Data-Intensive Science in the Beginning of the 21st Century,” *OMICS: A Journal of Integrative Biology*, Vol. 15, No. 4, 2011, pp. 217–219.

²⁹The collective figure “We” in this case refers to the researchers in the back end and fueled futurological conspiracy theories that imagine the world’s knowledge to be in the hands of a few researchers.

³⁰Cf. Lummerding, Susanne, Facebooking. “What You Book is What You Get—What Else?” in *Generation Facebook. Über das Leben im Social Net*, Leistert, Oliver/Röhle, Theo (eds.) (Bielefeld 2011), pp. 199–216.

to fulfill a behavior-moderating, representative and rhetorical function and to highlight research on the future as entertaining and harmless. To be credible in this sense, futural epistemology must always be staged persuasively in some way; it must be exaggerated theatrically, enacted promotionally and narrated in order to generate attention. Thus the futural propositional forms inherently include a moment of prophetic enactment of self and knowledge, with which the scientific representatives aim to prove the added value of the social networks for purposes of societal diagnosis.³¹ Social network media like Facebook nowadays act as global players of opinion research and trend analysis and play a decisive role in modeling statements about the future and futurological enactment of knowledge.

Happiness research is also increasingly using friendship networks like Facebook for evaluating its mass data. Within big data prognostics, happiness research is a central research direction. But the socioeconomic study of happiness occurs mostly in seclusion from the academic public. In this connection, influential theoreticians such as Lev Manovich³² and Danah Boyd³³ warn of a “Digital Divide” that distributes future knowledge lopsidedly and could lead to power asymmetries between researchers *inside* and *outside* the networks.

This unequal relationship consolidates the position of social networks as computer-based control media that appropriate future knowledge along a vertical and one-dimensional network communication: (1) They enable a continuous flow of data (digital footprints), (2) they collect and order these data and (3) they establish closed knowledge and communication spaces for experts and their expertise, which condense the collective data into information and interpret them. Thus the future knowledge passes through different layers of media, technology and infrastructure that are arranged in a hierarchical pyramid:

The current ecosystem around Big Data creates a new kind of digital divide: the Big Data rich and the Big Data poor. Some company researchers have even gone so far as to suggest that academics shouldn't bother studying social media data sets—Jimmy Lin, a professor on industrial sabbatical at Twitter argued that academics should not engage in research that industry ‘can do better’.³⁴

³¹Cf. Doorn, Niels Van, “The Ties that Bind: The Networked Performance of Gender, Sexuality and Friendship on MySpace,” *New Media & Society*, Vol. 12, No. 4, 2010, pp. 583–602.

³²Cf. Manovich, Lev, “The Promises and the Challenges of Big Social Data,” in *Debates in the digital humanities*, Matthew K. Gold (ed.) (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012) pp. 460–475.

³³Cf. Boyd, Danah/Crawford, Jane, “Six Provocations for Big Data. Conference Paper, A Decade in Internet Time” [presented at Symposium on the Dynamics of the Internet and Society, September 2011, Oxford]. Online: http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1926431 (accessed 27.12.2013).

³⁴Boyd, Danah/Crawford, Jane, “Six Provocations for Big Data. Conference Paper, A Decade in Internet Time” [presented at Symposium on the Dynamics of the Internet and Society, September 2011, Oxford]. Online: http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1926431 (accessed 27.12.2013).

These statements illustrate—in addition to the factual seclusion of future knowledge with respect to technological infrastructure—that the strategic decisions are made in the back end and not in peer-to-peer communication. While peers, with their restricted agency, may distort results, create fake profiles and communicate nonsense, they cannot actively shape the future beyond tactical activities.

The “Facebook Happiness Index” introduced in 2007, which empirically evaluates users’ moods in the status messages using a word index analysis, constitutes an important variety of futurological prophecy. Based on the status update data, the network researchers calculate the so-called “Gross National Happiness Index” (GNH) of societies. The sociologist Adam Kramer worked for Facebook from 2008 to 2009 and created the Happiness Index together with the Facebook Data Team, social psychologist Moira Burke, computer scientist Danny Ferrante and the director of data science research, Cameron Marlow. Adam Kramer was able to use the internally available data volume for this purpose. He evaluated the frequency of positive and negative words in the self-documenting format of the status messages and contextualized these self-recordings with the individual life satisfaction of the users (“convergent validity”) and with significant data curves on days on which different events occupied the public media (“face validity”): “‘Gross national happiness’ is operationalized as a standardized difference between the use of positive and negative words, aggregated across days, and present[s] a graph of this metric.”³⁵ The individual practices of self-care analyzed by the sociologists are ultimately reduced to the opposites “happiness”/“unhappiness” and “satisfaction”/“dissatisfaction.” In the end, a mood state with binary structure is employed as an indicator of a collective mentality that has recourse to certain collectively shared experiences and expresses specific moods. The sociological mass survey of the self-documentations (“self reports”) in social networks has so far determined the mood state of 22 nations. With the scientific correlation of subjective mental states and population statistics, the “Happiness Index” can be assessed not only as an indicator of “good” or “bad” governance, but as a criterion of a possible adaptive response of the political sphere to the perceptual processing of social networks. In this sense, the “Happiness Index” represents an extended tool set of economic expansion and administrative preparation of decisions.

4 Case Study: Twitter Research

For big data research, application programming represents a central tool of data-driven knowledge production. The term “application programming interface” is abbreviated here as API.

³⁵Kramer, Adam D. I., “An Unobtrusive Behavioral Model of ‘Gross National Happiness,’” in *Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, Association for Computing Machinery (ed.), Vol. 28, No. 3, New York 2010, pp. 287–290, here p. 287.

It is an irony of history that the usability of the commercially motivated Twitter API has given a boost to big social data research in the field of media and communication sciences. The online research depends on the versions that the Twitter company makes freely available. The API prescribes, among other things, the quantity and mode of selection options and access restrictions. A dispositive analysis of the media could draw on the data critique of the research infrastructures articulated by Danah Boyd, Jane Crawford und Lev Manovich and could enhance the analysis of media arrangements and their discourses with the analysis of the power effects that arise at this interface.

Richard Rogers developed the concept of “online groundedness” “to conceptualize research that follows the medium, captures its dynamics, and makes grounded claims about cultural and societal change.”³⁶ Can online research independently decide to follow a medium, or does it not rather affix itself to predetermined tendencies as a tactical effect? So far, the Twitter API has exercised constitutive power over the upsurge in applied Twitter research. The application programming made available by Twitter can be critically discussed in two respects as a media-dispositive infrastructure. As a programming paradigm for Web applications, it upholds the logic of the back and front end and hence does not act as a window to the world of social data but rather leads to automated preselection by creating software-based filters of selective knowledge generation that cannot be scrutinized by ordinary research. The filtering function of the application interface therefore systematically establishes a lack of transparency, regulatory gaps and epistemic ambiguities. In this regard, the methods of acquisition and processing that operate in the framework of application programming can be regarded as *foundational fiction*. The pertinent research literature³⁷ took a close look at the reliability and the validity of the Twitter data and came to the conclusion that the Twitter data interfaces can more or less be regarded as dispositive arrangements in the sense of a gatekeeper. This can be demonstrated through the different access points of the Twitter API: “Statuses/filter” returns all public tweets that correspond to a set of filter parameters passed. The standard access privileges allow up to 400 keywords, 5000 user IDs and 25 locations. “Statuses/samples” returns a small random subset of all public tweets. “Statuses/firehouse” is a limited access point that requires special privileges to connect to it. Thus, as filter interfaces the APIs always also produce economically motivated exclusion effects for network research, which the latter cannot control independently.

Digital methods and analyses situate themselves in the interplay between media innovations and the limitations of technical infrastructures. Thus, in order to precisely work out the power asymmetries of socio-technical interactions, one would have to avoid building on the sheer existence of individual communication technologies and their digital methods, and instead engage with the concrete data practices and technical infrastructural restrictions associated with them.

³⁶Rogers, Richard, *Digital Methods* (Cambridge/MA: 2013), p. 64.

³⁷Cf. Burgess, Jean/Puschmann, “Cornelius: The Politics of Twitter Data.” Online: www.papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2206225 (accessed 20.06.2015).

5 Development and Outlook

In recent years, social networks and online platforms have become important sources for mass collection of statistical data and have given rise to new forms of socio-empirical knowledge using data-based digital methods. Their gigantic databases serve to systematically acquire information and are employed for collecting, evaluating and interpreting statistical social data and information. Under the perspective of corporate social responsibility in their role as a medium for storing, processing and distributing mass data, social networks have brought forth comprehensive data aggregates that are used for predicting societal developments.³⁸

However, the future knowledge contained in social media is not equally available to all involved. This asymmetric relationship between ordinary users and exclusive experts has been described in the pertinent literature as a “participatory gap.”³⁹ Though it suggests a new form of government and administration, the future knowledge established by the social networks is excluded from public discussion.

Social networks have opened up new possibilities of tapping sources for empirical social research. The future knowledge of social networks overlaps two fields of knowledge. Empirical social science and media informatics are responsible for evaluating the communication in mediated interactive network media. Social research sees a decisive force for societal development in the communication media of the social networks. Its research perspective onto socialization via information technology in multimedially networked media has developed a coordinate frame of different knowledge sources and knowledge techniques to produce prognostic knowledge. Thus, for instance, the acquisition of knowledge is delegated to search bots that can access the public information. However, the future knowledge can also be used for enacting expected constellations of the statistical data aggregates, e.g., when the Facebook Data Team popularizes certain segments of its activities on its web page. In this sense, statistical data and information are built into the outward representation of the social networks and acquire an additional performative component.

In the course of its modeling, the future knowledge passes through different fields of production, acquisition and mediation and can be employed as a procedure, argumentation or integration. Against this background, the future knowledge can be viewed as a heterogeneous field of knowledge that absorbs empirical, formal-mathematical, semantic, psychological and visual knowledge. Accordingly, a futural episteme has affixed itself to the social media and brought forth a plurality of planning and consulting practices that act as multipliers of a computer-based power differential and a time-based system of rule. The heightened interest of market and opinion research in the trend analyses and prognoses of social networks

³⁸W. Lance Bennett, “The Personalization of Politics: Political Identity, Social Media, and Changing Patterns of Participation”, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, November 2012 Vol. 6, No. 44: pp. 20–39.

³⁹Taewoo, Nam/Stromer-Galley, Jennifer, “The Democratic Divide in the 2008 US Presidential Election,” *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 2012, pp. 133–149.

illustrates that social, political and economic decision-making processes are being rendered highly dependent on the availability of prognostic knowledge. In this respect, this essay has drawn attention to the fact that prognostic techniques can always also be viewed as techniques of power manifested in medial arrangements and infrastructural precepts.

In view of the increased public participation in scientific research and development, enterprise-internal actors (researchers, public relations staff, CEOs), have a significant role to play in communicating data-driven insights to the wider public. The opportunities provided by social media, in particular, illustrate the development toward collaborative processes in the co-determination of the cultural formation of meaning. As such, open platforms and networks are well suited to the integration of critically reflecting communication processes in the field of business-oriented big data research. Establishing an ethical foundation for the CSR approach recognizes the challenges and requirements of online-based research in terms of data protection, and aims at creating binding directives for the development of digital methods and for data work involving electronic sources and resources. The planned preparation of guiding principles for ethical research identifies “best practice” examples for specific research processes. The ethical catalogue of guidelines for research relates to shaping the relationship between the researcher and research subject, it is intended to stimulate self-reflection during the research process, and it comprises the full spectrum of empirical data acquisition, data analysis and data preparation. The guiding principles for ethical research are developed in collaboration with legal experts in the field of data protection and primarily serve to protect personal rights and the cultural sustainability of research results.

To ensure the long-lasting availability and ongoing development of the research results, the participatory processes of the specialized and collective roles are continuously evaluated and processed in feedback procedures for the innovative development of socio-cultural sustainability. In addition to the technical organization of crowdsourcing, the institutional anchoring of cultural sustainability also seeks to answer the question about how to design the bridge across to new forms of medial and cultural expression and use, in order to ensure the sustainable integration of the users within the agenda of big data research on social networks sites.

6 Exercise and Reflective Questions

1. Describe the relationship between social media and corporate social responsibility (CSR).
2. Please describe the role social media networks play for generating big data.
3. How can social media data be applied to health monitoring and how can the data be used? Please illustrate with an example.
4. What role does the “Facebook data team” play in terms of predicting future knowledge about Facebook user’s music choices?
5. Please discuss chances and problems when using social network data for future knowledge.

Virtual Corporate Social Responsibility Dialog: Seeking a Gap Between Proposed Concepts and Actual Practices

Shintaro Okazaki and Hector D. Menendez

Abstract This chapter provides an initial conceptualization of virtual social corporate responsibility (CSR) dialog and a preliminary examination of global firms' Twitter CSR communications. Combining Web 2.0 and customer engagement, virtual CSR dialog could be a powerful tool to establish participative and collaborative relationships between the firm and its clients. However, our analysis of 8 global firms' Twitter CSR accounts reveals that the level of firm–customer interactions is extremely low, while the level of customer–customer interactions is relatively active.

1 Introduction

In recent years, the importance of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has increased tremendously. CSR can be defined as “a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis” (European Commission, 2011). As of 2006, this was one of the most widely accepted definitions, while there were as many as 31 definitions identified in the literature (Dahlsrud, 2006). Such a wide variety of definitions implies a gradual but steady increase of academic interests in CSR during the past decades. The European Commission's CSR definition is based on five sub-dimensions—voluntariness, stakeholder, social, environmental, and economic. There seems clear evidence that more and more firms are interested in integrating these sub-dimensions in their public relations.

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Compared with other related terms, such as corporate philanthropy or social marketing, it incorporates the interaction with firms' clients so that social and environmental concerns can be addressed bi-directionally, not uni-directionally.

This chapter intends to introduce and conceptualize one of the emerging phenomena in CSR—virtual CSR dialog. The surge of virtual CSR is much related to the skyrocketing growth of social media. Social media represents the spirit of Web 2.0 that advocates consumer participation and collaboration on online communication. Unlike Web 1.0, which primarily focused on interactivity, Web 2.0 enabled consumers to be actively engaged in information exchange and dissemination. This chapter sheds light on the synergy between CSR and Web 2.0, visiting a new concept, virtual CSR dialog, first proposed by Korschun and Du (2013).

The main objective of this chapter is to fill a gap between virtual CSR dialog concept and actual practices. As is usually the case, there tends to exist a lag between academically proposed concepts and their actual adoption. We aim to find whether global corporations actually adopt virtual CSR dialog in their corporate CSR Twitter accounts. A study fulfilling such a gap may provide insights into our managerial practices as well as academic research.

In what follows, we first establish a background of virtual CSR dialog, clearly defining the terms and associated concepts. Then, we describe our method, followed by the results based on our data extraction from Twitter. We then draw managerial implications while suggesting some directions for future academic research.

2 Background

2.1 *Korschun and Du's (2013) Conceptualization*

The term “virtual CSR dialog” was first proposed by Korschun and Du (2013). Their conceptualization can be summarized as in Fig. 1. Probably the most unique aspect of this conceptualization is that Korschun and Du (2013) distinguish firms' communication efforts in terms of the type of media and offering. CSR offering and product-service offering differ fundamentally, because the former does not necessarily involve stakeholders' social or environmental interests while the latter does. This is the most crucial difference between traditional marketing and CSR. On the other hand, traditional media and social media differ fundamentally, because the former does not involve content sharing or network building while the latter does. Firms could establish networking brand communication with their clients through social media but, unless it involves social and environmental interests and tries to stimulate proactive engagement, they would fail in establishing virtual CSR dialogs.

Korschun and Du (2013) formally define virtual CSR dialog as “a company's strategic utilization of social media technologies to proactively engage stakeholders in CSR activities” (p. 1495). Decomposing this definition, we can identify two key terms—social media and proactive engagement.

	<i>Traditional media</i>	<i>Social media</i>
<i>CSR offering</i>	Traditional CSR engagement	Virtual CSR dialog
<i>Product-service offering</i>	Traditional marketing program	Virtual customer dialog

Fig. 1 Korschun and Du's (2013) conceptual matrix

2.2 *Web 2.0 and Customer Engagement*

First, the surge of social media is a natural consequence of Web 2.0. Web 2.0 is characterized by interactive information sharing, interoperability, user-centred design, and collaboration (Campbell, Pitt, Parent, & Berthon, 2011). Since Web 2.0 enhances the openness and transparency of user-generated content, an increasing number of global firms adopt Web 2.0 to increase the level of interactions with their clients. Undoubtedly, Web 2.0 has been one of the accelerating factors for fostering virtual CSR dialog. Unlike Web 1.0, Web 2.0 enables consumers to voluntarily participate in building social networks.¹ Web 2.0 can be exemplified by social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, where users freely build their own network community with their friends. Facebook is a closed network in which information is only shared by the invited users. In contrast, Twitter is an open network where the information is accessible by anyone, while followers may receive continuous updates about those followed. As a result, an increasing number of firms are adopting Twitter as a CSR tool. Twitter offers an ideal platform for CSR because it enables transparent, open, timely, and direct communications between firms and users. In addition, it helps firms to build networks with stakeholders, while keeping them abreast of the latest news and trends.

Second, proactive engagement can be paraphrased as customer engagement in academic literature. Customer engagement is defined as “a psychological state that occurs by virtue of interactive, co-creative customer experiences with a focal agent/object (e.g., a brand) in focal service relationships” (Brodie, Hollebeek, Jurić, & Ilić, 2011, p. 260). Customer engagement is closely related to CSR's voluntariness sub-dimension, which seems key to understanding the recent shift from traditional CSR to virtual CSR. Here, voluntariness refers to any behavioural change based on ethical values and beyond legal obligations (Dahlsrud, 2006). One of the pre-requisites of this voluntariness sub-dimension is customer engagement. That is, unless firms succeed in engaging their customers and encouraging their voluntary behaviour based on their ethical values, no information exchange or “dialog” would occur. However, without company–users interaction on CSR, no socially responsible behaviour would be expected, since users may merely receive the message uni-directionally. In other words, unless firms succeed in establishing a

¹See also Chapter 11 of this Handbook: “*The World Wide Web and the Social Media as Tools of CSR Communication*” by Paul Capriotti.

dialog with their customers, there is no way to assess whether the CSR message transmission provoked any behavioural change or not.

Broadly speaking, one of the conceptual foundations underlying customer engagement relates to service-dominant logic in a context of customer relationship management. Service-dominant logic defines service as “the core purpose of exchange and provides a theoretical understanding of how firms, customers, and other market actors ‘co-create’ value through their service interactions with each other” (Karpen, Bove, & Lukas, 2012, p. 21). Service-dominant logic highlights the consumers’ proactive contribution to value co-creation (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). Customer engagement reflects customers’ interactive, co-creative experiences with other stakeholders in focal, networked service relationships (Brodie et al., 2011). Hence, virtual CSR dialog expects that mutually beneficial values will be co-created through social-media-based CSR communications because customers are more engaged by proactive participation. If this is truly the case, firms will be able to effectively “co-create” solutions to social and environmental concerns with their clients and improve collective well-being collectively.

3 Research Questions

Based on the preceding discussion, this chapter addresses the following research questions in an attempt to extend our knowledge of virtual CSR dialog.

Research question 1: What is the actual adoption level of virtual CSR dialog among global firms?

Research question 2: What is the level of activity in firm–customer interactions and customer–customer interactions within the firms’ Twitter CSR accounts?

Research question 3: What quantitative and qualitative observations can we make in this regard?

4 Method

In order to address our research question regarding virtual CSR dialog, we examined eight companies’ CSR Twitter accounts. These companies include two pharmaceutical (Merck and Pfizer), two financial (Barclays and Citibank), two food (Nestle and DANONE), and two cosmetics (L’Oreal and Nivea) companies. In each firm, we extracted (1) firm–customer tweets and (2) customer–customer tweets, both of which were originated by or associated with firms’ CSR messages.

The number of extracted tweets for each firm were as follows (the number of firm–customer tweets; the number of customer–customer tweets): L’Oreal (15652; 109634), Merck (916; 37529), Nestle (2307; 69476), Nivea (2774; 4650), Pfizer (1783; 1800), Barclays (2466; 28673), Citibank (4425; 25489), and DANONE

(1012; 3870). The differences in the sample sizes among the firms may be due to (1) the differences in the actual tweets or (2) a lack of CSR activities during our data extraction period. It is noticeable that the number of customer–customer tweets generally exceeds the number of firm–customer tweets. The most active tweets/retweets activities were found in L’Oreal (109643 customer–customer interactions), followed by Nestle (69476 customer–customer interactions).

Next, applying five different clustering algorithms, i.e., hierarchical, K-means, Partition Around Medoids (PAM), and Self Organizing Maps (SOM), we grouped these tweets into tightly intertwined “communities”. Nevertheless, the results obtained from distinct clustering algorithms did not differ much, producing similar results. Most of the firms produced 2–6 clusters. In order to choose the optimum clustering results, we employed three evaluative metrics, including Connectivity (level of data dispersion in the cluster), Dunn (ratio between the smallest distance and the observations outside the cluster), and Silhouette (level of confidence in the clustering assignment of a particular observation). All the clustering algorithms have been executed 100 times. The validation scores of clustering algorithms for L’Oreal are shown in Fig. 2. As can be seen, different clustering algorithms produced slightly different results, and thus needed to be examined further by evaluative metrics.

After applying these metrics and determining the best clustering solutions, we found that most of the firms’ tweets/retweets activities were formed by two or three communities around the firms’ CSR message. This seems a natural consequence of Twitter usage, given the foremost objective of Web 2.0 being network building. At the same time, it is a little surprising that the communities were not so fragmented, indicating that there are probably a certain number of influencers and the number of topics discussed or exchanged in corporate Twitter accounts is rather limited.

We then further analysed the content of the tweets to find the level of firm–customer interactions through so-called “dialog interaction indicators” consisting of Betweenness, Clustering coefficient, and Average path. Betweenness refers to the number of shortest paths (between all pairs of nodes) that pass through a given node. Clustering coefficient measures the probability that two incident edges are completed by a third one to form a triangle. Lower clustering coefficients tend to indicate those who are connected to many people who are not themselves connected to one another. Average Path indicates average path length.

It is important to note that the level of firm–customer interactions can only be measured by these objective indicators since we dealt with a large number of tweets. Our main objective here was to first identify the most actively interacting clusters through objective indicators, then qualitatively analyse tweet dialogs in those clusters. To our surprise, however, we found that none of the firms’ clusters exhibited active interactions between the firms and customers.

Finally, we decided to extract the customers’ tweets associated with the firms’ CRS message. Here, our focal point was the level of customer–customer interactions, not the level of firm–customer interactions. After repeating the same

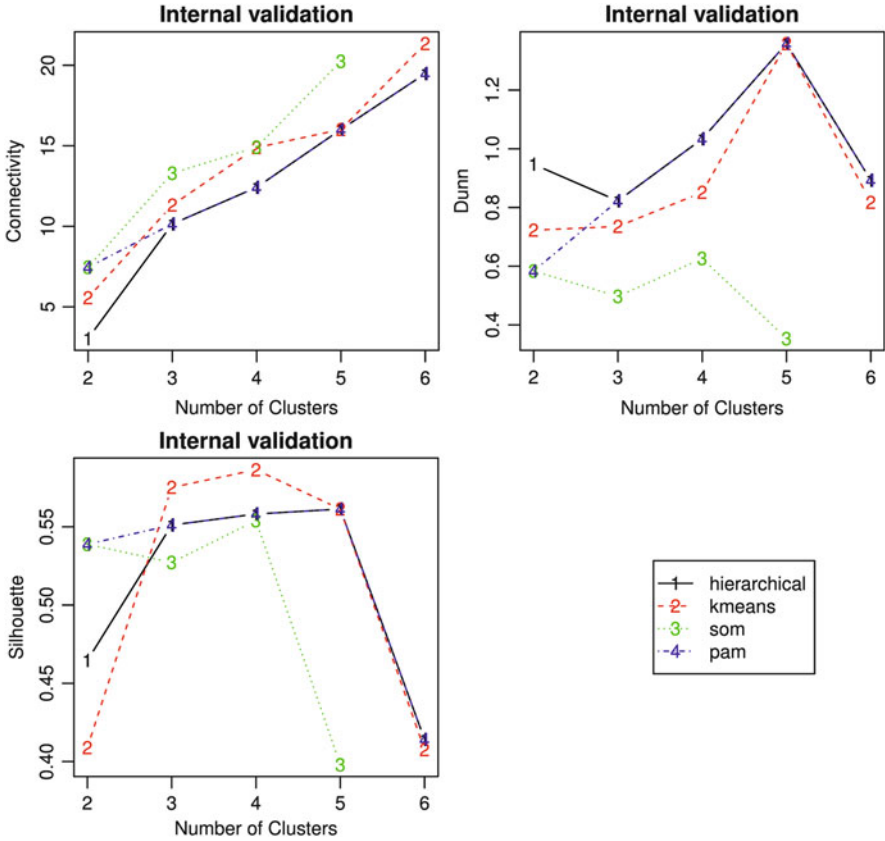


Fig. 2 Clustering results for L’Oreal

procedure, we found that most of the clusters in all firms showed a fairly active level of customer–customer interactions. That is, while the level of firm–customer interaction was extremely low, the level of customer–customer interactions was relatively high. However, we should note that, although the customers’ tweets were initiated by firms’ CSR messages, their subsequent tweets and retweets were not necessarily related to the firms’ CSR message. For example, a vast majority of these tweets included pointless jokes, ill-natured communications or any third-party-based promotional or commercial messages (or their retweets). According to the prior literature, this seems a general tendency (e.g., Okazaki, Diaz, Rozano, & Mendez, 2015).

5 Results

After carefully examining the customer–customer interactions based on the dialog interaction indicators, we found Merck’s Cluster 1 and Nivea’s Cluster 2 to be the most actively interacting clusters.

In Merck’s Cluster 1, the dialogs were mainly motivated by tweets related to the “Save Locky’s Dad” campaign (Fig. 3). This campaign sought for compassionate access to PD-1 medicine for Mr. Nick Auden who was in a battle against Stage 4 Melanoma. The campaign called for signing Nick’s petition to Merck or Bristol-Myers Squibb for new immunotherapy drugs, and tweeting “Ask @merck and @bmsnews to give Nick compassionate access to PD-1”. Such drugs as Lambrolizumab and Nivolumab have been shown to cure some patients by shrinking tumours in clinical trials (*The Sunday Morning Herald*, 2014).

Mr. Auden, who missed out on clinical trials, was pleading with the companies for “expanded” or “compassionate” access to the investigational medication, which is an option for the companies while the drugs are still under development. Just three-and-a-half months after he died, Merck announced that it was launching an “expanded access program” for its PD-1 drug Lambrolizumab for those who are suffering from life-threatening illnesses (*The Sunday Morning Herald*, 2014).

This case seems to illustrate a potential danger of virtual CSR dialog. Apparently, Merck failed to respond to the “Save Locky’s Dad” campaign, ultimately causing Mr. Auden’s death. Merck’s followers may have seen this as an example of corporate hypocrisy, since the firm should have made maximum efforts to save a terminally ill individual who desperately sought their help. Because Twitter enables transparent, open, timely, and direct communications between firms and users, if the firm is not capable of reacting to that situation in a timely fashion, virtual CSR puts the firm in a very awkward and vulnerable position.

In Nivea’s Cluster 2, the messages were related to the “#DRNIVEA Twitter Party!” campaign, where participants could win a NYC New Years’ Eve experience

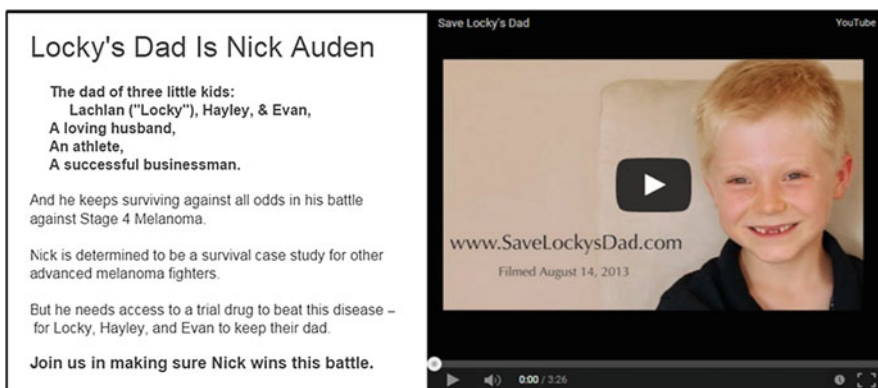


Fig. 3 Home page of the “Save Locky’s Dad” campaign. Source: Save Locky’s Dad (2015)



Fig. 4 Join @DuaneReade #DRNIVEA Twitter Party. *Source:* NIVEA USA on Twitter (2015)

in Time Square (Fig. 4). This campaign was organized by Duane Reade, which is the largest drugstore chain in the New York Metropolitan area and has served customers since 1960. This was a sweepstakes campaign in which five participants could win \$100 VISA gift cards. The prizes were given away during the 1-h duration of the party on November 14, 2013. No purchase was required to participate in the campaign. Unlike the “Save Locky’s Dad” campaign, this was a promotional campaign with an attractive incentive.

6 Conclusion and Directions for Further Research

This chapter presents the preliminary results of global brands’ virtual CSR dialog activities. Our in-depth analyses of their Twitter accounts reveal that most of the firms failed in establishing active firm–customer interactions. That means, even if the use of Twitter has proliferated among global brands’ CSR communications, they have not taken full advantage of this Web 2.0 tool. On the contrary, if global firms do not provide timely reactions to their clients’ or non-clients’ concerns, they may demonstrate a lack of honest and sincere corporate intentions, despite the messages transmitted through their CSR Twitter accounts.

As more and more firms adopt Twitter to enhance their customer relationship management, the time has finally come for global firms to exemplify true social responsibility. Consumers are increasingly sceptical of corporations engaging in irresponsible behaviours, and thus firms need to make maximum efforts in engaging their clients, letting them participate and collaborate in their CSR activities.

Future research should expand the current study by increasing the number of global firms examined. It might also be interesting to examine firms in industries that have suffered from a serious deterioration of their reputations, such as financial institutions and airlines. Also, an extension incorporating data mining techniques may be an interesting means of exploring “hidden” interactions among firms and their customers.

7 Exercise and Reflective Questions

1. Why are global brands interested in using Twitter for their CSR communication?
2. What is the conceptual foundation of virtual CSR dialog?
3. What is the difference between virtual CSR dialog and traditional CSR?
4. What are the expected outcomes of virtual CSR dialog?
5. In the study presented in this chapter, why do you think are the firm–customer interactions so inactive?
6. How could global brand managers improve the effectiveness of virtual CSR dialog?
7. How should global brands react when they receive serious complaints or claims in their CSR Twitter account?
8. Which would be a more appropriate tool for virtual CSR dialog, Twitter or Facebook? Why?

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Part IV
Intercultural Integrated CSR
Communication

Integrated Corporate Social Responsibility Communication: A Global and Cross-Cultural Perspective

Matthias Karmasin and Gerhard Apfelthaler

Abstract Based on a brief history and a short overview of global rankings, country-specific and comparative studies, this chapter discusses the impact of cultural differences of CSR communication in the global context. We relate CSR communication to a typology of the multinational enterprise, discuss implications for the ethical framing of CSR communication, and present different options for action before we identify needs for further research.

1 Introduction

While there is an ongoing dispute over the degree of globalization (Ghemawat, 2007a, b; Ghemawat & Altmann, 2014), the world has without doubt witnessed an impressive increase in the levels of international trade and foreign direct investment over the past decades. Between 1950 and 2010, international trade has increased 33 times (Singh, 2011), and foreign direct investment flows rose more than twentyfold from approximately \$54 billion in 1980 to about \$1.35 trillion in 2012 (UNCTAD, 2013). Trends of that magnitude not only exert influence over conditions in the macro-environment, but they also have very tangible impacts on the firm-level. Virtually every element in the value chain of organizations has to be re-evaluated and re-aligned to fit the changing conditions in the global environment. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is no exemption. CSR emerged in the 1950s (Gulyas, 2011)—if not as early as the 1920s (Freeman & Hasnaoui, 2011)—at a time when globalization was not even a distant vision. In parallel to the emergence of today’s globalized world of business, CSR has attracted growing interest from scholars and practitioners.

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Originally stemming from the vague idea that businesses have responsibilities that go beyond their own profit interest, CSR has been approached from a number of theoretical perspectives, including stakeholder theory, stewardship theory, institutional theory, corporate citizenship, and corporate social performance (Bashtovaya, 2014), and it has always been characterized by the co-existence of a multitude of definitions, ranging from philanthropic activities to stewardship (Gulyas, 2011). The rise of CSR as a salient topic on the public and corporate mind has been accompanied by a flurry of CSR-related research across academia as Ragas and Roberts (2009: 267) summarize. Today, CSR refers to the totality of a firm's economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic responsibilities (Carroll, 1979, 1991; Luu, 2012; Schwartz & Carroll, 2003, see also Karmasin and Litschka in this volume). It includes a multitude of initiatives including the triple bottom line, volunteer work, or providing in-kind or monetary assistance to in-need-individuals, the promotion of health and environmental awareness, supporting local communities and causes, and others (Freeman & Hasnaoui, 2011), with approaches to CSR ranging from legislating, mandating to recommending (Freeman & Hasnaoui, 2011).

Companies are commonly assumed to engage in CSR for one of two reasons—the economic argument and the citizenship or ethical perspective (Hartman, Rubin, & Dhanda, 2007). Whether it is to meet external obligations or to increase competitiveness (Dincer & Dincer, 2010), organizations need to communicate their CSR efforts in order to overcome stakeholders' concerns and generate favorable attributions (Douvis, Vaios, Thanos, & Ourania, 2014). The activity stemming from the need to communicate CSR initiatives has grown into a specialized discipline within corporate or organizational communication (Dincer & Dincer, 2010; Ragas & Roberts, 2009; Schmeltz, 2014).

However, compared to the “polyphony of CSR” (Castello, Morsing, & Schultz, 2013), only a small number of definitions of CSR communication exist, and we therefore only have a broad and sketchy understanding of the field (Schmeltz, 2014). Despite an increase in CSR awareness, the state of the debate on CSR engagement and communication is relatively limited in scale and scope in general (Gulyas, 2011), and CSR communication is clearly an under-investigated area (Maignan & Ferrell, 2004). CSR clearly has taken the world by storm. On the practice side, a number of global initiatives, including the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), the Fortune 100 Global Accountability List, AccountAbility's AA 1000 Responsibility Assurance Standard, the FTSE4GOOD, the Dow Jones Sustainability Index, the UN Global Compact's COP, Social Accountability International's SA8000 standards, CSR Hub's performance ratings, or even the ISO 26000¹ have not only increased global awareness for CSR and provided platforms for CSR communication, they have also attempted to make efforts more comparable by introducing global standards in different categories such as economics and finance, the environment, labor practices,

¹For a comprehensive list of standard-setting organizations, membership organizations, industry-specific initiatives, responsible investment institutions, multi-sector networks, NGO watchdogs, journals and magazines, see Waddock (2008).

human rights, product responsibility, and society (Global Reporting Initiative), or working toward environmental sustainability, developing positive relationships with stakeholders, upholding and supporting universal human rights, and countering bribery (FTSE4GOOD). A closer look at such assessments often not only reveals the obvious—how companies are ranked—but they also have more subtle value by revealing patterns of national differences in how companies approach CSR. Consequently, if approaches to CSR differ, approaches to CSR communication must also differ across different national and cultural contexts. In addition to the challenge of integrating various communicative processes internally and externally, problems of standardization and adaption of practices and issues of cross-cultural communication arise in global environments. This contribution therefore attempts to raise and address questions around the universality of CSR communication in a global context, including questions relating to standardization and local responsiveness of strategy and practices in the multinational enterprise.

2 CSR and CSR Communication: Global Concepts and Local Necessities

In the past decades, CSR has become globalized, and with it the interest in CSR communication in different national contexts has grown globally (Takano, 2013). So there is little doubt that in a globalized and mediated society the public legitimization of international corporations also has to be discussed on a global level. Despite the fact that there is some convergence, and hints towards the emergence of trans-global cultures such as the millenials (Schmeltz, 2014), for whom cultural differences may be less pervasive, stemming mostly from globalization and harmonization in the external environment in which multinational corporations operate (Matten & Moon, 2008), CSR is neither a universally adopted nor understood concept (Freeman & Hasnaoui, 2011), and the same holds true for CSR communication. Both CSR and CSR communication are social constructs, and cannot be universally defined (Dahlsrud, 2008). Hence, there is a broad variety of approaches to CSR cross-culturally (Hartman et al., 2007), and it is impossible to separate these concepts from the contextual environment of the nations in which they are practiced (Gjolberg, 2009). Schmeltz (2014) discusses the role of the cultural context for CSR communication and stresses that it deserves careful attention. These contextual environments consisting of normative, regulative, and cognitive or cultural components (Bashtovaya, 2014) vary due to:

- Differences in the political, economic, social, and technological environment (e.g., Fahey & Narayanan, 1986);
- Cultural differences (e.g., Ho, Wang, & Vitell, 2012);
- Different concepts of identity and group boundedness (e.g., Douglas, 1985, 1992);
- The importance of human values (e.g., Schmeltz, 2014);
- A strong sense of responsibility to the group, country, family and company built into some cultures (e.g., Takano, 2013).

It is therefore not surprising that there are differences in whether and how CSR activities are communicated (Dawkins & Stewart, 2003). Firms have several choices to communicate CSR messages (Hartman et al., 2007). According to Gulyas (2011), these differences can exist in (1) the format of CSR communication, (2) the extent of CSR communication, and (3) the content of CSR communication. Other authors see differences primarily in the channels of communication, which range from advertisements, to promotions, to public speeches, and newsletters (Maignan & Ferrell, 2004). As a firm's CSR behavior is influenced by the factors that shape national business systems (Matten & Moon, 2008), it is only a logical consequence to assume that there are difference in the if, what, and how CSR communication is practiced in culturally different environments. In a study of CSR communication in media organizations, Gulyas (2011) indeed identified country of origin as a very important factor in influencing CSR communication, both in terms of extent and content. In this vein, it has often been stated that, for instance, Western concepts of CSR and CSR communication do not work well in the Chinese context (Wang & Juslin, 2009). Even more often, the differences in approaches between the United States and Europe have been discussed. Although some authors observe growing convergence between the more explicit approach in CSR communication that is practiced in the United States, and the more implicit approach that dominates in Europe (Matten & Moon, 2008), others still state the distinctiveness of each region and that European firms have matured over the years to their own approach (Hartman et al., 2007). Most likely rooted in differences of factors such as the American focus on individual ethical responsibility versus the European tradition, which has a stronger concentration on the state or the systemic character of ethical market problems (Groddeck, 2011), CSR communication in the United States emphasizes shareholder value, while European firms seek to satisfy multiple stakeholder groups (Matten & Crane, 2005). Similarly, it is also reported that US companies often communicate and justify CSR via economic arguments, while Europeans favor arguments of sustainability (Hartman et al., 2007). The explicit approach to CSR that is followed in the United States also often results in more deliberate CSR communication, whereas the implicit European approach goes hand in hand with poor CSR communication (Habisch, Patelli, Pedrini, & Schwartz, 2011; Schmeltz, 2014).

The literature on CSR communication in a global context also lists a growing number of empirical studies on countries including, for instance, those on China (Liu, Garcia, & Vredenburg, 2014; Luethge & Han, 2012),² a study involving data from 49 countries (Ho et al., 2012), Denmark (Morsing, Schultz, & Nielsen, 2008), Germany (Antal, Oppen, & Sobczak, 2009), Hungary (Ligeti & Oravecz, 2008), India (Chaudhri & Wang, 2007), Japan (Takano, 2013), Mexico (Logsdon, Thomas, & Van Buren, 2006; Meyskens & Paul, 2010) or Russia (Bashtovaya, 2014; Soboleva, 2007) and comparative studies such as, for instance, those comparing Russia and the United States (Bashtovaya, 2014), Brazil and the United Kingdom

²For CSR communication in China, see also the contribution of Lee/Chan (Chapter "Practices of Corporate Social Responsibility in China and Hong Kong") of this Handbook.

(Abreu & Barlow, 2013), Germany, Italy, and the United States (Habisch et al., 2011), the United Kingdom, France, the United States, and Canada, (Freeman & Hasnaoui, 2011), Canada, the United Kingdom and Germany (Bondy, Matten, & Moon, 2004, 2008) or France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States (Maignan & Ralston, 2002).

It seems that there is little doubt that different cultural contexts call for different approaches to CSR and CSR communication. The important firm-level question is how boundary-spanning global enterprises decide and implement different strategies in such diverse environments.

3 CSR Communication: Culture Matters

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, 2015) estimates guesses that there are about 70,000 multinational enterprises with hundreds of thousands of subsidiaries worldwide, some of which have revenue producing capabilities of smaller governments (Waddock, 2008). These companies are usually headquartered in one country and manage a portfolio of different entities or affiliates in multiple host countries. Unlike companies that are solely sourcing from or selling to countries via contractual entry modes, multinational enterprises have assets and employees in foreign countries. Multinational enterprises organize their activities across the boundaries set by administration, politics, geography, or culture, which often results in a careful balancing act between meeting the headquarters' and the subsidiaries' needs. As Prahalad and Doz (1987) state, "*On the one hand there are strong pressures for integration and coordination between the host-country subsidiary and home-country parent company due to multinational customers and competitors, technological developments, access to raw materials and energy, and the need to leverage investment and achieve economies of scale. On the other hand, pressures for local responsiveness are due to different customer needs and tastes, market structure, and governmental requirements*". Being in the middle of this "*global versus local dilemma*" (Jamali, 2010) is as true for value-creating activities at the core of multinational enterprises as it is for CSR activities and CSR communication. The international business literature has seen decades of research on the debate over the drivers, restraining factors, and outcomes of global standardization versus local responsiveness and has produced an impressive body of results, albeit often inconclusive. In comparison, the state of research on CSR in multinational enterprises is still at an early stage (Barin Cruz & Boehe, 2010; Campbell, Eden, & Miller, 2012; Meyer, 2004) and "*embryonic*" (Rodriguez, Siegel, Hillman, & Eden, 2006) at best. A lot of theoretical and empirical issues remain to be resolved (Rodriguez et al., 2006). It is therefore not surprising that there is a lack of consensus on how multinational enterprises should implement and communicate about CSR (Hah & Freeman, 2014). A universalistic CSR approach fitting into a globalized business strategy would argue that the value basis of the company is not changed in different cultural settings. A pluralistic approach takes a

tolerant position, taking into account that ethical practices (in business) differ around the world and adopts the ethical standards of the host country even if they differ from those of the home country. The communication of CSR will in the first case be imposed on all the subsidiaries and only be modified in terms of language, whereas a relativistic approach will react upon communicative taboos, differences in media systems and communicative practices.

Multinational enterprises have often been accused of simply spreading management concepts and tools globally in an undifferentiated way, thus leading to convergence of management practices (Bondy et al., 2008), which also reflects on CSR and CSR communication. Other authors see them as networks of heterogeneous and loosely connected subsidiaries that are engaged in multi-faceted—and uncoordinated—CSR activities (Jamali, 2010). While global strategies may be more proactive, efficient, and integrated, they often lack ownership and legitimacy at the local level and decentralized strategies, while locally responsive approaches—on the other hand—may be more adequate with regards to the local context, but often are fragmented and ad hoc (Jamali, 2010). The reality is, of course, much more complicated, as multinational enterprises are—contrary to common belief—limited in their decision-making capacity. On the global level, integration and standardization pressures exist—stemming not only from headquarter strategies, but also from global NGOs (Husted & Allen, 2006). In their application and diffusion, however, there is also a certain degree of dilution (Jamali, 2010). Corporations that operate globally often contextualize their approaches, oscillating between national conditions and emerging global standards (Bashtovaya, 2014). Foreign affiliates from more distant home countries have, in fact, been found to be less likely to engage in host-country CSR (Campbell et al., 2012). Multinational enterprises are embedded into multiple internal and external contexts that include the home country environment, the host country environment and, increasingly, a global environment of multilateral organizations, regulations and global non-governmental regulations. Each of these environments presents a set of factors that determine (or, at least, influence) the degree of standardization or adaptation a multinational enterprise follows in their strategies, policies, and operations. Another important influence on the multinational enterprise's specific approach derives from the state of development of CSR and CSR communication in the home country environment. If CSR is practiced as a mere support of traditional business imperatives in the home market, then MNEs will often have similar practices in host countries that ignore local conditions and undermine the broader stakeholder concept (Bondy, Matten, & Moon, 2011). Even in the case of a home country culture with a long CSR tradition and formalized CSR policies, standards and procedures, managers in subsidiaries often hold different, and not necessarily convergent, views of CSR (Pedersen & Neergaard, 2009).

4 CSR Communication and the Multinational Enterprise

More than just to adapt to external conditions, to satisfy local expectations or to gain legitimacy, however, multinational enterprises also have the power to influence the legitimacy of CSR in their host country environments (Hah & Freeman, 2014). Often, it is the internal environment and institutional pressures, rather than a strategic analysis of social issues and stakeholders that are guiding decision-making with respect to CSR (Husted & Allen, 2006). An important internal determining factor is the multinational enterprise's overall international approach. Perlmutter (1969) has developed a typology of approaches to international activities that distinguishes four different archetypes of organizations. The *ethnocentric* type describes a multinational enterprise that is mainly guided by the home country environment and home country strategies. Conditions in the host country environment get little attention under the ethnocentric approach, which results in a high degree of standardization. A good example for this approach is Starbucks, the global coffee chain. With regards to CSR, Starbucks positions itself globally through ethical standards in sourcing and environmental awareness. Even the communication of its responsibility towards local communities surrounding its retail locations itself is globally standardized. The *polycentric* company has activities in many different locations, and strives to adapt to each one of the local host country environments individually and, often, to the maximum degree possible. As globally standardized as the automotive industry might seem, Volkswagen, the German car manufacturer, follows a polycentric approach in its CSR efforts. They address local or regional topics and focus on stakeholder dialogue at the local level. The *geocentric* type also follows a standardization approach. It differs from the ethnocentric type in that it is not standardized based on the conditions of the home country environment, but based on global standards. Samsung Electronics is an example of this approach. For instance, in its efforts to be a good corporate citizen, Samsung maintains a team of global compliance experts that work not only on the prevention of unlawful practices worldwide, but also on building a global organizational culture of responsibility.

There is, of course, interaction between these different strategic approaches and the respective external environments in which multinational enterprises operate, resulting in different options for CSR and CSR communication. If strategies are applied to cultural environments that are distinctly different from those that govern the dominant strategy, difficulties are bound to occur. And even in situations where the dominant approach and the local conditions align, negative effects may occur, as is outlined in Table 1.

The concrete approach to strategy and CSR communication is the outcome of a negotiation between multinational companies' global strategies and the interests of stakeholders in their local environments (Abreu & Barlow, 2013) in which the MNE must determine if and to what degree an issue is of strategic importance (Husted & Allen, 2006) and what the respective advantages or disadvantages of each strategic option are.

Table 1 MNE strategic approaches and CSR communication outcomes in different environments

	Dominant strategy	Approach to CSR communication in host country is SIMILAR to dominant perspective or standard	Approach to CSR communication in host country is DIFFERENT from dominant perspective or standard
ETHNOCENTRIC	UNILATERAL STANDARDIZATION: home-country perspective or standard alone. Universalistic ethical approach	MATCH. Home country approach to CSR communication applied in host country Result: no conflict of culturally biased perspectives; global efficiency in CSR communication through standardization	MISMATCH. Home country approach to CSR communication applied in host country Result: conflict of culturally biased perspectives; entering MNE perceived as foreign imperialist with CSR communication standards and practices that do not fit the local environment
POLYCENTRIC	BILATERAL ADAPTATION: home country perspective or standard exists, but host-country perspective or standard embraced. Dialogic ethical approach	MATCH. Host country approach to CSR communication applied in host country Result: no conflict of culturally biased perspectives; over-adaptation to meaningless differences may lead to fragmentation of CSR communication	NON-CONSEQUENTIAL MISMATCH. Host country approach to CSR communication applied in host country Result: no conflict of culturally biased perspectives; fragmentation of CSR communication due to necessary adaptation
GEOCENTRIC	GLOBAL STANDARDIZATION: no home country perspective or standard. Global perspective or standard established Relativistic ethical approach	MATCH. Global approach to CSR communication applied in host country Result: no conflict of culturally biased perspectives; global efficiency in CSR communication through standardization	MISMATCH. Global approach to CSR communication applied in host country Result: conflict of global versus local perspectives; entering MNE perceived as global imperialist imposing CSR communication standards and practices that do not fit the local environment

At first glance, the geocentric approach with a flexible CSR communication outlined above seems to be a reasonable one. The corporation does not impose any values upon other cultures and reacts flexibly to different moral beliefs and ethical practices. If the different values do not conflict, if there are no legal restraints and the local values do not harm the corporate or brand identity, this may seem rational and plausible. However, the communication of values and ethical self-restraints of corporations are essential in CSR communication. This issue can't be reduced to mere strategic aspects. Let's take, for instance, the case of a corporation that operates in a business environment in which there is no freedom of speech, no free press, an environment in which women are not treated equally. There are environments, in which such practices are widely accepted, and—being part of the cultural heritage—they are supported by local laws. In such an environment, should corporations still “do as the Romans do”? Even if they do (ethically) wrong? Moreover, who decides what is “right” or “wrong”? Practice and research have shown that different contexts have different answers to this question. Are there universal standards (like human rights and dignity), which must not be violated, neither by politicians nor by corporations, or should corporations just care about not harming any stakeholders intentionally? From the viewpoint of integrated CSR communication, the easiest way out seems to be to clearly define the standpoint of the corporation (on human rights, ethical standards in relation to the development of the host country) and to communicate it thereafter. Standardization therefore seems to be the answer—one set of values, consistently communicated, integrated across all departments and subsidiaries, embedded in a consistent branding and corporate strategy, enforced with rigorous quality control. Then again, what if the CSR communication conflicts with local taboos and communication practices, and what if the communication itself is regarded as inappropriate and unacceptable? For instance, a focus on equal opportunity in CSR communication may be an appropriate and effective CSR communication in Northern European countries, but may be regarded as problematic in Middle Eastern states. Standards can lead to a “thoughtless, blind and blinkered mindset” (De Colle, Henriques, & Sarasvathy, 2014: 177). A strict universalistic approach is therefore not a perfect approach either. There seems to be no easy way out—the corporation has to take responsibility, and continue the balancing act between a geo- or ethnocentric, standardized and a polycentric, decentralized approach.

5 Outlook and Further Research: Therefore, Communicating with Integrity

The reason why multinational enterprises have a “mixed track record” of CSR and CSR communication (Jamali, 2010) and why the communication of corporate ethics has “perils and opportunities” (Schlegelmilch & Pollach, 2005) may stem—at least partially—from the fact that relatively little guidance on the topic

exists. The fundamental approach to CSR communication, not only to communicate about responsibility, but to act responsibility through communication, as Karmasin and Weder (2008) argue, does not change in international aspects. Following Göbel (2013, 103ff.), this responsibility consists of two moments, namely a teleological moment (responsibility for the outcomes) and a deontological moment (without any fixed values and obligations the term of responsibility becomes meaningless). CSR communication combines numerous dimensions: an individual-ethical component (managers and employees have to communicate responsibility), a system-ethical (the communication of the organization) as well as a regulatory-ethical component (business ethics are constantly monitored skeptically by the public). From this perspective, the corporation is not understood to work singularly towards profit maximization, but as a pluralistic entity that engages in the value creation processes in communicative aspects as well. Moreover, the corporation bears responsibility not only for itself, but also for competitive conditions that govern its environment, as summarized by Karmasin and Litschka (2017) in an earlier chapter of this book.

Following these arguments, intercultural CSR communication should not simply react to cultural differences but should also try to communicate about the respective cultural standards and how they could be ethically justified. This does not imply that CSR communication has to impose the ethical standards of the home country to the host country (we discussed the problems of a universalistic perspective earlier), but that the self-imposed CSR standards should be not only properly communicated but also justified. CSR communication should always be communication with integrity. Or, to put it differently, business integrity is a basis for communicating with integrity. As Schlegelmilch and Pollach (2005) point out, any successful communication of corporate ethics has to be grounded on a firm and sustainable commitment to responsibility and ethical behavior. The CSR communications strategy and the overall CSR strategy should provide the framework for communicating with integrity. In our understanding, this means, first of all, that the CSR (communication) strategy makes clear that it is only admissible to “do as the Romans do when the Romans do the right thing”, that it has to define what the right circumstances are, and to justify this from an ethical (and not only strategic) point of view. The problems of intercultural communication should be addressed in the CSR communication processes itself and the premises of CSR and the underlying ethical arguments should be reflected. On a formal level, the need for CSR communication (in the meaning of taking responsibility seriously) and the goal of integrating stakeholders in communication processes will and can be part of the CSR communication strategy. The integration of stakeholders in communicative processes, however, depends on the technical possibilities and social realities of a culture. The feedback of stakeholder interests with demoscopic methods (e.g., stakeholder panels) and the usage of social media or wikis (see Farrar et al., 2008) are methods to maintain dialogue and interaction with stakeholders only in highly developed and mediated environments. In other (less developed and mediated) regions, the dialogue can focus on real time assemblies and interactions. This means that there should be a process of self-governance, which shows that ethical problems must be solved collectively, not individually as the concept of process ethics (see Krainer,

2002 or Heintel, Krainer, & Ukowitz, 2006) argues. It also implies a collaborative, constitutive view of communication, rooted in conflict rather than in consensus models (Deetz, 2007: 274) that takes different values, different ethical reasonings, and different cultural value semantics of CSR (Groddeck, 2011) into account. Circling back to Table 1 and trying to bridge “is and ought”, the polycentric approach with a variable communication strategy seems to be appropriate from a normative (ethical) point of view, if integrated and based on a CSR strategy of integrated CSR communication. If applied appropriately, CSR communication can even double up as a mechanism to overcome the so-called “Liability of Foreignness”, a competitive disadvantage that foreign affiliates of MNEs suffer from (Campbell et al., 2012).

For CSR scholars, this makes variances of CSR communication in international contexts, in particular the format of CSR communication, the extent and frequency of CSR communication, the content of CSR communication and the level of integration of CSR communication (Gulyas, 2011; Habisch et al., 2011) an interesting area of future research. It is fairly certain that CSR communication will stay on the agenda for researchers in many disciplines including public relations, marketing, international management and of course business ethics.

6 Exercise and Reflective Questions

1. What are the main challenges of CSR in an international context?
2. Describe the major differences between the US and the European approaches to CSR.
3. Why is CSR communication important in international management?
4. What are different strategies to resolve cross-cultural conflict in international settings?
5. Describe the different strategic approaches practiced by multinational enterprises.
6. What is the main difference between the ethnocentric and the geocentric approach in international management?
7. What are the implications of different strategic approaches to CSR communication?
8. Discuss arguments pro and contra universalistic approaches in CSR communication.
9. Discuss arguments pro and contra relativistic approaches in CSR communication.
10. What are the implications of a process-ethical approach to CSR communication?
11. Discuss directions of future research in CSR communication.

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Integrated CSR Advertising: With a Special Focus on the Intercultural Perspective

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Abstract Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is becoming ever more important in today's business world. For consumers, the knowledge that a company engages in CSR is increasingly a crucial factor in their decision-making. However, for consumers to know about CSR activities, it requires that companies communicate about their engagement to their stakeholders. Advertising is but one means of communicating CSR efforts. In the academic literature, CSR advertising has received disproportionately little attention, in comparison to the bulk of CSR literature. This chapter provides a review of the current literature dealing with the topic of CSR advertising, with a special focus on intercultural CSR advertising. Qualitative and quantitative studies have been conducted in this area, with the majority of quantitative studies involving experiments. Directions for further research are provided, as significant research gaps in the area of CSR advertising, and in particular in the area of integrated and intercultural CSR advertising, exist.

1 Introduction

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has been a topic of interest for corporations and academia since the latter half of the twentieth century, following heightened consumer attention towards the beneficial and detrimental practices of companies that influence society at large (Becker-Olsen, Taylor, Hill, & Yalcinkaya, 2011). Research and industry polls have shown that this consumer interest has grown steadily, and with it companies' interest, as well. Whether the issue at hand concerns

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environmental efforts or social justice, consumers and stakeholders want companies to take responsibility (Diehl, Terlutter, & Mueller, 2016). However, these elevated consumer expectations are not just a challenge, but also a huge opportunity for firms to differentiate themselves from their competitors (Becker-Olsen et al., 2011). Investing in CSR can improve a company's image, motivate its workforce and even increase sales, albeit economic objectives will rarely be in the foreground of a company's CSR goals (Drumwright, 1996). In order for a company to reap the rewards of their CSR investments, it is essential that stakeholders are familiar with a company's CSR activities. Only awareness can lead to changes in attitude or purchase intentions (Pomeroy & Dolnicar, 2009). Therefore, effective CSR communication is essential for successful CSR programs (Dawkins, 2005; Diehl et al., 2016; Öberseder, Schlegelmilch, & Gruber, 2011).

CSR communications can take various forms. Du, Bhattacharya, and Sen (2010) proposed a framework of CSR communications, which highlighted two aspects that are key to a company's understanding of CSR communications: message content and message channel. The latter, message channel, includes the sources of CSR communications. Independent channels are represented by word of mouth and media coverage. Corporate channels include CSR reports, corporate websites, public relations, point of purchase and advertising. This last element, CSR advertising, is the focus of this chapter.

CSR appeals in advertising have dramatically increased in number over the last years (Mögele & Tropp, 2010; Pomeroy & Johnson, 2009). Despite this trend, research on the topic is still not highly developed. Consumer responses to CSR appeals and the variables that are of relevance in this context are still not fully understood (Diehl et al., 2016). This chapter, therefore, provides an overview of the research related to (intercultural) CSR advertising and integrated CSR communication to date, in order to highlight where further research is still needed. Both, CSR as a research topic in advertising research, as well as research on how to advertise CSR activities and the effects of CSR advertising, are included. While this chapter highlights much of the research conducted on the topic of CSR advertising, it must be acknowledged that this literature review is not exhaustive, as not each and every article on the topic is included.

2 CSR, Advertising and Integrated Marketing Communications

Corporate social responsibility is a concept for which many definitions exist in the literature. Since the 1950s, sparked off by Howard R. Bowen's 1953 publication of *Social Responsibilities of the Businessman*, a large number of approaches to the concept of CSR have developed. Carroll (1979) reviewed and summarised some of these in his development of a conceptual model of corporate performance. As a definition of CSR, he posited that "the social responsibility of business encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time" (p. 500). Dahlsrud (2008) analyses and compares a further 37 definitions of CSR found in the literature. For a discussion of

CSR definitions and a classification of CSR in relation to corporate responsibility, corporate governance, corporate citizenship and the role of communicative responsibility, see Karmasin and Apfelthaler (2016) and Karmasin and Litschka (2016). For the purpose of this chapter, the very general definition provided by Brown and Dacin (1997) is adopted, which sees CSR as a company's "status and activities with respect to its perceived societal obligations" (p. 68).

Companies can engage in a variety of CSR activities. Among them are corporate philanthropy, cause-related marketing, minority support programs, as well as socially responsible employment and manufacturing practices (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004). Cause-related marketing (CRM), an often applied and much studied concept, is a manifestation of CSR in which a company donates a certain amount of money to a non-profit organisation or social cause for each purchase of a particular product or service (Nan & Heo, 2007).

Each of these CSR activities can be communicated in a number of ways. As mentioned previously, reports, websites, product packaging, press releases and advertising are communication outlets that are controlled by the company (Du et al., 2010). The first two are subtle forms of communication, while the latter are rather broad and open communication channels, as identified by Morsing and Schultz (2006). Each communication outlet has its advantages and disadvantages, and a company must be particularly aware of the trade-off between controllability and credibility. For instance, advertising is more controllable but less credible than public relations (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001; Skard & Thorbjørnsen, 2014; Yoon, Gürhan-Canli, & Schwarz, 2006).

CSR communications entail the ways in which "companies present their CSR principles and practices to the public and investors" (Tang & Li, 2009, p. 200) and represent a somewhat problematic issue. Companies engaging in CSR communications face a dilemma; on the one hand, stakeholders want to be informed about a company's CSR efforts, but on the other hand, they are often sceptical of CSR messages and cynical regarding a firm's motives (Pomering & Dolnicar, 2009). This is particularly true of advertising, as it is the most visible communications medium (Jahdi & Acikdilli, 2009; Obermiller & Spangenberg, 1998). The literature offers evidence that CSR communications can have a positive impact on corporate image and trust in the company (Swaen & Vanhamme, 2004), but there is an equal amount of evidence that suggests that CSR communications can reflect negatively on the company (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001).

As advertising is "non-personal mass communication using mass media (such as TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, billboards, etc.), the content of which is determined and paid for by a clearly identified sender (the company)" (De Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Van den Bergh, 2010, p. 4), it is frequently used for CSR communication. "CSR advertising" is referred to with many different terms in the literature. Drumwright (1996) calls it "company advertising with a social dimension" and CSR advertising campaigns are referred to as "social campaigns" (Drumwright, 1996). Pomering and Dolnicar (2009) use the term "pro-social marketing communications", while Pomering and Johnson (2009) apply the wording "corporate image advertising" for the tool used to inform consumers about a company's identity-based CSR record. Farache and Perks (2010) employ quite similar terminology, namely "CSR image advertising". Kilbourne (1995) views such ads from a

'green' angle, thus referring to them as "green advertisements". In summary, we define CSR advertising as follows:

CSR advertising is a company's mass communication about its CSR engagement or references thereto, with the purpose of informing consumers about the company's CSR engagement, and thereby positively influencing consumers' opinions of the company, its products or business processes.

