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Ivanova-Gongne, Maria; Lång, Stefan

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The Drama of Corporate Social Responsibility Communication

Abstract

Purpose: This paper is exploratory and aims to investigate a company's corporate social responsibility (CSR) communications in a business network with regard to the flow of critical events related to CSR.

Design/methodology/approach: The paper focuses on the drama that unfolded at a Nordic-based multinational corporation, Stora Enso, after a critical event related to CSR and the specific signs and codes applied by the company to justify its actions. To achieve our aims we conducted a dramaturgical and semiotic analysis of the company's corporate communications in connection with various actions prior to or following the major critical event.

Findings: The findings consist of a five-act drama that unfolded around certain CSR communication activities at the company. We followed the company's shift in communication strategy as they were compelled to adopt a more responsive and involved approach. The results also show the roles of the various business network actors in shaping CSR communications.

Practical implications: This case has practical uses for providing the framework to create effective messages at different stages of the communication process related to a major CSR event.

Originality/value: The originality of the study lies in its application of a dramaturgical and semiotic approach to the analysis of CSR communication. It also contributes to the scarce literature on CSR communication within business networks.

Article classification: Research paper

Keywords: CSR communication, critical events, dramaturgical approach, semiotics, business-to-business marketing

1. Introduction

CSR activities have been part of the public relations programs of large companies since the beginning of the 19th century with the aim of creating better conditions for production and development. It was not until the latter part of the 21st century, however, that CSR activities became standard practice for companies and organizations (Gulyás, 2011). Clement-Jones

(2005, p. 10) noted that there were many drivers behind the different programs formed by organizations for CSR, but “by far the most relevant to business is the bottom-line effect of incorporating a socially responsible element into corporate practice”.

The increased importance of being socially responsible and developing sustainable business processes has raised the amount of attention the public and business network actors give to a company’s actions. Consequently, communication during critical events related to CSR matters have become increasingly important for companies operating in today’s hyper-competitive global business environment. In this paper we define a critical event as a temporary specific happening, which certain actors view as influential regardless of whether it has a positive or negative outcome (Tidström and Hagberg-Andersson, 2012).

Appropriately communicating the company’s CSR beliefs and initiatives within the business network, both internally and externally, is a crucial part of implementing CSR practices for building a reputation as a socially responsible, sustainable company (Maignan and Ferrell, 2004). The literature on corporate social reporting highlights the role of CSR communication in influencing people’s perceptions about a company (Hooghiemstra, 2000) and presenting it as an exercise in impression management (Sandberg and Holmlund, 2015). Impression management is at the core of most marketing activities (Lowe *et al.*, 2012) and is operationalized through interactions within the business network. However, this perspective has been largely neglected both in marketing (Lowe *et al.*, 2012) and CSR communication studies (Tata and Prasad, 2015)

A company creates the perception that it promotes sustainability and social responsibility by its narratives and stories about its CSR activities (cf. Lowe *et al.*, 2016). In the utilization of CSR communications for producing a good impression, effective language is essential to establish and maintain legitimacy (Hooghiemstra, 2000). The specific signs and codes chosen for CSR communications play a crucial role in their effectiveness (see Joutsenvirta, 2009; Christensen *et al.*, 2013). However, few environmental management scholars have focused on the role of language in mitigating environmental and social problems (Joutsenvirta, 2009). We aim to fill this gap by applying a semiotic and dramaturgical perspective to CSR communication. Thus, while semiotic elements such as signs and codes form the basis of the script (cf. Lowe *et al.*, 2012), the story unfolds in a series of acts according to a classic dramatic structure (e.g. Freytag, 1900) with the performance elements (see Goffman, 1959) changing in accordance with the audience’s reaction.

The aim of this paper is to understand company’s communication in the business network with regards to a flow of critical events related to CSR matters. Thus, we, in particular, focus on 1) how company’s CSR communication unfolds as a drama in a network context along certain critical events and on 2) the signs and codes applied by a company in order to justify its actions during critical events.

In order to achieve the research aim, we analyzed the case of the Nordic-based company, Stora Enso, through the lens of semiotics and dramaturgy. Our analysis focused on the events that led to the critical focal event that struck the company on March 2014 and the events that occurred as an outcome. We particularly studied the specific codes applied by the company in their communications posted on the official company website and those in the media. This case was chosen because of the scope of the changes that occurred in the company's CSR communication system after this major critical event. The dramaturgical perspective adopted for the research in this study contributes uniquely to the literature on CSR communication.

The paper is structured in the following manner. First, we present a theoretical overview of CSR communications in business networks in connection with critical events from the perspective of semiotics and with the structure of a drama. Second, we describe the specific methods used in the study, and lastly we discuss the findings and their implications for showing managers how to develop effective communications during CSR critical events and how this process follows a dramatic structure.

2. CSR communication within a business network

Despite the growing amount of literature on CSR communication during recent decades, little marketing research on CSR communication was done and that mainly concerning consumers (Scandeliuss and Cohen, 2016) (Crane and Glozer, 2016). In regard to B2B contexts, sustainability and CSR topics have received little attention from market researchers (Lacoste, 2016). Companies nowadays are not only deemed responsible for their own actions and those of their close partners in relation to CSR matters, but also for the actions of those actors who have an indirect connection to the focal company, as supplier's suppliers. The increased pressure from the business network calls for a more sophisticated approach to CSR communication (Morsing & Schultz, 2006).

CSR communication has traditionally been perceived as a "means to influence stakeholders' perception of organisations in terms of the resources of information (specific contents, media, channels or rhetoric arsenals) they use to inform stakeholders about their CSR policies and activities" (Golob *et al.*, 2013, p. 178). The traditional way of employing CSR communication thus relates to one-sided strategic action with an emphasis on its persuasive and informative functions (Elving *et al.*, 2015). On the contrary aspirational and participatory CSR communication pertain to a more cooperative and dialogical, communicative action (*ibid.*). Morsing and Schultz (2006) outline three strategies of CSR communication in relation to stakeholders: the stakeholder information strategy; the stakeholder response strategy; and the stakeholder involvement strategy. The first two focus principally on informing the stakeholders and acting on their concerns, while the latter requires the company to engage stakeholders in an active dialogue with the aim of co-constructing the CSR functions of the company (*ibid.*). From a dialogical perspective, CSR communication thus can be seen as "a forum for sense-making and debate of opinions and expectations associated with

organizational activity” (Christensen *et al.*, 2013, p. 387). In a hermeneutic fashion (Gadamer, 2004), such a dialogue should engage its participants in the process of coming to an understanding about the most effective CSR policies.

Language is the core medium for reaching an understanding between several entities and contains “its own truth within it”, despite the unpredictable outcome of the communication (Gadamer, 2004). CSR communication messages of a company can be regarded as “sites of language use” (Joutsenvirta, 2009), which contain the company’s perception and enactment of reality (Lowe *et al.*, 2008) with regards to CSR. However, several researchers pointed out that stakeholders often perceive CSR messages as mere words, designed to create a desired impression rather than reflect reality (e.g. Elving *et al.*, 2015; Siano *et al.*, 2017). Because of different points of view and ways of working among the actors in a business network, they often encounter “an alienness” in understanding and “renunciation of shared meaning”, which is a core problem in understanding Gadamer (2004). The growing pressure from the whole business network to act responsibly may lead the company to present deceptive communications portraying it as a sustainable organization despite not being a “green firm” (Siano *et al.*, 2017, p. 27). Furthermore, an overuse of CSR messaging can lead stakeholders to have the impression that the company is trying to hide something (Brown and Dacin 1997; Morsing and Schultz, 2006; Vanhamme and Grobbsen, 2009).

