

Clara My Lernborg

# ORGANISING RESPONSIBILITY IN THE SWEDISH FASHION AND TEXTILE MARKET



## ORGANISING RESPONSIBILITY IN THE SWEDISH FASHION AND TEXTILE MARKET

During the past decades, the role and the perceived responsibility of business in society has shifted. This has been manifested in the translation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices in most markets. However, the range of responsibility issues appears never ending and a wide number of different organising attempts and forms have appeared.

The research question posed in this thesis is: "How is responsibility framed and organised in the markets?" In order to investigate, this thesis draws upon case studies of initiatives that constitute attempts at organising responsibility in the Swedish fashion and textile market: labour rights and water use.

It is clear that there is a struggle between different market actors to establish a decided order of responsibility. It is argued in this thesis that the business sector has responded by attempting to create its own responsibility order, ultimately, one in which the boundaries of responsibility are defined by the business case for CSR. However, an active role of government in framing and supporting this organising is here identified.

Partial organising is recognised and argued to be a key facet of such organising. This entails that one or several of the following organisational elements are used to this end: membership, hierarchy, rules, monitoring, and sanctioning. With shifting organising practices of responsibility, the dynamics of elements in partial organising are especially explored in this study. The important and dynamic role of membership in this organising, at the individual and organisational level, is particularly highlighted.



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Clara My Lernborg

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*To my family*





# Foreword

This volume is the result of a research project carried out at the Department of Marketing and Strategy at the Stockholm School of Economics (SSE).

This volume is submitted as a doctoral thesis at SSE. In keeping with the policies of SSE, the author has been entirely free to conduct and present her research in the manner of her choosing as an expression of her own ideas.

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All my life I have been an avid reader. Stereotypically, my mother used to warn me that I would ruin my eyes when reading in the dark. Perhaps it was this insatiability that planted the idea to do a doctorate: to sift through vast expanses of knowledge. A PhD education requires, and allows, reading and excursing into the depths of an academic ocean of research. Possibly the abstracts and papers referenced herein do not seem as exciting to my inner seven-year old as Laura Ingalls Wilder's and Lewis Carroll's epic tales

once did. But I digress. Nevertheless, they are, to the eyes of this researcher. However, I must admit that perhaps, for now, I am replete with reading.

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*Stockholm the 4<sup>th</sup> of March 2019*

*Clara My Lernborg*



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# Chapter 1

## The Weight of Water: Organising Responsibility in the Swedish Fashion and Textile Market

A polluted river, with colors of the latest world-wide fashion. Huge piles of sludge at dyeing and printing units; women and children queuing up to collect their daily drinking water from tankers because piped water is too dirty to drink; farmers protesting about their land and water being polluted by dirty water, and water shortages.

*Andersson, in Andersson & Bergkvist, 2016, p. 20*

### 1.1 Organising for Responsibility

In matters of responsibility and sustainability<sup>1</sup>, gloom and doom appears a common sentiment with regard to the possibilities of actors organising it

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<sup>1</sup> As will be presented in this thesis, there are numerous labels and concepts in the field of CSR or sustainability. These two are sometimes used interchangeably. However, when referring to responsibility, it relates mainly to responsibility for sustainable supply chain practices.

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and saving our common future. Land and water conflicts are no longer a fear; they are an increasing reality. Growing inequality of wealth, social, and environmental externalities of production raise critical questions about how responsibility for sustainability issues should be organised across state borders. What roles and responsibilities corporate actors could or should take in this post-national constellation era is up for discussion, as well as the way in which this could be accomplished. What is clear is that society's claims to responsibility are attributed to corporate actors of various sizes; yet, they also attempt to shape and frame their own claims. These claims to responsibility contribute to setting the rules for how responsibility should be organised; as such, they are important to examine. The phenomenon of so-called "private"<sup>2</sup> governance may not be new; however, the scale of its organising certainly is.

Lately, the hopes of improving our society involve a wider set of actors than governments. Agency for ecological, moral, and social change is often lent to the "Market". Numerous ways of organising responsibility for a common future exist. Organising for responsibility on markets takes many shapes and forms through both hard and soft rules concerning market exchange: governmental regulation, standard setting by intermediaries, NGOs and firms alike, as well as "private" governance efforts in order to enforce such standards, guidelines, etc.

