

# Reconsidering Corporate Responsibility by Using Dialectical Approach

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## Abstract

Recently, the question of responsibility (including Corporate Social Responsibility) has been the subject of increased interest and debate. Due to this, new orientations and conceptual proposals are required. Dialectical approach is well-grounded in the Western philosophy - exemplified e.g. by the Hegelian dialectics - although it is typical for inherent theories to stress antagonism, non-cooperativeness, and even enmity. Indeed, the Hegelian dialectics demonstrates real and objective conflicts, which take form between a particular state and its negation. Eventually, there will be a struggle and a clash in order to eliminate the prevalence of harmful contradictions. Hence, the opposite sides of the phenomenon that are studied are often separated and discussed on a disaggregate level.

Nevertheless, it can be assumed that the opposites (e.g. divergent and incompatible orientations in running CSR- related policies) are needed to understand more properly the phenomenon under consideration such as conflicting elements of the responsibility. One can even claim that all the entities come into existence by way of polarities. Presumably, the parts are meaningful only in their relations to the whole. The opposites as complements enable each other.

The major purpose of this conceptual paper is to discuss the potentiality of both perspectives of the dialectics in order to reveal the major features of harmonization and disharmonization. Although widely discussed and explicated in non-Western traditions (e.g. in Confucian and Daoist thinking), there is much space for theoretical articulation in explaining particularly the dialectics of harmonization. Contextually, the ambiguity of collective responsibility (such as CSR) is in focus. The contribution of this theoretical study is that it provides some new mindsets for understanding the contradictory nature of the collective responsibilities. On the other hand, the discussion may inspire the future attempts for explicating the harmonious co-existence of apparently opposite elements – such as the dimensions of the CSR- bound practices.

**Keywords:** Corporate responsibility, dialectical approaches, harmony and disharmony

Paper type: WIP- paper

## INTRODUCTION

Currently, the responsibility- related issues are a subject of incremental interest in the field of science but also in pragmatic decision-making. Generally speaking, the research concerning network- like phenomena with (collective) responsibility under consideration addresses an area of considerable contemporary interest. Indeed, as a practice and conceptualization, responsibility, if any, is currently under harsh debate. One cannot deny the fact that there is a tendency to increase the discussion of the diverse aspects of the policies and practices that are intended for running new and more responsible and sustainable strategies among many organisations.

We live in a complex and a wicked world. Due to this, there are forces which impede the positive intentions of human beings of doing good either individually or collectively. Many people (including the decision-makers) feel that we live in world that is (too) turbulent and vulnerable imbued by conflicting ambitions. At least we are told so. The actors, however, (whether human beings or organisations) want to live in a trustworthy world labelled by integrity and co-existence. The consolidation of controversies of the world is troublesome.

In this situation, emotions – such as compassion – can affect the issues of accountability. Indeed, responsibility as a conceptualization and practice should not only be approached by explicating the cognitive mind and rationality of the human beings. People want to be loved and cared. Welfare and well-being are of great importance for us. We all carry strong positive emotions, which we – more or less - are prepared to share with the others. Compassion can be a carrier of these aspirations. Satisfaction and the peace of the heart represent truly the tones of our inner emotions. Integrity, as mentioned, is strongly valued irrespective of cultural differences, though it seems to include something, which is contradictory to the positive aspirations. Probably, our own spheres (such as our own focal nets) do not provide enough security and feelings of safety for the personal attempts. Dissatisfaction, mistrust, incredulity and even fear among people can provide a good basis for doing business. Under these circumstances responsibility sells well. Due to future potential in terms of increasing revenues, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR including also related policies like Code of Conduct- manifestations) seeks a place in contemporary business strategies.

Actors are embedded in their networks with multiple relationships. The social networks influence us whether positively, negatively, or as often true – carrying both of the aspects. Responsibility is therefore a crucial element in understanding more properly not just the interorganisational but also interpersonal issues. In all, discussion on responsibility must include the consideration of contrasts.

## OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of this conceptual study is to expand the discussion on responsibility by exploiting the relevance of the dialectical approaches. The task is accomplished theoretically by comparing two dialectical methods. Scholarly, the discussion on dialectics (whether representing dialectics of harmony or disharmony) provides a broad framework for the discussion on responsibility. Hence, the twoness (apparent bipolarities – even opposites - in one entity that is under consideration) must also be in focus.