In order for the company’s CSR messages to be seen as truthful, the language should be used as “a medium of communication aimed at achieving understanding about social and environmental issues and the ways to address them” (Elving *et al.*, 2015, p. 120). Such an understanding through the means of language should be focused not on the “correct mastery of language”, but rather on “coming to a proper understanding about the subject matter” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 387), which in this case refers to facilitating good CSR principles in a business environment. Therefore, language is not only a means of strategic action, but also enables managers to effectively carry out the communicative function of CSR communications. Through careful use of language to illustrate the social and environmental issues deemed important by the business network, a company may be able to ensure that the words, scripts, and plots that they incorporate into their CSR communications are considered legitimate and meaningfully practical by other network actors (Lowe *et al.*, 2012). CSR communication can thus be seen as a performance shaped in interaction with the environment and the audience of business network actors (cf. Lowe *et al.*, 2012).

When treating CSR communication as a performance, impression management perspective and in particular a dramaturgical approach is viable. Impression management perspective on CSR allows to understand company’s motivation to engage in CSR communication and to manage, maintain, enhance and repair its CSR image (Tata and Prasad, 2015). This perspective can also 1) help organizations in being “responsive to stakeholder audiences by communicating information about the organization’s socially responsible strategies and activities”; and 2) provide a framework to “examine and evaluate their past CSR

communication, understand the conditions under which the communication was more or less successful, and develop strategies for future CSR” (Tata and Prasad, 2015, p. 766).

3. Dramaturgical approach to CSR communication

An method applied extensively for impression management is the dramaturgical approach, which was popularized by Goffman (1959). Recent studies in B2B marketing research also emphasize the importance of drama (Lowe *et al.*, 2016) in understanding interactions in business networks. Lowe *et al.* (2012) claim that dramaturgical analysis could contribute to B2B marketing by uncovering how actors create impressions during interactions and communications. By following Goffman’s dramaturgical approach (1959), Purchase *et al.* (2010, p. 600) state that “the dramaturgical scene of networking has: actors performing roles; activities inscribed by scripts; and resources regarded as props”. In particular, “all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion” is regarded as a performance and “serves to influence in any way any of the other participants” (Goffman, 1959, p. 8). Performances consist of several elements, namely, belief, front, dramatic realization, idealization, mystification, expressive control and misrepresentation. A coherence among these elements “is necessary to staging a believable performance”, which can be “easily undermined by the most minor of the mishaps” (Grove and Fisk, 1992, p. 455). Furthermore, the company should act as a performance team during the communication, with a team being “any set of individuals who cooperate in staging a single routine” (Goffman, 1959, p. 48). Table 1 sums up the main elements of a performance as outlined by Goffman (1959).

Table 1. Summary of the main elements of a performance

Performance element	Short description (as outlined by Goffman 1959 (cited from Zavattaro 2013))
Belief	An actor’s belief in the impression of the reality that he/she attempts to impose upon the audience. The actor may be either taken or not by his/her own act.
Front	That part of the performance that regularly functions in a general and fixed manner to define the situation for the audience. For an individual these may be rank, speech patterns, clothing, age, etc.
Dramatic realization	Applying signs that dramatically highlight and describe confirmatory facts that otherwise might remain unnoticeable.
Idealization	The performance may incorporate and exemplify the officially accepted values of the society
Mystification	The performance may emphasize certain issues and conceal others. The actor should be able to regulate the information obtained by the audience in order to avoid disruptions in the projected situation.
Expressive control	Even minor cues are crucial for the performance. The audience may misunderstand the meaning that the cue was meant to convey or may

	read meaning into the gestures and events that were accidental or not meant by the performer to carry any meaning whatsoever. A good performer must maintain expressive control over his/her performance in order to avoid such pitfalls
Misrepresentation	Although the performer may have nothing to hide in some performances or parts of the performances, at some point there may be something that cannot be treated openly. This aspect may particularly arise in “crisis situations where some information is necessarily kept close to the vest” (Zavattaro, 2013, p. 516)

CSR communication can be seen as a ‘*front*’ stage activity where “actors are under tacit peer pressure from the other ‘cast members’ to conform to the ‘front’ while under the gaze of the audience to create a ‘good’ impression” (Lowe *et al.*, 2012, p. 422). The audience in this case is comprised of the actor’s business network as well as the overall society and it is through the network that the actor learns the appropriate signs and codes to use in the performance (ibid.), thus conforming with the ‘*idealization*’ element. CSR communication, as well as corporate communication in general, also includes the *mystification* and *expressive control* element of a performance, where the company strictly regulates the information, which is distributed to stakeholders and every detail must be thought through to avoid misunderstandings. Mirroring *dramatic realization* in the performance, the company should carefully select the signs and codes applied in its communications in order to highlight the issues. Finally, CSR communication has often been criticized for being deceptive in terms of “hiding the most controversial aspects related to corporate responsibility” (‘greenwashing’) (Siano *et al.*, 2017, p. 27), which in dramaturgical terms relates to *misrepresentation*.

It should be noted that in contrast to impression management, which generally regards performance as a “means to an end of gaining benefits”, the dramaturgical approach views performance as a point of interaction, an end in itself (Tseëlon, 1992). Thus, a performance is continuously renegotiated depending on the audience’s acceptance and is, in itself, a process of negotiation (ibid.). In this way, a dramaturgical approach can aid in understanding the communicative and dynamic aspects of CSR communication.

3.1. Critical events as ‘acts’ and signs as ‘props’ in CSR communication

The actor’s performance in CSR has been mostly analyzed as a one-time action, for instance, by looking at company’s annual sustainability reports or at CSR stories on a company’s website (Du *et al.*, 2010). However, CSR communication is dynamic in that certain events may push the communication script in another direction. An event in B2B marketing literature can be treated as a description of an action in time and place constructed from an actor’s subjective viewpoint and including added interpretations and explanations (Makkonen *et al.*, 2012, p. 289). Therefore, an event can be treated as an act in a drama, where a series of events forms the dramatic structure with an exposition, rising action, climax, falling action,

and resolution (Freytag, 1900).

The core idea of the critical event concept is that it acts as an “engine for change” (Hedaa and Törnroos, 2008, p. 322). Whether it is a negative or a positive event, it still serves as an opportunity to engage in a dialogue with the relevant actors (the ‘audience’) and change the company’s business and operational processes for the better. As mentioned in section 2, a dialogue is a “process of coming to understanding” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 387), where understanding or misunderstanding may be regarded as an event in itself (ibid.). “Understanding must be conceived as a part of the event in which meaning occurs, the event in which the meaning of all statements is formed and actualized” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 157). In this case it is crucial to elucidate the company’s interpretation of events and the arguments they put forward. “Depending on how the actor interprets the scene and the reactions from the audience, actors as characters will change their values to suit the conditions” (Lowe *et al.*, 2012, p. 424). Thereby the CSR communication process consists of events the main aim of which is to reach an understanding between the actors participating in the event.