The overarching aim in this thesis is to better understand the organising of responsibility in markets, not least over time. Markets constitute an area with unclear patterns of responsibility and unforeseen consequences. This is especially in relation to a long period of deregulation, as well as in areas that are difficult to oversee, regulate, govern, or organise: i.e. regulatory and or responsibility gaps. Who is ultimately responsible and for what? I argue that markets are not self-organising; rather, they are constructed and require rigorous organising efforts in order to function. The idea of the self-organising market, however, is also important in how responsibility is or-

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<sup>2</sup> The Private in Private governance is placed between quotation marks, as this thesis attempts to make clear that such market organising attempts involve a wider range of actors, beyond business and civil society organisations, that the use of private implies. Frequently, governments are also involved therein as full members or support agents, little "private" governance can thus be considered fully private.

rganised in markets. Believing markets are self-organising may lead to a demand for responsibility, which will also be reflected in organising choices.

## 1.2 Purpose of the Thesis and Research questions

The purpose of this thesis is to better understand how responsibility is organised in the markets, with the particular emphasis upon the empirical setting of the fashion and textile market. With a plethora of “private” governance organisations and initiatives, and competition thereof, it becomes clear that there is a struggle between different market actors to establish a decided order of responsibility. Partial organising is recognised and argued to be a key facet of such organising. This entails that one or several of the following organisational elements are used to this end: membership, hierarchy, rules, monitoring, and sanctioning. (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011) With shifting organising practices of responsibility, the dynamics of partial organising are especially explored in this study.

The dynamics of organising to which I refer, relate to the shifting use of organisational elements over time within the particular initiative studied, and implications thereof – not only if the use of an organisational element is discontinued but also potential changes therein are considered part of the dynamic processes of partial organising.

The use of organising and its related concepts (e.g. meta-organisations) allows more precision in understanding the organising of responsibility than the emic concepts used in most CSR research: e.g. trade and industry associations, or multi-stakeholder and business-driven initiatives. These may all for example have different uses of membership and rules, yet they cannot be understood without the precise framework of the theory of partial organising (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011).

Most of the CSR literature, of which parts will be reviewed in Chapters 2 and 4, has been studied in terms of single, complete<sup>3</sup>, organisations (Rasche et al., 2013). Increasingly, however, there are multiple forms of col-

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<sup>3</sup> A complete organisation is one that makes use of all of the organisational elements available: membership, hierarchy, rules, monitoring, and sanctioning. (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011)



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laboration, co-opetition, initiatives, cross-sectoral partnerships, social movements, etc. in order to organise issues of responsibility, whose conditions are not applicable to complete organisations. This leads to the question: *“How and why is responsibility framed and organised in the markets?”*

In order to investigate the research question, this thesis draws upon case studies of initiatives that constitute examples of attempts at organising responsibility in the markets: attempts to organise responsible supply chain practices related to labour rights and water use respectively. This allows the in-depth investigation of organising responsible supply chain practices, as well as uncovering of its organisational dynamics. Partial organising offers an answer to that question: what organisational elements are used (i.e. membership, hierarchy, rules, monitoring and sanctioning) and for what purpose. In short, I look at the dynamics of elements involved organising responsibility in this market.

I argue these governance arrangements used to organise CSR are often sites of partial organising (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011): a hitherto relatively unexplored concept. The empirical setting is the fashion and textile market in Sweden, which is seen as a site of partial organising. In order to better understand the organising of responsibility in markets, the partiality of this organising is explored: particularly, which organisational elements are used over time. As Ahrne et al. (2015) proposes, markets as well as organisations can be more, less or differently organised. This has implications for how and to what degree responsibility is taken and organised. Additionally, the study of organising of markets can be used to analyse the creation of markets, their shape, form, and trajectory. I wish to highlight the efforts involved in organising responsibility in markets, and the organisational elements involved in doing so.

### 1.3 Theoretical Problematisation

Organising involves several elements (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011). Government is the main and most legitimate rule-setter, according to the democratic base: *demos*. In recent decades, it has been popular to deregulate markets or even privatise public organisations and, thereby, its rules. Governmental regulation has become popular to describe as insufficient, if not

obsolete, in organising matters of responsibility and sustainability. Instead, private actors are encouraged to organise together and take political responsibility (Scherer & Palazzo, 2011). To this end, business in conjunction with civil society actors has arisen as a common constellation (Kolk, 2013; Seitanidi & Crane, 2009). Public actors, however, also lend support to some ventures: particularly through public-private partnerships. There are numerous attempts and motivations for government to contribute and to influence CSR, thereby, removing the voluntary aspect of its proceedings. The role of government in this organising of responsibility in markets has been underplayed, and will be further explored in this thesis.