Intercultural CSR advertising encompasses CSR advertising that is employed in more than one country.

Drumwright (1996) observes that advertisements associated with CSR topics are often grouped under the related concepts of cause marketing, cause-related marketing, corporate issue promotion, corporate social marketing, social issues marketing, mission marketing and passion branding.

For marketing communications to be most effective, it is important for them to be integrated. De Pelsmacker et al. (2010) state that "good marketing is integrated marketing" (p. 3). Integrated marketing means that the marketing mix should be consistent and synergetic. For marketing communications, which include advertising, this suggests that all marketing channels work in the same direction and should not be in conflict with each other.

As communication tools influence one another, integrated marketing communication becomes even more relevant (Jahdi & Acikdilli, 2009). In the context of CSR, it is essential to practice integrated CSR communications and advertising that are strategically planned and maintained (Türkel, Uzunoglu, Kaplan, & Vural, 2016).

Integrated CSR advertising is a company's mass communication about its CSR engagement or references thereto, with the purpose of informing consumers about the company's CSR engagement, and thereby positively influencing consumers' opinions of the company, its products or business processes, which is aligned and coordinated within the company's general communication campaigns, such that all advertising is consistent and synergetic.

Messages on the Internet, company reports and mainstream communications media should be employed with a strong and clear explanation of their relevance to the stakeholders concerned (Dawkins, 2005). Drumwright (1996) sees CSR campaigns as particularly effective for integrated communications, as they are ideally both externally and internally directed, and thus organisational identification can be increased and company-oriented goals achieved. According to Drumwright (1996), the success of CSR advertising in this context depends on the degree of affinity that internal and external stakeholders have or develop for the advertised cause.

The goal of CSR advertisements is to meet consumer demands for information regarding the deeds a company performs in the area of socially responsible behaviour (Dawkins, 2005). CSR advertisements may follow different strategies. Some might appeal to consumer rationality, while others appeal to their emotions. Companies may also use CSR advertisements in response to public pressure (Farache & Perks, 2010). In general, integrated CSR advertising campaigns should present the

desired corporate identity, and thus should aim to guide corporate image perceptions (Pomeroy & Johnson, 2009).

3 Literature Review

Although there is a large number of studies on CSR communications, research focused on CSR advertising is still rather scarce. Drumwright (1996) notes that “no one has investigated them [company advertisements with social dimensions] directly” (p. 71). Therefore, Drumwright (1996) examined what predominantly American managers’ objectives were for employing CSR advertisements and how the ads were conceptualised and executed. Findings include the insight that non-economic objectives are indeed relevant for CSR advertising campaigns and that CSR ads are not processed much differently than standard campaigns. In 2010, Farache and Perks commented that “little is known about CSR advertisements” and “even the term CSR advertisement is not widely used” (p. 235). Rather, Farache and Perks (2010) reported that research has focused on websites and corporate reports, but not on advertising. Ihlen, Bartlett, and May (2011) noted that while the topic of CSR is supported by a vast amount of literature, CSR communications literature is still scarce and in the periphery. Even a recent study in the field (Türkel et al., 2016) decried the fact that “CSR communication studies are far more limited” (p. 229), an evaluation shared by Diehl et al. (2016).

Golob et al. (2013) reviewed CSR communication papers published in scholarly journals, in order to summarise the current state of CSR communication knowledge. Working with qualitative content analysis, the authors identified 184 papers, of which 90 remained in the final list, and these were then divided into three categories—disclosure themes, process-oriented papers and articles on the outcomes/consequences of CSR communications. The goal was to identify which topics were most common in the CSR communications literature. Two-thirds of all papers were disclosure-oriented, of which again two-thirds dealt with CSR communication channels. Only fifteen articles were found to deal specifically with CSR advertising. Moreover, it was identified that the papers under scrutiny appeared in 48 different journals, in the areas of marketing, public relations and communication studies, as well as business and management fields.

It is true that research on CSR advertisements goes by many different names and thus is a bit difficult to grasp at first. However, when researching the many labels available for the concept of CSR advertising, quite a large number of studies can be discovered. Nan and Heo (2007) found that research on consumer attitudes towards CSR marketing communications largely concerns itself with anecdotal stories, case studies and surveys, which ask directly about attitudes towards cause-related marketing. Experimental approaches have also become more common in recent years. Intercultural research on CSR advertising is rather rare to date, however, with few exceptions, e.g., Diehl et al. (2016). The theoretical basis for CSR advertising is also underdeveloped. Mögele and Tropp (2010) explain the lack of empirical

research studies in the area with the fact that there is still an insufficient theoretical basis for the research subject. In the following, an overview of the existing research on CSR advertising is presented, focusing first on content analyses on the topic and thereafter on the different variables that have been investigated.

3.1 Content Analyses of CSR Advertising

In the literature on CSR advertising, several comments have been given on the subject and a number of content analyses have been conducted. Lord Borrie (2005), to give an example of a comment on the subject, investigated CSR and advertising self-regulation. As chairman of the Advertising Standards Authority in Great Britain, he claimed that self-regulation in advertising standards is working, as the CSR dynamic runs with the grain of business need, and thus proves more effective than continuous legal battles over compliance to the British Code of Advertising, Sales Promotion and Direct Marketing.

Mögele and Tropp (2010) examined the development of the appearance of CSR advertisements in three weekly German magazines during the period 2002 to 2007. Findings show that CSR print advertisements increased 390 % during these five years, from 2 % to 9.8 % of all advertisements in the three magazines. Furthermore, the CSR component was increasingly linked with product advertising. Ecological appeals outnumbered social topics.

Farache and Perks (2010) also conducted a content analysis of CSR advertising. Via in-depth analysis and comparison of two British and two Brazilian advertisements, the authors examined how companies use CSR advertisements to legitimise their ethical positions. As a theoretical basis, Lindblom's legitimacy theory was used, which operates on the assumption that a social contract exists between business and society (Farache & Perks, 2010).

Green and Peloza (2015) conducted a content analysis of U.S. print advertisements from 2006 to 2010 to test the hypothesis whether managers alter their CSR communications during recessionary periods. Findings revealed that instead of lower levels of CSR communications during the recession, a greater number of CSR advertisements were found among the sample. Moreover, there was a greater likelihood that the CSR messages were integrated into 'mainstream' advertising during the recessionary period.

Jahdi and Acikdilli (2009) conducted a literature review of the role that various marketing communications media play with regard to the communication of CSR policies to various stakeholders. Advertising received heightened attention, as critical claims towards it were investigated and source credibility and attractiveness, as well as media choice, were discussed.

An unusual approach was taken by Kerr, Johnston, and Beatson (2008), who analysed the nature of Australian government advertising processes and developed a framework of CSR for governmental advertising accountability. Included in the

framework are the CSR principle of legitimacy, processes of corporate social responsiveness and outcomes of accountability and inquiries.

To the best of our knowledge, no qualitative study deals with integrated CSR communication, or integrated CSR advertising, in particular. Apart from Farache and Perks (2010), no content analysis was found that focused on intercultural aspects of CSR advertising.

In the following, the literature is sorted according to dependent variables researched.

3.2 Attitude Towards the Advertisement

A commonly researched variable is attitude towards the ad. Ross, Stutts, and Patterson (1991), for instance, asked U.S. consumers in personal interviews whether they could recall CRM ads, which 53 % were able to do. Pomeroy and Dolnicar (2009) also sought to find out whether consumers could recall CSR initiatives of Australian banks and to what extent they were interested in communication from banks. Results showed that the levels of specific and general awareness were very low. 53 % of respondents were interested in receiving information on confidentiality and customer safety and 35 % of respondents were interested in environmental improvements or recycling efforts.

Nan and Heo (2007) explored whether advertisements with embedded CRM messages elicited a more favourable attitude towards the ad (in their case, for a fictitious brand of orange juice) among American students. The three experimental conditions were high brand/cause fit, low brand/cause fit and the control group. The stimulus was a black and white print ad. In the high brand/cause fit condition, the cause was a health-related NPO, in the low brand/cause fit condition, it was a traffic safety organisation. Attitude towards the ad proved insignificant for either condition when compared to the control group. However, brand consciousness had a positive effect on attitude towards the ad. For those consumers who were high in brand consciousness, attitude towards the ad was also more favourable in a high brand/cause fit condition.

Mattila, Hanks, and Kim (2010) also researched attitude towards the ad in their experiment of JP Morgan vs. Verizon, as well as CSR ad vs. non-CSR ad. Adding a CSR message to the ad boosted American respondents' attitudes towards the ad for JP Morgan but weakened their attitudes towards the ad for Verizon.

Pomeroy, Johnson, and Noble (2013) measured attitude towards the ad against varying levels of CSR commitment, using fictitious bank print ads. Their subjects were Australian participants. The authors' hypothesis of a positive relationship between the degree of CSR commitment information and attitude towards the ad could not be supported.

Most recently, Diehl et al. (2016) examined ad evaluation of humane-oriented CSR advertisements in a cross-cultural study of six countries. It was hypothesised that the perception of a higher level of humane orientation in an ad would lead to a

more positive evaluation of the ad. For all six countries studied by the authors, this hypothesis was confirmed.

A variable that is closely related to attitude towards the ad is attitude towards the message. This dependent variable was studied by Türkel et al. (2016) with Turkish participants. The authors' hypothesis was that there is a difference in the attitude towards the message depending on the degree of prior familiarity with a brand. They compared a CSR ad for a familiar brand with a CSR ad for a fictitious brand. This hypothesis was not supported by the data, however.

Ross et al. (1991) asked U.S. consumers in personal interviews whether the amount of CRM contribution advertised in CSR ads makes a difference to them. Nearly half (47 %) of respondents agreed. 37 % of respondents said they would not be influenced by the size of the contribution and the remaining 16 % were undecided.

Bowd, Bowd, and Harris (2006) conducted a stakeholder survey in Britain. The survey was undertaken in a retail centre and customers, staff, suppliers, as well as managers were asked which CSR communication technique they found most effective. On-site marketing communication techniques highly visible to users were deemed most successful. These could include CSR advertising, although it was not specifically mentioned. It should be noted that this research was exploratory in nature.

Another intercultural study was carried out by Morsing and Schultz (2006). They used the data from national reputation surveys in Denmark, Norway and Sweden to learn about the reputation of those companies most visible to the public. Among the survey questions were some related to CSR communications, e.g., which forms of CSR communications are desired by consumers. In Denmark and Norway, annual reports and the company website were preferred to corporate advertising and press releases. The Swedes rated the two channels more or less equally, with corporate advertising and press releases slightly in the lead.

Landreth-Grau and Garretson-Folse (2007) investigated attitudes towards CRM-campaigns. As independent variables, cause involvement (high vs. low) and donation proximity (local vs. national) were chosen. For their experimental study, the authors manipulated an ad for a fictitious lotion, adding the cause of skin cancer research. It was hypothesised that campaign attitudes would be more positive for those who were more involved with the cause and that campaign attitudes would be greater when the donation was targeted locally. Only donation proximity proved significant. No information was provided as to where and with whom this study was conducted.

Birth, Illia, Lurati, and Zamparini (2008) conducted a survey among Switzerland's top 300 companies with the goal of learning about their CSR communication practices. With regard to CSR advertising, the authors found that 44 % reported that they use CSR advertising, while 64 % acknowledged that it is a difficult feat, due to a longer and more complex creative process, evaluation of results and criticism from the public.

As no independent variable was studied by more than a single author in relation to attitude towards the ad, results cannot be compared in terms of consistency. Only

two studies in our literature review analysed attitude towards the advertisement from an intercultural perspective.

3.3 Level of Scepticism Towards the Ad

Webb and Mohr (1998) conducted interviews with American consumers, exploring their responses to cause-related marketing. As part of the general cynicism directed at companies engaging in CSR advertising, consumers frequently expressed concern regarding their scepticism and distrust of the messages.

Singh, Kristensen, and Villaseñor (2009) sought confirmation of their research model, which claimed that repetition decreased CRM ad scepticism. As a first step, they studied familiarity as the dependent variable against claim repetition as the independent variable. The authors employed a TV CRM advertisement for a fictitious brand. While no significant effect was found for familiarity between 1 and 2 repetitions or 2 and 4 repetitions, a significant difference in familiarity occurred between 1 and 4 repetitions. The second relationship tested by Singh et al. (2009) was whether increased familiarity with a company's CRM ad reduced consumer scepticism towards the CRM claim. This hypothesis was supported by their data. Moreover, they tested whether general ad scepticism negatively moderated the effect of familiarity on scepticism towards the CRM ad. This proposed relationship, too, was supported. The study was conducted with Norwegian respondents.

Pomeroy and Dolnicar (2009) looked at the Australian banking sector and conducted interviews with bank executives, in order to learn about their CSR activities and strategies, as well as their goals for successful CSR communications. A relevant finding for CSR advertising was that bank executives were very cautious in advertising their CSR activities to the general public for fear of consumer scepticism. In addition to their qualitative analysis, Pomeroy and Dolnicar (2009) also conducted a quantitative survey of consumer awareness of CSR initiatives. The survey sought to find out how much trust consumers ascribe to different communication sources. Findings showed that while 40 % of respondents trusted a bank's website, only 20 % trusted its advertising. Moreover, advertising was found to generate more consumer scepticism than information from independent sources. However, it was also reported that almost half of respondents turned to bank advertisements as an information source.

The reduction of scepticism towards CSR advertising was the topic addressed in Pomeroy and Johnson's (2009) research. They sought to develop a set of research propositions with regard to how to align a company's image in relation to socially responsible behaviour and its corporate identity. The reduction of consumer scepticism was considered key in this challenge. Resulting research propositions concerned the inclusion of social topic information in CSR image advertisements, the inclusion of message content that establishes a firm's long-term commitment to

CSR, the use of specific social impact claims rather than policy or program claims, and the existence of unplanned corporate personality cues.

Pomeroy et al. (2013) examined the dependent variable of level of scepticism towards the ad against CSR commitment information levels (high vs. low), as well as social topic information (high vs. low). It was hypothesised that more detailed CSR commitment information will result in less scepticism than ads with relatively less CSR commitment information. The hypothesis was rejected, however, and no significant interaction effects were found.

A variable related to scepticism towards the ad is deceptiveness of the ad, which was studied by Mattila et al. (2010) against the independent variables of company type (JP Morgan as financial services provider vs. Verizon as phone company) and CSR ad (yes vs. no). Results showed that the ads for JP Morgan were rated as more deceptive than those for Verizon, but that the CSR main effect and the interaction effect were insignificant. Mattila et al. (2010) also examined honesty of the ad together with deceptiveness of the ad. Again, while the ad for JP Morgan was perceived as less honest than that for Verizon, the CSR main effect and the interaction effect were both insignificant.

As with attitude towards the ad, no two studies examined the same independent variables, which is why the findings complement each other rather than allowing for direct comparison. No study investigated this variable from an intercultural perspective.

3.4 Attitude Towards the Product

Apart from attitude towards the ad as a dependent variable, Diehl et al. (2016) examined whether a more favourable evaluation of an ad would also lead to a more favourable attitude towards the product, in this case, a branded wristwatch (hence, this variable is very similar to attitude towards the brand). This hypothesis was confirmed in all six countries under investigation. Moreover, the authors looked at whether participants who more strongly perceived the advertiser to be socially responsible also had more favourable attitudes towards the product. Findings showed that for the United States, France, Chile and Switzerland this positive relationship was significant, while for Germany and Austria the hypothesis was only supported at the 10% level.

Chernev and Blair (2015) researched perceived product performance of a teeth-whitening product. The independent variable under examination was the source of CSR information (company advertising vs. an independent source). The authors discovered a halo effect, in that CSR behaviour positively spilled over onto perceived product performance, but only when the firm's motivation was perceived as benevolent. Moreover, the positive effect did not occur when the source of the CSR information was advertising.

These studies again investigated different independent variables, thus complementing one another. Only Diehl et al. (2016) studied this variable from an intercultural perspective.

3.5 Attitude Towards the Brand

Attitude towards the brand or brand evaluation is among the most researched dependent variables. Lafferty and Goldsmith (2005) conducted a pre- and post-test among American students, in which they compared consumer brand attitudes before and after exposure to an ad for a brand with a CRM component. They also explored whether high vs. low familiarity with the cause made a difference. Results showed that brand attitudes improved after exposure in all conditions. Nan and Heo (2007) criticised the findings, suggesting that demand effects, rather than the CRM message, might explain these results.

Nan and Heo (2007) studied attitude towards the brand based on high vs. low brand/cause fit levels. As with attitude towards the ad, none of the hypotheses, apart from a posited interaction effect between brand/cause fit and an individual's brand consciousness, were significant. This suggests that those respondents who were high in brand consciousness evaluated the brand more favourably than those with low brand consciousness.

Wang (2008) employed a rather uncommon independent variable to study brand attitude related to a corporation's CSR practices among American students, namely positive vs. negative news coverage about a corporation's advertising practices. Here, a TV news report about the Blockbuster company's advertising practices was manipulated. Results showed that positive assessments of ethical and relational practices enhanced participants' brand attitudes, in contrast to discretionary practices.

Chang (2012) dedicated the first experiment of her study to researching attitude towards the brand among heavy vs. light product users, with credit cards as the advertised product. The second independent variable was a sponsorship advertisement vs. a CRM ad. Findings showed that heavy product users became more emotionally involved with a cause and reported more favourable brand attitudes than light users when the company employed CRM ads but not sponsorship ads. Moreover, in a second experiment, Chang (2012) investigated whether there is a significant interaction effect between affective state and corporate giving style on brand attitudes. For CRM ads, positive ad-evoked affect was hypothesised to lead to more favourable brand evaluations than the neutral ad-evoked affect. While the interaction effect between the two independent variables was not significant, a simple-effects test showed that for CRM ads, positive affect did indeed lead to a significantly more favourable attitude towards the brand. Another hypothesis, that internal cause attribution mediates the interaction effect between ad-evoked affect and corporate giving style on brand attitudes, was only partly supported, in that

internal cause attribution significantly predicted brand attitudes. Where and with whom the study had been conducted was not mentioned.

Pomeroy et al. (2013) researched brand evaluations of banks based on CSR commitment information among Australian participants. More detailed CSR commitment information was hypothesised to result in higher brand evaluations than messages with lower CSR commitment information. This hypothesis could not be substantiated, however.

Skard and Thorbjørnsen (2014) looked at brand evaluations of a fictitious cereal brand in Norway. Their experimental conditions were publicity (editorial newspaper story) vs. (print) advertising as message sources and high vs. low brand reputation conditions. It was hypothesised that there would be an interaction effect between CSR information source and brand reputation on brand evaluation, such that (a) publicity would generate more positive brand evaluations than advertising for high-reputation sponsors, and (b) advertising would generate more positive brand evaluations than publicity for low-reputation sponsors. Further, sponsorship attitude, persuasion knowledge and perceived fit were hypothesised to mediate the postulated interaction effect. All hypotheses were confirmed.

Recent CSR advertising research on attitude towards the brand comes from Türkeli et al. (2016) and Diehl et al. (2016). The independent variable examined by Türkeli et al. (2016) was brand familiarity. The authors found evidence that there is a difference in Turkish consumers' attitude towards the brand depending on the degree of prior familiarity with a brand, operationalised by comparing a CSR ad for a familiar, existing retail brand with a CSR ad for a fictitious, thus unfamiliar, brand. As mentioned previously, Diehl et al. (2016) found a positive effect of evaluation of the ad, as well as of perceived social responsibility of the advertising company on attitude towards the (branded) product.

Despite the large number of independent variables studied in relation to the dependent variable of attitude towards the brand, there is no overlap in the studied constructs, making direct comparison of results difficult. Apart from Diehl et al. (2016), no study examined intercultural aspects of the variable attitude towards the ad.

3.6 Attitude Towards the Company

A variable related to attitude towards the brand is attitude towards the company. Ross, Patterson, and Stutts (1992) conducted mall intercept interviews using a standardised questionnaire in the United States. As independent variables, gender and proximity to the cause (local vs. national), were chosen. As one of three dependent variables, attitude towards the company was examined by showing respondents a CRM magazine ad in which a firm (Procter and Gamble) promised to donate 10 cents to a cause for every coupon redeemed for P&G products. For attitude towards company, both hypothesised proximity effects proved

non-significant but the hypothesis regarding gender effects differences was supported, with women showing a more positive attitude towards the firm.

In developing a contingent CSR framework, Bhattacharya and Sen (2004) studied consumers' company evaluations, alongside a multitude of other variables. It was found that attitude towards the firm was positively influenced after reviewing CSR information about the company. Moreover, this positive relationship was even stronger among consumers who perceived the company to have a better reputation, who perceived a high fit between company and cause and who had a personal connection to the cause that was represented by the company's CSR initiative. Bhattacharya and Sen's (2004) study is more practitioner-oriented and did not provide additional methodological background, such as information on the origin of the participants. Thus, it is unclear to what extent CSR advertising in particular was studied, and whether intercultural aspects were incorporated.

Dawkins (2005) looked into consumers' desire for more CSR information. The study was conducted in Britain with more than 1,000 subjects, and revealed relevant findings for companies engaging in CSR communications. For example, more than 80% of the respondents considered it important that companies spend money on publicly communicating their CSR activities. Moreover, 74% of respondents claimed their purchase behaviour would change, if they received more information regarding companies' CSR endeavours. Dawkins (2005) also specifically highlighted that companies should integrate their CSR messages with other mainstream communications for maximum success. In addition, the employee base was mentioned as a medium for CSR communication success.

Attitude towards the company was a dependent variable employed by Nan and Heo (2007). The hypothesis that attitude towards the company would be more favourable under the high brand/cause fit condition (vs. a similar ad condition without a CRM component) was supported. Moreover, weak support was found for the hypothesis that under a low brand/cause fit, attitude towards the company would be more favourable compared to the regular ad condition. Additionally, brand consciousness was found to have a positive effect on attitude towards the company.

Wang (2008) measured the ratings of assessment on ethical, discretionary and relational practices, separate from brand attitude in his study of positive vs. negative news about a company's advertising practice. It was found that the persuasiveness of negative news should not be overlooked, while the effect of positive news was minimal. In particular, the negative news effect was content-specific, but the positive news effect had no impact in terms of consumers' assessments of CSR practices.

A variable related to attitude towards the firm was studied by Diehl et al. (2016), who looked at whether the perception of a higher level of humane orientation in an ad leads to a stronger perception that the advertiser is socially responsible. The study was conducted in six countries, the United States, Chile, Germany, France, Switzerland and Austria, and a positive influence was found in all six countries.

Similar to Diehl et al. (2016), Dean (1999) employed perceived corporate citizenship as a dependent variable. The author conducted an experiment in the

U.S. in which an ad for a television set was manipulated. One condition featured a slogan that heralded the brand's sponsorship of the Olympics. The hypothesis that the sponsorship condition would significantly increase the evaluation of perceived corporate citizenship held true.

Wang (2011) examined consumers' overall attitudes towards advertising disclosures with a focus on mobile phone companies. The author hypothesised that consumers' positive attitudes towards a company's ad disclosures enhance their attitudes towards firms' CSR practices. In addition, attitude towards firms' CSR practices was hypothesised to be a mediator for perceived trust towards firms. Both relationships were found to be significant.

A dependent variable similar to attitude towards the firm is company reputation, which was examined by Mattila et al. (2010) as one of four outcome variables. Independent variables were company type (financial services provider JP Morgan vs. phone company Verizon) and CSR advertisement (yes vs. no). The goal was to determine whether CSR ads help financial institutions to enhance their company reputation. Results show that adding a CSR component to the ad boosted the reputation of JP Morgan, but had a detrimental effect on the reputation of Verizon.

Sohn, Han, and Lee (2012) researched corporate image between the sponsoring company and its CSR endeavours in Korea. First, they obtained evaluations before and after exposure to CSR ads, which showed that the corporate image had significantly increased. Second, the authors studied the effect of predetermined brand/cause fit (high vs. low) on company image. It was found that for both conditions, the image increased significantly. It should be noted that alternative explanations, e.g., demand effects, might apply to this study's findings.

Within the large number of independent variables studied, only brand/cause fit has been tested in more than one study. All three studies, Bhattacharya and Sen (2004), Nan and Heo (2007) and Sohn et al. (2012), found that high brand/cause fit significantly increases attitude towards company. There was only one study that investigated attitude towards the company from an international perspective.

3.7 Company/Cause Fit

Sohn et al. (2012) researched perceived fit between the sponsoring company and its CSR endeavours. As with their study of company image as the dependent variable, company/cause fit significantly increased before and after exposure to a CSR ad. Also, the respondents in the two predetermined fit conditions (high vs. low) increased the evaluations of perceived fit significantly. As mentioned previously, alternative explanations for their findings are possible. No international studies are available for this variable.

3.8 Attribution of Motives

Chang (2012) researched respondents' attribution of motives to the company's CSR endeavours. An attribution scale was developed with acceptable internal consistency. The independent variables were corporate giving style (sponsorship vs. CRM) and ad-evoked affective states (positive vs. neutral). However, the hypothesised interaction between affective state and corporate giving style on motive attribution was only significant at the 10 % level. This variable was not analysed from an international perspective.

3.9 Contextualisation of the Firm's Initiative

An interesting variable was examined by Pomeroy et al. (2013), namely contextualisation. The authors hypothesised that CSR advertising messages that provide more detailed information about the social topic would prove more helpful in putting into context the company's CSR initiatives, compared to those CSR ads that provided less detailed information. The authors conclude that more social topic information helped participants contextualise the firm's CSR initiatives in both conditions, thus supporting their hypothesis. Again, this variable was not analysed from an international perspective.

3.10 Attitude Towards the Cause

Ross et al. (1991) asked U.S. consumers in personal interviews which type of cause consumers would support. Causes aimed at curing diseases, supporting disaster relief, providing shelter for the homeless and protecting the environment were the highest rated causes.

Ross et al. (1992) researched attitude towards the cause with mall intercept interviews. Respondents were shown a CRM ad for Procter & Gamble, which promised to donate to the Special Olympics. Gender and proximity to the cause (local vs. national) were the independent variables. The relationship for proximity was insignificant, while the relationship for gender received support at the 10 % level, with women having more positive attitudes towards the cause than men. However, as previously noted, the authors did not use established scales, nor did they provide information on the internal consistency of scales.

Lafferty and Goldsmith (2005) also used attitude towards the cause as a dependent variable in their study of cause-brand alliances. Respondents completed one questionnaire before and one after exposure to the stimulus—a booklet with four advertisements. The hypothesis that the attitude towards the cause would be higher after exposure to the cause-brand alliance than before exposure held true.

None of the studies investigated the same independent variables, thus no comparison of results is possible. This variable was not analysed from an international perspective.

3.11 Emotional Involvement with the Cause

Chang (2012) studied emotional involvement with a fictitious cause. The independent variables were product use frequency of credit cards (heavy vs. light) and corporate giving style (sponsorship vs. CRM). Results showed that a significant interaction existed between product use frequency and corporate giving style on emotional involvement with the cause. Heavy product users who received the CRM ad reported greater emotional involvement with the cause than light product users. For sponsorship ads, no effect occurred. Furthermore, emotional involvement with the cause was found to mediate the interaction between the two independent variables on brand attitudes. This variable was not studied from an intercultural perspective.

3.12 Behavioural Intentions

Landreth-Grau and Garretson-Folse (2007) investigated CRM campaign participation intentions. As noted previously, the independent variables were cause involvement (high vs. low) and donation proximity (local vs. national). It was hypothesised that campaign participation intentions are greater for those who are more involved with the cause and that participation intentions are greater when the donation is targeted locally. Only cause involvement proved significant.

Pomeroy et al. (2013) looked at behavioural intentions in their study of bank CSR ads. However, the behavioural intentions and the single item used to study them were not further specified. As with attitude to the brand and attitude to the ad, there was no significant effect between CSR commitment information levels (high vs. low) and social topic information (high vs. low) on behavioural intentions.

Behavioural intentions were also included in the intercultural study conducted by Diehl et al. (2016). The authors hypothesised that a more favourable attitude towards the product would lead to more favourable behavioural intentions towards the product. Items used to measure this variable included willingness to try the product, willingness to buy the product, and whether the brand would be among the respondent's most likely choices when next buying that product. For all countries examined in this research, the authors' hypothesis was confirmed.

Ross et al. (1991) asked U.S. consumers in personal interviews whether they had purchased products because of a CRM ad. 48.7% of respondents had done so because of their desire to support a cause. Generally, more women than men claimed that they had engaged in such a behaviour.

Purchase intention was studied by Ross et al. (1992), although it was subsumed under the variable attitude towards the firm. The purchase intention item proved insignificant for proximity to cause (local vs. national), but significant for gender differences, in that women reported to be more willing to buy Procter & Gamble products than men.

Türkel et al. (2016) studied whether there was a difference in purchase intentions depending on the degree of prior familiarity with a brand, operationalised by comparing a CSR ad for a familiar brand with a CSR ad for a fictitious brand. Findings showed that CSR ads for familiar brands elicit higher purchase intentions than CSR ads for unfamiliar brands. This effect was not significant for CSR communication messages conveyed through publicity.

Pracejus, Olsen, and Brown (2003/2004) conducted three experiments to learn about potential consumer confusion associated with the wording of CRM advertisements, which in many instances changed consumer behaviour. First, it was established that the majority (approx. 70%) of online CRM advertising formats are abstract, using wording such as “a portion of proceeds is donated”. Second, the authors found that consumer estimations of donation amounts are influenced by various abstract advertising copy formats. Third, a discrete-choice conjoint task inquired whether the amount donated by a company influenced consumer decision-making. It was found that the amount donated did indeed make a difference in consumer behaviour and that choice between brands was such an important behaviour.

Pracejus and Olsen (2004) investigated whether fit between charity and brand impacted the success of a CRM campaign in terms of choice behaviour and the magnitude of this effect. Respondents received advertising materials from theme parks (Experiment 1) and hotels (Experiment 2). Results showed that CRM does have a significant impact on choice behaviour and that the brand/cause fit substantially amplifies this effect.

Of all the independent variables analysed, only proximity to the cause received attention from more than one study, namely from Ross et al. (1992) and Landreth-Grau and Garretson-Folse (2007). In both cases, the influence of proximity to the cause on behavioural intentions was insignificant. Only Diehl et al. (2016) investigated behavioural intentions from an international perspective.

4 Directions for Future Research

While the above overview revealed that quite a large number of dependent and independent variables have been studied to date, there is still much potential to improve our understanding of CSR advertising in general, and integrated CSR advertising in particular. Specifically, connections and interrelationships between the variables are, to a large degree, still a mystery (Ross et al., 1992). A few of the studies provide models in which these interrelationships are tested (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004; Diehl et al., 2016), but these articles are rather rare.

Another research gap lies in the area of intercultural studies on CSR advertising, which has been identified numerous times in the literature (Brønn & Vrioni, 2001; Diehl et al., 2016; Öberseder et al., 2011; Taylor, 2014; Yoon et al., 2006). There are various cultural dimensions and typologies that may prove useful for analyses of CSR advertising in an intercultural context, e.g., the typologies suggested by Globe, Hofstede, Schwartz, or the World Values Survey [for an overview and the applicability of such typologies see Terlutter, Diehl, and Mueller (2006) or Terlutter, Diehl, and Mueller (2012)]. In particular, the Globe typology (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004) has proven useful for application to intercultural advertising in several recent studies, e.g., the dimension of humane orientation in Diehl et al. (2016), the dimension of performance orientation in Diehl, Terlutter, and Mueller (2008) or the dimension of assertiveness in Terlutter, Diehl, and Mueller (2010).

Perhaps the most important shortcoming of current scientific treatment lies in the fact that none of the studies has considered integrated CSR advertising or marketing communications. There are several studies on CSR communication effectiveness using communications tools other than advertising (e.g., Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, & Hill, 2006; Brown & Dacin, 1997), some of which even examine these tools interculturally (e.g., Becker-Olsen et al., 2011). Only a few studies draw comparisons between CSR advertising and other communication tools (e.g., Morsing & Schultz, 2006; Skard & Thorbjørnsen, 2014; Türkel et al., 2016), but none of the investigations has grasped the opportunity to further open the field of empirical investigation of integrated CSR marketing communications, much less intercultural integrated CSR advertising.

5 Conclusion

The goal of this chapter was to provide an overview of the current state of research on (integrated) CSR advertising with a special focus on intercultural aspects. As was shown, some articles have been dedicated to this topic; however, no study has specifically focused on integrated CSR advertising or communication, much less intercultural integrated CSR advertising. Thus, Drumwright's (1996) statement that "there is much work yet to be done in the area of advertising with a social agenda" (p. 85) continues to hold true. A considerable number of research gaps are still waiting to be filled by future investigators. The more research that is conducted on this topic, the closer we will come to an understanding of CSR advertising processes. Corporations, too, would profit from findings in this area and could draw better-informed conclusions as far as integrated and intercultural CSR communication decisions are concerned.

6 Exercise and Reflective Questions

1. Which dependent variables have been most commonly researched?
2. Which independent variables have been studied so far?
3. Which research methods have been employed in the study of CSR advertising?
4. What can integrated CSR communications look like in practice?
5. Which variables that seem important to you have not yet received scholarly attention?
6. How can CSR communication researchers contribute to the development of integrated CSR advertising as a research area?

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Knowledge Integration in the European CSR Communication Field: An Institutional Perspective

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Abstract By inspecting contemporary macro-level developments concerning the phenomenon of CSR communication in parallel to scholarly contributions on CSR communication this chapter aims to outline the main institutional logics that shape the field of CSR communication in Europe. The chapter reveals that on both levels a struggle between communicative and non-communicative interpretations of CSR communication is taking place. This conflict is then contextualised both from the perspective of cultural and socio-economic factors, which have conditioned the current state of the European CSR communication field, and from the viewpoint of its future challenges.

1 Introduction

In the recent two decades or so the idea of the societal role of companies and other organisations has come to the forefront of the business and society relationship. Together with these concerns a stream of thought, actions and research under the umbrella term of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has emerged. One of the first institutions to officially map and recognise this field was the European Commission (2001) with its Green Paper on CSR at the turn of the Millennium. Although some scholars and professionals tended to dismiss the idea of CSR as a mere fashion fad, social demands and the popularisation of CSR have given this idea the necessary recognition and strategic importance and have firmly anchored it both in academia and practice.

The meaning of CSR is linked to stakeholders' expectations about the acceptable behaviour of business towards society and nature. One way to look at these expectations is through social constructionism and understanding CSR as a participative process where communication has a vital role. "CSR communication thus reflects the ways firms engage in social processes on a communicative level. It points out how firms communicate about CSR but also about how the meanings of the messages are construed and shared among firms and stakeholders" (Golob,

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2016). Communication perspective is therefore important for the ways to think about CSR (e.g., Golob et al., 2013; Verk & Golob, 2014).

With universally higher stakeholder expectations about CSR and sustainability issues the role of CSR communication has been increasingly recognized as important. The attention CSR communication is receiving is shown in the number of research studies dedicated to different aspects of CSR communication, on the one hand, and in the progressively visible communicative practice of CSR-related issues by corporations, on the other. The amount of CSR-related practices and messages developed by the corporations shows that CSR communication tackles a variety of issues concerning “the ways that corporations communicate in and about” the process of implementing their CSR (Ihlen, Bartlett, & May, 2011, p. 8).

In the 2013 study by KPMG, which continuously monitors CSR communication and reporting of the world’s biggest corporations, it is indicated that CSR communication has become a mainstream business practice worldwide with 93 % of the world’s largest corporations engaging in different CSR communication practices and reporting. In addition, the biannual CONE 2015 global CSR study among consumers shows that nearly nine in ten global consumers (88 %) are eager to hear about CSR initiatives and progress.

Recognised as an important part of CSR, CSR communication has become a focus area of wider academic and professional debates at conferences and symposia. This indicates that the field of CSR communication is evolving and as it develops it is important to evaluate the progress that has been made so far and reflect on the directions taken in this progress.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide such a contemplative moment for the field by examining how CSR communication has been established as a research area and practice in Europe. Idowu, Schmidpeter, and Fifka (2015, p. ix) recently acknowledged that “Europe has contributed immensely to developments in the field of corporate social responsibility (CSR) as we know it today”. With the European development of CSR in general the communicative aspects of CSR have also developed and we can rightly assume that Europe-based professionals, organisations and academics have contributed their expertise and knowledge to a great extent to the CSR communication area as well.

2 Institutional Perspective as a Conceptual Frame for Studying CSR Communication

An institutional perspective, recently often used to discuss CSR-related phenomena (Brammer, Jackson, & Matten, 2012) seems to be an appropriate frame for thinking about how CSR communication has become established in the European context. The institutional perspective suggests that decisions and discourses about CSR communication are not purely instrumental but are “framed vis-à-vis a broader social context” (Jackson & Apostolakou, 2010, p. 374).

A new field such as CSR or CSR communication evolves around new institutional arrangements that give more satisfactory responses to certain problems. Once responses are examined and compared, participants engage in theorisation to institutionalise solutions. Institutional construction can be either “demand-sided”, where there is a demand for solving certain problems (e.g., societal expectations of businesses to address certain issues in society) and institutions are crafted from scratch by those who are challenged, or it can be “supply-sided”, where certain types of actors (e.g., scientists, professionals) have the ability to “devise and promote new schemas, rules, models, routines, and artefacts” (Scott, 2008, p. 104) to solve the problems.

To provide the context for examining the emergence and construction of the CSR communication field in Europe, we would like to focus mainly on the cultural-cognitive aspects as sources for “shaping and interpreting individual and organisational activities” (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008, p. 103). These include institutional logics defined by Friedland and Alford (1991, p. 248) as “a set of material practices and symbolic constructions which constitutes its organising principles and which is available to organisations and individuals to elaborate”. Thornton and Ocasio (1999) propose different mechanisms by which institutional logics can shape organising and knowledge integration at the field level. One relevant for the purpose of our examination is that the “meaning, appropriateness, and legitimacy . . . are shaped by the rules of the prevailing institutional logics” (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999, p. 806). The second is related to the issues that are relevant in terms of CSR communication and that shape the cognition of social actors and organisations. And thirdly, “the assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules that comprise institutional logics determine what answers and solutions are available and appropriate” for CSR communication practice (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999, p. 806).

Scott (2008, p. 186) notes that there are multiple frameworks differentiated around specialised arenas such as political, financial, (anti)consumerist and so on, which are all governed by their own different logic, that shape heterogeneity, stability and change in the actors working at the meso-levels within these arenas (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). One such level is the notion of the (organisational) field that connotes the “recognized area of institutional life” where the common meaning system is being established together with the interactions among participants that are more frequent with one another than “with actors outside of the field” (Scott, 2008, p. 86). Hence, the field “is a level of analysis; it is a place where institutional logics get played out . . .” (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008, p. 119).

According to Scott (2008, p. 187) institutional logics vary in their contents (the nature of beliefs and assumptions), penetration or vertical depth (general societal understandings vs. specific understandings of how a particular area works), as well as in their horizontal linkage and exclusiveness, or the extent they are being contested. They also vary in terms of the level on which they are formed. They may, for example, emerge within the field through competing institution-building projects or actors, or alternatively, they may be shaped by higher-order logics (e.g., political, economic etc.; Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). The emergence of the

institutional field is also related to how knowledge is built and how ideas are integrated into existing (and new) contexts (Becker-Ritterspach, 2006).

Continuing with our observation of the CSR communication field in Europe we can trace several arenas where institutional logics emerge. Our attempt is not to analyse all of these, as this would be beyond the scope of this chapter. We will nevertheless examine multiple levels by which institutional logics may influence the field. First, we will look at the *macro-level* (i.e., institutional logics as supraorganisational patterns; Thornton & Ocasio, 1999) and focus on such societal-level institutions as business and political systems, transnational associations, different stakeholders (especially nongovernmental organizations) and society in general. Then we will turn our attention to the *field level* and examine how some of the actors within the field—carriers and promoters such as academics—are shaping CSR communication in Europe.

3 Institutional Construction of the CSR Communication Field

3.1 National and Transnational Institutions

Focusing first on the macro-level, we start our discussion with the institutional logics of *national business systems* based on the varieties of capitalism theory (VoC; Hall & Soskice, 2001) and of other national institutions (Matten & Moon, 2008) that have helped to shape CSR and CSR communication. The importance of national (business) systems has already been established in the literature by those scholars—many of them European—favouring the institutional perspective on CSR (e.g., Gjølborg, 2009; Matten & Moon, 2008). According to Hall and Soskice (2001), national business systems are shaped by two opposite systemic equilibria—liberal market economies (LME) and coordinated market economies (CME). LME is associated with a predominately market-based type of coordination and CME is reflected in institutionalised coordination that governs the welfare state, political systems and the role of civic culture. Somewhere in-between are mixed-market economies (MME), which belong to the CME family, as they also rely mostly on non-market coordination (Hassel, 2014).

The literature (e.g., Gjølborg, 2009; Hassel, 2014; Preuss, Gold, & Rees, 2014) suggests that most of the continental European countries are either CMEs or at least belong to the CME family. The exception comes in the form of some of the newer EU member states, which developed a system closer to that of LMEs (Preuss et al., 2014). Traditional LMEs in Europe are the two English-speaking countries, the UK and Ireland (Hassel, 2014).

The VoC perspective combined with new-institutional theory (Gjølborg, 2010) has led to the idea of “explicit” and “implicit” CSR practices (Matten & Moon, 2008), where LME business systems are associated with more explicit CSR

practices due to the lack of institutional stakeholder involvement. Governed by the market forces, explicit CSR practices also tend to evoke more vocal and explicit language of CSR to be communicated extensively to stakeholders. Implicit CSR practices, which are associated with CME, are not supported with explicit communication: CSR represents compliance to the laws, normative pressures or reflect a societal consensus about the appropriate CSR levels, hence there is no need to widely advertise CSR (Jackson & Apostolakou, 2010).

We could thus conclude that traditionally institutional logics of national business systems in Europe determined different rules for the appropriateness of CSR communication: organisations in CMEs were traditionally more focused on “walking the walk”, while those in LMEs were more inclined to be “talking the talk” (Strand, Freeman, & Hockerts, 2014). To label these two institutional logics from the CSR communication point of view we could refer to the former as the *non-communicative logic* and to the latter as the *communicative logic*.

The balance between them, however, has changed significantly over the years due to various reasons. The majority of them can be attributed to rapid globalisation processes in which the former managerial and business-driven CSR concept increasingly became an instrument of national and global governance with the potential to fill in the gap that emerged after the power of global corporations increased (Gjølberg, 2010).

Consequently, global and transnational diffusion of explicit CSR has transformed the national institutional models of CSR (Gjølberg, 2010; Matten & Moon, 2008). From this point of view there are two moments that contributed most to the establishment of CSR communication in Europe. The first such moment is related to the enhancement of *competitiveness based on CSR and sustainability*, which is strongly promoted in many of the European Union’s documents, also suggesting a softer approach to CSR policies (Steurer, Martinuzzi, & Margula, 2012). The competitiveness perspective should give European companies an advantage when competing on non-European markets. Thus, the communication part of CSR is indispensable when building such advantage.

The second such moment is reflected in a document titled *A renewed EU strategy 2011-14 for Corporate Social Responsibility* (2011). In this document, the European Commission explicitly considers what Gjølberg (2010) labels *global governance*. There are three areas where communicative logic is dominant. First, there is the need to stress the importance of issuing relevant information about CSR and sustainable actions, which should be a crucial element of public accountability. Second, the need to recognise marketing communication malpractices to prevent green- and other forms of washing. And third, the need to align European approaches to CSR to those used globally. Here the Commission is referring to different global principles: UN Global Compact, ISO 26000 Guidance Standard on Social Responsibility, OECD guidelines, and the Global Reporting Initiative that is directly related to communication practices of companies.

Both, *CSR competitiveness* and *global governance* have caused communicative logic to become much more influential for CSR communication development in Europe. This shift encouraged actors to apply the CSR label to their efforts and

communicate about them more openly. Especially those companies that come from the CME oriented countries needed to start learning about “talking the walk” (Strand et al., 2014).

3.2 *Society and Stakeholders*

When considering the role and importance of CSR, the national business system and VoC perspective need to be complemented with the socio-cultural character of particular environments (Gjølborg, 2009). Culture, informal institutions and such values as post-materialism, trust, tolerance, and social activism seem to be very important in determining what is driving CSR. Gjølborg (2009) observes that the socio-cultural context is the institutional factor bearing the highest correlation with the country’s CSR leadership.

While such values are not necessarily directly related to the “explicitness” of CSR—the notion of non-talking was supported by the findings of Morsing, Schultz, and Nielsen (2008), where citizens in Denmark wanted organisations to engage in CSR but not talk too much about their activities—they do tend to raise the CSR expectations of stakeholders and society in general. Consequently, stakeholders might also demand more information about CSR to be able to evaluate the behaviour against their expectations. The European Commission Eurobarometer survey (2013) confirms this: around 79 % of Europeans are interested in what companies do to behave in a responsible manner. However, the results of this survey also show an information gap: only 36 % of Europeans feel informed in this area. Citizens also need to be informed and knowledgeable about CSR activities so that they can take action. According to the Eurobarometer survey, around 50 % of Europeans think they themselves should take the lead role in influencing the CSR actions, mainly through their buying behaviour.

The first definition of CSR by the European Commission (2001) puts stakeholder engagement in the centre of how CSR is perceived in a European context. Hence, the development of CSR communication is not encouraged only by the expectations of citizens to be more informed about CSR activities of companies but also by the need to balance interests of different stakeholders. One such stakeholder are NGOs gaining a very influential role as social movements that have a potential power to influence the business community at multiple levels (Burchell & Cook, 2013, p. 508). NGOs together with “the broader civil society and community interests that they represent, clearly constitute an important and increasingly influential element of the institutional environment” (Doh & Guay, 2006, p. 54). Doh and Guay (2006) observe that the role of NGOs (and other stakeholders as well) is highly situational and also dependent on the institutional context. Comparing the US and the European institutional environment they argue that this context has resulted in different ways of accepting stakeholders as a relevant partner in the policy-making process and has framed the development of attitudes towards CSR and its implementation (Doh & Guay, 2006).

Along with accepting the rise of power of such stakeholders as NGOs which, in the European context mainly represent consumer, environmental, citizen, and social groups (Doh & Guay, 2006), the corporate world also needed to accept a more collaborative approach for interacting with stakeholders based on exchanging opinions and informing each other (Jonker & Nijhof, 2006). Hence, they needed to accept the importance of communication as the process which contributes the most to balancing different interests and reaching a mutual understanding about the relevance and application of certain norms and directions related to CSR (Jonker & Nijhof, 2006). Kaptein and Van Tulder (2003) argue that we can see these communication processes as being aimed at co-creating CSR strategies.

To sum up, both societal expectations and stakeholder interests in CSR activities have empowered the *communicative logic* towards CSR—a logic presuming that CSR communication is something appropriate for business to adopt; not only to inform but also to engage and deliberate common understandings of CSR-related facts and their implementation.

4 Structuration Processes in the CSR Communication Field

Thus far we have examined some of the institutional factors that have contributed to the development of the CSR communication field from a macro-level perspective. The macro-level institutional construction mainly serves as a framework that orders reality, provides meaning to actions taken by social actors, and gives a sense of direction for the future development of the field (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999). In our further investigation we will turn to the field level, which presents a boundary that produces sources that structure the decision-making and practices of CSR communication. Here, the focus will be on the academic contributions as an important source of institutionalisation.

Therefore, our field level analysis aims to identify (1) main types, sources, and numbers of academic contributions based on the thematic scope, and (2) research streams (i.e., institutional logics) in the European studies on CSR communication on the basis of examining their discursive (content) orientation as a main indicator defining a particular logic.¹

¹Our insight into the nature of contemporary European studies on CSR communication is grounded on a systematic literature review. With the intention of placing the emphasis on the latter, our sample is composed of those studies on CSR communication, which can be considered as a product of European scholars. Accordingly, academic papers were included into our sample if at least the first author of a particular study was identified as a member of a European-based institution/university. A total of 103 papers were collected by scanning relevant marketing and management online databases (SAGE, ScienceDirect, Proquest, and EBSCO) and using a standard keywords search (keywords used: corporate social responsibility/CSR communication, communicating CSR, CSR disclosure, CSR advertising, and CSR reporting). After an initial inspection

The vital role of the academic community in shaping social reality seems tightly connected to its knowledge-generating, reflective and integrative nature. Namely, the process of generating new theoretical and empirical knowledge regarding the concept of CSR communication depends on scholars' ability to detect the main characteristics of macro-, meso- (i.e., organisational) and micro-level (i.e., individual level) processes of institutionalising CSR communication (Schultz & Wehmeier, 2010), to critically reflect upon them and explain how these levels intersect to drive the institutionalisation. Institutionalisation can also be seen as socially constructed outcome of knowledge integration processes in a certain field.

4.1 Types, Numbers and Sources of Contributions on CSR Communication

In the early 2000s, European scholars (along with their North-American colleagues) from various academic disciplines started taking an interest in the communication aspect of the CSR phenomenon and have since then broadened the discursive terrain of CSR communication field considerably. As a result of CSR being adopted by a wide range of disciplines, the body of research on CSR communication is often labelled as "heterogeneous" (Schoeneborn & Trittin, 2013, p. 195), thus integrating knowledge by developing a repertoire of ideas and building a web of connections among ideas. The repertoire of ideas means that various and sometimes conflicting views are involved, sorted into knowledge webs based on scientific principles, conceptual proximities, or critical analysis of similarities and differences (Linn, Eylon, & Davis, 2004). Our data analysis supports this notion by showing that European authors have published their papers on CSR communication in 39 different publication sources, ranging from marketing, public relations and management journals to journals of organisation studies and accounting. Yet, only a quarter of these journals (25.6 %) contain more than one CSR communication-related paper. In fact, 58.3 % of all papers have been published in a total of six journals. Two of these leading publication sources—*Journal of Business Ethics* and *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*—seem to be by far the most targeted by the European authors, as both of them together contain more than one-third (38.5 %) of all papers from our dataset. These observations are consistent with findings presented by Golob et al. (2013) in their overall literature review of CSR communication papers. By taking this into consideration, we can arguably confirm that both European and Non-European authors contribute to the current fragmentation of the CSR communication field.

91 papers were selected for further content analysis. The majority of papers excluded from the final sample addressed the topic of CSR reporting with the emphasis on accountability standards, not communication.

Further literature analysis reveals that the ranking order of leading publication sources can also serve as an indicator for identifying main conceptual frameworks on which authors build the understanding of CSR communication. Among European authors the issue of CSR communication is most frequently examined within the framework of corporate communication, management and marketing frameworks (see Fig. 1 for main conceptual origins of CSR communication studies). This can be of relevance when assessing the nature of CSR and CSR communication studies, as the literature shows that a choice of a specific conceptual framework can influence the thematic focus of studies (May, 2011; Nielsen & Thomsen, 2012). For example, Nielsen and Thomsen (2012) report that papers adopting a corporate communication or a management approach to CSR communication primarily deal with CSR communication strategies and strategies of stakeholder engagement as well as their influence on corporate reputation. On the other hand, the studies embedded within the marketing communication framework focus on CSR communication effects in relation to consumer attitudes and behaviour.

Apart from their academic contributions published in a wide range of journals, the active role of European scholars in constructing the CSR communication field is evident from their participation in organising special issues on CSR communication. To date, they have served both as editors and co-editors of five special issues on this topic, however, only in three of them does CSR communication act as a central issue.² The first CSR communication-related special issue was published in *Journal of Marketing Communications* in 2008. Despite that, the highest level of involvement of European authors in the making of such special issues with respect to their content can be detected in two issues, which appeared in *Corporate Communications: An International Journal* as a tribute to the first and second international *CSR Communication Conference* (held in 2011 and 2013, respectively). These particular issues have also been the source of some progressive papers in terms of their dedication to: (1) exposing a need for adopting a constructionist approach to CSR communication (Schoeneborn & Trittin, 2013), (2) outlining new 'social media'/interactivity challenges for CSR communication (e.g., Colleoni, 2013) and (3) providing an overview of the development and the characteristics of CSR communication as a research field (e.g., Elving, Golob, Podnar, Nielsen, & Thomsen, 2015; Golob et al., 2013). Generally speaking, special issues have added to the visibility of the concept of CSR communication and inspired a much anticipated, albeit subtle, increase in the number of CSR communication studies, which can be noted, if we compare the period after the publication of a first special issue to the period of the early and mid-2000s. Still, the annual rise in volume of European-based CSR communication studies has remained

²Special issues published in *Journal of Business Ethics* in 2013 and in *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management* in 2010 addressed the topic of CSR communication in a more implicit way as they were primarily focused on new media as facilitators of new forms of interaction between responsible business and its audiences and on emerging discourses on CSR, respectively.

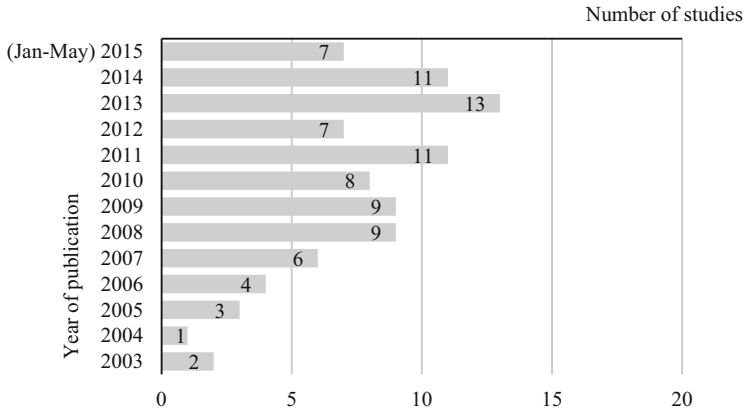


Fig. 1 Number of CSR communication studies by year of publication

relatively slow and inconsistent for more than a decade (see Fig. 2), which suggests that the issue of CSR communication has yet to gain a more prominent place in the mindset of a broader pool of European scholars from business and communication disciplines and from different European countries.

The papers we examined originate from 18 different European countries, the indicator being the origin of the first author of selected papers. Further, scholars from Denmark and United Kingdom, whose studies together account for 30.8 % of all European-based CSR communication studies, appear to be in the forefront of the European academic debate on CSR communication. This might, in some ways, be a result of Denmark (Midttun, Gautesen, & Gjørberg, 2006) and the United Kingdom (Jackson & Apostolakou, 2010; Vertigans, 2015) often being referred to as those countries, which pull ahead of other members of different European regions, both with regard to public policies on CSR and actual business behaviour.

Since noticeable differences as well as similarities exist among different European countries with regard to the implementation of CSR, scholars have been able to identify (usually) four mainstream CSR models that have emerged and now co-exist in the European context. These CSR models, at least for the most part, coincide with the political, economic and cultural heritage of different European regions. Further, they show us how a particular cluster of European countries approaches CSR regulation and implementation, CSR reporting and CSR communication (e.g., Argandoña & Hoivik, 2009; Lenssen & Vorobey, 2005). Following this idea, we decided to inspect the distribution of European-based CSR communication studies not only according to their country of origin but also according to their approach to CSR (communication), taking into account that institutional environments tend to guide the process of knowledge integration. How ideas are integrated into cognitive systems of actors depends on social-system conditions, which means that “different actors not only come cognitively to different translations but have different resources at their disposal” (Becker-Ritterspach, 2006, p. 364).

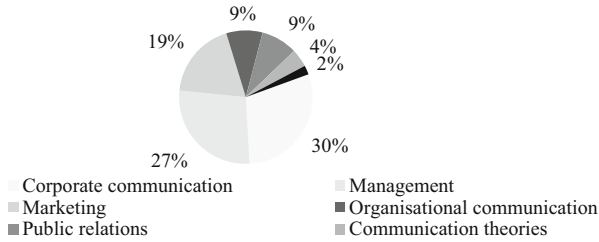


Fig. 2 Distribution of CSR communication studies according to their conceptual origin

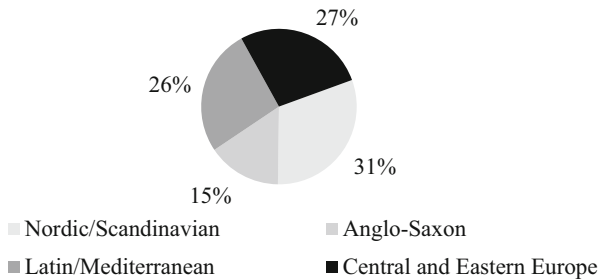


Fig. 3 Distribution of CSR communication studies by models of CSR in Europe [*Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark—Nordic/Scandinavian model; United Kingdom, Ireland—Anglo-Saxon model; Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, France—Latin/Mediterranean model; Slovenia, Poland, Belgium, Germany, The Netherlands, Switzerland, Austria—Central and Eastern European model (for classification see Argandoña & Hoivik, 2009; Lenssen & Vorobey, 2005; Midttun et al., 2006).*]

Our analysis reveals that European authors, who come from countries which employ a Nordic, Anglo-Saxon or Latin CSR model, have contributed a rather equal share to the total number of European-based studies on CSR communication (see Fig. 3). Authors from Central and Eastern European countries, which have adopted their own approach to CSR (Argandoña & Hoivik, 2009), are lagging somewhat behind. This could be related to scholarly observations on how governments as well as business entities in these countries still struggle with developing and/or following CSR standards (Argandoña & Hoivik, 2009; Idowu et al., 2015).

4.2 Discursive Orientations Guiding Contributions in CSR Communication

By turning our attention to the content of European-based CSR communication studies, we can arguably identify what we refer to as three ‘camps of thought’ or three institutional logics on CSR communication. On the one hand, our literature

review upholds the observation made by Nielsen and Thomsen (2012), which reveals that so far discourse on CSR communication has been largely governed by *operational and transactional logic* of business-society relations. On the other hand, *constructionism*, together with a CCO (i.e., communication constitutes organisations) perspective, has served as a basis for a set of alternative discussions on CSR communication. Most recently, an idea of following a third model, a *holistic approach*, has been employed by a rather small group of European authors (e.g., Elving et al., 2015; Seele & Lock, 2014) as an attempt of bridging the gap between instrumental-strategic and constructionist interpretations of the nature of CSR communication.

An extensive amount of studies on the CSR phenomenon has adopted an instrumental approach to evaluating its value for companies, disregarding its social embeddedness at the same time (Garriga & Melé, 2004). This business-centric approach, which focuses on the operational use of CSR as a managerial tool and the measurement of CSR outputs in terms of profits and corporate reputation (Secchi, 2007) has also provided a resource for discussion on ('not more than') a supporting role of communication in relation to CSR behaviour.

As in the case of international contributions on the topic of CSR, the predominant share of European authors has adopted an *instrumental-strategic* approach to investigating CSR communication. Their contributions account for more than three quarters (79.1 %) of all papers from our sample. This group of authors strives to assess the corporate efforts related to communicating CSR. Their rhetoric is thus either concentrated on CSR communication as a tool for increasing the visibility of CSR practices, enhancing brand/corporate reputation and achieving profit-related goals, or on managerial strategies and models for effective CSR communication. Adopting a Habermasian perspective, Elving et al. (2015, p. 120) argue that such studies try to institutionalise CSR communication as a form of "instrumental/strategic" action and imply that CSR-related disclosure is used merely "as a medium of self-presentation". More specifically, European authors, who focus on CSR communication as a tool of marketing or corporate communications, orient their research around the characteristics of channels used for delivering CSR messages and their content. Their goal is to provide answers to questions about 'what' is being communicated and 'how'. Special attention, as previously pointed out by Golob et al. (2013), is given to the characteristics and challenges of CSR communication within the online environment. This thematic focus, as indicated by our data analysis, is most prominent among authors originating from a group of countries with a Latin model of CSR, especially Spain and Portugal (e.g., Capriotti & Moreno, 2007; Chaves, Mozas, Puentes, & Bernal, 2011). Moreover, studies with their focus on the 'form of delivery' of CSR messages also frequently expose CSR communication as an in vogue advertising topic (Lauritsen & Perks, 2015; Mögele & Tropp, 2010).

From an integration perspective on CSR communication this implies static integration based on an intra-organisational approach (Johansen & Esmann Andersen, 2012). Static integration is exhibited by integrating CSR behaviour with business strategy and by further aligning it with CSR communication to support the fit between CSR programs and strategy. The aim is to minimise the scepticism

of external stakeholders regarding CSR practices and enhance value creation in terms of CSR.

Such explicit forms of CSR communication are questioned by another stream of authors, who argue that companies can employ different strategies when communicating about CSR. Two main typologies of such strategies appear in the European-based literature. The first one inspects the approaches to CSR communication on the implicit-explicit continuum (e.g., Ligeti & Oravecz, 2009; Morsing et al., 2008). The second one categorises the same approaches on the basis of the level of stakeholder engagement in the process of CSR communication employed by a certain company. Stakeholders' role in CSR communication, from this perspective, can range from stakeholders being passive receivers of information to being actively involved in the co-creation of CSR meanings (Morsing & Schultz, 2006). By pointing out that companies across Europe take on different approaches to communicating CSR, we could argue that they are not so much confronted with a Hobson's choice whether to communicate about their CSR or not, but rather with a dilemma regarding the extent and the dialogical potential of their communication. If the value of implicit CSR communication strategies is, at least for the most part, more thoroughly explored by Scandinavian authors (e.g., Morsing et al., 2008; Morsing & Schultz, 2006), no such region-specific observation can be made with regard to studies on explicit CSR communication. However, this could serve as an indicator of the 'invasion' of explicit CSR communication practices, traditionally favoured by Anglo-Saxon countries, into other parts of Europe (Jackson & Apostolakou, 2010).