The theories which are scrutinized in this study represent both Western (occidental) and non-Western (represented by Asian philosophical paradigms) thinking. It must be remembered, however, that a simple and monolith conceptualization of Asia as a one geographical entity can be subject to over-simplification as there is abundance of different subcultures in the area. Despite the divergent cultural aspirations, there is probably no cultural incongruity – at least as related to some ontological assumptions prevalent in most Asian cultures.

### ON CSR AND TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE- MODEL

Currently, Corporate (Social) Responsibility (C(S)R), its content, and purpose is subject to intense debate and discussion (see e.g. Fleming and Jones 2013). According to World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD 2014), CSR is *‘the continuing commitment by business to contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as the community and society at large’*. The pillars – as they define three major dimensions – are economic growth, ecological balance, and social progress.

The abovementioned themes can be seen in the following model providing a basis for discussion on CSR.

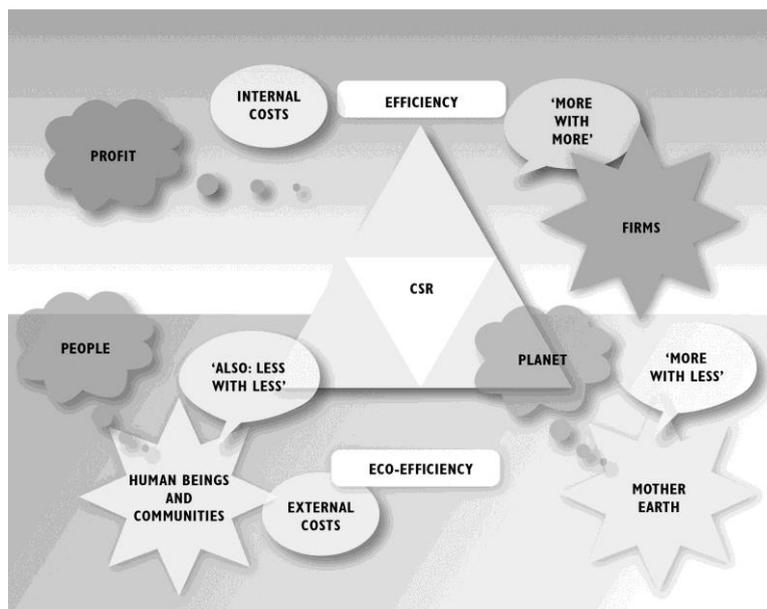


Figure 1. The Ideal TBL- model

The visual presentation is based on the initial explanation as introduced by Elkington (1998). The depiction simultaneously considers (and aims at balancing) economic, environmental and social goals. This triple bottom line (TBL) model suggests that at the intersection of social, environmental and economic performance (the triangle area), there are activities that organisations can engage in which *‘not only positively affect the natural environment and society, but which also result in long-term economic benefits and competitive advantage for the firm’* (Carter and Rogers 2008, 365).

In Fig. 1, the term eco-efficiency was introduced by the WBCSD to describe a desired scenario, in which more (products, services) is/are produced with few(er) resources. According to WBCSD, eco-efficiency is a management philosophy, which encourages a business to search improvements that yield parallel economic benefits. Consequently, this could mean less harmful negative impact on the environment and people.

WBCSD has listed some broad activities for this initiative. Reducing the consumption of resources, reducing the impact on nature, and increasing service value are the major guidelines for companies which seek for more eco-efficient practices. One way to estimate the degree of eco-efficiency is to calculate the ratio of output (e.g. the value of services) divided by the input (the sum of resources). Hence, it combines economic creation (value-added) with ecological destruction. One must remember that the value proposal has a different connotation depending on application area: value for the customer (a method for increasing the economic performance of the providers vs. value for the communities).

CSR encompasses not only these three dimensions but can include also ethical, legal and other discretionary responsibilities. One potential ingredient, ethics, in turn, is more related to moral judgments and behaviour (of actors or groups of them). Indeed, the *moral* arguments (paying attention to the needs and wants of the stakeholders) for companies to consider more carefully CSR (Crane and Matten 2007, 48) can be listed as follows:

- ✓ corporations cause social problems (including e.g. pollution and harmful emissions). They have, therefore, a responsibility to solve these.
- ✓ as powerful social actors, with recourse to substantial resources, companies should use their power and resources responsibly in society.
- ✓ all corporate activities have social impacts (of one sort or another). Hence, corporate activities cannot escape responsibility for those (whether they are positive or negative).
- ✓ corporations rely on the contribution of a much wider set of constituencies – rather than just shareholders. They have a duty to take into account their interests and goals as well as those of shareholders and communities.