### 1.3.1 How are Complex Sustainability Challenges Organised?

Given the difficulties involved in governmental regulation of transnational regulation gaps, a comprehensive solution to regulating responsibility gaps seems far from reality. Numerous parallel organisation attempts and efforts are made, and arrive at different solutions and levels of responsibility. There are a number of factors involved in this difficulty - particularly in the fashion and textile market. Power relationships, investment climate, media scrutiny, vertical integration, number of supply chain levels, and so on are some of the factors contributing to the complexity of organising responsibility in the global fashion and textile market. Some issues may be given more attention, whilst others, albeit important, will suffer from oblivion. Grand challenges are complex and uncertain (Ferraro et al., 2015): such as water use, thus, requiring the coordination of different regulatory systems as well as many different types of actors.

Thus, it is interesting to clarify how and why responsibility remains partially organised, what organisational attempts are made, and how these may shift over time. Rules are but one, albeit very important, element of organising (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011). Membership, hierarchy, monitoring, and sanctioning constitute the other organisational elements. Global supply chains are complex and the fragmented nature of “private” governance will lead to the use of some organisational elements; others may be left unused. As we carry on through this thesis, we will discover which ones are put to use, and why and, accordingly, what are the consequences for organising responsibility in the markets. “Private” governance of CSR is a prime site

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of partial organising (Rasche et al., 2013), therefore relevant to study, in order to delve deeper into, and understand the dynamics of, partial organising and CSR itself.

### 1.3.2 Organising of Responsibility in the Markets

Market organisers and market actors may coincide, yet, are not necessarily the same; market organisers are frequently more numerous. Responsibility issues shift over time, what was considered responsible yesterday, may not be considered so today. Claims to responsibility may come from government, civil society, or even business actors. Such claims may arise in order to frame the limits of such a responsibility issue.

Flying has recently become a prime topic of environmental responsibility in the Swedish debate and societal discourse (Larsson, Kamb, Nässén & Åkerman, 2016). The juxtapositions of individual versus governmental or corporate responsibility indicate the unclear boundaries of responsibility in this market. According to some, the market has not acted promptly enough so individuals must rise to the occasion and stay on the ground (Halldorf & Malm, 2018; Andersson, 2018). To others, governmental regulation is the only answer (Expressen, 2019). Others lay our common future in the hands of the flight market in the hope that it will prevail with environmental solutions. This is indicative of the unclear boundaries of how to organise responsibility in the markets.

Markets are associated with speed and swiftness. There is a hope that, by integrating a business case for CSR, markets need not only be good or ethical; they should also be efficient and profitable: the market for virtue (Vogel, 2005). The possibilities of the business case for CSR have been examined at length (Carroll & Shabana, 2010). However, what happens in practice when attempting to organise responsibility for a particular issue? I look at particular cases in order to elucidate the possibilities of organising responsibility in practice.

Hope is often lent to markets to solve these issues. There is particular hope that the idea of the Market will provide prompt solutions. One of the core aspects of the market idea is the invisible hand, which allows self-regulation. I argue that markets are not self-regulating; rather, they are partially organised and so too responsibility in markets needs to be organised.

Organising responsibility in markets is further associated with increased profitability: e.g. a business case. Organising responsibility is, thus, interlaced with many ideas as to how this is to be done most efficiently and or ethically. Who is responsible, and how does one organise these claims to responsibility? Many actors are involved: all with different preconditions, agendas, capacities, and resources available to organise.

### 1.3.3 The Translation and Framing of the Idea of Responsibility in Global Markets

Concepts are transformed and certain issues get more attention when popular ideas are translated. This includes responsibility in the form of CSR, and how it is to be organised (Czarniawska & Sevón, 1996; Jutterström & Norberg, 2013). Predominantly, the quest for legitimacy is the main motivation in such translations. The CSR literature is full of attempts to overcome the goal conflicts in organisations: short-term profitability versus long-term sustainability (Kallifatides & Lerpold, 2017). In the search for gaining and maintaining legitimacy, such attempts are seen as leading to organisational hypocrisy (Brunsson, 1989), decoupling (Meyer & Rowan, 1977), corporate greenwashing (Kallio, 2007), or responsabilisation of other actors (Shamir, 2008; Alexius, 2014a).

