# Chapter 7
# CSR Life-Cycle Exploration

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**Abstract** During the last century, CSR has developed dynamically from the believe that business is responsible for what transpires in societies—in terms of factors which contribute to social, economic and environmental achievements and with regard to taking sustainable actions which reduce the external negative effects of business operational activities on the environment. Business is also deemed responsible for connecting positively business and society and consolidating relations between parties. Due to CSR's dynamic nature as a cluster and its contextual dimension, it continues to change society in all ramifications. Since the intention of this chapter was to search for the life-cycle of CSR, it was important to look at the terms that it takes its root from. And so, some key issues in CSR development were outlined, such as corporate responsibility (CR), global sustainability, social responsibility, as well as some of the first definitions of CSR.

Next, the visions of CSR as a managerial idea, academic concept and from companies' perspective, and their features were briefly presented and discussed. Following that, the CSR life-cycle was presented from its initiation as the ideology of social responsibility released in the U.S. in the late 1800s, to the terms of stewardship and trusteeship in the 1920s, going through its turn from practice to theory and theoretical concept between the 1950s and 1960s, to its continuous change in conceptual shape in 1970s, 1980s, 1990s until the present day.

## 7.1 Introduction

The scope of this chapter is to briefly discuss the main milestones of corporate social responsibility (CSR) life-cycle, with no deep recommendations or defending any of its evolutionary theories. Basically, the aim of the chapter is to bring forward

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important moments in CSR life-cycle development. Business is also deemed responsible for connecting positively business and society and consolidating relations between parties. Due to CSR's dynamic nature as a cluster and its contextual dimension, it continues to change society in all ramifications. Since the intention of this chapter was to search for the life-cycle of CSR, it was important to look at the terms that it takes its root from. And in order to do so, some key issues in CSR development were outlined, such as corporate responsibility (CR), global sustainability, social responsibility, as well as some of the first definitions of CSR.

During the last century, CSR has developed dynamically from the believe that business is responsible for what transpires in societies - in terms of factors which contribute to social, economic and environmental achievements and with regard to taking sustainable actions which reduce the external negative effects of business operational activities on the environment.

The chapter consists of four parts. Firstly, some key issues in CSR development will be outlined. It will explore the corporatist responsibility (CR), global sustainability, social responsibility, as well as some of the early definitions of CSR. The second and third parts were dedicated to the visions of CSR as a managerial idea, an academic concept and from companies' perspective, while their features were briefly presented and discussed. Fourth, the CSR life-cycle was presented from its initiation as the ideology of social responsibility released in the U.S. in the late 1800s, to the terms of stewardship and trusteeship in the 1920s, going through its turn from practice to theory and theoretical concept between the 1950s and 1960s, to its continuous change in conceptual shape in 1970s, 1980s, 1990s until the present day.

Fourthly, the objectives achieved, the limitations and the perspectives of CSR were briefly introduced. As the methodology was mainly qualitative, the chapter's research was a walk through a large collection of publications on the subject of CSR and its life-cycle.

Although there is much to be researched on, this chapter tried to contribute to the CSR debate tracing the route and milestones of the concept based on the retrospective and prospective construction of CSR life cycle, the previous theoretical and practical developments and the foundation for future developments and trends in CSR.

## 7.2   Key Issues in CSR Development

The various issues of sustainable development assist us in the contextualisation of CSR and its elements. Coined by the Brundtland Report, which was released by the United Nations in, 1987 and which defines sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

In addition, it introduced the concept of corporate responsibility (CR), from which the concept of CSR was derived. Taking into consideration that the research

focuses on CSR, the concept of CR is briefly introduced here, in order to provide a systematic progression by CSR. The CR concept is not an entirely new one. While some CR practices were empirically used more than a century ago, various authors have noted that they occurred in sequential cycles as noted by the following scholars (Carroll, 1999; Hummels, 2004; Vogel, 2005; White, 2004, 2005).