A strong stakeholder orientation could also be recognised as a common denominator of studies dealing with strategic approaches to CSR communication. The main goal of CSR communication from a corporate point of view is to align expectations of multiple stakeholder groups and gain their trust in order to optimise CSR-related profits (Chaudhri, 2014, p. 3). The focus in European studies is mainly on investigating consumers' expectations regarding CSR communication (e.g., Schmeltz, 2012; Colleoni, 2013; Bögel, 2015; Lauritsen & Perks, 2015). According to our analysis, mixed findings on consumers' expectations regarding the preferred style of CSR communication can be identified within the European context: from not expecting any explicit communication (Morsing et al., 2008) to demanding detailed and explicit information about CSR (Bögel, 2015). Either way, the emphasis in this type of studies appears to be on organisational reactions to stakeholders' expectations and demands, not on their proactive role in constructing CSR meanings. Moreover, these studies might concentrate on different communication strategies, but only a few of them explicitly address the value of CSR communication as a strategic instrument which, if aligned with the overall corporate strategy (e.g., Nielsen & Thomsen, 2009; Podnar, 2008), can help to offset stakeholder scepticism towards CSR-related messages (Chaudhri, 2014).

In recent years, as indicated by our findings, European authors have responded to the criticism of the limitations of instrumental approach to CSR communication by shifting their focus from the operational to the performative (i.e., constitutional) role of CSR communication (Christensen, Morsing, & Thyssen, 2013). This shift

builds on the idea that the institutionalisation of “a language of CSR in Europe” has provided European companies with the opportunity to act in a more socially responsible way (Matten & Moon, 2005, p. 335). CSR communication, in this case, is seen as the imperative for CSR actions, meaning that organisational talk about CSR has the power of instigating, shaping, directing and redirecting organisational CSR-related practices (Christensen et al., 2013). As such, “CSR is not a preexisting, out there idea, but one that is constructed . . . through communication” (Chaudhri, 2014, p. 5) and should on this account be inspected through the lens of communicative logic. Authors, who adopt a constructionist approach to CSR communication, are said to offer a fresh and alternative view on the role of CSR communication if compared to a more established instrumental-strategic camp (Elving et al., 2015). As a result, studies with a constructionist background make up less than one-fifth (15.4 %) of our sample. In Europe, the idea of communication being a cornerstone of organisational reality seems to be most readily accepted among the Scandinavian scholars, who take centre stage in the current constructionist debate on CSR.

In comparison with instrumental-strategic studies on CSR communication, this group of scholarly contributions replaces the business-centric view on CSR communication with the idea of a plurality of voices, which act as co-creators of CSR meanings. Chaudhri (2014), for example, highlights the importance of stakeholders’ involvement in the dialogical process of CSR communication. CSR meanings, he states, are being constantly negotiated and not merely transferred from business entities to their audiences. The attention is no longer given solely to the content of CSR messages, but to the social context/reality and its constituents as well. Further, the role of stakeholder management in relation to CSR-related activities is not only informative but also relational. The goal is to encourage stakeholders to become actively engaged in a dialogue with a company. In terms of integration of CSR communication these studies can be linked to dynamic or flexible integration (Christensen, Firat, & Torp, 2008), where an organization is focused on integrating different voices and views on CSR that come from stakeholders and co-create the meaning of CSR.

A still emerging logic (5.5 % of papers), the third conceptual camp of CSR communication studies we identified, combines both approaches to studying CSR communication and tries to critically reflect upon the professed incompatibility between the instrumental and constructionist approaches. For instance, it challenges the belief that the CSR communication-action gap can only result in consumer scepticism and argues that such an issue could also lead to improvements in the organisational reality, provided that the performative role of CSR communication is taken into account (Elving et al., 2015). Its holistic/integrative nature also promises to address the gap between academic calls for seizing the interactive potential of new communication technologies and business ‘reality’ (Chaudhri, 2014).

5 Conclusion and Future Outlook

CSR communication has become an important notion inside a wider CSR field, both in practice and research. In Europe, CSR might have had a rather long tradition, however it was mostly practiced in an implicit way. The CSR term as we know it today in Europe was introduced into the lexicon not so long ago, together with the forces that made CSR much more explicit (Strand et al., 2014). The explicitness has brought into the forefront the importance of communication processes in CSR, both from the perspective of sharing information and establishing dialogues. Thus, on a macro-level we seem to be witnessing a dominance of the communicative logic over the non-communicative one. The communicative logic has helped to provide the meaning to actions and set the course for the development of the CSR communication field in Europe.

After establishing the macro-level context for the institutional construction of CSR communication in Europe, offering a brief introduction to the institutional mechanisms, we analysed academic contributions as one of the most influential sources on the “supply-side” that structure and shape the decision-making and practices of CSR communication. Here we have discovered three institutional logics to frame the developments in CSR communication: operational/transactional, constructionist, and holistic. They tend to nicely reflect the “demand-side” on the macro-level where both, the need to be informed and the need to be engaged, included and integrated seem to influence CSR communication.

While the operational/transactional might be the most straightforward reflection of the global diffusion of explicit CSR, the other two are shaped much more by the national institutions and socio-cultural character of European countries. Both are slowly but persistently gaining more power, showing there is a tendency that CSR communication is liable to the process of adaption and translation of how CSR should be thought of in the communicative terms to fit the reality of the European context.

As for the future outlook: the development of the European CSR communication will continue to be about finding a place in the global context, “not about convergence or suppression of difference” (Scott, 2008, p. 206). This has further implications for the process of knowledge integration in the field. The question that could be further addressed in this regard is whether the process of knowledge integration will continue as routinely or as discursively translated (Becker-Ritterspach, 2006). In the former case, communicative logic may not be further contested, while in the latter, the dominant logic may be subjected to continuous conscious reflections by certain actors. Thus, the question is, how will the European discourse on CSR communication revolve around the issue of finding a balance between opening up to explicit ways of communicating CSR and doing this in a European-like, less intrusive and more engaging way, for example, by giving voice to internal stakeholders (Morsing et al., 2008) or brand ambassadors.

6 Exercise and Reflective Questions

1. What kinds of institutional logics can be found in the CSR communication field and how are they manifested?
2. How can policy makers influence the practice and research of CSR communication?
3. In your opinion how does the institutional context influence the academic endeavours? Can the academic research contribute to shaping the institutional context as well?
4. What are the advantages and disadvantages of non-communicative and communicative logics in shaping the communicative CSR aspects in the European context?

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Corporate Social Responsibility Communication in North America: The Past, Present and Future

Karen Becker-Olsen and Francisco Guzmán

Abstract Since the establishment of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between Canada, Mexico, and the United States, corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts across borders have been encouraged. Although NAFTA itself has been heavily studied, the comparative development of CSR programs and their related communications across borders remain relatively unexamined. This chapter examines the historical development of CSR in the post-industrial United States and Canada and compares it to its development in Mexico. This historical perspective provides a foundation for understanding the current state of CSR communication and sets the stage for the future CSR communication across North America.

1 Introduction

The establishment of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) on January 1, 1994, marks one of the earliest records of a regional trade agreement encouraging aspects of CSR across borders (Cohen, 2011). The creation of a North American commercial block has represented opportunities and challenges for Mexico, the United States, and Canada in terms of tariffs and trade, but has also shaped environmental policy, workplace safety standards, ethical reporting, and corporate communication. Although NAFTA has been studied extensively, one aspect that remains relatively unexamined is the comparative development of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). More than 20 years after the establishment of NAFTA, North America presents an interesting case study for CSR, and more specifically CSR communication. The United States and Canada have highly developed markets which host numerous multinational corporations (MNCs). These MNCs often have robust strategic CSR programs, both in their home and

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international markets. Additionally, many small to mid-size firms are committed to varying levels of CSR. In contrast, Mexico maintains the status of a developing country, host to fewer MNCs committed to strategic CSR, and has lower levels of CSR participation in its small to mid-size domestic firms. Thirteen of the top 100 and five of the top ten MNCs are located in the United States, with an additional two of the top 100 in Canada, and all of them have strong CSR initiatives and communication. Additionally, the culture and implementation of CSR are more advanced in the United States and Canada than in Mexico as evidenced by consumer response to CSR communication, development of CSR as a business model, and trends in CSR implementation. These economic and developmental differences allow for an interesting illustration of the challenges faced by firms that operate across the area as they strive to implement strong CSR programs.

The objective of this chapter is to examine the historical development of CSR in the United States, Canada, and Mexico to better understand how and why CSR and its related communication have evolved, and where it might be headed in the future. Thus, the chapter is broken down into four distinct sections: life-cycle review and general context, the past, the present, and the future. First, a general context for the chapter is developed via review of the CSR lifecycle model followed by Andrew Carnegie's *Gospel of Wealth*, Milton Friedman's "The Responsibility of Business is to Increase Profits," and the ideology of a Global Civil Society in which firms are responsible contributing actors. Second, Sect. 3 presents a traditional historic review of CSR from the beginnings of industrialization through the 1970s, illustrating issues related to industrial growth, urbanization, consumerism, and associated challenges of work place safety, pollution, social inequality, and regulation. In response to industrialization and business growth, firms begin to develop CSR-based communications as the fields of publicity, advertising, and consumer advocacy are simultaneously developing. Next, Sect. 4 looks at more contemporary CSR development and issues from 1980 through 2015, focusing on the shift in CSR from a response-based model to a more strategic proactive business model. This shift in perspective is the result of slower growth in domestic markets, concern about resource utilization, and the magnification of the role of global social equity and resource allocation. During this time, CSR for large firms becomes less about opportunistic events and more about sustainable business practices. The advent and fast adoption of the Internet and new media platforms radically shifts models of CSR communication by firms and consumers. Section 5 makes some predictions about CSR, the role of firms, and discusses issues of innovation, thought leadership, and the use of consumers as CSR business partners via social media networks. Lastly, we examine the paradox of responsible consumption in which consumers in highly developed markets such as the United States and Canada want firms to produce inexpensive products using responsible business practices that contribute to sustainability and the related communication difficulties this paradox presents.

2 CSR Lifecycle and Development Overview

Today CSR is a mainstay for any large corporation, and most often extends beyond philanthropic activities and mandated compliance, to proactive solutions that not only build brands and strengthen firm reputations, but also provide thought leadership and innovation for sustainability and social issues. However, this was not always the case. In this section we use the CSR lifecycle model as a frame for understanding the broad development of CSR across North America and then present a general review of that development.

2.1 CSR Lifecycle

The CSR lifecycle model (Guzmán & Becker-Olsen, 2010) provides a framework for examining the development, current position, and even future of CSR across North America. According to this model, CSR will evolve in tandem with market development such that in developed markets, such as U.S. and Canada, CSR is likely to be fully absorbed into all facets of business operations, be a part of the mission and values of the company, and be a regular focus of corporate communication via CSR reports, internal and external communications, package and product design, and advertising messaging. However, in less developed markets like Mexico, the model suggests CSR is less likely to be integrated into the core business model, more likely to be opportunistic or philanthropic, less likely to be a regular part of the corporate communication messaging strategy, and more likely to be met with skepticism by consumers. This is not to suggest that CSR does not have a place across all of North America or that it is not valued or even expected by various stakeholders, but simply to suggest the role of CSR communication, the specific messages, and stakeholder responses are likely to vary across markets. In developed markets CSR and its related communication are expected, while greenwashing and CSR infractions are likely to be met with skepticism and consumer backlash including boycotts and social media campaigns against the firm (Guzmán & Becker-Olsen, 2010). In contrast, in developing markets CSR is not as common and is not generally expected. However, CSR communication can be used to create consumer-based value for CSR and a culture in which CSR is the norm, thus, forcing other firms to engage in responsible business practices.

Within the lifecycle structure, the importance of specific issues changes with time and across cultures, as well as the perceived importance of businesses' commitment to society and the communities in which they operate. Conrad and Abbott note, given the "ebb and flow of actions and reactions, control and resistance, between corporations and their critics, the history of CSR has been a somewhat cyclical one" (May, Cheney, & Roper, 2007), further reinforcing the idea that CSR has evolved in many levels across all three markets. In order to more fully understand the dichotomy that exists across North America, it is important to

understand the development of CSR and the movement through the lifecycle across the United States and Canada as compared to Mexico.

2.2 CSR Development: From Carnegie to a Global Civil Society

Early industrial development in both the United States and Canada is often said to be responsible for the widespread poverty, moral decay, political corruption, pollution, and other social issues in these countries (Mayo, 1949). Although some might still make that case today, others would argue that the growth of businesses provides jobs, creates wealth, and sets the stage for modern developed markets. In 1889, Andrew Carnegie wrote *The Gospel of Wealth*, in which he broadly and vehemently advocated for business executives to use their personal wealth for the good of society. Although the idea of private individuals using personal wealth to build a more just community was not a new idea, Carnegie suggested that individuals, *through the wealth created by their firms*, were “duty bound” to improve the world. Carnegie himself donated \$350 million (almost 90 % of his total wealth) and was particularly interested in using education as a vehicle for the poor to change their plight (carnegie.org), and when his business partner caused the Johnstown flood, Carnegie donated millions to rebuild the town. In stark contrast to this picture of Andrew Carnegie as an advocate for social justice, is a man who was ruthless in business, paid low wages, offered workers no job security, opposed unions, and used every means possible to cut costs. This represents the conundrum that exists even for today’s firms, and is representative of the age-old Machiavelli-Friedman debate which questions not only the means for accumulation of wealth, but also the dissemination of that wealth, the responsibility of those with wealth, as well as the inherent purpose and mandate of capitalism (Buttery & Richter, 2003).

Understanding how the existence of corporations is intertwined with the development of communities and social goods, is critical for understanding the role that firms, governments, and individuals play in shaping more modern CSR initiatives and communication. There are deep philosophical undertones in the entire notion of corporate social responsibility, and many of these address the concept of a “civil society.” A “civil society” is associated with the philosophical notion of ‘the good society,’ in which classical political thinkers espouse the idea and characteristics of good citizenship as manifested by all actors and agents in the community. More specifically, the idea of a civil society is that the common good rests in the hands of all the actors within that society; thus, businesses have a responsibility to work toward the common good. As societies grow and entities become more sophisticated, the intertwining of the common good with the market and business actions becomes inevitable and more intricate. Today’s mega companies can trace their roots to the late 1800s when large firms monopolized markets, and their activities increasingly affected other realms of society, including poverty levels,

environmental degradation, the rights of workers to safe working conditions and livable wages, and education.

In the 1990s the emergence of active global NGOs and new social movements spurred by the Internet and its ability to connect people worldwide, led to the more formal conceptualization of a global civil society as an ideology which builds a platform for activities aimed at creating a social world order in which all actors, including businesses, accept shared responsibility for the health and welfare of the planet and its citizens. The idea of a civil society ties closely with CSR concepts, especially those involving active citizenry. As CSR has developed, the number of firms and individuals that support the idea that businesses act outside of ‘society’ is diminishing, while the number of individuals and firms that support a more active role in society by firms is growing (Bemporad & Baranowski, 2007; Rayapura, 2014). In this latter case, businesses are seen as potential contributors to the social good as they work with governments and non-government organizations (NGO) to promote sustainable healthy communities (Davidson & Novelli, 2001; Guzmán & Sierra, 2012).

3 The Past: Historical Perspective on Development of Corporate Social Responsibility in North America

With the understanding that the central tenet of civil society yields sustainable healthy communities, we turn our attention to the historical context and perspective for CSR development in the United States and Canada. In this next section and throughout this chapter, unless otherwise noted, the United States and Canada will be discussed simultaneously, while Mexico will be juxtaposed against these two countries.

The notion of CSR began with earnest ideals rooted in a philosophical mindset over a century ago with the rise of industrialization, and since then has blossomed into a more mature structured mainstream business model in the United States and Canada, but remains less developed in Mexico. It could be argued that historically CSR was a given. A company would set its roots in a community, help create jobs, distribute wealth, and, overall, increase a community’s well-being. However, around the turn of the century, as the immigrant population exploded and urbanization was solidified, companies and their owners prospered, established operations outside their local realm, and firms became publicly traded, increasing the interests of investors over communities. Thus, this original *raison d’être* got diluted as firms responded more strongly to profitability measures demanded by owners and shareholders and were disconnected from their original community based roots. As a consequence, companies paradoxically became externality generating machines that slowly began to realize the importance of community health and welfare.

3.1 *The Early Years: 1800s–1920s*

The rapid growth of industrialization in the 1800s created a firestorm of activity and public interest surrounding businesses and the ideas of capitalism. Consequently, the growth of railroads, steel, petroleum, and other industrial corporations quickly achieved monopoly status with little to no government intervention. However, as markets developed so did public outrage; the U.S. government responded with the Sherman Anti-Trust Act and the development of the Interstate Commerce Commission. These new regulations came in an era of previously unchecked industrial growth, thus necessitating the passage of laws which addressed trust formations, child labor, workplace safety, and minimum wage standards. The U.S. Progressive Era, from 1900 to 1920, saw additional legislation and agency development related to societal transformation and income tax with the passing of the Clayton Act, and the creation of the National Safety Council, the Department of Labor, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics. However, firms retained a great deal of power.

As early as the 1920s, the search for the delicate balance between societal good and corporate interests was tested, as industrialists found themselves in the precarious position of advocating for a system of factory laborers that was proving detrimental to society. As pressure from advocacy groups and muckrakers mounted, some firms developed “industrial welfare programs” in order to curb the passage of additional government regulations and attenuate the swell of anti-business sentiment. Critical events such as the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire, Jacob Riis’ photo expose, and Upton Sinclair’s publication of *The Jungle* forced corporations to think about their interactions with society. In essence, firms were being pressured into socially responsible practices particularly related to labor issues. It was at this time that many firms hired public relations specialists to create publicity campaigns and press releases which attempted to portray corporations as indispensable to national interests and economic growth, as well as responsive to their communities’ needs (May et al., 2007).

Meanwhile Mexico was living the last years of the *Porfiriato*—Porfirio Diaz’s 35 year presidency/dictatorship (1876–1911) which was characterized by a strong centralized state and paternalism. During this period of time, although economic growth was rampant, the middle and lower classes suffered severely as companies in Mexico enjoyed governmental protection, dispossessing the poor from their land and properties and then exploiting them to increase profits. There was no sense that corporate responsibility or its associated communication was necessary, as the power was retained with Diaz’s regime and a few corporate leaders. The growing social inequities generated during the *Porfiriato* led to the Mexican Revolution (1910–1920). Paradoxically, during this period Porfirio Diaz strongly promoted charitable causes and created la “Junta de Asistencia Privada” (Private Assistance Board) which still operates today (Perez, 2009), though this was not enough to alleviate marginalization of the poor and prevent the revolution to come.

3.2 Beginnings of Stability and Globalization: 1920s–1950s

The fallout of the folly of the 1920s led to the greatest economic downturn in history, the Great Depression. Its effects were felt worldwide and had a profound impact on the way firms reacted to social and economic issues. It was in this time that Edward Bernays first linked brands to prominent social issues. After World War I, while working for the American Tobacco Company, Bernays organized the “Torches of Freedom” march to raise not only cigarette sales, but awareness for the feminist cause and women’s voting rights by having women march down the streets of New York City holding cigarettes which represented their “torches of freedom” (Burton & Lamme, 2011). The Second World War also shaped the ways individuals and firms reacted to social needs and causes. Firms responded quickly as the U.S. sought goods to sell to overseas markets and when the U.S. entered the war, firms rallied around the war effort increasing production, hiring women, and maintaining a positive interaction with the government and their communities. In this time employees, government agencies, communities, and firms all worked for a single cause, defeating Hitler. Firms such as Coca-Cola, General Motors, and Lucky Strike ran campaigns depicting soldiers using their products and wrote press releases about product donations they were making to the front lines, all in an effort to highlight their good deeds and build their brand’s patriotic reputation (Heide & Gillman, 1995).

However, the concept of “corporate social responsibility” first emerged as a namesake in the United States shortly after WWII. The Cold War led to a re-endorsement of capitalism that was sought to be humanized by the expectation that corporations have the ability and responsibility to serve societal needs (May et al., 2007). The idea was that only in capitalistic markets could businesses act responsibly and build strong communities with opportunities for all. As such, CSR communication focused on highlighting how the firm’s good deeds helped communities. Howard R. Bowen captured this ethos when in 1953 he wrote, “we are entering an era when private business will be judged solely in terms of its demonstrate-able contribution to the general welfare. . . The acceptance of obligations to workers, consumers, and the general public is a condition for survival of the free enterprise system” (Bowen, 1953, p. 127). Bowen and many of his contemporaries, charged businesses not only with producing products and making profits, but increasing their social and ethical behaviors ensuring that the doctrine of capitalism and free-enterprise prevailed over communism.

During this period of time, business in Mexico was being conducted under very interesting circumstances. American businesses were trying to enter the Mexican market partly because of the growing population and wealth, and partly in fear of a perceived growing Nazi influence (Moreno, 2004). However, driven by early twentieth-century American imperialism practices—a capitalist missionary approach—American business practices, not surprisingly, clashed with Mexican culture. Most businesses in Mexico were family partnerships that heavily guarded their market information and company records. Overall, the business environment

in Mexico was characterized by being closed, nationalistic, and even paternalistic—particularly driven by the national oil company PEMEX. However, by the mid 1940s companies in the north of the country, primarily motivated by religious faith, were addressing workers' housing and health care needs (Perez, 2009). This movement in Mexico is similar to the earlier “social-gospel” movement of the Progressive era in the United States and Canada which began to shine light on the social inequities driven, at least in part, by industrialization. There is no evidence that the movement was supported broadly enough in Mexico that firms were systematically publicizing their good deeds; CSR, as we know it today, was not on the radar of Mexican business practices until later in the mid-1980s, thus CSR communication was virtually non-existent.

3.3 Accountability, Foundations, and the Environment: 1960s–1970s

As the field of CSR grew in prominence, new theories and ideas emerged and research expanded. In 1960 Keith Davis reinforced previous arguments espousing CSR as not only a way to maintain social and economic power, but as a responsibility of firms with power and excess wealth. In his piece, the “Iron Law of Responsibility,” he notes the “social responsibilities of businessmen need to be commensurate with their social power,” in essence reiterating Carnegie’s and Bowen’s shared mandate. He further suggests that CSR can create a level of social capital for both firms and agents or officers of the firms whose impact must be understood holistically and as a means for maintaining both political and economic power. However, there was little overt attempt to link social responsibility to financial overall performance. Ten years later, Milton Friedman entered the debate with his essay, “The Social Responsibility of Business Is To Increase Its Profits” (Friedman, 1970). Unlike his predecessors, Friedman believed the greatest social good would occur if businesses made ethical decisions based solely on increasing shareholder value, not on philanthropic contributions, social causes, or voluntary social spending. From Friedman’s perspective, firms were acting in a socially responsible manner if they provided jobs and allowed market forces to work without intervention. Many investors supported Friedman’s perspective as the business case for CSR was minimal.

Concurrently, government regulators (e.g., FCC, FTC), and public interest groups began to hold corporations to a new level of accountability as they tried to shift power away from firms. From 1969 to 1972, three of the major regulatory agencies in the U.S., the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the Equal Opportunity Commission, and the Environmental Protection Agency, were founded to create greater disclosure and transparency of corporate actions, including funds for workplace safety, employment practices, and environmental clean-up.

In an effort to placate consumer advocacy groups and satisfy investors, many firms created corporate foundations, and fulfilled their “social responsibilities” through local and national philanthropic programs and grants. These foundations were branded with the firm’s name, thus they could operate outside of the firm, but still generate positive publicity and advertising. Foundations prepared annual reports which would serve as a precursor for CSR reports. These reports focused on how much money was given to specific organizations; they were shared with media outlets and a few socially conscious investors. The idea that CSR communication could do more than relay feel-good messages or create ‘insurance’ if the firm experienced some social infraction was further cemented (Manheim & Pratt, 1986).

Of great interest during this time were energy and environmental issues such as pollution control, dumping, and toxic waste removal. In both the United States and Canada, the debate regarding corporate social responsibility shifted from mere compliance to responsiveness and began emphasizing what companies needed to do better in order to limit future regulations and fines. Thus, there was a new emphasis on political action and lobbying as a form of communication; public affairs departments became more active, and public relations was directed towards “strategic philanthropy” and “cause-oriented marketing” (Manheim & Pratt, 1986). The hope was strategic philanthropy and cause-related marketing would detract from the negative publicity regarding energy consumption and environment degradation. The energy industry itself presents an interesting case in which CSR initiatives were initially used to fix a poor image, but have since transformed to a more innovative model in search of global sustainable energy solutions. Hooker Chemical and the Love Canal incident represent some of the first modern large-scale environmental disasters directly attributed to corporate irresponsibility. These events both received national media attention motivating firms to think more strategically about their CSR communication and forcing firms to understand that stakeholders were going to demand action, accountability, and transparency. The response of Hooker lacked transparency, accountability, timeliness, and truthfulness, and would start a spiral of skepticism on the part of consumers that continues today. At this time, it was not the norm for firms to engage in proactive CSR programs, thus there was no positive CSR record to counter the negative publicity. Firms would learn quickly the value of a strong proactive CSR program that provided innovation and leadership to the industry.

In Mexico, the 1960s and 1970s were characterized by the formation of multiple organizations focused on procuring social development, and for the first time the focus moved away from the church and began to put the responsibility on business owners. Two prominent examples are the *Fundación Mexicana para el Desarrollo Social* (Mexican Foundation for Social Development), created by Catholic businessmen searching for solutions for the living conditions of farmers, and the *Consejo Coordinador Empresarial* (Business Coordinating Council), that grouped multiple chambers—industrial, commerce, etc.—to provide guidance on how companies could focus on social responsibility (Perez, 2009). Unlike their northern counterparts, businesses in Mexico were just starting to think about corporations

and businesses as a force for social development, and thus they were still in the response mode of communication, publicizing good deeds that showed their responsiveness to pressing social issues. However, given that CSR was in the very earliest stages in Mexico, there were low consumer expectations for actual corporate responsibility limiting the need or usefulness for CSR communication.

4 The Present: Corporate Social Responsibility Reaches Acronym Status and Communication Is Institutionalized

Modern CSR in the United States and Canada has evolved from companies using CSR programs as a form of opportunistic short-term public relations and marketing campaigns (Pirsch, Gupta, & Landreth-Grau, 2007), to an institutional commitment to long-term sustainable businesses practices that are supported by a strong business case (Guzmán & Becker-Olsen, 2010). This corresponds with the last phase in the CSR lifecycle where CSR becomes absorbed into all aspects of business operations. Interestingly, in this more contemporary era CSR goes beyond being a good investment that is rewarded by customers and investors, in fact the lack of CSR becomes a liability to the firm. In Mexico the CSR market is one of expansion and growth in which the focus is on building consumer awareness and creating differential advantage with groups of consumers that care about various CSR initiatives.

4.1 The Business Case for CSR

Twenty years after Friedman's pronouncement that firms should engage in business practices that increased investor profits, Archie Carroll advocated for a "triple bottom line" which called for firms to account for profits, regulatory influences, and social impact. These seemingly competing ideologies create a disconnect in the way firms manage their CSR communication. Industrial business-to-business firms tend to adhere to Friedman's ideology and engage in little CSR beyond being compliant on environmental and work place issues as their stakeholders are less likely to value CSR (Friedman, 2013). However, firms that are heavily involved in consumer markets, tend to adhere to Carroll's ideology and continue to develop their CSR programs and publicize their CSR commitment, as well as institutionalize their CSR reporting. The latter of these companies begin to more closely monitor the business case for CSR, and think about long-term customer loyalty and brand differentiation, as well as program efficacy, not just short-term expenditures. Vancouver Savings was one of the first Canadian financial institutions to advocate for "people, planet, and profit" (macleans.ca) by significantly reducing

their carbon footprint, repeatedly showing that there is a strong business case to be made for integrated strategic CSR in the personal financial sector.

CSR is no longer an add-on managed by the foundation or even the marketing department; it is a business model that positions the firm as a proactive industry leader concerned with global sustainability and community health and well-being. Interestingly, this transformation occurred in the late 1990s, in an economy characterized by increasing unemployment, greater global dependence, a widening poverty gap, financial deregulation, and the rise of the Internet. Investors were moving capital freely from one country to another, creating economic instability around the developing world, bestowing unprecedented power on corporations over governments. Paradoxically, as their power increased again, so did their collective social conscience. It is during this time period that CSR moved from being a public relations or marketing ploy to an “almost universally sanctioned and promoted [activity] by all constituents in society from governments and corporations to non-governmental organizations and individual consumers” (May et al., 2007). There is no doubt that the Internet helped to encourage firms to act more responsibly as it was increasingly easy and fast for consumers around the globe to discover a firms’ socially irresponsible behavior and organize a boycott. Thus, irresponsible firm behavior could be easily punished by large groups of consumers. Conversely, acts of social responsibility were also shared quickly with millions of customers and investors around the globe.

4.2 Ethics and Transparency

As the necessity of CSR became apparent, CSR progressed to a model in which businesses developed a normative approach centered around ethics and values (May et al., 2007). As noted it is no coincidence that the increased attention to ethics came in conjunction with an increase in the number of corporate scandals and an increase in global connectivity allowing employees, customers, and other stakeholders to act as whistleblowers on firms that violated responsible standards. Nike in the late 1990s was embroiled in numerous social irresponsibility scandals involving child labor and work place safety standards, which were highly publicized allowing the news to spread rapidly. Although most of the infractions were with contracted manufacturers in the supply chain, Nike needed to answer for the infractions quickly. The case set a standard for corporate crisis communication and made it clear that consumers would ultimately hold firms responsible for their supply chain partners. Nike responded quickly with a program for improved oversight, and most importantly with their CEO Phil Knight delivering the message that “consumers did not want to buy products made under abusive conditions.” (Nisen, 2013); Nike was able to recover from the scandal and establish itself in a position of leadership for fair labor practices in the South East Asian garment industry (Nisen, 2013). Similar incidents with Gap, Mattel, and Apple breathed new life into a strategic CSR model and once again reinforced the notion that a history of

strong CSR initiatives and communication could provide reputational insurance (Peloza, 2006).

The new millennium ushered in an era of global struggle and even greater oversight by developing markets via new regulations and the UN Global Compact; by the end of the 1990s, close to 90 % of Fortune 500 firms had included CSR as part of their organizational mission, discussing such activities in their annual reports (May et al., 2007). Firms began hiring dedicated CSR professionals whose job was to manage CSR events and initiatives, as well as communication. Additionally, firms began publishing separate CSR reports as a way to communicate with groups of stakeholders that were not necessarily customers, thus stockholders, employees, and even advocacy groups could easily access firm specific CSR information.

Web-based communication allowed firms to update CSR information in a timely manner and respond more quickly to social issues, increasing their CSR presence. Within 3–5 days of the World Trade Center bombing, U.S. firms communicated with a variety of stakeholders adding patriotic images and slogans to advertisements and web pages. Although the images and message were similar to those during WWII, the Internet allowed firms to respond to this national crisis within days. In 2010 when Haiti, and more recently in 2015 when Nepal, were hit by catastrophic earthquakes, firms again responded, but this time, they were able to showcase their CSR efforts within hours. In 2010 Hanes, AT&T, and other multinational firms kept employees and customers updated on their recovery efforts and donation programs via the corporate website, twitter, and text messages. They were even able to involve customers in the relief efforts so the Hanes and AT&T could create a stronger connection between their brand and their customers as they worked together to assist the people in Haiti.

4.3 More than Expenditures

In addition to the increased presence of globalization and timeliness of communication, contemporary CSR is subjected to a mandate that CSR initiatives and programs demonstrate efficacy and impact for both the firm and the program. To this end firms look to comprehensive programs, with integrated communications that not only have a positive business impact such as reducing costs (e.g., hotel linen programs which ask guests to reuse towels) or increasing loyalty, but also yield a measureable social impact (e.g., reduce water use by 20 % and energy by 15 %). Starbucks is not only committed to financial success, it also provides customers with Fair Trade coffee, uses 100 % ethically sourced suppliers, encourages employees to volunteer in the local community, uses low flush toilets in all outlets, monitors its carbon footprint, and incentivizes customers to use reusable tumblers for their coffee as well as supporting hundreds of local charity events. In Canada, Starbucks piloted LeadersUp as a way to give job skills to disadvantaged youth and committed over \$1 million to the program, as well as providing financial

and man-hour assistance to a program that recycles shipping containers into small store spaces for cottage businesses. These CSR efforts are communicated with a CSR annual report, posters in the cafes, signage on tables, labels on packages, and strong social media messaging.

4.4 Contemporary Growth and Development in Mexico

In Mexico, the leading cause triumphed by firms during the last decade, like that of their northern counterparts, has been sustainability. As in other developing markets, there is strong pressure on firms to more fully engage in CSR activities, implement stronger supply chain sustainability standards, and be more accountable with CSR activities via reporting. Recent research suggests that of the top 25 companies in Mexico 18 address CSR in their corporate communications, but only 6 have it as a core element of their business strategy, mission or value statement (Perez, 2009). Although there is progress by many large Mexican firms, consumers are not necessarily convinced that these CSR efforts are worth paying for (Garza, 2013) and thus the business case incentive is minimized in Mexico. To date, consumers in Mexico are more interested in philanthropic endeavors that support social services, education, and the arts (Perez, 2009). Perez (2009) concludes that although there is clear evidence of progress in terms of companies adopting CSR practices, there is still a lag in terms of effective communication strategies which help to build consumer support and create a stronger business case for CSR investments. Outside of the very largest MNCs, firms do not typically publicize their responsible business practices and CSR programs.

4.5 Special Case of Small to Mid-Size Businesses

Small businesses in the U.S. and Canada may not so easily fit into the life-cycle model, yet they make up a large portion of both employment opportunities and GDP; in the U.S. 99 % of all businesses are considered small and thus are important in fully understanding CSR. These companies may not have CSR officers, budgets, or communication specialists, however they are taking their social commitment seriously and see themselves as vital to their host community's economic and social health (Besser, 2002). Although small to mid-sized firms might not achieve the profound global impact of large MNCs, they can inevitably impact their community and minimize downside risks (Smith, 2013). Most small to mid-sized firms report being firmly entrenched in their community with a strong connection and commitment to local community providing leadership on numerous community-based initiatives, with community NGOs, serving on local boards, and sponsoring local events (Besser, 2002; Besser & Miller, 2001). In these cases the CSR communication is likely to be word of mouth communication, posters for local events, and

social media posts; small to mid-size firms are not likely to issue a CSR report or spend advertising money promoting their CSR initiatives (Besser & Jarnagin, 2010; Besser & Miller, 2001). This type of CSR is more limited and more likely to be reflective of what is seen in the expansion and growth stages of larger firms.

CSR in small firms in Mexico has a limited history grounded predominately in philanthropy finding its roots in the church. In 1988 the Mexican Centre of Philanthropy, Cemefi, was created to advise small to mid-size firms, foundation personnel, and community leaders on the benefits of CSR. To date, the organization has consulted with numerous firms, and reports that more than 55 % of mid-size domestic firms are engaged in CSR (Garza, 2013). Cementos Mexicanos (CEMEX) program Patrimonio Hoy, which offers micro-credits and technical assistance to build low-income housing, provides proof of the advances in the adoption of CSR (Guzmán, 2014).

4.6 Contemporary CSR Messages and Tools

As CSR continues to grow, the focus within mid-sized to large firms in U.S. and Canada is on CSR communication that is fully integrated into shareholder reports, employee communication, supply chain partnerships, package design, traditional advertising, corporate websites, and social media. As noted, the messages and focus have shifted from ones in which firms attach a band-aid to an issue in a local market, or support a local charity, to one in which firms take a leadership role seeking out solutions to large global issues and exhibit a consistent commitment to issues with a long-term strategic fit with the firm's mission. The messages have also moved from simple awareness brand building messages to ones that highlight efficacy of given programs and offer strong strategic fit with the mission and values of the firm.

CSR communication is critical in that consumers generally report an interest in purchasing products from firms with strong CSR records (conecomm.com), but in order for them to make socially responsible decisions, they need to have product, brand and company information. Extant research shows firms that use strong consistent CSR communication are able to engender strong positive affect for their brand (Bhattacharya, Korschun, & Sen, 2009; Brown & Dacin, 1997). Cone Roper's 2013 Global CSR report supports the academic research and shows when price and quality are comparable, CSR becomes the next attribute of choice (conecomm.com). Determining which firms have responsible and ethical business practices and support initiatives of interest needs to be easy for consumers. Thus, clear, easy to access, consistent messages that do not overstate a firm's position are likely to be most effective. Given that contemporary consumers are more skeptical than ever (Forehand & Grier, 2003), and have access to large quantities of information, firms need to be cautious with their CSR communication and ensure the claims, both explicit and implicit, are genuine. General Motors was repeatedly criticized in the global press for changing the color of its logo from blue to green in an effort to portray the company as more eco-friendly, when it is in fact one of the

top ten most polluting car manufacturers in the world (Aggarwal & Kadyan, 2014). Contemporary CSR communication messages are most likely to be found in four key areas: CSR reports, traditional advertising, social media, and point of purchase (POP).

4.6.1 CSR Reports

CSR reports are designed for a myriad of stakeholders, but require significant investment of time and effort on the part of the reader, thus they are best for investors or consumers that are highly committed to CSR. Most reports prepared by large MNCs follow the Global Reporting Initiative format, making it easier for investors to compare initiatives and efficacy. In 2012, more than 6600 Annual CSR Reports were prepared by firms globally, with more than 50 % of those being prepared by U.S. MNCs (Scott, 2013), while in Mexico less than 20 % of the top companies prepare CSR reports (Perez, 2009). CSR reporting, like CSR itself, focuses on environmental issues of waste management, emissions, and sustainability. However, as the spectrum of issues and projects has expanded, so too has the content in the reports, with many large firms reinforcing missions, values, and consumer propositions with social partnerships and programs creating strong brand connections (Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, & Hill, 2006; Simmons & Becker-Olsen, 2006). Today CSR reports are an integral component of many published annual reports providing investors details on the firm's CSR activities. Although CSR reports provide a wide range of information, including details on specific programs, CSR impact, and carbon footprint, they often are more detailed than most consumers would like, and more importantly they are not easily or quickly accessible, thus limiting their usefulness to consumers.

4.6.2 Traditional Advertising

The use of traditional advertising venues such as newspapers, magazines, and billboards all provide an opportunity to showcase the good deeds of firms. Given that most U.S. consumers want to know what firms are doing on the CSR front, these traditional venues are still a great way to let consumers know that the brands they desire are not just providing high quality products or services, but they are doing so in a responsible manner. Traditional advertising platforms are best for firmly established partnerships or programs in that the lead-time for communication development is longer than with social media. Panera Bread uses the slogan, "Baked before Sunrise . . . Donated before Sunset," to let customers know that Panera Bread is "more than great soup, salad, and bread, it is a firm dedicated to feeding people—all people." (Elliott, 2013) Chipotle Mexican Grill serves as another example; their billboards and printed communication are all tagged to remind consumers they serve "food with integrity."

Event sponsorship and cause marketing are two additional more traditional venues that allow a firm to leverage their CSR and philanthropic efforts. Often events provide a link to the local or regional community and create a sense of brand community as well as help a brand develop strong positive brand associations. Event sponsorship and cause marketing are different from traditional mass media advertising or communication, in that a firm willingly engages with a cause for direct commercial gain. In contrast, charitable giving or inter-firm activities such as carbon reduction are activities that may indirectly benefit the firm, but do not have a direct or intentional commercial gain component. Events and sponsorships are typically supported with integrated communication campaigns including advertising, public relations, social media, and even product labeling.

4.6.3 Social Media

Social media is having a transformational impact on corporate communications, with CSR communication being one of the biggest areas. Firms are tweeting, posting on Facebook, snapping, and using other digital platforms to showcase their CSR efforts. There is no doubt that social media is increasing awareness for CSR and changing the baseline expectation for consumers. It is also a space where firms can engage with customers, listen to their passions, and ultimately bring them onboard via CSR projects and initiatives. Social and other digital platforms provide the added advantage of being agile, allowing a firm to respond within seconds with a new message.

Twitter, with over 500 million members, provides space for 140 character messages that get information out quickly. It is timely, easy to read and process, and can be linked to other more traditional media or images. Tweets can also be linked to celebrities, top corporate officers, special occasions such as Arbor Day (@dell buy a laptop plant a tree), Clean Water Day (@anheuserbusch most efficient global brewer in water use 3 years running), or specific brands in a firm's portfolio, to increase reach and build specific associations and awareness. Although twitter does not allow for a rich conversation around an issue, it potentially gives consumers just enough to tip the competitive scales and forces firms and consumers to think about CSR, not in a static once and done manner, but in a dynamic continual fashion that centers around an open authentic conversation.

For greater depth on CSR issues, CSR impact, and creation of a dialogue around specific issues, other platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn, DevelopmentCrossing, YouTube, and even blogging provide an avenue for sharing and building meaningful conversations. These more interactive platforms can also lend themselves to crowd sourcing and greater engagement from consumers. Procter and Gamble used Facebook to implement "The Future Friendly Challenge" which helped to promote water conservation. The program included online commitments via Facebook, a custom app and invitations to friends to participate. In the first 3 months, the program had nearly 50,000 followers and estimated over 20,000 days of clean drinking water donated to Children's Safe Drinking Water fund. Chipotle again

provides a strong exemplar with their “Scarecrow” campaign which uses multiple digital platforms to engage consumers and communicate their social responsibility message. Their YouTube short film has been viewed over 14 million times and their scarecrowgame.com can be downloaded as an app on iTunes, showing that CSR communication has moved from stiff scripted public relations to interactive digital platforms which engagingly embed CSR messages in the minds of consumers without sounding like an advertising message.

4.6.4 CSR Labeling at Point of Purchase

Although corporate reports, traditional advertising and even social media provide information for a variety of stakeholders, most consumers are not willing to take the time to research a firm’s sustainability record, charitable contributions, or other community involvement; hence, point of purchase information provides easy cues for consumers. Cone Communications reports that the preferred methods of CSR communication in point of purchase can range from package labels, to seals, to displays, and even sales pitches which incorporate CSR information. Industry Canada surveyed member firms and found that most used some form of POP communication to maximize the benefit from CSR activities, particularly sustainability (ic.gc.ca). These benefits include creating brand relevance, building customer relationships, and disseminating information about how consumers can also minimize environmental impact. Procter and Gamble, H&M, and Levi Strauss have all run informational campaigns on the environmental impact of clothing, both in terms of recycling and laundering. As part of the campaigns, they have not only talked about their own sustainability efforts, they have also shown consumers ways to decrease their environmental impact by using high efficiency detergents, line drying, washing in cold water, and donating used clothes. These messages are on laundry detergent boxes, on tags on the clothes, and part of in store displays making it easy for consumers to not just see what the firm is doing, but understand how they can magnify the environmental impact with own responsible practices. Aveda, a U.S. based beauty product MNC, has used package labeling to enhance its position in the market as an environmentally friendly organic product, and Bimbo bakery in Mexico also leverages its bio-based packaging to communicate their commitment toward sustainability.

5 Looking to the Future

The future of CSR, like the future of anything, is unpredictable. In a world that is increasingly and globally connected, a tremor in one part of the world could cause an earthquake in another, however current trends point toward slow and steady development as global issues of resource use, sustainability, and widening poverty gaps interact to shape the social and environmental landscape. On the firm side,

companies will need to adapt CSR practices so they meet strategic needs, but also show cultural understanding in various global markets as well as position themselves as innovative leaders that are providing creative solutions to global issues. On the customer and investor side, it is likely that as Millennials age, they will reshape the CSR frontier, demanding more responsible business practices, wanting to be a part of those initiatives, and making consumption choices that allow them to alleviate some of the guilt of overconsumption.

5.1 Corporate Innovation and Leadership and Cultural Understanding

Even though many would agree that the United States and Canada are in the absorption phase of the CSR lifecycle, there is a continuum that exists within that phase, where some firms operate in industries that are simply compliant to the lowest level of regulation, while others operate in industries that demand innovation for survival, and within those industries, there is an even further delineation across firms as they search for the strategy that best fits their mission, values, and ability to compete in the marketplace. It is likely that all firms will move toward higher levels of CSR as global competition increases and awareness of social and environmental issues parallels this growth creating a business imperative for firms operating in developed markets. However, the question regarding consumer-based value for CSR in less developed markets remains unanswered. Although dumping technology and apparel waste in third world countries has been standard practice, it is likely that firms will need to have a stronger commitment to simply creating less waste and recycling waste. For Dell to run tree planting programs in the United States and then dump their computer waste in India, creates a strong disconnect for consumers and investors, and potentially tarnishes the brand's reputation and attenuates brand associations. In the future firms will need to think more about product life-cycle and focus on the disposal component.

Creating a strong regional or global brand with strategic associations that resonate across cultures is also going to be more important. Issues of poverty, sustainability and even body image and bullying have received worldwide attention. Cartoon Network's latest effort to fight bullying serves as an interesting example of the challenges an MNC faces when implementing a program across borders. The international campaign, that expands to other Latin American countries, is called "Stop Bullying: Speak Up" in the United States, "Stop Bullying: Stand Up" in Canada, and "Basta de Bullying: No te Quedes Callado" in Mexico. In each country, Cartoon Network, with the support of Facebook, established partnerships with different local organizations to successfully develop a program that integrates messaging through television, online media, social networks, and community education programs to help protect children and teenagers from bullying at schools and in their on-line lives. Regardless of the economic and developmental

differences among all countries involved in this effort, the promoted cause is relevant across borders. Cartoon Network's effort to "localize" this international campaign—in each country different communication tools were developed and local celebrities recruited to send out the message to kids and parents—serves to illustrate the kind of CSR communication efforts that are becoming more common and are more effective in that the use of local partners allows for cultural sensitivity to issues and images more relevant in specific markets.

5.2 The Millennial Paradox of Consumption

As Millennials become the most powerful economic force in the marketplace, companies will have to increasingly respond to their collective values. A worldwide study from Edelman (2012) suggests that Millennials' buying power will be more than \$2.5 trillion by 2018. Millennials are strong advocates for CSR and sustainability (Greenberg & Webber, 2008), and this generational trait is not exclusive to Millennials of advanced economies (Guzmán, 2014; Rayapura, 2014). Based on this generation's commitment to sustainability, it is naïve to think that companies will not need to step up to the challenge and meet Millennials with messages that resonate with their interests on media platforms that are interactive and engaging.

Keurig Green Mountain (KGM) coffee embodies many of the consumer-based CSR related challenges faced by firms in the future. Green Mountain claims to "brew a better world," and was the first coffee company to accept the UN Global Sustainability Reporting Standards, was twice named to the top 100 CR Magazine's best corporate citizens, won two EPA awards for carbon offset programs, has been touted as one of the most committed leaders in the Fair Trade Movement, and has increased profitability over 500% from 2011 to 2014 (Gunther, 2014). On the surface KGM appears to be a model firm for successful sustainable CSR. However, the future of CSR is complicated, particularly at KGM. In 2011, KGM sold 5.9 million Keurig coffee makers and 1.7 billion worth of single serve K-cup coffee packages (Gunther, 2014). Consumer advocacy groups quickly took to the internet and named Green Mountain as socially irresponsible generating tons of non-recyclable waste from its plastic coffee containers. These groups loudly and repeatedly questioned the firm's commitment to "a better world" and went deeper to expose misleading claims in SEC reports and questionable business practices by its former CEO who was yachting on his company purchased 164 foot yacht.

The KGM case raises many questions for the future of CSR. First, had the firm not publicly committed and incorporated CSR as a core business practice, would they have been shamed or would it have passed under the radar? Is there value for firms in quietly embracing CSR? Using Vancouver Savings model of planet, people and profits, there is no doubt that value exists on the planet side, and possibly the profit side, but the people side is harder. Consumers and investors want to know what firms are doing, and want to be able to be aligned with socially and environmentally responsible brands.

Interestingly, the negative publicity has not had a significant adverse impact on sales, thus raising the second question. Do consumers value convenience over CSR? This question sharply suggests the paradox of consumption is hard at work. Consumers in developed countries need to commit to using fewer resources, yet these same consumers are typically not willing to inconvenience themselves to reduce their resource use. Innovations that assist consumers without impacting their quality of life allow consumers to feel good about their purchases and at least theoretically reduce their resource use. Again, consider KGM who responded to the allegations of waste by replacing their CEO and publicly committing to developing 100 % recyclable K-cups and more energy efficient machines while expanding their partnerships to include Campbell Soup and Coca-Cola. KGM assuages consumers' potential discomfort by continuing to report about the social good being done by the firm and their commitment to allocating 5 % of the company's pre-tax profits to relevant social causes. Thus, consumers can now buy a new energy efficient machine, use the machine more often to brew coffee, tea, cold soup, and even cold drinks, and feel good that part of their purchase is being used to support hunger and environmental organizations. However, the reality is that the old machines are simply dumped and the consumers' increase in consumption is likely to offset or surpass any energy savings of the new machine.

The KGM scenario suggests two other questions: does good in one sector offset infractions in another, and can owning a problem and 'promising' a solution placate both investors and customers? Can KGM's \$2 million dollars in development funds to coffee producing communities in poverty zones offset the waste of three billion K-cups? Can the promise of new packaging materials and more energy efficient machines keep investors and customers buying the product? Would the realization of a 100 % recyclable or biodegradable K-cup give KGM a renewed leadership position as a firm that is not just environmentally friendly, but environmentally forward?

The KGM example exposes a series of important questions for the future of CSR, not just in the coffee industry, but across many. Will firms tire of the CSR treadmill and the constant threat of advocacy groups to a point where CSR slides backward and only a few firms expend the time and resources to engage in innovative strategic programs, or will CSR communication grow in importance as firms look at cases like KGM and realize that consumers are relatively forgiving and willing to make trade-offs if savings in one area outweigh infractions in others?

6 Conclusion

The objective of this chapter was to examine the historical development of CSR in the United States, Canada, and Mexico to better understand how and why CSR and its related communication have evolved, and where it might be headed in the future. The chapter first presented a general context of CSR by reviewing the CSR lifecycle model and several foundational pieces for the development of CSR theory. Second,

a comparative historic review of CSR communications in Canada, Mexico, and the United States illustrated how factors such as industrial growth, urbanization, consumerism, work place safety challenges, pollution, social inequality, and regulation have affected the development of CSR in the area. Third, the chapter analyzed contemporary CSR issues by focusing on the shift in CSR from a response based model to a more strategic proactive business model. Finally, some predictions were presented about the future of CSR, the role of firms, and how innovation, thought leadership, and the use of consumers as CSR business partners, via social media networks, might affect CSR communications.

No doubt CSR communication in North America has a long history of both shaping consumer responses and expectations and being shaped by consumer movements. From the earliest roots of industrialization, individuals have looked to firms to do more than make a profit and provide jobs; they have expected firms to be a part of the community. Though these expectations have shifted over the past century, there is no denying that firms, not just in North America, need to have strong CSR programs and corresponding communications if they want to be in positions of industry leadership and maintain a loyal customer base.

7 Exercise and Reflective Questions

1. Identify the role of firms and their agents expressed by Carnegie, Friedman, and Carroll. What is distinctive about these ideologies and where do they overlap? What is the inherent value in each of these arguments?
2. Many firms work with foundations, governments, and NGOs to address some of our most pressing problems. Choose a global issue and discuss how at least three firms have addressed that issue and how successful they have been in creating a long-term sustainable solution.
3. If a firm is faced with a CSR infraction such as an unsafe manufacturing facility, toxic dumping, or unfair labor practices, what would you recommend as a communication strategy to address that infraction? Do some research and choose a firm that has faced this issue and evaluate their response. What could they have done better? What worked well for them? Would your strategy have changed if the firm was small or large, or if the firm was in the United States or Mexico?
4. Countries with different levels of development of CSR require different CSR communication strategies. Imagine a company wanting to implement a CSR program across all three North American countries, what adaptations are necessary in terms of developing a North American CSR communication campaign?
5. Given the way young consumers communicate and consume media and entertainment, on which media would you suggest developing a multiplatform CSR communication campaign for a North American car manufacturer?
6. What do you see as the greatest challenges North American firms will face in terms of CSR strategy and communication?

7. With the increasing flow of immigrants across borders in the North American region, do you believe that a “one size fits all” CSR communication campaign will ever be possible? Discuss the pros and cons of this standardized approach to communication.

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Practices of CSR in China and Hong Kong

Liane Lee and Kara Chan

Abstract China and Hong Kong have a long history of practicing corporate giving and caring, guided by the deeply ingrained pursuit of the collective good. This chapter begins with a brief description of the historical and philosophical roots of corporate social responsibility in the Chinese context. Differences in the political system and economic development have shaped the courses that China and Hong Kong tread in practicing corporate social responsibility (CSR). In recent decades, CSR in China has been driven by government initiatives and the introduction of mandatory environmental and social responsibility reporting. It is also more visible among large-scale corporations. CSR in Hong Kong is more likely to be driven by company initiatives assuming a bottom-up approach among large corporations, as well as by small and medium-sized enterprises. The chapter goes on to discuss public perceptions of CSR. It ends with two case studies of CSR practices, one a negative example, and the other positive.

1 A Brief History of Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives in China and Hong Kong

There is a presumption that corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a Western concept, and was imported into China along with Western enterprises entering Chinese markets at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Although China did not adopt the term “CSR”, it is widely recognized that CSR principles in China are embodied in three main Chinese ideologies, namely Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism (Ip, 2009). Whilst acknowledging that Buddhism and Taoism shaped the culture of China, this chapter begins by discussing the impact of Confucianism on

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CSR practices, followed by an examination of how modern Chinese society sets the scene for the unique features of CSR in China.

1.1 Confucian Era

The core of Confucian ethics is comprised of three interconnecting elements, i.e., ren, yi, and li, which are “mega-virtues” that define what is morally acceptable in human society (Ip, 2009). Confucianism advocates that people should live collectively in harmony and respect people in higher positions (Chen & Culbertson, 2009). Ren is variously described as benevolence, philanthropy, and humaneness (Ip, 2009). The quintessence of ren, the capacity for compassion, refers to the right acts and attitudes in dealing with people (Ip, 2009 p.464). Yi represents the moral compass in how one acts and manages interpersonal relationships. Li represents the performance of rituals and customs developed over generations of ancestors (Gao, 2009). The rules guided by ren, yi, and li apply to both individuals and organizations (Gao, 2009). From these tenets of Confucian philosophy, it is expected that one should “do well by doing good”, as well as giving, without requiring a favor in return (Ewing & Windisch, 2007).

The division of CSR practices in China and Hong Kong began when Hong Kong was colonized by the United Kingdom in 1841 and China entered into a tormented period of chaos after the collapse of the Qing dynasty in 1911 and eventually came under the rule of the Communist party in 1949.

1.2 China: A Tormented Period of Chaos (1911–1976)

Despite the rich theories inherent in Confucianism, the practice of CSR in China is limited to a few charitable works such as disaster relief and charity donations. Although Confucianism is rooted in CSR concepts, it was challenged by the long history of war after the collapse of the Qing dynasty in 1911. China was in chaos caused by warlords, primarily arising from political division, whilst at the same time the nation was confronted by foreign countries’ partial occupations and the Japanese invasions of the 1930s. Eventually, in 1949, the Communist party established the People’s Republic of China (PRC) as we know it today. During the planned economic era of 1949–1979, Communist party leader Mao Zedong introduced dramatic changes with forced farm collectivization, and the country was plagued by internal power struggles. During that time, the country was closed to the world, practiced atheism and adhered to communist ideologies. Enterprises, especially state-owned enterprises (SOE), had to guarantee their employees’ welfare and pioneered the execution of government policies. Meanwhile, private enterprises were restricted and remained underdeveloped. So, CSR during this period of time was operated through government initiatives instead of being offered

voluntarily by enterprises. Mao's era ended with the Cultural Revolution of 1966–1976, another dark period of pain and turmoil endured by Chinese citizens (Chen & Culbertson, 2009).

As a result of this continuous period of war, chaos, and instability lasting more than 60 years, and the anti-Confucius campaigns undertaken by the authorities in the mid-1970s, the impact of Confucianism gradually weakened in China (Ham, 2000; Rozman, 2002). Arguably, this has put CSR development in China behind its colonized Hong Kong counterpart.

1.3 Hong Kong: The Beginnings of CSR Post-colonization (1841–1960)

Hong Kong was a fishing village before it was colonized by the United Kingdom in 1841 to eventually become a metropolis with GDP per capita ranked 15th in the world (Central Intelligence Agency, 2015). The city was returned to China in 1997 and runs under the “one country, two systems” regime, whereby the city runs under its own autonomy and legal system for 50 years (Central Intelligence Agency, 2015). In the context of Hong Kong's history, prior to the 1970s, social welfare was limited and residual; legitimacy of the colonial government ruling was seldom challenged. The colonial government distanced itself from the Chinese living in Hong Kong during that era, and the residents did not perceive the government to be obligated to provide any assistance (Ng, Cheung, & Prakash, 2010). In the early days, CSR in Hong Kong was driven by two main forces, faith-based groups and philanthropists (HKTDC, 2005). A classic example of CSR practice in the 1800s is the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals (TWHG). TWHG was founded in 1870 and is the oldest and largest charitable organization in Hong Kong. In the early 1800s, critically ill patients went to the temples “Guang Fu Yi Ci” to await death without any medical help (Tung Wah Hospital Group, 2015). A group of successful business leaders proposed the construction of a hospital to provide free medical assistance to Chinese patients. Today, the TWHG operates a spectrum of social services supplemented with government subsidies (60%) and is supervised by a board of directors comprised of successful business leaders in Hong Kong (Tung Wah Hospital Group, 2015).

The Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC) is a non-profit organization founded in 1884 to promote horse racing in Hong Kong. The government has granted HKJC a monopoly in betting on horse racing, on the Mark Six lottery and, later, on football (HKJC, 2015). HKJC is the largest taxpayer and biggest private donor of charity funds in Hong Kong. HKJC contributed an average of over HK\$1 billion in donations (approximately US\$130 million) annually over the past 10 years. Today, this trust serves four principal areas of civic and social need: sports, recreation, and culture; education and training; community services; and medical and health (HKJC, 2015).

Examples such as HKJC and TWHG are mainstream philanthropy support platforms through which companies have regularly performed CSR activities in Hong Kong for several decades.

1.4 Hong Kong: Introducing the Era of Positive Non-interventionism (1960–1997)

One significant turning point in Hong Kong's history was an era of social unrest during the 1960s, when Hong Kong struggled with post-war reformation and a massive influx of immigrants from mainland China. The original laissez-faire approach taken by the British government required a more "positive" stance on intervention. The government started to draft a white paper on social welfare and introduced public health care, subsidized university education, public housing programs, community welfare services, and the deployment of social workers in deprived neighborhoods (Ng et al., 2010). This set the scene for the basis of Hong Kong's social safety net based on support provided by the government. Corporates remain active in offering donations to charities as the major mode of CSR activity.

In the era from 1970 to the handover of 1997, the Hong Kong economy experienced unprecedented and phenomenal growth. Hong Kong was seen as the gateway to China and many factories were established in the territory, later migrating to China. CSR issues such as environmental protection and labor rights were not taken into consideration, and corporates continued to equate CSR with community involvement and philanthropic donation (Tsai, Tsang, & Cheng, 2012). Gill and Leinbach (1983) argued that CSR was not being emphasized because of the profit-driven capitalistic structure, the absence of strong trade unions, and the government's non-intervention economic policy.

1.5 China's Modernization: An Era of Socialist Market-Oriented (1979–Now)

China also started to embark on a period of economic prosperity. This era was set in motion by the Communist party leader, Deng Xiaoping. In 1979, he advocated the idea of "opening to the West" and modernization. Deng governed China with a two-track approach of maintaining the dominance of the Communist party, whilst incorporating economic change by adopting Western economic principles and technologies (Chen & Culbertson, 2009). This two-track approach to governance has set the scene for CSR management requiring a somewhat "split-personality" approach of infusing CSR practices from the West within the modern Chinese cultural and political framework (Chen & Culbertson, 2009; Ewing & Windisch, 2007).

From 1993 onwards, China undertook economic system reform to build a socialist market-oriented economy (Gao, 2011). Enterprises, including privatized SOEs and developing private enterprises, were in pursuit of a period of fast-growth economic development. Very often, the importance of CSR was overlooked. As a result, the environment was greatly damaged. Natural resources were consumed at an unprecedented pace and the poverty gap widened. CSR started to be viewed seriously when China joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001, due in part to the severe criticism emanating from WTO counterparts of irresponsible social practices by businesses in China (Gao, 2011). From then, Chinese enterprises began to pay attention to many social issues. However, CSR in China is still at an early stage when compared to developed countries.

1.6 Hong Kong: Post-handover Era (1998–Now)

After Hong Kong was handed over to China, it was hit by the Asian financial crisis in 1998. Property prices hit rock bottom, having dropped by close to 50% from 1997 to 2000 (Peng, Cheung, & Leung, 2001).

The growth engine suddenly came to a halt in Hong Kong, forcing the community to rethink its values. With bad news coming in rapid succession, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), a deadly epidemic, came to Hong Kong and later spread to the rest of the world, bringing business and tourism to a complete stop. Two hundred and ninety-nine people died, while the spread of SARS infected 8096 worldwide (Benitez & Siu, 2013).

CSR among Asian businesses was not born of shifting demographics and changes in attitudes and values, but was triggered by the Asian economic crisis revealing a lack of transparency in business operations (Tsai et al., 2012, p. 1146). Coupled with the impact of the SARS epidemic, it flagged a great urgency for businesses to improve their operations in an upright manner and show concern for employees' work-life balance (Wong & Ko, 2009). The increasing emphasis on CSR in Hong Kong was due to the fact that employees are better educated. They are more aware of their rights, and demand fair treatment from their employers (Tsai et al., 2012).