Such goal conflicts are increasingly resolved by the framing of CSR as a business case, which ultimately leads to profitability. Thereby, no conflict appears to exist. There is hope that addressing profitability concerns will lead to efficient and prompt organising of the responsibility gaps prevalent on markets. This framing results in additional organisational efforts making use of varying organisational elements. However, *de facto* responsibility taken is still selective or partial, with remaining responsibility gaps. As we will see, the stakeholder inclusion and selection of issues in this organising is indicative thereof.

I argue and investigate how the claims to responsibility of several market organisers are interweaved. To this end, I make use of the concepts of framing and translation to investigate how ideas of responsibility and its organising are taken from one part of the world and inserted into the Swedish fashion and textile context. Framing is used to capture the view of what is central and important in the motives for an initiative, how contin-

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ued membership is perceived, as well as the view of corporate vs. governmental responsibility for supply chain practices. Frames and framing is seen in line with Gamson and Modigliani (1987), as an organising idea that provides meaning. Translation is used in order to discern whence such framings originate and travel. These concepts contribute to a nuanced view of the popularity of, in this case, partial organising. Thus, I argue that CSR is translated and transformed when introduced into the Swedish context; the active role of the government in this translation is specifically highlighted.

As argued above, organising in markets is often of a partial character – either as seen in complete organisations that make partial use of organisational elements (e.g. meta-organisations such as industry associations, see Berkowitz et al., 2017) or in partial organising such as projects or initiatives (see Norris & Revéret, 2015). What does this plethora of partial organising efforts achieve: in terms of responsibility?

### 1.3.4 What is Responsibility and Who is Responsible?

Similar to morality, responsibility is a concept that is often ascribed to the individual level. A common definition equates responsibility to being accountable or to blame for something, or a moral obligation to behave correctly.<sup>4</sup> Within an organisational setting, a member of management such as a CEO or a head of the board is considered responsible for organisational actions in line with organisational statutes. Furthermore, the particular type or form of organisation also impacts which responsibility its board or CEO can assume. The limited corporation is popular in part due to its limitation of individual responsibility. Mitchell (2001) points to this limited liability and lack of accountability as the rationale for corporate irresponsibility and the increased needs of organising CSR beyond these limits in the future.

Corporations' limited liability corresponds to the classic economic view of the role of business in society: its purpose is to create employment and shareholder wealth. Thereby, it fulfils its obligations toward society as long as it follows formal rules. This was long one of the main arguments against CSR. Although it is less often heard these days, the rationale used to justify

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<sup>4</sup> For an extensive overview of the concept of responsibility, see Müller (2018).

CSR is frequently a business case (Carroll & Shabana, 2010). The business case for CSR increasingly allows the corporate understanding that it is in its own self-interest to address issues, such as water use. Not the least, as water as a resource, is projected to become ever more difficult to access for production purposes. How to organise for it? The business case for CSR does not necessarily include a long-term perspective, and can serve to promote a short-term quarter logic perpetuated by limited companies. The even quicker turning wheels of fashion that we will observe are evidence of this logic, and part of the responsibility equation that appears impossible to solve.

Claims to responsibility and responsibility taken may, indeed, go hand in hand; yet they do not necessarily constitute a natural equation. Responsibility, and its market counterpart, CSR have multiple vague definitions. Organising efforts to increase responsibility may, in fact, lead to the reverse (Alexius, 2014a). The governmental requirement for Swedish state-owned enterprises, as well as the supra-governmental incentive to report upon non-financial matters - i.e. sustainability reporting (European Commission, 2017) - do not necessarily lead to more responsible practices. Instead, Borglund et al. (2010) found the result of the Swedish government requirements was merely the improvement of reporting skills. The organising of responsibility over time in the Swedish fashion and textile market is indicative of shifts in what constitutes responsibility, identified here as ranging from ethical to performance-oriented, and how it should be organised: governmental regulation to business-driven initiatives.

