MAKING SENSE OF GLOBAL CUSTOMERS IN INTERNAL MNC NETWORK

Elina Pernu
Department of Marketing, Oulu Business School, University of Oulu,
P.O. Box 4600, 90014 University of Oulu, Finland
elina.pernu@oulu.fi

Abstract

This research explores how individuals make sense of the same customer in different units of supplier MNC and how supplier organization can manage its internal network in relation to these specific customers. The MNC is approached as internal network consisting of relationships between individuals, different functional units and geographical locations. The emerging question in this multinational context is who the customer actually is. Individual managers face the challenge of making sense of the customer in relation to their own organizational level, since customer can be seen and understood in multiple ways at different levels, depending on whether concentrating on individual, group or to organizational level.

This paper utilizes multilevel empirical data and thus is able to focus on the individual level sensemaking of global customer relationships in internal MNC network and also to approach organizational level by concentrating on the network management as an organizational level process. The primary qualitative data consist of several interviews done inside industrial MNC in multiple organizational levels and units. This research ties network management and individual sensemaking together as processes needed for managing global customer relationships.

Keywords: sensemaking, MNC, internal network, network management, global customers

A work-in-progress paper for the 27th IMP Conference
University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, August 31 - September 3, 2011

INTRODUCTION

Multinational corporations (MNCs) are organizationally complex multidimensional entities (Gupta, Govindarajan 2000, Ghoshal, Bartlett 1990) with multiple inter-unit relationships and can thus be described as a network of different units (Holm, Sharma 2006) or internal networks. These organizational networks consist of internal relationships between people, departments and different functional units (Ritter, Wilkinson & Johnston 2004). Holm, Johansson and Thilenius (1995) state that to properly understand the dynamics of MNC, there is a reason to study the operations of its different units and thus approach MNC as a network. While subsidiaries and headquarters are embedded in the host country context and institutions, they simultaneously form their own internal network (Dörrenbächer, Gammelgaard 2010).

Identifying key customers in MNCs has been seen as important strategic decision (Wilson, Weilbaker 2004). For MNCs, defining the global key customers is problematic, since different organizational and geographical units may perceive different customers more important than others. Still, management of certain corporate level customers is considered important. How to make sense of the customer in internal network of a MNC is challenging. The emerging question in this multinational context is who the customer actually is. Individual managers face the challenge of making sense of the customer in relation to their own organizational level, since customer can be seen and understood in multiple ways at different levels, depending on whether concentrating on individual, group or to organizational level. Möller (2010) note the need for managers to be able to make sense of their business environment, its dynamics and possible development plans. Sensemaking in a complex business network helps managers to understand their own position, as well as their available options for change (Henneberg, Naudé & Mouzas 2010). Therefore, concurring with Möller (2010), it is seen that the before mentioned issues together create the theoretical and managerial need for understanding how actors make sense of their network environments, how they try to influence the sense-making of other actors and through that shape their own network and behavior in it.

In addition to individual sensemaking, the question arises how the internal network can be managed in relation to those specific customers. Relationship and network management has been seen as key characteristics of firms (Ritter, Wilkinson & Johnston 2004). However, Rampersad, Quester and Troshani (2010) state that while the significance of networks has been recognized in several marketing research streams, to fully realize the potential benefits, more work on management of networks is needed. Ritter Wilkinson and Johnston (2004) see network management tasks as ongoing and interrelated by nature. They divide network management tasks by the location of relationship (internal vs. external) and the number of relationships (one vs. multiple). The focus in this research is on internal, cross-relational relationships, which Ritter et al. (2004) refer as “interfunctional coordination”.

This research focuses on different views of the global customer relationship in different organizational levels and how MNC can manage its internal network in relation of specific customer relationships. MNC is described as internal network consisting of different units, actors and levels. Different organizational levels affect and restrict the ways how customer is seen and how individuals in those levels can make sense of the customer. According to Henneberg, Naudé and Mouzas (2010) the issues of individual manager’s understanding of the business network have not been covered extensively by

research in business marketing. The purpose of this paper is to create a deeper understanding of MNC's global customer relationships. The aim is to find out *how individuals make sense of the same customer in different units of supplier MNC and how supplier organization can manage its internal network in relation to specific customers*. MNC consists of the headquarters and numerous of local units and therefore offer even more challenging environment for making sense of global customer relationships.