The polarization of rich and poor is increasing. In 2009, the Gini coefficient of Hong Kong was 0.4 (a Gini coefficient exceeding 0.4 is considered a warning line for developed countries). In 2014, the "Occupy Central movement" or the "Umbrella Movement" was a public display of the hostility of youth towards the government. The term "Umbrella Movement" was coined from students using umbrellas to protect themselves against police pepper spray (Iyengar, 2014). Stagnant wage levels, unaffordable property prices and the prevalence of business cronyism had triggered many to turn up to the civil disobedience campaign. The 10-week-long protest ended with reportedly 10,000 people flocking to the protest site on the eve of the closure of the protest, and the police made more than 240 arrests on the day when they moved in to clear the tents and barricades (Barber,

2014; Beech, 2014; Philips, 2014). Although the implications of this new generation of millennials; i.e. children born between 1977 and 2000 (Kotler & Armstrong, 2014) for CSR management practices are yet unclear, corporates should consider this as an emerging trend with a view to consider their future workforce dynamics and the new expectations of the upcoming millennial workforce.

2 Companies' Attitudes Towards CSR

2.1 *China*

The practice of CSR cannot be separated from its socio-economic context and there is a complicated set of factors such as historical, institutional, and global issues that corporations must consider in shaping their CSR practice and communication. The thinking on CSR in China reflects the enduring Chinese traditional belief of "making money through harmonious relationship" (he qi sheng cai) as well as the public's deep suspicion of the business/merchant class for "being rich and heartless" (wei fu bu ren) (Wang & Chaudhri, 2009).

When China joined the WTO in 2001, CSR had to be taken seriously due to malpractices in the country such as labor scandals, product safety scares, and air pollution (Gao, 2011). As with most developing countries, the CSR awareness in both the government and Chinese enterprises since then must be described as still in its infancy. However, despite the underdevelopment of CSR practices, the Chinese government and enterprises are paying more attention to CSR, following the CSR steps of Western countries, and meanwhile developing distinctive features. A survey of Chinese companies in 2007 found that a majority of respondents agreed that "excellent enterprises must have a strong sense of social responsibility" (Xu & Yang, 2010, p. 323). This suggests that CSR principles began to assume a higher importance in Chinese companies' priorities after the advent of WTO membership. More Chinese companies now publish a corporate social responsibility report (CSRR) on a regular basis. Before 2002, there were no publications of CSRRs. By 2006, there were 32 CSRRs; in 2011, 1001 CSRRs; and a total of 1705 CSRR publications in 2012 (SynTao, 2013). The exponential growth in recent years demonstrates CSRRs are becoming a much more standardized and common practice among corporates.

Evidence of this trend can also be seen through the quality of the CSRRs produced. Tong (2014) analyzed the quality of Chinese CSRRs in terms of their length and compliance with required standards. These studies concluded that the awareness, quality, and reliability of CSRRs are still very low (Tong, 2014). Information bias, a lack of CSR reporting knowledge, and a lack of motivation to produce a good CSR report were identified as the main reasons. Companies tend to hide the bad and report the good news (Tong, 2014).

Fang Guowei, a specialist in CSR auditing, said this kind of biased CSRR had become a propaganda tool for companies. Many companies were reluctant to disclose CSR information, and the CSSR paid lip service to the reporting requirements by putting minimal effort into reporting (Tang, 2013). Zhou (2012) took a negative view of the status quo of Chinese CSR. He pointed out that corporations mainly have five erroneous perceptions of CSR. The first misunderstanding is that corporations believe that being involved in CSR activities will benefit the company. The second misconception is that employing staff and paying taxes fulfills the obligations of CSR. The third misconception is that CSR takes place after the company has become well established. The fourth is the belief that complying with the law means achieving the minimum requirements of CSR. The fifth misconception is the problem between ethics and morality. There are questions of attribution of responsibility. Who is responsible for CSR? For whom would they direct CSR? For what purposes and to what extent? Zhou argued that performing the baseline requirement is the major misconception surrounding CSR in China. Companies need to exceed this minimum requirement to achieve CSR (Zhou, 2012).

2.2 *Hong Kong*

Although the Hong Kong government did not mandate that enterprises report their CSR performances, companies started to find CSR activities useful in empowering and motivating their staff, building up a good corporate image and creating rapport with their stakeholders. Taylor Nelson Sofres Limited (TNS) developed a CSR index in 2006 by surveying 500 Hong Kong middle to senior executives. Results showed that companies headquartered overseas scored higher in the CSR index than local firms. The survey also found that a large portion of employees believed CSR activities are positively correlated with business success (Tsai et al., 2012).

Oxfam Hong Kong conducted research on CSR activities undertaken by Hang Seng Index constituent companies, commonly known as the blue-chip stocks of Hong Kong (Wong & Lau, 2008). Six dimensions were measured, including CSR strategy and reporting, connecting with stakeholders, work environment, environment protection, supply chain, and community investment. Results showed that these companies obtained outstanding scores in the dimension “connecting with stakeholders” while scoring lowest in the supply chain management and environmental performance dimensions (Wong & Lau, 2008).

Following the launch of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) code on social responsibility, ISO 26000, the Hong Kong Quality Assurance Agency established its HKQAA-HSBC CSR Index, the first index analysis in Hong Kong set up according to ISO 26000. ISO 26000 aims at providing organizations with guidance to incorporate socially responsible behavior into corporations and maximize an organization’s contribution for sustainable development (Brockett & Rezaee, 2012). There are seven principles of ISO 26000, including

accountability, transparency, ethical behavior, stakeholders, rule of law, international norms, and human rights (Mo, 2011 p. 84–85).

According to the CSR Index result, most of the companies only carried out the ISO 9001 quality assurance system in order to guarantee product quality and services. In terms of community investment, most companies donated money and engaged in employee voluntary work but seldom invested in heritage preservation (Mo, 2011).

The level of CSR involvement by corporates differs with the perceived benefits they could receive in return.

The majority of companies in Hong Kong are at the lower end of the Ogilvy (2006) CSR spectrum of involvement (see Fig. 1), while there is an increasing trend for companies actively to engage CSR throughout their company and place CSR as a core part of their business strategy. The non-profit sector is also actively seeking to evolve into self-financed models by establishing successful social enterprises. Examples of enterprises where they “champion a unique cause” includes transferring “Dialogue in the Dark” from Germany to Hong Kong, in which exhibitions were hosted by blind tour guides, and “Green Monday”, where a brand was developed to promote vegetarianism and a low-carbon footprint, and this is becoming a successful brand used by large food chains (Dialogue-in-the-dark.com, 2015; Green Monday, 2014a).

In contrast, in terms of corporate environmental management (CEM), the level of environmental awareness amongst small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) still lags behind their international counterparts in Hong Kong. The major difficulty for implementation of ISO 14001 (a standard specifically addressing environmental management systems such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions) (Brockett & Rezaee, 2012; IMSM, 2014) is a lack of senior executive management support. Most managers do not consider preventing environmental problems as their priority, as most believe that compliance cannot offer them any tangible benefits (Studer, Welford, & Hills, 2006). SMEs lack the necessary resources in terms of technical knowledge, industry-specific information, and manpower, as well as synergies and support between the industry and the government (Studer et al., 2006). Export-

Fig. 1 The CSR spectrum of involvement. Source: Ogilvy (2006)



driven industries in Hong Kong are often pressured by their customers upstream in the supply chain, in particular those in the electrical and electronics sector (Studer et al., 2006). Recently, specific guidance for the SME sector has been offered by Hong Kong's major bank, HSBC, through its "Living Business" programme, and by China Light and Power, an electricity utility provider. However, there is still a long way to go to engage local SMEs in paradigm change (Chong & Montesano, 2012; HSBC, 2015).

HSBC was one of the pioneers to initiate a study of its Hong Kong SME customers in 2003 to gauge their perceptions of CSR. The study revealed that Hong Kong SMEs' key focus remained on compliance with mandatory government rules and environmental management. While acknowledging that CSR would lead to increases in costs, participants in the study remarked that it should be adopted when it generates positive word of mouth for the company. In their reports, SME supply chain hosts such as Gap, Nike, and Reebok confessed to problems with their SMEs' supply chains. The key difficulties in following through with ideal CSR implementation often lies with constrained resources, limited budgets and lack of qualified personnel (Welford & Frost, 2006). The SMEs also voiced that large corporates will generally be better positioned to engage in CSR activities than SMEs (HKTDC, 2005).

3 CSR Principles

3.1 *Initiatives from Stock Exchanges in China*

The Chinese government more recently utilizes the CSR tool as a means to achieve a government-led harmonious society (Wang & Juslin, 2011). These initiatives demonstrate that while the Chinese government strives for economic prosperity, it is also concerned with an equal and sustainable distribution of society's resources (Noronha, Tou, Cynthia, & Guan, 2013).

The Shenzhen Stock Exchange (SSE), Shanghai Stock Exchange (Shanghai Exchange), the China Banking Regulatory Commission (CBRC), State Assets Supervision and Administration Commission (SASAC), and China National Textile and Apparel Council (CNTAC) have formulated guidelines as well as mandates for CSR standards and principles in Chinese businesses' operations (Levine, 2008).

The involvement of stock exchanges encourages Chinese companies to submit their CSR reports. The two stock exchanges—Shenzhen Stock Exchange and the Shanghai Exchange have each taken several steps to emphasize the importance of CSR (Levine, 2008).

In 2006, the SSE issued its CSR Guidelines for Listed Companies (SSE guidelines), which requires SSE-listed companies to report their work in social development, environmental protection, and commitment to consider the interests of shareholders, creditors, employees, customers, consumers, and other stakeholders.

The SSE guidelines set out guidance for companies to routinely evaluate and voluntarily issue disclosures about their performance (Levine, 2008).

The latest initiative from the Shenzhen Stock Exchange was a new set of principles announced in 2014 concerning annual reports of listed companies. In article 25, the guidelines encourage the company to disclose the performance of their social responsibility initiatives, including protecting the legal interests of stakeholders such as creditors, employees, consumers, suppliers, communities; as well as actions on pollution control, strengthening ecology protection, maintaining social safety, sustainability. If companies have already disclosed the full context of a social responsibility report, they need only provide a search index (Shenzhen Stock Exchange, 2014).

In 2008, the Shanghai Exchange issued its Notice on Strengthening Listed Companies' Assumption of Social Responsibility (Shanghai CSR Notice) and the Guidelines on Listed Companies' Environmental Information Disclosure (Shanghai Stock Exchange, 2008). These two documents require Shanghai Exchange-listed companies to fulfill their social responsibilities, address the interests of stakeholders, and commit themselves to promoting sustainable economic and social development. The Shanghai Exchange uses listed companies as leading examples to drive other companies to follow suit in promoting sustainable development. The Shanghai Exchange may incentivize a company's public image, for example, by offering priority election into the Shanghai Corporate Governance Sector, or allowing a simplified procedure when examining and verifying temporary announcements (Levine, 2008).

The Shanghai notice encourages transparency by encouraging listed companies to disclose their CSR planning and progress through announcements on the Shanghai Exchange website. This approach, however, may backfire if executed poorly, attracting attacks, litigation and investigations (Levine, 2008). The counterargument from CSR critics is that the benefits received from stakeholders are difficult to measure. In response to the criticisms, the Shanghai Exchange developed a new way to measure companies' value creation by "social contribution value per share (SCVPS)" (Levine, 2008). The formula is designed to calculate the SVCPS by, for example, adding salaries, loan interest, taxes and charity donations paid out, less any social costs caused by the corporations such as pollution damages or product defect damages.

3.2 Initiatives from Government Departments in China

The Ministry of Commerce, which oversees all corporates, issued the notice "On Enhancing Export Enterprise Environmental Monitoring" in 2007, whereby an enterprise in violation of social responsibilities may have its engagement in foreign trade activities terminated (Zadek, 2012).

To demonstrate the commitment of the government in implementing proper CSR practices, China has signed on to the International Organization for

Standardization code on social responsibility (ISO 26000) and plans to carry it out as a national standard (Zadek, 2012). Chinese government entities such as the State Assets Supervision and Administration Commission (SASAC) and China Banking Regulatory Commission (CBRC) are some of the key departments driving CSR.

The guidelines SASAC has implemented for state-owned enterprises (SOEs) aim to motivate SOEs to take responsibility for their stakeholders' interests as well as making a profit for the firm. SASAC indicates that as SOEs are major players in the Chinese economy, they are expected to bear the responsibility to influence industrial sectors and livelihoods of the people.

In 2008, SASAC issued its "Guidance for the Central Enterprises to Fulfil Social Responsibility". This guideline defines corporate social responsibility as contributing to the goals of state-owned enterprise while realizing national development (Zadek, 2012). It sets a clear expectation that SOEs must not only comply but also lead. Meanwhile, SASAC required all state-owned companies to publish CSRRs starting from 2012. Many companies' executives expressed their aspiration to introduce more CSR practices to a wider and broader extent (World Economic Forum, 2012).

In the financial sector, the priority of CBRC (China Banking Regulatory Commission) is to protect the interests of banking and financial services consumers. CBRC's CSR-related responsibilities fall into three specific categories of (1) educating financial consumers, (2) sharing and communicating financial knowledge to rural areas, and (3) requiring that financial institutions comply with the United Nation's ten Global Compact principles, which are internationally acclaimed CSR standards (Levine, 2008).

The latest initiative on environmental protection was implemented on January 1, 2015 by the Ministry of Environmental Protection of the People's Republic of China (MEP): "Measures for the Disclosure of Environmental Information by Enterprises and Public Institutions" (Ministry of Environmental Protection, 2014). This measure requires corporates that have been identified by the MEP to self-disclose the amount of waste/pollutant released, with the MEP also providing guidance for and supervision of these reports (Ministry of Environmental Protection, 2014). The revised "Environmental Protection Law of the People's Republic of China" in article 59 penalizes companies on a daily basis until the corporates comply with the environmental requirements (Xinhua, 2014). The revised law can also empower the department to halt the operations of the firm, if they do not comply (Xinhua, 2014). This has a profound impact on corporates in terms of enforcing the required environmental protection guidelines.

3.3 The Role of the Hong Kong Stock Exchange in Driving CSSR

The two securities governing bodies in Hong Kong, The Hong Kong Exchange and Clearing (HKEx) and the Securities and Finance Commission (SFC) act as the statutory supervisory body for Hong Kong listed companies and the financial institution watchdog respectively. Although arguably running behind their international counterparts in terms of driving CSR initiatives, these organizations have made some effort in encouraging companies to publish a social responsibility report. HKEx published its Consultation Paper on Environmental, Social and Governance Reporting Guide on 9 December 2011 and its Consultation Conclusions on Environmental, Social and Governance Reporting Guide on 31 August 2012. In June 2014, HKEx required listed companies to fill in the “Questionnaire on Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Reporting”, which is one of the steps to improve the status of CSRR in Hong Kong. Most blue-chip listed companies are seeking to fulfill these directives by their 2016 financial year reporting.

4 Forms of CSR Initiatives and Practices

4.1 China

4.1.1 Going from Top-Down to Bottom-Up?

Chinese CSR was imposed by top-down government initiatives (Davis & Moosmayer, 2015). As mentioned earlier, with a series of directives from the stock exchanges, SASAC and Ministry of Commerce, the government’s involvement has been a strong driver in promoting the practice of CSR in China.

PRC President Hu Jintao in November 2007 exhorted China’s leaders to uphold a “scientific outlook on social development”. The government advocates that businesses put the focus on sustainable development and to consider people before short-term profitability (Levine, 2008, p. 50).

In January 2007, the National People’s Congress Standing Committee Vice Chair Cheng Siwei announced that anyone who believes that “money overrides morality can no longer be tolerated in China.” (Levine, 2008, p. 51). Cheng also mentioned that profits cannot be gained at the expense of social responsibilities. This would slow down economic growth and overseas expansion opportunities (Levine, 2008).

The fast-paced progress in the development of CSR reporting (CSRRs) as well as compliance with ISO 26000 in China have gradually encouraged corporate CSR practices commonly adopted by counterparts in the West. Corporate philanthropy had not been common practice amongst firms in China but companies are following suit after one company stood out among the crowd with their efforts to contribute to

the Wenchuan earthquake in 2008. JDB group, the manufacturer of a famous Chinese herbal tea branded “Wanglaoji” donated RMB100 million (US\$14 million) to earthquake survivors and has generated notable goodwill in the press and on social media. Slogans were created on social media: “If you want to donate, you will donate 100 million. If you want to drink, you will drink Wanglaoji” (Zhang, 2008).

Davis and Moosmayer (2015) summarized various findings on corporate CSR practices in China and found that the CSR themes differ from the West in that the philanthropic and welfare aspects of CSR are less emphasized than in the West. Chinese firms put much less emphasis on addressing external stakeholders such as media and the community’s needs and wants, but the trends indicate that this is gradually shifting. This is due to the advancement of the internet and the empowerment of consumers to express their views on microblogs. For certain industries, stakeholder publics expect good CSR practices.

Although there are numerous government-led CSRR initiatives in place, in reality, the impact of CSR has fallen short of expectations. A critical differentiation needs to be made between compliance with the code of conduct in the CSRR and the actual improvements in areas such as child labor, environmental conservation, poverty reduction, and working conditions (Prieto-Carrón, Lund-Thomsen, Chan, Muro, & Bhushan, 2006).

Many Chinese firms have started to engage in philanthropic activities ranging from support for local charities and educational support for disadvantaged youth to disaster relief and control and prevention of SARS in particular (Ewing & Windisch, 2007). However, there are also cases where corporations circumvent the codes of practice through bribery, establishing elaborate double-booking systems and collaborating with workers to provide false reports during CSR audits (Prieto-Carrón et al., 2006). There is also a lack of research in terms of how international corporations’ CSR initiatives affect workers in China (Prieto-Carrón et al., 2006). One example is how Apple’s outsourcing of iPhone and iPad production to Foxconn plants in China concealed workplace malpractices such as excessive overtime and unsafe work practices (including poisonous chemicals and explosions from the build-up of aluminum dust from polished ipod cases), which was not reported until The New York Times unveiled it as front-page news on 26 January 2012 (Swann, 2014). Workers’ stress levels caused suicides and suicide attempts, which tarnished the reputation of Apple’s global brand. Apple did not respond until two weeks later, directing the media to look at its Apple Supplier Code of Conduct and 2012 Progress Report. (Swann, 2014). The issue is still prevalent, with news reporting of Foxconn’s overworking of staff that “links long-term overtime to premature death” (Huang & Chung, 2015).

4.2 *Hong Kong*

The leading Hong Kong-listed companies and multinational corporations (MNCs) based in Hong Kong have engaged in CSR activities that are similar to those undertaken by corporations in developed countries. These CSR practices range from “simple charitable donations, award sponsorships, environment and energy-saving initiatives, to community work, gifts of computer software, and voluntary compliance with international standards and codes of conduct” (HKTDC, 2005, p. 16). Although these MNCs are leading Hong Kong’s CSR initiatives, Hong Kong’s 300,000 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are also increasingly becoming aware of the fast-changing and challenging business environment and are expected to display more social responsibility initiatives (HKTDC, 2005).

As a leading institute recognizing social obligations to the Hong Kong community, HSBC launched its “Living Business” programme 10 years ago. Based on research findings, HSBC was led to conclude that CSR is as valuable for SMEs as it is for MNCs. The program included free seminars to educate SMEs about the benefits of CSR and good business practices. The SME Living Business Awards were introduced to identify Hong Kong SMEs that successfully manage their businesses in a socially responsible manner. Altogether over 840 corporates participated in the scheme (HSBC, 2015).

In the interviews with CSR managers, factory managers and CSR experts, Welford and Frost (2006) found that the key driver for CSR boils down to the benefit of risk reduction. There is too much reputation risk a company faces if it is linked to endangering lives and the environment. Any bad press will harm the company’s brand and erode the company’s brand equity (Cheung, Welford, & Hills, 2009).

Companies are also facing enormous pressure from their shareholders, especially long-term investors such as trust and pension managers, who act as key stakeholders to a company. There is a trending requirement for investment fund managers to ask whether CSR practices are being adopted and whether potential risks are being identified and managed. These fund managers understand that protecting the company’s reputation and brand equates to protecting their investments (Welford & Frost, 2006).

5 Consumers’ Attitudes Toward CSR

5.1 *China*

As one of the most important driving forces of CSR, the public’s involvement in CSR is increasing. The Research Centre for CSR Chinese Academy of Social Sciences carried out a Survey on “Public Views on CSR” and summarized the public’s view of CSR in ten main points (Li, 2015).

Overall, the public believe that state-owned enterprises have done a better job in CSR than foreign and private companies. The public believe that the main focus of CSR is compliance with laws and regulations, product quality, fulfilling tax obligations, and creating employment.

The survey also revealed that more than half of the public are most unsatisfied with the food and drinks industry and the pharmaceuticals industry. The public believe that corporates did not fulfil their responsibility to the environment or carry out proper product manufacturing practices. Moreover, corporates should be responsible for the cost of water pollution, food safety, and air pollution issues, while consumers will embargo products that cause environmental pollution, waste environmental resources, or cause animal abuse.

In terms of consumer marketing, social media or consumer testimonials have become the new channel for the public to access information on CSR. Honest, transparent, and timely disclosures increase a company's credibility. More than 70 % of respondents hold a positive attitude towards social marketing and 90 % are willing to pay more for socially responsible products (Li, 2015).

The public is becoming more vocal, with public supervision and whistle-blowers reporting poor CSR practices on social media forums. In 2011, a Weibo user published news and photographs of a chemical spill incident at a refinery factory in Dalian. This led to Dalian residents taking to the streets to express their dissatisfaction, resulting in the government finally closing down the factory. (World Economic Forum, 2012). It is clear that Chinese citizens are increasingly empowered by social media to report companies' irresponsible behaviour (Anonymous, 2009; Wong, 2009).

The Chinese public's expectations of CSR have broadened. Consumers do not simply regard CSR as "philanthropy and public welfare" but rather they care more about product quality, environment protection, and honesty (Luo, 2009). "This means that consumers clearly refused simplifying and vulgarizing CSR," Jean-Michel Dumont (Chairman of Ruder Finn Asia) said. "No doubt, 'philanthropy and public welfare' which is represented by donating money is one part of CSR, but definitely not the key dimensions and corporates could not take it as the whole of their social responsibilities." (Green Sohu, 2009).

In 2012, Tsinghua University and Ruder Finn conducted another survey on CSR in the auto industry. Although the number of CSRRs delivered that year was already very high (1337 to December 2012), only 45.2 % of the interviewees knew about CSR (Xie, 2013). The result also indicated that, compared with 3 years previously, consumers' understanding of CSR was becoming increasingly diversified. For example, consumer's rights and interests, moral advertising, and the usage of sustainable resources had earned more attention in the media. Zhao Shuguang, director of the media research laboratory at Tsinghua University, said that consumers had become more mature and their knowledge of CSR had gradually developed from emotional perception to rational perception (Xie, 2013).

5.2 *Hong Kong*

As with studies in the West and in China, local studies lend support to the view that CSR influences customer choices and behaviors. In extreme cases, customers may boycott companies that act unethically (Tsai et al., 2012). By the same token, CSR may help build up and strengthen corporate reputation when consumers perceive a company as ethical (Tsai et al., 2012). A study by Environics International in Hong Kong supports previous research, which revealed that one in five customers claim that they have rewarded or punished companies based on their perceived CSR performance (HKTDC, 2005).

In 2011, the Chinese University of Hong Kong conducted research on CSR in Hong Kong, in which 92 % of respondents agreed that enterprises should perform social responsibility while pursuing profit; 75 % believed that Hong Kong enterprises did not perform full CSR because of profit orientation and a lack of CSR awareness; 44 % would support those companies, which perform well in social responsibility issues through consumer habits and product selection; and more than 80 % of respondents held the attitude that the CSR performance of Hong Kong enterprises still lags behind that of corporates in developed economies (Mo, 2011).

Evidence has been very clear that consumers pay great attention to the responsibility of corporates to protect the environment. There is renewed sensitivity towards the environment and towards social consciousness. “Sustainable development” has become a key theme of the early twenty-first century. Residents of Hong Kong have just started to realize the environmental damage that was wrought in the name of economic development. In a poll conducted in 2007, more than 80 % of Hong Kong residents expressed dissatisfaction with the city’s quality of the environment (Ruhlman, 2007). Evidence indicates that green purchasing behavior is increasingly prevalent among consumers in Hong Kong. The rising concern about the quality of the environment creates a new opportunity for green marketing in Hong Kong (Lee, 2008), which may in turn demonstrate the importance of CSR in environmental protection. Green Monday, a social venture company, promotes a vegetarian meal on Mondays to reduce the carbon footprint, thereby contributing to a sustainable and healthy lifestyle (Green Monday, 2014b). The initiative has been taken up by over 800 schools, 1000 restaurants and hotels and many Hong Kong celebrities and public figures in Hong Kong, making Green Monday a trendy brand associated with healthy eating (Green Monday, 2014c).

With advances in technology, companies now conduct sourcing from low-cost countries and outsource non-critical production worldwide. Customers are becoming more aware of the origins and methods of production. While preferring value-for-money, consumers also want products that have not been made by forced or child labor. All other things being equal, customers will purchase products with “social good” or social labels such as “fair trade”, and boycott companies that they feel are socially irresponsible (Antonio, 2011). Adopting CSR improves a company’s reputation, company learning, and internal efficiencies (Antonio, 2011). Through CSR activities such as community involvement, companies can

help shield themselves against crisis situations such as anti-trust claims, patent infringements, and fraud accusations (Godfrey, Merrill, & Hansen, 2009).

6 Impact of CSR on Brand Reputation and Consumers' Purchase Intentions

Empirical evidence from the West has demonstrated that consumer behavior is affected by intangible factors such as trust, brand association, supplier reputation, and image, as much as by the product itself (Cretu & Brodie, 2007; Lai, Chiu, Yang, & Pai, 2010; Mudambi, 2002; Mudambi, Doyle, & Wong, 1997). Research in developed countries has demonstrated the effects of CSR on brand reputation. Recently, with the development of CSR in China, there is an increasing trend for research conducted in China to support the notion of the positive impact of CSR on brand reputation by stimulating purchasing behavior, building brand loyalty, and bringing about brand satisfaction (Lai et al., 2010; Wong, 2009).

In 2012, Tsinghua University and Ruder Finn published their "Automobile Industry CSR Index Report" (Xie, 2013), which affirms the importance of the impact of CSR on brand reputation, with 38 % of respondents regarding it as "very important", 47 % considering it "relatively important", and only 8 % thinking it is "not important" (Xie, 2013). The report also showed the impact of the auto industry's CSR performance on consumers' purchasing decisions. According to the survey result, 25 % of the respondents take CSR as "the most important consideration" when buying a car, and 62 % "give preference to the cars" produced by manufacturers with a good CSR performance in business ethics, charity, and environment protection. Meanwhile, only 4 % never take CSR into consideration.

Although this survey is limited to the automobile industry, it gives a good insight on the positive influence of CSR on brand reputation and consumers' purchasing intention.

Nowadays, China's focus on growth is shifting from quantity to "higher quality growth". In China's 12th Five-Year Plan, the key themes are "sustainable growth, moving up the value chain, reducing disparities, scientific development, environmental protection, energy efficiency, and domestic consumption" (KPMG China, 2011, p. 2).

The trends for Chinese consumers involve green-friendly products, reduction of carbon footprints, and ethical labor practices. Chinese consumers reportedly have an even higher sustainability criterion (16 % more) than their counterparts in the U.S. and the U.K when buying a product. (AMCHAM Shanghai, 2012; Yang, 2014).

7 Case Study in China: How the Red Cross Society of China Suffered by Negative Publicity

In China, NGOs have less involvement and legitimacy than their Western counterparts. Such legitimacy is not established in China due to China's historical socialist background, and despite being very active, neither international nor government-run NGOs are drivers of CSR in China. As CSR becomes more socially accepted, NGOs appear to be exercising an increasingly influential impact on firms' CSR initiatives (Davis & Moosmayer, 2015).

The Wenchuan earthquake in 2008 is one of the key milestones in the history of corporate donations to a cause. However, the charity network has been involved in numerous scandals, especially among charities linked to the government. Serious reputational damage was caused when the 20-year-old business general manager of the Red Cross Society of China, Guo Meimei, was found flaunting her luxury lifestyle on China Weibo, causing serious negative viral publicity for the Red Cross Society of China.

Because Guo is endorsed by the Red Cross Society of China as a business general manager, her behavior on Sina Weibo led to many questions on how a Red Cross Society of China representative could afford all these luxury items. Did she use donations to purchase these goods?

Initially, the Red Cross Society of China denied any affiliation with Guo and even reported her to the police for her false claims to be a Red Cross Society of China representative. However, bloggers quickly discovered Guo was the girlfriend of Wang Jun, who was a board member of Zhonghong Bo'ai Asset Management, a for-profit company connected to the Red Cross Society of China (Hong & FlorCruz, 2011). Bloggers further discovered convoluted and complicated relationships among Wang's company, the Red Cross Society of China, and two other for-profit companies.

With the Guo Meimei revelation, all the cards tumbled. Trust in the government-run Red Cross Society of China remains at an all-time low. Donations from individuals dropped drastically, with 50,000 angry bloggers posting on the internet to ask for a refund from the Red Cross Society of China (Hong & FlorCruz, 2011).

According to a survey conducted on the Sohu website, 66% of respondents do not want to donate money for Guo to buy luxury items and 16% will not donate because of non-transparency in the use of the donations.

Alerted by the scandal, the National Audit Office stepped in and found five major breaches in accounting entries. Although the office described the breaches as a "posting error", the trust of the citizens in China in government-run NGOs is at an all-time low. This is a particularly big issue as donations to the Red Cross Society of China make up close to 70% of the country's donations.

Guo's scandal further triggered a public-led investigation that revealed the China Charity Federation's "Suntech donation fraud event" and the China Youth Development Foundation's "China-Africa hope project", creating serious public distrust of government-led charitable organizations.

Government-run NGOs should consider adopting even higher moral ground in providing transparency to their stakeholders, and conducting even better CSR practices than their listed SOE counterparts, as strongly advocated and governed by the exchanges and SASAC in China.

The China government has long been suffering from a lack of trust from the public, which consequently dilutes the effects of government-run charitable organizations. The public believes that those charitable organizations that have a connection with government, or those charities that are set up under the government's direction, are not properly supervised (Lin, 2011).

The Guo incident could be an opportunity for credible NGOs to increase their participation with firms in CSR practices in lieu of previous domination of government-run NGOs.

8 Case Study in Hong Kong: How Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Practice Corporate Social Responsibility

Baby Kingdom, founded in May 2002, is a company that operates an online platform to provide the latest parenting and education information to Chinese speaking parents and educators of children and youth in Hong Kong and overseas. With more than 450,000 registered members in Hong Kong and another 550,000 members in China and Taiwan, over 350 million page views are recorded per month (Estopace, 2012). It is one of the most frequently visited sites on parenting and family-related issues. The company employs some 30 employees. Mr. Rainer Sip and Mr. Winson Chow, the founders of the company, have made considerable contributions to society in their business practices. Chow remarked that "Corporations should commit to the sustainable development of the society in their operation. It should be more than generating profit" (Hong Kong Council of Social Service, 2011). Baby Kingdom demonstrates corporate social responsibility in three areas, namely community service, care for staff, and environmental protection.

Through its work with children and youth, Baby Kingdom has many contacts with NGOs that serve children and young persons. It cooperates with The Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups to provide business communication training and internship opportunities for young people. For example, youngsters have been invited to participate as interns at various events organized by the company. Through the guidance of Baby Kingdom's staff, these young people gain much in interpersonal skills and ethical work practices. The company has held a used book recycling campaign to raise fund for Medecins Sans Frontieres, a humanitarian medical support organization. Being a member of the Online Service Providers Alliance (OSPA), Baby Kingdom encourages parents to foster positive communication on the Internet with their children.

Baby Kingdom cares a lot about the private lives of its staff. It implements a number of family-friendly working measures to encourage work-life balance, including a 5-day week, fractional employment, flexible working hours, a continuing education fund, study holidays to support part-time study, and providing sponsored products for employees with young children. The company enables staff to work in a clean physical environment through the monitoring of indoor air quality and regular cleansing initiatives.

As an environmentally-friendly business, Baby Kingdom reuses 25 % of its office supplies. It runs various parent-child environment protection campaigns through the setting up of an environmental protection education fund.

All these efforts have paid off in community recognition. In 2014, Baby Kingdom was awarded the fifth Hong Kong Outstanding Corporate Citizen Award (small and medium-sized enterprise category) organized by the Hong Kong Productivity Council. A few years ago, the company was also recognized by the Total Caring Award, given by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service.

9 Conclusion

China has come a long way from a long period of chaos during which CSR practice was unable to take root, to rapid growth in which CSR is increasingly a priority. Chinese CSR has developed its unique character by adopting practices from the West, while differing in emphasis due to its historical and political background. The government continues to be the key driver of CSR, while the corporates are mandated to follow. Consumers increasingly expect corporates to adopt good CSR practices, whilst the public demands transparency from scandal-tainted government-run NGOs; this allows an opportunity for independent NGOs to increase their involvement with corporations in China. The trend in the development of CSR in China is promising, and it is anticipated that a new standard of Chinese-centric CSR will emerge in the coming years. Research in this area would help formulate the right CSR approach in China.

Hong Kong's development, with its mix of East and West in which the territory was run under a capitalist system, means that CSR was historically limited to faith-based groups and philanthropists. Government and corporates did not generally engage in CSR. After the 1997 handover, Hong Kong was hit with the Asian financial crisis, followed by the SARS epidemic. Employees and consumers then started demanding better commercial practices, leading to the growth of CSR. This is supported by financial regulatory bodies such as the HKEx imposing reporting requirements on listed companies. SMEs are also increasing their awareness and efforts in CSR through support from large corporations such as HSBC and CLP. Hong Kong's progress in CSR is slow but steady, and the unfolding attitudes and trends of Hong Kong's new millennial generation as they enter the workforce in the coming years may require a new paradigm shift yet further toward CSR thinking and research.

Future research can examine how senior management and executives in China and Hong Kong envision the future of CSR, and the process of identification of social causes to pursue. Studies can also be conducted to measure the effects of CSR in terms of improvement in consumer perceptions, trust, and influence on purchase decisions.

10 Exercise and Reflective Questions

1. Why do companies' and consumers' attitudes differ in terms of CSR application in Hong Kong and China? How would one bridge the gap between CSR practices adopted by companies and expectations generated by consumers?
2. If you were tasked to advocate CSR in this region, would you choose to lobby the government for more mandatory CSR directives or motivate corporates to adopt good CSR practices through the benefits of generating good brand image? Would there be differences between Hong Kong and China when you make this consideration?
3. Are the Confucian ethos and the influence of Chinese culture on CSR practices being replaced by Western values in the modern era? Is there a "modern Chinese value" that differs from Western ideologies of CSR ideals? Discuss your arguments for and against this point of view.

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The CSR Communications and Reporting Landscape in Developing Countries

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Abstract Despite the global trends shaping Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Communications and Reporting (CSR C&R), which trends advocate for quality, reliable and accurate CSR messages, developing countries' CSR C&R is still lagging behind. For example, much as the most common channels of CSR C&R are annual reports, website postings, newsletters, etc., , to a large extent, these CSR C&R fail to differentiate between material and non-material CSR issues that should be communicated. This is evidenced by most of the CSR C&R messages from companies and organizations in these countries, produced and issued to the audiences at below Global Reporting Initiatives (GRI) 4 minimum standards. In a promising development though, traces of the relationship between '*Speech Act Theory (SAT)*' and '*Sense-making Theory (SMT)*', have been found to be helpful in understanding how stakeholders targeted by these CSR messages in developing countries endeavor to extract and make meaning and use of this information/message. Hence, as a contribution to knowledge, this chapter provides the '*Kata-Nkiko Framework*.' This framework explains the state of Integrated CSR Communications and Reporting (CSR C&R) in developing countries. Additionally, it advances critical points, which, if observed, will allow the CSR C&R from these countries to be credible, and *sense* can be made out of it. Lastly, from this framework, a concept, "*Sense-Act*" of CSR information is fronted in the debate on CSR C&R for the first time. It is derived from roots of "*Sense-making Theory*," and "*Speech Act Theory*".

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1 Introduction

1.1 *What Is Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)?*

Understanding how to communicate and report about Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), commands possessing some understanding of what CSR means. CSR has been variously defined (Stanwick & Stanwick, 2009). However, these various definitions are presented in a way that is limited to the topics that are being examined, the economic situation, the levels of analysis, or the parties/stakeholders involved. For example, the European Commission's Green Paper of 2001 offers two definitions of CSR: (i) CSR is "essentially a concept whereby companies decide voluntarily to contribute to a better society and a cleaner environment", and (ii) CSR is "a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis." These two definitions leave any CSR interested party wondering why the same body (*European Commission*) defines the same concept of CSR, differently! Nevertheless, other definitions of CSR exist. For example, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD, 2000, p. 9) defines CSR as "the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the local community and society at large." A bevy of these definitions was described as nothing but chaos that surrounded the concept and practice of CSR (Katamba, Nkiko, Tushabomwe-Kazooba, Babiiha, & Kemeza, 2014). Interestingly, after mentioning 'chaos' these authors also put forward another definition of CSR. They defined CSR from a community involvement and development (CI&D) point of view with guidance of stakeholder theory and with views of ISO 26000 (*a social responsibility guidance standard*). They mentioned that CSR/CI&D mean:

[...] Organizational activities that bring about positive impact in the community as the organization re-emphasizes its citizenship and its responsiveness to the socio-economic concerns of the communities/areas in which it operates, (Katamba, Nkiko, Tushabomwe-Kazooba, Babiiha, et al., 2014, p. 840).

Henceforth, it is important for the reader of this chapter to note that all the CSR definitions mentioned, as well as those outside this chapter, merge towards a common ideology. That is, they present CSR as a strategy through which organizations (profit and non-profit) can participate in the efforts that bring about *sustainable development* (SD).¹ Additionally, this book chapter finds Katamba, Nkiko, Tushabomwe-Kazooba, Babiiha, et al. (2014)'s definition as more appropriate in the context of developing countries. This is because most developing countries are

¹The Brundtland Commission (1987)'s report coined the term, '*sustainable development* (SD)'. The report defined SD in terms of development initiatives that seek to meet the needs and aspirations of the present society without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

still engulfed by complex socio-economic problems (Katamba et al., 2014; The Millennium Development Goals Report, 2014), which are no longer problems of developed countries. These problems are collectively reflected in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), formerly MDGs.

Meanwhile, since this chapter is about CSR Communication and Reporting (CSR C&R) in developing countries, it will place its rootholds in the text book, “*Principles of CSR: A guide for students and practicing managers in developing and emerging countries*” by Katamba, Christoph, Tushabomwe-Kazooba & Haag (2012). These authors, in their efforts to write a chapter on “*implementation, tracking CSR undertakings and managing CSR communications,*” mentioned that it is good practice that “after implementing (undertaking) CSR activities, you have to track and measure their progress using different tools. Thereafter you have to communicate with stakeholders . . .,” (p. 59). These scholars offered various frameworks and tools (like, Global Reporting Initiative—GRI; UN Global Compact 10 principles; Balance Score Card, AccountAbility, -AA 1000; etc.) or any other recommended tool (depending on industry guidelines and specifics) that can be used to “*Communicate and Report*” CSR undertakings to the stakeholders (either internal or external).

1.2 CSR Communication

CSR Communication can be taken to mean a set of initiatives that are employed by a company so as to inform, activate, share as well as enter into dialogue with its concerned stakeholders about what such a company or firm has done, plans to do or a combination of these, in a given period as regards to CSR. However, it’s important to note that CSR communications are voluntary in most of the developing countries (like Uganda, Kenya, Georgia, India, etc.), yet in most developed countries, it is mandatory, e.g., in South Africa, Canada, UK, etc.). CSR Communications can take the form of company reports, press releases, magazines, etc. CSR communications may be made through a variety of communication channels. These can include (though are not limited to) websites, TV, print, radio or points of sale (Europe, 2000). As noted by Mersham and Skinner (2005), websites, advertising and social reports play a crucial role compared to other media/channels. Given this fact therefore, and before we engage in detailed rhetoric, it’s important to differentiate between CSR Communications, Public Relations and marketing campaigns. This can be briefly shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1 Differentiation of CSR communication from other related communications

CSR communications	Public relations	Marketing campaign/ communication
A set of initiatives that are employed by a company so as to inform, activate, share as well as enter into dialogue with its concerned stakeholders about what such a company or firm has done, plans to do or a combination of these, in a given period, as regards to CSR.	Building awareness and a favorable image for a company, its products or clients so as to have goodwill. In other words, it is one of the promotional tools a company can use.	A specific, defined series of activities used in marketing a new or changed product or service, or in using new marketing channels and methods (http://www.entrepreneur.com)

Source: Katamba, Christoph, Tushabomwe-Kazooba & Haag (2012, p. 62)

1.3 CSR (Sustainability) Reporting

CSR Reporting (*starting with early 2000*) was ‘branded’ *sustainability reporting* (International Integrated Reporting Council,—IIRC,² 2011; KPMG, 2005; Nielsen & Thomsen, 2007). Henceforth, according to the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI, 2011), sustainability reporting is:

... the practice of measuring, disclosing, and being accountable to internal and external stakeholders for organizational performance towards the goal of sustainable development.

Similarly, Soderstrom (2013) defines sustainability reporting as the communications, which corporations make concerning their corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities, including social and environmental impacts in addition to financial performance. Similarly, the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) mentions that the sustainability report is a report published by a company or organization about the economic, environmental and social impacts caused by its everyday activities. GRI further says that a sustainability report presents the organization’s values and governance model, and demonstrates the link between its strategy and its commitment to a sustainable global economy. To fit the reporting debate into the broader (integrated) communication and reporting rhetoric, GRI mentions that sustainability reporting is identical with other expressions for non-financial reporting. That is, triple bottom line reporting, corporate social responsibility (CSR) reporting, etc. Hence, CSR reporting is an essential element of integrated reporting, that is, reporting which combines the analysis of financial and non-financial performance. This means, by being integrative, CSR (Sustainability) reporting can help organizations to measure, understand and communicate their economic, environmental, social and governance performance, and then set goals, and manage change more

²The International Integrated Reporting Council (IIRC) (previously the International Integrated Reporting Committee) was formed in August 2010 and aims to create a globally accepted framework for a process that results in communications by an organization about value creation over time. See, <http://integratedreporting.org/the-iirc-2/>

effectively. Hence, CSR (Sustainability) reporting is a key platform for communicating sustainability performance and impacts (*positive or negative*) created by an organization.

1.4 The Concept of Integrated CSR Reporting and Communication

A review of objectives and key concepts in literature (*see Table 2*) from both the GRI³ and the IIRC reveals that these two bodies somewhat agree that Integrated Reporting (IR), *as applied to CSR*, is that CSR C&R, which incorporates appropriate material sustainability information equally alongside financial information so as to provide a chance to the reporting organizations, a broad perspective on risk. In more specific terms, IIRC (2011) describes Integrated Reporting as:

Bringing together the material information about an organization's strategy, governance, performance and prospects in a way that reflects the commercial, social and environmental context within which it operates.

This IIRC definition of IR implies that Integrated Reporting provides a clear and concise representation of how an organization demonstrates stewardship and how it creates value, now and in the future.

This reporting (*of financial and non-financial issues*) starting with the year of 1999, witnessed a change towards a reporting approach recently baptized as sustainability reporting (KPMG, 2005, 2008). That is, KPMG revealed that corporate responsibility reporting shifted toward sustainability reporting rather than focusing primarily on environmental reporting. In more elaborate terms, Soderstrom (2013) observed KPMG's report and noted that:

In 2002, about 70 per cent of the reports were published as Environmental Health and Safety reports; in 2005, about 70 per cent were published as Sustainability Reports. The number of corporations providing CSR information continues to increase. In 2005, 64 per cent of the G250 corporations⁴ provided CSR reports, either standalone or as part of their annual reports.

We consequently observe a few things from these statistics:

³GRI is an international independent organization that helps businesses, governments and other organizations to understand and communicate the impact of business on critical sustainability issues such as climate change, human rights, corruption & many others. Visit: <https://www.globalreporting.org/information/about-gri/Pages/default.aspx#sthash.ke46XQPt.dpuf>. Also visit: <https://www.globalreporting.org/information/current-priorities/integrated-reporting/Pages/default.aspx#sthash.D3Rvzku8.dpuf>

⁴G250 stands for Fortune Global 250. These are the world's largest corporations, including the top 250 companies of the Fortune 500, and the top 100 companies in 34 countries.

Table 2 The concept of IR in the CSR discussions and practice

Objectives of integrate reporting (IR)	Three fundamental concepts underpinning IR
1. To improve the quality of information available to providers of financial capital to enable a more efficient and productive allocation of capital 2. Provide a more cohesive and efficient approach to corporate reporting that draws on different reporting strands and communicates the full range of factors that materially affect the ability of an organisation to create value over time 3. Enhance accountability and stewardship for the broad base of capitals (financial, manufactured, intellectual, human, social and relationship, and natural) and promote understanding of their interdependencies 4. Support integrated thinking, decision-making and actions that focus on the creation of value over the short, medium and long term	(i) Value creation for the organisation and for others. An organisation’s activities, its interactions and relationships, its outputs and the outcomes for the various capitals it uses and affects influence its ability to continue to draw on these capitals in a continuous cycle (ii) The capitals. The capitals are the resources and the relationships used and affected by the organisation, which are identified in the < IR > Framework as financial, manufactured, intellectual, human, social and relationship, and natural capital. However, these categories of capital are not required to be adopted in preparing an entity’s integrated report, and an integrated report may not cover all capitals—the focus is on capitals that are relevant to the entity (iii) The value creation process. At the core of the value creation process is an entity’s business model, which draws on various capitals and inputs, and by using the entity’s business activities, creates outputs (products, services, by-products, waste) and outcomes (internal and external consequences for the capitals)

Source: Compressed from IIRC website: <http://www.iasplus.com/en/resources/sustainability/iirc>

- (i) There is a growing force behind corporations to be accountable and transparent, and to disclose a wide variety of information about their various activities, including their sustainability.
- (ii) A revolutionary shift in the way that corporations report their actions, done or intended, to stakeholders, essentially by going beyond financial statements to *integrated reports* that contain (a) financial information, (b) operational data, and (c) sustainability information.
- (iii) An organized approach and agenda is making corporations more sustainable since they have to provide information to a broad range of stakeholders.

2 The Changing CSR Communication and Reporting Trend

Nielsen and Thomsen (2007) in their study “*Reporting CSR—what and how to say it?*” painted a clear impression that CSR Communication and Reporting has changed over time, whether in developed or developing countries. That is, while in Denmark, these scholars were puzzled about whether organizations report consistently on CSR in terms of genres, media, and rhetorical strategies. They

therefore analyzed and discussed what organizations say and how they say it when reporting on CSR. They used critical discourse analysis of selected corporations' CSR reporting, theories & research on CSR and stakeholder relations. They found that whereas CSR relevant topics to be communicated and reported are: employees, local community, environment, society, corporate governance and accountability, business strategy, and measurement of CSR initiatives, it is nevertheless clear that the six companies use different strategies for reporting on CSR. That is, the respective annual reports of the six Danish studied companies were very dissimilar with respect to topics on the one hand and dimensions and discourses expressed in terms of perspectives, stakeholder priorities, and contextual information & ambition levels on the other hand. In the end, they proposed a model of analysis, which presents discourse as a result of four kinds of challenges facing corporations today [that is, (1) globalization; (2) the role of business in society-, people, planet, profit; (3) the relations to the stakeholders; and, (4) the CSR ambition level of the company (Nielsen & Thomsen, 2007, p. 30)].

Although Nielsen and Thomsen (2007)'s research was conducted in a developed country (Denmark), this trend of corporate communications has not spared CSR communications and reporting practices in developing countries (Elving, 2010; Iza, 2015). This is because the four challenges observed by Nielsen and Thomsen (2007) have suggested initiatives and methods to be employed by a CSR C&R company so as to inform (Van-Riel & Fombrun, 2007), activate, share, as well as enter into dialogue with stakeholders (Katamba, Nkiko, Tushabomwe-Kazooba, Babiha, et al., 2014; Katamba, Nkiko, Tushabomwe-Kazooba, Mpisi, et al., 2014; Maignan & Ferrell, 2004) in its sphere of influence (Grayson & Hodges, 2004) regarding what such a company or firm has done, or plans to do or a combination of these, in a given period of time. This demonstrates a company's commitment to being socially responsible. Interestingly, however, this trend has helped to shape the face of CSR communications and reporting (CSR C&R) in developing countries by presenting it as a multifaceted practice involving responding to or mitigating crises (Grayson & Hodges, 2004), enhancing reputation (Fombrun & Van Riel, 2004), strengthening corporate identity (Katamba, Tushabomwe-Kazooba, et al., 2012; Katamba, Christoph, Tushabomwe-Kazooba, & Haag, 2012; Morsing & Schultz, 2006; Porter & Kramer, 2006), etc.

What is emerging now in most developing countries, is a divergence of how different stakeholders⁵ or audiences (development partners, governments, NGOs, employees, competitors, suppliers, etc.) act and/or make sense [*attach meaning*] of the CSR C&R message(s) they receive or anticipate from companies and

⁵With this in mind, stakeholder theory then becomes relevant to guide CSR decision-making (Katamba, Nkiko, Tushabomwe-Kazooba, Babiha, et al., 2014; Katamba, Nkiko, Tushabomwe-Kazooba, Mpisi, et al., 2014; Lantos, 2001). That is, when developing adequate CSR programs, it is important to acknowledge how stakeholders are affected, or can affect the profit-oriented operations of a business as it pursues its economic (profit-making) agenda. Therefore, as part of integrated CSR Communication and Reporting, this effect should be communicated and/or reported on.

organizations. That is, some stakeholders/audiences reject it as not factual, welcome it, ignore it, others don't act on it, while others act but with a non-desired behavior. These divergences, according to the philosopher Austin (1962)'s '*Speech Act Theory (SAT)*', convey three meanings to both parties (the originators of the CSR C&R; and the recipients). That is: (i) *propositional meaning* (precise meaning of what is said by either party), (ii) *illocutionary meaning* (social function of what is said by either party), and, (iii) *perlocutionary meaning* (the effect of what is said by either party). This means that in the eyes of *sensible*' stakeholders in any developing countries (Freeman, 1984; Freeman, Harrison, & Wicks, 2007; Freeman, Harrison, Wicks, Parmar, & de Colle, 2010; Kumar & Singhal, 2012; Lantos, 2001; Weick, 1995), especially, profit-oriented stakeholders (Friedman, 1970), every material CSR activity undertaken is worth being communicated and/or even reported on (Fombrun & Van Riel, 2004) if it is to carry sense and receive the desired actions. The desired actions from CSR communications in the context of developing countries (*which are not so very different from developed countries*), include forming partnership in CSR activities, CSR budgetary support by donors/or approval by the board, brand attachment/loyalty, favorable share price, etc.

Lastly, guided by philosophers, notably Austin (1962), Grice (1975), and Searle (1965, 1969, 1975), we cannot easily find a tendency in developing countries to segregate between material and non-material CSR activities when conducting CSR C&R. This breeds detrimental effects (like litigations for the misuse of shareholder funds; green washing, fines, etc.) for the communication and the reporting company, especially when this segregation is not properly is performed. Occasionally, and for guidance, the tendency for this segregation, would start from how a CSR activity was initiated (ISO 26000; Katamba et al., 2012), was undertaken/implemented (Katamba, Nkiko, Tushabomwe-Kazooba, Babiha, et al., 2014), how much financial cash inflow/outflow was involved (KPMG, 2008), etc., to how such activity should be segregated (e.g., matrices, statistics, tabulations, graphs, etc. [GRI 4; CSR Europe, 2000]).

3 Major CSR C&R Channels

Currently, CSR C&R messages are largely conveyed through '*modern channels*', which include annual reports (branded with words like, Sustainable Development Report—the best case here is Nile Breweries Ltd., a Ugandan based company/ subsidiary of SABMiller Plc., South Africa, Corporate Citizenship reports, etc.), corporate advertising, websites and management reports. Katamba, Tushabomwe-Kazooba, et al. (2012) observed that it is worth noting that there are other dominant traditional channels. The work of these scholars (*Corporate Social Responsibility Management in Uganda: Lessons, Challenges and Policy Implications*) attempted to investigate CSR Communication as part of exploring socio-economic factors shaping CSR in Uganda. These scholars interviewed senior managers in charge of CSR (managing directors, chief executive officers, chief financial officers,

marketing managers, public relations managers, CSR managers, heads of corporate affairs and human resources managers) in companies operating in Uganda. Using a combination of interviewing and focus group discussions (FGDs), these scholars found that:

[...] about 70 % of the business entities in Uganda use press releases as the major medium to communicate what they have done under CSR. . . followed by their annual reports (26 %), newsletters (23 %), and brochures (22 %), while international reports account for 14 %, yet publications of associations that bring the companies together were responsible for a mere 4 % (p. 382).

The above statistics seemed in agreement with Li, Marc, Ilan, Christoph, and Kuang (2010), who examined how country-level, industry-level, and firm-level factors affect the extent of corporate communication about CSR in Brazil, Russia, India, and China (BRIC) (the countries, which are considered as developing, with the exception of Russia). These authors used data of the 105 largest MNCs from BRIC and found that firms communicating more on CSR tend to be from more rule-based societies (e.g., OECD countries, EU, etc.) They also noted that the country-level, industry-level, and firm-level factors affect CSR communication intensity and channels.

Therefore, whereas the above mentioned channels are used to convey CSR C&R, these media are also prevailing in developing countries and have seemed most effective for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs): meetings, memos, invitations to meeting as well as minutes of meetings with stakeholders, CSR Newsletters, News placements/pullouts.

4 How CSR Communication and Reporting Messages Are Received and Interpreted in Developing Countries

Developing countries have similar characteristics (Fox, 2005). These include, among others, miserable social-economic life, poverty (most average people living on less than US\$ 2 a day), escalating political turmoil, limited access to quality education, corrupt business climate, and rampant environmental degradation. This landscape of characteristics has a big bearing on how CSR Communications and Reporting (CSR C&R) will be received and interpreted. This is because the implementation of CSR activities, which consequently have to be reported on, can be impeded by a lack of adaptation to these contextual characteristics (Baughn, Bodie, & McIntosh, 2007; Gerson, 2007), especially economic and political freedoms and high levels of corruption.

Therefore, in light of the foregoing paragraph, CSR C&R in developing countries is understood and interpreted in developing countries by use of knowledge of the somewhat existing traces of the relationship between ‘*Speech Act Theory (SAT)*’ (Austin, 1962; Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989; Cohen, 1996; Grice, 1975;

Searle, 1969) and ‘Sense-making Theory (SMT)’, (Dervin, 1983, 1992; Duffy, 1995; Kumar & Singhal, 2012; Savolainen, 1993; Weick, 1995). This relationship is evident in a tendency adopted during CSR C&R to explain how the authors of these messages and reports use language (Weick, 1995) to accomplish intended actions by stakeholders (Lantos, 2001) and how the hearers (stakeholder audiences) in the company’s sphere of influence infer the intended meaning from what is said. Additionally, by engaging in CSR C&R, the targeted audiences understand insights into factors, issues and influence that surface as the organization is addressing either uncertain or ambiguous social responsibilities (Katamba, Nkiko, Tushabomwe-Kazooba, Babiiha, et al., 2014; Katamba, Tushabomwe-Kazooba, et al., 2012). Therefore, in managing organizational issues, notably communication and reporting, *sensemaking*⁶ requires us to look for clarification, explanations and answers in terms of how people will see things. Weick (1995), in his book “*Sensemaking in organizations*”, mentions that *sensemaking* suggests that organizational issues (for example, ‘strategies’, ‘system or process breakdowns’, ‘change’, ‘goals’, ‘plans’, ‘tasks’, ‘teams’, among others) cannot easily be found out by people (stakeholders who actually want to know them or extract sense regarding why they happened). Consequently, it is important to understand these people’s way of thinking about them.

Therefore, CSR C&R can be interpreted as messages intended to communicate product safety, maintain supplier relations, enhance fair competition, and inform the various stakeholders of the improvements in the quality of life of the society in which the business operates, as a result of CSR of the respective company.

5 CSR Communication and Reporting Challenges in Developing Countries

Failure to meet international reporting standards and a lack of expertise in keeping track of CSR information, which will be reported, is the major challenge facing CSR C&R in developing countries (Katamba, Christoph, Tushabomwe-Kazooba and Haag, 2012). In developing countries, the application and adoption of globally recognized CSR Communication and Reporting mechanisms (*like* GRI) seem scanty. Very many CSR reports do not even meet the lowest grade of GRI 4. For example, while GRI 4 mentions that CSR C&R messages/information should be sufficient and accurate to inform the decisions of the targeted audiences, many reports fall below this standard. We can hence say that most CSR C&R reports lack credibility as opposed to their counterparts in developed countries. For example, Iza

⁶*Sensemaking* is an approach to thinking about and implementing communication research and practice and the design of communication-based systems and activities. Weick (1995) mentioned that it consists of a set of philosophical assumptions, substantive propositions, methodological framings and methods.

(2015) conducted a study, “*Communication Needs for Corporate Social Responsibility in Developing Countries: The Case of Georgia.*” Georgia is a developing country in the Caucasus region of Eurasia, located at the crossroads of Western Asia and Eastern Europe. Now, this scholar found that most Georgian companies prepare CSR communications. However, they are insufficient, if not absolutely insufficient!

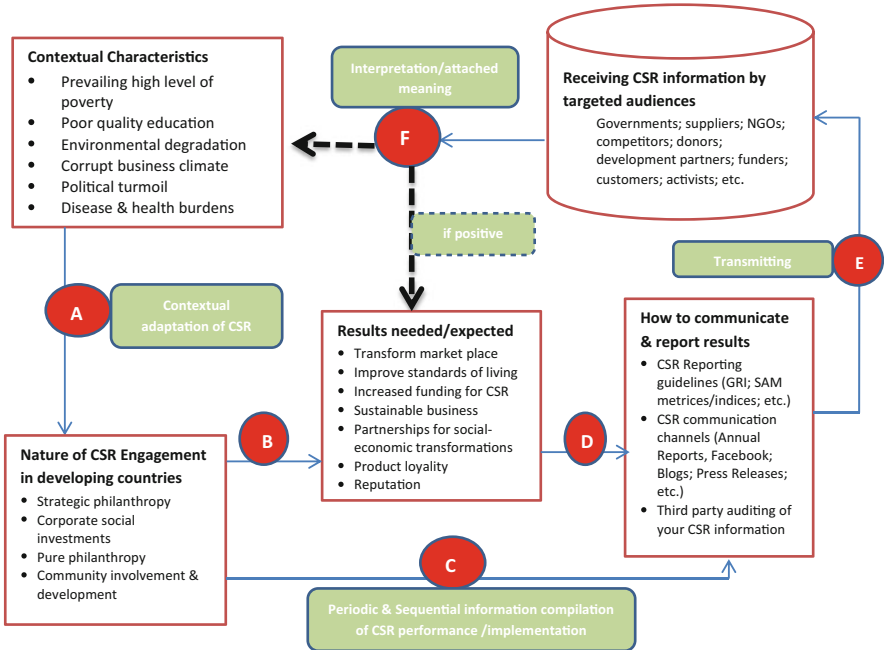
[...] the existing information on social responsibility is insufficient or absolutely insufficient. However some respondents still think that the available information is sufficient. Respondent opinions differed in categories of age and sex. 14 % of women and 13 % of men considered the existing information about CSR as absolutely insufficient while 24 % of women and 15 % of men thought it as insufficient. Only 2 % of women and 3 % of men believed that the existing information was sufficient.

6 A Framework Explaining the State of CSR Communication and Reporting in Developing Countries

The rhetoric in the different subsections above can be better summarized into the “Kata-Nkiko” framework below (Fig. 1).

This framework explains the state of Integrated CSR Communications and Reporting (CSR C&R) in developing countries. Additionally, it advances critical points which, if observed, can help to ensure that the CSR information from companies/organizations operating in these countries will be *credible*, *sense* is made out of it, and henceforth, the desired *action* is taken. Lastly, from this framework, a concept, “**Sense-Act**” of CSR information is put forward in the debate on CSR C&R for the first time. It is derived from roots of “Sense-making Theory,” and “Speech Act Theory”, as a relationship from these theories was found to be sufficient to explain how CSR information is interpreted and acted on in developing countries. To build its case, this framework assumes six critical points that matter for meaningful CSR Communicating & Reporting (CSR C&R) in developing countries.

- (i) *Point A: Adaptation point.* Here the CSR engaging company understands the problems/characteristics that define the country (geographical) area where it does business. This largely helps it to know the relevant nature/mode of engagement. Additionally, literature mentions that these characteristics define how the CSR C&R information will be received and interpreted.
- (ii) *Point B:* is the *justification of the CSR Communicating & Reporting* company for its CSR information after engaging in CSR. This point tells us why it is worthwhile to communicate and report on CSR conducted in a developing country. These justifications would ideally be the “*interpretations*” the company expects stakeholders to get when they receive CSR C&R information. Note that stakeholders may negatively get (*interpret*) or give (*attach*) the reverse in the form of product boycotts, litigations, etc. So, this framework assumes a positive interpretation of the information received.



Source: Author compilation.

