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CSR Policies from a communication perspective

- A study on how organizational members make sense of CSR policies

Authors: Tatevik Yerznkyan
Anette Henriksson

Supervisor: Annette Cerne

ABSTRACT

Title: CSR Policies from a communication perspective – a study on how organizational members make sense of CSR policies

Author: Tatevik Yerznkyan and Anette Henriksson

Supervisor: Annette Cerne

Department: University of Lund, Business Administration

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Background: Corporate Social Responsibility has during recent years been an increasingly focused area within business administration. In order to become a preferred supplier and employer, corporations strive to take on the responsibility for environmental issues, human rights and other ethical shaping behaviours. However, this puts emphasize on the corporate culture and how members of the organization find meaning with implementation of CSR policies.

Purpose: This study will provide an insight on how the process of communication of CSR policies are understood and perceived by different groups within the organization.

Methodology and method: The research is conducted by using primary (interviews) as well as secondary sources (company official documents) of data from a case study. It is a qualitative study whereas a hermeneutic methodology is used for analysing the material. All of the interviews we conducted were loosely structured.

Theoretical perspectives: Relevant literature from our academic studies in knowledge management, organizational change, strategic human resource management, CSR, strategy and organization and reflexive methodology has framed our research. We have chosen the stakeholder theory and sense-making theory which we found suitable for the study of our case.

Conclusion: We have identified that CSR policies are given different meanings according to different understandings of CSR policies. Accordingly different groups of organizational members perceived the communication work of CSR policies differently and how they made sense of it varied between groups.

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1. Introduction

During recent years the question of sustainability and an increased focus on company's responsibility have prevailed. From organizations, media, politicians and consumers the pressure on companies to act proactively in these issues are growing.

Several different factors drive the development of a thought through corporate social responsibility (CSR) policy; reward from customers which may enhance price, to be a favored employer, independence of government, a long-term investment for a safer and better educated community (Crane & Matten, 2004/2007).

In order to comply with this movement, most of the multinational companies have created policies that ensure their stakeholders of their intention to take responsibility for environmental issues, human rights and other ethical shaping behaviour such as for example ethics in business and a collaborative relationship between stakeholders. These corporate values may vary from one company to another and is part of the identity and image of the company, i.e. its trade mark. It is of particular importance how the employees understand and find meaning with the behaviour that is desired to comply with the company's strategy and identity. 'To the extent that an organization (as identity) is a significant source for identity work, people tend to view themselves as part of an overall 'we' and experience unity and closeness with the whole organization' (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2008). On the other hand, if the organization is perceived as ambiguous, the members tend to identify themselves with parts of the organization, for example the department or office they are belonging to, creating sub-cultures. According to Alvesson and Sveningsson (2008) there is a close relationship between organizational culture and identity, whereas identity related to culture is more language oriented, explicit and more directly emphasized (Hatch and Schultz, 2002, as cited by Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2008, p. 40). Alvesson and Sveningsson (2008) suggest that 'perceptions among organizational members that an organization stands for something unique and positive in terms of identity can increase the inclination to appropriate common organizational values'. As we understand this, it could also be that by shaping values and symbols of the organization, for example ethical behaviour and accordingly by establishing CSR policies, the identity of the company can be reinforced.

Accordingly, in order to develop the organizational identity by using CSR policies, employees have to be aware of the policy, understand the policy and accept the purpose and strategy. However, the way these policies are perceived depends on how organizational members interpret and make sense of them. The employees will also act as a representative for the company and as such have to be prepared to argue in favour of the company values. To acknowledge the ethical values, by which the company is supposed to be recognized, the process of communication internally is important.

To shape the way that the general character of the company is perceived might be a more interesting perspective than the formal documentation as for example 'code of conduct' or participation in 'The Global compact'. Those different strategies for showing a corporate interest for social responsibility has to be sustained by the employees desire to act in an ethical way. To achieve this, the processes of communication will be investigated. Basu and Palazzo (2008) argue 'simply documenting CSR-related activities without understanding their precipitating causes is unlikely to reveal real differences among firms, given the trend of rising homogeneity and near standardization in CSR reporting'.

1.1 Problem discussion

Strategic challenges which managers daily face in organizational life, i.e. organizational change and reorganization processes, building a strong corporate culture, are an integral part of our study from a perspective that puts emphasis on humans and human behaviour within organizations. This implies that 'all people affected by an organization's human resourcing strategies will make their own moral evaluations of the way they are treated and they will be influenced in their actions and behaviour by the extent to which they perceive themselves to be treated ethically and fairly by that organization and its managers' (Harris and Watson, 2005, p.5).

From the company's point of view we believe it is vital to make their employees understand the importance of the ethical values and we are looking into how CSR policies are practiced to

create a value for organizational members and in what ways the process of communication are essential for shaping the company culture in an ethical way.

The paradigm shift in managing organizations from using direct (specific rules and instructions) to more indirect (vision, mission, culture and values) forms of management also suggest that the leadership of the company takes the form of dialogue than authority for managing human action, whereas peoples actions are not controlled by external conditions, as rationalistic perspective suggests; instead they are controlled by people's understanding of external conditions which are central to the interpretative perspective (Sandberg and Targama, 2007).

If rationalistic perspective on management means 'searching for relationships between changes in conditions on the one hand and effects upon human behaviour on the other hand' (Sandberg and Targama, 2007, p.33), the interpretative perspective on managing understanding suggests that managers influence the understanding of their employees of what the changes, namely introduction of CSR policies, mean and stand for and thereof, behavioural effects are achieved.

From the studies of organizational change, core values are believed to be one of the stable aspects of the organization since they are relatively stable over time. In other words, core values are 'basic principles or beliefs that have stood the test of time and best represent what the organization stands for' (Cummings and Worley, 2005, p.161). Thus, there is need to acknowledge that core values are the 'values in use' that actually inform members what is important in the organization in consideration of organization's historical roots (Cummings and Worley, 2005, p.162). In a situation when companies are facing a merger, the creation of the new image becomes a sensitive and a challenging initiative in an attempt to bring in different cultures under the umbrella of a new image so that all employees can identify with and will be committed to work towards the vision, mission and goals of the organization to sustain the business in the long run.

The company of our study is a stock listed shipping company merged from three companies with different backgrounds as regards business areas, culture and images, having components

of decentralized and hierarchical forms of management which already posits a challenge when creating a new image of the company with the introduction of new CSR policies, namely core values to develop a shared understanding for the members of the organization representing different cultures.

What we found already problematic to be in need of further studies, was the change initiative, as organizational change means that employees' commitment is necessary to achieve the expected results. While the lack of clarity as to what is expected from the change could mean that there is 'lack of understanding of what such supportive action would look like, because they fail to convert a change initiative into a supportive action' (Palmer et al., 2006,). Accordingly, change presents both change agents, namely top management and recipients, namely employees with potential problems that are a trigger for sense-making (Palmer et al, 2006). Therefore, both get engaged in interpretation to give meaning to the change whereas the change manager tries to understand how it will be accomplished and employees, on the other hand, seek to understand what will happen to them.

As our case suggests, during the change when the past history of different companies was put aside, the implication could be that failing to communicate expectations from organizational change, i.e. what CSR policies could mean to organizational members, may fail to create commitment to behaviour change through which the character of the company could be shaped. In this sense, organization practitioners and researchers in the behavioural sciences suggest that organizational change fails without individual behaviour change (Malone, 2001, pp. 27-36).

In the company of our study we believe that CSR policies are expressed through core values. With reference to business ethics management Trevino et al (2007 as cited in Crane and Matten, 2004/2007) claim that one way of organizing business ethics is through values orientation. Accordingly 'values approach is 'rooted in personal self-governance' and provides the means for ethical decision making where no particular rules are in place'. Following this stance (Paine 1994 as cited in Crane and Matten, 2004, p. 171) suggests that this approach encourages employee commitment to certain ethical aspirations based on the defined organizational values.

Throughout our research, we have treated core values and referred to them as CSR policies and discuss how people make sense of CSR communication.

Thus, what became of our particular interest in the research regards the ethical aspects of business and management of people with communication as its focal point. As studies on managing change suggest communication is one of the most frustrating aspects when change is to be implemented (Cummings and Worley, 2005). Yet one should be able to cope with it; and the perspective on communicating change provides us awareness that communication strategies are necessary to achieve successful organizational change. Therefore, communication process becomes crucial, and the failure to address this issue, may bring potential problems, namely message distortion can occur when meanings are misinterpreted or message ambiguity can be a problem when an organization has a vision but it is not clear how to achieve it (Palmer et al, 2006).

Why we also found the study of communication aspects central in our research is because the way communication is processed, in conversation with others, namely when CSR policies are the theme of communication, will accordingly affect and shape people's understanding and behaviour, which will be projected to the organization. The study of communication process of CSR policies, therefore, helped explore how people makes sense of those policies in the process of being involved in interpretations and trying to understand what is the meaning of CSR policies to them.

CSR policies are given different meanings when people are involved in the process of making sense of CSR communication. The implication of this with reference to organizational culture is that culture is claimed to be a set of meanings to be shared by all members of the organization which will define what is good and bad, right and wrong (Watson, 2000), while business ethics perspective will suggest that there is no definite answer whether something is right or wrong due to different understandings of what constitutes morality or ethics (Crane and Matten, 2004/2007). Accordingly, people will ascribe certain meanings to CSR policies based on their understanding of what is perceived as morally right or wrong.

Our problem discussion results in posing the following question, which will guide us in our study and to which we try to provide an answer.

How do organizational members make sense of CSR policies and what meaning CSR policies are given? In our context, what do CSR policies mean for top management group and its organizational members?

This central question can be divided into sub-questions:

- Which expectations do the managers, namely top managers had when communicating CSR policies and how do organizational members, namely how middle managers' interpret top managers' expectations when introducing and communicating CSR policies?
- How managers are committed to communicating CSR policies and are they believed to be adopted by organizational members?
- What could be the consequences if CSR policies are treated as an accomplished project and if employees do not identify with them?
- What could be the ethical implications of it for the business?

1.2 Purpose

This interest in the study of CSR policies of the company, which are expressed through core values, is based on the observation and assumption that values are understood, interpreted and consequently enacted in multiple ways owing to people's different backgrounds and pre-understandings. We will reflect on how the top management makes sense of and give sense to the declared CSR policies, i.e. how they are interpreted by managers and communicated to employees.