In particular, critical events provide precise circumstances in which different types of signs and codes are used in developing a specific message. These specific messages may differ in comparison to everyday marketing and other types of communication, due to the intensity of the communication and the greater involvement of the audience in the communication. The elevated involvement of individuals and organizations draws greater attention to the content of CSR messages (Claeys and Cauberghe, 2014) and requires companies to be more careful in choosing the specific signs and codes applied in the message. Thus, we look at the CSR message as a prop, which is crafted by a careful application of relevant semiotic resources, such as “signs that actors use to construct meaning” (Lowe *et al.*, 2016, p. 531). A sign may be an object, expression, word, type of behavior, or image (Brannen, 2004) and is “something that represents or stands for something else in the mind of someone” (Manning and Cullum-Swan, 1994). Signs are an important part of the communication model of relationship marketing (Duncan and Moriarty, 1998). A sign cues the action and interpretation made by the various actors, thus enabling interaction between the sender and the receiver (ibid.). A focus on signs has been predominant in B2C marketing research (Duncan and Moriarty, 1998; Mick *et al.*, 2004), but to the best of our knowledge, there have been few publications applying semiotics in the B2B marketing field.

The multifaceted signification that specific signs provide creates a complex system of codes. The way the codes are produced and communicated by a company has an effect on the outcome of the interpretation of the codes by the various actors in a business network. In taking a critical event perspective on CSR communication it is necessary to consider the codes, which need to be applied by the company in connection with the event. Emotional or rational framing of the message may also play a role in the audience’s perception of the message (Claeys and Cauberghe, 2014). Therefore, the company is most likely to use a combination of aesthetic and logical codes, which respectively relate to the emotional and

rational weight of the message. Aesthetic codes reflect feelings and employ poetic signs, such as metaphors, whereas logical codes represent a rational approach to the world and consist of concrete, arbitrary signs like numerals and scientific language (see Kim, 1996).

Jakobson (1960) explain that poetic signs, as part of the six communication functions of language, are not restricted to poetry, but rather could be employed in any creative use of the language as when forming a message (Chandler 2007). As further stated by Ricoeur (1978, p. 152) citing Jakobson (1962): “The poetic function – which is more than mere poetry – lays the stress on the palpable side of the signs, underscores the message for its own sake (i.e. the referential function) and deepens the fundamental dichotomy between signs and objects”. Numbers, for example, enable the referential function of communication, while metaphors serve the poetic function and are a central tool in the study of poetical tropes (Jakobson, 2003). In comparison to symbols, metaphors are purely linguistic in the sense that they are a “free invention of discourse” (Ricoeur 1976, p. 61) and are “subject to what Ricoeur calls “evanescence”: what is at first vibrant becomes, over the course of time, trivial, and then dead” (Simms, 2015, p. 412). Metaphors, in general, are more dynamic than symbols, which are usually bound by more stable cultural meanings, and may be used differently for various communication purposes. Furthermore, apart from their poetic function, metaphors can also have a rhetorical function (Ricoeur, 2004), making them useful for impression management.

The panoply of poetic signs, such as metaphors, has been widely used by successful communicators, from politicians to business leaders, when appealing to people’s feelings and sometimes even for influencing rational opinions. Different types of organizations have also understood the benefits of using signs that provide a deeper dimension when creating a message. The types of signs and codes used in a communication are determined by the message and the desired reaction. These signs and codes are used in everything from slogans and taglines to storytelling. Many studies have considered the use of poetic signs in the form of metaphors in the context of organizational discourses (see Cornelissen et al., 2008). It should be noted, however, that investigation of the poetic and logical signs are not the focus of this study, but act as additions to the dramaturgy perspective, and are used solely for the purposes of analysis.

4. Methodology

In order to reach our goals we employed textual discourse in relation to an event that occurred to the multinational Nordic company, Stora Enso. The case was chosen to illustrate the scope of changes that could occur in a company’s communication procedures after a critical focal event. At the beginning of March 2014, Stora Enso’s operations in Pakistan were highlighted and criticized on the Swedish TV Channel 4 and by the business magazine, *Veckans Affärer*. The focus of the media reports was on Stora Enso’s CSR activities and the fact that child labor was used in the feeding system for waste paper at the joint venture company, Bulleh Shah Packaging (*Veckans Affärer*, 2014). We define this event as focal for our study. In order to conduct a thorough analysis, our qualitative approach required tracking

backward from the event and follow the outcomes forward (Halinen *et al.*, 2013). The timeline before the critical focal event dates back to September 2012, when the investment talks began. The aftermath period of the event continued until November 2015, when changes in the CSR communication process became apparent.

The textual data included the company's documentation and discussions in the traditional media. The main source for analyzing the company's communications was the information that Stora Enso posted on its website. A company's website is particularly useful for understanding the impressions a company attempts to create (Bansal and Kistruck, 2006). We have considered all the documents related to the Bulleh Shah joint venture posted on Stora Enso's website and we have searched the downloads section (Stora Enso Download Center, 2017) with the keywords "Bulleh Shah" or "Pakistan" during the years 2012-2015. In total, 48 documents were investigated (**Appendix 1**), including information regarding the joint venture sustainability reports, CEO letters to shareholders, general letters to stakeholders, presentations, and conference call transcripts. We also explored the posts in the Sustainability section (Stora Enso Sustainability, 2017) of the website and downloaded the posts relevant to the 2015 documentation. The media coverage was based on the Swedish and Finnish Internet media outlets because of the lack of coverage of the critical event by the international media. We investigated the news that was posted on the websites of the following providers: (1) *Kaupparehti*, one of the leading daily business newspapers in Finland, (2) *Yle*, the main Finnish national broadcasting company, (3) *TV4* and *Veckans Affärer*, the Swedish television network and the leading weekly business journal respectively, which were actively involved in bringing the critical event to the public's attention, and (4) *Svenska Dagbladets*, one of Sweden's largest daily subscription newspapers. The search terms contained the keyword, 'Stora Enso', in combination with the keywords, 'Pakistan', 'Bulleh Shah' or 'child'. This search returned 55 articles (**Appendix 2**). The media coverage was treated as secondary to the analysis of the company's documents, however, and was used as complementary to the main narrative. Our investigation took a company-centric perspective to the dramaturgical performance during the critical events. Due to choosing only certain media outlets, some aspects of the story might have been omitted.

The texts relating to the Stora Enso case from both the media and the company's website were analyzed using a dramaturgical and semiotic approach. The analysis was conducted in three phases. First, we read the texts and identified five major events, with two leading to the critical focal event, the focal event itself and two comprising the outcome. Thus, each event corresponded to an act in a classical five-act drama (Freytag, 1900) with a structure that involved exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. Exposition relates to setting the scene, rising action sets the narrative in motion and leads to the climax, where the greatest tension of the story occurs, after which the falling action relates to events that occurred as a result of the climax, and the resolution works out the conflict. Second, we extracted the parts of the text related to the company's and the media's communications regarding the events of the Bulleh Shah joint venture, which either led to or were the outcome

of the critical focal event. Third, following Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical approach we identified the main actors' roles, the props used and the setting of each act, as well as the scripts applied. We also applied the main elements of performance as defined by Goffman (1959) in order to analyze the dynamics throughout the timeline (see Section 3 for the description of Goffman's approach and the performance elements). To uncover the scripts, we identified and interpreted the semiotic signs and codes applied to each event. We particularly looked at the poetic and arbitrary signs, which represent emotional and rational argumentation respectively (see Section 3.1). In this paper, we treated signs as words and expressions and thereby limited our analysis to linguistic semiotics. The objective of this type of analysis is to "say a lot about little" (Joutsenvirta, 2009, p. 249). Limiting our analysis to only linguistic instances gave us a focus, due to the complexity and time consuming nature of the analysis.