## 1.4 Short Introduction to the Study and Empirical Setting

A shared responsibility for our common future is described in Gro Harlem Brundtland's (1987) seminal report and definition of sustainability. Moving forward, in academia, as well as in societal and business discourse, partnerships and various "private" governance initiatives are increasingly seen as central to taking such responsibility (Kolk, 2013). I analyse one example of such an initiative by following it over the course of the years through retro-

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spective accounts of its first four years, and actively over the following four. During this time, its organisational foci have ranged from business-driven initiative to public-private partnership. Questions of how this responsibility is taken, and especially its limits are important to highlight. Particularly, responsibility that is not organised provides a contour for the borders in this slippery globalised terrain of responsibility. In order to organise responsibility in markets, such borders or limits may appear to be given by the idea of the Market itself. With growing consumer concerns, NGO and, at times, governmental pressures, responsibility for sustainability issues - such as water use - appears to have become an increasing matter of concern for markets.

This chapter introduces the overarching focus of this thesis. I predominantly study the particular case of organising responsibility for water use in fashion and textile production. The particular role of business actors in organising is highlighted, as is setting a new decided responsibility order for water use. The role of the Swedish government's role in assisting this framing and subsequent organising is also investigated.

Therefore, it is also of interest to introduce the sustainability issue for which responsibility is to be organised in the market: water. Water is one of our most precious resources; it is the essential elixir of life and one of few things that we cannot live without. There are already accounts of irrevocable damage, toxin emissions, and dangerously low ground levels in water-stressed regions across the globe. The question of the weight of water in organising responsibility is important. Water functions are essential for social-ecological resilience and for promoting sustainable development. Given current erosion of such functions, it is unknown what impact this will have (Falkenmark, Wang-Erlandsson & Rockström, 2019). Considering its importance for - simply put - life on earth, it is relevant to reflect upon how it is considered when organising responsibility in markets.

An idiomatic expression or a geometric Greek equation, the weight of water constitutes a double or even triple-entendre, constituting an open question in relation to organising responsibility that will be examined in the following chapters. Not least, water is important for the principal case study as it was seen as an urgent issue, a grand challenge, to address and organise. Water is an essential resource for corporate survival, as well as a

moral right to preserve for future generations. Thereby, it epitomises the plurality of motives for organising responsibility.

The studied initiatives, DressCode and Sweden Textile Water Initiative (STWI), constitute attempts to organise responsibility for labour rights and sustainable water practices in markets. Both have numerous phases and forms of organising attempts to this end that will be explored in Chapters 8 and 9. STWI was formed in 2010, its goal was to establish short yet comprehensive guidelines. A pilot implementation was attempted afterward, in the form a public-private partnership. Framed as a success by the government as well as its members, the public-private partnership was extended to involve more countries, suppliers, and brands.

## 1.5 Contributions

The primary goal of this research is its theoretical contribution to the study of organising, as well as to “private” governance. Many have looked at individual corporate motivations for acting responsibly: for companies to adopt Codes of Conduct (CoCs) and for companies to collaborate with NGOs (Doh & Teegen, 2002); however, only a few have studied how companies engage in collaboration on these issues with competitors (Egels-Zandén & Wahlqvist, 2007; Fransen, 2012). Additionally, few studies to date have looked at the dynamics of partial organising of CSR (Rasche et al., 2013), and a mere few at cooptation (Brandenburger & Nalebuff, 1996): e.g. collaborating with competitors (Berkowitz & Souchaud, 2017).

This work also makes a contribution to, what is known as, private governance literature. Wahl and Bull (2014) find there is little research on the evolution of private governance initiatives; this thesis answers this call by precisely doing this: an in-depth analysis of the trajectory of the organising of a private governance initiative.

Furthermore, I contribute to practitioner learning, by delving into the remote possibilities of de facto controlling the global supply chain. The use of rules has now become commonplace, i.e. CoCs and other standards in order to take responsibility in the markets, whilst simultaneously keeping closer tabs on the global supply chain. Yet, according to Egels-Zandén and Lindholm (2015), very little improvement in terms of labour rights has been



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accomplished despite decades of organising. This thesis establishes the partial nature of such arrangements for controlling and improving sustainability issues in the global supply chain by assessing the potential benefits and drawbacks for such organising. Specifically, drawing clear lines around membership may allow for easier consensus; yet it may also lead to a disregard for such issues that are not easy to organise.