With this aim we will discern, explore and analyse different understandings of top management and organizational members regarding CSR policies to see how they are actually reflected and enacted in organizational life and by its members to obtain a deeper knowledge of the complicated nature of communication and sense-making of CSR policies to bring together different cultures.

2. Methodology

In this chapter we will provide the reader with the foundation by which we have made the research. It contains methodology understood as a reflexive approach to understand the problem as formulated in chapter 1, and also the actual method of doing the research. We also discuss various ways of this and why we have chosen a particular approach.

2.1 Discussion of methodology

When observing how CSR policies are being communicated among employees and in particular how the ethical aspects of CSR policies are understood from our case study, we started with reflecting on epistemology (how knowledge is created) and ontology (specification of a conceptualization), i. e. how knowledge is created and what kind of conceptualization of relationships are at hand.

Of the two main choices, quantitative or qualitative approach, we are of the opinion that a qualitative analysis best suited for research when trying to obtain knowledge from social scientific studies. We will in dept look into a certain process that is framed by employees and managements' perceptions and behaviours. As suggested by Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2000), 'consideration of open, equivocal empirical material, and the focus on such material, is a central criterion (for qualitative method)'. However, qualitative methodology put a lot of responsibility on the researcher. First it is essential that the knowledge is not treated as a mirror of reality, but is open to different perspectives when developing theory (Alvesson, 2003). The researcher plays an essential role when producing (e.g. interviews, observations, text, pictures) and interprets the data. Another researcher in a different empirical situation would come to other explanations and results from the research. This means that the objective way of looking at data will be difficult, as the researchers identity – formed by norms, education, values and social context – is vital for how, what, when and where the research will be conducted. There is a connection between object and subject that need to be taken into consideration.

As the research is coloured by the researchers own pre-understanding, she has to be cautious about the selections and try to distance herself to get the interpretation as objective as possible. The researcher could also include their own preferences in the material, telling about values and pre-understandings. It might be an advantage to have some pre-understanding from the researcher to be able to make the right questions (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000).

To be able to understand the underlying meaning of the process, we have chosen a hermeneutic approach, whereas we analyze the empirical material (transcription of interviews and secondary data as annual reports and corporate folders) from our understanding of the author's meaning. Hermeneutics describes, interprets and tries to understand. Starting point is a text from which the purpose is to find the actual meaning of the writer by comparing parts of the text with the whole in the first round and next to utilize the researcher by interpreting what she has understood from this with her pre-understanding; this rounds are used like a double loop to dig as deep as possible into the meaning by using intuition, empathy and imagination in order to understand from the inside. The researcher actively uses their own self as if there is a dialogue with the text, not passively more statistically sort the data (Alvesson, 2003). In hermeneutics the researcher is never tabula rasa, and the production of knowledge is always biased by who is the researcher (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000). The questions are open and emanate from our pre-understanding of the process and the interviews are more related to dialogue than a questionnaire. The research project will, therefore, be viewed as an interpretative activity involving assumptions and notions that are important in terms of determining interpretations and the search for the underlying meaning.

Further, we have decided to do a case study that is framed by a process of change where communication is of vital interest. We are aware that aiming to understand the problem by what can be learned from a single case might not be of interest more generally. However, it could possibly be used to connect to other studies. Stake (2000) defines three types of case studies: intrinsic (the researcher want better understanding of a particular case), instrumental (the case plays a supportive role) and collective (study of a number of cases).

In this case study, we have taken an intrinsic stance and consider the case as such to be that of interest. The conceptual structure of a case study is usually organized around a small number of questions that are thematic and attention is to be drawn to language and understanding of the common disciplines of knowledge (Stake, 2000).

In order to reduce the risk for misunderstanding we have applied the process of triangulation understood as 'a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation' (Stake, 2000). We aimed to spend time on site and to have individual interviews with employees to get a deeper understanding for the context of the case and the interaction between people within the organization and to evaluate our findings by corroboration from more than one source.

As one of the researchers previously has been part of the top management of the company that is studied, the triangulation is most important to be able to verify data and to understand the underlying bias from the pre-understanding. However, as this is a qualitative study, validity and reliability is not that central to the analysis. Bryman and Bell (2007) suggest two other prerequisites more suitable to qualitative research, namely trustworthiness and authenticity, whereas trustworthiness consists of four sub-prerequisites, namely creditability, transferability, dependability and confirmability. In our research, we have used official documents such as annual reports, company brochures and other printed material. This material is also accessible from the company's web site. As the company is a Swedish stock listed company, we are of the opinion that this information is trustworthy. As for the interviews, field-notes have been taken, dialogues taped and photos taken that have been used for analysing the qualitative research.

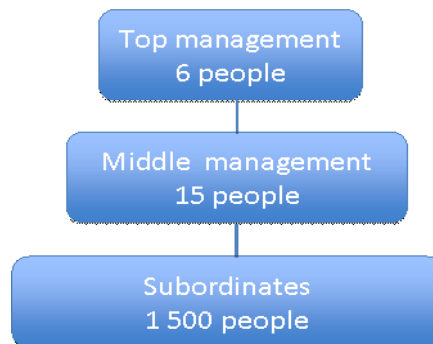
2.2 Method of empirical study

We have during the time of research, looked into the process of change and communication and also clarified the organization structure and background to be able to gain knowledge that will support our interpretation of how the implementation of CSR policies succeeded.

The process:



The organization:



Primary as well as secondary sources are used for data collection. As the research case suggests, it may take the form of reflections, interviews and narrative analysis. Secondary data is collected from the company documents, reports and Internet sources.

Since secondary data is already a result of their author's assumptions and interpretations, the seemingly sound arguments will be questioned through applying different aspects of critical approach (Mingers, 2000). In order to understand the perception of the values and the communication process, the secondary data will be supported by primary data where interviews with current employees as well as employees, who worked with the company previously, are made.

Conducting of qualitative interviews is of particular relevance and value to our study since interviews in opposition to 'talking questionnaires' (Potter & Wetherell, 1987 as cited in

Alvesson, 2003, p. 13)—are relatively loosely structured and open to what the interviewee feels is relevant and important to talk about, given the interest of the research project.

Given the problematic nature of communication and awareness that communication may not be easily controlled and managed, reflexive approach to interviews will inform us that we get different kinds of truth through interviews in the sense that based on moral imperative people express themselves in loyal terms during interviews and ‘from the point of view of the romantic, it is an effort to establish rapport and trust, leading to ‘depth’ in the contact, with the subject honestly telling the truth as he or she knows it’ (Alvesson, 2003, p. 21).

With that also come advantages of avoiding naivety associated with a belief that ‘data’ simply reveal reality and encouraging creativity when studying potential richness of meaning in complex empirical material (Alvesson, 2003, p.14), which is of our particular interest.

In the process of interpretation new facts will emerge and old disappear. According to Bryman and Bell (2005) it is difficult for an interviewer to assure that the information received throughout the interviews can be considered valid and that the respondent is answering the questions in a truthful way. The influence of interpretative perspective on our choice of method is that texts are results, not starting points. In this light, the hidden problematic of the text would be to what unspoken question is the text an answer (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2000, p.86).

In our case, by viewing the organization as a culture or mini society we would look into how organizational values are encouraged, how are they communicated to best align to the type of work the company does (Palmer et al., 2006). In this context, interviewee's experiences, knowledge, ideas, and impressions will be considered and documented. While it will also give us awareness to consider the limitations with interviews, by acknowledging that people tend to present themselves in a positive way, and as Palmer et al. (2006) point it, assumptions about certain phenomena are hold by people without being aware of the existence of those assumptions, and accordingly those assumptions as mental models affect their thinking, perceptions and actions in their attempt to simplify and make sense of the complex

organizational issues. It informs us that peoples' assumptions will drive them in certain directions particularly when communicating organizational values.

As language is an inseparable part of our study, narrative analysis will help us when involved in understanding the processes of interpretation and on how the use of language shapes communication. This stance will provide us awareness that narrative is a symbolic action and 'we make meaning through our shared use of symbols, including language as a symbolic sign system' (Tietze et al., 2003, p.19).

We started our research by interviewing a focus group at one of the subsidiaries of Delta, whereas a focus group is understood as a group interview with a smaller group that is containing more than two people but preferably not more than four, discussing a subject that is decided by the researcher (Wibeck, 2000). The focus group of our research consisted of five members of the organization with different working tasks; secretary, charterer (2) and marketing officer (2).

Bearing in mind Weick's approach (1999) suggesting that change in organizations can be framed either from a perspective that aim for maximizing economical values, with focus on shareholders' value or from an organizational perspective which have focus on culture where participation of the employees is crucial, the group interviews gave us the opportunity to listen to, analyze and interpret the organizational members expressing their opinions. From a Weick perspective, if the ethical values are developed from an organizational point of view, there are supposed to be involvement from employees in the process. We have tried to explore whether it could be determined that the way the CSR policies were established and subsequently communicated actually came from a participative process.

The interview was made during a restricted period of time (Wibeck, 2000). This particular focus group lasted for about an hour. The researcher took the role of a moderator, bringing the discussion back to the subject when necessary and putting emphasize on different perspectives of the given subject. The purpose was that the group talks freely with each other. Focus groups are a form of group interview, but all group interviews are not focus groups.

According to Morgan (1996) there are three criteria for a focus group 1) scientific research, 2) gathering of data through group interaction and 3) subject is decided by the researcher.

The discussion of the focus group was affected by intrapersonal factors (how the group members are by themselves) interpersonal factors (how they interact with each other) and environmental factors (how comfortable the members feel in the situation). In our case they knew each other before, as they have been working at the same office during some time.

Wibeck (2000) suggests that a focus group might be suitable when there is not much interest in the individuals understanding, but merely how a group of people together thinks about a phenomenon. The interest is focused on common, cultural perceived notions and attitudes. In our research, we are interested to study how the group perceives the ethical values of the corporation.

The interview took place at their office. We had formed some open questions about the change in 2005, the CSR policies that were implemented and how they perceived the development of these CSR policies and ethics during the recent five years. However, the purpose was to create a situation whereas the involved people felt relaxed and could express themselves freely. The method of using focus groups gives the researchers the depth and context needed for evolving a deeper understanding of the underlying meaning of people thoughts and experiences (Wibeck, 2000). During the course of a discussion within a focus group, the participants questioned and explained each other. As suggested by Morgan (1996) a focus group discussion might give more understanding than separate interviews as opinions often derive from interaction. The reason for starting the research with this interview was to establish the perception of the communication process from organizational members' perspective.