Most notably, the CR concept is now closely connected with the sustainability movement. Even if both concepts had different development tracks, lately they have become integrated. While sustainability concept was the product of the environmental movement, CR emerged in the early 1950s and was primarily concerned with social issues (Carroll, 1999, Loew, Ankele, Braun, & Clausen, 2004). CR incorporates social, economic and environmental components of sustainable development and provides a holistic approach to companies in order to understand the issues involved in sustainable development. This fact supports the clarification and the translation of numerous factors in corporate language, according to their relevance for companies. In addition, CR offers a holistic structure of global sustainability from the corporate point of view, therefore, from an individual business and its operations' perspective, the accession and implementation will be easier.

As Brady (2004) asserts "it is not useful to use CSR to refer to the net contribution of business to sustainable development because it implies that the only reason we would conserve...the environment is because society demands it. That suggests that the environment ...does not have its own innate value. That suggestion goes against the founding ethos of sustainable development". The previous statement sets the CSR as part of CR and CR as a whole which represents a company's contribution to sustainability. Therefore, it can be concluded that CSR covers social dimension of CR, where it created the link between CSR and sustainability.

Responsibility has been interpreted in various forms, including profit allocation and investment, research and development of community. These interpretations have been developed in a more detailed form of CSR, first stated in 1953 in Bowen's book "Social Responsibility of Business Man", which was the beginning of the modern era of corporate responsibility.

He states that "social responsibility rests upon the idea that business should be conducted with concern for the effects of business operations upon the attainment of valued social goals" (1953). Further, he proposes a set of objectives that include "community improvement, security, justice, personal integrity, freedom and development of individual person".

As Hens and Nath assert "CSR is clearly supportive of sustainable development, making companies, managers, employees and shareholders alike aware of the impact that the company has socially" (2005).

Later, numerous definitions of CSR appeared. Davis defined it as "decisions and actions taken for reasons at least partially beyond the firm's direct economic or technical interest" (1960). Carroll (1979) in the Pyramid of CSR asserts "the social responsibility encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations that society has of organisations at a given point of time". The World

Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBSCD), defines CSR as "the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as the local community and society at large" (WBCSD report, 1998).

In recent years, Porter and Kramer (2006) have noted that "the relationship between business and society that does not treat corporate success and social welfare as a zero-sum game". Definitions, although they retain the meaning of CSR (a company' responsibilities to society), can create ambiguities, because they include a wide range of words such as ethics, economic and technical development, as well as quality of life, which contain numerous items of complexity. This is a positive issue in terms of grouping people from various fields and creating and developing solutions and strategies. However, it could undermine the genuine social responsibility of a company, for they include a wide range of issues involving different actors. Therefore, it can be concluded that the context in which CSR is used supports the clarity of the concept.

## 7.3   CSR as Managerial Idea and Academic Concept

As they were identified in the literature "social aspects have received less consideration, even though they are of considerable importance to the successful and sustainable operation" (Werner & Schafer, 2007). Throughout the twentieth century, CSR has developed both as a managerial idea Porter and Kramer (2006), Donham (1927) and as an academic concept (Bowen, 1953, Clark, 1916, Walsh, Weber, & Margolis, 2003).

This development was reflected in the area occupied in management and academic level, as well as, particularly within the framework of business scholarship and education (Cheit, 1978; Frederick 2006; Gond, & Moon, 2011; Matten and Moon, 2004; Moon and Orlitzky, 2010).

The development was certainly not equal, but it is also true that the status of CSR in the second decade of the twenty-first century is higher than it has been in the last hundred years (de Bakker, Groenewegen, & den Hond, 2006; Lockett, Moon, & Visser, 2006; Margolis & Walsh, 2003; World Commission on Environment and Development 1987).

Therefore, the emphasis should be put on both the CSR as a concept of management and managerial practice and as an academic concept.

Corporate social responsibility refers generically, to the hope that the company is responsible in before society when noted in a hierarchical order, in the sense of responsibility (Bowen, 1953; Carroll, 1979) and for society, in order to explain the negative aspects and the contribution to social welfare (Crouch, 2006; Arrow, 1974); hopes that the company acts in a responsible manner (Carroll, 1979); and the management of corporate business-society by strengthening relations with and among concerned parties (stakeholders) (Barnett, 2007; Gond & Matten, 2007; Freeman, 1984). Based on stakeholder theory, which addresses the management

of business ethics an organization identifies and implement, and shapes the groups of a corporation's stakeholders, CSR can support management to give due regard to the interests of those groups. In fact, in this context, CSR will address the "Principle of Who or What Really Counts" (Freeman, 1984).