This research utilizes multilevel empirical data and thus is able to focus on the individual level sensemaking of global customer relationships in internal MNC network and also to approach the organizational level by concentrating on the network management as a corporate level process. In multilevel theories, the simultaneous examination how one level of analysis can influence and interact with other levels, can create understanding of the complex and changing organizational landscape (Drazin, Glynn & Kazanjian 1999). The IMP research tradition is utilized by adding their view of network management in MNC literature and discussing how managers perceive their surrounding business network and how they are able to manage in the network (Ritter, Wilkinson & Johnston 2004, see Henneberg, Naudé & Mouzas 2010).

NETWORK MANAGEMENT IN INTERNAL MNC NETWORK

Business network is a complex web of interdependent relationships within which individuals are embedded and operating in (Henneberg, Naudé & Mouzas 2010, Forsgren 2008, 108). Bearing in mind the multinational and dispersed nature of MNCs, it is natural to discuss also about MNC's internal network. Also terms as "interorganizational network" (Ghoshal, Bartlett 1990), "heterarchy" (Hedlund 1986) and "external and internal networks" (Dörrenbächer, Gammelgaard 2010) have been used to describe the relationships of MNC to its internal and external environment. As Ritter, Wilkinson and Johnston (2004) note a "firm itself is nothing more than a complex network of internal relationships among people, departments and functional units". Ritter and Gemünden (2003) in turn discuss multinationals as networks of quite independent players as they resemble more hierarchical networks than organizations. Discussing about organization as a network is relevant approach, since network perspective concentrates on relations and patterns of interactions and thus differs from the traditional perspectives in organizational studies, where the focus has been more on isolated actors and attributes (Brass et al. 2004). Ritter, Wilkinson and Johnston (2004) note that it's important to consider also intra-firm relations and thus extend the current network view to include also the internal network.

Theory development in network management stream has according to Rampersad, Quester and Troshani (2010) been shaped by a major debate on whether or not networks can be managed. The IMP tradition has distinguished between "managing of" and "management in" relationships and networks. Arguments in this debate differ based on researchers' views towards the ontological characteristics of networks and the levels of analysis adopted (Rampersad, Quester & Troshani 2010). There are varying opinions on the degree to which network management is possible (Rampersad, Quester & Troshani 2010). Achrol and Kotler (1999) distinguish between the 'network of organizations' and 'network organization' perspectives. "Network of organizations" perspective views networks as emergent, and at least somewhat unmanageable, whereas the "network organization" perspective sees nets intentional and more manageable. Internal MNC network can be seen representing "network organization". In this research it is seen that

the discussion on whether to “manage in network” vs. “manage of network” depends on the network and level of analysis in question. When acting in internal MNC network, in individual level, the focus is on “managing in”, and in organizational level, on “managing of” network of relationships between different business units. Rampersad, Quester and Troshani (2010) also suggest that different types of networks may require varying management solutions. All actors are simultaneously involved in the ongoing management of the network, which means that the resulting structure and performance of a network is created through their actions (Ritter, Wilkinson & Johnston 2004). Different relationship and network situations require different network management skills and competencies to handle the interactions happening in the relationships.

Most company’s relationships are interconnected with each other and any individual relationship can thus affect other relationships both positively and negatively – and according to Ritter (1999) this interconnectedness should be considered when company is developing and using its network. The interconnected and embedded nature of networks makes it possible to distinguish different levels of analysis, which is also recognized in previous literature (see e.g. Ritter, Gemünden 2003, Järvensivu, Möller 2009, Möller, Halinen 1999, Provan, Fish & Sydow 2007) Previous research both on relationships and networks as well as organizations, has pointed out the need to research these issues on different levels of analysis. For example, Möller and Halinen (1999) discuss about relationship, portfolio net and network levels of management. Ritter and Gemünden (2003) differentiate between interorganizational (i.e. interaction, individual relationship, similar relationships, net and network) and management levels of analysis (i.e. individual, group, organization and cluster). and Ritter, Wilkinson and Johnston (2004) discuss management in networks at the individual, group, or business units and firm level and see these levels interrelated. In organizational research, for example Brass et al. (2004) have identified interpersonal, interunit and interorganizational levels of analysis for analyzing organization

As firms are confronted with the management of the internal and external relationships, they are seldom in total control of all these relationships and are therefore subject to the control and influence of others within and around the relationship (Ritter, Wilkinson & Johnston 2004).This does not only apply to inter-organizational relationships but also to intra-organizational ones. Today’s trends such as rapid globalization, increase of network forms, technological complexity and knowledge intensity are producing more complex and dynamic environment, where network relationships are embedded into global and local environments (Möller 2010). Same can also be seen in network MNC where different units are located in geographically distant locations and multitude of technologically diversified products are developed inside the borders of single multinational.