The primary purpose with using focus groups as a complement to individual interviews was to generate ideas of which interview questions should be used later and to see that the researched area actually is studied from the members' perspective and ease the choice of interview persons (Wibeck, 2000). This is also what we did, when preparing for the coming interviews.

By using a focus group we also aimed to inquire whether there was coherence in the way they expressed their understanding of the success of the way the company had performed the change work. It was our intention to facilitate that the group was interactive and discussed the subject among each other as well as to observe their discussion and evaluate language, shared values and the degree of common experience.

Deriving from the findings from the focus group, two interviews were conducted with persons that were middle managers at the time when the CSR policies were communicated. These interviews were done on one-on-one basis at the same office and took about 45 minutes each. The interviews were done by using open-end questions that opened up for the managers to express their own opinion of the process of communication and in what ways the CSR policies actually made any difference to the behaviour of the organization.

Finally, a telephone conversation with the HR Manager, that reflected the process and result of implementing CSR policies, were conducted. The purpose was to receive the perspective of today's top management of the company.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis. Our transcriptions were used to give us a deeper understanding of the way CSR policies were perceived on the level of organizational members. We tried to sort the findings into different areas of interest, which is presented in chapter 5.

The purpose for the management to form CSR policies is gathered mainly from secondary data, which have been studied in detail. A folder, that was created in 2006 and distributed to all employees, whereas CSR policies were made visible and interpreted by top management, as well as communicated via web-site, have been analyzed. Annual reports for 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009 have been studied in order to gain understanding for the company and their vision, strategy goal and core values.

2.3 Limitations

Being aware of the limitations of the chosen approach, we would avoid universal harmonizing during the interpretative process in careful consideration of the given situation and by showing openness to different possible interpretations.

Time is a limitation to this research. For in depth analysis of credibility and confirmability aspects, more time would have been valuable. To interpret the meaning of some of the material and to get under the 'surface' of the organization, observations made at sites (head office as well as subsidiary) during a couple of days and 'hanging around' asking questions would presumably add in to our analysis.

The bias of the researchers and the pre-understanding of communication and ethical values in general and knowledge of this particular company specially, might influence the interview questions. This, in turn, might direct the answers towards the interviewer's expectations. Our aim was to listen and only construct open questions.

3. Theoretical framework

This chapter will provide the reader with an overview of the theoretical framework of CSR in connection with the communication process, viewed through organizational perspective, whereas language and discourse analysis are found central in pursuit of communicating CSR policies and creating shared meanings through shaping people's behavior.

3.1 Framework of CSR

The work with conducting CSR policies and rules are voluntarily for companies, however laws and regulations have recently emerged that claim for companies to increase their efforts to take responsibility for environment, human rights and economics.

One perspective on how to create a socially responsible business ethics is to refer to the free market and the legal system as the framework for what a company should align to. Another perspective is that this issue is not in the hands of the system but in the hands of employees within the companies (Armstrong and Kotler, 1999). The company should have a 'social conscience'. The company should work out a strategy for social responsibility and ethical behaviour.

Business ethics is primarily concerned with issues not covered by the law or where there is no definite consensus on whether something is right or wrong. For most of issues of interest to business ethics, the law does not currently provide us with guidance. Therefore it is often said that business ethics is about the 'grey areas' of business or where, as Trevino and Nelson (1999) put it 'values are in conflict'. There simply may not be a definite 'right' answer to many business ethics problems.

Controversy regarding business ethics exists due to different understandings of what constitutes morality or ethics. As Crane and Matten (2004/2007) suggest morality is concerned with norms, values and beliefs embedded in social processes which define right

and wrong for an individual or a community, while ethics is concerned with the study of morality in the context of ethical theories.

Following the given stance in the frame of studying communication processes by using language people engage in a social process of constructing particular realities. Accordingly, as Watson (2001b:27) claims, the structures and circumstances in which humans find themselves partly shape what they think and do, yet humans also shape those thoughts and circumstances, depending on the power associated with the position in which they find themselves.

We have looked upon the question of communicating CSR policies from a stakeholder perspective. Crane and Matten (2004/2007) suggest that the relationship between stakeholders generally have been perceived as contradicted to each other, but recently it has been recognized that there also might be co-operation between stakeholders. For examples co-operation between companies and non-governmental organizations are increasing. Starting up within environmental issues, it has spread to other areas of business. Crane and Matten (2004/2007) argue that by involving stakeholder more democratic governance might be introduced into corporate decision-making and thus enhancing corporate accountability. From an employee perspective, collaboration between individual employee and the company might have a negative impact on trade unions.

We have looked upon the question of communicating CSR policies mainly from an employee perspective. However, other stakeholders are strongly connected to the way employees behave. The foundation for the stakeholder model is that a corporation has to survive and in order to do that, it is dependent on different kinds of stakeholders; employees, customers, suppliers, government and shareholders (Min-Dong Paul Lee, 2007). The focus in our research is identifying which groups that is essential for the company, i.e. to whom does the company own responsibility, or put in another way; any group or individual who can affect, or is affected by, the achievement of the organization's objectives (Freeman, 1984 as cited in Crane and Matten, 2004/2007). As the stakeholders differ from one company/situation to another, we have tried to define which stakeholders were represented in our case company at the time

of the merger. From doing this, we understand that focus is on employees, customers, authorities and non-governmental organizations, as described below in chapter 5.

3.2 Perspectives of Human resources related to CSR

Core values provide a basic normative foundation of a business unit (Tushman and Nadler, 1996). To communicate core values is a way to shape culture and make employees behave in a certain way. The actual meaning of the core values is expressed by norms of the company. Norms help specify for example language and decision-making process (Tushman and Nadler, 1996). To use reward and punishment strategies in line with core values (norms) nurture the culture in the preferred way.

From employees' perspective, it is claimed that employees might be attracted to work for and even be more committed to corporations perceived as being socially responsible (Greening and Turban, 2000). CSR research has shown that job applicant and employee perceptions of a firm's CSR affect how attractive these individuals perceive the firm to be (Greening & Turban, 2000).

Employees have to buy in to their workplace values to be fully motivated and effective (Thomson and Hecher, 2000) and as employees create image of the company as 'brand ambassadors' it is essential to communicate the core values with a thought through strategy. From an organizational justice framework a theoretical model on employee reactions to corporate social responsibility might be appropriate to consider which presents how 'employees' perceptions of CSR impact their subsequent emotions, attitudes, and behaviours, mediated by instrumental, relational, and deontic motives/needs, as well as moderated by organizations' social accounts' (Rupp et al., 2006).

Two main components are suggested to be of main importance (Hardaker and Fill, 2005). The intellectual element refers to alignment of corporate values, strategies and goals, whereas an emotional element is about the employee embracing the corporate goals and is committed to achieve the strategy. It is suggested that the communication strategy should be based on an information processing style that is preferred by the employees and have a blend of rational

information (to support the intellectual element) and expressive types (to appeal to emotions) of information.

3.3 How communication is used in relation to CSR

Sense making perspective is a fruitful method for better understanding communication processes. Sense making is inherently social (Weick, 1995), as we 'make sense of things in organizations while in conversation with others, while reading communications from others, while exchanging ideas with others' (Nijhof et al., 2006 as cited in Morsing and Schultz, 2006, p. 324), implying that no manager or organization makes sense in splendid isolation (Craig-Lees, 2001 as cited in Morsing and Schultz, 2006, p. 324).

The implication for our study with regard to making sense of CSR policies would be that the way managers handle the communication process with employees as their stakeholders, will determine employees' behaviour on what the company stands for.

3.4 Different kind of communicating changes in organizations

There are two ways of distinguishing the change process – episodic and continuous (Weick, 1999). The episodic change process is planned and intentional and follows the process of unfreeze – change – freeze (Lewin, K (1947 as cited in Palmer et al., 2009, p. 205) and is connected to a top-down perspective where the change manager is the one creating the change in order for the corporation to comply with external changes (e.g. change of top management). On the other hand a continuous change is an ongoing process where the management is a sense-maker who redirects changes. Weick (1995) suggest that the process is to freeze (make the change visible) – rebalance (reinterpret the patterns) – unfreeze (resume to learning and improvise). In order to establish how the researched company manage the implementation and the subsequent result of it, we have analyzed the process during the recent five years of developing shared values and behaviours.

3.5 Power of language in communication

Interpretative approach on understanding organizations through language suggests the central role of meaning in social action. Instead of seeing communication as a thing that can be controlled and managed, through semiological approach or as called the science of signs and meanings, may be appropriate enabling to understand processes of interpretation involved and how they inform and shape communication. This will provide awareness that meaning is not only shaped but also manipulated and changed. Dialogue theory suggests that getting knowledgeable about one's own assumption is the first and foremost step to a richer understanding of the social world (Tietze et al, 2003). Taking the same stance Schein (2000 as cited in Tietze et al, 2003, p.15) also argues that in order to gain any understanding of another group assumption, we must get into a communication mode that legitimates self-examination and acknowledges that perception and thought are anything but objective.

The contemporary forms of organizational management with the shift of locus of control to more horizontal forms of relations involve employees in a dialogue. Yet the change in the form of control may inhibit problematic power issues and the risk of manipulation can be one of them. To this effect, dialogue is also referred to be a language game as far as managing understanding is concerned, reflecting that 'what seems on the surface to be an honest dialogue is, at a deeper level, a planned, manipulative language game' (Sandberg and Targama, 2007, p.190). This provides us awareness of manipulative practices that may involve unethical behavior and illegitimate games endangering the future of the business.

The tactics of communication entail power. Hardy (1996) argues that 'power comprises a number of dimensions, of which resources (mobilization of funds, information, expertise and credibility) is only one; it is also embedded in processes and meaning (Lukes, 1974; Hardy 1994)'. Power dimensions, in particular power of meaning provide us awareness that power aspects may be fundamental in determining the communication stance in the organization.

Power of meaning involving language as one of its attributes (others are symbols and rituals), informs us that depending on the language in use, it may either foster or hinder the accomplishment of the desired effect. In light of this, Palmer et al (2006, p.296) claim that

using the language that shows respect towards others is more likely to produce positive results than the language of strongly direct and imperative nature. Another aspect of power of meaning, where action of power is involved, it is argued that change is given a new meaning through behaviour modification. A relevant illustration with reference to the given statement can be the practice of applying the role negotiation technique, which relates to intervening directly in the relationships of power, authority and influence within the group, provided that the recipients in this change effort trust the consultant enough to give it a fair try (Harrison, 1972 as cited in French et al, 2005). Another aspect of power of meaning, where action of power is involved, can be relevant in our case, as new meaning will be achieved through behavior modification.