The above mentioned concepts have varied together with the definitions used for describing social phenomena relating to CSR. Although these transformations usually reflect the conceptual developments (Wood, 1991a, 1991b; Carroll, 2008) or changes in management practices and visions, they also reveal the spirit of the time accompanying the trend-cycle and management consulting (Abrahamson, 1996; den Hond, de Bakker, & Neergaard, 2007; The Economist, 2005, 2008). Thus, CSR can be viewed as dynamic, contextual and overlay.

In a great extent, its quality is based on the dynamic developments in the relationships between company and society, including, among others, new trends of "irresponsibility".

The overlay feature of CSR points out that it corresponds, to a certain extent, to the "cluster concept" (Moon, 2002) getting in and pulling out from related fields such as business ethics, corporate governance, business strategy, sustainability, business and society relations and between government and business.

Although the occurrence of CSR has been far more visible in the USA, it is true that it also appeared in various contexts at national level, reflecting different occurrences of corporate governance, institutional, economic, political, social, and ethical, therefore experiences regarding CSR can be related to numerous countries. Moreover, even within and among different sectors of the countries there have been developed distinct trails of CSR, often reflecting the balance between risk and opportunity, or market structure and property.

As a result of this dynamic character in context and overlay, a wide range of concepts and structures have been used to describe and theorize social phenomena that correspond to CSR: Businessmen's Responsibility, Corporate Social Performance, Corporate Social Responsiveness, Triple Bottom Line, and Corporate Responsibility to Stakeholders or Corporate Citizenship. Consequently, the name CSR is used as a general concept of "umbrella" as it has been suggested by Hirsh and Levin, who defined this category as broad concepts used to encompass and account for a diverse set of phenomena (1999). According to Garriga and Melé (2004) and Gond and Matten (2007), in the specific case of CSR, the phenomena covered by this broad concept refers to the relationship between business and society.

## 7.4 CSR from Companies' Perspective

Sheldon's work on CSR management reflects the fact that the industry has been designed to be useful to society (1924). The progress that industries have recorded up to now, is rooted in the relationship between them and society. The requirements

of the society led to the process of creativity and innovation. In short, the industries were established for the benefit of the society and for its sustainability.

There have been debates about the purpose and meaning of CSR in industry (Waddock, 2004). Jenson suggests that maximizing long-term wealth for shareholders by increasing the market value will lead to the achievement of social responsibility (Jensen, 2002). In addition, "Management scholars have recently focused attention on instances when managers use CSR instrumentally" (McWilliams cited in Waldman, Siegel, & Javidan, 2006). In addition, increasing pressure on the part of international organizations (including the International Labour Organization, Global Reporting Initiatives, guidelines of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the International Organization for Standardization and the Global impact of UN) has led companies in compliance with CSR codes of conduct (Mamic, 2004). However, CSR, theorists like Ackerman (1973), Sethi (1975), Wartrick and Cochran (1985), Carroll (1991), Wood (1991a, 1991b) and Margolis and Walsh (2003) underline that CSR understanding and its credibility can support companies in balancing the social and financial objectives. Although this could raise social issues, the concept of social responsibility of companies may add to the changing in their way of thinking.

As Davis (1973) asserts, "the business which vacillates or chooses not to enter the arena of social responsibility, may find that it gradually will sink into customer disfavour". Building and maintaining relationships between an organization and society is an essential part in the growth of the company (community relations).

Brady asserts that "this concept is most prominently opposed by the Milton Friedman type ideology; Friedman has suggested that only individuals can have responsibility, the corporation as an artificial person can only have artificial responsibilities" (2005). This idea becomes the joint structure only if the organization and its employees are regarded as two different entities, and the unique social responsibility of business is to increase the profits, provided that no illegal activity takes place. The strategy to turn the shareholders of the company into employees in order to make them feel that they are part of it, and responsible for its development, combines the benefits of profit maximization with those of the employees. However, such a move on the part of a company may be considered to be more beneficial for the company than for employees, creating a reciprocal relationship of give and take, and thus advantageous to both.