Fig. 1 The ‘Kata-Nkiko’ Framework of CSR Communications and Reporting. Source: Author compilation

- (iii) *Point C:* According to GRI, CERES, ISO 26000, and other reputable CSR rating agencies, meaningful CSR C&R information has to be periodically compiled (monitored) either statistically, qualitatively, mechanically, etc., if it is to be credible and also pass third party/independent evaluations. This point was observed as lacking in most developing countries.
- (iv) *Point D:* Professional packaging. This is where the company now *thinks* through the process of how it should professionally package the information so that it can bring out the intended meaning, sense and action (Sense-Act), when it is received by the targeted audiences. Hypothetically, Point D and Point C are the same.
- (v) *Point E:* This is the transmission component of CSR C&R. To reach the targeted audiences (stakeholders), appropriate transmission means need to be employed. That is the means of how the developed/generated CSR C&R is passed over. These could include, (a) digital media (like phone calls to the relevant stakeholders requesting them to pick up a copy of the report, to check on the website, face book page, etc.); (b) electronic media (e.g., sending emails with the CSR information attached, embedded in a website link, phone message pop-ups, etc.); (iii) manual transmission (like using courier services to deliver hard copy reports, CDs, pictorials, etc.)

- (vi) *Point F: Interpretation*—of the received CSR information. It is true that developing countries have contextual characteristics (social-economic problems). Similarly, literature has indicated that chances are higher that stakeholders will interpret and attach meaning (react) to the CSR C&R in relation to these characteristics. That is, by how far have their problems been reduced? These “*interpretations*” would ideally be *in-line* or *against* what the CSR C&R company/organization expects of stakeholders when they receive CSR C&R information. This should never surprise the CSR C&R company/organization, but rather, it should know that the communication process ends when feedback is received (good or bad). So, chances are that stakeholders may negatively *interpret* or *attach* the reverse of what the reporting company expected. This will be exhibited in the form of product boycotts, litigations, the assumption that the reporting company is corrupting the minds of stakeholders with regard to its operations, a denial of the social license to operate, etc. In this case, the CSR C&R process will end with *contextual factors* being fronted as still prevalent. In contrast, the CSR C&R information may be positively interpreted. In this case, the stakeholders in the country for which CSR C&R is being conducted, will notice the changes advocated for and anticipated by the company. In this case, the CSR C&R will end with results needed/expected.

7 Conclusion and Directions for Future Research

Globally, CSR being variously defined has not only created chaos and problems in its conceptualization, but also in how CSR C&R should be managed. In developed countries, the chaos ought to have been somehow contained, because of institutional factors like a functioning European community, which at the international political level offers guidelines on how CSR C&R should probably be managed. However, developing countries seem to be still far from delivering what is competitively expected, both in terms of CSR as a practice and subsequently its ‘communication and reporting’ to stakeholders/targeted audiences. This is more apparent when companies operating and reporting from developing countries are placed on one side of a continuum, and those from developed countries are put on the other side. Whereas studies e.g., from Denmark, a developed country, revealed four CSR C&R challenges (globalization; role of business in society, -people, planet, profit; relations to the stakeholders; & CSR ambition level of the company) as cross-cutting limitations in CSR C&R globally, developing countries’ CSR C&R is additionally challenged with how to go about the contextual adaptation of CSR (see Stage A in the ‘Kata-Nkiko Framework of CSR C&R’). This results in failure to “*make sense*” of what is finally communicated and reported. Hence, we can conclude that CSR C&R is still in its infancy in developing countries, but the authors of this chapter feel that the socio-economic situation in these countries contributes a lot, thus causing a slow CSR C&R adoption process. That is, many

good communication and reporting guidelines and initiatives (e.g., GRI 4, International Integrated Reporting Council,—IIRC Frameworks; ISO 26000, etc.) will take long to be appreciated and practiced in developing countries. The solution would be to pilot some of the initiatives on CSR C&R that have worked elsewhere, in developing countries. Additionally, there is a need to identify what is material for developing countries, as opposed to developed countries, since these two categorical countries have vastly different socio-economic and political climates. Thus, what is *immaterial* in developed countries may be *material* in those that are developing. Hence, neglecting to form part of an integrated report (in a developing country context) would constrain the gradual CSR C&R efforts in these countries. We thus welcome future studies that can quantitatively ascertain the strength of the relationships (including ‘mediation’ and ‘moderation’ effects where appropriate) and the contributing prediction or explanatory potential of the variables in the “Kata-Nkiko framework,” studies documenting its limitations, criticisms, improvements or strengths, are welcome, as well as studies looking into what should be material for CSR C&R in developing countries.

8 Exercise and Reflective Questions

1. With reference to ‘*The Kata-Nkiko Framework of CSR C&R*’ what would be its strength as well as limitations in guiding the roadmap to successful and effective CSR Communications and Reporting (CSR C&R)?
2. This book chapter has painted an impression that CSR C&R in developing countries ought to be different from that in developed countries. Identify and discuss five aspects that you think can account for this difference.
3. With reference to any CSR definition (whether in this chapter or elsewhere), describe how the various aspects such a definition points out as CSR should be communicated and reported to stakeholders. (*Hint: It is important that your answer makes appropriate use and reference to appropriate tools and matrices*).

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Part V
Special Topics of Intercultural Integrated
CSR Communication

Corporate Social Responsibility and the Portrayal of Minority Groups in Advertising

Charles R. Taylor and John P. Costello

Abstract The portrayal of racial and ethnic minority groups in advertising is an important issue that has implications for both business and society. Both expectancy theory and cultivation theory suggest negative impacts of repeated exposure to stereotypes in the media or advertising. At a societal level, integrated CSR communications should portray minority groups in a variety of contexts that allow both members of the minority group and the society at large to have a less stereotyped and more complete view of the minority group. The extant research suggests that significant progress has been made in terms of the frequency of appearances of various minority groups in ads as well as some improvements in the types of portrayals shown. As a result, recent studies have shifted to issues such as the prominence of portrayed characters and the types of roles and settings that minorities are featured in. The authors conclude that integrated CSR communications should strive to give more complete and varied portrayals of minority groups rather than relying on stereotypes that potentially decrease the effectiveness of advertisements and risk significant social consequences.

1 Introduction

The portrayal of racial and ethnic minority groups in advertising is an important issue that has implications for both business and society.¹ Businesses are wise to be attentive to the overall representation and types of portrayals of minority groups. Unrealistic portrayals or the absence of a group can be a bad business practice.

¹The focus of this paper is on racial and ethnic minority groups. Portrayals of other minority groups such as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) as well as other specific areas of inquiry such as portrayals of women, men, or children in various contexts are also important but are not the focus of this study.

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However, there are also potentially larger societal consequences (Lee, Williams, & LaFerle, 2004; Taylor & Lee, 1994). Beyond mere appearances of minorities in advertisements, it can be argued that marketers have a social responsibility to portray minority groups in ways that do not promote or reinforce stereotypes. This includes both overt and subtle stereotyping, as well as depicting diversity in the types of roles and settings in which minorities appear. Both expectancy theory and cultivation theory suggest negative impacts of repeated exposure to stereotypes in the media or advertising. Thus, socially responsible advertising will portray minority groups in a variety of contexts that allow both members of the minority group and the society at large to have a less stereotyped and more complete view of the minority group (Taylor, Landreth, & Bang, 2005). If organizations want to be viewed as responsible corporate citizens they need to focus on inclusiveness and showing more groups in a variety of roles in their CSR communications.

In a literature review of the top ten marketing journals on the role of marketing in a socially responsible company, Langan (2014) found an implicit or explicit adherence to the concept of stakeholder marketing in all related studies. Stakeholder marketing calls for organizations to consider all the groups to which they are accountable including customers, employees, local communities, suppliers, shareholders, and government groups (Langan, 2014). As the world becomes more interconnected and societies more diverse, almost any firm will have multiple stakeholders from a number of ethnic and racial backgrounds. This is certainly the case in the United States where demographic shifts are making minority groups an increasingly larger portion of the country at large, but it is also true in many other parts of the world, including much of Europe, China, Russia, Brazil, Australia, and many other places. According to the 2010 census the United States now has over 50 million Hispanic Americans (16.3 % of the population), over 38 million African Americans (12.6 % of the population), over 14 million Asian Americans (4.8 % of the population), and over 9 million individuals who identify as 2 or more races (2.9 % of the population) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). These groups represent a large consumer base with the Selig Center for Economic Growth at the University of Georgia reporting in 2014 that buying power has reached \$1.3 trillion for Hispanic Americans, \$1.1 trillion for African Americans, and \$770 billion for Asian Americans (Humphreys, 2014). Having stakeholders from various racial and ethnic backgrounds makes socially responsible portrayals of minority groups all the more important.

At least sixty years of research has studied advertising portrayals of minority groups (Shabbir, Hyman, Reast, & Palihawadana, 2014). Much of the research in this area has been in the context of the United States, however studies have also been conducted in South America (Rial & Moraes, 2001), Europe (Shabbir et al., 2014; Sudbury & Wilberforce, 2006), and Africa (Johnson & Grier, 2012; Milner, 2007). While some progress has been reported in summaries of minority portrayals, there are a number of remaining issues. The rest of this chapter will discuss the following topics:

1. A theoretical perspective of why socially responsible portrayals of minority groups are important
2. The history and progress made in the portrayals of minority groups in advertising with particular emphasis on the three largest minority groups in the U.S. Both representativeness in frequency of portrayal and potential stereotyping in types of roles and settings will be discussed.
3. Emerging and future issues related to social responsible minority advertising including multiracial advertising and how minority portrayals impact advertising effectiveness.

2 Theoretical Perspectives: Why Advertising Portrayals Matter

The stereotyping of minority groups in advertising presents potentially harmful consequences that are important to understand for a business aiming to engage in socially responsible behavior. Even when the intent of marketers is good, it is important to question the assumptions and attitudes present in advertisements as stereotypes can persist even when they are not consciously articulated or intentional (Bristor, Lee, & Hunt, 1995). Taylor et al. (2005) suggest that “from a societal perspective it is important that advertisers show minority groups in a wide variety of contexts” to avoid one-dimensional or stereotyped portrayals of an entire group.

A number of theories including expectancy theory, cultivation theory, and social learning theory provide useful frameworks for understanding how stereotyping in advertising can lead to negative social effects. These theories help to clearly articulate how stereotyping in advertising can result in such harmful outcomes.

Expectancy theory posits that repeated media portrayals, such as advertising portrayals can build or reinforce expectations for a particular group (Jussim, 1990). An example in this context would be advertising showing Asian Americans as intelligent, hard working, and good at math leading to society building expectations that all Asian Americans have these characteristics. While these stereotypes may not seem harmful at first glance, for many individual Asian Americans who may not be high academic achievers, such expectations may be difficult to meet and result in negative outcomes (Taylor & Lee, 1994). Further, these types of stereotypes can constrain assimilation by Asian Americans due to an image that the group is “generic and one dimensional” (Randall, 2002).

A second perspective, cultivation theory, asserts that repeated exposures to a stereotype can result in public acceptance of the stereotype as reality (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1980). This theory also suggests that media depictions may help form how members of various groups see themselves and relate to others (Bailey, 2006). A possible negative outcome of stereotyped advertising as explained by cultivation theory is that limited contact with a minority group could increase the chances that the majority sees the depictions of a minority group as accurate (Taylor & Stern, 1997). Providing support to this theory, Lubbers,

Scheepers, and Vergeer (2000) found that individuals who were exposed to a newspaper that included negative reporting about ethnic crime were more likely to view ethnic minorities as a threat than those who were exposed to other newspapers.

Social learning theory is a final relevant theory that suggests that the media offers depictions, which may form the basis for imitation of the depicted behavior (Bandura, 1977). It can be argued that portrayals of minority groups in advertisements serve as the “behavior” to which advertisement viewers pay attention (Bailey, 2006). Learning that takes place from stereotyped depictions can be hazardous to the perceptions and attitudes towards those in the minority group. These negative effects can influence the way minority group members feel about themselves as well as the ways in which the society at large views the minority group (Bailey, 2006).

3 Minority Portrayals in Advertising: A History of Research

The most widely researched issue in the research around minority portrayals in advertising is minority visibility as measured by the percentage of advertisements that feature minority models. A large number of content analysis studies of magazines and television advertisements have been conducted that explore both frequency of portrayals as well as other issues, such as types of roles a group is depicted in, the settings they are featured in, and the presence of stereotypes. Since the vast majority of the extant research has been conducted in the United States, this section will specifically look at research in this context unless otherwise specified. Now, we will review the research of the three most researched and largest racial minority groups in the U.S.: African Americans, Asian Americans, and Hispanic Americans.

3.1 Portrayals of African Americans in Advertising

Much of the study of African American portrayals in advertising relates to their representation and the presence of stereotyped depictions. Early studies of this topic found that stereotypes included African Americans: being represented overwhelmingly as unskilled laborers (Shuey, King, & Griffith, 1953); living in poverty (Humphrey & Schuman, 1984); being overrepresented as actors and entertainers (Kassarjian, 1969); and depicted as being of low status (Kassarjian, 1969). While research has demonstrated that these stereotypes have appeared less frequently over time there are still concerns over the types of portrayals of African Americans. Now, we take a historical look at this research stream.

3.1.1 Magazine Advertisements 1945–1985

Published studies of portrayals of African Americans in advertising date back to at least the 1950s with Shuey et al. (1953) finding that only 0.6 % of a sample of mass circulation magazine ads from 1949 to 1950 contained an African American. Further, 96.7 % of these depictions showed Blacks as unskilled laborers with the remainder depicted as athletes or entertainers (Shuey et al., 1953). Kassarian (1969) studied high circulation magazines at three points over a 20 year period and found that the percent of unique advertisements with black models was less than 0.3 %. He also found that although depictions of African Americans as laborers or service workers decreased over this time period their depiction as entertainers or sports figures increased (Kassarian, 1969).

Though there were a number of other key studies from the 1960s to the mid 1980s on African American portrayals in magazine advertising (e.g., Bush, Resnick, & Stern, 1980; Cox, 1970) these studies and Humphrey and Schuman's (1984) study, which examined advertisements in magazines from 1950 and 1980, all seemed to point to similar trends.

3.1.2 Magazine Advertising 1985-Present

More contemporary research on models in magazine advertising has put less of a focus on the overall underrepresentation of African Americans and more of a focus on the types of roles and settings the models inhabit. Taylor, Lee, and Stern (1995) found that although African Americans were only slightly underrepresented in their sample (11.4 % vs. 12.1 % of the total population) they were underrepresented in the category of major roles and overrepresented in the category of background roles. In Taylor et al.'s (2005) study African Americans were in fact represented more frequently compared to their numbers in the U.S. overall (18.5 % vs. 12.1 %) and were featured in major roles 72.3 % of the time vs. 37 % in 1994 (Taylor et al., 1995, 2005), indicative of some improvement.

Bailey (2006) examined the role of the African American male in hip-hop oriented magazines as well as more established mainstream and cultural magazines. He found a low-representation of African American men in advertisements for high value products other than automobiles (Bailey, 2006). He also found very low incidence of African American men in business or work settings with only 4.7 % of the sample in hip-hop oriented magazines and 4 % of the mainstream magazines featuring this setting (Bailey, 2006). The relative lack of professional settings in advertisements featuring African Americans leads Bailey to argue that these advertisements "could feed the negative stereotype of the idle African American male, who is 'just chillin'" (2006, p. 99). While studies document that there clearly has been some progress in the frequency of displaying African Americans in magazine advertisements, this study exemplifies that there are still some concerns related to the types of roles and settings in which these models are portrayed. While blatant

stereotypical depictions seem to have almost disappeared over the years, a lack of portrayals in professional or business settings could reinforce updated versions of the same stereotypes, making the socially responsible management of these portrayals extremely important.

3.1.3 Television Advertising

Early studies of U.S. television ads found African American actors were featured more frequently over time with Dominick and Greenberg's 1970 study finding advertisements with Blacks nearly doubled to 11 % from 1967 to 1969. Later television studies observed continued increases of African Americans in major roles in television advertisements from 20 % of total depictions of African Americans in 1967–1968 to 45 % in 1990–1991 (Licata & Biswas, 1993). In a content analysis of advertising of high rated television programs from 1992 to 1994 Coltrane and Messineo (2000) found that White actors were given more major roles, exercised more authority, were placed in family settings, and were involved in more cross-sex interactions than African American actors.

Crockett (2008) analyzed commercials aired in 2001 and found that 24 % of his sample “contains some symbolic, visual, or rhetorical representation of blackness” (p. 248). However, upon further analysis the vast majority of these commercials (78.5 %) represent a strategy Crockett refers to as “Casting for Equality” in which African Americans appear in a multiracial ensemble of actors often in a minor role and appearing mainly to act as a representative for their race. “Casting for Equality” is similar in concept to Bristor, Lee, and Hunt's “Tokenism”, which describes the use of one minor minority character to be “treated as representatives of their entire category rather than as individuals” (1995, p. 53).

In a rare study outside of the United States, Shabbir et al. (2014) found that 31.5 % of the television advertisements they analyzed from the U.K. featured Black actors. This figure is much higher than the 3.3 % of the population that Blacks represent in the UK (Shabbir et al., 2014). The authors of this study argue that although this finding may represent a shift to greater diversity in ads, it is still the types of roles rather than the mere quotas that matter most when it comes to Blacks or any minorities in advertisements (Shabbir et al., 2014).

It seems that the state of television advertising portrayals of African Americans parallels magazine advertising in many ways. Though there have certainly been increases in the overall representation of African Americans in television advertisements there are still issues related to the ways in which these individuals are being represented. Presenting African American actors in more major roles and in a variety of settings seems to be one way to ensure more effective CSR communications.

3.2 *Portrayals of Asian Americans in Advertising*

Central to the study of portrayals of Asian Americans in advertising is the “model minority” stereotype, which views the group as educated, successful, and well assimilated (Cohen, 1992; Delener & Neelankavil, 1990). While this stereotype may seem positive at first glance, it has been observed that this stereotype along with other stereotypes of Asian Americans can contribute to vulnerability. For example Lee (1996) found that pressure to conform to “model minority” expectations contributed to anxiety experienced by both low and high achieving Asian American students. Another study by Lorenzo, Frost, and Reinherz (2000) found that although Asian American students were less likely to be involved in delinquent behaviors than others, they were more likely to have social problems, poor self-images, and experience depression. These consequences of individuals who feel the need to conform to a stereotype are very real, making stereotypes in advertising potentially hazardous. Ikemoto (1996) even argues that the model minority myth goes so far as to view Asian Americans as “honorary Whites”, which denies the group their own racial identity and potentially masks the effects of racism against Asian Americans.

3.2.1 Magazine Advertising

The study of the portrayals of Asian Americans in advertising has a shorter academic history than other minority groups and did not begin until the 1990s (Lee et al., 2004). Taylor and Lee (1994) found in a content analysis of magazines that although Asian Americans appeared in 4 % of advertisements versus the 3.3 % of the overall U.S. population they represented at the time, they were depicted in major roles in only 2.1 % of the advertisements. Further, this study found that Asian representation was disproportionately high for technology products, advertisements in business and scientific magazines (vs. women’s and general interest magazines), and in advertisements depicting business settings, and business relationships (rather than social or family relationships). Bowen and Schmid (1997) conducted a content analysis of nine mass circulation magazines from 1987 to 1992 and actually found a decrease of representation of Asian Americans over that time period with 2.5 % of ads featuring Asian Americans in 1987 and only 1.8 % in 1992. During the same time period African American portrayals increased from 6.8 % to 10.6 % (Bowen & Schmid, 1997).

In a cross-national study of advertisements in magazines from 2000 and 2001 Frith, Cheng, and Shaw (2004) found that Asian Americans were noticeably underrepresented in U.S. women’s magazines. Out of the 481 advertisements they analyzed in *Glamour*, *Vogue*, and *Elle* only five contained Asian models (Firth, Cheng, & Shaw). Taylor et al.’s, 2005 study used the same magazines as the 1994 Taylor and Lee study (Taylor et al., 2005). This study found that the overall representation of Asian Americans had increased dramatically since the 1994

study, from 4 % in the 1994 study to 10.5 % in the 2005 study (Taylor et al., 2005). However, the study also revealed that Asian Americans appeared in major roles in only 64.2 % of ads, a number substantially lower than the number for Caucasians (91 %) and African Americans (73.2 %). Though the proportion of Asian Americans featured in a major role increased in the ten years since the previous study (from 50.8 % to 64.2 %) the rate has not been as dramatic as for African Americans, which went from 37 % in 1994 to 72.3 % in 2004 (Taylor et al., 2005). Also consistent with the model minority stereotype, a disproportionate number of ads featuring Asian models were in technology based and business-related product categories (Taylor et al., 2005). The relative frequency of Asian representation in business settings was much higher than for all other racial groups and the frequency of appearance in home settings were the lowest (Taylor et al., 2005).

Though Asian Americans seem to be gaining a higher level of representation in magazine advertising [more than doubling in Taylor et al.'s (2005) study vs. Taylor and Lee's (1994) study] there still seems to be problematic stereotyping of Asian Americans as the "model minority". The types of roles and settings Asian models inhabit in advertising may play into a stereotyped image of all Asian Americans as successful, hard working, serious, and technologically savvy (Taylor et al., 2005). Also, a lack of portrayals of Asian Americans in a social and/or family setting fails to show the group in a full range of contexts relevant to their lives. Therefore, integrated CSR communications featuring Asian Americans or any minority group should portray these individuals in a variety of contexts and roles rather than simply those that fit into a stereotyped and one-dimensional portrayal of the group.

3.2.2 Television Advertising

Taylor and Stern (1997) conducted a content analysis of television advertisements on major networks in 1994. The study found that Asian Americans were featured in 8.4 % of advertisements, however there was also ample evidence of stereotyped portrayals (Taylor & Stern, 1997). Asian Americans were more likely to have background roles than other groups, and Asian actors were underrepresented in home settings and family or social relationships and overrepresented in product categories associated with the model minority stereotype such as items associated with affluence and work life (Taylor & Stern, 1997).

In a study of television advertising portrayals drawn from a 2001 sample of advertisements on major networks Mastro and Stern (2003) found that Asian Americans represented only 2.4 % of speaking roles. Consistent with the findings of Taylor and Stern (1997), the authors found that Asians were most often featured in commercials for technology-related products and in professional settings (Mastro & Stern, 2003). Mastro and Stern (2003) also observed that the depictions in these television advertisements may contribute to perceptions of Asian Americans as submissive, devoted to work, and only able to fulfill self-worth via superior achievement.

In a study of children's television advertising Bang and Reece (2003) found that the representation of Asian American models in children's advertising was similar to the overall percentage in the U.S. population at 3.7%. However, not even one advertisement in the 808 ads included in the sample showed an Asian model exclusively (Bang & Reece, 2003). Asians were also underrepresented in advertisements for toys, clothing, and movies and none of the ads showed an Asian in a family setting (Bang & Reece, 2003).

Overall the research on Asian American portrayals in television advertisements reaches very similar conclusions to the research on magazine advertisements. Though Asian actors seem to be used at a level representative of the percentage of Asians Americans in the U.S. population many of the portrayals still seem to reinforce the model minority stereotype. A more varied use of contexts and roles would present a fuller portrayal of Asian Americans.

It should also be noted that future researchers might wish to focus on South Asians as a group distinct from what is commonly described as "Asian Americans." Researchers have commonly defined Asian Americans as ". . . persons whose ancestry is rooted in any Asian country other than the Indian subcontinent" which means Asian Americans in this definition include people from Cambodia, China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Laos, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, and Hong Kong (Taylor & Lee, 1994). This definition does not include those individuals whose ancestry is rooted in the Indian sub-continent including those from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka (Taylor et al., 2005), making the representation of this group in advertising an important topic for future study. This growing group has too frequently been ignored.

3.3 Portrayals of Hispanic Americans in Advertising

As the largest minority group in the United States, Hispanic Americans represent a sizable consumer base and advertising expenditures specifically targeting Hispanic consumers continue to rise (Dávila, 2012, p. 54). Similar to other minority groups, research on advertising portrayals of Hispanic Americans has historically found underrepresentation and stereotyped roles portrayed. For example, early research found that Hispanic Americans were often stereotyped as uneducated (Czepiec & Kelly, 1983) and were commonly depicted in minor roles (Lee & Joo, 2005; Paek & Shah, 2003). An early study on network TV programming found that in the late 1970s Hispanic American characters only represented 1.5% of speaking parts (Greenberg & Baptista-Fernandez, 1980). This finding seems hard to believe given the continued growth in interest of Hispanics as a target market (Dávila, 2012), but research indicates that Hispanics are still underrepresented in advertising, especially in major roles.

3.3.1 Magazine and Television Advertising

Though Hispanic Americans are the largest minority group in the U.S., the studies on this group's representation in advertising have been somewhat limited. For this reason, this section will look at both magazine and television advertising together, rather than splitting them out into separate sections. In a 1982 sample of magazine advertisements Czepiec and Kelley (1983) found that just 1.5 % of advertisements featured a Hispanic model. In a study of television advertising on major networks in 1984 Wilkes and Valencia (1989) found that 6 % of advertisements included Hispanic actors, a figure higher than the findings in the magazine findings of Czepiec and Kelly (1983), but still low compared to the percentage of Hispanics in the overall population. Also, Wilkes and Valencia found that Hispanic actors were relegated to background roles, often in crowd scenes rather than central roles that featured product use (1989). Taylor et al. (1995) found in an analysis of magazine advertisements from 1993 to 1994 that Hispanic Americans were the most severely underrepresented minority, appearing in only 4.7 % of advertisements versus the 9 % of the population they composed at the time. Taylor and Stern's (1997) study of television advertisements on major networks in 1994 found that Hispanics appeared in 8.5 % of ads.

In Taylor et al.'s (2005) study the incidence of underrepresentation of Hispanics continued to be an issue. Hispanic Americans appeared in only 6.8 % of magazine advertisements in the sample versus 14.2 % in the overall United States population in 2004 (Taylor et al., 2005; U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). Furthermore, Hispanic Americans showed the lowest incidence of major roles along with Asian Americans with only 64 % of depictions in a major role versus 91 % for Caucasians (Taylor et al., 2005).

It seems surprising that the largest minority group in 2004 was the least represented group in magazine advertisements in Taylor et al.'s, (2005) study. One explanation for this discrepancy could be that this study and most of the research conducted on this topic examined English language magazines and television channels and that advertising prominently featuring Hispanic Americans is placed primarily in Spanish language media. While this may explain some of the lack of representation, this explanation does not seem adequate in explaining all of the discrepancy for a number of reasons. In the U.S. 22 % of Hispanics only speak English, 74 % of Hispanics "speak English very well", and a recent Hispanic targeted fashion magazine reported that 76 % of its readership prefers to read in English (Dávila, 2012, p.73). These statistics suggest English-speaking Hispanic Americans still represent a sizable readership for many media outlets. At the time of Taylor et al.'s (2005) study 80 % of Asian Americans spoke a language other than English at home and about 40 % of Asian Americans indicated they do not speak English very well (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002), and still Asian Americans were represented at or above their overall representation in society. The same type of reasonable representation would be desirable for Hispanic Americans in advertising.

Even if language differences can explain some of the overall underrepresentation the lack of major roles in advertisements featuring Hispanic models and actors is still problematic and cannot be explained away by language differences. Taylor et al. (1995) argue that the underrepresentation of Hispanic Americans in advertising “sends a subtle signal about their lack of acceptance in mainstream society” (p. 620). These signals are problematic.

4 Emerging and Future Issues

In spite of clear improvements in the representation of minority groups in U.S. advertising, there clearly is still work to be done in research that monitors the frequency and types of representations of minority groups in advertising. There are also a number of more recent issues related to the portrayals of minorities in advertising that are of interest to any socially responsible company or marketer. The research streams that will be addressed include multiracial advertising and factors that increase effectiveness related to portrayals of minority groups.

4.1 *Multiracial Advertising*

As mentioned in the introduction over nine million individuals in the United States identify as more than one race. According to the 2010 U.S. Census more than 1 in 10 couples are interracial, which is a 28% increase since 2000 (Zmunda, 2014). Similar to any of the other minority groups described, stereotyped portrayals or a lack of representation of mixed race families and multiracial individuals in advertising can result in harmful societal consequences. Though there has been limited academic research on the topic to this point, the consensus is that multiracial couples and individuals are underrepresented in advertising. Tim Nudd of Ad Week said of a 2013 Cheerios commercial called “Gracie” that featured a multiracial family that “the Cheerios ad, despite its characters being representative of tens of thousands of actual couples in America, sticks out like a sore thumb”, arguing that despite societal advances and progress on television programs, advertising tends to lag in these trends, and asking “at what point will an ad like this just seem normal?”

Portrayals of multiracial individuals and families in advertising have not been researched to any great extent. Additional studies of advertisements featuring multiple races and individuals who have mixed raced ancestry are important areas of future research both in the United States and internationally. It must be acknowledged that there has been some very recent progress on this front as some advertisers, as evidenced by the aforementioned Cheerios ad and some who have followed its lead, have taken heed (Zmunda, 2014).

4.2 *Advertising Effectiveness and Minority Portrayals*

While there are clear social reasons to adequately represent minority groups in advertising and avoid stereotyped portrayals, recent research also suggests that socially responsible depictions can result in more effective ads. Forehand and Deshpande (2001) found that “ethnic self-awareness” can be primed using ethnic identification cues in advertisements. This research suggests that ethnic identification cues can be used to enhance ad effectiveness of ads targeted at a minority group (Forehand & Deshpande, 2001). Dimofte, Forehand, and Deshpande (2004) also found in an experiment that included a sample of Caucasians and Hispanics that incongruent advertising schema helped prime identification among Hispanics. Additionally, Johnson and Grier (2012) find that racially stereotyped portrayals in advertisements may also negatively influence advertising effectiveness. Their experiment, conducted in South Africa, found that members of the group being stereotyped in an advertisement feel offended by stereotyped advertising portrayals, while viewers who are not members of the stereotyped group feel ambivalence and are not entertained by stereotyped portrayals (Johnson & Grier, 2012). This means that stereotyped depictions provide no positive effect on advertisements; instead they marginalize the group being stereotyped, while adding nothing to the experience of the viewer not being stereotyped. The authors argue that these results suggest that marketers should be diligent to not use stereotyped portrayals in their advertisements, a suggestion that is “seemingly obvious”, however “continual controversies suggest this message is not well known” (Johnson & Grier, 2012, p. 100).

Recent research has also found that the use of minority actors and models in advertisements can result in a number of positive outcomes including increased perceptions of social responsibility by the advertisement sponsor. Lee, Liu, and Lee (2013) conducted a study examining how Asian Americans understand advertiser motives when the firm is sponsoring a social cause through advocacy advertising. This study found that Asian Americans tend to believe that an advertiser has genuine motives in supporting socially responsible causes and showed higher levels of purchase intention when the advertisements used ethnically congruent cues, such as Asian models or other Asian specific cultural cues (Lee et al., 2013). This finding could be of value to advertisers.

5 Conclusion

The study of minority representation in advertising has evolved over the years and remains an important issue in CSR communications. Clearly, significant progress has been made as the frequency of appearances of various minority groups in ads has increased over time and some improvements in the types of portrayals have been documented. That said, research has shifted to focusing on the types of roles

and settings in which minority actors and models are featured. Even the most recent studies suggest that minority actors and models are often relegated to background roles in advertisements and that certain stereotypical portrayals persist. Integrated CSR communications should strive to give more complete and varied portrayals of minority groups rather than relying on stereotypes that potentially decrease the effectiveness of advertisements and risk significant social consequences.

6 Exercise and Reflective Questions

1. How can stereotyping minority groups in advertising lead to negative social effects and why does this matter for CSR communications?
2. How has the portrayal of minority groups in advertising changed since the beginning of its study?
3. Besides merely including minority actors or models in advertisements, how can advertisers present minority groups in a socially responsible manner?
4. From a social responsibility perspective, why do the roles minority actors and models play in advertisements matter?
5. Why do socially responsible representations of minority groups provide an opportunity to improve advertising effectiveness?

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Corporate Environmental Responsibility Communication: Implications from CSR and Green Advertising Research

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Abstract Even though environmental topics are among the main themes addressed in CSR communication (CSRC), research on specific environmental themed CSRC has been scarce so far. This paper discusses the lessons that can be learned from previous CSR communication and green advertising research for corporate environmental responsibility communication (CERC) aims, channel selection and message strategy. The review of relevant literature reveals that, while stakeholders seemingly demand that companies engage in environmental initiatives, CERC potentially can backfire. If adequately implemented, CERC can have beneficial effects on corporate image, brand equity, stakeholder attitudes and consumer purchase intentions. Key factors of CERC success are discussed.

1 Introduction

Stakeholders such as consumers, investors, employees and the public are increasingly demanding that companies operate in a socially and environmentally responsible manner, beyond their primary economic interests and legal requirements. With corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, companies engage in activities aimed at improving the social good in a way that is desired by stakeholders (Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, & Hill, 2006; Dawkins & Lewis, 2003; McWilliams & Siegel, 2001; Mohr, Webb, & Harris, 2001; Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001; Sprinkle &

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Maines, 2010). CSR can have multiple benefits for firms, including improving corporate image, stakeholder attitudes, market value of the firm, as well as employee and customer relationships (Becker-Olsen et al., 2006; Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2010; Luo & Bhattacharya, 2006). For many firms, corporate environmental responsibility (CER) is currently one of the most important subdomains of CSR, reflecting the need to reduce their environmental impact in response to environmental issues such as global warming (Milliman, Ferguson, & Sylvester, 2008; Öberseder et al., 2013; Perks, Farache, Shukla, & Berry, 2013; Schwartz & Carroll, 2003). There is also some evidence that CSR in the environmental domain may have a more positive impact on corporate image and purchase intention than other CSR domains more closely related to philanthropy (Mohr & Webb, 2005; see also Choi & Ng, 2011). Since stakeholders' awareness of CSR activities is generally low, adequate CSR communication (thereafter CSRC) is a critical factor for CSR success (Du et al., 2010). CSRC employs a variety of channels to communicate messages related to the social performance of the corporation to different stakeholders. According to Taylor's (2014) review of CSRC, current research has focused on executional factors and effectiveness of CSR messages, on message source effects, fit between CSRC initiatives and the sponsoring corporation, or on the impact of CSRC on corporate reputation.

Environmental topics (for instance, waste management, reduction of energy consumption and emissions, efficient use of resources, creation of innovative products and production processes for environmentally friendly production) are among the main themes addressed in CSRC (Perks et al., 2013). If adequately communicated, corporate environmental performance may deliver significant benefits to companies (Grimmer & Bingham, 2013). However, since the review of relevant literature turned out little research on specific environmental CSR communication, the approach here has been to extract implications from both previous CSRC and green advertising research. The specific environmental subdomain of CSRC, on which this chapter is focused, will be termed 'corporate environmental responsibility communication' (thereafter CERC) in the present context. In this chapter, CERC is understood as corporate communication, which, by using different communication channels, communicates messages related to the environmental impact of the company to its stakeholders. Compared to CSRC the focus of CERC is only on environmental corporate responsibility, not on wider CSR. Yet, most of CSRC research seems to be applicable to CERC, for corporate environmental responsibility (CER) issues are the most frequently addressed in CSRC (Perks et al., 2013). Another reason for the environmental focus of CSR research in general and communication efforts in particular is the "genesis" of CSR research, coming mainly from environmental and sustainability science.

On the other hand, green advertising research has been more focused on product and brand advertising than on corporate issues. CERC refers to a wider array of recipient groups, and is less centered on advertising as a channel in particular. Still, important lessons for CERC effectiveness may also be learned from green advertising. The following sections discuss the implications of previous CSRC and green advertising research for CERC aims, channel selection and message strategy.

2 CERC Aims and Effects: Awareness, Impression Management and Green Corporate Image

As with CSRC, improving corporate image can be considered one of the principal objectives of CERC. In the specific case of CERC this pertains to the particular environmental dimension of company image. With consumers being increasingly sensitive about environmental issues and scrutinizing the environmental impact of companies, improving or maintaining the environmental image of a corporation constitutes a relevant marketing objective (Perks et al., 2013). One of the most significant impediments of the positive impact of CSR activities on company image is the low extent to which stakeholders are actually aware of the CSR record of corporations, highlighting the need for companies to communicate their CSR more effectively (Du et al., 2010; Pomeroy & Dolnicar, 2009). Consequently, one of the most important aims of CERC, and a critical prerequisite for its positive impact on corporate image, is achieving awareness for the company's pro-environmental efforts.

Research indicates that consumer attitudes toward the communication of CSR activities are largely positive (Webb & Mohr, 1998) and that consumers generally indeed perceive companies communicating their engagement in CSR activities as more socially responsible (Ross, Patterson, & Stutts, 1992). Those effects are also to be expected for specific environmental activities. If adequately implemented, CERC activities may have a positive effect not only on the evaluation of the company by improving the environmental dimension of its corporate image, but also on attitude towards its products (Nan & Heo, 2007; Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001; Smith & Alcorn, 1991). There is furthermore evidence of a significant influence of a company's perceived environmental performance on consumer's purchase intentions (Grimmer & Bingham, 2013). Cross-national research has also confirmed CSRC effectiveness in an international context (Becker-Olsen, Taylor, Hill, & Yalcinkaya, 2011). Adapting Perks et al.'s (2013) classification scheme of CSR image management strategies to the specific case of CERC, a number of approaches to environmental image management can be identified. One option is to provide substantial environmental information to stakeholders, indicating environmental investment, outcomes and other information about the corporate environmental program. Another strategy, environmental legitimization, can be based on (i) informing stakeholders about the intentions of the organization to improve its environmental performance; (ii) attempting to change the perception of stakeholders regarding the corporations' environmental impact without changing corporate environmental behavior; and/or (iii) diverting attention from environmental problems by focusing on unrelated positive activities (environmental or other). Green impression management can rely on either proactive environmental strategies (e.g., green self-promotion) or defensive environmental tactics (e.g., excuses and justifications accounts, environmental disclaimers, apologies, or restitution of environmental damages). A further CERC strategy may utilize third-party

association, that is, associating the company with third-party endorsements (e.g., environmental NGOs, environmental government agencies, etc.).

3 CERC Recipients and Channels

3.1 Environmental Stakeholders

Potential recipients of CERC are all environmental stakeholders of the corporation in the widest sense, and, in particular, key stakeholders such as consumers, employees, investors, and influencers of key stakeholders, comprising the public at large (through positive or negative word of mouth), as well as environmental organizations and pressure groups. Based on Dawkins (2004) classification of CSR stakeholders, environmental stakeholders can be classified into environmental opinion-leader audiences, for instance the business press, investors (both mainstream institutional investors and especially environmentally conscious investors and investment funds), and environmental NGOs on the one hand, and the general public on the other (consumers and local communities). According to Dawkins, environmental opinion leader audiences have a more proactive approach to environmental related information and seek the company's environmental report for evidence on its environmental impact in terms of environmental indicators, benchmarks and trends. Mainstream investors are more likely to be interested in the business impact of environmental activities and should be provided with information on how environmental activities impact business indicators such as customer equity and employee retention. In contrast, the approach of the general public to environmental information, such as consumers or local communities, is much more passive. These stakeholders in most cases do not proactively seek information on corporative environmental activities, even if issues are concerned, which they consider of importance.

3.2 Stakeholder Skepticism

Stakeholders' skepticism toward CER initiatives may have an important influence on CERC effectiveness. Recipients' skepticism has been extensively addressed from both CSRC and green advertising perspectives. In the CSR literature it is generally assumed that stakeholders are skeptical of CSR activities and communications and that they are increasingly so, paradoxically, at the same time that CSR communications are increasingly employed to improve CSR perceptions (Becker-Olsen et al., 2006). Stakeholders may also be particularly distrustful of CER activities and communications, particularly, in the case of environmentally hazardous industries. Source credibility and reliability are considered as major

requirements for CSR message acceptance and communications effectiveness (Jahdi & Acikdilli, 2009) and highly skeptical stakeholders have been found to respond less positively to CSR than less skeptical ones (Bronn & Vrioni, 2001; Mohr, Eroglu, & Ellen, 1998). In particular, CSR skepticism has been shown to hurt corporate equity, lead to rejecting CSR claims, decrease resistance to negative information about the company, stimulate unfavorable word of mouth, and affect purchasing behavior (Skarmas & Leonidou, 2013). The suggested growing skepticism toward CSRC in general and CERC in particular, has been attributed partly to the observable proliferation of corporate ethical and green advertising claims, especially those utilized by socially and environmentally noxious companies of the so-called 'sin industries' category (Jahdi & Acikdilli, 2009; Pomeroy & Johnson, 2009). Stakeholders are typically suspicious of corporations in certain industries related to health or environmental hazards, such as tobacco or oil, posing an important challenge to their CSR communication (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004; Du et al., 2010; Skarmas & Leonidou, 2013; Yoon, Gürhan-Canli, & Schwarz, 2006).

3.3 Channel Selection

The choice of the CERC communication channel can affect message effectiveness and credibility. A variety of communication channels is used by organizations to disseminate their corporate environmental responsibility activities. Among these channels, environmental reports (for instance as part of an annual corporate responsibility report), web sites (as a dedicated section of the company's official corporate website) and advertising (TV commercials, magazine or billboard advertisements, and product packaging) play a prominent role (Birth, Illia, Lurati, & Zamparini, 2008; Du et al., 2010; Farache & Perks, 2010; Perks et al., 2013). A further popular communication instrument to improve stakeholders' company image is corporate sponsorship (Uhrich, Koenigstorfer, & Groeppel-Klein, 2014), which in the case of CERC would be centered on environment related initiatives, activities, events or organizations.

In addition to company controlled CERC, stakeholders will eventually also be exposed to external communicators such as the media, word-of-mouth, environmental monitoring groups and NGOs, or consumer forums and blogs. To exert influence on such channels, in particular the media, press releases constitute a key communication tool (Du et al., 2010). Message credibility will be affected by the fact whether communication channels are controlled by the company or not. Individuals are less skeptical about a company's CSR activities, if messages come from non-corporate, neutral sources (e.g., independent environmental organizations), since corporate sources have less credibility and are perceived to be biased or self-interested (Simmons & Becker-Olsen, 2006; Yoon et al., 2006). Thus, companies should aim at getting favorable CER media coverage from independent, unbiased sources (Du et al., 2010).

Since different stakeholder groups will typically use specific communication channels, the appropriate communication outlet should be selected depending on respective stakeholder characteristics. According to Dawkins (2004), opinion leader audiences such as the business press, investors and environmental pressure groups, which are more likely to proactively seek out CER information, should best be targeted via specific CSR and/or CER reports (for instance on corporate websites, such as in the case of the BP corporate website). In contrast, the general public, such as consumers or local communities, with a more passive predisposition toward CER information, often only becomes aware of corporate CER initiatives through advertising or independent channels (for instance, editorial press coverage; Du et al., 2010, or environmental advertising such as the Iberdrola-Scottish Power renewable energy campaigns).

4 Persuasion Strategy and Message Content

4.1 CERC Themes and Claims

Information provided in CSRC is typically different from corporate ability-related information such as products or innovations. CSR information is centered on a wider array of fundamental and enduring aspects of corporate identity, generally related to sponsorship of social causes, employment policies or environmental initiatives (Du et al., 2010). Indeed, it seems that environmental issues represent the main themes addressed by organizations in CSR advertisements, focusing on aspects such as waste management, reduction of energy consumption and emissions, efficient use of resources, creation of innovative products and production processes for environmentally friendly production, or reflecting the environmentally concerned nature of their industry (Perks et al., 2013; Ziek, 2009). The message content of environmental claims has also previously been studied from a green advertising perspective. Carlson, Grove, and Kangun (1993) proposed classifying environmental claims as either substantive or associative. The former type of claim presents a product or corporation as pro-environmental, providing information on tangible environmental benefits. In contrast, associative environmental claims expose simple environmental facts, merely linking the organization perceptually with some environmental cause, but without relationship to the actual environmental impact of the product or company.

4.2 CERC Or Corporate Greenwashing?

In the case of some advertisers, the lack of a clear understanding of green claims by recipients may indeed be the desired outcome. A number of studies analyzing the

information content of green advertising claims revealed vague or even misleading advertising messages (e.g., Carlson et al., 1993; Iyer, Banerjee, & Gulas, 1994; Kangun, Carlson, & Grove, 1991). In Banerjee, Gulas, and Iyer's (1995) content analysis, only a small minority of advertisements presented clear environmental benefits of products or depicted concrete pro-environmental activities. Mostly, advertisers used appealing pictures of the natural environment and addressed the environmental implications of the product or company in an unspecific manner. These authors identified as a typical example an advertisement by a major oil company showing scenic pictures of pristine mountains and valleys underlined by the copy 'We care about the environment'. An ad-hoc review of more contemporary green advertising campaigns shows that not much has changed in this regard in the last two decades. Indeed, there is an ongoing discussion confronting such 'social irresponsibility' strategy with genuine CSR (Murphy & Schlegelmilch, 2013).

Unspecific and potentially deceptive environmental advertising strategy has been termed 'greenwashing' (Carlson et al., 1993; Kangun et al., 1991). Such advertising may be detrimental to consumer's trust in green claims and has been suggested as a cause for a worldwide surge in skepticism toward green advertising (Kangun & Polonsky, 1995; Kilbourne, 1995, 2004; Scammon & Mayer, 1995; Zinkhan & Carlson, 1995). In the literature, the assumption has been widespread that, due to the prevalence of misleading green advertising campaigns, consumers are generally more skeptical toward environmental claims (Carlson, Grove, Kangun, & Polonsky, 1996; Do Paço & Reis, 2012; Easterling, Kenworthy, & Nemzoff, 1996; Fowler & Close, 2012). De Vries, Terwel, Ellemers, and Daamen (2013) showed that communicating environmental policies and activities could elicit positive reactions, but may also lead to accusations that companies deliberately framed their activities as environmentally friendly in order to look more environmentally responsible. Consequently, advertisers have been advised to avoid alienating consumers, in particular environmentally conscious consumers, with non-defensible, inaccurate or even misleading green advertising messages.

4.3 Improving Message Credibility and Minimizing Stakeholder Skepticism

Minimizing stakeholder skepticism of CERC messages, avoiding suspicions of greenwashing and enhancing message credibility constitute key challenges of a successful CER strategy. For this purpose, some indications from previous CSR research may be useful, in particular those based on attribution theory addressing the underlying motives of CSRC. Stakeholders' attributions of CSR motives seem to be crucial, and positive inferences are unlikely, if ulterior, self-serving motives are suspected (Fein & Hilton, 1994). Attributions of values-driven motives appear to inhibit skepticism toward CSR, whereas egoistic motives elicit consumer skepticism (Skarmeeas & Leonidou, 2013). Similarly, attribution of extrinsic CSR

motives, aimed at increasing company profits, will lead to less favorable stakeholder attitudes and behaviors toward the company than intrinsic motives, seen as genuine social or environmental concern (Du et al., 2010; Forehand & Grier, 2003; Yoon et al., 2006). The aim should be to minimize stakeholder skepticism by conveying intrinsic CSR motives (Du et al., 2010). On the other hand, stakeholders may not respond so much to extrinsic motives per se, than to any manipulative or deceptive initiative. Skepticism and impression of deception may be caused by the discrepancy between perceived motives and publicly stated CSR motives (Forehand & Grier, 2003). Yoon et al. (2006) showed that only when consumers attribute sincere motives, CSRC indeed enhances corporate image, but that such initiatives are ineffective when motives are perceived as ambiguous. When motives are perceived as insincere, CSRC can even have detrimental image effects. Another approach to improving perceived credibility may be related to the durability of support for a cause, as it can be used as a cue for judging corporate motives, according to Webb and Mohr (1998), who found that short-term campaigns were more likely perceived as exploiting a cause for image reasons, whereas long-term commitment was perceived as more related to authentic social concern. Furthermore, acknowledging both intrinsic and extrinsic motives in CSR messages has also been shown to decrease skepticism and enhance credibility (Ellen, Webb, & Mohr, 2006; Forehand & Grier, 2003; Sen, Bhattacharya, & Korschun, 2006). In the CERC subdomain, this condition can be complied with by acknowledging, for instance, cost savings achieved by pro-environmental measures (such as recycling, energy saving, etc.).

4.4 Substantial Information and Informative CERC

Research into particular behavioral effects of exposure to CERC claims has been rather scarce so far. As a general increase in environmental consciousness has been observed, it is not surprising that most authors recommend cognitive persuasion strategies, that is employing informative claims, in green advertisements (Carlson et al., 1996; Cope & Winward, 1991; Swenson & Wells, 1997). Particularly for CSRC the use of substantial, factual information is indicated, avoiding especially the impression of ‘bragging’ (Du et al., 2010; Polonsky & Jevons, 2009; Sen, Du, & Bhattacharya, 2009). Hartmann and Apaolaza (2009) showed that exposure to information on a specific environmental product feature can improve brand attitude. The framing of information content can also have a significant influence on environmental attitudes and behaviors. Differentiating between communication framing in terms of the definition of the problem (gains and losses) and the target (current and future generations), Davis (1995) showed that messages reflecting losses to the current generation were the most effective with regard to intentions regarding pro-environmental behavior. Overall, consumers seem to value accurate and detailed environmental information, and they are not necessarily skeptical toward green advertisements, which comply with this condition. For

environmentally conscious individuals, information utility of green claims seems to decrease skepticism of green advertising (Matthes & Wonneberger, 2014).

4.5 *Emotional Claims in CERC*

Emotional advertising can lead to an improvement of brand attitude and purchase intention by associating emotions with the brand (Brown & Stayman, 1992; Burke & Edell, 1989; Kim, Lim, & Bhargava, 1998). In CERC, emotional claims have also been utilized extensively. One particular green claim with emotional qualities is nature imagery. Pictures of nature are widely used in green advertising. Merten (1993) identified three categories of green claims related directly to nature, of which one was described as visual associations with scenic pictures of nature. Hartmann and Apaolaza (2008, 2009, 2012) and Hartmann, Apaolaza, and Alija (2013) showed that exposure to pleasant nature imagery can lead to the association of specific emotional experiences with the brand. Such positive affective brand associations, which they termed ‘virtual nature experiences’, albeit of the associative and vague claim type, can notwithstanding lead to an increase in brand attitude and purchase intention of environmentally friendly products.

In addition, negative affect may also play a role in environmental persuasion. On occasion, green advertising appeals are aimed at evoking negative emotions such as fear and guilt. Environmental fear appeals have been addressed in a small number of studies. The influence of fear arousal as a consequence of exposure to environmental threat appeals on behavioral intentions has been confirmed by LaTour and Tanner (2003) for the specific case of radon gas contamination and by Laros and Steenkamp (2004) for genetically modified food. For green appeals related to climate change threats, Hartmann, Apaolaza, D’Souza, Barrutia, and Echebarria (2014) found that increases in fear arousal subsequent to the exposure to severe threat appeals increased intentions to switch to green electricity and to support a tax on carbon dioxide emissions. Less research attention has been directed at the effectiveness of guilt appeals in green advertising. While there has been some empirical evidence supporting the use of guilt appeals in such a context, research has also shown that the effect of guilt on behavior is rather complex (Jiménez & Yang, 2008). Overall, the literature supports the view that the use of emotional appeals in CERC can be quite effective.

4.6 *Message Fit*

Another characteristic of the CERC message, which has been shown to affect its effectiveness, is the fit between the CER initiative and the advertised corporation (Becker-Olsen et al., 2006; Nan & Heo, 2007). CSR-company fit refers to the perceived congruence or logical connection between a corporation’s core activities

and its CSR initiatives. Fit may relate to the product dimension (e.g., an energy company sponsoring renewable energy projects), corporate image associations as a result of past CSR activities (e.g., The Body Shop supporting environmental initiatives), or affinity with specific stakeholders, such as consumers (e.g., McDonald's helping families of hospitalized children; Menon & Kahn, 2003). A certain degree of such congruence seems to be expected by stakeholders. A low fit of CSR activities and communications with the corporations' business activities has been suggested to increase cognitive elaboration and salience of extrinsic motives, which in turn may induce negative reactions to CSRC (Du et al., 2010). Social activities not aligned with corporate objectives may actually have a detrimental effect on corporate image and become a liability. Becker-Olsen et al. (2006) found that low-fit CSRC had a negative effect on consumer beliefs, attitudes, and intentions. However, they also found that high fit initiatives could have a negative impact as well, when they were profit-motivated. Furthermore, Becker-Olsen et al.'s study revealed that consumers considered the timing of the social initiative (proactive versus reactive) as an informational cue, and that only simultaneously high-fit and proactive CSRC improved corporate image. In a similar study by Nan and Heo (2007), a positive effect of CSRC fit was only observed for individuals who were high in brand consciousness. It is recommended that existing fit of CSR activities should be highlighted in CSRC. In the case of low fit, CSRC messages should elaborate on the rationale of the selection of the specific social initiative to enhance fit perception (Du et al., 2010). For CERC, the implication is that companies should seriously analyze the fit of their CER initiatives and communications with their core corporate activities. For instance, it is questionable whether a much advertised 2003 campaign by BP Spain to protect the Iberian Lynx did indeed have an adequate fit with the company's environmentally hazardous activities.

5 Integrating CERC

Integrating CSRC strategy over multiple channels, and possibly on a global scale as well, poses an important challenge to corporations. CERC, as a subdomain of CSRC, does not follow an independent planning process, but must be considered as embedded into the global CSR strategy. On the other hand, global CSRC strategy must be consistent with CERC. In essence, this means that environmental aspects across the whole company should be managed in a manner that is consistent with CERC aims and messages. Or, expressed the other way around, CERC should not communicate messages, which are inconsistent with the actual environmental management and behavior of the corporation. Polonsky and Jevons (2009) have proposed three areas of complexity that must be addressed for a successful strategic integration of CSR activities and communications: issue (the range of social responsibility issues), organizational (what the organizations actually do) and communication (how to leverage those CSR actions). They recognize that particularly for global organizations, leveraging a corporate brand consistently for all

stakeholders is a complex task, since activities related with CSR should be aligned considering these three areas of complexity. Global organizations will have to address the highest stakeholder expectations on a global scale, since lower levels in any national or regional scope may be perceived as insufficient for stakeholders in other geographic or cultural environments. Another complication, in particular for companies operating on an international level and following an integrated CSR approach, may arise from the fact that some stakeholders may be alienated by some CSR messages related to taking a stance on controversial social issues (Taylor, 2014). Multiple cultural contexts may give rise to cross-cultural issues complicating or even hindering a successful integrated CSR strategy. Environmental issues, however, are less controversial than many other social topics such as those suggested by Taylor, which may be more sensitive (e.g., gender issues, gay rights, etc.). For CERC the problem of global integration will mostly be related to the significant variation of moderators of CERC effects, such as environmental concern and values in different international contexts or national cultural environments. Receptiveness to CERC claims will vary consequently. Integration of CERC should also not necessarily mean standardization. While overall CERC positioning should be maintained constant across the globe, individual messages and executional factors, while being consistent with the overall strategy, may be adapted to particular stakeholders.

6 Conclusions and Future Research

Corporate environmental responsibility communication is a delicate matter. Stakeholders seemingly demand that companies engage in CER initiatives, and they want to be informed about it. However, while CERC can improve corporate image, it may potentially backfire. Stakeholders can easily become wary of CERC claims when extrinsic motives are suspected (Du et al., 2010). Stakeholders initially may already be skeptical toward CERC claims, and skepticism can easily arise in those who are not. Credibility of CERC themes is a critical issue. Companies should definitely avoid ‘bragging’ about their social and environmental initiatives (Sen et al., 2009). In some situations, it may even be indicated to renounce non-mandatory CERC altogether, in particular if advertising is concerned. This may be the case for environmentally hazardous industries, such as oil and (conventional fossil or nuclear) energy companies, as well as chemical companies. However, even for companies with a strong environmental performance, green corporate advertising can result in more unfavorable brand attitudes than no advertising (see Nyilasy, Gangadharbatla, & Paladino, 2014; Parguel, Benoît-Moreau, & Larceneux, 2011).

Adequately implemented CERC can have beneficial effects on corporate image, brand equity, stakeholder attitudes and consumer purchase intentions. An efficient CERC program should take into consideration the specific stakeholder characteristics and adapt messages and communication channels adequately. It is strongly

recommended to utilize substantial green claims, that is, providing relevant information regarding the corporation's environmental performance. The degree of detail of that information should be adapted to stakeholder groups. Information included in environmental reports on corporate websites should be detailed, whereas CER advertising directed mainly at consumers and the wider public should concentrate on specific messages related to the corporation's environmental positioning. Stakeholder perception of greenwashing will significantly hurt company image and should be avoided. Besides informative messages, the use of emotional claims can also be effective in enhancing corporate image and brand equity. Overall, it seems that CER can be a profitable communication instrument. Many consumers seem to accept a 'win-win' perspective on such corporate initiatives in which the environment and the company both benefit.

There are still, however, significant gaps in understanding CERC effects, which open important avenues for future research. It is not yet clear for which stakeholders, which message contents and frames will work. The role of emotional claims in CERC, for instance, has not been addressed in sufficient detail so far. May some stakeholders react adversely to such message framing? Are nature images favorable or can they lead to negative reactions? What is the role of message fit in specific CERC messages? Clearly, more research is still needed to address many remaining questions.

7 Exercise and Reflective Questions

1. The 2015 webpages dedicated to environmental information on BP's corporate website hardly show any images of pleasant natural environments. The two pictures of this kind that can be seen (a snow owl and a lake with some leafless trees) do not contain any green colors. Discuss the implications of this rather untypical visual framing of CERC, as well as probable reasons and aims of the company, and effects on recipients.
2. The "Shell Let's go" CSR advertising campaign, depicting social and environmental achievements of the company, has given rise to parody advertisements from institutions such as the Arcticready initiative. Discuss the reasons and implications of such counteractions from environmental organizations.
3. Would you recommend that an organic food producer and retailer such as ALNATURA should use nature imagery in its CERC? (<http://www.alnatura.de>)

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Integrated CSR Communication of NGOs: The Dilemma to Communicate and Cooperate in CSR Project Partnerships

Lars Rademacher and Nadine Remus

Abstract Integrated communication has expanded as a concept during the last 10 years. It is not about tightly controlling communication tactics any more, but instead it involves the strategic integration of stakeholders. On the other hand, CSR has become a common part of management practice, and CSR communication is an ongoing challenge that needs to be embedded in an overall integrated marketing communication (IMC) framework. The chapter describes the development of the recent IMC discourse, discusses the chances and challenges that IMC holds for NGO communication—and applies the IMC framework to the CSR communication of NGOs. The chapter lays out the role of NGOs in relation to businesses and focuses on the intersection of NGOs and CSR—and how this affects the communication aspect. It systematically unfolds what CSR means to NGOs and proposes a communication-collaboration challenge for NGOs in cooperating with businesses.

1 Introduction

Looking at the CSR concept from an NGO perspective has recently become more and more important. The scholarly discourse on Stakeholder Theory generally focuses on corporations at the heart of the discussion, arguing that they are dependent on a wide range of stakeholders influencing their success (Den Hond & de Bakker, 2007; Freeman, 1984) and, that CSR is a way to interact with these stakeholders and therefore to offer feedback or even participation models. In contrast to this well-known discourse structure, we put NGOs at the center of the discussion and ask what intersections exist between NGOs and CSR when businesses are considered as NGO stakeholders. We examine this relationship from an integrated communication perspective to describe the various aspects of what we call the communication-collaboration challenge in managing for CSR.

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In the first step we explain the role that integrated communication has played in recent years and reflect this development in relation to the progress of the recent CSR discourse. Next, we describe the role of NGOs in relation to businesses and focus on the possible intersections of NGOs and CSR—and how both affect the communication aspect. Finally, we consolidate the discussion under the communication-collaboration challenge.

2 Integrated Communication as a Challenge and Chance for NGOs

2.1 From Classic IMC to Postmodern Concepts of Integration

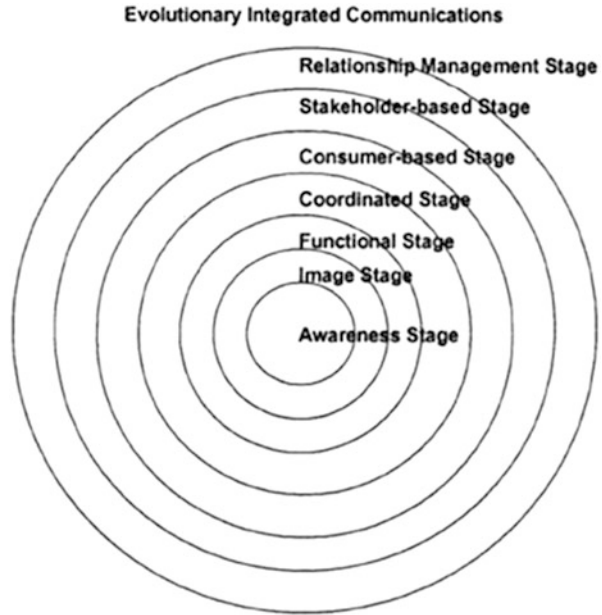
Integrated Communication has been discussed for more than 30 years. While the terminology within the German discourse varies mainly between Integrated Communication, Integrated Corporate Communications and Integrated Marketing Communication, etc., the English-language literature sums up the dominant discussion roots under the term of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC). Among the referred concepts are those of Schultz, Tannenbaum, and Lauterborn (1993, 1996) and Duncan and Caywood (1996), who generally start with the observation of a medial transition where advertising in traditional mass media loses its edge, i.e. its effectiveness (Kitchen & Schultz, 1999, p. 21). In these times, IMC is a modern way to enhance effectiveness and has become a new paradigm to handle the fast evolving media technology and to keep pace with the ever-changing customer needs.