3.6 Company strategy that align with corporate value

Managers cannot readily construct a culture to which all individuals and groups will subscribe and which will achieve this binding. To varying extents, however, managements make efforts to establish a shared culture, a set of key values and ideas about how one should behave in this organization. Therefore, strategy becomes central when communicating CSR policies.

Ethical concerns are a fundamental as well as complex aspect of strategic human resource management. Ethical and fair treatment of employees is an important strategic concern since the way employees perceive the way they are treated, potentially impacts on the long-term concerns of the organization (Harris and Watson, 2005). Values and interests already involve certain ethical positions, which affect organizations in one, or another way (Harris and Watson, 2005), and this informs us that ethical conflicts may emerge given the power relations within and between various organizational stake-holding groups.

Organizational development perspective suggests that there might be a need to increase the clarity of the strategy rather than changing the strategy because it may find resistance with the deep-seated culture of the organization (Cummings & Worley, 2005, p.105). Accordingly strategy, as a main driver of change, will be used in the change process to address issues the organization is facing and envision a clear path, in line with the organization's objectives.

It is believed that power and strategy interplay and logically strategic thinking is involved when dealing with power. As the power of the system developed by Foucault suggests 'power is embedded deep within the organizational system that everyone takes for granted. It lies in the unconscious acceptance of values, traditions, cultures and structures of a given institution and it captures all organizational members in its web' (Foucault, 1979, 1980, 1982).

To this effect 'a better understanding of the use of power can provide the energy to ensure strategic action by driving the organization and its members through the strategy-making process (Hardy, 1996)'.

3.7 Organizational development from a communication perspective

In the change processes communication is of strategic importance since the members of the change team should share common understanding of the change, which can be achieved through conversations around assumptions on how to deal with the task. The study of change images in the frame of organizational development provides us awareness that images 'we hold of organizations affect our interpretations of what we think is going on, what we think needs to happen and how we think things should happen' (Palmer et al., 2009, p.23). In this sense, during the communication process of CSR policies, management is already biased by those images that act as mental models and drive in certain directions when they try to make sense of things. Consequently, depending on what the organization is seen as, i.e. if it is seen as machine, as political arenas or as mini societies or cultures, the communication process will differ accordingly (Palmer et al., 2009). From knowledge management perspective, when talking about shared understanding, we know that competence is rooted in it and core competence is central to stay competitive. Consequently it is being developed and maintained through shared values.

As the literature review suggests language is a powerful tool and the way the language is used in an organizational setting may determine the mode of communication, wherein the aspects of strategy, power relations, ethical positions of organizational members and their relevant impact on shaping people's behaviour are worthy of consideration.

The theoretical framework underpinning the process of communication provides us a context for reflecting on processes of interpretation related to CSR policies. Considerations of ethical aspects of business and business ethics are highlighted because values can be treated differently based on different understandings of what constitutes morality or ethics. From the stance of business ethics, values are embedded in social processes, in this sense communication is treated as a social process and different interpretations are in play to help understand the conflicting nature of values. Consequently, depending on how those values are communicated and understood, i.e. what particular meanings are attached to them will shape people's thoughts and determine their behaviour depending on the power associated with the position in which they identify themselves.

3.8 Sense-making concept

In the article 'Corporate Social Responsibility: A Process model of sense-making' by Basu and Palazzo (2008), they discuss the way that CSR is framed that is characterized as 1) stakeholder driven, 2) performance driven and 3) motivation driven. They suggest the sense-making approach as an alternative to the former and argue that CSR activities framed from a content-driven perspective might not explain the behaviors of people working within organizations, i.e. the general character of the company.

As the purpose with this research is get a deepened understanding of the process of internal communication when implementing CSR policies, by which the goal is to shape behavior and culture within the company, we found the sense-making perspective by Weick (1995) useful.

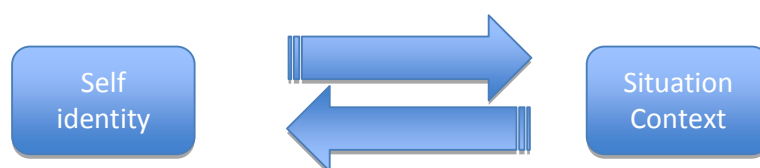
In this approach Weick (1995) distinguish between sense-making and interpretation, whereas he suggests that 'sense-making is about the ways people generate what they interpret'. As we understand this, the CSR policies are interpreted by the employees and subsequently the employees look back and try to find meaning in those interpreted values. Weick (1995) describes sense-making as an activity or process, whereas interpretation can be a process but also describe a product, 'a focus on sense-making induces a mindset to focus on process, whereas this is less true with interpretation'. Further, he argues that there are at least seven

characteristics of sense-making, which we try to explain below and which we have found valuable when analyzing our case study.

3.8.1 Grounded in identity construction

Corporate identity is important to employees, and external events that question the defined identity, may threaten the perception that employees have of their organizational identity (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991 as cited in Weick, 1995, p.). Consequently, changing understanding of what we are is hard: most of the time transforming understanding is quite difficult because of embedded understanding of a certain phenomenon as a result of which people become defensive. Thus, sense making is involved which is a way of understanding the reflection process.

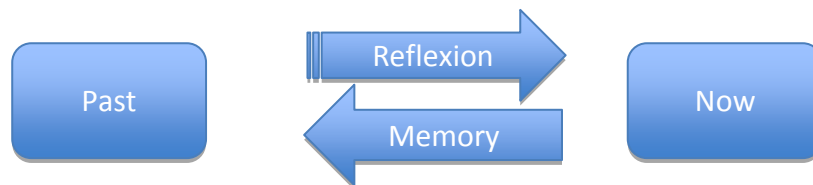
As identity is constructed from an interaction with other people that are constantly changeable, the way people perceived themselves are subject to an ongoing redefinition and also every individual has several different identities, depending on situation, time and interaction. When defining one's 'self', the context will also be defined and people learn about their own identity by mirroring themselves in others. Weick argues that 'sense-making occurs in the service of maintaining a consistent, positive self-conception'. The sense-making of a situation is dependent on which identity the person utilizes or adopts at that particular time.



Individual behaviour in organizations can be of two kinds (Chatman et al., 1986 as cited in Weick, 1995, p.23) 1) the individual as a representative or 2) the individual as himself. In the first case the individual are acting 'as the organization', i.e. has taken on the values and believes that are the corporate identity. Weick argues that members of organizations understand their identity by interaction with others whereas they clarify and define the organizational identity.

3.8.2 Retrospective

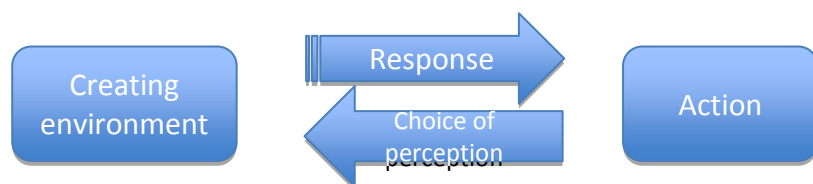
When dealing with sense-making, it is actually referable to something that has already happened. By trying to make sense, one puts attention to something that has occurred, which is biased by the context of that situation. As memory is not reality, it is biased by our own pre-understanding. Accordingly, retrospective sense-making can have many different meanings. The problem, according to Weick (1995), is that there are too many meanings and the problem of the sense-maker is one of equivocally. Weick (1995) posits that sense-making is not about calling for more information, but rather to get values, priorities and clarity about preferences to make people understand what is important in the elapsed experiences.



There might also be a hindsight bias, whereas people tend to use the outcome of other prior histories and relate to new ones. If the former outcome were negative, then they will expect the new to be that as well. By doing this it will be preconceived.

3.8.3 Enactive of sensible environments

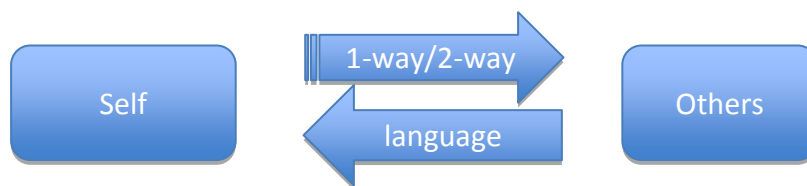
The environment that is perceived is constructed by people, who choose to take action in accordance with what they have constructed. The interaction between people creates the environment – which is not singular and fixed. Weick argues that ‘action is crucial for sense-making. As for organizations, the ‘resistance of change’ is suggested by Weick to be an idea about ‘resistance of environment’. There is an interaction between people creating environments and environments create the people. When people create the environment they find what they expect to find – i.e. ‘I see it when I believe it’, which is a subjective notion. Managers in an organization can be seen as someone that creates the environment by their actions.



3.8.4 Social

Sense-making is a social process that shapes interpretations and decisions (working organizations are made 'in the presence of others or with the knowledge that they will have to be implemented, or understood, or approved by others' (Weick, 1995), 'when people overlook the social substrate the manufacture theoretical obstacles that can be distracting'. A common language and the social interaction are the foundation for common values in organizations.

Weick (1995) argues that sense-making can be both one-way and two-way communication. If a person agrees to a message, there may not be need for a reply. Even so, one-way communication is about somebody to communicate to, and thus it is social conditioned. Mainly, sense-making is focused on language, discourse, symbols etc, which is how social interaction is mediated.



3.8.5 Ongoing

Sense-making is a flow which has no beginning and no end. People are always in a process and dealing with several 'projects'.

An interruption in the individual's 'project' that shifts the perception of environment that creates an emotion, which the individual tries to make sense of. In organizations those interruptions in daily 'projects', will create emotions that is dependent on if the interruption make sense in order to in an improved way contribute to the 'project' accomplishment. If it does, the emotion is positive otherwise the individual will react with anger, indifferences or if the interruption can be circumvented with relief. Weick argue that the emotion at that particular interruption, will affect the individual's memory and similar notions will be used when making sense of the situation.

3.8.6 Focused on and by extracted cues

When trying to make sense, people have to have perceived something that is coming from outside, if not noticed it doesn't exist and then there will of course be no sense-making. When people notice an extracted cue, not all information is explicit, but from that cue people tend to embrace the whole situation, building their own reality and shaping the understanding.