Another example, Husted and Salazar (2006) refer to, from the strategic perspective of CSR, is to support the community by providing scholarships for training programs.

Therefore, the company benefits through additional opportunities for personal development and has at its disposal a wider area of qualified labour selection. Individuals together form a company and consider it as being entirely responsible in front of the people and the community, taking into consideration that people in the community form the organization. As Ghosal and Bartlett state in their book *The Individualized Corporation* (1998) "The management is, above all else, about achieving results through people. Not that there is no value in crunching numbers, analysing trends, or restructuring activities. But these traditional responsibilities

have, for too long, distracted managers from their most basic and most valuable role—being able to attract, motivate, develop and retain individuals with scarce and valuable knowledge skills."

Exploration of CSR in various companies will allow the enrichment of the image on CSR in general, and in specific industries where there are fewer activities of analysis and research. When people of different backgrounds work together, they create a new dimension of creativity and knowledge. The two positive aspects are the processes of learning and mutual communication in order to achieve sustainability and responsible practice. As Marrewijk noted "business forms an important triangular relationship with the state and civil society. Each has a specific mechanism that coordinates their behaviour and fulfils a role within society" (2006).

In addition, with the transfer of operations to companies in course of developing or developed economies, CSR has gone to a whole new level where more problems with social character take birth. To shed light on social issues, a survey conducted by McKinsey Quarterly showed that 84 % of the directors of companies argue that their "role is not only to generate returns for shareholders and investors but also contribute towards societal benefits" (2006). Therefore, the concern with social responsibility approach is not only outside, but also inside the companies. From this perspective, CSR could be viewed as a strategy that includes compliance with the organization's objectives and promoting sustainability.

Many companies are faced constantly with challenges but also, often with harsh criticism on the part of the interested parties as regards their participation in order to be socially responsible, despite the rigorous and intense activity in applying CSR initiatives.

There is still the perception of CSR as a "marketing stunt" that companies can use in order to access markets and expand activities. From this perspective, when a company's consumers link it to positive, specific and ethical social actions and deeds, they will always tend to view the company in a favourable light. On the other hand, as consumers have a deep understanding of hypocrisy, CSR needs to be a real commitment and not just a mere slogan that the company will abandon at the first circumstances of a market decrease or recession.

Current issues represented by sustainability, policies, regulations or standards, which many industries face, required governments, international organizations and businesses to work in dealing with the challenges of these industries. CSR is a way by which a business can be profitable and responsible; however, CSR initiatives do not seem to convince society of the connection between business and social responsibility. As Porter and Kramer (2006) say "first, they pit business against society, when in reality the two are interdependent. Secondly, they pressure companies to think of corporate social responsibility in generic ways instead of doing it in ways more appropriate to their individual strategies". Later, the issue of CSR integration on the agenda of a business and strategies still remains, despite the efforts of integration and implementation on the part of companies and their interested parties. Despite CSR implementation in order to overcome societal obstacles, the ambiguity of the concept creates ambiguity. This ambiguity raises several issues, two of which are particularly important.

The first is that CSR is seen rather as a tool of the public relations than as a process of value creation in itself, whose goal is to assist companies in achieving sustainability. Secondly there are some companies that have claimed to follow the path of CSR, but, in fact, they have used the contributions to social objectives only as a mechanism to carry out operations to maximize profit. Profit is an integral part and a concrete way to assess a company's development; however, it is not the only goal. CSR offers a mixture of vision and is ability (competence) for multinational companies. It is important to understand the perspective of business of companies that "they are challenged by real difficulties of integrating societal issues into their organizational systems and structures" (Epstein, 1987; Epstein & Hanson 2006), while they continue CSE initiatives to achieve sustainability. Exploration of CSR within various companies can lead to an understanding of the industry and of the challenges which companies currently face in order to resolve persistent misconceptions.