INDIVIDUAL LEVEL SENSEMAKING IN MNC

In IMP tradition, there have been only a few researches focusing on sensemaking; studying sensemaking has been more prevalent in the research tradition of organizational behavior and strategic management (Henneberg, Naudé & Mouzas 2010). However, in recent IMP literature, sensemaking and network pictures (i.e. views of network held by participants of that network) and relationships have been linked – they have been seen as similar, but not as identical concepts (Colville, Pye 2010 see also Industrial Marketing

Management, Special Issue: Sense-Making and Management in Business Networks, 2010).

When individuals are confronted by ambiguous events, they try to make sense of them. As sense develops about the situation, it allows individual to act in some rational fashion – meaning that sensemaking is primary generator of individual action (Drazin, Glynn & Kazanjian 1999, Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld 2005). Individual's sensemaking is shaped by interactions with others engaged in similar situations and in multidimensional situations individual seeks out the interpretations of others and through these interactions, group level categorizations emerge (Drazin, Glynn & Kazanjian 1999). Even though shared group-level frames may develop, they can also differ across organization – even though two actors may share similar experiences, their sensemaking may differ and through that the resulting action (Drazin, Glynn & Kazanjian 1999). Drazin, Glynn and Kazanjian (1999) state that even though sensemaking might not be completely shared in organization, political compromise between opposing groups will nonetheless guide the behavior in organization. In this research, sensemaking is treated as an individual level activity (Weick 1995: 5-6), which involves turning circumstances into a situation that is comprehended explicitly in words and stimulates action (Weick et al. 2005). Sensemaking is about continuous refining of an emerging story (Weick et al. 2005). In MNCs, individuals create "stories" to better understand the global customers. These descriptions, or stories, do not represent the whole truth, but over time, they might describe the relationship with customers quite accurately. Also it should be noted that one particular story might be suitable description to one group, but prove to be implausible to another.

Sensemaking perspective has been connected to different levels of analysis in previous research (see Drazin, Glynn & Kazanjian 1999, Weick 1995). Henneberg et al. (2010) see that sensemaking in network context still needs further research, including the research connecting individual sensemaking to different levels of analysis. The choice of levels of analysis is central to development of any model; it affects the conceptual framework, research methods and locus of interest (Drazin, Glynn & Kazanjian 1999, Klein, Dansereau & Hall 1994). Sensemaking perspective enriches levels of analysis perspective with cross-level, systematic and embedded effects that may arise from different interpretations (Drazin, Glynn & Kazanjian 1999). Individual sensemaking in MNC is important and this importance can well be seen in relation to customer relationships, since in fractured organization, knowledge about customers is difficult to combine into organization-wide understanding. In network MNC, relevant pieces of customer knowledge are decentralized into multiple local settings and to various individual actors (see Lindkvist 2004). As Henneber, Naudé and Mouzas (2010) state "from the IMP perspective, a core requirement to understand any network is to understand the interaction of the parties within the network".

Firms interact with other organizations through their own internal network of interpersonal and cross-functional relationships (Ritter, Wilkinson & Johnston 2004). Customer relationships cannot be managed in isolation and thus a network perspective should be taken (Ritter 1999). Therefore, this research focuses on internal network management in relation to customers. The concept of network management is connected to different levels of management (Rampersad, Quester & Troshani 2010, Ritter 1999) as discussed in previous chapter Based on the previous theoretical discussions, the organizational level network management and individual level sensemaking are

connected in the internal network of MNC and seen guiding the global customer relationships of MNC (figure 1).

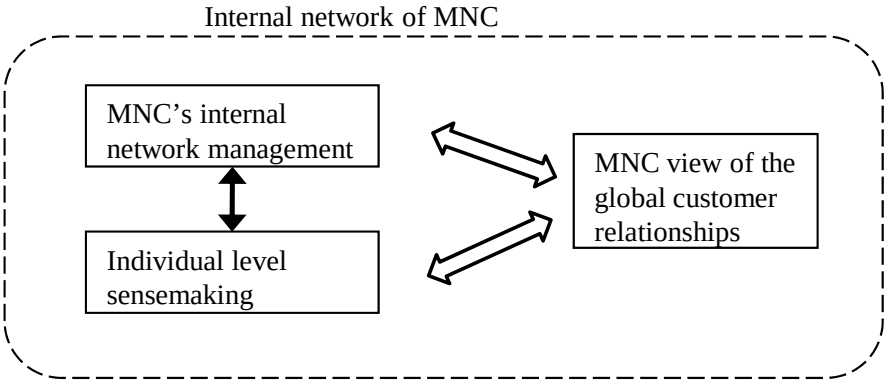

Figure 1. Network management and sensemaking in internal MNC network.