### 1.6 Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 2 delves into the CSR literature, and its historical background, providing a backdrop to the past, current, and future organising of CSR. Furthermore, it provides an overview of the current state of “private” governance: the forms under which more or less voluntary responsibility for water issues in fashion and textile markets is currently organised. Chapter 3 presents the theoretical framework of partial organising. Chapter 4 constitutes an overview of how markets and responsibility are related. The idea of self-regulating markets is particularly reviewed, as well as its implications for the ensuing view of responsibility and CSR. Chapter 5 provides a detailed account of the research design, methods and materials; it involves a chronological description of my research journey, coupled with the methodological and theoretical issues that have been of outmost importance. Chapter 6 focuses upon the empirical setting on the fashion and textile market and its particularities, power structures, relationships, and global supply chain that may influence the way it is organised. An overview of the interlinkages of membership in “private” governance in the Swedish fashion market is then presented in order to elucidate the complexity of partnership portfolios and fragmentation of “private” governance. This clarifies that CSR, and this initiative in particular, is a prime locus of partial organising and is, therefore, particularly apt for understanding how responsibility is partially organised through so-called “private” governance, and how such organising has shifted over time, as well as its consequences for issues concerning water. The Swedish government’s framing of CSR policy and strategy, and motivations for engaging in public-private partnerships is examined in Chapter 7. Membership is identified as one of the central organisational elements and the findings on motivations for organisational

and individual membership respectively are presented in chapter 8. Chapters 8 and 9 provide analyses of the empirical material collected from the theoretical perspective of partial organising. In Chapter 10, I elaborate on the findings and provide concluding discussions of this thesis.



# Chapter 2

## Understanding Framings of CSR and its Organising

This overview will highlight the most important developments in the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) literature, often coinciding with the most important framings of responsibility and the concepts that dominate the discourse. CSR is sometimes seen as an umbrella term (Blowfield & Murray, 2008); therefore, it allows for several different definitions, as well as assumptions on motivations. Social and environmental responsibility comes in many forms: its issues ranging from philanthropy to corporate governance. The relationship between business and society involves the overarching discussion regarding the appropriate way for business to behave, thereby, also following how to organise CSR: Codes of Conduct (CoCs), partnerships, etc. Throughout this chapter, it will become clear there is an overemphasis upon large Multi-National Company (MNC) CSR practices, as well as on their motivations and means for organising CSR activities. The importance of the business case for CSR becomes apparent in the choices of organising it, rather than a moral prerogative. Furthermore, organising CSR issues is frequently studied in a dyadic perspective, with a focus upon the participating large multi-national company's motivations for joining an initiative. Thereby, a number of under researched areas become apparent, not least the organisational dynamics of CSR in these initiatives.

Let us first start with a reflection on what responsibility is in general, and how it relates to CSR.

## 2.1 Responsibility

Responsibility is often defined as being accountable or to blame for something. There are many more nuanced definitions (Williams, 2012). Responsibility can be attributed in a legal sense, yet beyond the law it is difficult to establish its meaning. Legal responsibility requires a legally binding framework, which is frequently not available in matters of CSR given transnational regulation gaps. A more moral responsibility refers to the obligations that an actor has in society. Corporate responsibility, therefore, is tied in with the perceived historical role of business in society (see Section 2.2). The development of CSR is specifically attached to a Western context and culture, so is the moral outlook on CSR issues. There is often correspondence between legal and moral responsibility, as many illegal activities are also deemed immoral. In relation to the CSR discourse, occurring transgressions in the global supply chain are already perceived as immoral actions in the Western context: e.g. labour rights abuses.

Part of the debate surrounding CSR has centred upon the inadequacy of organisational versus individual responsibility: in terms of organisational actions and responsibility. Financial crises, environmental pollution, and poor labour practices are but some of the issues found in corporate tumbleweed for which, given the current system, little to no individual responsibility is or can be taken. Moreover, it can be argued that is not necessarily merely top management that bears responsibility in an organisation. For example, Nelson (2016) argues the importance of middle management in feigning the environmental monitoring system in Volkswagen's car models, concluding that this traditionally ignored layer of management should bear part of the responsibility and shame for the scandal.

Responsibility in an organisational setting, however, is relayed to certain individuals, and not to others. Employees are deemed as holding much less extensive responsibility for organisational actions than do management. However, employees or lower levels of management can also be more prone to attempt to organise responsibility: within or outside the organisational setting. Most sustainability issues are complex and linked with different types of issues; thus, organising responsibility for an issue within a single organisation is insufficient. The fashion and textile global supply

chain has numerous environmental and social impacts. In the markets, the boundaries for dictating who is responsible for these grand sustainability challenges are less clearly understood. Who is responsible for what and why: is it the brands, the investors, the suppliers, or the government? And again, who is then to organise the responsibility: brands, investors, suppliers, NGOs, labour unions, or government? As will be noted, there is predominance with the CSR concept for attributing responsibility to brands and producers. This thesis does not preoccupy itself deeply with the normative question of who is responsible; rather, I focus upon how and why responsibility is organised in the market.