In addition to moral arguments, firms as actors tend to pursue CSR quite differently for various other reasons as well. For some firms CSR is a strategic weapon for maintaining and/or increasing the current profits or provides a basis for innovations (see e.g. Nidumolu *et al.* 2009). Then they convert the doable means they have for profit-increasing purposes. Moreover, CSR can be used for dealing with the vulnerabilities and risks. Philanthropy and donations are some operational activities that are associated with the practice when companies want to go beyond the conventional compliance.

In spite of its popularity in contemporary business discussion and rhetoric regarding both the content and its implementation, CSR has generated criticism as well. The primary argumentation against CSR is that a company's major purpose is - always and unconditionally - to maximise profits and subsequently transfer enough high returns to the shareholders. The other aspects of triple bottom line - people and planet – must be subordinate to the major objective of the firm. Hence, the trade-off between the economic efficiency of a firm and peoples welfare (the stakeholders perspective) is - probably - impossible to solve adequately because companies are obliged under all circumstances to reach their financial targets; '... *an executive's commitment to CSR is inevitably circumscribed by profitability*' as Scott (2007, 35) puts it.

Despite some minor attempts made by the firms with their CSR- related policies, there is an ongoing unsolved dilemma between the interests of the shareholders and stakeholders. It has been suggested that CSR is - more or less - a cover up- story expressing deliberate distraction than a real strategy (more critics on CSR see e.g. Fleming and Jones 2013). Porter and Kramer 2011 introduced Creating Shared Value (CSV) concept to challenge the premises of the classical neoliberalism and endless greediness for higher profits among business enterprises. There is a crucial need to challenge the classical economic models thus providing a basis for new capitalism even. Nevertheless, a critical question must be uncovered before more in-depth analysis: for whom the potential benefits and good is created in running business operations: for the business, for the people, or for the environment – or can the good (value, utility) be divided somehow (though not equally) for all as presumed according to TBL- model. Hence, the fundamental problem - *cui bono* - needs careful attention.

### ONENESS, TWONESS, AND DUALISM

As already mentioned in previous subchapter, there seems to be a discrepancy between the different elements of TBL- model (as a representation of the reality). The one – a model – which integrates the three major dimensions – is an entity which is probably imbued by some tensions caused by the orientations and disagreements. On the other hand, it can be a source for deeper analytical matters and interest.

Indeed, often at the embryonic stage in conducting scientific research, there may be a need for splitting up the phenomenon (in the beginning the ‘one’ or its symbol) to certain parts (looking for the internal conformities; the breaking) and then for categorizing them (rediscovery of the fragments; searching for the internal coherence). This is necessary, as the point of departure is often the one – the phenomenon or an object depicted e.g. with the help of the model that needs to be studied. Inevitably, the basic cognitive process (reflecting the use of a scientific and rational method) is that of categorization, which refers to conscious analytical stages (often sequential) of recognizing the essence of what is studied and its differentiation. This is done to increase the deep(er) understanding of the object that is in focus; actually its internal coherence in relation to other phenomenon.

The simplest form of this method is the use of two distinct categories. This means that the study object (e.g. its appearance, character, or quality) is conceptually divided into two parts. Using dichotomies is actually a procedure of creating a sharp distinction, in which the whole (the oneness) is divided into two distinctive parts. The divided parts are first (analytically) separated and then isolated and there should not be any overlapping with the segregated qualities of an object. Hence, the qualities are mutually exclusive. Subsequently, the two distinctive categories create their own entities and qualities expressing the prevalence of dichotomy.

In linguistics and semiotics, the dichotomy is associated with binary opposites. Indeed, a binary system is a dyadic constellation, a pair of related concepts, that are opposite in meaning. Finally, in this way of thinking, there is either a contradiction (or complementarities) at least related to basic terms that are used.