Internal network management in this context refers to organizational level aspiration to manage the different organizational units and levels to better respond the needs of global customer. Network management offers tools for sensemaking, which consists of the elements needed for individuals to form a picture of the customer relationship. In the other hand, the individual views and experiences of the customer form the overall understanding of the relationship and the ways how it should be managed. Together organizational level network management and individual level sensemaking create a MNC level view of the global customer relationships.

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative case study is utilized in this research since it offers the opportunity to address the complexity of studied phenomenon in its own context (Eriksson, Kovalainen 2008, 3). In this research the case study method is applied, since it can offer a valuable way of gaining knowledge in a cross-cultural setting (Marschan-Piekkari, Welch 2004, 7-8) and therefore it is also relevant for this research. A case study can be seen both as the process of learning and the product of learning (Ghauri 2004, 109). Qualitative research is also suitable for cross-cultural research since it offers deeper understanding and is less likely to have cultural bias or ethnocentric assumptions than traditional surveys. In this study the chosen methodology follows abductive research logic (Perry 1998, Dubois, Gadde 2002), which means that theories and empirical data take turns and together aims to develop the theory. The present study uses interviews, documentation and sketches and presentations collected from a provider of process technologies for the mining and metals industry as a primary empirical data. 20 interviews are done with the managers of the case company in different organizational units and levels. Multilevel approach is seen relevant, since organizations by nature are multilevel (Klein, Dansereau & Hall 1994) and therefore, when examining organizational phenomena, one naturally is encountered with level issues. The internal networks of the case company in relation to customer relationships are analyzed by concentrating on three customers, which all are big, metal producing concerns that have strategic importance to the case company. Together these interviews consist 28 hours and 34 minutes of recording. Interviews focus on the development of customer relationships, features of the relationships, individual sensemaking, cooperation between the companies and different units and shared projects. By analysing data on the internal networks in relation to three customer relationship of the case company, a better understanding of internal network

management and individual sensemaking of the global customer relationships can be created. Secondary data (namely 15 interviews with the case company) was collected by other researchers during the larger research project, in which this research is also connected. Data is also collected from written sources, namely from the web-pages of the company and its customers, brochures, project memos, as well as workshop materials and case-specific seminars. This secondary data was an important supplement and it was extensively used before the actual interviews to create a comprehensive understanding of the context and actual phenomenon.

ANALYSIS

This research focuses on the management of internal MNC network in relation to three specific customer relationships (figure 2). The MNC in question consist of three subsidiaries or divisions, which each include multiple geographical and technological units, and differ in their historical backgrounds and areas of specializations. The various geographical and product-based supplier units have relationships to numerous units of globally operating customers.