In a limited corporation, its responsibility was long seen as extending to fiduciary and economic responsibilities: that is to say, a responsibility to pay its taxes, and contribute to the economy by job, and wealth creation. With the introduction of the CSR concept, a whole new range of issues has gradually become part of what is considered the responsibility of companies. Sweatshop and child labour issues first became prominent in the fashion and textile market; then calls for additional responsibility concerning living wages were raised. With mountains of landfill and increasing calls for circularity, calls for corporate responsibility for a life-cycle perspective have become increasingly common. This extended responsibility is sometimes called Extended Producer Responsibility (OECD, 2006): a concept in which manufacturers or buyer brands should bear a significant degree of the responsibility for the environmental and social impacts of their products. This responsibility is to be reflected in the design process as well as in other production choices, so as to minimise detrimental negative social and environmental impacts. What is included in this responsibility varies, but has a link to what attempts at organising responsibility are made. In order to investigate how responsibility is organised in the market, the concept of framing is useful in order to understand which issues are found important to organise, how responsibility is understood, and how it should be organised.

There are many calls to achieve taking joint responsibility for important global issues: those, which are vital for our future survival. Examining the advantages and disadvantages of such attempts to organise and take responsibility is important. What is responsibility and how can it be defined?

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How is it framed and how does this framing impact its organising? As shown in Chapters 8 and 9, responsibility or CSR is increasingly framed as a win-win proposition, which allows cost-savings, access to resources, improved brand, increased possibilities for trade competitiveness, and so on. This development of new framings coincides with a shift in motives: moving from an ethical perspective to one that concentrates upon the outcomes related to organising CSR. Thus, CSR is increasingly associated to what is called the business case for CSR (Kurucz et al., 2008; Carroll & Shabana, 2010).

### 2.1.1 Definition(s) of CSR: Voluntarism and Vagueness

This study understands CSR as the expression of responsibility for sustainability issues in the markets. Yet, the definition of responsibility is not necessarily clear; it is influenced by different motivations. The way in which responsibility is defined and how is it framed influences what is subsequently organised.

The definition of CSR is not consistent across its uses (Blowfield & Murray, 2008; Waddock, 2004), nor is the concept of responsibility itself considered systematically (Pellé & Reber, 2015). Drebes (2016) further urges normatively that responsibility should be the focal term in the CSR debate. However, it is not. Instead, the focus lies upon the motives and operationalisation of CSR. In the hope of solving the global issues that affect us all, research has overwhelmingly turned toward an instrumental approach.

The definition of CSR has long hinged upon the company as its focal actor, navigating an intricate web of public regulation, norms, and voluntary commitments. The definition of CSR has since its inception involved a voluntary aspect; Dahlsrud (2008) even counts 37 definitions of CSR involving its voluntary nature. Most CSR scholars have found that “abiding by the law” is not enough to constitute CSR (Kakabadse et al., 2005). However, the distinction between what is respectively considered voluntary and mandatory is becoming increasingly muddled (Ruggie, 2003). Notably, regulation at times is more encouraging than authoritatively enforcing. Furthermore, membership in voluntary private governance initiatives may, over time, lead to adherence to minimum industry standards. Additionally,

in the context of developing countries, compliance with legislation can be at times considered an important part of organising CSR (Laudal, 2010).

There has also been an increasing level of governmental regulation of CSR; Indonesia and India have passed laws pertaining to corporate budgeting of CSR (Waagstein, 2011). The increased forms of governmental CSR legislation contribute to this view of the voluntary aspect of the definition of CSR as losing ground. As will be expanded upon in Chapter 7, it is argued that governmental regulation of CSR is increasing and expanding to a growing number of states (Knudsen & Moon, 2017; Sheehy, 2015), as well as through more subtle governmental support for CSR. This is not captured in the mainstream CSR research, however, and this under researched area (Djelic et al., 2016) accounts for a missing piece of the puzzle on how CSR is organised (See Section 2.4.1).