The binary opposites can be used in categorizing the objects though a clear dualism generates, more or less, a simplified worldview of the issues under consideration. In addition, the idea of binary opposites can be a carrier of even a larger system. In so called Saussurean theory (according to de Saussure; a representative of structuralism in linguistics) a *binary opposition* is seen as a *fundamental organizer*, not just of simple analytical attempts, but also of human philosophy, language, and even culture (see e.g. Harris in de Saussure 2000).

## CLASSIFYING THE DIALECTICAL APPROACHES

The dialectics or dialectical examination can provide a basis for understanding deeply the bipolarities of the phenomenon. This means that simultaneously a ‘thing’ is both prevalent and not (this approach is discussed more deeply e.g. in Nikkanen 2013, 27-31). Actually the dialectics *per se* can refer to two distinct approaches: the dialectics of disharmony and disharmony. Dialectical approach (categorized rather as dialectics of disharmony) is well-grounded in the Western philosophy (exemplified e.g. by the Hegelian dialectics) although it is typical for inherent theories to stress antagonism, non-cooperativeness, and even enmity. The opposite sides of the phenomenon that are studied are separated and must be discussed on a disaggregate level. The philosophy of Hegel is widely discussed in various sources and hence excluded in this study (more on Hegelian thinking see e.g. Burbidge 2008; also Nikkanen 2005).

In contrast to the western tradition, Chinese philosophy often stresses the need for balance between different, even distant topics (e.g. man and nature). Generally speaking, this encourages the virtue of magnanimity - a feature that is highly appreciated in this cultural context. This implies *inter alia* that actors must defuse complicated contradictions. The tensions between the things (the dialectical confrontation) must be released somehow, as they are not accepted. Though Chinese philosophy places considerable emphasis on harmony, there are some variations and different interpretations of this concept. Basically, the Chinese philosophy is well-equipped to confront and examine the concepts of harmony (and conflict). Hence, the term harmony must be associated with conflict in order to go on with in-depth analysis. Two views and foundational schools are probably the most notable in the discussion influencing Chinese thought: Confucianism and Daoism. Presumably, these views stem from the same philosophical roots (‘ancient cosmological experience’) emphasising their philosophical and historical proximity.

The well-known yin-yang- constellation (representing Confucian thought) is actually based on the search for harmony as these terms can be seen as different and contrasting aspects of balance. As a principle, this means that there are always two opposite, but complementary forces or momenta in the process of change indicating the female and male aspects (Cheng 2006, 28). The other principles (as discussed in Yijing; Book of Changes) are in conjunction with expression of reality (the Dao or the Way; the Way is largely used in many other oriental philosophies as well; see e.g. Eväsoja 2011, 16), which encompasses e.g. Earth and Heaven, and which is both a process of change and an ordered structure. The Dao as manifestation is crucial as it is the source and origin of all momenta, but also the fountainhead of all polarities. (Cheng 1997). Moreover, the difference (and differentiation) of things are actually manifestations of the interaction of the opposite forces – the yin and yang. On their attempts to understand the dynamics of change, humans can conform to its principles in their conduct. Finally, they can also achieve an all-comprehensive goodness in the world (Cheng 1997). The imperfections caused by human’s failures to understand the reality of change. Moreover, in this situation humans are also incapable in harmonising the world.

Hence, it is important to establish (conceptually, pragmatically) an appropriate relationship between two sets of opposite forces. The knowledge of how these contrasting forces can bring them eventually into balance expresses the depth of correlative thinking. In other words, things *begin* with harmony but they also *end* in harmony. All the imperfections (like conflicts) are regarded as misconceived due to incomplete sub-process of the interaction of (bi)polarities. The tension in the interaction is not resulted if the opposites are allowed to proceed in their inherent simplicity. Despite the differences, the Confucians and Daoists have philosophically lot of in common. In both of the explanations harmony is explicitly recognised; the differences and conflicts have '*no ontological ultimacy*' as Chenc (1997) claims. In fact they complete a state of harmony. From personal point of view, humans can overcome conflicts by developing their own understanding.