## 7.5   CSR: Cycle of Life

From a managerial point of view, the ideology of social responsibility was released in the U.S. in the late 1800s from the tradition of industrial paternalism or philanthropy with foundation in the religious belief of the leaders of major companies such as Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller (Heald, 1970; Carroll, 2008). Contrary to the image received (Porter & Kramer, 2006), social responsibility has been shaped by business people themselves (Bowen, 1953; Frederick, 2006; Swanson, 2008).

To a large extent, this is a co-product of much deeper management professionalization (Abrams, 1951; Donham, 1927) which accompanied the gradual separation of corporate ownership from corporate control (Berle & Means, 1932). This separation has created both the need for a new category of "professional managers" to justify their social status in society, as well as the opportunity to make this in improved managerial care forms, without any other precedent in the past (Bowen 1953; Berle and Means, 1932; Friedman, 1970).

In the 1920s, social responsibility was most often addressed by managers in terms of stewardship and trusteeship, two questions inspired by the Protestant religion (Bowen, 1953; Carroll, 2008; Heald, 1970). Stewardship maintains that "those who own property have the duty of using and administering it, not exclusively for their own purpose, but in ways that will serve the needs of the whole society" while trusteeship confirms that "The owner is a trustee accountable to God and society" (Bowen 1953). According to Heald (1961, 1970), these two concepts have created ideological bases which formed the basis for the development of CSR in the USA until the 1960s, and the most important innovation of the 1950s and 1960s would be the formulation and dissemination of social responsibility itself. During about half a century, the CSR was subsequently addressed in the managerial world by getting different notions such as "public service", "stewardship", "trusteeship" and finally "social responsibility".

Between the 1950s and 1960s, social responsibility has turned from practice to theory and CSR has become a theoretical concept (Heald, 1970). This process has accelerated the pace of changes in the CSR. Howard R. Bowen is often regarded as the founder of "modern corporate social responsibility" (Carroll, 1999; Wood, 1991a, 1991b), after the publication of his book *The Social Responsibilities of Business Man* in 1953. Although the book put the institutional bases for economic analysis of social responsibility as a tool to regulate corporate behavior (Acquier, Gond, & Pasquero, 2011), academia has not brought more than just the definition "the obligations of businessmen to pursue those policies, to make those decisions, or to follow those lines of actions which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society". This first definition of social responsibility of business was the basis of a set of revisions and redefinitions.

As an ideology, social responsibility aims at increasing the legitimacy of the "great companies" as well as their management (Acquier & Gond, 2007; Moon, Kang, & Gond, 2010; Pasquero, 2005). The legitimacy of new companies was first put under question (Chandler, 1962, 1977). On one hand, corporate scandals which have raised public issues relating to corporate regulation have been strongly denounced (Sinclair, 1981) and which put public issues relating to corporate regulation (Markham, 2002). On the other hand, this uncontrolled development of the "hierarchy", an inherent characteristic of corporations as a form of organization, (Williamson, 1985) was perceived as a direct threat to the American democratic ideals (Miller & O'Leary, 1989). In this new context, the managers have begun to think about the perception of their activities by public opinion. Thus, there were created the first public relations departments (Heald, 1970), and along with them came the idea that large corporations have a duty to serve the public, and have referred to the notion of public service that corresponds to a first form of social responsibility (Toynbee, 1953).

CSR continued to change the shape, as several authors have proposed alternative conceptualizations to define the social phenomenon of CSR, such as the ability of social corporatist reaction, which in the 1970s focused on managing social problems (Frederick, 1978, 1986, 1987) or corporate social performance which aimed at integrating the concept of social responsibility (Carroll, 1979).

Conceptual changes were numerous in the last half-century, so anyone may wonder if can still talk about the same concept. This question does not receive, for three reasons, a simple answer.

First, the same concept and the corresponding acronym, CSR may refer to completely different elements: the definitions given by Bowen (1953) and Friedman (1970) refers to the social responsibility of businessmen, while the definition of Basu and Palazzo (2008) refers to corporate social responsibility.

Secondly, the creation of a new concept doesn't necessarily have aimed at replacing previous concepts, and its position between new and old concepts is not always clear. For example, Matten and Crane (2005) pointed out that corporate citizenship was described either as a component of the CSR, synonymous of CSR, or as an alternative to the CSR.