5. Findings

The *protagonist* of this story is the company Stora Enso, with operations in the forest-related industries. It is one of the largest companies based in Finland and Sweden, with sales of 9.8 billion EUR (in 2016), and 25,000 employees in 35 countries (Stora Enso in Brief, 2017). The company is a provider of solutions for packaging, biomaterials, wood and paper products (ibid.). Before investing in Pakistan, Stora Enso had already begun operations in other emerging countries, such as China and Brazil, where they had some major critical events related to their CSR programs (see Kanninen, 2013a).

5.1. Act 1 - Exposition: Talks about investing in Pakistan

In September 2012, Stora Enso announced investments in Pakistan, which represented a major event in itself and thereby required appropriate communication. Media in this case acted as a *supporting actor*, which aided Stora Enso in its communications. Since Act 1 was mainly communicated with the help of the supporting actor, the media, only one specifically targeted communication prop was applied by the company to communicate this event. It consisted of a presentation given by the executive vice president of the renewable packaging department concerning the plans to expand as well as the justification for such an expansion. The following codes were applied in relation to the *script* for announcing the Pakistani investment. First, **growth** was emphasized in various types of signs. In terms of poetic signs, a *tree* metaphor was used to describe the growth of the company's business with the help of the Pakistani investment. In terms of logical signs, the company repeatedly emphasized that the Pakistani market was an *attractive growth market* and that the *demand for dairy products* in Pakistan represents a significant growth opportunity. The growth code was emphasized in the media as well (Saario, 2012).

Second, a **credibility** code was promoted by poetic signs highlighting the company's connections and expertise, for example, by applying the metaphoric expression "*with [our network, our expertise,] our everything [it's faster to grow]*" indicating the company's belief

in its capacity for expansion. Their close relationship with the partner was emphasized by employing expressions of appreciation such as “*having the honour*” to meet them and “*thinking highly*” of them. Finally, the investment itself was described in a metaphoric way, as a “*proof point*” for the growth of the company, thereby enhancing credibility. Use of codes for growth and credibility are common when proposing an investment. While the basic goal of an investment is to grow the income of a firm, the company proposing the investment needs to credibly justify it, to gain the investors’ trust and the approval of the public and other network actors.

The major event in this act laid the foundation for the acts to come and consequently no changes were implemented during the event. During the event, the performers attempted to accentuate the *dramatic realization* element by applying signs, such as *our expertise, proof point, attractive growth market* that dramatically highlighted the company’s actions and brought the event to the notice of the public and stakeholders. Making such an event as foreign investment noticeable is particularly crucial for a company to retain its reputation for being transparent. The almost exclusive usage of the media in executing the performance can be justified by the need for dramatic realization and greater dispersion of information.

5.2. Act 2 - Rising Action: Towards a responsible business?

The actual conclusion of the investment took place in May 2013, when Stora Enso formed a joint venture with Bulleh Shah Packaging, together with the Pakistani-based company Packages Ltd (Stora Enso, 2014a). The main communication props included a one-page summary from the global responsibility report introducing the new joint venture and a featurette in the company’s customer magazine on the director of the joint venture. The latter also acted as a communication prop during Act 4 in the form of a featurette on the company’s website. During the time leading up to the investment, the media acted mostly as supporting actors and performed according to the protagonist’s script by highlighting Stora Enso’s work on identifying risks and the possibility of child labor in the company because of the country’s setting (Kanninen, 2013a). The company highlighted its positive image by emphasizing Stora Enso’s commitment to deal with the issue by recognizing the social problems in Pakistan and constructing a strategy for improving the lot of children in the country.

The company’s communication script regarding Bulleh Shah during this period became more focused on sustainability. First, *numerous checks, audits, and diligence processes* were incorporated as logical signs to enhance **credibility** and perception of the investment as sustainable. The company also applied some poetic signs related to the codes of commitment and credibility. For example, the metaphoric expression *passion for responsible business* was used to foster the image of a committed corporate player. This reflected the performance element of idealization by trying to conform to societal values and respond to the expectations of the audience. The company acknowledged the risks while stating that everything was going according to plan and that the situation was under control. By emphasizing concrete action in creating sustainability the company also communicated the

fact that they were monitoring possible risks. Their awareness of risks was supported by signs related to the **setting** of the drama: “*decades old traditions do not change overnight*” or “*the best solution cannot be determined unless the context is also understood*”. Among the critical factors identified was the employment of children at the end of the supply chain to collect waste paper. This was stated in an external consultancy report, where not only child labor was identified but also the fact that it was used by suppliers and could be part of the supply chain of the joint venture company, Bulleh Shah (SEBCON, 2012). What is of importance, however, is that although the external consultancy report was delivered to the company in 2012, before the investment took place, it was only posted on the website and used as a communication prop in Act 4, after the critical focal event occurred (Section 5.4). In Act 2, however, the consultancy report was made an element of backstage activities. By keeping the consultancy report out of sight, the company applied the *mystification* element in its performance. Mystification may be appropriate to control what the audience knows about a dramatic performance, but in this case, dramatic realization would have been more beneficial. By making the consultancy report public already in Act 2, the company would have shown transparency. It would have faced criticism for establishing the joint venture, but it might have avoided the consequent loss of expressive control in Act 3.

Another alarming sign can be found in media reports. At the beginning of 2013, before the actual investment took place, Parul Sharma, who was then vice president of global responsibility for the renewable packaging area, left Stora Enso after working at the company for only half a year. Operations of the joint venture were handled by the renewable packaging division, which had a central role in the event described in Act 3. Parul Sharma said this about her leaving: “My understanding of sustainable development is very different from that of Stora Enso’s. And I do not want to talk about it anymore” (Kanninen, 2013b). This occurrence highlights some discrepancies in the performance of the team, which will become even more apparent in subsequent acts.

5.3. Act 3 - Climax: Child labor scandal

The focal critical event occurred on March 6, 2014, when the Swedish TV Channel 4 broadcast in the program, *Kalla Fakta*, an investigation into Stora Enso’s operations in Pakistan. Together with the Business Magazine, *Veckans Affärer*, TV4 highlighted the fact that Stora Enso knew about the possibility of child labor being a part of the supply chain in Pakistan, but continued with their investment in the country (SvD, 2014; Vehviläinen, 2014). At this point, the company was largely silent over the media stories with only a reference to the bulletin posted on their website for stakeholders commenting on the situation. The first communication prop, the company’s bulletin about the event, was released before the broadcast of the critical program. In the bulletin, the company took a rational approach to the situation by applying signs such as *clarify*, *should have been more open*, *clear*, and *transparent*. Apart from the **clarification** code, the company’s communication emphasized the code of **corrective action** by saying, for example, “*need to go deeper*”, and “*continuously*

carrying out investigation". It also applied the code of the Pakistani *setting* through language like "*root causes...are deep in the...society*", "*social reality*", "*different social and cultural contexts*", thus framing the problem as a social challenge.

After the silence, Stora Enso still refused to fully admit that its joint venture company was employing children and tried to defend itself. Stora Enso stated that there was a risk and a possibility that Bulleh Shah was using child labor, but so far, they had detected only one case (Salokorpi, 2014). At this point the company continued to pursue the strategy of misrepresentation in its performance by hiding the entire information about the situation. While such a strategy may be useful in certain crisis situations (Zavattaro, 2013), in this particular case it was detrimental. By that time, Stora Enso has been infamous for other misconducts related to CSR (see Kanninen, 2013a) and lack of strong reputation leads the effectiveness of any justification attempts to be close to zero (Vanhamme and Grobben, 2009).