Understanding the importance with extracted cues is that 'what an extracted cue will become depends on the context which (i) affects what is extracted as a cue and (ii) affects how the extracted cue is interpreted'. Thus, 'if events are noticed, people will make sense of them, and if events are not noticed they are not available for sense-making' (Starbuck and Milliken, 1988 as cited in Weick, 1995, p. 52). In that case the term 'scanning' is 'preferred' to 'noticing' because the latter term 'implies a more informal, involuntary 'beginning' to the process of sense-making, while scanning, on the contrary, sounds more strategic, more conscious, more deliberate, more under the control of preconceptions, and less open to invention (Weick, 1995).

Smircich and Morgan (1982 as cited in Weick, 1995) argue that extracted cues can be thought of as seeds from which people develop a broadened perception of what may happen.

3.8.7 Driven by plausibility rather than accuracy

It is not necessary to be accurate in order to create sense. To have all information and a total comprehensible picture of the situation might be impossible. Instead, people need to have something that motivates them – a plausibility of what could be achieved. That theory doesn't have to be true, but a mental model that can be used to make sense. The strength of sense-making is that it doesn't rely on accuracy, but on plausibility, pragmatics, coherence, reasonableness, creation, invention, and instrumentality (Weick, 1995).

Implication of sense-making perspective for our research is its processual nature which is approached as a continuum in the attempt to enrich our understanding about communication processes of CSR policies which will be achieved through interpreting sense-making of CSR communication in the company through the lens of sense-making perspective. And as Weick (1995) postulates it: 'Once people begin to act (enactment) they generate tangible outcomes

(cues) in some context (social) and this helps the discovery (retrospect) that is occurring (ongoing), what needs to be explained (plausibility) and what should be done next (identity enhancement)'.

Following this stance we will achieve new understanding about what meaning CSR policies are given and what could be their implications for business management.

4. Presentation of the case study

The purpose with this chapter is to provide the reader with an overview of the company that is subject to this research. The background, where three different companies were merged and subsequently formed a new organization might be relevant for understanding the process of incorporation of core values. In order to facilitate the understanding, a chronological description of the process of communicating core values is described.

4.1 The industry

The company that this case study is built on is a stock listed shipping company that was created from a merger in 2005 of three different Swedish shipping companies, based in Gothenburg, Stockholm and Skåne area. The companies, below named Alfa, Beta and Gamma had different backgrounds as regards, business areas, culture and images.

4.2 Company Alfa

This company has a long history – about 90 years, based on an aristocratic family and situated in a midsized town. The culture in the company may be described as conservative and a bit of ‘upper class’. Investment in the company was ordered from the best suppliers, working conditions and salaries were well known as top of the class. At the office, the walls were crowded with paintings of the company and the family, once owners. Since mid 90th the company had been stock listed. The turnover was about M 800 SEK and the yearly result was in the range of M 50 SEK. Total assets were around M 800 SEK. The company was in need for investments and was facing a slow ‘sun set scenario’, the employees were proud of their company but wanted change to be able to survive. From interviews with people who worked in this organization, the decision about the merger came as a relief and the employees were positive to the change. There was not any obvious resistance to the new organization.

4.3 Company Beta

This company was founded during the 60th and the founder was still the main owner. The company had been stock listed since the 80s and the head office was based in a small fishing village. The culture can be described as familiar and within the company several people were related to each other. They were proud to be cost effective and believed that almost every problem was possible to solve with some practical skills and common sense. This company had about the same turnover as Alfa, but a negative result due to heavy investments during the last couple of years, which had brought up their balance sheet to about M 1 500 SEK. Unfortunately, they could not utilize their new investments, as they did not have the market knowledge needed to find suitable customers.

The employees were convinced that the founder would find a way to come through the bad result and were certain that there would be a future for the company. The merger was merely described as a take-over of Alfa from the employees' point of view. In 2001 Beta had bought about 34 per cent of Alfa.

4.4 Company Gamma

Gamma was the smallest of the three companies with a turnover of about M 600 SEK. It was founded in 1977 and privately owned until it was bought by Beta in 2004. The basis of the company was merely as broker and forwarding but also that of a short sea shipping company. The managing director was one to the founder of the company and he held a strong position within the company and the employees put a lot of trust in his decisions.

4.5 The new group Delta

The board of director's of the two stock listed companies found a lot of synergy effects by merging the two companies, which subsequently was done. Alfa brought in market competence and a strong balance sheet, whereas Beta had new equipment available.

Directly after the merger was published, an executive group started to work with the changes that had to be made in order to make the new merged company taking care of those synergies. The merged company got a new name Delta and the history of Alfa and Beta and Gamma was supposed to be put behind and forgotten. The head office was placed at Beta's old premises.

About two months after the announcement, several new groups were formed to create policies for HR, ITC etc. An executive group which contained top management of six person and in addition those reporting to top management (about 20 people) started a leadership development programme, where deciding upon core values for Delta was one of the goals with this particular group and also discussion how to communicate this to the rest of the organization, i.e. in total about 1 500 employees. A consultant was brought in to facilitate the work with creating core values for the organization that was understood and accepted by the whole group.

From a stakeholder perspective there were discussions on how to form the core values to support the strategy of Delta. From internal perspective the purpose was to attract and retain employees to the company. This was important as the situation to attract young people to the shipping industry, especially chief engineers and captains were two categories that were increasingly harder to find. It was also of great importance to develop a common culture by those working in Transatlantic.

From an owner perspective, the company is stock listed in Stockholm and in order to attract capital and an increased share-price, the company have to be consistent and reliable in the market communication.

From a customer perspective business ethics was a key factor as Swedish shipping companies are not able to compete with other countries with low cost transport, but need to be perceived as trustworthy and honest. The majority of the customers were (multi national companies (MNC) within the paper industry, with extensive demands on their suppliers.

The group decided on the core values:

Participation

Reliability

Target orientation

Openness to change



These ethical values are understood as CSR policies which is to be guidance in the internal as well as external communication. By behaving in accordance with those values, the corporation will shape its identity that is aligned with how stakeholders perceive the company – i.e. its image.

4.6 Design and process of communication

The organization consisted of five offices in Sweden, one in Finland and one in UK and also of about 25 vessels, trading Baltic, North Sea, Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean. Totally about 1 500 employees with Swedish, Finnish, British, Philippine and Polish citizenship were employed.

A plan was made to communicate the core values to all employees, with the following measurements:

1. Seminar with all Swedish (about 100) office employees where the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the Human Relations (HR) Manager informed about these values and also discussions in small groups about core values were created.
2. Four pictures were created (see above) symbolizing the core values and distributed to offices and vessels and put on the walls. By using hands it should symbolize that it is people working together, helping each other but also with a purpose to climb towards new goals.

3. All of the 20 within the management group were given a folder, which was to be used by the managers to discuss the values with the organizational members.
4. A brochure about CSR policies was published and made available to employees. In this brochure, the CSR policies were discussed and how they were interpreted by the top management follows:
 - ⇒ **Participation** is created through co-operation and openness. It is important that there is a good dialogue and a sensitive ear at your working place. That you get information about the overview of our operations and why your efforts are important. In that manner, we build team spirit and a corporate climate that is characterized by development and renewal.
 - ⇒ **Target orientation** is our ability to conduct operations towards identified goals. This goes for the total group, for the divisions, but for you as an employee in your daily work as well. By being target oriented, we may easily drop those activities that only are time consuming without bringing us forward.
 - ⇒ Without development, we cannot meet tomorrows' demands. That is why we all the time strive to create better solutions that give our customers and partners increased values. That call for, not only a welcoming of change, but also a strong **openness to change**, both as companies and individuals.
 - ⇒ Our customer should be able to **rely** on us all the time. We keep our promises and the commitments we have taken on. It is also important that we all represent good ethics and that we have trust in each others. That you can rely on your superiors and that your colleagues can rely on you. As a company it is our purpose to see to it that your work place is secure and that all work we do is done with respect for internal and external environment.

In the folder the CEO expresses 'A company where we together, through participation, reliability, target orientation and openness to changes, every day take a step closer to being the natural choice for all our customers'. The folder describes how they (top management) want the company to be seen from outside (image), 'as a customer focused company based on innovation and development' and from inside (identity), 'though our long history we prove over and over again our ability to survive'. 'It shows our professionalism and high quality over time'. They are also talking about that the image is a mirroring of common values within the company.

5. Follow ups were made by the 'well-being' inquiry that was sent to all office employees once a year. This inquiry was a way to evaluate how organizational members were coping with core values and how they perceived commitment from other employees in the overall organizational setting.
6. The core values were externally communicated by the annual report as well as by a folder (see above point 4) about how the company perceive the values.

4.7 Summary

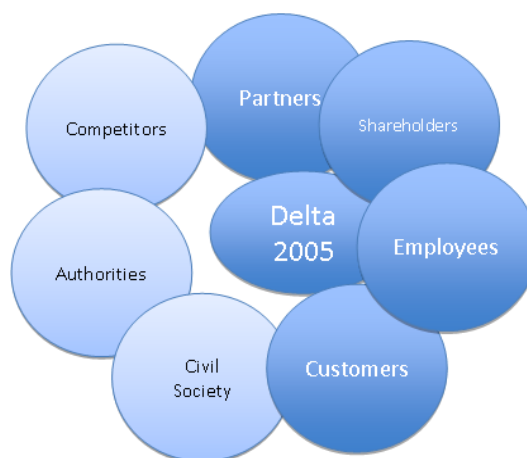
From this, we can conclude that through design and communication of CSR policies, the top management aimed to create a company that would have a coherent culture, whereas sub-cultures of different companies merged, would be integrated under the umbrella of one single organization. Communication of CSR policies was designed and processed in the form of verbal, visual and textual themes to create a shared understanding of what CSR policies stood for.

5. Analysis of empirical research

In this section we will discuss what CSR policies mean for the employees in our studied company and why employees treat them differently. We will aim at explaining the way employees/middle managers and top managers make sense of CSR policies in the process of communication. To this effect we will discuss why employees' perceptions of the company CSR policies differ. We will conduct our discussion on the given objects through our theoretical framework, which is the perspective of sense making as a more central stance, and stakeholder theory which is complementary to our analysis in consideration of stakeholder involvement perspective.

Sense making perspective, as our frame of reference, will support the movement between part and whole and deepen our understanding of values of the CSR policies in the process of their communication in the organization. By taking a hermeneutical stance in our analysis, our object of study, namely, CSR policies (part) and meanings ascribed to them can be understood only when put in an organizational environment (whole), while organizational environment can better be understood when CSR policies are under close scrutiny.