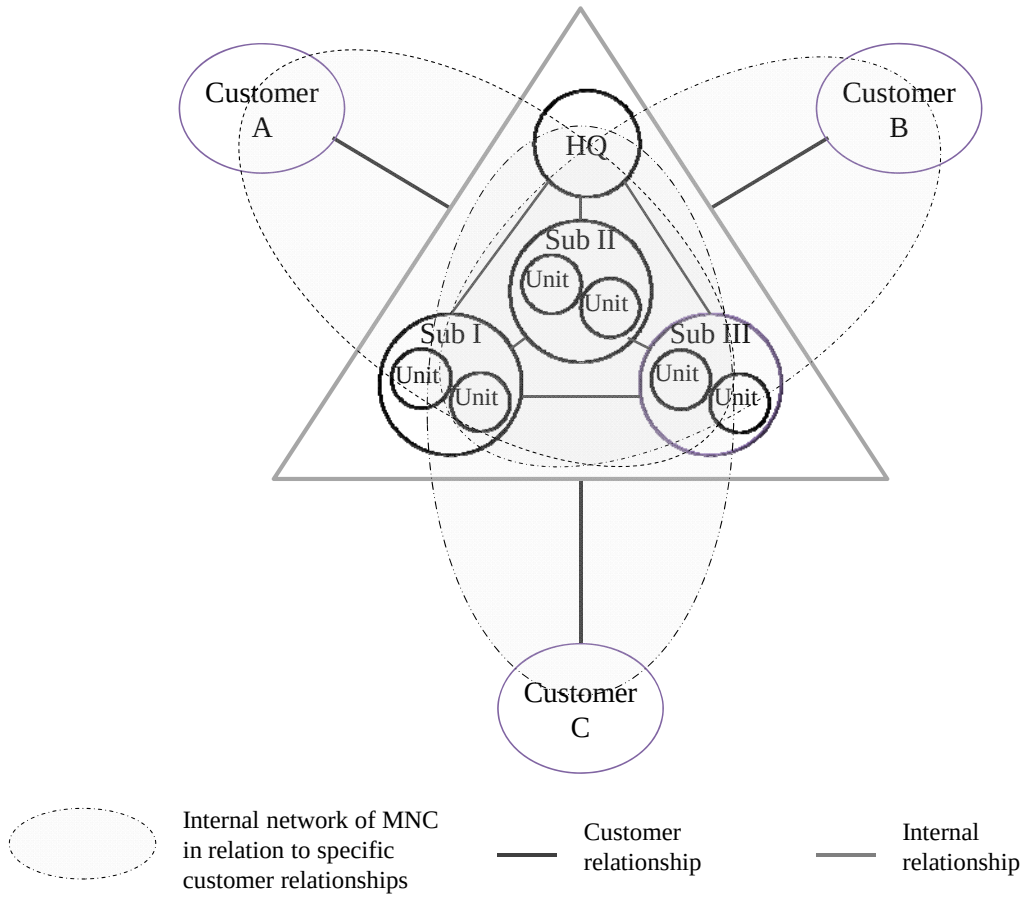

Figure 2. Research setting

Subsidiary I is geographically divided into smaller units, where Subsidiary II and III are divided based on different technological solutions. The case company's sales are organized through projects. Different projects are often implemented independently from each other and the project personnel is not a stable group of people. One or more units might have simultaneous projects with one customer unit. The change and development are studied, in principle, at the level of three supplier-customer relationships. However,

these relationships turn to networks due to the global subsidiary-based operating of both the supplier and its customers and involvement of various third parties in the projects. Understanding of the dynamic phenomenon is searched for through examination of the evolution of the relationships over time. All of the customers (namely customers A, B and C) are senior houses and steady customers to the case company. Customer A is mainly working in India, Zambia and Australia. The relationship with the customer A has started actively in 2003 and the customer has been experiencing high growth and expanding especially rapidly in 2003-2006. Customer B is focused in North and South America, Australia Pacific and Africa. It has had a long, steady relationship with Subsidiary I (from 1990s) of the case company and it is offering great potential for Subsidiary II (relationship started in 2006). Customer C is concentrated on South and Central America. The projects with this customer are not massive but they are all time constant and steady. The Subsidiary I has had a relationship with the customer C from 1980s and Subsidiary II from 2003. The table below lists the key differences of each subsidiary's relationship with customers, which in turn affect the internal network in question and thus require different kind of cooperation and network management between organizational units.

Table 1. Relationships between customers and different supplier subsidiaries

Customer A			
	Relationship started	**Importance**	**Relationship management**
Sub 1	2003	Low	Through key account manager
Sub 2	2005	High, more important to unit 1 than unit 2	Finland, also through India office and key account manager
Sub 3	Relationship between previous supplier and previous customer units from 1970s	High	Germany, role of India office growing, also through key account manager
Customer B			
	Relationship started	**Importance**	**Relationship management**
Sub 1	1990s, first contact through the companies that customer bought	High	Decentralized in local offices: Canada, Chile, Peru, Australia
Sub 2	2006	Medium	Centralized
Sub 3		Low	Not active, through Sub I if needed
Customer C			
	Relationship started	**Importance**	**Relationship management**
Sub 1	1980s	High	Canada, USA and through local office
Sub 2	2003	High	Through local office
Sub 3	Relationship with former supplier unit from 1980s	Low	Through local office

The relationship to customers differs between subsidiaries, because they are working with different technologies, with different size of projects and with different project time frames; these issues all affect the internal networking. Some of the subsidiaries have long relationship with the customers and see them as more important partners than others. Subsidiaries and relationships differ from each other also on their independence, for example, Subsidiary III has become part of the case company through acquisition as well as one unit of Customer A. The relationship between Customer A and Sub III has started even before they were part of their today's organization.