The head of the Global Identity (i.e. Sustainability and Communications) division of the company, Lauri Peltola, who had the role of director in this act, justified their investment by hypothesizing that without the company's presence in the country, the children's living circumstances might have been worse. In his speech, Peltola stated categorically that if Stora Enso ceased its operations in Pakistan, the children might have to resort to prostitution to survive (Salokorpi, 2014). Not surprisingly, this justification of their investment, communicated by the PR manager, escalated the crisis. This ill-considered communication during the days following the critical event also became a critical event in its own right, making a bad situation worse. The media excoriated the company for its failure to tell the truth. In this case, we see a loss of expressive control, where seemingly minor cues appeared to be crucial for the performance. In particular, while the PR manager might not have intended for his words to carry any meaning whatsoever, this misguided cue for the audience appeared to be highly significant in judging the company's performance.

Within days, various investors who viewed the media reports, acted as antagonists and expressed their objection to investing in the company considering the lack of responsible action with regard to the use of child labor by Bulleh Shah. The stakeholders criticized Stora Enso and emphasized that it had neglected its responsibilities and paid little attention to CSR commitments. The falling level of investors' trust in the company resulted in its being immediately blacklisted and further investment was suspended. The stakeholders also demanded that the company provide all relevant information and explain how they planned to correct the problem. (Jakobsson and Alestig, 2014; Uusivaara, 2014) This prompted Stora Enso to change its script and performance, which supports the notion of a performance being a point of interaction and process of negotiation, rather than a stable impression (Tseñlon, 1992). The change was reflected in a new communication prop, a bulletin for the stakeholders. While the earlier letter was from the company in general, this bulletin was sent to the stakeholders from the CEO of the company. The signs used in these documents were

mostly similar. However, while the first letter had a more rational character, the second letter was oriented more towards apologizing and had a more emotional character. This was done by applying signs, such as “*plea for your support*”. Apart from the *apology* code, the company communication emphasized the code of *commitment* to resolving the situation, thus reflecting the stakeholders’ requirements for action.

Communication in the media during this period reflected the company’s communication in its bulletins. The company admitted their failures in communication and promised to work on the situation. The company particularly apologized for not communicating what they knew about the possibility of child laborers in Pakistan ahead of their investment in the country. The company also admitted that they should have reacted more quickly on the issue of child labor and that the communication of their actions could have been more transparent. The corrective action code was evident in their statement that the company had already made some improvements during the last 12 months and was now starting to conduct a wide assessment of human rights issues. The company also presented its perspective on the future of its operations in Pakistan, by claiming that they had high goals and that improvement could only be achieved by long-term effort. Child labor was discussed as a general social problem in Pakistan that could not be dealt with in one night. Stora Enso also stressed that they could not guarantee that employment of children in factory work would be eliminated. In order to work on the problem they needed to be present in the country to educate their partners and work government agencies to ban the practice. Thus, the company could not cease their operations in the country. (*Veckans Affärer*, 2014)

5.4. Act 4 - Falling action: Improvements for the better

Following the critical event, some of the largest shareholders of the company voiced their concerns about what they regarded as Stora Enso’s irresponsible conduct. They stressed that it was impossible to accept child labor, since it was contrary to Nordic society’s values. They expected the matter to be resolved within a reasonable timeframe that would safeguard the children’s wellbeing, and result in more active and open communication from the company (Tapiola, 2014). In May 2014, the company implemented a new code of conduct for its suppliers, as well as a supplier declaration, which when signed, bound the suppliers to act according the code of conduct. The document included rules concerning child labor, in particular restricting the age of employed workers to no less than 15 years (14 years in certain developing countries or in accordance with local legislation) (Stora Enso, 2014b). The code of conduct in its 2014 version is still used today (2018).

The company increased the number of communication props because of the situation in Pakistan and has used its *front* in the form of CSR communication. The props included a fact sheet on mitigating child labor in Pakistan for stakeholders, information on the situation with child labor in each of the quarterly results, and special sections on the situation in Pakistan in the Global Responsibility Performance and Progress report. The later props have been

introduced to Stora Enso's communication after the critical focal event and are a constant part of the company's annual report. The Global Responsibility Performance report was produced only after the critical event and did not become an annual communication prop. The company has also added a regular CSR section to their quarterly reports, providing information about the progress of CSR activities in emerging countries, which can be taken as a sign of greater transparency in communication.

Thereby, in this act the props were largely oriented towards the *idealization* element of a performance and at delivering a script of improvements and progress concerning mitigation of the child labor issue. In the fact sheet, Stora Enso also clarified their previous work by releasing the 2012 external consultancy report (Section 5.2). The main codes applied by the protagonist during this act were **collaboration**, by emphasizing *dialogs* with NGOs, **educating/training**, through *raising awareness* of human rights in the supplier network, **support** of local communities with regard to children (*"we will not just walk away and let the children down"*) and **control** through the signs of audits and follow-ups with suppliers. The company's communications became more focused and achieved a network perspective by clearly defining the codes in relation to various network actors. The codes reflected each of the actor's values, thus conforming to the *idealization* element of a performance. In addition to the codes, the company emphasized the **time** factor by using signs such as *"taking small steps towards a better future"*, *"time required for finding right partners"*. As in previous CSR communications, the code of **commitment** was brought to the fore in regards to improving the situation.

In the aftermath of the critical event, the company performed a structural reorganization, which can be interpreted as a sign for the code of **corrective action**. The reorganization was mostly in the renewable packaging division where the event occurred. The head of the division, Mats Nordlander, who might have acted as one of the directors in the company's drama, left his post. This dismissal should have been properly communicated to stakeholders and the media, but no information regarding it was found in the company's records. The media reacted to the action by reporting that the company had found a scapegoat in form of Nordlander and that dismissing him was a quick fix for the company (Siivonen, 2014). They also pointed out that this kind of reorganization often leads to adverse consequences. A company's reorganization needs to start at the top. Discharging the divisional manager for renewable packaging was also questioned by other actors.

A month after the divisional manager was discharged, the CEO of the company left, which was announced during the company's annual meeting and covered by the media. The CEO applied an apology code when speaking of the Pakistan situation by *blaming himself* (Liimatainen, 2014), thus taking a personal rather than an organizational stance on the problem and appealing to the audience's emotions. At the end of summer 2014 another core person in the company's drama left the scene, namely the head of the Global Identity division, Lauri Peltola (Yle Talous, 2014), who through wrong communication, escalated the

critical event in the press (section 5.3). In this act, the *performance team* has been broken up due to its inability to hold a decent performance. Performance teams are said to “integrate the divisions”, whereas “staff and line statuses tend to divide an organization” (Goffman, 1959). However, in this case the company failed to integrate its performance team. The Global Identity division itself was further divided into Global Communications and Global Responsibility and new heads of these divisions were elected. The newly elected interim head of Global Responsibility also handled communications during the summer before Peltola left. She sent a communication outlining how the company was discontinuing its work with the subcontractors who may have employed child laborers (Nurmi, 2014). The company also stressed that it was working with a certain NGO (ibid.) to improve the children’s situation. Partnering with NGOs may, however, represent a sort of ‘pooling’ in which a company improves its CSR image without actually doing much (Siano *et al.*, 2017).