Thirdly, a few conceptual changes of duration seemed to have appeared in time, such as the tendency of CSR last definitions to borrow the vocabulary of complementary or neighbouring disciplines such as economics, the concept of "externality" (Crouch, 2006), political science, the concept of "corporate citizenship" (Bocean 2010; Crane, Matten, & Moon, 2008; Moon, 1995; Moon, Crane, & Matten, 2005; Pirvu (Gruescu) 2011).

Another notable change is the quasi-systematic use in the 1990s of the interested parties' concept to define CSR (Basu & Palazzo, 2008; Maignan 2001; Wood 1991a, 1991b). However, their review suggests that the definitions and concepts of CSR, old and new, share a few recurring and lasting features, such as the emphasis on activities to a greater or small extend illegal, and by focusing on the Corporation and/or its management as the main unit of analysis. However, the sequence of terms used to refer to social responsibility applied in practice, conceptual developments, changes of definition and rearranging of structures provide a complex image but a sense of confusion on the other hand (Garriga & Melé, 2004). Clarkson (1995), for example, claimed that CSP (corporate social performance—"a business organization's configuration of principles of social responsibility, processes of social responsiveness, and policies, programs, and observable outcomes as they relate to the firm's societal relationships", Wood, 1991a, 1991b), together with CSR1 (corporate social responsibility) and CSR2 (corporate social responsiveness—capacity of a company to respond to its environment) do not have a clear meaning and remain elusive constructions. A strategy to manage this complex image lies in the adoption of a long-term perspective on the sequence of conceptual structures of CSR, which are reminiscent of the structures of CSR issues reported by the companies (Chapple & Moon, 2005).

## 7.6 Perspectives

Since this chapter intention was to search for the life-cycle of CSR, it was important to look at the terms that it rooted from or were the results of. As such, some key issues in CSR development were outlined, for example corporate responsibility (CR), global sustainability, social responsibility, as well as some of the first definitions of CSR.

Next, the visions of CSR as a managerial idea, academic concept and from companies' perspective, and their features were briefly presented and discussed.

Following these issues, the CSR life-cycle was presented from its initiation as the ideology of social responsibility released in the U.S. in the late 1800s, to the terms of stewardship and trusteeship in the 1920s, going through its turn from practice to theory and theoretical concept between the 1950s and 1960s, to its continuous change in conceptual shape in 1970s, 1980s, 1990s up till the present day.

The CSR life-cycle and development have not been exhaustively treated in this chapter, due to numerous theories, definitions, concepts and terms created or expressed by various authors, practitioners or theorists, thereby giving an

opportunity for researchers to further look and have a thorough check into this aspect of the topic. In this view, this chapter can be considered as, at least providing a basis from which future research can be carried out. CSR has clearly developed as an academic and management concept. Demonstrating often its chameleonic character, its cycle of life suggests that CSR is in a continual state of change. The dynamism and the overlay and contextual character reflect its quality as a concept in question. Therefore, in recent years there have been many changes that critics and followers some 50 years ago would have found incompatible with what they considered to be hypothetical about CSR.

Two of these developments were represented, first of all, by the idea that CSR appears to reflect to some extent the compatibility of sociability with the success of a company.

Secondly, CSR seems to have become incorporated into the systems of national and international governance. Both conceptual developments are subject to discussion among those involved in CSR. From this perspective, any transformations of the concept could have an impact, taking into account the pro and against debates.

It is important to add that, despite its common core, CSR is also contextual and, thus, is based on the national traditions of the business society, reflecting the different institutional, legal and ethical traditions (Matten & Moon, 2008; Moon et al., 2010). However, traditions are interwoven where large corporations are transferring their operations and supply chains across borders. Moreover, the new sectorial challenges and even at the level of the company, must ensure also that each context in itself is dynamic. These trends will be, without a doubt, the subject of national and international CSR rearranging, taking into consideration that developments reflect new overlays and contexts. This should not be a source of despair, but rather a reason to recognise the fact that essentially, the contested concepts are attacked because they have value.

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