MNC's internal network management

The challenges inherent in MNC's internal network management can be seen from previous table 1. The complex nature of relationships creates the need for network management. From the table 1 it can also be seen which unit strives to manage or coordinate the internal network in relation to each specific customer. Internal network in relation to customer consist of all the units and individuals working with the customer – either directly or indirectly. The cooperation between subsidiaries varies and the working methods differ. The cooperation has improved over time, but still own interest goes over the organization's overall benefit. Created organization structure sometimes works as obstacle for internal networking and creates boundaries for cooperation.

> ”And that we are divided as we are now, we have been put to different divisions to take care of different offices -- We have created the problem ourselves. ” (Senior Vice President of Marketing Development)

The cooperation between different units offers possibilities for great potential and therefore, cooperation between subsidiaries in relation to customers naturally exists. For example, Subsidiary I acts as subcontractor to other subsidiaries and Subsidiary II operates as mediator between Customer A and Subsidiary I's office in South Africa. Mining technology project in Chile provides a successful example of cooperation between different units. As project was executed in Chile, Customer B's unit in Chile and Subsidiary I's office in Chile were involved in project. Subsidiary I did not have the needed technical expertise in Chile, hence Australian unit offered the technical support for sales process. Since units in North-America and Finland had good corporate level connections to Customer A's headquarter, they were also involved in selling.

As each subsidiary's relationships affect others, challenges are bound to exist. For example, Subsidiary III lost the sales with customer, because of the problems with Subsidiary II's project. The effect varies between different customers, since some of the customers are more centralized and some more decentralized in their actions:

> ”[Customer A] is really centralized, if one field or one delivery has problems, it quite easily affects the entire [Supplier-Customer A] relationship, because the investment projects are centralized in that organization. In other extreme, Customer B, if we have problems in African office or with African project, then it doesn't affect projects in other countries, since they have decentralized their own activities.” (President, Sub I)

Network management is needed for organization to have unified ways of action with customer. For example having unified terms of contract is needed when multiple supplier units are dealing with the same customer. Customer relationship can thus act as impulse for cross-divisional network management. Internal networking is not always so straightforward even inside a subsidiary; people might not know what other technology units are doing. It's good to note that also inside the organization, there are relationships that should be created, developed and taken care:

> “We have something to offer to each other, but maybe the yard is too big to cross sometimes – we should have more meetings together and get to know each other. That might me the message that knowing each others is the key before this [cooperation] starts properly.” (Vice President, Sub I)

Individual level sensemaking

In MNC, individual sensemaking happens in multiple levels and therefore, is tied to the particular organizational level and geographical unit in which individual in question belongs. The actions of individuals are seen to 'move' the relationship inside the supplier and affect the inter-unit and inter-firm relationships, which make individual sensemaking process a central focus in this research. Different subsidiaries, internal units, geographical locations and individuals have different views about customer relationships, which create the basis for individual sensemaking.

> "There is no single truth." (Senior Vice President of Marketing Development)

Even though in HQ-level, it is understood that views and experiences of customers differ, it might not be clear in lower organizational levels, where individuals' network positions restrict their view of the customer. Customer perceptions can also differ, since the customer in question might not always be the same. In case of global customers, which consist of multiple units, the subsidiaries and their units might be dealing with separate customer units. Previous experience a strong indicator of the attitude toward customer and individuals own experiences affect the view of the customer relationship that they posses. As relationships are formed from projects, the success or failure of individual projects guide the sensemaking of involved individuals. Also the nature of each subsidiary affects how relationships are taken care. Subsidiary I has many local customers and smaller projects, so the relationship is mainly taken care by local offices, whereas more global actors require more centralized management. Customer's preference also affects how internal network is managed. For example, Customer C prefers working through local office, whereas the relationship with Customer B is taken care more globally and through multiple levels. Also the degree of informal versus formal interactions with customer shapes individual's picture of the relationship. The amount of informal contacts to customer representatives varies and is typically connected to the amount by which individual feels he can affect the development of relationship or project.