Generally speaking, it is quite difficult to identify precisely the major principles of Chinese dialectical epistemology. To some extent the contents have been found out but the major characteristics have seldom explicitly theoretized (Peng and Nisbett 1996, 6). The next discussion aims at depicting some of basic assumptions of the dialectical thinking. It should be remembered, however, that under the Chinese tradition a multitude of concepts exist and the articulation is highly flexible, with a multiplicity of meanings and functions. It is also worth questioning, how well the western (modern but still conventional) scientific methodology (involving high analytical rationality, decomposition and deconstruction) is suitable for understanding *truly* the logic of e.g. Chinese thinking (including e.g. explicit assumption of persons own mental and spiritual development for gaining more knowledge). The lifelong learning principle has totally different connotation in China than it has in the western world (Eväsoja 2001). Hence, a demarcation line can be drawn to separate the analytic thinking form the Confucian dynamism, in which opposites complement each other and which relies on the use of synthetic and contemplative thinking (on the way to the discovery of real selfhood; Eväsoja 2011, 16).

Consolidating the earlier discussion on the Confucian and Daoist metaphysics, a unified characterization can be suggested expressing a common dialectics. The dialectics of harmonization can be depicted as follows (Chenc 1997; also Peng and Nisbett 1996, 7):

- ✓ all things come into existence by way of polarities and relativities
- ✓ anything regarded in isolation is distorted because parts are meaningful only in their relations to the whole (compare to Miike 2002, 6 as he claims that in so called 'Asiacentric' thinking the ontological assumption is that everyone and everything are interrelated across space and time)
- ✓ polarities at the same time contain relativities, opposition, complementation, and mutual generation; nothing is isolated and independent, but everything is connected
- ✓ all differences and distinctions of things are generated by (and explained by) polarities of principles, forces, and aspects; because change is constant also a contradiction is constant (hence, not anything which leads first to clash and then to some form of synthesis and/or isolation as assumed in western thinking)
- ✓ polarities specifically produce the unlimited creativity of life, a process of return, and the mutual transformability of things, as well as reversion
- ✓ conflicts can be resolved by locating a relevant framework of polarities and their generative relationships in which the ultimate reality of oneness and the ontological equality of all things can be asserted, and
- ✓ humans can relate to and discover ways of resolving conflict through understanding reality – and themselves.

The Hegelian dialectics, correspondingly, demonstrates real and objective conflicts, which take form between a state and its negation. This implies e.g. antagonism, enmity and non-cooperativeness (Chenc 1997). The whole must be realized as the limit of dialectical progression. Finally, (at least in dialectical materialism according to western thinkers), there will be a struggle and a clash in order to eliminate the harmful contradictions. This leads to the situation in which the polarities must be discussed on disaggregate level. The polarities are isolated breaking the whole (the one). The result is twoness without any identifiable polarities. As noted they are, however, sources of creativity. In a disaggregate model, there are no contradictions but on the other hand, there is no vitality for triggering the progress.

The following Figure 2 depicts the differences between these two diverse orientations (adapted from Nikkanen 2013a, 38; see also Nikkanen 2013b).

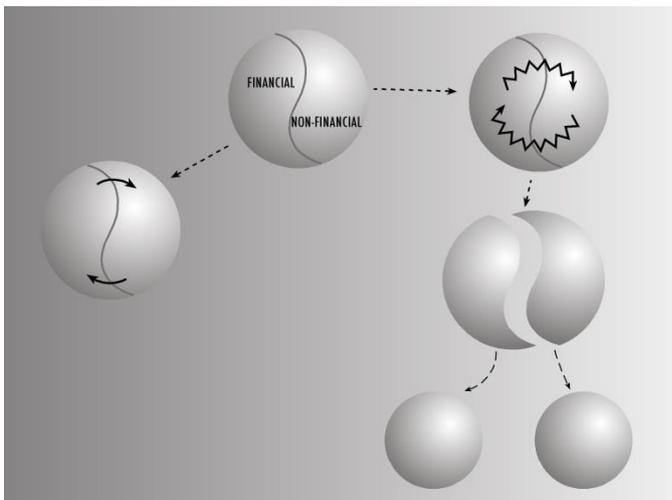


Figure 2. Contrasting Dialectics of Harmonisation ('oneness') and Dialectics of Disharmonisation ('twoness')

To wrap up the discussion, it can be claimed that the opposites (also including the stakeholder view vs. stakeholder view) are needed to understand more properly the 'things' such like conflicting elements of the responsibility. One can even claim that all the things come into existence only by way of polarities. As already discussed, the dialectics of harmony is widely applied in non-western philosophical traditions (see e.g. Chenc 1997 for more discussion), but not properly analysed or understood in occidental science. Therefore, the proposal that parts - even the opposites - are only meaningful only in their relations to the whole is worth examined. As regarding to networks, Miike (2002) argues that under Asian traditions the explanations – including how the self is perceived – is more deeply rooted to human relationships than just to a sense of individual ego. Would it be so that in non-western traditions there are more 'we'- networks (of responsibility *inter alia*) with strong demarcation line between the 'we' and the 'others' (method of exclusion is presumable typical in the western way of thinking)? Strong – or too straightforward - dualistic categorization (using two instead of one) can be a basis for all kind of discrimination in terms of discussing the various attributes of responsibility.