While the basic understanding is that IMC “may be defined as the coordination and integration of all marketing communication tools, avenues, and sources in a company into a seamless program designed to maximize the impact on customers and other stakeholders” (Clow & Baack, 2011), alternative traditions such as Duncan and Caywood (1996) transcend the focus on tools and sources and extend the claim to integrate far beyond this instrumental limitation. They have developed a model of integration stages ranging from awareness stage to relationship management stage—one stage encompassing the stage below (see Fig. 1).

Kirchner (2001, pp. 180–182) takes up the idea of integrating beyond communication products, tools, and routines and transfers it into a five-step-model with the following stages (own translation) that represents the outcomes of a broad meta-analysis of current integration theory:

1. Tactical and image integration
2. Functional integration of products, divisions, and regions
3. Customer-oriented integration (radical client perspective) of all touch points
4. Stakeholder integration
5. Strategic integration

Fig. 1 Integration stages according to Duncan and Caywood (1996, p. 22)



The first three steps represent—in Kirchner’s view—the traditional IMC discourse, whereas stages 4 and 5 mark the evolution into a wider integrated corporate communications approach. The final stage encompasses not only the question of output evaluation and financial performance; strategic integration according to Kirchner also means “allocation of resources and adjustment of the organizational structure according to corporate strategy. (...) This means that every aspect of the organization (...) needs to be brought in line” (Kirchner, 2001, p. 182; own translation).

The model is quite advanced, since it opens up numerous possible interfaces to questions that have concerned corporate communications and CSR departments in recent years, such as social dynamics, demographic change, climate change, diversity issues, etc. Furthermore, it is open to the evolution of media technology, to new ideas on organization, innovation and management. Although most of these questions arose later, Kirchner’s system is flexible enough to cover these new problems. However, possibly due to the early publication date, Kirchner’s work did not generate a lot of following research. It may have overexerted the academic discourse at the beginning of the century and neither English-language literature nor the influential German school of Manfred Bruhn (2014) has taken advantage of more progressive thinking, e.g. Kirchner’s synopsis or the like (Rademacher, 2015).

That could have been different a few years later. In recent years, the postmodern discourse has spread rapidly in management and in communication studies. While postmodernity was popular as a management concept only for a short period of time in the early 1990s—and yet again around the year 2000—it was rediscovered around the year 2005 and has been flourishing since then (Christensen, Torp, &

Firat, 2005). Concerning Integrated Communication a postmodern perspective argues that the idea of controlling channels and, thus, the image of an organization as a unified body has expired. A corporation is perceived as “a body with multiple voices” (Christensen, Morsing, & Cheney, 2008, p. 192)—contrasting the “one-voice-policy” that had been the aim for many years. The former idea was to create a consistent image in all relevant target groups. And postmodern authors like Christensen, Morsing & Cheney (2008) simply ask: is that a realistic goal? Corporations are complex organizations that cannot be reduced to a single opinion or to one voice.

In postmodern terms, integration is merely a heuristic construct that only exists for the sake of its orientation function. Christensen, Torp & Firat (2005, p. 424) describe integration as “alignment of symbols, procedures and behavior” without having a fixed goal to reach. Instead, they assume that integration is always “necessarily partial and incomplete, tempered by buffers and loose coupling and counteracted by processes of differentiation” (Christensen, Torp & Firat, 2005, p. 435). This means, in fact, the rejection of the control & consistency paradigm; may it be visual or content-based. Instead, integration is conceptualized as a co-creative process that involves both: the corporation or brand rights owner and their audiences.

So, the brand and other mental representations that go with it like images or reputations are co-created constructs. The brand is created by brand managers and audiences, which interact in creating a flexible and moving brand image. That makes branded interactions a concern of integrated communication: the brand works as a kind of frame in which brand interaction takes place (Spies, 2012). A creative idea in branded interactions needs to be bound at “common starting points” (van Riel, 1995) e.g. brand values, core ideas, etc. Moreover, new interactions are tested to see if they create a flexibility that can be represented across all possible touch points that users may have with the respective brand. To enhance these contacts, brand-owners seek to offer co-creative interaction in brand communities (Ind, Iglesias, & Schultz, 2013) and create a range of owned media (Baetzgen & Tropp, 2013).

With the postmodern turn, integrated communication as a concept changes into a logical way of arguing why and how an interaction roots in the brand core. Consistency is no longer a function of harmonizing instruments or aligning messages, but is produced through logic and argumentation. Control is only present in the sense that users sharing the same brand community react to one another—and produce feedback that interaction designers can use to initiate the next interactions (Ind et al., 2013). The brand is co-created and constantly changing over time. Moreover, it is becoming democratic and tangible, which fosters the integration and strengthens the relationship of users with the brand.

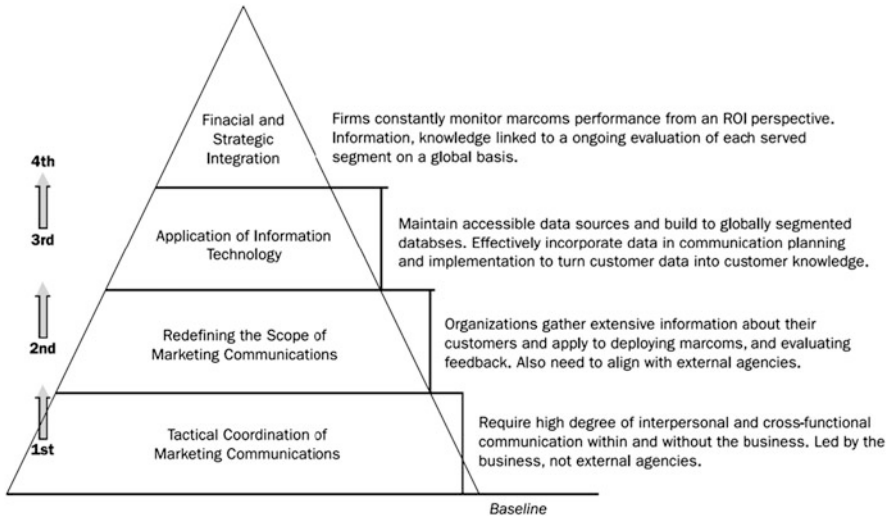


Fig. 2 The integration stages according to Schultz and Schultz (1998). Source: Kitchen, Brignell, Tao & Jones (2004, p. 26)

2.2 Locating CSR in Integrated Communication

Taking up this new way of understanding integrated communication, we want to ask how to locate CSR in the discourse and vice versa. We start with looking at the concept of Schultz and Schultz (1998) that Bruhn (2014, p. 110) describes as the mayor inflection point of the discussion, since it changes the perspective from integrating marketing communications to developing a management process model for integrated communication: the authors suggest four levels: starting with tactical coordination on the first level, proceeding with redefining the scope of marketing communication on the second level, describing the application of ITC on the third level and ending up with financial and strategic integration on the fourth and last level (see Fig. 2).

This has been celebrated as a breakthrough, since a client-oriented outside-in perspective has supplemented the classical corporate perspective. In addition, developments like big data accumulation to generate user profiles, etc. are already anticipated by Schultz and Schultz (1998). The key role of employees in transporting and living the brand is acknowledged. Finally, a financial perspective of integration that keeps an eye on the ROI of marketing communication complements the model. But still, a consumer-oriented perspective continues to dominate the IMC discourse. Kliatchko (2008, p. 153) developed his “pillar”-concept, where stakeholders like suppliers, authorities and employees are considered as relevant pillars to form a reliable basis for integrated communication (see Fig. 3). The idea is to build and maintain strong relationships with all of these stakeholders.

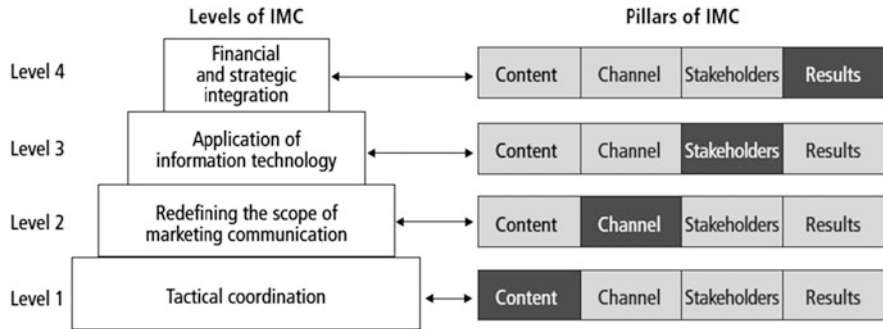


Fig. 3 The levels and pillars of IMC according to Kliatchko (2008, p. 153). Source: Kliatchko (2008, p. 153)

So in fact, we are facing a modern and advanced IMC theory that integrates various stakeholders, has a strong focus on tactics as well as on technology, and longs for a measurable ROI. In Kliatchko's (2008) terms we are talking about content, channels, stakeholders and results. This gives the impression of a lookalike of the latest discourse in communication management. There are still hidden barriers to reach a discussion stage where business studies and communication studies could refer to a common starting point in reconstructing integrated communication.

Bruhn (2014, pp. 114–116) explains that the media and communications sciences open the discourse with the statement that communication outcomes cannot be predicted—since the way in which recipients operate media information is not predictable. They are individual cognitive systems. Bruhn marks the terminology as differentiator: while marketing scholars talk about recipients, communication scholars talk about users—to underline their individuality. He summarizes his position (Bruhn, 2014, p. 116), when he finally declares that from a management perspective it is not satisfying to accept that integration is something that “happens” autonomously (meaning: without direct influence of the corporation). This means, in fact, that Bruhn chooses to ignore significant findings of communication research of the last 30 years.

Not to overcome this barrier signifies a blind spot in the development of IMC theory that marks a huge challenge when it comes to NGOs. Applying the IMC paradigm to a NGO means in the first step that the whole concept is redirected: from the NGO perspective, corporations become stakeholders (or clients). But what effect does that evoke, if these corporations try to apply integrated communication themselves? This seems to indicate that a systems theory approach, where stakeholders are environment to one another and the roles are interchangeable, is the most promising one.

Taking stakeholder theory seriously means, in our case, to accept that a possible business success is dependent on the stakeholder activity (or inactivity). And that obviously means that these organizations work to their own agenda and follow their own strategy. This opens up a new perspective for the theory of IMC: the

management discourse of IMC (Bruhn, 2014; Kliatchko, 2005; Schultz & Schultz, 1998) envisages a classical non-organized consumer. But, in the case of NGOs, consumer interests are accumulated and organized. They represent an abstract type of consumer who—due to the individual’s organizational network—acts like a mature counterpart instead of being a client or first-level consumer. This leads to the question of what NGOs can actually expect from the IMC concept.

2.3 Identifying Hidden Chances in the IMC Discourse for CSR and NGO Communication

Looking back at what we have already analyzed, we can point out several insights on IMC that will guide us through the following chapters:

- We no longer define IMC as a methodology to control and design communication processes on behalf of corporations. Instead, we assume IMC to be a discourse catalyzer that offers common starting options and a frame to co-creative processes of interpreting an organization, its values, strategies, products, services, legitimacy etc.
- We assume that IMC discourse is open to stakeholder theory and has multiple interfaces with it: Kliatchko’s (2008) pillar concept describes stakeholders as one of the four pillars of IMC; Kirchner (2001) assumes the fourth level of integration to be the level of stakeholder integration. And already Duncan and Caywood (1996) were talking about a “stakeholder-based stage” (although not yet in the wider sense that we have in mind today).
- Higher stages of advanced integration concepts transcend the mere communication stage: Kliatchko (2008), Duncan and Caywood (1996) or Kirchner (2001) talk about the development and maintenance of ongoing relationships, about strategic integration (into the business model), an ROI-perspective and the adjustment of the whole organization. All this means relationship development, dialogue, and acceptance of the critical role of stakeholders for business success.
- We assume that in communications, integration is a co-creative process that happens when communication partners interact: when communication products are used and commented, when they are discussed and revised or rewritten and, thus, transformed by interaction. Once this is accepted, the discussion focus shifts from the question of how to organize integration to how to create new and more flexible interaction issues (Spies, 2012).
- We believe that integration is not restricted to communication or business matters, but belongs into the wider context of social integration (Zerfaß, 2004). It is about situating a corporation, a NGO, a product, a public person in society, about integrating these entities and arguing their relevance and legitimacy.

- This involves both, sense making and sense giving (Morsing & Schultz, 2006) as forms of connecting CSR action (and other issues of a management agenda) to the core business process.

Applying IMC to CSR and NGOs defines a number of chances: if you take the IMC framework as common starting ground for co-creative processes of developing an organizational shape, products and legitimacy, this leads to arguing an organization's social role. It is possible to situate the organization, here: an NGO, in society and lay out the complex network of stakeholders that need to be integrated from an NGO perspective. This is the basis on which successful collaboration and cooperation with businesses is built.

3 Relations and Communication Approaches Concerning NGOs and Businesses

As previously explained, we place NGOs at the center of our argument. This holds a number of consequences, if you look at NGOs from a stakeholder relations' perspective (Karmasin, 2015). From a business' point of view one can value NGOs as (primary or secondary) stakeholder that has an impact on other stakeholders at the same level (e.g. suppliers or authorities) as well as on stakeholders of a higher (or more distant) level (e.g. general public). This is a central reason for the existence of several NGOs.¹

Since the term NGO is still an open one in the academic discussion, we would like to introduce some basic distinctions to clarify the boundaries of our understanding. Along with Arenas, Lozano, and Albareda (2009, p. 179), we see NGOs as "free-standing entities that sustain the collective action of the social movements from which they often emerged. They can be called 'social purpose NGOs', such as environmental groups, human rights organizations, organizations that fight against poverty and underdevelopment or provide medical assistance in emergencies." The necessary descriptors in our definition are (1) independence and a (2) social movements' heritage of (3) relevant social or environmental purposes. Arenas et al. (2009, p. 179) also name a fourth element that we support, which needs a bit more explanation: "Their 'clients' (beneficiaries) are different from the people who contribute time and resources; as such they are also called non-membership organizations." This aspect is to differentiate "social purpose NGOs" from "club NGOs" who mainly represent their members' interests, such as trade unions, business associations. We want to clarify that in most cases NGOs serve a purpose that is beyond their membership interests (like environmental or social issues,

¹Looking, for example, at anti-Corporate Campaigns it is quite easy to figure out that the most active NGOs in these conflicts would lose their edge and of course cease to exist, if the corporation itself or the critical aspects of their behavior would have vanished (cf. Baringhorst, Kneip, Niesyto, & März, 2010).

human rights or other fields of, so called, order politics). However, on the other hand, organizations like Amnesty International are also membership organizations; they serve a universal social purpose as well as serving their membership. And thereby, we need to stress that these organizations are not free of interests. According to general systems theory (Luhmann, 1984), an organization always seeks to secure its existence and to enlarge its power. And if you are a social purpose NGO, your own interests are in line with the society's expectations in the respective field: e.g. reducing inequality or poverty. On a second level of observation, however, the same organizations that seek to reduce inequality would destroy their own mission, if they accomplish their ultimate goal. Looking at it from an organizational theory point of view one may say: a social purpose NGO needs inequalities, poverty or other problems in the field of order politics to legitimize its very existence. Without these fundamental issues it would lose *license (or reason) to operate*. This is an important twist that we have to keep in mind while further examining the relation between NGOs and business entities.

Bearing in mind that NGOs have several formal or informal ways of impacting the success of corporations, there are a number of ways in which NGOs can approach corporate action (see also Toker, 2013):

- **Research, Consulting and Advising:**
Many NGOs are experts on social or environmental questions and can offer a wide range of expertise in their fields of activity. They are often referred to as experts by supra-national entities like the UN, by corporations or by the media. They produce reports, hold press conferences, and speak publicly at conferences, in hearings or parliamentary advisory groups. Businesses observe their behavior or even try to profit from their expertise and change behavior marked as critical.
- **Call to Action:**
In recent years NGOs have gained a public role as advocates of the public or as representatives addressing the common good (advocacy). Using this public role, NGOs can demand changes in deplorable states of affairs they detect and privately or publicly utter criticism.
- **Organizing Protest:**
If even public criticism does not lead to significant changes, NGOs can call for public action and organize protests against corporations, start a media campaign or organize alliances to put more pressure on the respective organization.
- **Cooperation and Development:**
The opposite way to reach a change in behavior is that of cooperation, which NGOs can also try. If they chose to cooperate, this can help the corporation to achieve more progress in less time; it can help the NGO to obtain additional funding or at least to gain publicity and to achieve public proof of concept.

These four roles that NGOs show in their relation towards businesses also mark different communication patterns that are dominant in the approaches (see Table 1).

As Table 1 shows, the listed communication patterns such as personal/impersonal, general/individual or rational/emotional are connected to the role that an

Table 1 NGOs' communications patterns towards businesses (own composition)

NGO roles	Dominant Comms pattern	Less dominant Comms pattern
Research, Consulting & Advising (advisor)	(Impersonal) Mass (and Soc.) Media; general; rational argumentation	Personal communication; individual consulting; dialogue
Call to Action (advocate)	Personal Communication; individual; rational argumentation; dialogue (offer)	(Impersonal) Mass (and Soc.) Media; individual; rational and emotional argumentation
Organizing Protest (organizer)	(Impersonal) Mass (and Soc.) Media; individual; emotional argumentation	Personal communication; individual; forming alliances; negotiations; dialogue
Cooperation & Development (partner)	Personal Communication; individual; rational argumentation; negotiations; dialogue; agreements	(Impersonal) Mass (and Soc.) Media; general; rational & emotional argumentation

NGO is playing in a situated context; we may say that these communication patterns are context-sensitive.

In an advising and consulting role, NGOs use mass and social media to demand changes (e.g. in climate politics); they address governments or business on a more general level. Some corporations ask for assistance or rely on NGO information to change their behavior or adjust e.g. production processes to make them more resistant to public criticism. Calling to action is usually—often as a first step²—tailored to organizations themselves asking for change. In organizing protest, the communication style is also impersonal via mass media, but more aggressive, emotional and often individual in the sense that a specific target group is chosen to concentrate on (e.g. an anti-corporate campaign; cf. Baringhorst et al. 2010).

The role that offers a variety of possible touch points to the idea of CSR is the cooperation and development role. In this role, NGOs play the part of an active partner instead of staying outside the process—observing and criticizing. This leads us to the question about the possible access ways NGOs have towards the social phenomenon called CSR. We have to explore this field before we can discuss the role of NGOs in CSR communication.

4 General Perceptions of NGOs

When it comes to the increasing relevance of CSR in businesses and across sectors, NGOs are usually seen as one of the main drivers of this development (Arenas et al., 2009, p. 182; Seitanidi & Crane, 2009). It is also widely accepted that NGOs are among those institutions that enjoy the highest credibility in society. This trend has

²When Greenpeace asks for a change, they usually address the company itself. If they do not agree to enter into a discussion with Greenpeace (like in the Kitkat campaign against Swiss food company Nestlé), the next step is a public campaign.

only recently slowed, as the 2015 Edelman Trust Barometer proves: NGOs' credibility is slightly lower than in previous years. Especially in Western Europe, the perception of NGOs seems to be changing, whereas their perception in Asia or in the BRIC countries is still climbing, or has reached the highest credibility rates of all organization forms named in the poll (Marell, 2016).

However, if you look more closely at NGOs' perception—as Arenas et al. (2009) did in a groundbreaking study gathering perceptions of 57 professionals from for-profit organizations as well as from NGOs in Spain—the scenery is a lot more complex and can be traced to various sub-perceptions. What we can learn from their contribution is that a lot of concern rises regarding the legitimacy of NGOs, their demands and tactics. The self-perception of NGOs and their self-confidence in being a legal and trustworthy representative “only partially coincides with the perception” of market participants (Arenas et al., 2009, p. 190). Their findings support the following reasons:

- NGOs believe they are justified by showing “coherence in their mission and commitment to social change” (ibid). But that might not be enough, because NGOs are also seen as business partners who seem to be “strongly motivated by a desire to gain access to business resources” (ibid).
- A reason for the sometimes divergent perceptions lies in the sheer number of NGOs that provokes the question who and how many people they represent—and if they are free of third-party interest.
- Another reason is the handling of their different roles of NGOs, sometimes being e.g. a consultant or trainer for corporations and receiving compensation for that, “while other (or the same ones) put pressure on companies and blame them for bad conduct” (ibid).
- The question of handling of roles is continued when it comes to defining the attitude towards stepping into CSR cooperation: while some NGOs stay behind and are merely open to consultations on senior management or top management level, others are willing to engage in advisory boards or even boards of directors (ibid.).
- Finally, NGOs seem to lack an understanding of business concerns and what the rules of business are. They are considered as utopian and partly unrealistic. This is, of course, legitimate; but on the other hand, having knowledge of the business world is necessary, if you want to build a joint project with businesses (ibid.).

The authors close with the conclusion that NGOs “are and continue to be essential for the progress of CSR, they are not always aware of the stereotypes that they generate and the problems caused mainly by what is seen as their ambivalent role. (. . .) An important task is to explain their double role and manage it wisely” (Arenas et al., 2009, p. 191).

NGOs are at a higher risk of losing legitimacy than any other organizational form: they themselves have to fulfill every expectation and standard that they demand from others. Even minor misbehavior can lead to dramatic consequences like distrust or a sudden gap in public support. And since the NGOs' realm is quite

complex and unclear, NGOs cannot expect to be trusted anyway. They have to give proof of concept and legitimacy like any other organization.

5 What CSR Can Mean to NGOs

To further explain which different ways of perception between social structures like NGOs and social practices like CSR exist, we refer to the four public roles of NGOs that we explained earlier: advisor, advocate, organizer, and partner. The dominant perceptions of CSR (from the perspective of an NGO) are—according to these roles—at least the following *perception modes*:

- *Rating agent*: as public advisors and advocates of public interest NGOs are target groups of corporate CSR communication. CSR reports or CSR programs are designed as an answer to the public call for action or reports on corporate behavior. They seek to convince NGOs in terms of legitimacy, transparency and openness by simultaneously addressing the public good. NGOs who comment on CSR initiatives or are influenced in their evaluation of corporate activities by CSR reports give credibility to businesses and serve as rating agents in the arena of public legitimacy (Arenas et al., 2009, p. 189).
- *Protest agent*: if a discourse between an NGO and a corporation has reached the stage of public conflict, CSR communication is often used against a corporation either to blame the organization for greenwashing or justifying their activities, or deflecting and blinding civil society's observing eye on them.
- *Development agent*: finally, if corporations seek to collaborate with NGOs CSR becomes a way to report on their collaborative activities. In using corporate resources and NGO intelligence as well as reputation, CSR programs can reach a new stage and make significant contributions. Subsequently, in NGO-business-collaborations CSR becomes an entity of its own that is backed from both sides: from the corporation and from a civil society representative.

In addition to these three modes that describe the possible alternatives of interventions and perceptions of CSR and its communication, we see a fourth perception mode that is obvious in the relation of businesses and NGOs from the second order perception:

- *Business partner*: taking up the idea (previously explained) that NGOs systematically need inequalities, environmental problems and other disparities that can be connected with problems of social order, collaborative projects between NGOs and corporations can be seen as business partnerships in quite a traditional sense, opening up benefits for both sides. So, CSR can develop into a field of business for NGOs. We will get back to this in the next section.

Finally, we have to ask what is meant if we apply CSR as a concept to NGOs themselves: what does it mean to be socially responsible as a NGO?

- *Self-regulation*: asking what CSR means to NGOs' behavior can only mean self-regulation in terms of how to deal with funding and membership fees, who to cooperate with in order to maintain a good reputation or how to behave in the arena of public conflict (Arenas et al., 2009: 181). Everything that is able to damage or harm the good reputation of an NGO or to harm its legitimacy as advocate may end up in putting its own *license to operate* in question.³

6 Cooperation Between NGOs and Businesses

Taking the outcomes of the presented literature review on integrated communication and combining them with what we have gathered on the various roles that NGOs play with regard to businesses, and bearing in mind which communication approaches they use and which perception modes they represent, it is easy to guess that cooperation between businesses and NGOs is one of the most common ways of putting CSR into practice.

According to Seitanidi and Crane (2009, p. 413), partnerships between businesses and NGOs are “an increasingly prominent element of corporate social responsibility implementation”. This implies benefits for both sides: business executives seek a broader basis for their performance evaluation “from a short-term financial focus to include long-term socio-environmental impacts and value added. (...) more corporate executives are willing today to consider an alternative view to strategic management integrating social responsibility considerations” (Jamali & Keshishian, 2009, p. 278). NGOs on the other hand are interested in promoting “more ethical and social responsible business practices” (ibid.). The reasons to engage in these kinds of cross-sector alliance for businesses can be diverse, ranging from reputational effects or increasing social status or recognition to learning in the field of CSR, up to risk prevention (Fombrun, Gardberg, & Barnett, 2000) or corporate foresight. NGOs are generally motivated by increased competition for limited funding, escalating societal needs or serious sustainable concerns. While businesses have the respective resources and managerial efficiency to promote significant changes, NGOs have “expertise and knowledge in what is needed to be done in the field” (Jamali & Keshishian, 2009, p. 279).

Partnerships between businesses and NGOs can be described as co-operations that can be beneficial for both sides. Seitanidi and Crane (2009) describe the creation of a business-NGO-partnership as a complex management task that starts with a (1) selection process where the form of partnership is decided upon and

³Identifying CSR of NGOs with self-control in terms of safeguarding the reputation and legitimacy or being transparent is only one way of applying the CSR approach to NGOs. Other authors like Waters and Ott (2014) seem to offer a broader interpretation; but if you look at the findings of their study (interviews with 17 communication managers of the San Francisco Bay area) the only descriptions for what CSR means to NGOs are “doing something for community good” and “demonstrating that the organization is accountable” (Waters & Ott, 2014, p. 13).

different options are valued against possible risks. At the second stage the (2) partnership itself is designed in terms of experimentation, adaption, and operationalization. (3) Institutionalization of the partnership follows as third and final stage (along with an exit strategy that represents a hidden fourth stage). The listed stages are accessible from both sides: the business and the NGO's side. This is because risks exist likewise, as well as the need to adapt to each other's expectations. And as already mentioned, Arenas et al. (2009) stressed the fact that up to now NGOs have rarely been seen as qualified partners when it comes to understanding the logic of business.

Jonker and Nijhof (2006) developed a "questionnaire for assessing expectations in order to shape dialogue and collaboration" as an instrument to be used in the above described adjustment process. Samii et al. (2002) and Kanter (1994) collected success factors like resource dependency, commitment symmetry, common goal symmetry, intensive communication, individual excellence, investments and many others that may influence a successful partnership setup.

In these models CSR communication plays a key role as success factor that is also a "delicate" one (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2010, p. 17). We are going to comment on this role before we reintegrate the case of CSR into our previous discussion on integrated communication.

7 The Communication-Collaboration Challenge in Managing for CSR

The problem of communicating CSR is quite similar to the legitimacy question of NGOs that we explored earlier: once communication on CSR is too explicit it can harm the good deeds beneath. "Corporate social responsibility communication can have a backlash effect, if stakeholders become suspicious and perceive predominantly extrinsic motives in companies' social initiatives. Hence a key challenge of CSR communication is to overcome stakeholder skepticism and to generate favorable CSR attributions" (Du et al., 2010, p. 17).

But there is more than this basic logic. In a multi-variables approach Du et al. (2010) have presented a framework for the effectiveness of CSR communication that has been highly recognized in recent years (see Fig. 4). The framework shows an input-stage on the left side, where it presents the two major elements of CSR communication: the message content and its various channels. On the right side it displays several internal and external outcomes like awareness and trust or purchase, loyalty etc. that can be found throughout the discourse on effectiveness and communication ROI (Ragas & Culp, 2014). In the middle they place a range of intervening variables that they call "contingency factors"—since they are able to impact the possible outcomes.

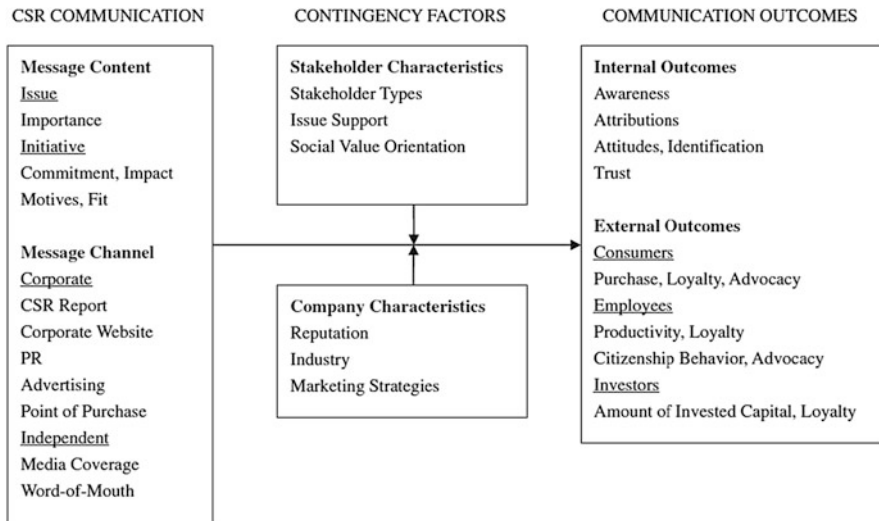


Fig. 4 Effectiveness framework for CSR communication by Du et al. (2010, p. 11)

As much as this merely represents a general generic framework that only gives a very basic overview,⁴ it still shows that CSR communication is placed in an extremely complex setting and has a lot to take into account, if it deals with the question of how to impact business returns of CSR initiatives. The framework is designed with for-profit businesses in mind. Nevertheless, the generic structure can easily be transferred to an NGO setting. Waters and Ott (2014) used it in the same way when exploring CSR attitudes in the nonprofit sector. One of their research questions focuses on the communication strategies of NGOs with regard to CSR. Their findings illustrate that NGOs try to avoid the term ‘CSR’, intending to not label their initiatives as such. The moment that donors or supporters believe that the NGO resembles a business (which even the involved staff believes), the respective NGO starts to lose support.

We describe this contradiction as “communication-collaboration challenge” in CSR communication. Hence, we assume that the context for CSR communication of NGOs is not the question of how to generate communication effectivity in terms of sales or donations, but to secure the legitimacy, transparency and accountability of the NGO by delivering proofs of concept of their efforts. They have to prove that they can impact the world of business in a way that does not corrupt them. NGOs have to show they are able to influence others and, at the same moment, they have to communicate that they remain uninfluenced by others and stay away from

⁴The framework is similar to other literature on communication affectivity that is already more developed, namely Coombs’ (2006) SCCT model for crisis communication that has already been empirically tested and could have been a good model in terms of dealing with attribution theory. Also, the question of the interplay of variables and how they impact each other remains unmentioned.

becoming a business themselves. Therefore, we assume the context of integration is not just about integrating CSR communication in the frames of IMC or of corporate communications, but in the sense of social integration (Zerfaß, 2004, 2008). Social integration means “the linking-up of different social actions or elements so as to form a shared context of action, one in which the conflict-potentials inherent in the division of labor and the distribution of resources among different agents are overcome. Social integration is thereby a normative concept—integration can be successful, or fail, in different degrees” (Zerfaß, 2008, p. 72).

Moreover, this is in line with stakeholder theory as Karmasin (2015) explains: organizations are referenced as a communicative construct, as a community of sense and shared values whose boundaries are also of communicative nature. “The normative goal is the integration of the organization into society resp. the re-integration of society in the organization (and not only the re-integration of markets). (. . .) Public Relations is the recursive and self-organized constitution of a public sphere and—as a process—the production and reproduction of specific organizational identities and legitimacy” (Karmasin, 2015, p. 347f.; own translation).

Zerfaß (2008, p. 72f.) describes three different dimensions of social integration:

1. *Conflicts in respect of means and (following this) the coordination of action.* In this case the means necessary for a certain action are not yet available. So, the company has to adjust its action to the intentions of others.
2. *Conflicts in respect of ends and integration of interests.* Actions that need to be integrated turn into a problem when the goals of agents are incompatible. Communication is needed here to explicate the various interests and find a compromise.
3. *Definitions of situations and interpretation of actions.* If no consensus is reached or a problem remains unsolved it is often unclear who to blame. The agents (e.g. NGOs and corporations) interpret the reasons differently. “The creation of a common interpretative framework represents a cognitive challenge in itself” (Zerfaß, 2008: 73) that only a process of communication can develop.

In a wider sense integrated communication is about re-integrating an organization into society. This is a challenge in general and for every type of organization. But for NGOs and other non-for-profit entities, this is the ultimate challenge, for they need to prove in every given situation that they are in a position of legitimacy. They are generally insecure organizations in the sense of being driven by a strong mission but weak in terms of structure, resources and the ability to reach set goals. From a business point of view they are more “stakeseekers” rather than “stakeholders” (Arenas et al., 2009, p. 184).

As a conclusion with regards to integrated communication (see Sect. 2.3 above) this means: NGOs are part of the co-creative challenge to integrate (or re-integrate) society into the business world and vice versa: to integrate businesses into society. As partner of CSR projects or as judge/rating agent and target group of corporate CSR communication NGOs play a key role in rating and promoting the legitimacy of profit-organization in society. In doing so, NGOs always have to behave in a way

that supports their own legitimacy (i.e. integration) in society and must maintain the distance to and the distinction between business and the non-profit realm. As we have seen, integration into society is always a communicative challenge. But communication of CSR matters needs to be balanced in order not to harm the reputation and status of an NGO. Hence, a NGOs communication-collaboration challenge in managing for CSR is to communicate their own impact, expertise and success in collaborating with businesses, while at the same time communicating their independence, where the boundaries of the cooperation are, what else they expect from partners, where they disagree with the partnering corporation, etc. This covers issues, impacts and motives, and it also involves clearly pointing out where the ends, commitments and social values of both partners lie (Du et al., 2010). It means to describe the fit—and the gap (where necessary).

8 Exercise and Reflective Questions

1. What is Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)? Give a ‘classic’ definition.
2. Which other fields and stages of integration can be found beyond instrumental integration?
3. The concept of IMC also stirs negative emotions about hindering variety and being over-controlled. Please explain.
4. “NGOs represent the public good—not the interests of members.” Discuss this statement with regard to systems theory.
5. NGOs enter the public discourse in various roles. Explain the four prominent roles.
6. The general perception of NGOs in the public and among business is ambivalent. Please explain why.
7. There are different ways NGOs can approach the concept of CSR. Please name and differentiate the perception modes that NGOs can choose when it comes to CSR.
8. Explain what it means to be “socially responsible” as an NGO.
9. Discuss risks of cooperation between NGOs and businesses.
10. What is meant by the expression “communication-collaboration challenge in managing for CSR”?

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CSR and Political Communication

Maren Beaufort, Tobias Eberwein, and Josef Seethaler

Abstract This chapter argues that there is a close relationship between the development of CSR policies (from a shareholder to a stakeholder model) and the political environment, particularly the changing forms of the public sphere (from liberal to participatory approaches). At all stages of this development, communication as a constitutive element of the public sphere plays an important role in CSR, but the more people are engaged in an active public discourse, the more emphasis companies have to place on efforts to communicate their CSR strategies and activities. The trend towards stakeholder engagement in CSR reflects a general shift in political communication, which—over the past years—has revealed a growing interest in the potentials of citizen participation in the political process, particularly with the support of digital media. Up to now, however, central questions in this field of research remain unanswered.

1 On the Political Relevance of CSR

The political environment in which companies are operating is changing. Liberal democracies all over the world are confronted by what Jürgen Habermas (1986) has called “the new obscurity”. A growing uncertainty about the enduring value of the great utopian narratives and the political goals (like the European “welfare state”), which once had outlined possibilities for a better future, is challenging the role of traditional political actors and the way in which policies are developed. This is becoming apparent on both a national and an international level.

On a national level, one need not go as far as Colin Crouch (2004), when he speaks of the dawning of a “post-democratic” age. But it cannot be denied that in many parts of the Western world there is growing criticism of the form of democracy that has emerged in the majority of constitutions and of its leading institutions and methods of procedure. Among the under-40 age groups, for example, party

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membership is in steady decline and voter turnout is below average—and it continues to fall. Trust in democratic organizations and regulatory mechanisms is on the wane, too. Much is heard of disenchantment with politics, particularly when it comes to the great problems faced by society, such as climate change, inequality, sustainability, health, and poverty (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013; Zukin, Keeter, Andolina, Jenkins, & Delli Carpini, 2006). Most people hold the government responsible for solving these issues, even though they have little faith that they will actually do so (Nerlich, Koteyko, & Brown, 2010).

This “governance gap” becomes even more worrisome, when one takes the nature of most of the aforementioned problems into account. On the one hand, a problem usually materializes at the community level (when, for example, forests are dying, more women than men lose their jobs, bottlenecks in the water supply become apparent, etc.), and problem-solving activities depend, for the most part, on state legislation. Therefore, the decreasing power of states to govern economic processes is one of the biggest challenges to modern democracy (Cabrera, 2004). In a time of globalization, on the other hand, it has also become increasingly difficult for the nation state, both as a single actor and within the collective of the international community, to deal with transnational problems in an adequate way. Accordingly, it is a widely shared assumption in the political sciences that issues such as global trade or the protection of the environment cannot be regulated effectively by relying on the traditional governmental “top-down” approach alone (e.g. Cohn, 2002; Newell, 2000). Instead, non-governmental actors are expected to take over responsibility in the process of regulating social issues, thereby assisting political authorities in their attempt to serve the public interest (Rosenau & Czempiel, 1992). In this perspective, even private corporations are regarded as political actors that can contribute directly and deliberately to the common good (Hauffer, 2001).

However, the ability of corporations to become, respectively, a player in the national decision-making process, or a node in the global governance network, often stands in conflict with their primary interest in maximizing their own profits (Rieth, 2011). This conflict is reflected by the stark contrast between the widespread recognition of “boardroom politics” as an integral and influential part of policy-making and the profoundly undemocratic governing arrangements of private corporations that are used to subordinate social goals to commercial ones in the name of maximizing shareholder profits (Baumer & Van Horn, 2014). On an international level, this conflict has been a matter of public debate at least since the early 1990s, when the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro agreed upon the Agenda 21, which—among other things—envisaged a leading role for transnational corporations in the process of finding solutions for the given social and ecological problems. Yet, many of these corporations initially did not comply with their promise to support environmental protection e.g. by establishing appropriate codes and statutes (Rowe, 2005). Public interest in the topic even increased in the context of the recent financial crises and the resulting mass protests against globalization, which were backed by large parts of the civil society. The rising pressure on the private sector clearly induced a climate in which many managers agreed to recalibrate the role of

their corporations in society (Hauffer, 2003) and eventually paved the way for a number of voluntary global initiatives for the advancement of their social engagement—such as the United Nations Global Compact and the Global Reporting Initiative.

Examples like these illustrate that CSR has become an increasingly relevant topic over the past years—also from a political perspective. Hence, while research on CSR generally draws on the traditions of economic sciences, in the face of a governance gap and economic globalization, the topic has also provoked growing interest within the political sciences—and political communication studies in particular. However, unlike the economic approach, which is mainly focused on the analysis of the “business case”, the political perspective particularly asks if and how profit-oriented business actors can affect the “public case” (Rieth, 2011). More specifically, political CSR research discusses:

- The motives and political context factors that influence the development of CSR
- The various strategies and practices of politically relevant CSR as well as
- Their impact on political decision-making processes

This chapter intends to clarify why, how and with which effects the concept of CSR is anchored in politically relevant corporate communication and what this means for society as a whole. We begin with a discussion of the current transformations of the public sphere, in order to illuminate the political setting in which CSR has to operate (2). Subsequently, we give an overview over central research findings, which evaluate the scope of traditional CSR activities (3) as well as the specific potentials and pitfalls of online media in this context (4), even though the number of meaningful empirical studies produced so far is small. The chapter concludes with an outlook and a discussion of the future challenges in this area of research (5).

2 The Political Context: Changing Public Spheres

The importance and performance level of implementation of CSR in companies are affected by those institutional conditions, traditions and norms of a society, which contribute to a social embedding of the economy and, thus, are likely to explain cross-national variation in CSR practices (e.g. Campbell, 2007; Crouch, 2005; Hall & Soskice, 2001). This is particularly important, because mainstream CSR literature (as far as it is concerned with the political dimension of CSR at all) tends to focus on international politics and to ignore the enduring significance of national settings. On the contrary, globally diffused mega-trends are usually translated and adapted to the local institutional realities (Czarniawska & Sevón, 1996). Basically, three key factors can be described as political context variables that are assumed to at least partly influence the development of CSR practices: the role of the welfare state, the nature of the industrial relations system, and the strength of the civil society (Gjølberg, 2012).

While there is less agreement on a positive effect of either strong social and environmental regulations (as they are common in welfare states) or strong corporatist industrial relations on the extent and content of CSR practices developed (e.g. Campbell, 2007; Jackson & Apostolakou, 2010; Kinderman, 2009; Middttun, Gautesen, & Gjøølberg, 2006), civil society is widely regarded as a crucial actor in securing responsible corporate practices. This undisputed role of civil society is due to a fundamental shift in political power between state, business, and labor organizations, with civil society assumed to remain the most active force in pursuing CSR in face of an ever weaker welfare state and declining corporatism (Matten & Moon, 2008). Therefore, it proves necessary to take a closer look at the changes of civil society structures that are occurring throughout the Western world and (at least) partly reflecting transformations of the state. (Undoubtedly, civil society is also undergoing profound changes in different societal systems and state contexts beyond the Western world, but these changes follow different patterns.)

The former abstract notion of a bourgeois public sphere, which emerged in the heyday of liberalism, witnessed a radical transformation during the democratization process, but, nevertheless, the representative model of democracy, which has been institutionalized in most Western constitutions, corresponds in principle to the liberal idea of a public sphere as a realm of economic relationships subjugating norms (such as individual rights and freedoms) to the logic of capitalism. Not surprisingly, the notion of an autonomous public sphere is best expressed by the metaphor of a “marketplace of ideas” (Calhoun, 2001; Seethaler, 2013).

Obviously, a highly rational debate over ideas permits only a small number of active participants. To make, however, the majority of ordinary citizens feel confident that their representatives will represent their interests, they have to be correctly informed about political matters by the news media. Only such “informed citizens” are assumed to make a rational decision in the polling booth (Patterson & Seib, 2005), which can be considered to be at the core of political participation in a liberal-representative system. This aspiration, however, is sometimes reduced: either to that of a “monitorial citizen”, who scans the social environment for those events that demand attention (Schudson, 1999), or to the creation of a “burglar alarm” (Zaller, 2003), by which citizens are put in a position to become politically active when particularly urgent problems arise—and only then. In such a constellation, CSR is supposed to play only a minor role. Usually, it is confined to some general and less specific principles such as fairness and justice as guidelines of all business actions, which are easily agreeable, but not controllable. From the perspective of the liberal state, it is the government (and not the public) who defines the rules of the game within which businesses should operate—and the only aim of the capitalist game is to pursue profit-making for the shareholders (Friedman, 1970; for a critical view, see Henderson, 2001).

As an alternative to the fundamentally elitist standpoint represented by the liberal-representative model of the public sphere, the deliberative model, the theoretical foundations of which were laid by Jürgen Habermas (1989) in the

1960s, offers the idea of a broadly based public discourse supported by a civil society created through the involvement of non-state *and* non-economic actors, who “form the organizational substratum of the general public of citizens” (Habermas, 1989, p. 367). Public will-formation built through communicative action should help to recognize the problems of society as a whole and to arrive at a consensus regarding their importance. It also serves to feed these topics into the political decision-making process and to monitor political decision-makers whose decisions are amenable to public justification.

In a deliberative public sphere, the rationale for CSR has shifted from a *shareholder-centered* approach to a focus on a corporation’s reciprocal relationship with a broad range of *stakeholders* in society (Freeman, 1984). One precondition of this understanding of CSR is the acknowledgement of secondary impacts of a corporation’s activity on a more or less great number of groups in the social environment, which, therefore, have legitimate claims on the corporation. The growing acceptance of societal expectations of corporate behavior coincides with a change in the nature of CSR from former notions of “business ethics” and “business philanthropy” to “business sustainability” (encompassing the economic, social, and environmental implications of a corporation’s activities) and “corporate citizenship”, which aim at creating higher standards of living in the communities in which a corporation operates (Bartlett, 2008).

As Gjølborg (2012) argues, this kind of implementation of CSR depends not only on a favorable political culture, but also on a strong welfare state and strong corporatism. At this stage of development, NGOs have pressured national governments to define legal versus fiscal instruments like fees, permits and cap-and-trade schemes, to induce and steer business self-regulation (Steurer, 2012). However, the growing critical attitudes against governments (who increasingly refuse to govern) as well as traditional (and inflexible) corporatist organizations not only has called the norms of the prevailing public sphere into question (thus turning the deliberative approach in a participatory one), but also the relationship between the public and economic organizations.

Whereas, in the deliberative approach, it is still primarily organized actors, albeit based on civil society, that are engaged in the discursive public sphere, the participatory model aims at the inclusion of everyone—even the oft-quoted “silent majority”—in the democratic public sphere. As a consequence, new forms of political participation are coming into being (Couldry, Livingstone, & Markham, 2010). In contrast to representative forms of party membership and voting systems, which see citizens’ input as a mark of support for the *system as such*, these new forms of participation are geared towards output and aim at enhancing *system performance* (Zukin et al., 2006). In contrast to the delegation of responsibility to democratically legitimated organizations and the accompanying support for their functions (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995), a civil society engagement is currently in the making that embraces a wide variety of participatory activities such as consciousness-raising measures, company boycotts, and online petitions (Ekman & Amnå, 2012), whose consequences on companies are less assessable than in former times, thus bringing new challenges to CSR policies. Civil society in

a participatory sense has been assigned a key role in implementing citizens' concerns in the political context and making demands against a weakened state *and* a strengthened market. Frustrated with the governance gap and regulatory failure associated with economic globalization, civil society actors, both organizational and individual ones, have begun not only to pressure governments (like in the past), but to target corporations directly in various ways, and even to attack corporate brands, and in some instances corporate profits (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013; Steurer, 2012). Among the applied tactics are (Utting & Ives, 2006):

- Watchdog activities to denounce and publicize malpractice
- Consumer boycotts
- Publishing resolutions and organizing public protests at annual meetings of management boards
- Testing and using complaints procedures contained in voluntary CSR codes
- Collective bargaining to improve environmental and labor standards providing advice and technical assistance related to standard-setting, monitoring, reporting, and certification (in collaboration with companies and CSR institutions)
- Partnerships across various NGOs, local grassroots organizations and companies to design and implement social, environmental and development projects

These civic measures represent a major shift from state-dominated to NGO-based (Thompson, 2012) and, finally, participatory accountability (Damgaard & Lewis, 2014). However, the scope of the issues regarding which citizens may hold a company to account has to be considered as rather narrow, because citizens lack power to sanction anyone or to change any procedures. So, to turn civic measures into incentives for business to include social and environmental concerns in their long-term strategies, requires not only *high consumer awareness* and an *active public debate*, but also *strength of monitoring organizations* (including the media) and an *institutionalized dialogue* with stakeholders such as unions, community groups, investors and others (Campbell, 2007). The latter precondition points at the enduring necessity for (welfare) state authorities to create a legal framework that will stimulate or stipulate this institutionalized dialogue. Otherwise, the danger of using CSR as a cover for purely market-driven activities is apparent. There is a thin line to neo-liberal thinking, which aims at substituting “hard” law by “soft” CSR policies (thus undermining democratically legitimized forms of state regulation), and, therefore, considers civil society as a more easily manageable substitute for the welfare state (Sadler & Lloyd, 2009; Steurer, 2010).

3 Strategies and Practices of Politically Relevant CSR

According to theories of political economy, which deal with the interaction between economics and politics by focusing on institutions, processes and outcomes, social responsibility as well as information about it (both of which are

closely connected) is assumed to be a commodity, which (like other commodities in an economic system) has a value for those who provide it and those who use it, responding to supply and demand. This seems to be a more appropriate approach to study, explain and control CSR activities in the context of political communication than the exclusive application of former (and rather vague) normative approaches postulating what firms should or should not do (Gjøølberg, 2012). From a political economic perspective, social behavior of companies is primarily seen as being the outcome of an interplay between voluntary social and environmental activities of a company in order to *gain* societal legitimacy and the expectations of various stakeholders regarding these activities in order to *grant* legitimacy (Sethi, 1979). This perspective is met by the definition given by the European Union, according to which CSR is a “concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis” (Commission of European Communities, 2001).

According to a taxonomy of CSR strategies and practices given by Bartlett (2008), four categories can be distinguished (which overlap one another, but emerged subsequently, and thus can be easily related to the changing political context described in Sect. 2 of this chapter):

- Early liberal CSR conceptions were based on notions of *business philanthropy* and included mainly donations and foundations (Ihlen, 2005).
- On the other hand, sponsorship and cause-related marketing are examples of socially responsible practices, which are intentionally designed to provide *commercial advantage* to the organization and fit to profit maximization as the only corporate purpose (Kotler & Lee, 2005).
- A third and more recent category of CSR strategies is couched in terms of *business sustainability and legitimacy* and reflects the companies’ awareness of the social and environmental implications of economic decisions as well as their long-term implications for organizational success. This category encompasses, for example, employee, environmental, and community engagement programs. The development of this understanding of CSR was forced by a series of environmental and human disasters from the early 1980s on, like the 1984 Bhopal disaster (when the release of methyl isocyanate gas and other chemicals caused death of about 10,000 people in the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh within 2 weeks) and various oil spills, in which several leading transnational companies like Exxon, BP and Shell were involved. In this situation, government policy and strong activism of NGOs have made the implementation of CSR strategies more successful and effective, but continue to be needed when the operating standards of companies fall short of societal expectations (Heath & Ni, 2010).
- The *performance* category, finally, is dedicated to reporting on social and environmental impacts, reputation measurement, and internal and societal evaluations of CSR and sustainability principles and actions to an increasingly interested and participating public. In this respect, the Global Reporting Initiative, the United Nations Global Compact and the associated AA1000 Standard

for Corporate Responsibility and Sustainable Development as well as the ISO26000 Standard for Social Responsibility are emerging international frameworks that help corporations to understand and communicate their impact on social and environmental issues. In December 2014, the European Commission adopted a new directive obliging large multinational corporations with more than 500 employees to disclose information on policies, risks and results regarding environmental matters, social and employee-related aspects, respect for human rights, anti-corruption and bribery issues, and diversity on boards of directors (European Commission, 2014).

At all stages of this development, communication as a constitutive element of the public sphere plays an important role in CSR, but the more people are engaged in an active public discourse, the more emphasis companies have to place on efforts to communicate their CSR policies and activities. When considering the requirements placed on communication from companies, a significant change in the last three decades becomes evident. Besides the transition into a communication society, other impetuses to this change were and are an increasingly complex production process and thus the need to explain technical issues, a rising desire to participate in community matters, and the transition into a risk society. Beck (1986) points out that the modern society has to cope with self-made risks to a much larger extent than in previous decades. Accordingly, the information communicated by companies about themselves must be focused on three core goals: reputation, social acceptance, and trust.

This is especially true in times of crisis which—with regard to the overall development as well as to particular organizations—often represent a starting point for implementing CSR actions as an instrument of crisis management (Bielina-Grajewska, 2014). Thus, theories developed to explain crisis communication provide insights into the mechanisms behind CSR communication in general. Coombs (2007), for example, has based his influential situational crisis communication theory (SCCT), which draws on Benoit's (1995) image restoration theory, on attribution theory, the foundations of which were laid by the Austrian psychologist Fritz Heider (1958). Summarizing the results of various experiments, Coombs argues that, in the case of crisis, causal attributions elicit negative emotional reactions from stakeholders, if the company's behavior is attributed as the cause for the crisis. These negative emotions affect stakeholders' future interactions with the company, changing their willingness to buy its products.

Various authors have attempted to incorporate additional influencing factors into this theory. For instance, Jin and Liu (2010) have drafted an extension to SCCT with SMCC (Social-Mediated Crisis Communication Model), which is the first model to incorporate social media (see Sect. 4 of this chapter). Liu, Austin and Jin (2011) explored how the "form" (traditional media, social media and word of mouth) and "source" (company or third party) of information affect public emotion and acceptance of a company's communication strategy. Claeys and Cauberghe (2012) examined the relationship between the timing of a communication strategy and the company's reputation; and the Integrated Crisis Mapping Model (ICM),

developed by Jin, Pang, and Cameron (2007), aims at understanding the diverse and varied emotions likely to be experienced by key stakeholders during crises. The emotions are located along two axes, representing publics' coping strategy (from cognitive to conative coping) and the level of organizational engagement (from high to low) (see also Jin, 2010).

While there is considerable research on the effects of corporate communication strategies on the public, one of the most neglected issues is the intervening role of media coverage of CSR activities in this relationship. As Holladay (2009) argues, the public relies heavily on the media for information on companies, and if companies do not understand how to convey supporting information in a timely and factual manner from their own point of view, the media will fill the information vacuum with other content and sources. Actually, a struggle of "interpretive dominance" (Stuckey & Antczak, 1995) can be assumed, due to a clash of interests: While public relations try to use media outlets to communicate specific interpretations of issues by applying particular strategies to capture journalists' attention (Fröhlich & Rüdiger, 2006), journalists are eager to apply their own logics, norms and routines to the selection and presentation of what they regard as "news" (de Vreese, 2014). Therefore, more studies are needed to gain more knowledge about which PR messages make it through to the media and why, and how the relationship between the companies' strategic framing and journalistic frame-building in the media has to be mapped (e.g. Ashok, 2010; Schultz, Kleinnijenhuis, Oegema, Utz, & van Atteveldt, 2012).

This is all the more important as the current trend towards a more inclusive form of public discourse (which is fostered by participatory democracy) requires increased corporate communication. When CSR should have value not only for those who provide it, but for those who use it (and otherwise it would not have value for those who provide it!), citizens have to be involved in corporate processes. As already mentioned, citizens—and particular young citizens—have developed a wider repertoire of intrinsically motivated activities of civic engagement, based on individually formulated concerns and personal ideas about what constitutes a "good life", and aimed not only at the government or political parties (like in former times), but at various actors, including business actors (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013). This leads to two consequences: On the one hand, by blurring boundaries between the public and the private sphere, the former juxtaposition between the "citizen" and the "consumer" is also dissolved. When consumers purchase products as citizens, companies have to pay attention to this "political consumerism" (Ward, 2011). On the other hand, the inclusion of citizens in the definition of what sustainable development means to a community or society is a fundamental prerequisite for its achievement. According to the United Nations, only broad public participation can help define the objectives of sustainable development *and* reconcile the different interests in order to integrate economic, social and environmental policies (Steurer, 2008).

These new challenges to corporate communication coincide with the recent developments brought about by new communication technologies, which seem to enhance the possibilities of realizing CSR on the one hand, but come along with

new problems on the other hand. The complex relationship between the promises and pitfalls of web-based CSR communication in the political arena deserves a closer inspection, even though many of the most pressing questions in this context must remain unanswered as yet, due to a lack of solid empirical research.

4 CSR and Political Communication in the Digital Age

The advent of the Internet, in particular the recent innovations in the area of social media, have provoked massive transformations of the way in which CSR works (Adi, Grigore, & Crowther, 2015). Especially in the context of political communication, the increasing use of online media has brought about various new potentials: On the one hand, the Internet has helped private corporations to develop new channels to communicate CSR contents to their relevant stakeholders. On the other hand, it has also empowered these stakeholders to address corporate actors directly, enabling them—in some cases for the first time ever—to verbalize their concerns and actively demand more responsibility on the part of the corporations.

Accordingly, the digitization of CSR communication has massive consequences for the relationship between corporations and their stakeholders (Ingenhoff & Kölling, 2011, pp. 481f): Not only has the number of actors which can partake in the process of communication grown extensively—a development which is all the more important, if corporate actors are expected to demonstrate responsibility for society as a whole. In addition, web-based CSR communication has become increasingly multidirectional; it not only intends to inform stakeholders about certain CSR activities, but rather engages them to enter into a dialogue about business ethics and responsibility (Adams & Frost, 2006; Hughes & Demetrious, 2006). This trend towards stakeholder engagement in CSR reflects a general shift in political communication, which—over the past years—has revealed a growing interest in the potentials of citizen participation in the political process with the support of digital media (e.g., Rackaway, 2014).

When it comes to distributing CSR contents to stakeholders, the corporate website has turned into the key instrument among the available online channels (Ingenhoff & Kölling, 2011, pp. 482ff). It has been compared to the Roman atrium in view of the fact that it publicly showcases selected CSR initiatives and makes them available for stakeholder groups such as employers, journalists, shareholders, or investors (Guimarães-Costa & Pina e Cunha, 2008). Besides the possibility to target specific audiences, websites are often marked by various characteristics that can make them an effective multiplier in the process of CSR communication, e.g. the option to combine different media types (such as text, photos, audio and video elements) or to foster a dialogue with users by including interactive features. However, numerous empirical studies—mostly on the basis of content analyses—demonstrate that potentials like these have not been fully realized yet (e.g. Capriotti & Moreno, 2007; Chaudhri & Wang, 2007; Gomez & Chalmeta, 2011; Holder-Webb, Cohen, Nath, & Wood, 2009; Mann, Byun, Kim,

& Hoggie, 2014; Unermann & Bennett, 2004): According to the most recent research, it is more or less undisputed that corporate websites are widely used to display interest in CSR all over the world, particularly with regard to topics such as community relations, health and security, human resources, and diversity. However, there are still notable national differences in some business sectors. Multimedia productions seem to be thriving, but are not an international standard yet. At the same time, interactive CSR features are still an exemption rather than the rule—a deficit that clearly impedes the development of an open discourse about CSR across countries.

While traditional websites have proven to be unable to stimulate a constant dialogue between corporate actors and their stakeholders, high hopes are being attached to the potential of the various forms of social media, which have become a common feature in both political and organizational communication (Adi et al., 2015; Wagner, Lahme, & Breitbarth, 2014). With the help of blogs, wikis and social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter, corporations intend to advance digital CSR communication from a merely linear to a networked exchange of information, from the idea of instructing potential recipients to the notion of ‘enabling’ them to become a communication partner on an equal footing (Reichmann & Goedereis, 2014). Research shows that “being socially responsible” on social media can indeed have a favorable impact on the public awareness of a firm in some cases (Lee, Oh, & Kim, 2013). However, although the technical preconditions for networked communication about CSR are realized in many corporations around the globe, up to now a clear imbalance prevails within this network, as corporate actors often fail to fully engage with their stakeholders (Fieseler & Fleck, 2013). New forms of user engagement in CSR are currently being tested on the basis of mobile media (Müller, Ahlemann, & Rosenstock, 2014), online games (Coombs & Holladay, 2015b) and other forms of digital communication. It is still largely unclear, though, if these means are more effective than traditional forms of stakeholder management.

Despite these limitations, digital CSR communication continues to have a high appeal, both from a practitioners’ and an academic point of view—particularly since its potential as a vehicle in the political process has hardly been probed into yet. After all, it is beyond doubt that especially social media are offering many options for involving ordinary citizens into a discourse about corporate responsibility and its role in society. More than once, this has been exemplified by political activists who have employed blogs or social networks to put problematic CSR issues on the public agenda, using a grassroots approach to exert pressure on certain firms (Bennett & Lagos, 2007; Coombs & Holladay, 2015a). In cases like these, traditional one-way CSR mechanisms are questioned by a critical counter-public that uses low-cost communication tools to demand corporate accountability in a multidirectional network environment. Here, political messages often travel across media formats and sometimes even intrude into the mass media, easily overriding traditional journalistic gatekeeping processes that were prevalent in the analogue age.

Unfortunately, there is too little empirical research so far to reliably systematize the various influences and context factors that come into play in communicative settings like these. While the various formal characteristics of online CSR initiatives and their thematic focus have been analyzed in much detail, we have hardly any authoritative knowledge about the interdependencies between the corporate and political communication arenas that could—at least in theory—be easily connected in the digital world. Moreover, it is largely unclear, which particular motives may prompt members of the audience to adopt an active role in CSR communication in online contexts—as opposed to conventional offline scenarios. Further studies on the topic would help to clarify which strategies could help to strengthen the dialogic character of web-based CSR communication—and which approaches result in failure. Considering the social and political relevance of this type of dialogue, such insights are desperately needed. However, most of the open questions can only be answered, if traditional CSR research manages to bridge over the gap to the ideas and perspectives of political communication research—thus tackling one of the basic deficits of academic analysis in this field, as highlighted in the previous parts of this article.

5 Conclusion and Future Outlook

The formative role of political communication for CSR and the role of CSR in processes of political communication, so far, have tended to remain under-theorized. This chapter, therefore, makes an attempt to integrate CSR into theories of the public sphere (in which companies operate).

Historically, CSR was first established in countries and during governmental periods that were dominated by neo-liberal ideology (for example in the United States under Ronald Reagan and the United Kingdom under Margaret Thatcher). Referring to general ethical standards had helped to cut back concrete governmental action, which was seen as little more than facilitating market functioning (Midttun, 2005; Moon, 2005). Neo-liberal ideology profited to a large extent from a liberal-representative public sphere with its separation of public and private life and its trust in the elected officials to whom responsibility had been delegated.