Individual level connections to customer are seen important in unit-level, whereas headquarter also sees the need for including corporate level connections. For example, sales see that organizational structures are not so important; instead informal structures are needed more. It was also shown in interviews that in HQ level it is easier to see the wider picture; see the problems arising from lack of network and see the need for example to key account management (KAM) system. In unit level this understanding is not so obvious, so network management is more difficult to accept. Individual sensemaking is needed for accepting and recognizing the need for network management. Individuals represent their own unit and the sensemaking is tied to this level of analysis and environment. Key account manager can help sales by having a higher level contact to management and mediate information about the genuine status of the project. Without key account manager system with Customer A, most of the past problems would be still dominating and there would be less sales and connections. CRM and KAM are been seen as tools for internal network management. Customer A needs more active management, whereas Customer B can easily be contacted. Customer C is most dependent on close local level connections. These differences naturally affect on how internal network is managed in relation to that specific customer. With more challenging customers, HQ level support to key account manager is crucial.

MNC's view of the global customer relationships

MNC's view of the global customer relationship is constructed through multiple individual sensemaking pictures, organizational practices, past experiences and former and present projects. Typical individual who can build the shared view and strive to connect individual level understanding with organizational level network management is key account manager. As each customer relationship is unique, so are the created relationship pictures inside a MNC. Customers differ for example in their corporate values and thus desired ways of operation with customer diverge. For example, Customer A strives for buying the cheapest possible solution, where Customer B emphasizes good and reliable technological solutions. Customer C's philosophy is somewhere in between.

The contact levels to customers differ, which affects the level on which the network is managed and whether influence from individual sensemaking to network management level is stronger than vice versa. With Customer B, the contacts are to project, business unit and technology level; and only limited connections top management level. Top management contacts with Customers A and C are been seen as integral part of the culture and thus they are naturally existing. Contact level to Customer A varies from centralized to decentralized depending on customer's needs:

> "[Customer A] always tell us, oh, you talk to division head if you want to talk to us. Okey, the problem is -- when we want something from them, but when they want something from us, they are always consolidating the issue. -- They decentralize if they want to give, if they want to sign the contract with us, and they centralize on the issues we have with them." (President – Sub III)

CONCLUSIONS

This research focused on the MNC's perceptions of the customer and the connections between network management and individual sensemaking in internal MNC network. As Johnston (1981) state, researching a single firm cannot provide a throughout understanding of all the processes of business. In this research it is seen that treating a MNC, consisting of multiple different units, as a one single firm, will not reveal the underlying complexity and could lead to simple conclusions. As implied earlier by Drazin, Glynn and Kazanjian (1999) multilevel analysis and concentration on connections between different levels can evoke understanding of complex organizational phenomena. Since sensemaking evokes action, it is seen in this research as a way to manage customer relationships by shifting individual level understanding to organizational level. As the internal networks in relation to specific customers differ, network management needs to be different in each internal network related to specific customers. Even though individual and group level understandings of the customer differ, Drazin et al. (1999) state that political compromises are still done in organization and they thus guide the actions in organization. This study implies that key account manager can act as one organizational power connecting different views and levels together.

Customer specific differences in individual sensemaking and internal network management are significant. In this research it is seen that certain type of sensemaking is linked to certain customer experience. If customer was easily contacted through multiple levels, individual sensemaking was seen more strongly to guide corporate wide network management and to provide information to organizational level. However, if the customer required key account management and top management level contacts, network management was seen more to guide the sensemaking process of individuals. In this case network management should provide tools for sensemaking in order to help shape the individual views of the relationship.

REFERENCES

Achrol, R.S. & Kotler, P. 1999, "Marketing in the Network Economy", *Journal of Marketing,* vol. 63, no. 4, pp. 146-163.

Brass, D.J., Galaskiewicz, J., Greve, H.R. & Wenpin, T. 2004, "Taking stock of networks and organizations: a multilevel perspective", *Academy of Management Journal,* vol. 47, no. 6, pp. 795-817.

Colville, I. & Pye, A. 2010, "A sensemaking perspective on network pictures", *Industrial Marketing Management,* vol. 39, no. 3, pp. 372-380.

Dörrenbächer, C. & Gammelgaard, J. 2010, "Multinational corporations, inter-organizational networks and subsidiary charter removals", *Journal of World Business,* vol. 45, no. 3, pp. 206-216.

Drazin, R., Glynn, M.A. & Kazanjian, R.K. 1999, "Multilevel theorizing about creativity in organizations: A sensemaking perspective", *The Academy of Management Review,* vol. 24, no. 2, pp. 286-307.

Dubois, A. & Gadde, L. 2002, "Systematic combining: an abductive approach to case research", *Journal of Business Research,* vol. 55, no. 7, pp. 553-560.