From a perspective of stakeholder's theory, which complements the analysis of our case, we have made a model (see below), whereas the focus in this research was on employees, who are expected to create shareholder's value by serving the customers in a way that the company is preferred as 'the natural choice' by their customers. From this point of view the employees are the main resource for development and prosperity of the company.



Our own observation on the employee commitment about the change initiative shows that employees of all three companies had trust and belief in the director/founder of their companies and accepted change in the form of merger as a relief and a way for company survival. The way this was accepted indicates that the employees were well aware of the company goals and necessary actions to reach them. This was supported by the organizational members, who during the focus group interview expressed their opinion of the owners, board of directors and context of the company.

Following the merger, it was important to communicate CSR policies to create an understanding of what those policies meant for the company. We, as hermeneutic interpreters, have used the characteristics of sense-making to give us a frame for understanding the process of how people made sense of CSR policies when they were introduced and communicated as well as how they are perceived now.

5.1 Sense-making grounded in identity construction

In the process of creating new meaning out of the newly formed organization, people got involved in sense-making. It is claimed that sense-making never starts nor clearly ends, it is an ongoing process (Weick, 1995). Thus, employees are involved in ongoing sense-making about change trying to position themselves in the new organizational environment, with new organizational policies, the meaning of which employees try to understand and make sense of, i.e. the self identity of the employees are interacted by the situation and context.

We have observed that in the annual report of 2006, it was promulgated that a common corporate identity has been created whereas the employees were representing the new company based on the CSR policies. The top managements' view on how the CSR policies should be understood, affected interpretations of employees who tried to identify themselves by questioning who they were in this new context. From our point of view, top management aimed to create an organizational identity based on ethical values reflected in CSR policies in order to reduce uncertainty and ambiguity coming from co-existing subcultures of the organization. Accordingly, it was believed that CSR policies would become part of employees' identity. Employee position was '...everyone was quite afraid, what will happen to our

company, do I have my work left?'. When asked during the focus group interview about the new corporate strategy (expressed in the newly released annual report) and the implication of the CSR policies, one of the members said 'don't know' and another clarified 'we don't get any information any more'. The body language signalled distrust and resignation to us. It is our understanding that this uncertainty prevents the organization from developing CSR policies in the direction that people would behave in accordance with ethical values. The result might be that the external stakeholders do not perceive the image that the company would like to create. The way employees identify themselves with CSR policies, will determine their commitment to creating an organizational culture.

Employees in all the companies before the merger occurred were positive to the change, as it was an interruption connected to the arousal of positive emotions when trying to make sense of the change. As sense-making grounded in identity construction suggests, employees had a positive image about the company, when trying to position themselves in a new organizational setting. Yet negative set of images aroused because of the absence of those characteristics that employees expected to see in the new image of the company, i.e. the meaning of CSR policies did not match their interpretation of them. So 'both positive identity and negative image affected employees interpretations of who they were, what they felt, what they faced and what was expected from them' (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991).

It is believed that sense-making begins with the self-consciousness of sense-maker to develop a sense of identity in a given situation, as we have observed in our case with employees involvement in the sense-making process. In light of this, in studying individual behaviour, Chatman et al. (1986 as cited in Weick p.23) refer to 2 entities: individual as himself, put in a different way, employees acting on behalf of the organization and individual as representative of his collectivity, 'acting more subtly as the organization, when embodying the values, beliefs and goals of the collectivity. The following example illustrates how employees position themselves within the organization.

Employee perspective: 'I don't believe much in core values, like we have in Delta if there is no dedicated person working with the values all the time, not on a daily basis, but maybe on a weekly or monthly basis'.

On another stance the middle management self-conception of a good leader who '[must share respect for the people that he is working with] ... [listen and out from that use the people who have the skill and make them do the right job towards the goal. So I think that's important, that's a good leader]'. When this self-conception was projected in the organizational environment, it did not match with the organizational practice of a good leader: 'So it's very much about the personality, if you have a good leader from the top and he can put that spirit down to the management, to different leaders in different divisions, I think that's very, very important'.

This statement gives us a reason to believe that employees expect participation from top management in the form of engagement in a dialogue, while the understanding of 'participation' by top management was communicated as 'by giving, spreading and exchanging information, increase the employees understanding of the corporation'.

5.1.1 Cultural Gap

Organizational studies give us awareness that culture is difficult to change, especially in our research case the culture (subcultures) is deeply seated in the minds and acts of people with employees over long years of experience with the company. From our talks middle management also expressed awareness of this: 'many of employees worked both in Alfa and Beta for a very long time. I mean people in this company worked here for 30-40 years, and the culture that the company is still building, is very difficult to break down and start anew'.

It can be assumed that this cultural aspect was omitted by the management group, although CSR policies were thought to be implemented through the strategy, when enacting a new image of the company, there was a lack of sense about existence of former culture (subcultures) and in adopting ways to cope with it. The merged company got a new name Delta and the history of Alfa and Beta and Gamma was supposed to be put behind and forgotten. On another stance with reference to the company culture, middle manager says: 'I think it was a journey, absolutely, trying to overcome these cultural differences and I don't really think that we ever did succeed'. This indicates to us that the actual sense making of why

those particular values were chosen as well as why CSR policies should be of great importance at all, did not make sense to the employees due to the fact that this was seen by top management as an episodic change, whereas the process was that of unfreeze – change and freeze the organization in a top-down perspective. The employees asked for dedicated management who made sense of the continuous change in shaping behaviours through CSR-policies. As we understand it, employees recognize CSR policies to be an ongoing process in order to overcome cultural differences.

5.2 Sense-making in retrospective

A reflection on people's experience with CSR policies, which is termed through sense-making lens, is viewed as elapsed experience. In our discussions employees talk about CSR policies referring them as a past event, that is not practiced any longer. In order to develop understanding about CSR policies, people get involved in elapsed experience which appears to be equivocal, not because it makes no sense at all, but because it makes many different kinds of sense for the employees. From this we can assume that employees have difficulties in finding meaning with CSR policies.

Thus, in an attempt to make sense of CSR policies, retrospective sense-making suggests that employees would be engaged in an activity in which many possible meanings may need to be synthesized. Accordingly, the problem faced by the sense maker, i.e. employee is one of equivocality, not one of uncertainty. The problem is confusion not ignorance (Weick, 1995). Therefore, in pursuit of making sense out of the ambiguous situation, people get engaged in various interpretations and 'need values, priorities and clarity about preferences to help them be clear about which projects matter' (Weick, 1995, p.27). In the context of our case employees needed clear CSR policies to be able to prioritize what kind of sense to make, as we can see it in the following excerpt of our discussion with one of the middle managers: 'I think that these core values were: are they meaningful? Is it necessary? So not much about the core values as it is, but why do we need this? Why does the company decide to put a lot of money and effort in this thing, when we have all the other challenges?'. The decision to implement CSR policies was taken by top management and there is a lack of understanding among middle

management of the reason for it. This communication has not been clear, which may be due to the fact that the top management are somewhat uncertain of the purpose as well. This is indicated by the extensive communication process going on for about six months and then suddenly stopped (as top management thought of this as a finalized project not as a continuous change).

It is our understanding that middle management sees CSR policies as something that is a part of their work with especially external stakeholders that is not thought of as “core values” but as part of their identity. As one of the middle managers said: ‘No, I don’t work with values, because I think, if I talk for myself, I believe in the person’s ability to do a good job, you have to be flexible, you have to listen, you have to say what you think, you have to inspire people, you have to give people credit for what they are doing’, From this we assume that employees are driven by their understanding of what is ethical. Accordingly, this ethical thinking is an integrated part of middle managements’ behaviour and therefore what middle manager actually expressed was the ethical values of the corporation.

5.3 Sense-making – enactive of sensible environments

Positing the role of environment in the sense-making process the word enactment is used in the sense that ‘in organizational life people often produce part of the environment they face’ (Pondy and Mitroff, 1979 as cited in Weick, 1995, p. 30). To this effect groups, which in our case is the top management construct the reality through authoritative acts, namely CSR policies. Thus, when they enact CSR policies, ‘they establish categories and coin labels that create new features of the environment which did not exist before’ (Weick, 1995). We saw it in the light of the CSR policies that were established, that were thought to be visible, unique and their impact was reinforced by images displaying the meaning of those symbols. Although those symbols were meant to ease the process of communicating and shaping employee understanding of them as believed by the top management, by doing so they ‘created their own environment they had to deal with’ (Weick, 1995). In our case when transferring the given meaning ascribed to CSR policies, the top management created a challenge it had to respond.

Awareness that the created environment is not detached from the people is worthy of consideration to enhance opportunities, the lack of which may create constraints. The given stance underpinning the sensibility of the environment suggests that 'there is not some impersonal 'they' who puts these environments in front of passive people. Instead the 'they' is people who are more active' (Weick, 1995). Our discussions with company organizational members reinforced our reflections and revealed this fragmentation created between organizational members as we and the reference to top management as they. As Follett (1924 as cited in Weick, 1995, p. 32) also suggests 'we are neither the master nor the slave of our environment. We cannot command and the environment obeys'. If treated otherwise, then the assumption will follow that 'they' is people who are more active and the ones who are to receive it, would become its passive recipients and behave according to the stimuli they receive. From the folder that was designed for employees, it was interesting to observe how the pronouns were used: the folder started out with the CEO presenting '*his*' ideas, with a statement that is signed by him. In the following text, '*we*' is used but for the reader '*we*' could be understood as the management, top management or owners. In some other parts of the text '*we*' were more likely to mean all the employees within the company.

This gave us awareness that we are dealing with interdependent activities, process and continuous change and beware of falling into the trap of stimulus-response by treating the behaviour process as a result. The sense-making process, underpinning the role of action, posits that 'there is no result of process but only a moment in process' (Follett, 1924 as cited in Weick, 1995, p.33).

The implication would follow that one should be careful 'not to equate action with a simple response to a stimulus, or with observable behaviour or with goal attainment. To do so maybe to miss subtle ways in which it creates meaning. As a result 'the act never gets done or is dropped too soon' (Weick, 1995) which can well describe the situation with treating the introduction and implementation of CSR policies as a complete project. Thus, people in the organization enact the environment that accordingly enacts their organizational identity or fail to do so otherwise and the process of which represents enactment in sense-making.