However, environmental disasters like the 1984 Bhopal disaster and various oil spills (occurring from the late 1980s on) not only made it clear “that CSR may not be naturally occurring within the corporate environment” (Coombs & Holladay, 2012), but called for taking the CSR concept more seriously. This means, firstly, to “detect and transmit information about social values to guide executive decision-making”, and, secondly, to engage in true dialogue, showing “conscious and respectful effort to share power in a discourse” (Black & Härtel, 2004, p. 130). With this change in the importance of the concept, a change in the political meaning has been observed, which is usually described as “the triple bottom line principle”, implying that businesses (should) not only serve economic, but also social and

environmental ends (Elkington, 1994). Consequently, the implementation of CSR policies in this second stage of CSR development has become more popular in countries with comparatively stronger social and environmental regulations and strong corporatist and non-governmental organizations than in liberal countries (Steurer, Margula, & Berger, 2008). This policy to embed business self-regulation into the welfare state's public policy agenda, was called "new embeddedness" (Midttun, 2005; Steurer, 2010). It coincided with a more general trend in public governance, which emphasizes modes of co-regulation (albeit sometimes associated with a vanishing ability of national governments to put more control on the growing number of transnational corporations), and is typically accompanied by the transformation of a liberal into a more deliberative public sphere with its emphasis on the involvement of all kinds of social and economic actors in governing processes.

Corporations, however, were ready to undertake CSR efforts not because of legal requirements, nor out of a voluntary duty of care, but primarily because of increasing stakeholder demands and pressures. Obviously, the strength of these pressures is, on the one hand, weighed up against the interests of shareholders, and depends, on the other hand, on the readiness of civil society to engage in activities that are determined to influence a company's decisions, i.e. on the strength of a participatory public sphere, which has emerged only in recent years. As Black and Härtel (2004) pointed out, only growing public awareness is able to enhance pressure on corporations to establish truly stakeholder-engaged organizational strategies, because if citizens perceive CSR activities as merely symbolic, the company's reputation is in danger of incurring damage. In a participatory democracy, this pressure is expected to be exerted by citizens who are no longer ready to delegate responsibility only to leaders, but who wish to take their fate into their own hands.

While there has been considerable research on the development of the relations between CSR and the political environment in the last three decades, which allows us to draw inferences on the role of CSR in relation to the changing public sphere, little is known about (1) the concrete implications of the most recent development towards a participatory public sphere for the future of CSR as well as (2) the actual impact that new online-based strategies of politically relevant CSR may have on the image of corporations as well as on political decision-making processes.

Regarding the first question, empirical studies of the relations between citizens' demands, corporate policies, CSR activities, and political decision-making (now often discussed as "co-regulation") are among the major challenges of future research, because a lot of the existing literature on CSR tends to be descriptive. Analytical studies are particularly important as the boundaries between CSR and PR are blurring, thus making it almost impossible for citizens to distinguish between earnest social and environmental measures and CSR rhetoric for "social window dressing" or "green wash" (Steurer, 2012). For example, one has only to remember that some of the corporations responsible for the economic breakdown in

2008 (like Enron and Lehman Brothers) had been—ironically—honored with CSR awards.

A closer look at the second question also reveals that research on CSR and political communication urgently needs more innovative methodological approaches. In a participatory public sphere, new communication technologies like social media transform the communicative dynamics between organizations and their environment (Castelló, Morsing, and Schultz 2013; Whelan, Moon, & Grant, 2013) and turn CSR communication into a continuous activity through which corporations and citizens explore, construct and negotiate the meaning of social responsibility (Christensen & Cheney, 2011). This means that more elaborate methodological designs such as frame-building and semantic and social network analyses are needed to explain the balance of power in the flow of CSR communication in a digitized media environment, whose structure and functionality we are only beginning to understand (Fieseler & Fleck, 2013). Besides, more systematic comparative studies—covering both different business sectors and countries with different political cultures in a long-term perspective—are necessary, as they can help to clarify which context factors influence the changing relationships between CSR activities and society at large.

6 Exercise and Reflective Questions

1. Discuss the goals and activities of corporations that may limit or enhance their ability to become, respectively, a player in the national decision-making process or a node in the global governance network.
2. Name the three political context factors that can be assumed to at least partly influence the development of CSR practices and explore the importance of each of them.
3. Discuss the various strategies and methods of politically relevant CSR and relate them to the political context within which corporations operate, particularly the various forms of the public sphere.
4. What role do different notions of citizenship play in discursive formations of CSR, aiming at shaping the meaning and scope of CSR?
5. Digital communication massively changes the flow of information about corporate social responsibility. Name at least three key characteristics of online media and explain why they might help to intensify the impact of politically relevant CSR messages.
6. To what extent and in what ways do new communication technologies in general and social media in particular influence and change the formative role of political communication for CSR (e.g. by creating new CSR issues such as transparency, social fairness, and privacy)?

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Corporate Social Responsibility Communication and Consumer Gender

Heribert Gierl and Tanja Schneider

Abstract We investigate the role of the consumer gender in CSR communication. Based on Gilligan's work stating that female individuals are more care-oriented whereas male individuals are more justice-oriented we analyze whether female consumers respond more favorably to care-oriented and male consumers respond more favorably to justice-oriented CRS activities. Moreover, we posit that these gender-specific preferences for CSR activities spill over onto brand evaluations when communication formats are used that do not contain intense product-related information. In our study, we found that male consumers' brand attitudes are positively affected by justice-related CSR activities if ads are used for communication that focus on CSR-related information. Moreover, we show that females' brand attitudes are positively influenced by care-related CSR activities independently of the medium used for CSR communication.

1 Introduction

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is an intensely discussed issue in marketing research. We focus on two determinants that might moderate the effect of a company's CSR activities on the evaluations of the promoted brand.

Targetedness We presume that the tendency to respond favorably to CSR activities is stronger if consumers feel personally targeted. We revisit the theory of Gilligan, Langdale, and Lyons (1982) who posits that female individuals are care- and male individuals are justice-oriented and conclude that feelings of targetedness in response to CSR activities are higher in conditions where females are exposed to care-related and males are exposed to justice-related CSR activities.

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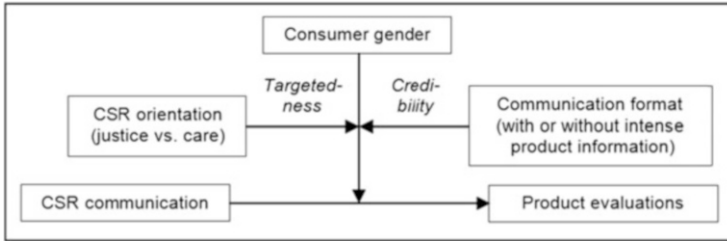


Fig. 1 The conceptual model of this study

Credibility We posit that consumers who feel targeted by CSR activities additionally must regard the company’s motives for supporting a social organization as credible. Consumers may either interpret CSR activities as an altruistic behavior or as means to increase sales and profits. We presume that the effect of targetedness (i.e., the match of consumer gender and the CSR-orientation) is stronger when the CSR information is not used for transporting intense product-related information.

In Fig. 1, we present our conceptual model.

2 Theoretical Considerations

2.1 *The Main Effect of CSR on Brand Attitudes*

A stream of research in attribution theory states that people tend to assign the cause of an actor’s behavior to the actor’s stable dispositions instead of attributing it to situational or external factors. Based on findings of Jones and Harris (1967), Ross (1981, p. 25) hypothesized a general tendency in people “to underestimate the impact of situational determinants and overestimate the degree to which actions and outcomes reflect the actor’s dispositions.” For instance, teachers tend to attribute their pupils’ good or bad test performance to the pupils’ high or low mental capabilities and tend to ignore situational factors such as good or bad luck. This kind of “fundamental attribution error” can be used for explaining consumer responses to CSR activities. Yoon, Gürhan-Canli, and Schwarz (2006, p. 1) presume that consumers tend to use a naïve theory: “consumers will take the activity at face value and attribute positive characteristics to the company, resulting in a more favorable evaluation.” This means that consumers interpret a firm’s CSR activity as a positive stable characteristic of this firm (i.e., assume altruistic motives) and ignore the possible fact that the firm deliberately intends to compensate current reputational deficits or to increase sales that had been declining in the past. Sen and Bhattacharya (2001) found that the attitudes toward a company were more favorable when the firm reported about positively evaluated CSR activities. Only in cases where consumers are less “naïve” and scrutinize the firm’s reason for engaging in

CSR activities, a firm's evaluation may deteriorate because the consumers presume that the firm intends to repair bad reputation or uses CSR activities to enhance profits. We test:

H1 Brand attitudes are higher when the company informs consumers about its CSR activities (main effect in Fig. 1).

2.2 The Interaction Effect Between the Orientation of the CSR Activity and the Consumer Gender on Brand Attitudes

Kohlberg (1981) described a famous moral dilemma, which is denoted as "Heinz's dilemma." Test persons had to imagine the following scenario: "Heinz's wife suffers from a special disease, which can only be cured if she takes a certain drug. This drug has been invented by a druggist who charges ten times its production costs. Heinz is not able to afford the drug or to borrow money and asks the druggist to sell the drug at a lower price or accept later payment. However, the druggist persists on full and immediate payment." The test persons were asked to slip into Heinz's role and provide reasons why Heinz should or should not steal the drug. Basically, keeping the law by not stealing the drug can be justified by the ethic of justice, while stealing it can be reasoned by the ethic of care. Gilligan et al. (1982, p. 34) hypothesized that women generally prefer care-oriented and men are in favor of justice-oriented solutions of moral dilemmas.

Numerous techniques to assess the moral orientation have been developed. In one procedure, hypothetical moral dilemmas such as Heinz's dilemma are created. Test persons then are asked to agree to either the care- or to the justice-oriented solution of the dilemmas. Another method is suggested by Gilligan et al. (1982, p. 22). She proposes to rely on the test participants' responses to moral dilemmas the test person herself/himself actually had experienced. She argues that confronting people with hypothetical dilemmas is not suitable for revealing one's true ethical orientations, because "moral knowledge is constructed by people through their own experience." We summarize the findings that are based on presentations of hypothetical and real moral dilemmas in Table 1.

The results can be interpreted as follows: When test persons reminded themselves of a real dilemma they personally had solved, a tendency of gender-specific moral orientations exists: females prefer care-related actions, while males are in favor of justice-related actions. If they were confronted with hypothetical dilemmas, the effect sometimes disappeared. We use this relationship found for real dilemmas for predicting the effectiveness of CSR activities depending on its moral orientation (justice vs. care) and test:

H2 Justice-oriented CSR activities improve brand attitudes of male consumers. Care-oriented CSR activities improve brand attitudes of female consumers (Moderating effect in Fig. 1).

Table 1 Frequency of care- vs. justice-oriented solutions of moral dilemmas

Authors	Number of test stimuli	Females' preference			Males' preference		
		N	Care (%)	Justice (%)	N	Care (%)	Justice (%)
Gilligan et al. (1982)	1 P	16	75	25	13	15	85
Rothbart et al. (1986)	1 P & 2 H	23	78	22	23	39	61
Gilligan and Attanucci (1988)	1 P	22	55	45	31	3	97
Johnston (1988)	1 H	24	75	25	22	23	77
Pratt et al. (1988)	1 P & 2 H	12	56	44	12	19	81
Pratt et al. (1988)	2 P	10	78	22	9	55	45
Ryan et al. (2004)	1 H	82	40	60	60	43	57
Ryan et al. (2004)	1 H	82	45	55	46	46	54

Note: We excluded the cases in which indifference was stated. *P* personal dilemma, *H* hypothetical dilemma, *N* sample size

2.3 The Amplifying Role of the Communication Format

Numerous studies investigated whether advertorial- and newspaper-like presentations are more credible and perceived as more helpful than regular ads.

For instance, Salomon et al. (1985) exposed consumers to the information that saccharin may cause cancer. They considered four experimental conditions that result from the source of this information (Pepsi or the American Cancer Society) and the presentation format (advertisement or a newspaper article) and found that the information was perceived as more credible if the newspaper article was used to inform the consumers. Van Reijmersdal, Neijens, and Smit (2006) compared the effectiveness of advertorials (advertisements that appear as editorial at first sight but contain the brand logo, have a slightly different type face, and contain product-related information) and theme features (in this case, editors of the magazine present a number of brands in the magazine style) to the effectiveness of print ads. The authors' results indicate that print ads are perceived to be less amusing, less informative, and more irritating.

For the case of CSR communications, Yoon et al. (2006) reported that brand evaluations are more favorable when consumers are informed about the fact that the company conducts CSR activities by a newspaper format compared to informing them via a corporate print ad. Samu and Wymer (2009) also compared the effectiveness of a newspaper-like report to the effectiveness of a print ad depending on whether the medium predominantly contained CSR information, product-related information, or when both types of information were equally present ("balanced version"). They found that the versions that concentrated on reporting the CSR activity led to higher brand attitudes compared to the balanced and the product-dominant version independently of the used communication format (i.e., the newspaper-like format or the print ad). They argue that consumers are confused

and regard the marketer's motivation as ambiguous when they receive equally balanced information. However, no effect was found for different communication formats.

In sum, the results of prior research are contradictory with regard to the effectiveness of different common communication formats. We presume that newspaper reports and ads that focus on information about the company's CSR activities (i.e., do not additionally contain intense information about the features and benefits of the promoted product) are more effective because the consumer could infer more easily on altruistic motives and regard the company's CSR activity as "credible." We include this aspect into our investigation because we expect feelings of targetedness due to appropriate combinations of CSR orientation and consumer gender to be ineffective until a sufficient level of credibility has been achieved:

H3 The effects described in *H2* depend on the use of the communication format: Brand attitudes improve due to the use of matching consumer gender/CSR orientation combinations when the communication medium does not simultaneously transport intense product-related information (Moderating effect in Fig. 1).

3 Experiment

Experimental design Our design had a nested structure. On the highest level, we considered whether CSR information about a brand was given or not. For the CSR-information-present condition, we used a 2 (CSR orientation) \times 4 (CSR presentation format) design. This resulted in nine conditions. The CSR information was either justice-oriented or care-oriented. The formats used to present the information about the company's CSR activity were as follows: (1) print advertisement containing only CSR information; (2) newspaper report containing only CSR information; (3) print advertisement containing both product-related and CSR information; and (4) advertorial-like advertisement containing both product-related and CSR information. Moreover, we used the gender of the consumers as an experimental factor and the product category as a replicate factor. In sum, we had a 9 (CSR activity: either absent or present in two different conditions regarding CSR orientation in combination with four different conditions regarding the presentation format) \times 2 (consumer gender) \times 4 (product category) factorial between-subjects design.

Product categories and brands From each of the product categories (textiles, sweets, shower gel, and facial cream), we selected a brand that either targets male or female consumers. In the case of the textiles, we chose Jack & Jones (which targets males) and Miss Sixty (which targets female). From the category of sweets, we selected Fishermen's Friend and Katjes. From the shower gel category, we chose Axe and Dove. Finally, for the facial cream category, we used Nivea for men and Nivea Visage.

Manipulation of the orientation of the CSR activity We conducted a pretest to identify projects that are perceived as justice- or care-oriented. The test participants were exposed to a set of texts that described projects of social organizations; the organizations really exist, but all the projects were fictitious. In total, 744 people (48.4 % females; $M_{\text{age}} = 27.67$ years, $SD = 8.15$) took part in an online survey that aimed to identify either care- or justice-oriented projects. The online survey was sent to student online communities; however, concerning the age, we presume that there were some people in the sample who had already finished their studies. At maximum, a single participant rated five texts regarding the justice and care orientation of the projects. To assess perceptions of justice evoked by the project, the participants agreed or disagreed with “contributes to justice,” “supports the individual’s rights,” and “supports the ideals of equality and mutuality” ($\alpha = .847$). Perceptions of care were assessed by asking the participants to agree or disagree with “indicates high sensitivity for the needs of others,” “cares for others,” and “takes responsibility for the society” ($\alpha = .921$). All scales were seven-point scales. Based on the findings, we selected three projects that turned out to be predominantly associated with perceptions of justice (projects of the OECD, Amnesty International, and UNESCO) and three projects that were predominately associated with care-related perceptions (projects of Handicap International, SOS Kinderdorf, and UNICEF). The evaluations of these projects with regard to the justice and care orientation are summarized in Table 2. In Table 3, we provide the information about how we assigned the justice- and care-related projects of social organizations to the sponsoring brands.

Manipulation of the information presentation format We considered four common formats for communicating information about the company’s CSR activity. We illustrate the formats for the Dove brand. For the remaining seven brands (i.e., Jack & Jones, Fisherman’s Friend, Axe, Nivea for men as brands targeting male consumers and Miss Sixty, Katjes, and Nivea Visage as brands targeting female consumers), similar sets of test stimuli were used. First, we created two versions of print ads that either focused on reporting the company’s CSR activity or were balanced with regard to reporting CSR- and product-related information. By combining this aspect with the orientation of the CSR activity (care-related or justice-related), we developed four versions of the print ad. These ad versions promoting the Dove brand are shown in Fig. 2. Second, we developed versions for the newspaper report that focused on reporting the company’s CSR activity and for the advertorial that contained information that is balanced with regard to reporting CSR- and product-related information. The combination of these media with the orientation of the CSR activity resulted in four additional test stimuli. They are shown in Fig. 3. Third, we created a print ad that did not contain any information about the company’s CSR activity. For the Dove brand, this version is shown in Fig. 4.

Sample, procedure, and measures Data collection took place from 2010 to 2013 in Germany and resulted in 2786 participants (50.1 % females; $M_{\text{age}} = 25.60$ years, $SD = 6.50$). Most data were collected via face-to-face interviews (73.4 %) and the

Table 2 Justice- and care-related CSR activities

Organization	Objective of the project	Male consumers		Female consumers		t-value
		Perceptions of justice	Perceptions of care	Perceptions of justice	Perceptions of care	
	<i>Justice-related</i>					
OECD	Fair treatment of employees in all countries	5.54	3.49	4.75	4.11	$t_{37} = 2.919^{**}$
Amnesty International	Maintenance of the human rights	5.54	3.39	4.70	4.17	$t_{33} = 2.276^*$
UNESCO	Equal opportunities for children in educational issues	5.18	3.02	4.59	3.29	$t_{107} = 7.105^{***}$
	<i>Care-related</i>					
Handicap International	Integration of handicapped people	4.37	5.07	3.67	4.61	$t_{59} = -6.812^{***}$
SOS Kinderdorf	Healthy breakfast for children	4.08	4.61	3.98	4.81	$t_{59} = -7.138^{***}$
UNICEF	Help for mistreated children and female adolescents	4.15	4.81	4.11	5.13	$t_{59} = -6.830^{***}$

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ in a two-tailed test

Table 3 Assigning justice- and care-related CSR activities to the brands

Consumer gender	Brand	Justice-related CSR activity	Care-related CSR activity
Male	Jack & Jones	OECD	Handicap International
	Fisherman's Friend	Amnesty International	SOS Kinderdorf
	Axe	UNESCO	UNICEF
	Nivea for men	UNESCO	UNICEF
Female	Miss Sixty	OECD	Handicap International
	Katjes	Amnesty International	SOS Kinderdorf
	Dove	UNESCO	UNICEF
	Nivea Visage	UNESCO	UNICEF

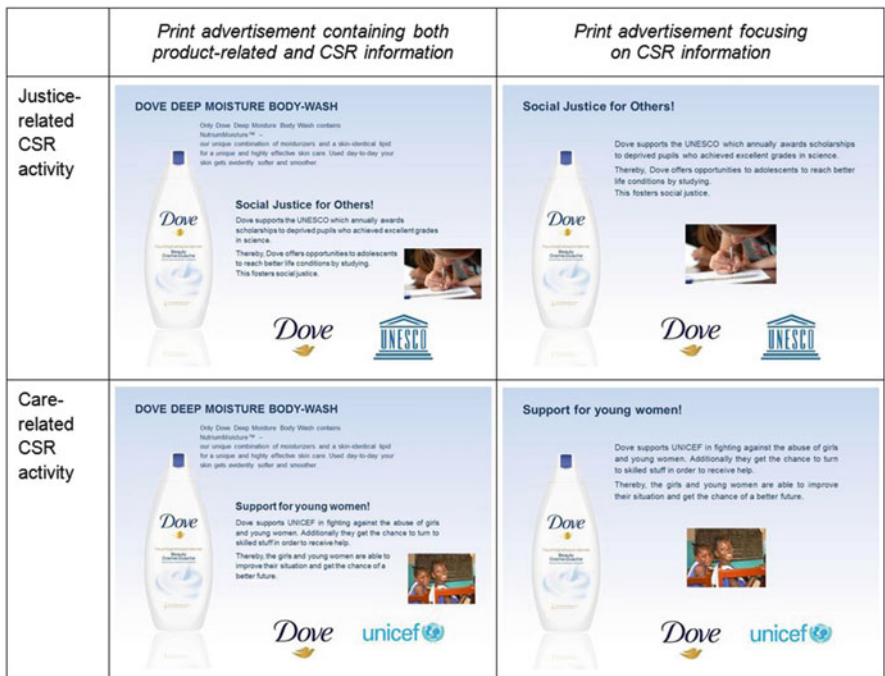


Fig. 2 Ads version for the Dove brand depending on whether a justice-related or care-related CSR activity is presented and whether they focus on CSR information or are balanced with respect to CSR- and product-related information

remaining data through social networks. The participants were exposed to one test stimulus and evaluated the brand by agreeing or disagreeing with “attractive,” “appealing,” “likeable,” and “good” on a seven-point scale ($\alpha = .878$). These items were averaged to assess the attitude toward the brand.

	<i>Justice-related CSR activity</i>	<i>Care-related CSR activity</i>
Newspaper report about the CSR activity	<p>Süddeutsche Zeitung</p> <p>NEUESTE NACHRICHTEN AUS POLITIK, KULTUR, WIRTSCHAFT UND SPORT</p> <p><small>München, Montag, 4. Mai 2013 19: Wocher / 79 104 / 1.30 Euro</small></p> <p>Dove unterstützt die UNESCO</p> <p>Unternehmerisches Engagement für wohltätige Zwecke</p> <p>Hamburg – Der Kosmetikartikelhersteller ist momentan nicht nur um die Steigerung seiner Gewinne bemüht, sondern kümmert sich auch um soziale Belange. In Kooperation mit der internationalen Organisation „UNESCO“ vergibt Dove jährlich mehrere Stipendien an sozial schwache Schüler, die in naturwissenschaftlichen Fächern hervorragende Leistungen an den Tag legen. Mit dieser Maßnahme eröffnet Dove Jugendlichen neue Lebensperspektiven durch ein Studium und fördert so die Chancengleichheit. Hiermit möchte Dove ein Zeichen setzen und das Thema „soziale Gerechtigkeit“ in den Fokus der Öffentlichkeit rücken.</p>	<p>Süddeutsche Zeitung</p> <p>NEUESTE NACHRICHTEN AUS POLITIK, KULTUR, WIRTSCHAFT UND SPORT</p> <p><small>München, Montag, 4. Mai 2013 19: Wocher / 79 104 / 1.30 Euro</small></p> <p>Dove unterstützt UNICEF</p> <p>Unternehmerisches Engagement für mehr Menschlichkeit</p> <p>Hamburg – Der Kosmetikartikelhersteller ist momentan nicht nur um die Steigerung seiner Gewinne bemüht, sondern kümmert sich auch um soziale Belange. In Kooperation mit der Hilfsorganisation „UNICEF“ bekämpft Dove die Misshandlung von Mädchen und jungen Frauen. Die Mädchen und Frauen können sich an dafür vorgesehene Einrichtungen wenden, in denen sie von geschultem Personal sofortige Hilfe erhalten. Dadurch können ihre missliche Situation verbessert und ihr Selbstbewusstsein wieder gestärkt werden, wodurch sie die Chance auf eine bessere Zukunft erhalten. Hiermit möchte Dove ein Zeichen setzen und das Thema „Misshandlung“ in den Fokus der Öffentlichkeit rücken.</p>
	Report about Dove's activities in supporting deprived pupils' education (Social Justice for Others!)	Report about Dove's activities in supporting abused girls and young women (Support for Young Women!)
Advertorial-like report containing both product-rated and CSR information	<p>DER SPIEGEL</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><small>- Anzeige -</small></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Schwungvoll in den Tag!</p> <p>Starten Sie in den Tag mit einem Moment der Entspannung. Wohlwollende Pflege kombiniert mit sanfter Belästigung. Mit dem optimalen Pflegeprodukt wird für jeden Morgenstiefel Deuchen zum (Haar-)Erflebnis!</p> <p>Für die meisten Menschen gehört der morgendliche Erlichungsprozess zum Alltag. Deuchen kann viel mehr sein als nur eine Rasenpflege – Entspannung, Hautpflege, Feuchtigkeitsschutz und Duftlebnis. Ein Großteil der Pflegeartikel ist mit wertvollen Inhaltsstoffen angereichert und liefert der Haut die benötigte Feuchtigkeit, wobei diese gleichzeitig gut wird.</p> <p>Das passende Duochgel sorgt für das optimale Gleichgewicht zwischen Körper und Geist. Die abwechslungsreiche Produktpalette von Körperpflegeartikeln bietet den Konsumenten ein breites Spektrum an Angeboten. Ob perfumiert oder duftlos, ob entspannend oder belebend – der Konsument hat die freie Wahl. Besonders zu beachten ist dabei die optimale Abstimmung der Pflegeprodukte auf die Haarbedürfnisse.</p> <p>Das Angebot an reizmildenden Hautprodukten ist genauso vielfältig wie die verschiedenen Frisurtypen.</p> <p>Der Konzernbetreiber Dove stellt diese Themen in seinem Werbergep in den Vordergrund. Dabei werden Frauen unterschiedlicher Größe und Haut sowie jeglichen Alters mit der Grundgedanke dabei ist, sich in seiner Haut wieder wohlfühlen. Wohlfühlen wird durch die Balance zwischen Körper, Geist und Seele erreicht. Dies fördert die soziale Gerechtigkeit.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Soziale Gerechtigkeit für Anderer!</p> <p>Dove unterstützt die UNESCO, die jährlich mehrere Stipendien an sozial schwache Schüler vergibt, die hervorragende Leistungen in naturwissenschaftlichen Fächern an den Tag legen. Somit wird Jugendlichen die Möglichkeit eröffnet, neue Lebensperspektiven durch ein Studium zu erlangen. Dies fördert die soziale Gerechtigkeit.</p> 	<p>DER SPIEGEL</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><small>- Anzeige -</small></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Schwungvoll in den Tag!</p> <p>Starten Sie in den Tag mit einem Moment der Entspannung. Wohlwollende Pflege kombiniert mit sanfter Belästigung. Mit dem optimalen Pflegeprodukt wird für jeden Morgenstiefel Deuchen zum (Haar-)Erflebnis!</p> <p>Für die meisten Menschen gehört der morgendliche Erlichungsprozess zum Alltag. Deuchen kann viel mehr sein als nur eine Rasenpflege – Entspannung, Hautpflege, Feuchtigkeitsschutz und Duftlebnis. Ein Großteil der Pflegeartikel ist mit wertvollen Inhaltsstoffen angereichert und liefert der Haut die benötigte Feuchtigkeit, wobei diese gleichzeitig gut wird.</p> <p>Das passende Duochgel sorgt für das optimale Gleichgewicht zwischen Körper und Geist. Die abwechslungsreiche Produktpalette von Körperpflegeartikeln bietet den Konsumenten ein breites Spektrum an Angeboten. Ob perfumiert oder duftlos, ob entspannend oder belebend – der Konsument hat die freie Wahl. Besonders zu beachten ist dabei die optimale Abstimmung der Pflegeprodukte auf die Haarbedürfnisse.</p> <p>Das Angebot an reizmildenden Hautprodukten ist genauso vielfältig wie die verschiedenen Frisurtypen.</p> <p>Der Konzernbetreiber Dove stellt diese Themen in seinem Werbergep in den Vordergrund. Dabei werden Frauen unterschiedlicher Größe und Haut sowie jeglichen Alters mit der Grundgedanke dabei ist, sich in seiner Haut wieder wohlfühlen. Wohlfühlen wird durch die Balance zwischen Körper, Geist und Seele erreicht.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Unterstützung junger Frauen!</p> <p>Dove unterstützt UNICEF beim Kampf gegen die Misshandlung von Mädchen und jungen Frauen. Zusätzlich bietet sie ihnen die Möglichkeit, sich an geschultes Personal zu wenden und so Hilfe zu bekommen. Dadurch erhalten sie die Chance auf eine bessere Zukunft.</p> 
	Left side: editorial-like report about factors affecting females' skin health Right side: report about Dove's activities in supporting deprived pupils' education (Social Justice for Others!)	Left side: editorial-like report about factors affecting females' skin health Right side: report about Dove's activities in supporting abused girls and young women (Support for Young Women!)

Fig. 3 Newspaper report and advertorial for the Dove brand depending on whether a justice-related or care-related CSR activity is presented



Fig. 4 Print ad for the Dove brand without any CSR information

Stability of the results In Table 4, we show how the attitude toward the brand is affected by the presence of CSR information, its justice or care orientation, and its presentation format depending on the consumer's gender. Because these findings indicate that there are no systematic differences across the product categories, we collapsed the data across the categories and visualized the findings in Fig. 5 on the aggregate level.

Test of H1 In H1, we expected that brand attitudes are higher when the company informs consumers about its CSR activities. We compared the control condition in which no CSR information was provided to the conditions in which CSR information was present. The attitudes toward the brand were higher in the CSR-information-present conditions ($M_{\text{CSR absent}} = 4.37$, $M_{\text{CSR present}} = 4.50$, $t_{2784} = 2.028$, $p < .05$), however, the size of the overall effect was marginal.

Test of H2 Next, we tested H2, which predicts that justice-oriented CSR activities improve brand attitudes of male consumers, while care-oriented CSR activities improve brand attitudes of female consumers. For male consumers, we found that demonstrating justice orientation is superior ($M_{\text{justice}} = 4.64$, $M_{\text{care}} = 3.91$, $t_{1046} = 8.868$, $p < .001$), and for female consumers, our data revealed that emphasizing care orientation is advantageous ($M_{\text{justice}} = 4.38$, $M_{\text{care}} = 4.99$, $t_{1176} = -8.094$, $p < .001$). These findings show that the orientation of CSR activities is a crucial factor for the company's success of CSR communications.

Test of H3 Finally, we proved the validity of H3, which suggests that only using communication formats that concentrate on reporting the company's CSR activity are advantageous. First, we looked at the findings for male consumers, which

Table 4 The effects of the CSR orientation and the presentation format on brand evaluations depending on consumer gender

Consumer gender	Brand	CSR activity and orientation	CSR information absent		CSR information predominant		CSR and product-related information equally present	
			Print ad	4.03	Print ad	Newspaper report	Print ad	Advertorial-like report
Male	Jack & Jones	Absent		4.03				
		Justice			5.20	4.59	4.28	4.77
		Care			3.59	4.18	3.85	3.96
	Fisherman's Friend	Absent		4.52				
		Justice			5.07	4.38	4.40	4.78
		Care			3.42	3.70	4.04	4.54
	Axe	Absent		4.14				
		Justice			5.57	4.23	4.83	4.57
		Care			2.87	3.56	4.65	3.87
	Nivea for men	Absent		4.27				
		Justice			5.52	4.24	4.42	3.74
		Care			5.01	3.70	3.78	3.76
Total	Absent		4.27					
	Justice			5.34	4.36	4.46	4.45	
	Care			3.73	3.78	4.07	4.03	
Female	Miss Sixty	Absent		3.94				
		Justice			3.52	4.14	3.80	3.88
		Care			4.57	4.18	4.38	4.30
Katjes	Absent		4.57					
	Justice			3.52	4.90	3.88	4.65	
	Care			5.88	5.11	4.79	4.83	

(continued)

Table 4 (continued)

Consumer gender	Brand	CSR activity and orientation	CSR information absent		CSR information predominant		CSR and product-related information equally present	
			Print ad	Advertorial-like report	Print ad	Newspaper report	Print ad	Advertorial-like report
	Dove	Absent	4.65					
		Justice		4.03	4.84	4.58	4.73	
		Care		5.53	5.28	5.10	5.09	
	Nivea Visage	Absent	4.64					
		Justice		4.40	5.11	5.11	4.87	
		Care		4.93	5.34	5.24	5.36	
Total		Absent	4.52					
		Justice		3.80	4.77	4.37	4.54	
		Care		5.10	5.04	4.89	4.92	

Note: Scale ranges from 1 (negative brand attitude) to 7 (positive brand attitude)

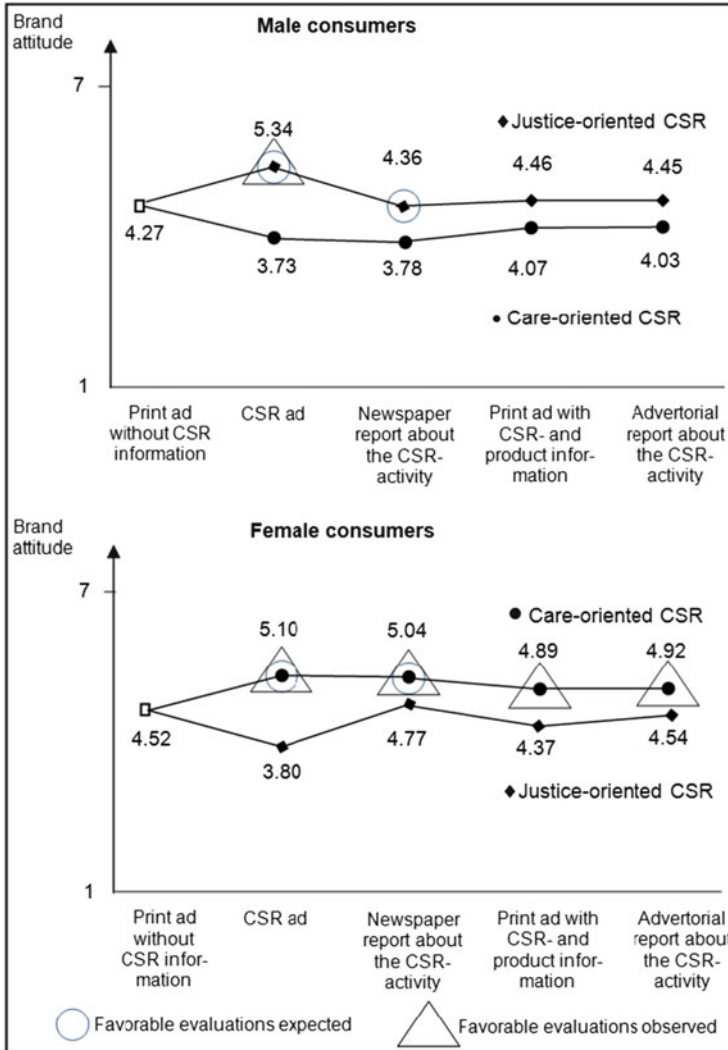


Fig. 5 The effects of CSR orientation and the presentation format on brand evaluations depending on consumer gender

resulted for the case of justice-oriented CSR activities. In comparison to the CSR-information-absent condition ($M_{\text{absent}} = 4.27$), we expected that CSR ads ($M = 5.34$, $t_{463} = 8.295$, $p < .001$) and newspaper reports ($M = 4.36$, $t_{468} = .712$, NS) are effective and print ads containing both CSR- and product related information ($M = 4.46$, $t_{495} = 1.643$, NS) and advertorials ($M = 4.45$, $t_{462} = 1.318$, NS) are ineffective. Contrary to our expectations, the newspaper report turned out to be ineffective as well. Second, we regarded the results for female consumers, which we found for the case of care-oriented CSR activities. Again, the presumption was

that, compared to the CSR-information-absent condition ($M_{\text{absent}} = 4.52$), brand evaluations are higher in the case of using the CSR ad ($M = 5.10$, $t_{366} = 3.967$, $p < .001$) or using the newspaper report ($M = 5.04$, $t_{396} = 3.956$, $p < .001$) and ineffective in the cases of using a print ad containing both CSR- and product-related information ($M = 4.89$, $t_{341} = 2.460$, $p < .01$) or using an advertorial ($M = 4.92$, $t_{354} = 2.653$, $p < .01$). In sum, we can support H3 partly for male consumers and cannot support this presumption for female consumers.

4 Conclusions

The results of our experiment provide insights into the role of consumer gender on the effectiveness of communicating CSR activities.

Gender Overall, we found that female and male consumers do not differ regarding their response to CSR activities. For both genders, the effect is marginal (males: $M_{\text{absent}} = 4.27$, $M_{\text{present}} = 4.35$; females: $M_{\text{absent}} = 4.52$, $M_{\text{present}} = 4.73$).

Targetedness We found that female consumers respond favorably to care-related CSR activities and male consumers are prone to respond positively to justice-related CSR activities. This finding is in line with the theory suggested by Gilligan et al. (1982). When CSR activities are communicated whose orientation do not match the moral orientation of the targeted consumers' gender, brand evaluations may deteriorate. We presume that the use of non-fitting orientations of CSR activities reduces sensations of targetedness of the consumers.

Credibility We found that male consumers are attracted by justice-related CSR activities when CSR ads are used to transport CSR information. Newspaper reports and media that also contain intense product-related information are ineffective. Female consumers are positively influenced by care-related CSR activities independently of the communication format used ($F_3; 589 = .846$, *NS*).

When companies communicate CSR activities to affect consumer's brand attitudes, they should pay attention to the moral orientation of the consumers' gender. We recommend demonstrating engagement in care-related (vs. justice-related) CSR activities when female (vs. male) consumers are targeted. Moreover, we recommend choosing the print ad format to inform consumers about justice-related CSR activities when male consumers are targeted.

5 Directions for Future Research

Opportunities for future research result from overcoming the major limitations of our experiment.

First, in our experiment, we focused on CSR activities that target “outgroups”, i.e., benefit people with a high distance to the consumer (e.g., abused children and young women in Africa). Ryan, David and Reynolds (2004) found that, besides the consumer gender, the ingroup membership is another important determinant for the utilization of care-oriented solutions of moral dilemmas. This finding suggests that even male consumers might evaluate brands of companies that support care-related CSR projects positively, when additional information is made available that lowers the social distance between the consumer and the individuals who are supported. Messages such as “Anyone could get into trouble” may evoke cognitions about the fact that all people belong to the same “mankind.” Probably, these thoughts reduce the social distance and, then, both female and male consumers may be positively influenced by care-related CSR activities.

Second, we used rather young test participants. We presume that people learn to develop care-related thoughts during the stages of childhood while the capability to develop intense justice-related thoughts is acquired in later stages. Thus, the differences we found for care- and justice-related CSR activities may be lower or even absent for older consumers.

Analyzing the effect of additional measures to reduce the social distance and using samples that are composed of older consumers may provide detailed insights into the role of consumer gender for the effectiveness of CSR activities.

6 Exercise and Reflective Questions

1. What is the main reason why CSR communication is supposed to be effective for improving the attitudes toward the brand of the company?
2. What are the moral orientations that are supposed to be different for males and females?
3. What types of communication should be used to inform consumers about a company’s CSR activity? Why?
4. In essence, CSR activities are instruments to humanize brands, i.e. link brand names with human characteristics such as caring, responsible, or fair. What different tools exist to associate brands with human personality traits?
5. Basically, CSR activities are means to influence consumers by informing them about these measures. Why and under which conditions should companies prefer these tools over those of classical advertising?
6. Which fit should companies consider: the fit between the brand’s product category and the sponsored institution, or the fit between the brand’s target group and the sponsored institution? Why?

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Insights into the Impact of CSR Communication Source on Trust and Purchase Intention

Ulrike Krisch and Sonja Grabner-Kräuter

Abstract The communication of “green CSR activities” offers companies the possibility to enhance consumer trust and increase consumers’ purchase intentions for their products. However, research on different sources and types of CSR communication is still scarce and little is known about the influence of these on trust and purchase intention outside of the Western world. In this article we explore the influence of different types of communication about environmental CSR activities on consumer trust and purchase intention in the context of Hong Kong consumers. We suggest that although positive CSR communication both in the form of advertising and publicity will have a beneficial effect on consumer trust and purchase intention, there will be a significant difference between these different types of CSR communication sources.

1 Introduction

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) provides support to worthy causes and companies practice it both to increase visibility and to create social impact. Many companies invest heavily, not only in socially beneficial actions, but also in communicating them (Luo & Bhattacharya, 2006). In many definitions of CSR, the environment is either mentioned explicitly as one of the dimensions of CSR or it is implicitly considered as part of CSR (Dahlsrud, 2008). Consumer environmentalism and, as a consequence, also green marketing, have been more prevalent in the last two decades, as consumers have become more aware of environmental problems in this world and more willing to purchase products, which are more environmentally friendly (Chen, 2010). Market polls and academic research have shown that consumers expect companies to provide information about what they do, and will support those who pursue CSR activities (Dolnicar & Pomeroy, 2007). Communication about CSR activities can move either through channels controlled by a third party, such as magazine or newspaper articles and social media, or through channels over which companies have full control, like PR or

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advertisements (Kim & Ferguson, 2014; Vanhamme, Swaen, Berens, & Janssen, 2014). This leaves companies with the dilemma how to communicate believably and consistently about CSR (Nielsen & Thomsen, 2007). In this context, the literature points out the importance of choosing adequate communication sources, media and communication channels (Dolnicar & Pomeroy, 2007; Morsing & Schultz, 2006; Schlegelmilch & Pollach, 2005).

Companies primarily have two avenues available to actively communicate CSR: advertising and publicity (Sandler & Secunda, 1993). Public relations practitioners seem to rely on the assumption that publicity provides more value than advertising (Hallahan, 1999; Michaelson & Stacks, 2007). These claims, however, do not have sufficient empirical support, and research efforts comparing the effects of publicity versus advertising are inconclusive at best (Eisend & Küster, 2011; Vercic, Vercic, & Laco, 2008). While the importance of communicating CSR activities has garnered a fair amount of attention in the marketing literature (Brown & Dacin, 1997; Wagner, Lutz, & Weitz, 2009), research on the effects of the information source or communication type has not kept pace (Groza, Pronschinske, & Walker, 2011). In light of the measurable decrease in media credibility over the last decade, the concept of higher levels of credibility assigned to publicity seems to no longer be universally valid.

A number of cross-cultural studies indicate that differences in cultural and social backgrounds and political and institutional environments result in different views on CSR in different parts of the world (Shafer, Fukukawa, & Lee, 2006). CSR activities can be impeded by a lack of adaptation to the cultural context, as these cultural differences exist in the expectations regarding CSR communication (Morsing & Schultz, 2006), causing some Western CSR approaches to fail in Asia (Ilan, Latteman, Fetscherin, Li, & Schneider, 2010). To date, consumers' perceptions of companies' communication have mostly been studied in the Western world. Applying these findings to the Eastern hemisphere has proven to be difficult because of both the distinct difference in socio-cultural environments and the substantial perceptual gap between the academic definition and actual practice (Yoo & Jo, 2014). The growing consumer spending power in China makes the region attractive for businesses, which is demonstrated by rapidly increasing advertising expenditures (Chu & Lin, 2012). China is the world's second largest and fastest growing economy (The World Bank, 2015)—but while there is an extensive stream of advertising research available for the Western world, more research attention is required to investigate if findings are also applicable to fast-growing Asian markets (Okazaki & Mueller, 2007).

While some literature exists comparing the persuasive effects of advertising and publicity, research on this topic is not extensive (Loda, Norman, & Backman, 2007; Maignan, 2001; Skard & Thorbjørnsen, 2014). In particular, research is needed, which investigates the conditions that might favor different types of communication sources (Skard & Thorbjørnsen, 2014), e.g. if the effects of communication sources found in the Western world also apply in Asia. Apart from the lack of extensive Asian studies in the field of comparable source communication, we also find a research gap in the examination of consumer trust as a mediating variable.

Although CSR is a well-researched topic, few studies investigate consumer trust as a CSR performance variable (Vlachos, Tsamakos, Vrechopoulos, & Avaramidis, 2009). In the following, after addressing communication sources and trust as they relate to CSR, we report on a study that explored the influence of different types of communication about environmental CSR activities on Hong Kong consumers' trust and purchase intention.

2 Background

2.1 *Publicity Versus Advertising*

Messages about ethical and socially responsible corporate initiatives are likely to evoke strong and often positive responses among stakeholders (Morsing & Schultz, 2006). Research has pointed to the potential business benefits of the communication of CSR efforts (Maignan, Ferrell, & Hult, 1999). However, the communication of CSR activities remains a "double-edged sword" for companies, trying to inform the general public about "doing good" on the one hand, while causing consumer skepticism on the other hand (e.g. Albayrak, Caber, Moutinho, & Herstein, 2011; Foreh & Grier, 2003; Richards, 2013). Publicity and advertising are two different content types and sources of persuasive communications (Çelebi, 2007) that marketers can also use to promote a company's CSR initiatives (Hallahan, 1999). Several studies have investigated the differences between various types and sources of communication. These differences can be categorized as follows: (1) differences in comprehension, (2) differences in processing, (3) differences in effectiveness, and (4) cultural differences.

Differences in comprehension It has been found that mental processing of stories requires more extensive elaboration than processing of visual images, because people have to "search for" and assign their own visuals to build the mental model of the story they are reading. In a marketing communications context, this means that exposing consumers to brands through news articles (e.g. in the form of publicity editorials) may generate a more extensive mental model than the one generated when observing visual ads (Micu, 2010). Researchers have also investigated how the communication source results in differences in comprehension. Jacoby and Hoyer (1982) compared rates of miscomprehension of TV messages and found that non-advertising messages (TV programs and news) led to greater misunderstandings than advertising messages.

Differences in processing Early research mainly reflects the assumption that the difference between publicity and advertising is obvious to consumers (Hallahan, 1999). Knowledge about differences between publicity and advertising are part of an individual's media literacy (Anderson, 1983; Rice, Huston, & Wright, 1982) acquired through media and consumer socialization (Ward, Klees, & Warkman,

1990). How consumers process and integrate various sources of information has been the subject of considerable study (Loda et al., 2007). Consumers use contextual cues (e.g. breaks in a TV episode) and formal features of a message (e.g. an advertising headline) to categorize a message as news/publicity or advertisement. According to Greenwald and Leavitt (1984), this occurs instantaneously during the pre-attention stages of processing, prior to focal attention, comprehension or elaboration. Using the most accessible schema, individuals will then process the message according to the rules that have proven successful for them in the past (Hallahan, 1994). In their study on media usage, McLeod, Pan, and Rucinski (1988) reported that different consumers integrate information presented in news (e.g. publicity) versus ads differently. For example, participants were less likely to attempt to interpret the meaning and “read between the lines” in advertisements than they were in newspaper articles. The knowledge of the differences between publicity and advertising also has an influence on the consumers’ cognitive processing (Hallahan, 1994).

Differences in effectiveness The assumption that publicity is more credible, persuasive or effective than advertising has been held in marketing literature (Gartner, 1993; Kotler, Bowen, & Makens, 1996) but without substantive empirical support (Loda et al., 2007). At the same time, Hunt and Gruning (1993) and Hallahan (1999) pointed out that despite the widespread acceptance among practitioners and general acknowledgements by academics, little empirical research had been conducted to test claims about third-party endorsement or the superiority of publicity versus advertising. To date, there have been mixed empirical results regarding the theory of the superiority of publicity (Holben, Bussy, Dickinson, & Allert, 2006). Some studies have suggested a uniform superiority of publicity (Cameron, 1994; Putrevu, 2005; Schwarz, Kumpf, & Bussmann, 1986), others have failed to validate the assertion (Jo, 2004). While some have indicated that assessments are moderated by other factors (Chaiken & Maheswaran, 1994; Hallahan, 1999; Salmon, Reid, Pokrwcznski, & Willett, 1985), others have stated that publicity and advertisements are equally effective in promoting a product (Michaelson & Stacks, 2007). In a recent study, Skard and Thorbjørnsen (2014) found that contextual factors such as brand reputation moderate the effect of CSR information sources on consumer perceptions and attitudes.

Cultural differences The way CSR is perceived is shaped by culture, religion, political and socio-economic conditions¹ (Sriramesh, Ng, Ting, & Wanyin, 2007). As the largest developing country in the world, China² has many special characteristics that differ from countries in the Western world, in terms of social system,

¹See therefore e.g. chapter “The CSR Communications & Reporting Landscape in Developing Countries” by Davin Katamba and Cedric M. Nkiko and chapter “Corporate Social Responsibility Communication in North America: The Past, Present, and Future” by Karen Becker-Olsen and Francisco Guzmán of this Handbook.

²For CSR communication in China, see also the contribution of Lee/Chan (chapter “Practices of Corporate Social Responsibility in China and Hong Kong”) of this Handbook.

economic development level, and cultural values (Emery & Tian, 2010). The popular assumption that publicity is perceived as more credible is based on the US and Western world's understanding of a free and unbiased press, postulating that the general public believes that the media "objectively" reports events as they happen (Vercic et al., 2008). Survey evidence shows Asian consumers' demand for greater responsibility among businesses. Hong Kong consumers have proven their serious support of CSR initiatives, if companies were perceived as sincere and committed to their CSR engagement (Ramasamy, Yeung, & Au, 2010). Previous research indicates that the effectiveness of advertising is highly dependent on cultural variations (Cheng & Schweitzer, 1996; Culter & Rajshekhar, 1992; Monga & John, 2007; Shavitt & Zhang, 2004). The existing literature further suggests that people's cognitive styles vary significantly across nations and cultures. As a result, East Asians emphasize holistic information processing and are more receptive to transformational (symbolic) advertising than people in the West, especially for low involvement product categories. In addition, Chinese consumers engage more in affective processing than in cognitive thoughts (Geng, Liu, Yang, & Wang, 2013).

2.2 A Multidimensional View of Consumer Trust

The notion of trust has been examined in different disciplines and under various contexts over the years (Grabner-Kräuter & Kaluscha, 2003). Trust is mostly defined as a belief or expectation about the other (trusted) party, or as a behavioral intention or willingness to depend or rely on another party, coupled with a sense of vulnerability or risk, if the trust is violated. For example, most researchers now agree that trust is multidimensional (Doney & Cannon, 1997; Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995; Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998). Especially within the research disciplines of relationship marketing and organizational theory, researchers define trust as a multi-dimensional construct and include in their trust definitions specific characteristics of the trusted party, such as ability, integrity, benevolence, predictability, credibility and dependability. From this perspective, consumer trust derives from a mechanism wherein characteristics, motives and intentions are attributed to an exchange partner, with the assumption that her/his behavior is predictable and corresponds to what has been promised (Doney & Cannon, 1997). Attributions of this kind can derive from the perceived performance competencies (abilities or competencies) (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001), the exchange partners' ability to assume responsibilities by prioritizing other parties' interests over their own (benevolence) (Barber, 1983) or the perceptions of the company's honesty, truthfulness, sincerity and reliability (integrity). From this multi-dimensional trust perspective, exchange partners must not only manifest an ability to fulfill expectations (competency), but also demonstrate benevolence and integrity towards the customer (Swaen & Chumpitaz, 2008). We assume that the communication of a company's environmental CSR activities can provide a number

of opportunities to strengthen the customers' beliefs that the company is competent, benevolent and acts with integrity.

Competence dimension of trust The expectation of consistently competent performance has been noted as a precursor to the development of trust in a variety of contexts; e.g. the conceptual model developed by Mayer et al. (1995), which includes ability, or "a group of skills, competencies and characteristics that enable a party to have influence within some specific domain" as a key element of trustworthiness. A competent brand is one that has the ability to solve customers' problems and meet their needs (Afzal, Kahn, Rehman, Ali, & Wajahat, 2010).

Benevolence dimension of trust Benevolence is widely recognized as influencing the perception of trustworthiness and implies a perception of positive intent and good motives (Connolly, 2007). A company's benevolence can be defined as behaviors that reflect an underlying motivation to place the consumer's interest ahead of self-interest (Sirdeshmukh, Singh, & Sabol, 2002). Sako (1992) refers to this dimension as "goodwill trust" and notes that, unlike competence trust, a benevolent partner "can be trusted to take initiatives [favoring the customer] while refraining from unfair advantage taking". Consequently, benevolent behaviors are often regarded as an "extra role" that is performed at the cost of the company with or without commensurate benefits (Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002). Studying consumer trust in a brand, Hess (1995) demonstrates that altruism, or the perception that a company has the consumer's best interests at heart, explains the greatest proportion (40 %) of variance in consumer trust.

Integrity dimension of trust Integrity has been discussed as antecedent of trust by several researchers (Bhattacharjee, 2000; Lee & Turban, 2001; McKnight, Choudhury, & Kacmar, 2002). For example, early research (Gabarro, 1978) indicates one of the determinants of trust to be "character" of which integrity is a key component. Later research suggests that the perception that the company has integrity assures the consumer that it will fulfill agreements as promised (Schoorman, Mayer, & Davis, 2007). Lee and Turban (2001) describe integrity as "the trusting party's perception that the trusted party will be honest and adhere to an acceptable set of principles".

3 Hypotheses Development

The communication of CSR activities is likely to bolster the consumers' sense of dealing with a partner worthy of trust because most CSR initiatives are specifically designed to signify a company's efforts to act in a socially and/or environmentally responsible way (Swaen & Chumpitaz, 2008). Previous research also found a positive effect of CSR in the environmental domain on company evaluation and purchase intentions (Mohr & Webb, 2005). Drawing on these arguments and

findings, a positive effect of CSR on consumer trust and purchase intention can be expected. In our study, we focus on the source through which CSR activities are transmitted as one of the factors that influence consumer attitudes and behaviors (Skard & Thorbjørnsen, 2014). More specifically, we investigate the effects of two different types of CSR communication on trust and purchase intentions of Hong Kong consumers.

Publicity is defined as “editorial space, rather than paid space, in print, broadcast media, to promote a product, place or person” (Kotler 1993 in Loda & Coleman, 2005). Publicity is often considered to be a more credible and trustworthy communication source as it is perceived as information not controlled by the company (Swaen & Vanhamme, 2005). While this perception is prevailing in the Western world, it might be less obvious in the Eastern hemisphere. Mohr, Webb, and Harris (2001) report that many consumers are cynical about the positive things described in the media. In Hong Kong, many newspapers, including the South China Morning Post, have been accused of censoring and pro-China propaganda, for example, recently, in the context of the Hong Kong Occupy movement (Chan, 2014). Exploring the function and meaning of *Xuan Chuan* in China, the equivalent to “public relations” in the West, Yoo and Jo (2014) found that newspapers in China were more often seen as drivers of persuasion rather than distributors of information. The fact that China shifted its economic system to capitalism only 40 years ago might be one of the reasons why public relations are mainly seen as the governmental management of the relationship between the political party and the population rather than the distribution of “neutral” information (Yoo & Jo, 2014).

Several years ago, research began to examine how companies use various communication strategies to highlight their commitment to CSR (Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, & Hill, 2006; Groza et al., 2011; Morsing & Schultz, 2006). Swaen and Vanhamme (2005) investigated the effect of corporate social responsibility arguments in communication campaigns and found that positive CSR information had a significant effect on product perceptions, purchase intentions and consumer trust. Although findings are not always conclusive, a large number of researchers state that consumers mostly view companies’ CSR activities favorably, resulting in positive purchase intentions (Drumwright, 1996; Ellen, Webb, & Mohr, 2006), or assert that positive CSR associations can enhance product evaluations (Becker-Olsen et al., 2006; Brown & Dacin, 1997). However, the influence of CSR on consumers’ purchase intentions might be more complex than its straightforward positive effect on company evaluation (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2010). In the case of Hong Kong consumers, we expect a counter-intuitive effect of the communication source on both consumer trust and purchase intentions. Chinese consumers have been found to be very positive about advertising and less skeptical toward information from foreign firms (Pollay, Tse, & Wang, 1990). At the same time, information provided by official Chinese media suffers from perceptions of being manipulative and being used as a tool of propaganda, whereas advertisements from the Western world are perceived to be more trustworthy. Chinese consumers have been found to react favorably to advertisements because of their pragmatic orientation, seeking for concrete and substantial product information rather than

questioning the motives behind different forms of communication (Chan, 2004; Tian, Wang, & Yang, 2011). Advertising as a means of marketing has been widely accepted by Chinese society and it has been discovered that Chinese consumers generally believe that foreign advertisements are attractive and trustworthy (Emery & Tian, 2010). Hence, we present the following hypotheses:

- H1 The positive effect of CSR communication on Hong Kong consumers' trust in the company's competence, benevolence and integrity will be stronger if the communication source is an advertisement.
- H2 The positive effect of CSR communication on Hong Kong consumers' purchase intention will be stronger if the communication source is an advertisement.

Previous research found that purchase intentions are influenced by customers' trusting beliefs in the firm's ability, benevolence and integrity (Schlosser, White, & Lloyd, 2006). In line with these findings, we posit that trusting beliefs in the company's ability or competence should lead to an increase in purchase intention. Similarly, consumers might believe that a company with high benevolence and integrity will offer honest products and act in the consumer's best interest, thereby increasing the consumer's intentions to buy. These trusting beliefs will all positively affect willingness to purchase because they assure the consumer that the company is both able and willing to deliver the goods/services purchased (McKnight et al., 2002). In the consumer behavior literature, dimensions of trust have frequently been described as key mediating variables leading to positive attitudinal or behavioral relationship outcomes (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Following these lines of research, we also investigate the mediating effects of the trusting beliefs on purchase intention and suggest the following hypothesis:

- H3 Consumers' trusting beliefs in a company's competence, benevolence and integrity mediate the influence of the communication source of a company's environmental CSR communication on purchase intention.

4 Method

4.1 Design and Procedure

We used a quasi-experimental design to examine the effects of CSR communication on consumer trust (benevolence, integrity, competence) and purchase intention. To test our hypothesis, we employed a factorial design, randomly assigning respondents to either the advertisement scenario or a publicity scenario, communicating a fictitious company's environmental CSR activities (Fig. 1). The ethical and functional factors related to a company producing bar soaps (following the approach of Auger & Devinney, 2007). Designs were derived from a US soap advertisement (not known in Hong Kong) and the publicity scenario followed the layout of the South China Morning Post, a well-known daily newspaper in



Fig. 1 Environmental CSR scenarios (publicity versus advertising)

Hong Kong. The environmental scenarios were created after a comprehensive analysis of real life examples of green CSR communication and were based on the environmental advertising of the ice cream company “Ben & Jerry’s” to keep it as realistic as possible. One version of the environmental scenario was in the form of a newspaper advertisement and one in the form of a publicity editorial in a newspaper, which is a commonly used form of PR communication.

We used a face-to-face investigation procedure to collect data. First, respondents were exposed to either an environmental advertisement or an environmental publicity text in a newspaper, after which they were asked to answer a survey comprised of 15 questions. If participants were unwilling or had difficulties reading the material (e.g. elderly people), material was read and explained to them before respondents filled out the questionnaire. On average, each respondent spent around 20 min participating, and no incentive was paid. Although English was initially used to develop the questionnaire, it was subsequently translated into Cantonese to facilitate respondents’ understanding. The translations were carefully checked by two native speakers in Hong Kong to ensure linguistic equivalence.

4.2 Measures

Established scales were used and adapted to serve the CSR context to measure the investigated constructs. The questionnaire was pretested with 20 consumers in Beijing, China in order to identify possible problems in terms of clarity and accuracy and small adaptations based on comments and feedback were made to the questionnaire after the pretest. We borrowed and adapted the trusting beliefs scale from McKnight et al. (2002) to measure consumer trust, which includes four items to measure the trust dimension competence, three items to measure the benevolence dimension and four items to measure integrity (see Appendix). All items were measured on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = “strongly disagree”, 7 = “strongly agree”). A three-item scale from Baker and Churchill Jr. (1977) was adapted to measure purchase intention. Participants were asked to rate the questions “Would you like to try the soap of Cicada Ltd.? Would you buy the soap of Cicada Ltd. if you happened to see it in a store? Would you actively seek out the product of Cicada Ltd. in a store in order to purchase it?” on a seven-point semantic differential scale (1 = “yes definitely”, 7 = “no definitely not”). The Cronbach alpha for these three items is .87; the responses were averaged to form one variable to represent the respondent’s purchase intentions.

5 Results

5.1 Sample

The study participants were 114 consumers who were recruited between June and October 2013 in their real life shopping environment, in Hong Kong shopping malls, following the approach of Tian et al. (2011). The sample was roughly equally distributed between males and females, the majority (82 %) between 20 and 59 years old. The questionnaire and the scenario were available both in English and Cantonese, the first contact with study participants was made in English and only respondents who could understand the instructions in English participated in the study. Although we see a higher education level of respondents reflected in the data (with 69 % having an undergraduate or postgraduate degree and 35 % of the respondents with a net (disposable) monthly income of HKD 36,000 or more), it is important to note that both Cantonese and English are official languages in Hong Kong and according to a recent report of the Hong Kong census and statistics department, 66.5 % of the Hong Kong population perceive their English language competence as very good or good, and 28.6 % as average (Census and Statistics Department Hong Kong, 2014).

5.2 *Testing Unidimensionality*

Prior to hypotheses testing, we started our analyses with an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to assess the unidimensionality using SPSS 22. Principal component analysis and Varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalization were employed. The EFA identified three factors explaining 78 % of data variance. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test of sampling indicated that conducting factor analysis on the data is appropriate (KMO = 0.91) and also the Bartlett's test of sphericity was highly significant ($p < .001$). The 11 items for the constructs competence, benevolence and integrity loaded on only two factors (one competence factor and another benevolence/integrity factor). The items "I believe that Cicada Ltd. would act in my best interest" and "If I required help, Cicada Ltd. would do its best to help me" had factor loadings between .51 and .54 on both the competence factor and the benevolence/integrity factor and were removed from further analyses. Internal consistency for each of the remaining scale items was examined using Cronbach's alpha. The alphas were .895 for competence trust (4 items), .930 for benevolence and integrity trust (5 items), and .839 for purchase intentions (3 items) (see Appendix). Overall, these analyses indicated that two distinct factors were underlying the responses to the consumer trust items (one competence factor and one benevolence/integrity factor) and a third factor was comprised of the purchase intention items. These three factors were moderately internally consistent.