Eriksson, P. & Kovalainen, P. 2008, *Qualitative methods in business research,* Sage, London.

Forsgren, M. 2008, *Theories of the multinational firm: a multidimensional creature in the global economy,* Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, UK.

Ghauri, P. 2004, "Designing and conducting case studies in international business research." in *Handbook of qualitative research methods for international business,* eds. R. Marschan-Piekkari & C. Welch, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, pp. 109-124.

Ghoshal, S. & Bartlett, C.A. 1990, "The Multinational Corporation as an Interorganizational Network", *Academy of Management.The Academy of Management Review,* vol. 15, no. 4, pp. 603-625.

Gupta, A.K. & Govindarajan, V. 2000, "Knowledge flows within multinational corporations", *Strategic Management Journal,* vol. 21, no. 4, pp. 473-496.

Hedlund, G. 1986, "The hypermodern MNC - a heterarchy?", *Human resource management,* vol. 25, no. 1, pp. 9-35.

Henneberg, S.C., Naudé, P. & Mouzas, S. 2010, "Sense-making and management in business networks — some observations, considerations, and a research agenda", *Industrial Marketing Management,* vol. 39, no. 3, pp. 355-360.

Holm, U., Johanson, J. & Thilenius, P. 1995, "Headquarters' knowledge of subsidiary network contexts in the multinational corporation", *International Studies of Management & Organization,* vol. 25, no. 1,2, pp. 97-119.

Holm, U. & Sharma, D.D. 2006, "Subsidiary marketing knowledge and strategic development of the multinational corporation", *Journal of International Management,* vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 47-66.

Järvensivu, T. & Möller, K. 2009, "Metatheory of network management: A contingency perspective", *Industrial Marketing Management,* vol. 38, no. 6, pp. 654-661.

Klein, K.J., Dansereau, F. & Hall, R.J. 1994, "Levels issues in theory development, data collection, and analysis", *Academy of Management.The Academy of Management Review,* vol. 19, no. 2, pp. 195.

Lindkvist, L. 2004, "Governing Project-based Firms: Promoting Market-like Processes within Hierarchies", *Journal of Management & Governance,* vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 3-25.

Marschan-Piekkari, R. & Welch, C. 2004, "Qualitative research methods in international business: the state of the art" in *Handbook of qualitative research methods for international business*, eds. R. Marschan-Piekkari & C. Welch, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, pp. 5-24.

Möller, K. 2010, "Sense-making and agenda construction in emerging business networks — How to direct radical innovation", *Industrial Marketing Management,* vol. 39, no. 3, pp. 361-371.

Möller, K.K. & Halinen, A. 1999, "Business Relationships and Networks:: Managerial Challenge of Network Era", *Industrial Marketing Management,* vol. 28, no. 5, pp. 413-427.

Perry, C. 1998, "Processes of a case study methodology for postgraduate research in marketing", *European Journal of Marketing,* vol. 32, no. 9/10, pp. 785.

Provan, K.G., Fish, A. & Sydow, J. 2007, "Interorganizational Networks at the Network Level: A Review of the Empirical Literature on Whole Networks", *Journal of Management,* vol. 33, no. 3, pp. 479-516.

Rampersad, G., Quester, P. & Troshani, I. 2010, "Managing innovation networks: Exploratory evidence from ICT, biotechnology and nanotechnology networks", *Industrial Marketing Management,* vol. 39, no. 5, pp. 793-805.

Ritter, T. 1999, "The Networking Company: Antecedents for Coping with Relationships and Networks Effectively", *Industrial Marketing Management,* vol. 28, no. 5, pp. 467-479.

Ritter, T. & Gemünden, H.G. 2003, "Interorganizational relationships and networks: An overview", *Journal of Business Research,* vol. 56, no. 9, pp. 691-697.

Ritter, T., Wilkinson, I.F. & Johnston, W.J. 2004, "Managing in complex business networks", *Industrial Marketing Management,* vol. 33, no. 3, pp. 175-183.

Weick, K.E. 1995, *Sensemaking in organizations,* Sage, Thousand Oaks (Calif.).

Weick, K.E., Sutcliffe, K.M. & Obstfeld, D. 2005, "Organizing and the Process of Sensemaking", *Organization Science,* vol. 16, no. 4, pp. 409-421.

Wilson, K. & Weilbaker, D. 2004, "Global Account Management: A Literature Based Conceptual Model", *Mid - American Journal of Business,* vol. 19, no. 1, pp. 13-21.