The study of our case shows that CSR policies are believed to be understood by treating each of the companies separately and seem to be problematic in the whole one company group. However, we found incoherence in the sense that on one hand employees were struggling to find meanings with the CSR policies within the company as discussed earlier and on the other it was thought to be non-problematic inside each of the merged company: 'I think they understand the core values and the meaning of them,-said the middle manager,- 'but I don't think they ever adopt them', in what follows we can see how middle managers position themselves: 'I think in our subsidiary company it was very easy to adopt them, I think from the beginning we all have been working with it and we have this, we want to change, we want to work together. But the problem was we were all supposed to work as a group with all the other companies in the same group. I think that was the difficult thing'.

Although there were thought to contribute to the involvement of employees and help them define themselves in a new organizational setting. We understand that within a particular working place, the organizational members feel that they honour the CSR policies, but in relation to other offices they do not feel that the response complies with the values. The company has not succeeded in creating a united corporation whereas cultural differences have been erased, to us ethical values seemed to be adopted even if interpreted and understood differently in different work places.

5.4 Sense-making as social

Sense-making can be both one-way and two-way communication (Weick, 1995). Even so, one-way communication is about somebody to communicate to, and thus it is socially conditioned. In our case it was believed that there is concordance with the CSR policies among organizational members both within the top management group and among organizational members respectively. So there was an assumption that if a person agrees to a message, there may not be need for a reply.

It can be said that the top management had also put an effort for discussing on how to communicate this to the rest of the organization, in total about 1 500 employees. In this light

the involvement of a consultant was thought to facilitate the work with creating CSR policies for the organization that was understood and accepted by the whole group. Bringing in a consultant to facilitate might also be seen as a way for top management to distance themselves from taking part in the process, which could be understood by organizational members as lack of interest and focus on this particular task.

Our observations revealed that in the beginning there was an initiative on establishment of employee-manager dialogue, whereas there were also discussions from the point of the CSR policies. But it wasn't sustained and in this sense it also becomes salient that even despite the attempts of management to establish a dialogue with employees, the employees did not embrace CSR policies and were silent. In our talks with the middle manager: '[in my monthly meetings it was always me talking] [there was no discussion and then after some time I think, oh, maybe they are not interested]'

This opinion is supported by our review of the annual report of 2007, where the core values were only mentioned with one sentence. Also the company expressed that a new identity has been established based on the core values. Within the annual report of 2008, nothing was said about the core values, corporate identity or culture. In the annual report of 2009 however, it was argued that there is an explicit strategy of how to develop employees by guidelines for leadership and values based on the four core values that was established in 2005.

Since 2007, the company have faced four different CEOs and also a crisis within the market with decreased demand for their services. This has affected long-term strategy in a negative way, and also created some disharmony among the employees (which was established in the annual inquiry of welfare). However, the newly appointed CEO seems to be anxious to work with the questions of identity and image and the top management were planning a 2-days meeting for this purpose on the coming week. Before that, practically nothing had been communicated as to CSR policies since 2006-2007.

The HR Manager, was of the opinion that after the process in 2006, when the CSR policies were established and communicated through the organization, there were positive signs ('I

think we were on the right track') that the employees actually changed their behaviours and worked in line with the ethics that they were expected to follow. In order to create a sustainable change in behaviour, it is the HR Manager's opinion that the CEO has to 'walk the talk' and to show that this is an important question in all respects, which means that resources (money and time) have to be dedicated to maintain a focus on ethical issues. Further that the CEO takes full responsibility and show the employees that this is prioritized on his agenda and that this shaping of behaviour has to be an ongoing process, led by management and not by external consultants.

At this point we saw a misalignment because the way CSR policies were communicated seemed to be effective from the management point of view, on the other hand the way employees made sense of them is determined by their no action and no talk attitude. Interestingly, our further talks with the top manager about this issue revealed that there was a dislike expressed in the top management about the idea of CSR policies, which was not salient at the time it was adopted.

5.4.1 Dialogue Gap

This made us reflect on the problematic nature of communication in the company when there was an attempt to establish a dialogue. The idea that sense-making is self-referential suggests that self rather than the environment maybe the text in need of interpretation (Weick, 1995). We believe that, dialogue within top management group on one hand and between top management and employees down the ladder on the other, was not achieved despite the fact that communication was thought to be central and was believed to be clearly adopted to spread the information.

By dialogue we mean engagement of top management in a talk within the group, followed by talks with employees. We would assume that perceptions and feelings of organizational members about the issue at different levels, were not listened to and considered. Consequently employees were not part of developing the CSR policies and could not identify themselves with the new corporate culture (values).

Here we can observe how crucial is the role of language as ‘telling the staff to provide input may have different results than using language that conveys respect for their opinion’ (Palmer et al., 2006). This also puts the emphasis on the behaviour of change managers to organizational members which can be viewed as unethical towards employees based on how middle management positions itself as morally right when top management is not responsive to CSR policies: ‘I don’t think there is too much value of such things because there are so many different individuals in the company and personalities and if the leader of the company doesn’t get engaged in the core values and put that down in the organization with all the managers and they work with these issues all the time, I don’t believe in it actually’.

As Weick (1995, p.3) suggests ‘organizations have their own languages and symbols that have important effects on sense-making’. When the project of CSR policies was seen as complete, middle management tried to make sense of top management action as follows: ‘I think that people (top management), when they do it that way, they also say that at least it wasn’t so important from the beginning either.

As interpretative perspective suggests ‘language use, as well as the meanings enacted from verbal and non-verbal messages, creates and sustains social reality’ (Tietze et al, 2003, p.12). In this sense, our reflections on the meanings that were ascribed to CSR policies show that *participation* is thought of in different ways and people act accordingly. In our talks with the middle manager, it is interpreted as follows: ‘I think it was very difficult, even if they all had the same core values, it was very difficult, how to say, to implement them at the same time and that they mean the same thing for everybody’.

Further reflection showed that from a decentralized organization perspective, former Alfa could think of *participation* as a form of empowerment, like a team building which is very important to achieve goals, i.e. participate by doing, while in former Beta with a more hierarchical forms of management, participation is more about information that you should be told. And most importantly that could mean something else for the top management when enacting participation as part of CSR policies, because as our talks reflected, employees have been working with participatory approach all the time but never referring to them as part of CSR policies, which could reassure our assumption that CSR policies were talked about but

never adopted by the company employees as such. And the implication of the use of language informs us that during communication process the way information is communicated, may either avoid problems from occurring 'when a common language about the change is adopted and when top management consistently models the desired behaviour '(Palmer et al., 2006, p. 294) or fail to do so which, we assume, may result in potential ethical problems.

5.5 Ongoing

The ongoing nature of sense-making suggests that it is a flow which has no beginning and no end. Therefore, people are always in a process and deal with several 'projects'.

The way we understand it is that the way top management made sense to themselves about implementing CSR policies, was that this was a project that was supposed to take about six months, whereas the values were decided upon in co-operation with middle management, subsequently communicated by seminars, meetings and brochures to all employees and finally like a trophy the new policies were put on the best place in the bookshelf besides the documentation of ISO 9000 and TQM. Top managements' mission completed and the other members' of the organization were expected to behave in accordance with the policies.

'Even ideas that have materialized will not move if no one demonstrates an interest in them and do not want to translate them to their own needs'. (Czarniawska, 2008). Following the stance, we found that top management stopped talking about it and so did middle management eventually. As for the rest of the organizational members, they expected to be guided and did merely see the CSR policies as yet another management fashion that would blow away gradually.

5.5.1 Expectation Gap

As we identified, employee expectation of CSR policies was interrupted. In order to make sense out of the situation 'there is need to understand how people cope with interruptions' (Weick, 1995). In our case organizational change was an attempt towards creating a new culture and management expected change to be embraced by organizational members. At

this point top management expectation from the change with the introduction of new organizational values was interrupted due to confrontation with the already existing routines and the ignorance of it, and employee expectation was interrupted in the sense that they tried to understand and make sense of it within their frame of earlier practiced routines and got puzzled as it did not match with their understanding of the situation and refrained them from further involvement.

The development of CSR policies and their believed adoption through disseminating information through the company annual reports, websites and internally among employees was assumed to bear its fruit. From the top management perspective it was something they decided upon, CSR policies were created, communicated and successfully implemented and the book was put in the shelf' as the top manager formulated in our talks. In this respect, the middle manager states: 'somehow it just became something that is a paper product. 'So we know this but we don't talk about it'. It was also explained that the follow up stopped because other things got prioritized.

Middle management tried to justify their position on the given aspect by referring to CSR policies to be triggered by top management: 'if the management doesn't discuss it at their meetings, why should employees do that?'. There is also a belief among middle management that the problem with the CSR policies was its discontinuation: 'I don't think that the implementation and the start was a problem, it was the continuation...]', as a consequence, citing: '[if you don't work with the core values on a regular basis and follow up all the time, it's not living'.

So in the eyes of top management CSR policies were looked upon as an accomplished project and in the eyes of employees they were something that disappeared and vanished. We found the use of the word 'implementation' by the top management as problematic which produced relevant consequences. In our earlier discussions about enactment we also postulated that CSR policies were treated as part of the change program that needs to be developed and implemented.

With our focus on the ongoing nature of sense-making we would argue that in the case of implementing CSR policies and the very use of the word 'implementation' already presupposes a relevant mindset that we need to bring something to its completion. The vocabulary definition of the word implement also describes it as 'carry out; put into action; perform' or with the archaic meaning 'to complete, satisfy, or fulfil' which could also create certain mindset when dealing with the concept. As Weick (1995, p. 41) cited 'words induce stable connections, establish stable entities to which people can orient, bind people's time to projects and signify important information. Follet (1924 as cited in Weick, 1995, p.32-34) also refers to this, arguing that by using a certain word we create a mindset that limits the way in which we presume people deal with it.

Presently there is also awareness that to get people work in the right direction there is need to work continuously, supported by top management and firstly pointed out by the CEO. The analysis of the talk with the top manager posits that at the time of our study, the company ethical values were planned to be discussed by the top management, which was explained as prioritized by the present CEO of the company. While having CSR policies on the agenda again, the idea of bringing in a consultant when the change was initiated is no longer encouraged, instead there is more interest in doing it internally directed by the top management and communicated to organizational members. The interruption of ongoing communication about CSR policies and lack of a regular follow-up thereof could be a signal that change was not sustained.

5.6 Focused on an by Extracted cues

Through the lens of extracted cues what we found problematic in our case was the early dawn of introducing CSR policies. The studies on managing and leading change provide us awareness that 'although the vision ultimately describes a desired future, it must acknowledge the organization's historical roots- the meaningful core values and principles that have guided and will guide the organization over time'(Cummings and Worley, 2005).