The beginning of 2015 saw more consequences of the critical event for the company when the Swedish state pension fund sold its shares in Stora Enso and placed it on a blacklist (Laakso, 2015). The new CEO of Stora Enso openly admitted to Swedish media that the company knew that child labor was being used by subcontractors, but did not fully tell the truth (Veckans Äffärer, 2015a). In response to this, however, an analysis of the child labor problem by Finnish media highlighted the difficulty in controlling this practice, especially in some of the developing countries, and stated that “saying in defense of Stora Enso, in reality controlling child labor is complex, if not impossible” (Yle Talous, 2015). This reiterates how effective CSR communication depends upon a continuous negotiation about meaning between all the actors in the drama (Schoeneborn and Trittin, 2013).

5.5. Act 5 - Resolution: Changes in CSR communication

Changes in CSR communication because of the child labor event and previous occurrences in China and Brazil resulted in Stora Enso communicating more fully and openly about their actions in the respective countries. They even implemented some new communication props. A ‘progress center’ has been created that displays their progress in social and environmental matters. Second, a feedback program “speak up” promoting “a culture of open dialogue” was initiated to encourage stakeholders to notify the company whenever they witnessed or suspected violations of Stora Enso’s code of conduct (Stora Enso, 2016). At the beginning of this story, Stora Enso’s CSR was focused predominantly on “doing well by doing good”, which may produce unsustainable behaviors because of the difficulty of fulfilling the stated promises (Siano *et al.*, 2017). After the critical event, the company started to emphasize the ‘avoiding bad’ aspect of CSR communication, through establishment of the progress center and the “speak up” forum (ibid.). We can assume that the critical event encouraged Stora Enso to move forward on the path towards a more responsive and proactive approach to CSR communication. However, in the end of 2015 Stora Enso was still in the blacklist of the pension funds (Veckans Äffärer, 2015b). Thus, further research is required in order to follow up on the situation (see section 6.4 for further research suggestions).

6. Discussion and Conclusions

6.1. Summary of the findings

The aim of this paper was to understand how a company's CSR communication unfolded as a drama in a network context and what signs and codes the company applied to explain and justify its actions. The summary of the codes applied in the case, as well as elements of the performance in each act are presented in Table 2. In the first two acts, the company tried to establish trust through dramatic realization and the codes of commitment and credibility, as well as the positive code of growth in relation to investment. It also applied idealization by asserting the possibility of influencing factors through the code of socio-cultural setting and by stating the complexity of dealing with social issues such as child labor in Pakistan. By not disclosing the information in the audit made in connection with the new investment and the possible use of child laborers, the company resorted to mystification, which proved to be disadvantageous for the course of events.

During the focal event, the company also resorted to misrepresentation by not fully admitting misconduct and trying to justify its actions with the help of socio-cultural arguments. However, after the intervention of network actors and the company's loss of expressive control, the codes of apology and commitment were applied. This response was aimed at mitigating the dissatisfaction expressed by network actors to its previous communications, as well as to clarify the actions being taken to improve the situation. The major event, which occurred in the Stora Enso case, was represented as a debate and a dialogue between the network actors on "what is CSR?", thus reflecting the definition of CSR being "a forum for sense-making and debate of opinions and expectations associated with organizational activity" (Christensen *et al.*, 2013, p. 387). While some of the actors insisted on Stora Enso ceasing its actions in Pakistan, the company justified staying in the country through its actions towards helping to solve the child labor issue as a socially responsible act.

In order to improve the situation, the performance team was dispersed and new personnel were hired. The codes after the focal events were more specific and directed at various actors, as well as conveying a more collaborative nature. The front of the performance in a form of CSR communication was altered and the amount of communication props also increased after the critical event.

Table 2. Summary of Stora Enso’s CSR communication drama

<i>Components of the drama</i>	<i>Act</i>				
	Exposition	Rising action	Climax	Falling action	Resolution
Core script	Introducing the investment	Sustainability of the joint venture (JV)	Defending and apologizing	Responsibility progress and performance	Open dialogue
Roles	<i>Protagonist:</i> Stora Enso				
	<i>Supporting role:</i> Media		<i>Core Antagonist:</i> Media; <i>Secondary Antagonist:</i> NGOs, Investors		
Communication props	1.Presentation: Stora Enso expands in Pakistan 2. Conference call with the shareholders	1. 1-pager on the new JV in Global Responsibility Report 2. Featurette on the new JV director	1. Bulletin - General 2. Bulleting to Stakeholders	1. Fact sheet 2. External consultancy report 3. Information on the situation with child labour in each Quarterly results 4. Global Responsibility Performance 5. Progress book 6. Featurette on the JV director	New communication programs
Performance element highlighted	Dramatic realization	Idealization Mystification	Misrepresentation Loss of Expressive control	Idealization Performance team disintegration	Changed “Front”
Codes applied/Scripts	Growth Credibility	Commitment Credibility Socio-cultural context	Clarification Socio-cultural context Corrective action Apology Commitment	Collaboration Education/training Support Control Time & Commitment	Progress Dialogue
Logical signs	demand attractive growth market	checks, audits, diligence process; according to the plan understand the context	continuous investigation; different contexts	dialogues raising awareness follow-ups	progress centre
Poetic signs	tree metaphor having the honour thinking highly proof point	passion for responsible business decades old traditions	need to go deeper; root causes deep in the society; plea for your support	won’t let the children down small steps for a better future	speak up culture of open dialogue

Each event in Stora Enso's CSR drama was crucial and required appropriate communication. For example, the Pakistan investment can be considered as a separate major event requiring appropriate frontstage communication, even though it was not inherently negative. In general, few communication props were applied by the company before the focal event. While the company applied numerous codes for creating and enhancing public trust in their investment during this phase, communication regarding the possible risks was less explicit with one crucial communication prop left backstage (the external consultancy report). Thus, our case also confirmed that more coordination was required between frontstage and backstage for impression management (Lowe *et al.*, 2012) and that better exchange of communication resources within the network would be beneficial.

Stora Enso's case is also an example of how CSR communication is a dialogue in a hermeneutic sense of a process of coming to an understanding (Gadamer, 2004). Thus, while the current paper did not display a dialogical communication in its classical form (examining a conversation between several parties), it demonstrated how CSR communication consisted of events, which were aimed towards eventually coming to an understanding on what constitutes good CSR. The understanding was reached by means of a drama where the core protagonists put forward their interpretations of what it means to be socially responsible, while other actors and the audience may understand or misunderstand the interpretations, as well as support or oppose them and offer alternative meanings. Their understanding or misunderstanding generated specific events, which acted as engines of change with the ultimate result of constructing a more comprehensive CSR communication system and leading all the actors toward a better understanding.

6.2. Theoretical contributions

The present study makes several noteworthy contributions to the literature on B2B marketing and CSR communication. First, the current study expands the methodology of the CSR communication field by being one of the few studies to apply a dramaturgical approach. While some studies have applied impression management to the analysis of CSR communication (e.g. Sandberg and Holmlund, 2015; Tata and Prasad, 2015), the express use of drama allows researchers to consider the dynamics of CSR communication and its formation and change through the interaction with stakeholders. Our analysis shows the usefulness of this approach in reaching an in-depth understanding of communication processes within a network. We hope that this work will encourage other scholars to use the dramaturgical approach in their studies.