## CLOSING REMARKS

*'harmony always exists in relationships'* (Miike 2003, 6 discussing the Asian paradigms for harmony)

Within the western economic framework of neoliberalism, the actors (organisations, individual persons, members in the net) are looking only for their own interests very selfishly. There is no real space or options for fulfilling other ambitions. Despite rhetoric, the financial and non-financial objectives of business stay too often separate. There is no harmony between the opposites but rather a disharmony expressing the prevalence of dialectics of disharmony. By addressing the connectedness and relationships, dialectics of harmony could provide a more stable basis for understanding the conformities and discrepancies in CSR- related policies. Discussion on bipolarities (financial vs. non-financial objectives of the firm, efficiency vs. eco-efficiency) can create a solid ground for understanding and subsequent analysis - not impeding it. As related to the Fig. 1, the discussion indicates that there is an apparent need to re-draw the ideal and unrealistic depiction. The new model – as an expression of the real world and the ambitions of the actors – is probably inclining the reality by exposing the garish imbalance between the dimensions of TBL-model with no real and harmonious co-existence of the issues under consideration. Subsequently, the result is a clear one: a state of disharmony in which there is a dominance of one dimension (the financial side fulfilling the needs of the shareholders) over the others (non-financial ones).

It is still worth discussing how responsible firms truly are willing to be? Under the assumption of a profit maximising company, a single firm wants to increase its profit level e.g. with a positive image achieved through more responsible activities. This is obviously the major motivation to be more responsible. Increased reputation provides the firm with increased visibility which later increases the firm's social license to operate in society (Bhattacharyya, 2010). The other major reason is related to trust: a more responsible image of a firm influences the other actors in the network to behave in the same, trustworthy way. The proactors and/or reactors can truly rely on the initiatives and practices conducted by the others. This may indicate that the disharmonious situation is probably still prevalent in many companies.

In creating more competitive strategies, firms are more likely to focus on their core capabilities and competencies. Hence, they are not willing to cope with issues which are not related to their primary tasks. Under these circumstances, it is appropriate to ask to what extent are they ready to concentrate on the activities which are beyond their core business areas - especially if these activities do not sufficiently provide any clear options for increasing profitability. It is, however, often very difficult to quantify these benefits caused by a better image. Despite the fact that many scholars defend the long-term benefits of CSR (e.g. stronger competitive advantage, positive development of profits), there have not been enough studies yet, which could explicate the true success of these strategies. There is still quite a small quantity of research work in this field with limited amount of retrospective data.

It is also worth discussing to what extent even the concepts created to understand human motivation and purposes – particularly responsibility - are appropriate in the case of organisations and firms. Is there an option for misunderstanding if e.g. the theoretical discussion on responsible behaviour of human beings is transferred to business context in too liberal a manner? Milton Friedman, when strongly arguing his viewpoint for social responsibility (shared still today by many practitioners), says that *'a corporation is an artificial person and in this sense may have artificial responsibilities'* (Friedman 1970, 4). What are the consequences for analytical attempts, if one cannot link properly human beings and their organisations? Unlike the claims of some scholars, it can be so that what is (or ought to be) typical of people is not typical for firms. Individual responsibility is - if not totally similar - very close to collective responsibility and can be used to describe the collective behaviour of business actors as well but only in a limited manner. Are the metaphors that are introduced and employed in analysis truly relevant? Is the harmony between the conflicting elements in the TBL- model a pure illusion?