5.3 *Hypothesis Tests*

H1 predicted a positive effect of CSR communication on consumer trust in the company's competence, benevolence and integrity and H2 on purchase intentions, which should both be stronger, if the communication source is an advertisement. To test this, we conducted a one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) with the type of CSR communication (advertisement vs. publicity) as independent variable and competence trust, benevolence and integrity trust and purchase intention as dependent variables.

A MANOVA was preferred to conducting multiple ANOVAs, because it can test more dependent variables simultaneously, and it also controls for intercorrelations among the various dependent variables; thus, a MANOVA protects against Type I error caused by multiple tests of (likely) correlated dependent variables (Tummers, Janssen, Landeweerd, & Houkes, 2001; Warne, 2014). The dependent variables in a MANOVA should be related conceptually, and it is reasonable to conduct a MANOVA, if they correlate from about .3 to about .7 (Maxwell, 2001). In this study, correlations among the dependent variables range from .516 (competence trust with purchase intention) to .651 (competence trust with benevolence/integrity trust).

The overall MANOVA conducted to compare the two groups on the three dependent variables was significant (Wilks-Lambda $F(3.110) = 3.722$, $p < .05$), as were the univariate tests. There was a significant effect of communication source on competence trust, benevolence and integrity trust and purchase intention. Univariate analyses showed that participants who were presented with the advertisement condition showed higher ratings in all three dependent variables than the participants in the publicity condition (see Table 1). Environmental CSR communication significantly affected the dependent variables in the predicted direction; therefore, H1 and H2 were supported.

H3 proposes that the effects of environmental CSR communication sources on purchase intention are mediated via the trust variables competence, benevolence and integrity. To test the mediation hypothesis, we used the “PROCESS” Macro 2.12.1 from Hayes for SPSS 22 (Hayes, 2013; Paine, 2007). We calculated a multiple mediation model 4 (10,000 boot straps, confidence level of .95) with purchase intention as dependent variable, communication source as independent variable and competence and benevolence/integrity trust as mediators. We followed the steps proposed by Zhao, Lynch, and Chen (2010) to determine mediation effects and to calculate the total regression model, which shows a good predictive power ($r^2 = .358$). Multiple regression analyses were conducted to assess each component of the proposed mediation model. Firstly, it was found that publicity (as opposed to advertisement) was negatively associated with purchase intentions ($B = -.487$, $t = -2.157$, $LLCI = -.934$, $ULCI = -.039$, $p > .05$), indicating that CSR communication in the form of advertising leads to higher purchase intention ratings. It was also found that publicity was negatively related to competence trust ($B = -.463$, $t = -2.559$, $LLCI = -.821$, $ULCI = -.105$, $p > .05$) and benevolence and integrity trust ($B = -.678$, $t = -3.298$, $LLCI = -1.085$, $ULCI = -.270$, $p > .05$). Lastly, results indicated that the mediators were positively associated with the dependent variable. It was found that the consumers’ purchase intention is significantly influenced by the consumers’ trust in the company’s competence ($B = .315$, $t = 2.524$, $LLCI = .068$, $ULCI = .562$, $p < .013$) and its benevolence and integrity ($B = .421$, $t = 3.831$, $LLCI = .203$, $ULCI = .638$, $p < .001$). In addition, results indicated that the direct effect of CSR communication source on purchase intention became non-significant ($B = -.056$, $t = -.287$, $LLCI = -.4432$, $ULCI = .3311$, $p = .77$) when controlling for consumer trust in a company’s competence, benevolence and integrity, thus suggesting full mediation. Hence, H3 was confirmed.

6 Discussion, Implications and Limitations

Existing research offers little guidance on how CSR initiatives and activities should be communicated (Skard & Thorbjørnsen, 2014). This study focuses on source effects and thereby contributes to a better understanding of factors that influence companies’ choices of the right communication source. Previous studies on advertising versus publicity suggest that CSR messages are more positively evaluated

Table 1 Effects of CSR communication source on trust and purchase intention

Independent variables	MANOVA results		Univariate results											
	Wilks' λ	F	Competence			Benevolence & integrity			Purchase intention					
			Mean	n	F	Mean	n	F	Mean	n	F			
CSR Communication	0.908	3.722*	4.58	66	6.549*	4.67	66	10.875**	4.76	66	4.653*			
Publicity			4.120	48		3.99	48		4.27	48				

*p < .05, **p < .01

when they are communicated through neutral, third-party sources than when they are provided by company sources (Skard & Thorbjørnsen, 2014; Yoon, Gürhan-Canli, & Schwarz, 2006). However, findings from our experiment with consumers in Hong Kong indicate that cultural factors must also be considered when assessing such communication effects. Drawing on previous findings that indicated that Chinese consumers generally react favorably to advertisements from Western firms and rarely question the motives behind different forms of communication (Chan, 2004; Emery & Tian, 2010; Tian et al., 2011), we hypothesized that the positive effect of CSR communication on consumer trust and purchase intention would be stronger, if the communication source was an advertisement.

Indeed, our results indicate that CSR communication in the form of advertising has a stronger effect on consumer trust and purchase intention than CSR communication in the form of publicity—a finding that might be counterintuitive from a Western perspective. Hence, the perceptions of communication sources and their impact on consumer trust in a company's competence, benevolence and integrity as well as on purchase intention might be highly country-specific. The present findings in the context of CSR communication seem to be consistent with other advertising research, which found that Chinese consumers generally believe that foreign advertisements are attractive and trustworthy (Emery & Tian, 2010). An important practical implication of this study is that the frequently held assumption that CSR initiatives should be communicated through third-party, non-corporate sources needs to be carefully assessed before companies start creating media and communication plans for the Chinese market.

The postulated mediation effect of consumer trust on the relationship between source of CSR communication and purchase intention was also confirmed. Consistent with our expectation and corroborating previous findings in the literature on consumer trust (e.g. Schlosser et al., 2006), trusting beliefs in the company's competence, benevolence and integrity fully mediated the relationship between communication source and purchase intention. Apparently, the mediating role of consumer trust can be observed in different contexts and different countries.

When interpreting the findings, we must also acknowledge several limitations to our study. Our sample is not representative of the Hong Kong population (consumers were recruited in shopping malls of certain areas of Hong Kong) and the recruitment in shopping malls could have resulted in a possible shopping pattern bias (see e.g. Tian et al., 2011). Presumably, our results are biased by the selection process and primarily reflect perceptions and attitudes of a more affluent and educated consumer group. Thus, it would be beneficial to extend the study to a sample more representative of Hong Kong's population. Furthermore, our study was restricted to two types of communication sources, whereas many more would be of interest, as they have gained popularity in recent times (especially the communication of social and environmental issues over social media, see e.g. Mohin, 2012). In our study, we artificially created awareness, which implies that our consumers made their choices under "perfect information" about the company's CSR activities. The approach was chosen to exclude information effects, which are difficult to control for, but this situation, of course, cannot be

assumed in the daily life of a consumer. Moreover, this research explored the link between the perception of a company's CSR activities and possible consumer responses. However, these links only exist, if consumers have become aware of the CSR information (manipulated by the researchers), which cannot be provided in daily consumption choices. In fact, lack of awareness is considered as one of the main reasons why ethical products often have very low market shares (MacGillivray, 2000) or are not as commercially successful as consumer research findings would give reason to expect. Finally, as we worked with a fictitious company scenario, we did not discriminate between companies that are actually environmentally oriented and those that convincingly pretend to be. This is a problem in many CSR studies, as consumers and other stakeholders cannot always know what happens behind the corporate walls (Castaldo, Perrini, Misani, & Tencati, 2009).

7 Conclusion and Future Research

Our study contributes to a better understanding of the conditions that might favor different types of communication sources. For successful CSR communication, the consideration of country- and culture-specific particularities of a marketplace is of central importance. The current study shows that an advertising campaign may generate more positive responses from consumers in Hong Kong than publicity, such as a neutral newspaper story. Our findings indicate that when communicating their CSR activities in Hong Kong and China, companies can use advertising campaigns more effectively than publicity. Consumers in Hong Kong and China might regard advertising as more congruent with the perceived environmental motives of the company, and they might also perceive advertising as more appreciable and trustworthy than a newspaper report.

Future research could examine our findings in a real-life setting, investigating the performance of actual CSR communication in the form of publicity versus advertising. Tian et al. (2011) found that some consumer groups are more likely to respond positively to CSR than others. Accordingly, it would be interesting to investigate the impact of different CSR communication sources on different consumer groups, as well as for different product categories. It is known that consumers are more suspicious of companies in certain industries (e.g. tobacco, oil), which can pose a significant challenge to their CSR communication (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004; Yoon et al., 2006). Addressing the source communication effects for familiar brands and considering the influence of their individual and industry reputations with regard to CSR could provide another angle for future research (Vanhamme et al., 2014). To better reflect consumer responses as they occur in a marketplace, additional research could use longitudinal data to reveal how consumers' responses to CSR campaigns evolve over time.

8 Exercise and Reflective Questions

1. When developing CSR communication strategies, which role does consumer trust play?
2. What can companies do to enhance consumer trust?
3. Why is the communication source for CSR communication crucial, and what should companies consider, when developing global CSR communication campaigns?
4. Does green CSR communications enhance the consumers' purchase intention for green products, and if yes, under which circumstances?

Appendix

Measurement items

Construct	Item
Competence Trust (McKnight et al. 2002) ($\alpha = 0.895$)	Cicada Ltd. is competent and effective in producing soaps
	Cicada Ltd. performs its role of producing soaps very well
	Overall, Cicada Ltd. is a capable and proficient manufacturer of soaps
	In general, Cicada Ltd. is very knowledgeable about soaps
Benevolence/Integrity Trust (McKnight et al. 2002) ($\alpha = 0.839$)	(I believe that Cicada Ltd. would act in my best interest) ^a
	(If I required help, Cicada Ltd. would do its best to help me) ^a
	Cicada Ltd. is interested in my well-being, not just its own
	Cicada Ltd. is truthful in its dealings with me
	I would characterize Cicada Ltd. as honest
Purchase Intention (Baker and Churchill Jr. 1977) ($\alpha = 0.839$)	Cicada Ltd. would keep its commitments
	Cicada Ltd. is sincere and genuine
	Would you like to try the soap of Cicada Ltd.?
	Would you buy the soap of Cicada Ltd. if you happened to see it in a store?
	Would you actively seek out the product of Cicada Ltd. in a store in order to purchase it?

^aItems removed

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Health Communication and Integrated Corporate Social Responsibility

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Abstract Health communication has experienced a revival in the twenty-first century, which has been labeled the “health communication renaissance”. At the same time, public concern regarding social causes is on the rise. In response, pharmaceutical marketers have begun to publicly proclaim their support for social and environmental causes. Due to declining public trust in their products as well as their commercial messages for these products, together with increasing legal restrictions, pharmaceutical marketers are being forced to rethink their business and promotional strategies. Consumers’ roles have changed as well; today’s “new consumers” are more skeptical and demanding, renowned for rewarding corporations for their sustainable and future-oriented projects, while punishing those who fail to engage in them. This chapter examines whether corporate social responsibility (CSR) appeals—defined as socially and/or environmentally-oriented efforts promoted as part of corporations’ advertising messages—present a fruitful strategy for the health communication field in general, and for pharmaceutical manufacturers in particular. To this end, two studies are presented here, which investigate how integrated promotional CSR messages are utilized and perceived in a cross-cultural setting. Results indicate that (1) to date, social and green appeals do not constitute a dominant message appeal category in the pharmaceutical industry, and, (2) while CSR appeals in pharmaceutical ads resonated with consumers in the U.S. and Brazil, they were looked upon less favorably by German respondents. This suggests that pharmaceutical marketers intending to incorporate CSR appeals in their commercial messages should tailor such messages to the respective country. In conclusion, limitations are addressed and suggestions for further research are provided.

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1 Introduction

With health communication activities having grown exponentially in the twenty-first century, this era has been termed a “health communication renaissance” for good reason (Bernhardt, 2004). While health is a topic of increasing public concern, so too is the public’s desire for firms not only to do well, but also to do good. As a result, throughout the world, companies have begun to address social issues in their promotional messages. For CSR initiatives to be regarded as credible and firms to be acknowledged as ‘good’ corporate citizens, such programs must be crafted with care, and modeled in accordance with the firm’s field of expertise (Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, & Hill, 2005). A new consumer segment—socially conscious consumers—has mandated public disclosure of CSR activities. The two investigations presented in this chapter explore the degree to which CSR appeals are integrated in promotional messages in selected pharmaceutical markets, as well as how consumers evaluate these messages.

The chapter will begin by defining the terms most central to this topic. Thereafter, the growing relevance of corporate social engagement will be discussed in general, and in particular, with regards to the pharmaceutical industry. After outlining both the state of the art and the role integrated communication plays in this context, two investigations will be presented. In conclusion, results will be discussed and the potential for future research will be outlined.

2 Conceptual Foundations

To guarantee that the terms used throughout the chapter are grasped as intended by the authors, they will be briefly defined beforehand.

2.1 Health

Health is often referred to as a fundamental human right (WHO, 2013) and is defined by the WHO (1946/2006) as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being”, implying the lack of disease (Boruchovitch & Mednick, 2002). Another definition emphasizes the fact that health lays the foundation for individual achievement and success (Seedhouse, 2001) and, thus, it can be perceived as the “state of optimum capacity of an individual for the effective performance of the roles and tasks for which s/he has been socialized” (Parsons, 1951). These two definitions differ significantly. The WHO’s version is quite positive and idealistic: it presupposes the complete absence of infirmity (WHO, 2006), and takes a very utopian, if not unattainable stance (Lucas & Lloyd, 2005). Moreover, it is very limited in that it fails to incorporate dimensions of culture and environmental

influences (Ewles & Simnett, 2003). For this reason, Parsons' definition will be relied upon in this chapter.

2.2 Health Communication

Health environments have altered considerably over the past decades and, as a result, researchers have been urged to broaden their (theoretical) horizons (Drum Beat, 2005). On a very basic level, health communication refers to the practice of communicating information on health topics to a widely dispersed mass audience (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014). It is predominantly utilized for educational or commercial purposes and encompasses a variety of activities, e.g., public health campaigns, health education materials as well as doctor-patient interactions (Schiavo, 2007). Berry (2006: p. 2) regards health communication as a “key aspect of all relationships, whether these occur in family, educational, work or social settings”. Communication between individuals as well as between individuals and organizations is central to creating, gathering and sharing health information (Kreps, Bonaguro, & Query, 1998) on an individual (micro) or public (macro) level (Gough, 2006). Regardless of whether it is employed by (commercial) manufacturers or (non-commercial) public service providers, health communication messages have “come to be understood as public [and commercial] health action which is directed towards improving people’s control over all modifiable determinants of health” (Nutbeam, 2000: p. 261). Communication activities draw individuals’ attention to environmental and social influences that impact their health, and also address individuals’ behaviors and capacities (Green & Tones, 2010). By raising the public’s level of awareness of medical conditions, the mass media can help consumers to reduce uncertainty about health issues, enable them to gather useful information, and potentially resolve their health issues (Wright, Sparks, & O’Hair, 2008). While individuals might fear receiving biased, false or incomplete information, mass mediated health messages are, nevertheless, useful points of reference, stimulating respondents to reflect upon their symptoms and seek information from a wide variety of commercial and non-commercial sources. Via this process, the mass media have the potential to significantly alter people’s health behaviors (Wright et al., 2008), leveling the playing field by placing lay people on an equal footing with experts and professionals (Parrott, 2003). The media, thus, have the ability to raise “the profile of health issues on the public agenda” (Green & Tones, 2010: p. 362).

2.3 CSR

Both corporations and policy makers are increasingly concerned with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). For firms, CSR has become a viable strategy and

presents “a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interactions with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis” (European Commission, 2008). Initiatives cover all “practices that improve the workplace and benefit society in ways that go above and beyond what companies are legally required to do” (Vogel, 2006). As such, CSR allows companies to connect with their various stakeholders by informing them about (desired) benefits, while at the same time justifying the legitimacy of their business practices (Tench, Bowd, & Jones, 2007).

2.4 Integrated CSR

Over the years, CSR has moved from a “disconnected philanthropic” endeavor to an “integrated business strategy” (McElhaney, 2009: p. 30) that is closely related to a firm’s mission statement and its corporate objectives (McElhaney, 2009). This suggests that CSR can only be successfully practiced if the brand/product matches the overall business orientation and is integrated into existing operational practices and concepts. Integrated CSR, thus, alludes to “a business strategy that is integrated with core business objectives and core competencies of the firm, and from the outset is designed to create business value and positive social change” (McElhaney, 2009: p. 31). Linking CSR activities to corporate practices—in the form of a “strategization of CSR” (Sharp & Zaitman, 2010)—can, therefore, be turned into a competitive advantage (Jones, 1999).

Health is a topic that requires both individual involvement and corporate efforts: individuals are called upon to act as self-interested agents to maintain their bodies and health, whereas corporations must place their employees’ safety and well-being at the center of an integrated CSR approach.

3 The (Increasing) Relevance of Integrated CSR/Social Engagement to the Health Communication Sector

Given the importance of CSR engagement by pharmaceutical enterprises, the next section examines the practice of integrated CSR in the health care sector.

3.1 Fundamentals of CSR Communication and Causes Appropriate for the Health Sector

Increased CSR communication originated out of consumers’ growing demands for companies to behave in an ethically, socially, as well as environmentally

responsible fashion (Cone Communications, 2011). At the corporate level, CSR has become an issue that is addressed both practically and communicatively (Cochran, 2007) and has evolved from an “obligation (‘doing good to look good’) to [a] strategy (‘doing well and doing good’)” (Nussbaum, 2009: p. 68). It, thus, can be perceived as an industry’s response to the increasing public concern regarding a corporation’s accountability and the impact of global businesses on society, the economy as well as the environment (Bluestone, Heaton, & Lewis, 2002).

The tendency of consumers to attribute a heightened relevance to social and environmental topics has led to the emergence of a new group, the so-called socially conscious consumer segment. The term was originally coined in the early 1970s by Anderson and Cunningham (1972: p. 24; cf. Kelley, 1971), and was defined as “individuals concerned not only with their personal satisfactions, but also with societal [and environmental] well-being”. Limited attention was given to this segment until 2012, when Nielsen released its first CSR study, which highlighted rising social concerns amongst the general public. This Nielsen study, together with a follow-up survey, emphasized the necessity for firms to align and/or successfully integrate corporate and social interests (Nielsen, 2013). Causes supported as a result of a firm’s own initiative, rather than those, which are borne of social pressure (Maignan & Ralston, 2002), are said to resonate most with consumers. They also represent an integrated CSR approach, which identifies social and environmental concerns as part of a firm’s overall corporate identity (Hooghiemstra, 2000).

In order for consumers to become engaged, companies’ motives for supporting particular projects need to be disclosed and made transparent (Feldman & Vasquez-Parraga, 2013). With regard to their social mission, enterprises can adopt one of two motives: firm-serving motives, which are predominantly economic and concern profit or market share maximization, or public-serving motives, where community and/or social interests are put first (Becker-Olsen et al., 2005): “[W]hen motivations are considered firm serving or profit-related, attitudes towards firms are likely to diminish; when motivations are considered socially motivated, attitudes towards firms are likely to be enhanced” (Becker-Olsen et al., 2005: p. 48). Hence, corporations are advised to give preference to public-serving motives.

Not all issues are of equal concern to consumers throughout the world. According to Nielsen’s most recent opinion poll, consumers care most about global water accessibility (59%), sanitation accessibility (53%), poverty and hunger eradication (51%), disease control (51%), environmental sustainability (50%), as well as child mortality reduction (50%). While environmental topics clearly rank first among socially-responsible consumers (Nielsen, 2012, 2014), they might not always ‘fit’ the company’s mission. The concept of fit looks at the product’s and the company’s compatibility with the designated cause and is usually determined by looking at the two concepts’ commonalities (e.g., similar customer base or values; Nan & Heo, 2007). This means that the promoted brand or product ought to be congruent and integrated with the selected social cause that is supported (Nan & Heo, 2007), rendering fit critical to the promotional campaign’s overall success (Rifon, Choi, Trimble, & Li, 2004).

Health-related causes are deemed to be more appropriate in the health communication context. Drug marketers should therefore adopt CSR practices that are connected to and integrated with their original business missions (Cheah, Chan, & Chieng, 2007), selecting causes that are well-aligned with their core operations. As it is critical for companies to make consumers aware of their efforts, they should not hesitate to make their social and/or environmental programs a central focus of their promotional messages. Selecting a cause, which matches a corporation's mission then ought to positively shape not only the firm's credibility but should also establish it as a 'good' corporate citizen. Social causes should be pursued on an on-going basis, rendering an integrated approach to CSR fruitful, in the course of which both organizational norms and stakeholder interests are taken into account (Maignan & Ferrell, 2004). Connecting the core concerns of profit and ethics (Mohr & Webb, 2005), it is also of utmost importance in the health sector for "corporate social responsibility not [to] be divorced from a company's bottom line" (Mueller, 2011: p. 343). Drug manufacturers may redeem themselves from accusations of engaging in unsound business practices by supporting causes in the health-care field. For instance, Bayer HealthCare has teamed up with the WHO to combat neglected diseases such as Chagas Disease or African Sleeping Sickness (Bayer, 2015), while Pfizer offers Prescription Medication Assistance (PfizerRxPathways) to patients as well as Medicine Safety Education programs (Pfizer, 2015). Likewise, Novartis claims to apply its knowledge to "society's biggest health challenges", e.g., drug testing in Brazil and the spreading of chronic diseases in Africa (Novartis, 2015).

Information about these programs is, or should be, made accessible across an array of platforms (e.g., on the Internet, on TV and in magazines), underscoring the importance of integrated communication to social responsibility efforts (Sorsa, 2008). Generally, integrated CSR communication includes all communicative attempts regarding CSR, employed to inform the public about social initiatives and environmental projects, which are meant to strengthen the company's corporate social image (Golob, Podnar, Ellerup Nielsen, Thomsen, & Schultz, 2013). As such, CSR communication presents one means of ensuring the transparency of business engagements (Esteban, 2008) that go beyond economic interests (Turker, 2009). Companies have begun to address social concerns in their promotional messages, incorporating CSR/humane- and social-orientation appeals (Diehl, Mueller, & Terlutter, 2014) across a broad spectrum of message forms, such as Public Service Announcements (PSAs), New Health Messages (e.g., Food, Fitness and Wellness) and pharmaceutical advertising. These three forms of health communication are presented in more detail in the following paragraphs.

3.2 Public Service Announcements

For educational purposes, public service announcements (PSAs) have been utilized to the largest extent (O'Keefe & Reid, 1990). Similar to advertising messages in terms of their length and features, this health communication form solely promotes

projects that hold a high social significance (Lannon, 2008). PSAs are typically sponsored by governmental parties or (non-profit) organizations (Murry, Stam, & Lastovicka, 1996) to increase awareness of “good” and “desirable” causes, such as combatting global warming, drug and alcohol abuse, illiteracy, and social diseases. As such, PSAs are used to promote behaviors that are regarded as socially desirable (Garbett, 1981). With regard to message design, these announcements are rather brief, emphasizing only one single point of view in a straightforward manner (Dillard & Peck, 2000), and intend to transform health-compromising behaviors into health-enhancing behaviors (Fishbein et al., 2002). Therefore, the social appeals incorporated therein can be best described with terms like Societal Social Responsibility (SSR) or Governmental Social Responsibility (GSR).

3.3 New Health Messages: Food, Fitness, Wellness Etc.

Over the years, the spectrum of health communication has widened considerably. Social and demographic changes (e.g., an aging population, decreasing birth rates, new ‘industrial’ diseases, changing lifestyles, etc.) and a rising health consciousness amongst the wider population have led the health-care sector to boom and broaden its boundaries (Mai, Schwarz, & Hoffmann, 2012). Hence, health communication has come to comprise traditional and innovative areas such as health care (Meffert & Rohn, 2011; Thomas, 2008), drugs and medical substances (Harms, Gänshirt, & Rumler, 2008, Umbach, 2011), life-science (Stremersch, 2008; Stremersch & van Dyck, 2009), nutrition (Mai & Hoffmann, 2012; Walker Naylor, Droms, & Haws, 2009), wellness, fitness and sport (Hermanns & Riedmüller, 2008; Nufer & Buehler, 2010), health tourism (WHO, 2013) and ecotourism (Wood, 2002). This extended scope is the result of an altered notion of health that takes a variety of social determinants into consideration (Dahlgren & Whitehead, 1991). In addition to socio-demographic and individual lifestyle factors, living, working and environmental conditions are presumed to have an influence on individual health. This broader perspective suggests that responsibility for health is no longer solely a personal or public responsibility, but rather has been delegated to corporations as well, which are called upon to guarantee their employees’ health, safety and well-being (Scherenberg, 2012).

3.4 Pharmaceutical Advertising

Another, more commercial form of health communication, is pharmaceutical advertising, which “can be defined as [paid] messages created by marketers of pharma products that attempt to inform, persuade and even entertain the target audience with the goal of influencing recipients’ attitudes—and ultimately behavior—in a favorable manner” (Diehl, Mueller, & Terlutter, 2008: p. 100). Pharmaceutical advertisements

are disseminated to promote both prescription and non-prescription drugs. The former are medications intended to address more serious diseases, and since significant adverse effects and risks are attributed to their use (Diehl et al., 2008), they require a doctor's prescription. Direct-to-consumer prescription drug advertising is only allowed in two countries world-wide (the U.S. and New Zealand). The latter can be categorized as self-medication preparations and home remedies, and are typically dubbed over-the-counter medications. These are promoted to physicians and consumers alike; by law, they are the only kind of medication that can be promoted directly to consumers in the E.U. (Buckley, 2004).

Having outlined the growing relevance of CSR and social engagements for drug marketers and manufacturers, the remainder of the chapter will focus on non-prescription drug promotions and CSR activities in the pharmaceutical sector. Due to the increased public concern with health issues, as well as the greater interest in corporate responsibility efforts, the two areas deserve further consideration. Given that CSR and health are reciprocally linked to one another, they should be part of an integrated communication effort.

4 CSR and the Pharmaceutical Industry

Increasing public pressure for CSR efforts has not left the pharmaceutical industry unaffected; yet, research in this area is rather scarce. The present chapter attempts to reduce this gap by presenting results from two, independent cross-cultural studies.

4.1 Research Related to CSR in the Pharmaceutical Industry

In the pharmaceutical industry, studies to date have explored CSR definitions and motivations (Droppert & Bennett, 2015; Frederiksborg & Fort, 2014; Salton & Jones, 2015), communication and reporting practices (Smith, 2008), recruitment perspectives (Esteban, 2008), CSR's 'added value' (Story & Neves, 2014), CSR's 'ethical mandate' (Leisinger, 2005; Nussbaum, 2009), CSR's online integration in manufacturers' websites (Sones, Grantham, & Vieira, 2009), as well as the industry's CSR communication on selected social media channels (Adi & Grigore, 2015). While research in this area is on the rise, neither have the recipients of such messages—drug end users/consumers—been surveyed, nor have content analyses and empirical studies addressed the topic of integrated CSR in the pharmaceutical industry. This is, however, a gap the following studies will attempt to address.

4.2 Possible Ad Appeals for Promoting Health Products and Services

The distinguishing mark that separates successful from unsuccessful health messages is the so-called ad appeal—the “life giving spark of an advertisement” and “the promise of the special significant benefit the product will provide” (Kleppner, 1979). Ad appeals describe the way in which advertisers want to trigger attention in recipients (Belch & Belch, 1993) and are usually conveyed through both the ad’s headline and visual, with the body copy building upon those two components (Mueller, 1987). Appeals can take several forms: informative appeals make explicit mention of the product’s functionality and distinctive features, emotional appeals rely on visual stimuli to tell (subjectively) appealing stories (Leonidou & Leonidou, 2009; Okazaki, Mueller, & Taylor, 2010a, 2010b), while mixed appeals present a combination of the prior two approaches.

As part of companies’ ethical and moral commitments (Wells, Moriarty, & Burnett, 2006), an advertising appeal that is increasingly being employed, is the CSR appeal, in which marketers integrate references to their social and/or environmental projects in hopes of generating (more) favorable public responses (Diehl et al., 2014). In the case of CSR advertising, the dominant promotional message is complemented with CSR elements, which should be aligned with the company’s mission and philosophy (i.e. in an ‘integrated’ manner; Pomeroy, Johnson, & Noble, 2013). Hence, CSR appeals present hybrid promotional messages (Rossiter & Percy, 1997) and are ideally expressive of a holistic communication approach that permits consumers to form “company images on the basis of [their] total experience of the company” (Kennedy, 1977: p. 121).

4.3 CSR as a Promising Strategy for the Pharmaceutical Industry

For pharmaceutical companies, being (both ethically and socially) responsible means, first and foremost, providing “people, especially the poor, with affordable medication” (Nussbaum, 2009). In addition, pharmaceutical marketers are expected to maintain high social, environmental and economic standards—all under tightening legal restrictions (Roblek & Bertoneclj, 2014). Pharmaceutical manufacturers are also required to reveal their drugs’ potential side effects in their advertising disclosures (Roblek & Bertoneclj, 2014). The integration of social and sustainable message elements, therefore, presents a potential strategy to counteract the accusation that the pharmaceutical industry is solely driven by profits (BBC, 2015). Drug marketers should adopt CSR practices that are connected to and integrated with their original business missions (Cheah et al., 2007), selecting causes that are well aligned with their core operations. As it is critical for companies to make

consumers aware of their efforts, they should not hesitate to promote their social and/or environmental efforts in their promotional messages.

CSR messages are useful in that they aid corporations in communicating “what we say we are” (Balmer, 2006), thereby potentially elevating consumers’ trust in a company and positively shaping a firm’s overall corporate image (Edelman, 2012). Consumers do not necessarily regard profitability and social support as contradictions; rather, CSR efforts can award businesses not only a “license to operate” but also a “license to lead” (Edelman, 2012). For this reason, CSR messages are more frequently made the focus of companies’ business and advertising communications (Diehl et al., 2014; Nielsen, 2014), aiding firms in strengthening their positions regarding their social and environmental involvements (Esteban, 2008): “At the moment of truth—in store, online and elsewhere—consumers are making a choice [...] that is heavily influenced by brands with a social purpose” (Nielsen, 2014: p. 5).

4.4 Potential Negative Aspects of CSR Messages

The inclusion of CSR appeals poses potential problems as well. Social advertising claims are often criticized for not being straightforward and, therefore, difficult to comprehend, resulting in companies being accused of disguising unsound business practices. If CSR messages are portrayed in too positive a light, a “self-promoter’s paradox” might apply, rendering companies’ contributions to social and/or environmental causes too good to be true (Ashforth & Gibbs, 1990: p. 188), and CSR messages run the risk of backfiring. A heightened sensitivity towards *corporate green washing* has led consumers to become increasingly skeptical of advertising messages (Nielsen, 2012). This cynicism toward corporate engagement might be explained by the negative social impact respondents ascribe to companies throughout Europe (European Commission, 2013), as well as their poor communication activities (Nielsen, 2013). So, while CSR messages are seen as “marketing’s greatest contribution to society”, at the same time, they are perceived as “marketing’s most unabashed exploitation” (Drumwright, 1996: p. 71). Nonetheless, public communication is of crucial impact to the area of CSR (Ihlen, Bartlett, & May, 2011): “Success will depend on the ability to connect sustainable benefits effectively with consumers’ wants and wallets through clearly communicated and readily available [integrated] brand positioning” (Nielsen, 2014: p. 9).

5 Examining CSR in the Pharmaceutical Industry

In the study of cultural differences in advertising, two analytical approaches can be identified, namely content analysis and empirical effectiveness studies (Diehl, Terlutter, & Weinberg, 2003). The present investigations pay tribute to both forms of research: the first study will present the results of an extensive content

analysis, which explored the potential for advertising standardization in the pharmaceutical (OTC drug) industry (Koinig, 2012; Koinig & Diehl, 2013); the second study employed the findings of the content analysis to design (standardized) OTC drug promotions, which were then evaluated in different cultural contexts (Austria, Germany, the United States and Brazil). These two studies investigate how CSR appeals can be utilized by pharmaceutical manufacturers as part of their promotional messages across the globe. Further, they examine (1) whether CSR positively influences consumer responses, (2) whether product/cause fit indeed impacts a company's CSR evaluations, and (3) whether cultural parameters might render advertising adaptation unavoidable.

The two studies presented next extend previous research on the topic in two ways: Apart from very few contributions (e.g., DeLorme, Huh, Reid, & An, 2010; Diehl et al., 2008; Main, Argo, & Huhmann, 2004), neither consumer evaluations of OTC drug ads, nor the topic of CSR in such commercial messages have been explicitly addressed in cross-cultural studies. Given that a more thorough understanding of the effectiveness of different ad appeals in pharmaceutical advertising can benefit both academics and practitioners, the investigations outlined in the remainder of this chapter serve to address this research gap. The countries examined herein are the U.S., the largest single drug market, Germany, the largest European medications market, Austria, a second European market, and Brazil, an emerging OTC drug market as well as the largest South American pharmaceutical market (MarketLine, 2014). In each of these markets, OTC drug sales, as well as the level of concern with CSR, are on the rise. Differences in advertising evaluations and CSR concerns are anticipated as a result of varying legal regulations as well as the cultural particularities of each market.

5.1 Content Analysis

A total of 385 print ads for non-prescription drugs were obtained from special and general interest magazines, of which 183 ads (47.5 %) were taken from 39 German and Austrian magazines¹ and the remaining 202 ads were obtained from 35 U.-S. American magazines (47.3 %). They were collected during the period from December 2010 to August 2011 in order to achieve extensive coverage of the two pharmaceutical markets surveyed. Adverts were only selected for analysis if they were for non-prescription drugs, treating minor illnesses, and were available over-the-counter (Craig, 1992). Any repeat advertisements were omitted. Ads were coded for a variety of dimensions. In order to ensure objective and comparative results, each of the 385 adverts was analyzed by two independent coders, who reached an inter-coder reliability of .88 according to Cohen's Kappa (Cohen, 1968). Any disagreements were resolved via a post-coding discussion.

¹Most magazines cover both the German and Austrian market.



social appeal

sustainable appeal

green appeal

Fig. 1 Examples for CSR ad appeals

In addition to uncovering a strong potential for standardization in two areas, namely product endorser portrayal and ad appeal type, the use of social and sustainable or green appeals in non-prescription drug advertising was examined. Despite the growing importance of CSR, appeals emphasizing companies' social and environmental practices to date do not constitute a dominant appeal category in OTC medication advertising—neither in the U.S. nor in the two European markets. Results indicate that socially-oriented efforts, which typically related to a company's support for welfare and/or community projects, and often involved a cooperation with aid agencies, were rarely employed in commercial messages (T: 2.6 %; AUT/GER: 1.6 %; USA: 3.5 %). Green appeals, on the other hand, were featured more frequently (T: 19.2 %; GER/AUT: 20.2 %; USA: 18.3 %) and involved corporations addressing environmental standards, using organic ingredients and substances, as well as preserving natural resources in producing their goods. Several examples are depicted in Fig. 1. In the face of fierce competition and increasingly discerning consumers, companies should not miss any opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to CSR. As CSR initiatives are infrequently featured in OTC preparation advertising, they can potentially be utilized in order to gain a competitive advantage.

5.2 Empirical Investigation

Stimulus Material Ad development followed the procedure outlined by Diehl, Terlutter, and Mueller (2011). The use of a fictitious brand controlled for attitudes towards recognized and established brand names. All four ad appeals were designed to promote a pain reliever with the brand name *Senza*, produced by the fictitious pharmaceutical manufacturer *ProSante*. Pre-tests were conducted, which revealed that the brand and company names were neutrally loaded and seen as suitable for use in the medical domain. They further showed that all ad versions were indeed associated with their intended appeals and were regarded as realistic, trustworthy, sufficiently credible and comprehensible.

The four fictitious full-page ads were professionally designed (see Fig. 2). The informative ad featured the advertised drug in a dominant visual, which was paired with a short body copy emphasizing the product's effectiveness, unique composition, plus its tolerance levels. The slogan included the brand name in a problem/solution manner: "Getting the best out of life despite pain—with *Senza*!" The emotional version used the same slogan, combined with a visual depicting a happy-looking couple that occupied 90 % of the total page. The mixed ad presented a combination of the informative and emotional versions: while it employed the latter's prominent visual, it also incorporated the textual information on product specifics. The CSR appeal ad was identical to the mixed appeal version, but it contained an additional social message. A fictitious CSR initiative, based on the successful CSR efforts linking Pampers and UNICEF, was included to create awareness of tetanus, a disease that can be prevented by the use of vaccines. Product purchase would involve consumers directly, as for every package of *Senza* sold, one crucial vaccination to reduce infant and maternal morbidity would be donated (Mueller, 2011). In terms of causes, this was considered to be a good fit and an integrated effort for a pharmaceutical marketer. The designated CSR message is illustrated in Fig. 3. Ads were translated into English, German and Brazilian Portuguese via the translation/back-translation method.

Study Design The study was conducted in the spring and summer of 2014. In each of the four selected countries, 60 subjects were presented with one of the four ad versions, resulting in a total sample size of 240 subjects per country and a total study population of 967 subjects. In terms of age, respondents were between 18 and 93 years old, with an average age of 35.9 years. Female/male participation was almost equally distributed ($f = 50.6\%$; $m = 49.4\%$). Answers to each question were reported on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from (1) 'I do not agree at all' to (7) 'I fully agree'.

Study Findings Respondents' evaluations of the four ad appeals will be discussed before specific questions related to the CSR appeal are addressed. The strongest predictor of ad effectiveness is attitude towards the ad—also referred to as ad evaluation (MacKenzie, Lutz, & Belch, 1986); the former is concerned with whether or not a message has 'worked', while the latter is the evaluation of the



Getting the best out of life despite pain – with Senza!

Generally, pain surfaces when prostaglandins are created – those are substances that increase the likelihood of pain and are at times accompanied by fever.

What now? The solution is Senza!
Senza is an effective, non-steroidal, well-tolerated anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) which inhibits enzymes triggering swelling and pain (cyclooxygenase) and, thus, prevents the creation of prostaglandins.

Don't ignore the warning signs your body is sending you. Trust Senza.

Senza
100 Film-Tabletten

These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.

informative



Getting the best out of life despite pain – with Senza!

Generally, pain surfaces when prostaglandins are created – those are substances that increase the likelihood of pain and are at times accompanied by fever.

What now? The solution is Senza!
Senza is an effective, non-steroidal, well-tolerated anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) which inhibits enzymes triggering swelling and pain (cyclooxygenase) and, thus, prevents the creation of prostaglandins.

Don't ignore the warning signs your body is sending you. Trust Senza.

Senza
100 Film-Tabletten

These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.

emotional



Getting the best out of life despite pain – with Senza!

Generally, pain surfaces when prostaglandins are created – those are substances that increase the likelihood of pain and are at times accompanied by fever.

What now? The solution is Senza!
Senza is an effective, non-steroidal, well-tolerated anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) which inhibits enzymes triggering swelling and pain (cyclooxygenase) and, thus, prevents the creation of prostaglandins.

Don't ignore the warning signs your body is sending you. Trust Senza.

Senza
100 Film-Tabletten

These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.

mixed



Getting the best out of life despite pain – with Senza!

Generally, pain surfaces when prostaglandins are created – those are substances that increase the likelihood of pain and are at times accompanied by fever.

What now? The solution is Senza!
Senza is an effective, non-steroidal, well-tolerated anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) which inhibits enzymes triggering swelling and pain (cyclooxygenase) and, thus, prevents the creation of prostaglandins.

Don't ignore the warning signs your body is sending you. Trust Senza.

At Senza, we also accept social responsibility.
1 sold package = 1 vaccination against Tetanus

Senza
100 Film-Tabletten

These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.

CSR

Fig. 2 Stimulus material



Fig. 3 CSR message

message content in affective and cognitive terms (Diehl et al., 2008; Edell & Burke, 1987; Lutz, MacKenzie, & Belch, 1983). Over the years, attitude has become one of the most intensively researched aspects of ad effectiveness (Brown & Stayman, 1992), used to determine and measure consumers' reactions towards the promotions encountered (Diehl et al., 2008). The current survey revealed that in terms of ad liking (ad evaluation), both informative and emotional ads were outranked by the mixed appeal version ($M = 4.534$), which combined the best of both worlds (rational arguments with atmospheric images; Kroeber-Riel & Esch, 2011). The mixed appeal version was followed by the plain informative ($M = 4.344$) and CSR appeals ($M = 3.954$). Being short of textual elements, emotional ads obtained low scores ($M = 3.884$). With regard to ad evaluation and taking all four countries together, the mixed appeal received the most favorable evaluations, followed by the informative and CSR ad versions, while the emotional appeal ranked last (results for the single countries will be discussed below).

Respondent's overall attitudes towards sustainable corporate actions were examined based on three questions adopted from Nan and Heo (2007). These questions were deemed sufficient to measure the relevance respondents attributed to socially and environmentally sound corporate actions. Principal component analysis revealed the items to load on one single factor and, consequently, they were combined for analysis (KMO: .722; Significance according to Bartlett: .000; Cronbach α : .868): (1) "I think positively about enterprises which act socially responsible", (2) "It is important to me that enterprises increasingly consider social issues", and (3) "I would increasingly purchase products from enterprises which act socially responsible". Overall, respondents judged corporate social initiatives very favorably (T: 5.4361; AUT: 5.1841; GER: 5.1156; USA: 5.5248; BRA: 5.9225); nonetheless, variations in attitudes towards CSR were seen as being dependent on the country of inquiry ($F = 19.052$, $p = .000$). Brazilian subjects' scores were significantly higher than in both European countries and North America (see Fig. 4).

In order to explore whether consumers considered a firm's record of corporate social engagement, regardless of whether communications to that effect were integrated into the commercial message, the following question was included in the survey instrument for all ad versions: "I have the impression *ProSante* (producer of *Senza*) is a socially responsible company²". Overall, *ProSante* was

²Note: Only in the case of the CSR appeal stimulus ad was any reference made to the fictitious CSR project.

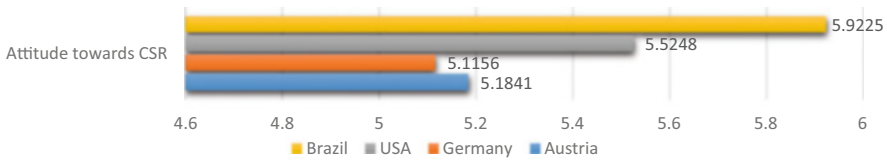


Fig. 4 CSR evaluations in a cross-cultural context

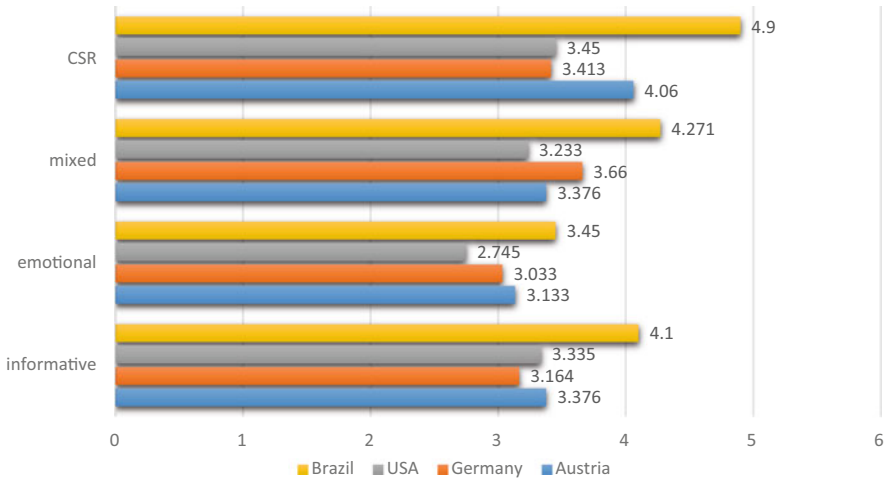


Fig. 5 ProSante’s CSR evaluations in a cross-cultural context

evaluated as acting moderately responsibly even in those ad versions in which no explicit mention of CSR engagement was made (see Fig. 5). Some highly relevant differences in ratings stood out: with the exception of Germany, the CSR ad appeal received significantly more positive evaluations ($M = 3.951$) when compared against all other versions in three out of four countries ($M = 3.413$). Highly pronounced differences in evaluations could be noted between the countries under investigation ($F = 23.655, p = .000$).

The final question explored respondents’ evaluations of the fit between the designated social cause and the promoted product, recognizing the highly contested issue of fit and integrated communication in the marketing domain (Hamlin & Wilson, 2004; Nan & Heo, 2007). The question examining brand-cause-fit was only included in the CSR questionnaire and read as follows: “I think that ProSante donating vaccines to reduce infant death caused by Tetanus represents a good match between the product and the cause”. The overall perceived degree of similarity and/or suitability between the product and designated cause revealed above-average results for three out of four countries ($M = 4.180$), while respondents from Germany did not perceive the anticipated match ($M = 3.160$; see Fig. 6). Findings suggest significant variations on a country basis ($F = 12.592, p = .000$).

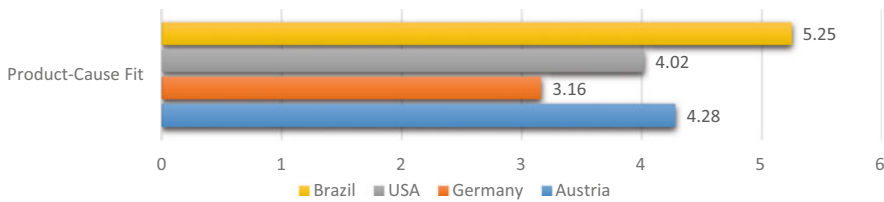


Fig. 6 Product-cause-fit evaluations in a cross-cultural context

6 Discussion of Results

The investigations outlined above illustrate the role communication plays in the practice of CSR in the pharmaceutical industry (Golob et al., 2013), and address whether standardized CSR messages present a fruitful approach for international marketers in the pharmaceutical industry. Above average attitudes towards corporate social engagement in all countries suggest that consumers have begun to attach greater relevance to CSR claims, and are exercising pressure on corporations to publicize their social and/or environmental projects. As part of an integrated CSR strategy, product-cause fit is of utmost importance—companies are encouraged to align their corporate and sustainable strategies with their corporate mission statements.

The highly distinct CSR evaluations by country are in line with Nielsen’s most recent global survey (2014), which found CSR relevance to vary by geographic region. Nielsen reported that 63 % of Latin Americans expected corporations to engage in socially responsible behavior, while only 42 % of Americans and 40 % of Europeans expressed a similar sentiment. Evaluations of the fictitious pharmaceutical producer *ProSante* with regards to its CSR initiatives revealed Brazilian scores to be the highest, in line with Nielsen’s claim of Latin American consumers to ‘care the most’ about ethical corporate behavior and require evidence of CSR efforts (Cone Communications, 2013). American consumers were also more responsive to CSR claims than their European counterparts: In Europe, where businesses, first and foremost, are perceived as economic entities (Maignan & Ralston, 2002), corporations are more reluctant to embrace the concept of corporate philanthropy. In particular, Germany differs from the other countries, in that consumers in this country are not only reluctant to voice their opinions regarding CSR projects publicly, but are also not interested in seeing “flashy campaigns” (Cone Communications, 2013: p. 45). Stricter legal regulations might also render CSR less of an issue in Germany.

Product-cause fit was seen as crucial to the concept of integrated CSR, suggesting that businesses harmonize their corporate and social efforts to create an authentic match between their product(s) and selected (social and environmental) causes. In the present study, fit was seen as crucial in all countries. The CSR ad appeal only received positive evaluations in those countries where a good fit was perceived. Brazilians were seen to detect the common ground between product and

cause to the greatest extent, followed by American and Austrian consumers, whose results came in slightly above average. German respondents failed to perceive the anticipated fit, as reflected in their very low (average) ad evaluations.

Based on the above, the following conclusions can be drawn: while one may be able to standardize emotional, informative or mixed advertising practices across countries (Koinig, 2012; Koinig & Diehl, 2013), this seems not to be the case with CSR claims. CSR messages resonated with Brazilian and U.S. American consumers, yet were not favorably received in Germany. This may be mainly due to the low product-cause fit perceived by German subjects, which warrants further examination.

7 Conclusion and Directions for Further Research

International marketers have started to integrate CSR claims into their promotional messages because they want consumers to lean towards their products (Diehl et al., 2014). CSR is a topic of increasing relevance, which is “not simply a feature of the new global corporation but is also a feature of new societal governance” (Moon, 2007: p. 302). If efforts related to social needs are in line with a firm’s fields of operation and integrated into its communicative practices (Cheah et al., 2007; Christensen, Morsing, & Thyssen, 2010), this can result in a competitive advantage (Cochran, 2007).

The investigations outlined in this chapter suggest that while advertising in the pharmaceutical industry can potentially be standardized, CSR messages do not cross borders equally well. A special focus needs to be put on the product-cause fit, which was quite different in the four countries, especially in Germany. Overall findings indicate that CSR appeals in international pharmaceutical ads may need to be tailored to the respective country. Companies need to realize that their social and environmental efforts might be evaluated differently in diverse markets and, due to consumer heterogeneity, they may need to adapt their messages to cultural particularities (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004).

Without question, integrated CSR communication in the health sector warrants further research. Future examinations on the effectiveness of OTC drug ads incorporating a(n integrated) CSR claim should not fail to include countries characterized by even more significant differences. Subsequent researchers may wish explore the perception of CSR in relation to factors such as ad and product evaluation, as well as purchase intention and the perceived degree of a company’s level of social responsibility (Diehl, Terlutter, & Mueller, 2015). In addition, other kinds of health messages and other claims supporting economic, environmental as well as social causes—both related or unrelated to a firm’s mission statement—might yield different findings.

8 Exercise and Reflective Questions

1. What is Health Communication and why is it of increasing concern in the twenty-first century?
2. Why is CSR gaining in relevance globally?
3. Increasing social and environmental concerns have led to the emergence of the socially-conscious consumer. How is this consumer segment characterized?
4. Which motives can companies pursue with their CSR initiatives?
5. What does the concept of fit describe?
6. Which are the greatest challenges the pharmaceutical industry has to face?
7. Why does integrated CSR communication present a fruitful strategy for the pharmaceutical industry?
8. Which CSR programs are best suited for pharmaceutical marketers (and why)?
9. Which aspects are responsible for variances in CSR perceptions?

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Research Outlook and Conclusion

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At the beginning of this handbook, the issue of how to provide a new, integrated approach to the Corporate Social Responsibility Communication debate was raised. In order to address this challenge, a wide range of scholars, researchers and practitioners from different countries and with various disciplinary backgrounds contributed a total of 26 chapters to this volume. Our goal was to offer readers a unique international and interdisciplinary perspective on an integrated approach to Corporate Social Responsibility Communication.

Research Gaps and Directions for Future Research

The chapters presented in this text provide an overview of a young and dynamic research field, albeit one with many research gaps and needs. In this final chapter, we focus on the central issues, which have emerged from the contributions to this volume. Clearly, the contributions included in this handbook are far too rich for us to summarize in more than a selective way. Therefore, this chapter addresses

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research gaps, desiderata and directions for further research identified within the six broad issue sections (listed in the introductory chapter) of the handbook.

As the authors of the individual chapters have already described in detail the research gaps related to the specific area of integrated CSR communication they addressed, our intent here is to identify “overarching topics” that have been highlighted in numerous chapters as directions for further research. It should be noted that these four overarching topics are related to one another, and reflect overlapping and intersecting issues.

The first overarching issue with regard to integrated CSR communications is the need to combine theory with practice. We address this critical issue first. The other main issues identified can be grouped into three additional overarching topics, which summarize the concluding segments of the 26 chapters in this volume: new ways of communicating CSR; the impact of integrated CSR communication on stakeholders; and finally, the challenges of CSR communication.

Integrated CSR Communication Should Combine Theory and Practice

Among the most significant contributions of the chapters in this volume are a set of considerations regarding the importance of, and the need to combine theory and practice when dealing with CSR communication. This allows us to reach an integrated approach by achieving both a conceptual and a practical understanding of CSR and its communication aspects. Many authors emphasized the need to increase the academic and scientific debate regarding CSR as well as the importance of an integrated approach, but above all, they highlighted the need to explore the field on a practical level. This point is vital and should be the focus of further research in each of the areas discussed here. To date, the topic has primarily been addressed on a theoretical level, without the inclusion of practical examples or the benefit of empirical research.

New Ways of Communicating Integrated CSR

The second overarching issue deals with the importance of developing new strategies for communicating CSR effectively, and from an integrated approach. Future research should be solicited to identify the most suitable format for, as well extent, and frequency of communicating CSR and to identify levels of integration of CSR communication. Beyond this, diverse and innovative proposals regarding the direction these new strategies should take, and the risks and challenges associated with them, are needed.

It became obvious from several contributions that a new understanding of integrated CSR communication related to the specific areas examined in this book is needed. In particular, the shortcomings in the marketing and advertising fields have been highlighted. Here, there is a need not only to integrate CSR communication as an important component of marketing communication strategies, but even prior to this, to develop an overall understanding of integrated CSR advertising from a marketing point of view. As mentioned in the chapter “Integrated CSR Advertising – With a Special Focus on the Intercultural Perspective”, few studies have compared CSR advertising and other communication tools, and none have explored intercultural integrated CSR advertising. Consequently, we emphasize the need for additional research in this area, which is clearly deserving of additional attention.

Another challenge for communicating an integrated approach to CSR is related to the use of online and offline media, and other tools of communication (such as personal communication, events, and so on). The authors addressing this issue mention not only the need to coordinate the use of online and offline strategies in line with an integrated approach, but also the importance of finding a balance between the two, recognizing the opportunities and risks, in particular with regard to new issues and fields such as Big Data, and above all, recognizing possible synergies in order to integrate them to benefit the overall CSR communication strategy. Future research needs to pay greater attention to the evolution of the social web and its impact on the development of CSR communication and management, as argued in the chapter “The World Wide Web and the Social Media as Tools of CSR Communication”, and perhaps to address Integrated CSR Communication 2.0, as suggested in the chapter “Integrated CSR Communications”.

Recipients of CSR communications play a crucial role as fundamental stakeholders. The question is how to engage them through an integrated CSR communication approach. New technologies and social media are seen by the authors as particularly suitable in promoting and establishing a new participatory and engaging approach to CSR communication.

The need for a participatory approach to CSR communication was also discussed in terms of interculturality. Several authors suggest finding an equilibrium between an engaging, yet not too intrusive nor explicit means of communicating CSR, which would be applicable in different cultures. In addition, ethical dimensions related to an integrated CSR communication approach should always be taken into consideration.

In summary, the second overarching issue we identified is the need to find new ways to communicate an integrated approach to CSR, particularly in the fields of intercultural management, issue management, integrity management, and CSR advertising and marketing, as well as via new (social) media.

Impact of Integrated CSR Communication on Stakeholders

In the vast majority of the chapters in this volume, the authors criticized the sparse research in the area of CSR communication, resulting in a limited body of knowledge on the topic. There are a multitude of opportunities to explore new ways to communicate CSR. For example, researchers may wish to examine the impact that different strategies and methods of communicating CSR have on political or managerial decision-making processes, especially with regard to the influence of new communication technologies, as mentioned in the chapter entitled “CSR and Political Communication”. In this context two subfields discussed in this volume are worthy of note. First, there is a need for further examination of the effects of CSR communication in the area of brand and/or company image and reputation. The question is how can one improve the company’s image and reputation through CSR communication? Related to this, additional research should explore the effectiveness of CSR communication in order to determine what kind of (positive) effects an integrated and engaging approach to communicating CSR has on stakeholders. Second, there is a need to examine different communicative strategies and their impact on stakeholders. Here diverse questions remain unanswered. These can be summarized in the following two queries: “Is the impact of CSR communication on stakeholders related to certain characteristics (such as gender or age)?” And, “Do different CSR appeals (e.g., economic, social or environmental appeals) elicit different responses from stakeholders?” To summarize, the third overarching issue we identified was the need to explore the impact of integrated CSR communications on stakeholders.

Challenges of CSR Communication

From the above discussion, we see that stakeholders play a fundamental role in the debate over CSR communication in general, and more specifically with regard to the focus of future investigations. The fourth overarching issue concerns challenges related to CSR communication, specifically the relationship between CSR communication and stakeholders. As mentioned in the introduction to this final chapter, the four overarching topics are interrelated and overlap one another.

A critical question is how stakeholders respond to CSR communications. One of the most challenging problems facing CSR communication is the issue of greenwashing, which can be seen as the “dark side” of CSR communication. The greenwashing issue can be summarized by reiterating one of the unanswered questions raised in the chapter “Corporate Social Responsibility Communication in North America: The Past, Present, and Future”: “Does doing good in one sector offset infractions in another?” And, can taking ownership of a problem and “promising” a solution placate both investors and customers? Furthermore, authors dealing with this issue in their chapters emphasized that CSR must be

communicated in a consistent and transparent fashion, in order to be perceived by stakeholders as sincere, rather than as a strategic attempt to shift attention away from unpleasant topics or to cover up embarrassing facts. Related to this, two other fundamental issues deserve further investigation: the relationship between stakeholder response and the legitimacy and credibility of a company. As a final point, with regard to the impact of CSR communication on stakeholders, its effects, particularly in the field of brand performance, purchase intention, consumer value and product evaluation require further exploration.

Challenges related to an integrated CSR communication approach in the areas of stakeholder analysis and management should also be mentioned. This topic is addressed by authors of this handbook, in particular from an intercultural perspective. Here authors argue that cultural peculiarities should be taken into account in order to communicate CSR effectively and efficiently. Furthermore, they argue for the application of triangulation between communication structure, CSR issues, and stakeholder analysis in future studies (see the chapter “Organizing CSR Communication: Challenges for Integrated CSR Communication from a PR and Organizational Communication Perspective”).

Finally, regarding this third “overarching issue” we must note that numerous contributors to this handbook define stakeholders as both external and internal. In this volume, special attention is given to internal stakeholders, a particularly under-researched area and one deserving significantly greater attention from academics (see the following chapters “Integrated CSR Communications”, “Communicating Responsibility – Responsible Communication”, and “Investigating Internal CSR Communication: Building a Theoretical Framework”). Here, the authors argue that corporate culture, along with communication culture, are both fundamental to an integrated understanding of CSR and to avoiding a potential backlash when communicating CSR activities. This is especially true with regard to the above mentioned greenwashing issue, in which internal stakeholders play a crucial role. They are, in many instances, the first point of contact with external stakeholders and should not only communicate the company’s values in a credible manner but, optimally live those values as well. This can only take place, if internal stakeholders are properly informed regarding the CSR activities of the company they work for, and if they are involved in translating communication into action. Only if external and internal communication are coordinated and paired with responsible actions, can a company both offer and communicate a consistent, transparent and credible image of itself. Accordingly, the ability to engage and integrate internal stakeholders in communicating CSR is a significant challenge that should be addressed by researchers in the future.

Conclusion

To summarize, it can be stated that collectively, the authors of this handbook call for: (1) greater cooperation and integration between CSR communication theory and practice; (2) new ways of communicating an integrated (intercultural) approach to CSR; (3) additional investigations into the effects of these new communicative forms, with particular attention to stakeholders; (4) an increased focus on how internal and external stakeholders respond to CSR communication; as well as a greater emphasis on the integration and engagement of stakeholders with CSR.

Without question, there is a need for the development of a CSR communication management discipline. This discipline would have the task of addressing the above mentioned research gap and outlining directions for further research. For example, it could call for a stronger focus on stakeholder management when dealing with CSR communication. Questions of impact, integration and involvement with regard to CSR communication could be addressed by this new discipline. Furthermore, queries regarding issue management, integrity management, internal and external social media management—which are implied by an integrated approach of CSR communication—could also be addressed within the framework of CSR communication management.

Within the scope of a CSR communication management discipline, the implications of new technologies and trends related to the Web could be addressed. These include, for example, effects of the use of the social web on CSR communication, as well as its impact on both a brand's and an organization's image and reputation and on stakeholder integration and engagement.

The contributors to this volume, as well as the editors, call for a new field of research, which would address all management aspects of an integrated and engaged approach to CSR communication. Such an integrated approach entails both restrictions and limitations, as well as opportunities and challenges, which require a communicative and managerial approach.

This new discipline calls for interdisciplinary work and research. Nearly all authors address the same theoretical problems and shortcomings of an integrated approach to CSR communication, albeit from different points of view. Consequently, we can assume that the best approach to overcoming such deficits can only come from a solid interdisciplinary approach. We would like to strongly encourage scholars and practitioners investigating this field to bear this in mind.

It is also critical to consider what this new integrated approach to CSR communication implies, not only with regard to general communication, organizational communication, marketing, advertising, and public relations debate, but also for the overall CSR debate. We must reflect critically upon the implication various phenomena (such as increasing globalization, convergence, mediatization and digitalization) for the overall CSR debate, and what kinds of ethical challenges they involve.

While it is important to continue theoretical discussions related to the CSR debate, it is equally important to move from theory to practice. Discussions related to the theoretical phase should be conducted on a reflexive, argumentative, systematic and methodical level. Here we recognize the potential for teaching CSR, not only as a discipline *per se*, but, in line with our argument for an integrated and interdisciplinary approach, addressing all the different fields this handbook has explored. Consequently, the practical or realization phase can best be carried out by those who follow this new approach and are able to translate it into action, in the spirit of our proposed new interdisciplinary and integrated CSR communication management approach. We look forward to the emergence of this new discipline.