Second, this study is also unusual in applying a semiotic perspective in a business context. While poetic signs such as metaphors have been widely researched in organization studies (Cornelissen *et al.*, 2008), B2B marketing and CSR studies could also benefit from the application of a semiotic approach to communication. This paper particularly looked at the use of poetic and logical signs to enhance the effectiveness of emotional and rational language in CSR messages. Sandberg and Holmlund (2015) stated that emotional tactics were

detrimental for CSR reporting and in Stora Enso's case, the company's wide usage of poetic signs did not save them from crisis. Stora Enso, however, applied mostly generic poetic signs such as "won't let the children down", "passion for responsible business", which may not have resonated with the audience due to lack of specificity. We still see poetic signs as necessary for delivering messages to specific network actors, if applied correctly and supported by relevant information. In particular, metaphors couched in simple, vivid language may reach a wider audience if they have the requisite knowledge to understand them (Glucksberg *et al.*, 2001). This paper also adds to the limited literature on communication processes in business networks (e.g. Mason and Leek, 2012; Olkkonen *et al.*, 2000).

The case presented here adds to the concept prevalent in current CSR communication literature that no single organization is in control of the drama of CSR communication, because of the multiplicity of actors within a business network (Elving *et al.*, 2015). In particular, it showcases how an actor can shift from being a director in the play to the one being directed. Thus, after the critical event, Stora Enso's script was to some extent dictated by the media and external stakeholders. As a consequence of the active involvement of the network actors, Stora Enso has developed a more responsive and proactive communication strategy (Morsing and Schultz, 2006). While communication in the first two acts of the investment drama was largely focused on 'strategic action' and informing stakeholders, the company's communication after the focal event shifted more towards 'communicative action' (Elving *et al.*, 2015). The codes applied after the event were in response to various actors, such as the code of collaboration with certain NGOs, the promised support for local communities, and better training and control of suppliers. The implementation of various feedback systems demonstrated a greater involvement of stakeholders in CSR decision-making. Our case results thus contribute to CSR communication literature by showing the importance of a shift from a purely 'informative' strategy to a more 'responsive' and 'involvement' strategy to stakeholder CSR communication (see Morsing & Schultz, 2006 and section 2 for the description of these strategies).

6.3. Implications for Management

Companies should engage stakeholders in a policy-making dialogue from the start rather than simply being a conduit for information or persuasive communications. By doing this, firms will be better able to understand stakeholders' viewpoints and perceptions about CSR. Involving them early in the process by appealing to them in their own language and in a manner they perceive appropriate, should guarantee better outcomes. In order to enable stakeholder participation in CSR communication formation companies can establish a CSR advisory board¹, including representatives from various types of stakeholders, who gather on a regular basis to help the company with CSR decision-making and communications. At the

¹ According to the authors' knowledge, such CSR advisory board exists in some MNCs, however the authors do not know the extent of companies' consideration of advices given by such an advisory board.

same time, the company's managers should not push their own agenda first, but start with a clean slate allowing the discussion with the stakeholders to lay the foundation of CSR communication. This will help to build CSR communication based on a proper understanding about the subject matter, thereby requiring no "translation" of the message for stakeholders to understand it (cf. Gadamer, 2004).

Second, each multinational corporation when investing in emerging countries with unstable social, economic and ecological conditions needs to show that they recognize the risk and be more transparent in communicating its CSR operations to various business network actors. For this purpose, it is not sufficient to evaluate the conditions in a country; the company needs to find efficient ways of communicating its results via traditional and/or social media using its website or other means of communication. Companies "rarely report unfavorable events" (Sandberg and Holmlund, 2015, p. 687); however, the reporting should, at the least, be done in relation to relevant network actors. Thus, in the case of Stora Enso, the company might have diminished the impact of the focal event by providing the external consultancy report to the relevant network actors before the media got the information and published it. With our changing media landscape, where messages and stories are not composed solely by the sender, but rather by the different commentators taking part in the discussion, the understanding of the different stages of how a story unfolds in the form of a drama provides management the wherewithal to follow and in some cases affect the end-result of a story.

Third, the example of Stora Enso can be useful for practical purposes by providing a framework for effective communication at different stages in a process. It should be noted, however, that Stora Enso largely applied conventional and generic codes and signs in their messages such as commitment, growth, collaboration, and support; and signs, such as according to plan, checks, dialogues, and passion for responsible business. A company would be better off applying a more sophisticated approach to executing its scripts. Communication within different industries and with specific network actors requires the use of specific industry-relevant codes, which are part of the professional language within a certain industry. Understanding the codes applied in various industries may eliminate misunderstandings among business network actors. Industry-relevant codes can be obtained from an in-depth review of the discourses and cultures pertaining to each industry with which the company is interacting. Little research has been done on industry cultures, since the emphasis of previous business research has been mainly on national culture (Leung *et al.*, 2005; Tung and Stahl, 2018). Further research is needed to identify the specific meanings behind each code, which can be used in the development of a custom-encoded message for specific target groups in a business network.

Fourth, the companies should be careful when applying dramatic realization and mystification to a performance in the context of positive events. Too much drama coupled with mystification may lead to negative attitudes and feelings of being deceived (Brown and Dacin 1997; Morsing and Schultz, 2006). Companies should view positive and minor events

in the same manner as negative ones by developing targeted communication strategies that reveal the company as a sincere player in the market. By doing this, firms may prevent major negative events and diminish the threat to their reputation. They should pay careful attention to feedback during the whole CSR communication process and consider the opinions of the business network actors during positive and negative events. Finally, an integrated performance team is essential for CSR communication during both positive and negative events. Disparity in the performance team in terms of the communication agenda may be detrimental for the CSR communication success.

6.4. Further research

The study also proposes several avenues for further research. First, our analysis represented the drama from the perspective of the focal company. Further research should focus on understanding the drama from the perspective of other network actors, by examining the responses of actual recipients of the communications. This will allow for a holistic understanding of a contemporary business drama, which is shaped not only by the focal actor, but by all the involved network actors. Second, current research mostly focused on CSR communication during negative events. There is a need to investigate CSR communication during positive critical events, since it may be crucial for understanding the communication process as a whole. Research into communication processes during less major events is necessary in order to understand how to prevent or facilitate such events.

The specific context of the study and its focus on MNCs also imposes limitations. For example, the consequences of a critical event related to CSR for MNCs, can be different from that of SMEs business operations, due to differences in firm size and power distribution in their business network. Further research is needed to compare the differences in consequence of a negative critical event for MNCs and SMEs and specific differences in CSR communication in the aftermath of the event. Because of the focus on documents related to a particular set of events, the research does not cover the diversity of documents that may be related to a company's CSR communications. Future studies should take into account documents, such as the CEO's messages to shareholders, the codes of ethics and organizational policies and the ethical training sessions to better understand CSR communication in general and in relation to critical events.

Finally, this paper used secondary data like company documents and media articles to understand the Stora Enso case. In-depth, face-to-face interviews may be required to better understand the company's perspective on the situation and to follow up on the outcomes of critical events. Furthermore, the selection of the keywords for searching media articles about the major critical event may have compromised the completeness of the story.