As James (1890/1950 as cited in Weick, 1995, p. 49) points to the importance of extracted cues for sense-making, we found it quite relevant to reflect it in our case. Following the two points of reasoning with extracted cues, first we will look into the problem driven by the argument that ‘an extracted cue is taken as equivalent to the entire datum from which it comes’ (Weick, 1995). In the case of our study we would treat CSR policies as an extracted cue, to which organizational members, when trying to identify themselves with the new culture could respond – *why should I buy in into the new culture* based on the judgment that the culture of the company is secured by CSR policies that they didn’t identify with. Thus, the notion of CSR policies which is part of the company culture is believed to construct the character of the company. The second point of reasoning posits that the extracted cue suggests ‘a certain consequence more obviously than it was suggested by the total datum as it originally came’ (James, 1890/1950 as cited in Weick, 1995, p. 50). Accordingly the extracted cue of CSR policies suggested that it would have a short life.

Discussions on the role of extracted cues by Smircich and Morgan (1982 as cited in Weick, 1995, p. 50) suggest that ‘control over which cues will serve as a point of reference is an important source of power’. And the implication of the point of reference for our case will be to direct people’s attention to discovering CSR policies rather than communicating already developed policies which they do not own and cannot identify with.

The pitfall for change managers, when introducing core values as CSR policies, would be to treat them as something that needs to be determined and described, instead ‘core values are meant to be discovered and described through the process of inquiry’ (Cummings and Worley, 2005). Consequently there should be awareness that the process of discovering organizations core values may take considerable time and energy ‘through long discussions about organizational history key events, founder’s beliefs and the work people actually do’ (Cummings and Worley, 2005).

As it could be observed throughout our study CSR policies expressed through core values were developed and determined by the management’ instead of being discovered through involving organizational members in the process.

Core values are believed to be one of the stable aspects of the organization (Cummings and Worley, 2000), while in our case core values viewed as CSR policies can be thought of taking the form of creating an envisioned future trapped with expectations of bold and valued outcomes and achievement of the desired future state as the components of envisioned future suggest (Cummings and Worley, 2005), which, on one hand is emotionally powerful and motivates to change, while on the other hand can easily be vanished which we assume occurred in our case of study.

5.7 Driven by plausibility rather than accuracy

Given the claim that sense-making doesn't rely on accuracy, but on plausibility, pragmatics, coherence, reasonableness, creation, invention, and instrumentality (Weick, 1995), sense-making is about plausibility of what could be achieved.

Here we will refrain from looking into a variety of reasons of why sense-making is not driven by accuracy; instead we would focus on plausibility in sense-making for the interest of our case, which would also disapprove applicability of accuracy.

Plausibility suggests that a good story is what we need in sense-making. Accordingly, it should be something that is 'reasonable and memorable, something that embodies past experience and expectations, something that resonates with other people, something that can be constructed retrospectively but also can be used prospectively' (Weick, 1995). If we translate it into our context, people would expect that something, as in our case CSR policies to drive them to get committed to constructing something that is fun.

Therefore plausibility becomes central in this project. In this sense, 'enactment in the pursuit of projects provides the frame within which cues are extracted and interpreted. And the action repertoire that lies behind the framing itself implies what can and cannot be known' (Weick, 1995). In light of this people would see something as sensible if they can do something about. Thus, we deal with the perceptions of people in their attempt to make

sense of situations they are faced with and accuracy will not be the issue as 'perceptions by definition, can never be accurate' (Weick, 1995).

From this we will posit that in our case top management saw in CSR policies a means to assure organizational members that the company should be acknowledged as an interesting and attractive employer. Thus, it seems to be plausible from a top management perspective and this is reinforced by the act of annual inquiries as a form of follow up to ensure the understanding of the values and goals. The outcome of these inquiries formed the strategic human resource management.

Another aspect of presupposing plausibility could be observed when CSR policies were communicated through specially designed pictures rendering the message of CSR policies through visual themes so as to show the meaning of the words. In particular they were meant to show involvement of people, togetherness and joint efforts to stand for the company goals. While our reflections on middle management perspective disapproves the plausibility of CSR policies when they tried to make sense of the situation and consequently, discontinuation of CSR policies.

Following the stance of plausibility in sense-making we would postulate that members of the organization in our study, at the time CSR policies were communicated, were in pursuit of knowing enough to be able to deal with their projects, which did not turn to be plausible and coherent with their ongoing projects.

5.8 Summary

In our study we focused on reflecting and providing explanations concerning the different perceptions about CSR policies and also observe how organizational members interpret the top managers' view on CSR policies. As we understand it, management has without explicitly discussing it, worked on the basis from a stakeholder theory, whereas it is important that external stakeholders such as customers and authorities perceive the company as trustworthy, target oriented and flexible. Thus, the shaping of corporate identity with the aim

to become the “natural choice” for the customers was not followed through with communication seen from a sense making perspective that is continuous.

The way to create this united image of the company, top management wanted employees to honour the CSR policies. That is to say how CSR policies through the four core values should be understood (from management perspective) was formulated. Also practical examples of how to use CSR policies in daily business were taken up.

During our research, we have identified several gaps. First we found a cultural gap meaning that the aim to create ONE organization with common cultural identity, out of the formerly three subcultures, was, in our opinion, not achieved due to different interpretation and meanings ascribed to CSR-policies. Next we identified a dialogue gap, which informed us that dialogue from top management was established through instructing and informing people, while organizational members seek engagement of management in the meaning creation process of CSR policies. Finally an expectation gap was found, in the sense that top management viewed communication of CSR as an accomplished project, while organizational members expected it to be an ongoing process. All these gaps could be a result of different languages that were in use due co-existence of subcultures.

It helped to broaden the knowledge about the problematic nature of communication and develop a new understanding of how decisions on communication processes affect organization development.

6. Conclusion

The aim to explain the way different organizational members make sense of CSR policies in the process of communication have two dimensions; The first is why CSR policies are created at all, how does it make sense to implement ethical values in an organization? The second is why those specific policies (ethical values) are chosen. To be able to make the organizational members identify with the CSR policies, the sense of these dimensions should be acknowledged.

In this research, we have studied three levels of organizational members and we have found differences between them of how to make sense of CSR policies:

Top management, argue that the reason for implementing CSR policies was to be a favoured partner to their customers by showing trustworthiness, commitment and flexibility. However, from our research we have found that there might also be another objective for the company that is to be seen as something a modern, stock listed Swedish company should do, like a kind of fashion, comparable to implementing ISO or TQM that was in focus for corporate management during the 80ies and 90ies. By this, top management would not really be committed to CSR as such, but merely doing what is expected not to be criticized by external stakeholders for not being socially responsible.

Further, top management make sense to themselves of creating CSR policies by perceiving them as a way to live up to high morality, showing respect for environment, human rights and other ethical shaping behaviour. Also, as we understand it, they feel content with the project and use it in annual reports and company brochures as a trophy that has been accomplished from thought through work.

Middle management that have taken part in this study, have more difficulties to make sense of implementing CSR policies as they think of them as a natural way to behave. They are asking for an ongoing process of CSR communication in a form of continuous leadership

showing a desire to “live the values”. During the past years there has been a lack of focus on the ethical values and a turbulent top management situation, which has left middle management in a vacuum, whereas they do not discuss the ethical questions with other organizational members either. However, at the time of the implementation in 2006, middle management saw it as a way to overcome cultural differences. In the view of middle management, establishing CSR policies made sense in the way that it facilitated creation of one corporate identity.

Other organizational members think of themselves as working in compliance with the ethical values but are disappointed of other offices and management. However, there is some hope that the newly appointed CEO will address ethical issues. As we understand it, there is a desire to feel like being a part of the organization, which they do not do today. They do not think of ethical values as CSR policies, but due to the fact that it was seen as an episodic change process by top management, they think of it as something that top management made up but quickly got tired of – as with fashion.

In summary, from both top management and other organizational members, we understood that CSR policies could be perceived as a fashion. From Czarniawska (2008) fashion is expressed as ‘some fashions remain and become institutionalized, other ideas and fashions vanish’. Provided the company sincerely desire to develop CSR policies, we would recommend them to make the communication an ongoing process whereas all organizational members can be part of the dialogue and development of the ethical behaviour of the company.

The actual ethical values that were decided upon between top management and middle management were taken seriously in that respect that they were discussed and evaluated on the bases of how management would like the employees to act between each other as well as in external business and in relation to government, media and authorities. It is our understanding that these values made sense to management who also felt that they easily complied with the CSR policies. Our research offer that CSR policies could be embedded in the identity of the organizational members, however perceived and understood differently. From

other organizational members' point of view the interpretation of ethical values were dependent of which subculture they represented.

Our research would offer that the choice of language can be decisive in affecting employee behaviour and achieving or otherwise failing to achieve employee commitment to work with CSR policies. The reflections through sense making approach helped us develop a better understanding about what meaning CSR policies are given in the process of communication, whereas the use of language in the choice of certain words, already ascribed certain meanings to the object of communication and which greatly contribute or limit the way people make sense of CSR policies and position themselves as ethical versus those who do not perform according to their understanding of what is perceived ethical.

This can be referred to what is called 'perceived clash with ethics' when employees show passive resistance which might be triggered by individuals desires to act in accordance with their ethical principles. (Palmer et al, 2006). This formed an organizational discourse 'creating mental frames, simultaneously highlighting certain meanings and excluding others' (Bateson, 1972 as cited in Marshak and Heracleous, 2005). From what follows is that 'no two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality' (Tietze et al, 2003), from this we would postulate that each of the subcultures in the company spoke their own language and ascribed their own meanings to CSR policies. As a result one common language was not achieved because of clashes with different corporate identities.

As a result CSR policies that were thought to be clear from the point of view of management, become vague and ambiguous for organizational members. Our study revealed that CSR policies for the top management as their creators, that are believed to own their product, could be of no value as they were not committed to working with them regularly, which could mean that the value of CSR policies was not shared and understood by top management as central for sustaining the business so as they see a meaning to stand for it. Thus, it can be argued that creation of new culture was approached with naivety, while there was need to have awareness that if sub-cultural implications are neglected in communication, it might question the company's dedication to stakeholders when it comes to CSR policies and be detrimental to the image of the company.

For further studies we would suggest that the role that participation has in the face of conflicting interests in the company, could be researched by focusing on the discourse of participation. From Habermas (1990) it is argued that 'a fair balance of interest can come about when all concerned have equal rights to participation'. From this it could be of interest to study the sensemaking of CSR policies through power relations and what implications it could have, based on the way organizational members position themselves in the company.

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