The questions mentioned are essential for modern network approach, as it is so strongly rooted to sociological sciences and their theoretical articulation. Network approaches (indeed, there are many of them) employ the idea of metaphorical thinking. Hence, the analysis of the metatheories/y and the major ontological concepts is a prerequisite. Despite the influential benefits provided by metaphorical thinking, it must be claimed that a chosen metaphor or an illustration of it (compare to Fig. 1) *hides as much it reveals*. In this sense e.g. discussion of collective responsibility carried out by human actors' may not be valid for understanding the conformities of actors in business networks. Probably, the 'interpersonal' of networks has its appearance and content in a different way than the 'interorganisational' that is studied.

Instead of paying attention only to organisations, the current debate obviously, although not explicitly, is focused on individual actors as well. However, these attempts at explanation pose difficulties in understanding the topic of free will, which is presumed to be in the essence of human behaviour. Individual responsibility can be characterised by free will in contrast to collective responsibility, which is constrained by different things such as expectations created by the others and contractual ties. This free will of single human beings can be seen in collective behaviour as well reducing - probably - the interest in common articulation. Scott (2007, 32) notes that *'in a society whose members increasingly "look to themselves", each stakeholder will tend to support his or her immediate interests, making meaningful consultation difficult'*. In this sense, community members represent different worldviews and interests, and they also provide different content for responsibility. Some network participants may disregard environmental issues (more or less), whereas others feel that these issues should be prioritized in decision-making. Therefore, it is very difficult to handle and analyse these entities as a common unified entity with clear common will. It does not provide a valid point of departure for subsequent research work either. Is responsibility - more or less - a bundle of ambiguous and equivocal expressions typical of contemporary strategic thinking but with no true empirical nor theoretical relevance? Hence, it is very difficult to grasp these issues.

Finally - and as already noted - CSR as a purpose to increase good and welfare for stakeholders is not actually a new concept. One cannot deny the fact that the novelty of this strategy is probably not adequate. Companies have always - more or less - been involved in voluntary practices, which create more welfare for the people they are *truly* interested in. It is quite obvious that in the past, numerous firms were even keener on practising and implementing these positive policies than they are today.

In other words, the current interest and measures among many players for running CSR-related policies do not even achieve the levels of past. Therefore, the contribution of corporate responsibility - at least in historical perspective - can only be modest and limited. Certainly, all the attempts to integrate CSR policies in strategies are positive if the inherent measures are more than nothing, but for many firms it is still a long and troublesome road to take.

The western managers (and more likely the actors in other parts of the world as well) feel that CSR can be managed. In short, they would like to command, and control not just the net(work)s, but also Mother Earth. Managerially, this requires the use of multiple categories for governance, which ultimately leads first to conceptual and then to pragmatism. In western managerial thinking the one becomes two – or more (forgetting the idea of ‘atomos’ – something which is not divisible – as suggested by ancient Greek scholars). In order to avoid the logical and operational dilemmas (dealing with the coherent entities under consideration), in western way of thinking the things (such as contradictions) are separated, isolated and then managed (or analysed). Philosophically, this is also to ensure the conformity of the law of the non-contradiction. As mentioned, under Asian traditions the fundamental question is how to achieve a harmonious relationship with everything in the world (see e.g. Miike 2002, 8) and not to find practices to control everything and everyone (as presumed e.g. in CSR- policies). Probably, there is need to change the mental schemes the western people tend to have. The non-western traditions can be carriers in creating new insights for actors in their practices and intentions for doing something beneficial for all – and not just for shareholders. This requires that the people in the western world must abdicate their ‘ego-centered’ models (we vs. the others) of communication and behaviour. The new mental schemes encourage connectedness and even spiritual liberation (see eg. Miike 2003).

In the world of imperfections, caused by the human beings as they are not capable in creating harmony, more attempts are required to find the balance between the opposites and tensions. Indeed, dialectics of harmony is required as it’s not a neutral option to be more responsible and sustainable, but rather ‘vital for..(our) survival....’ (Miike 2002,7). Jensen (1992 as quoted by Miike 2002, 7) nicely highlights the imperatives the actors are currently embracing by saying that

*‘harmony, achieving oneness with other human beings, and indeed with nature and all of life, is a historic **summum bonum**, a central value to cherish.’*

With the help of oneness, we will not just see or understand responsibilities, but we are more capable of facing it even in a more comprehensive manner. Hence, the harmony proving a balanced worldview to consider the reality is not just a question of cognition, but conation as well. The acts are not possible without interpersonal emotions just as is the case with compassion. Finally, I suppose, the world we live in is unified as there is just the one.

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