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Appendix 1. Stora Enso documents analyzed

Year		Document name	Target audience	Type
2012	1	Earnings Conference Call (Q3 2012)	Investors	Edited transcript
	2	Earnings Conference Call (Full Year 2012)	Investors	Edited transcript
	3	Annual financial statement release 2012	Investors	Stock Exchange Release
	4	Interim Review Q3	Investors	Interim review
	5	Report of the Board of Directors 2012	Investors	Financial report
	6	Facts & Figures 2012	General	Report
	7	Stora Enso expands business in Pakistan (Stock exchange release)	Investors	PPT
	8	Global responsibility report 2012	General	Report
2013	9	Annual financial statement release 2013	Investors	Stock Exchange Release
	10	Investor information request	Investors	External report (CDP)
	11	Interim Review January–March 2013	Investors	Stock Exchange Release
	12	Stora Enso’s Annual General Meeting	Stakeholders	PPT
	13	Earnings Conference Call (Q1 2013)	Investors	Edited transcript
	14	Earnings Conference Call (Q4 2013)	Investors	Edited transcript
	15	Report of the Board of Directors 2013	Investors	Financial report
	16	Facts & Figures 2013	General	Report
	17	Global Responsibility Report 2013	General	Report
	18	Stora Enso Rethink volume 4 2013	Customers	Customer magazine
2014	19	Statements in media	Public; general	Media articles
	20	Progress book 2014	General	Report

21	Interim Review Q2	Investors	Report
22	Interim Review Q3	Investors	Report
23	Interim Review Q4	Investors	Report
24	Financial report 2014	Investors	Report
25	Annual General Meeting presentation	Stakeholders	PPT
26	Financial results Q2	Investors	PPT
27	Global Responsibility Performance 2014	General	Part of annual report
28	Stora Enso's Global Responsibility up-date Q3	Stakeholders	Bulletin
29	Mitigating Child Labour in Pakistan - fact sheet	Stakeholders	Bulletin
30	Earnings Conference Call (Q2)	Investors	Edited transcript
31	Bulletin for stakeholders - Pakistan	Stakeholders	Bulletin
32	Letter from the CEO - Pakistan	Stakeholders	Bulletin
33	Global responsibility in Q4/2014 (compared with Q4/2013)	Stakeholders	Bulletin

2015	34	Stora Enso's Human Rights Assessments 2014	Investors	PPT
	35	Interim Review Q1	Investors	Report
	36	Interim Review Q2	Investors	Report
	37	Interim Review Q3	Investors	Report
	38	Stora Enso's Human Rights Assessments Report	General	Report
	39	Combating child labour in Pakistan	General	Website article
	40	Financial report 2015	Investors	Report
	41	Investing in children's rights	General	Website article
	42	Responsible sourcing in Pakistan	General	Website article
	43	Stora Enso ESG Investor presentation	Investors	PPT
	44	Global Responsibility in first quarter 2015	Stakeholders	Bulletin
	45	Global Responsibility in second quarter 2015	Stakeholders	Bulletin
	46	Stora Enso Q4 and Full year results	Investors	Report
	47	Sustainability report 2015	General	Report
48	Progress book 2015	General	Report	

Appendix 2. List of news in relation to the events (September 2012-2015)

Journal	Article name	Date
<i>Kauppalehti</i>	Stora Enso laajentaa Pakistaniin	18.09.2012
	Ruotsin tv: Stora Enson alihankkijalla lapsityövoimaa	6.03.2014
	Karvinen lapsityövoimasta: "Mahdotonta hyväksyä"	12.03.2014
	Kauppalehti seuraa Stora Enson yhtiökokousta	23.04.2014
	FT: Lapsityövoima vei Stora Enson mustalle listalle	8.02.2015
	Lapsityövoiman käyttöä vaikea valvoa	18.02.2015
<i>Yle</i>	Stora Enso mukaan pakkaustuotetehtaaseen Pakistaniin	18.09.2012
	Stora Enso myöntää riskit lapsityövoiman käytöstä Pakistanissa	03.09.2013
	Ruotsalaisväite: Stora Enson alihankkija käyttää Pakistanissa lapsityövoimaa	06.03.2014
	Stora Enson maajohtaja lapsityöväitteistä: Riskit ovat korkeat	06.03.2014
	Stora Enson toimitusjohtaja: Meidän olisi pitänyt kertoa lapsityövoimasta alihankintaketjussa	10.03.2014
	Ruotsalaiskanava: Stora Enso tiesi lapsityövoiman käytöstä	10.03.2014
	Haavisto kuuli Stora Enson lapsityövoimatilanteesta viikko sitten	11.03.2014
	Pakistan-kohu sai Stora Enson reagoimaan – hämäystä vai organisointia?	21.03.2014
	Stora Enson toimitusjohtaja Karvinen eroaa – "arvostettu, vaikka virheitä ollut"	23.04.2014
	Eroava Karvinen: Kritiikkiä tullut joka vuosi	23.04.2014
	Valtio ja Wallenberg-säätiö Stora Ensosta: "Mahdotonta hyväksyä lapsityövoiman käyttöä"	23.04.2014
	Stora Enso kertoo havainneensa lapsityövoiman käyttöä	21.07.2014
	FT: Stora Enso eläkerahaston mustalle listalle lapsityövoimasta – myi sijoituksensa	08.02.2015
	<i>TV 4</i>	Kalla fakta granskar svenska företag i Asien
Kalla Fakta: Lögnen om barnen		9.3.2014
Stora Enso-chef petas efter Kalla Fakta-avslöjande		21.3.2014
Efter Kalla Faktas avslöjande - nu avgår Stora Ensos vd		23.4.2014
<i>SvD</i>	Stora Enso satsar i Pakistan	18.9.2012
	Stora Enso anklagas för barnarbete	5.3.2014
	Stora Enso kände till barnarbete	9.3.2014
	Stora Ensos skandaler runt om i världen	11.3.2014
	Investerarare kritiska mot Stora Ensos agerande	11.3.2014

	Räkna med bråk på de här stämmorna	18.3.2014
	Stora Enso organiserar om	21.3.2014
	Bär hundhuvudet för barnarbete i Stora Enso-företag	21.3.2014
	"Vacka ord – men Stora Enso håller inte sina löften"	26.3.2014
	Wallenberg: "Barnarbete är förkastligt"	11.4.2014
	Stämma i skamfilad skogskoncern	21.4.2014
	Stora Enso - "en ohälsosam företagskultur"	22.4.2014
	Vd för skamfilad skogsjätte avgår	23.4.2014
	Stora Enso avfärdar kritiken	26.4.2014
	Sundström ny vd för Stora Enso	30.6.2014
	"Sundström måste våga lyfta fram problemen"	30.6.2014
	Stora Enso svartlistas av Sjunde AP-fonden	11.12.2014
	Vd:n: "Barnarbetet tråkigt och skämmigt"	21.7.2015
	Menar storbolagen allvar – eller är allt teater?	6.8.2015
<i>Veckans Affärer</i>	Avslöjande: Stora Enso och barnarbetarna	5.3.2014
	"Ångrar definitivt inte investeringen i Pakistan"	6.3.2014
	Krismöten med storägarna efter skandalen	10.3.2014
	"Avgå Karvinen"	13.3.2014
	Fackpampar kräver ansvar av Stora Enso	19.3.2014
	Så fel, Stora Enso!	21.3.2014
	"De ska absolut inte lämna barnen i sticket"	11.3.2014
	Nu kryper Stora Enso till korset	10.3.2014
	Skandalbolagets vd avgår	23.4.2014
	Skandalerna kastar skugga på stämman	22.4.2014
	Stora Enso svartlistas efter skandalen med barnarbetare	11.12.2014
	Stora Ensos vd: "Vi mörkade om barnarbetet"	7.1.2015
	Sjunde AP-fonden har uppdaterat sin svarta lista - Stora Enso ensamt svenskt	15.12.2015