The umbrella term of CSR associates a variety of topics, concepts, and practices to CSR (Blowfield & Murray, 2008). One of the reasons for the success of CSR is perhaps its vagueness, and the flexibility in assigning one's own definition. However, there is also a critique thereof: that this plethora of definitions has, indeed, contributed to the hollowing out of the term.

### 2.1.2 Emergent Perspective of CSR

The plurality of perspectives and definitions of CSR indicates an ongoing process of translation of CSR occurring, not least between competitors, buyers and suppliers, government or NGOs. This has led me to adopt an emergent perspective of CSR (Rasche, Morsing & Moon, 2017): one that sees CSR as a “permanent issue and an area of debates in management theory and practice, rather than a well stabilized construct with a clear and constant operationalization” (Gond & Moon, 2011, p. 4). This definition ties in well with the perspective adopted in this thesis, which purpose is to understand the way in which responsibility is organised in the market and its dynamics over time. As we proceed further, the actors involved will become apparent, as well as what framings and translations of CSR occur during this process.

We find ourselves with a field and a concept without academic or social consensus (Gond & Moon, 2011; Matten & Moon, 2008) on the bounda-



ries and definition of responsibility. The organising of CSR, and specifically its dynamics, are explored in this thesis, one commonality is proposed in particular and its implications are reflected upon: the partial nature of organising CSR, as defined by Ahrne and Brunsson (2011). In order to do so, it is necessary to first account for the development of CSR, what it is, what is the purpose and the means of organising for it.

## 2.2 Roles and Responsibilities of Business in Society

What is the role of business in society? The answer to this multi-faceted question has increasingly been linked to the CSR literature. CSR as a concept arose in the early years of the Cold War and developed in the second half of the 20th century (Spector, 2008). Although the field of CSR struggles with finding a common definition, its historical roots at least date back to the debate between mercantilism and liberalism (Djelic & Etchanchu, 2017; Screpanti & Zamagni, 2005; Carroll, 1999). The discussion on the role and responsibilities of business versus government is far from new. However, globalisation is thought to exacerbate the difficulty of organising these issues through the denaturalisation of responsibility, in that responsibility is no longer in one seat. Multiple actors are involved in each step of production, so it is difficult to allocate who is responsible for what.

There are many factors historically involved in establishing the modern firm and its role in society. A foundation for the role of business in society and modern capitalism resides in the establishing of commercial law in Europe during the 11th and 12th centuries: *Lex Mercatoria* (Swedberg, 2009). Ciepley (2013) also accounts for the role of a previous wave of globalisation and the launch of the limited charter. Previously, corporations were seen as owing their existence and rights to the government that had chartered them. Through the interpretation of privatism and private contracts, companies were entitled to better legal protection, and were considered less responsible. This new form is argued to have laid the foundation for a sharper division between public and private and, thereby, our view of the role of business in society and the need for organising CSR. This new legal interpretation of corporations left them ultimately more powerful, but less accountable (Ciepley, 2013). Mitchell (2001) points to the lack of accounta-

bility as one of the main reasons for current corporate irresponsibility and need for organising CSR.

To this day, corporations retain many rights, yet their responsibilities remain less clear. When it comes to the human rights perspective, the extent to which corporations are obligated to respect these considerations is still inconclusive (Bishop, 2012; Clapham, 2006). Instead, the multilateral organisations' guidelines, i.e. OECD, ILO and the UN, that were established in the 1990s and early 2000s in relation to human rights remain non-binding recommendations for corporations to follow.

## 2.3 Framings of CSR in Research

### 2.3.1 CSR as Personal Moral Responsibility of the Business Man

The first contributions on the concept of CSR addressed the issue mainly from the perspective of managers or rather the businessman itself (Bowen, 1953) and “his” moral conscience rather than that of the corporation per se. In it, CSR was defined as the decisions, policies, and actions that align with the current goals and values of society. Drucker (1954) pioneered the development of a definition of social responsibilities of business, including the latter in the primary objectives of a firm. Frederick (1960) also highlights the link between business and society, stating: “Enterprises have the obligation of working to improve society”. During this period, it was not clear whether CSR should be introduced in order to benefit business itself (Lee, 2008); it was framed instead in several different lights. CSR was, thereby, framed as the personal responsibility of the businessman. Furthermore, there was also a particularly national framing of CSR in the early years: in that the responsibility of the individual firm that the addressed stakeholders also included the nation “employees, suppliers, dealers, local communities, and the nation” (Johnson, 1971, p. 50). Such social responsibility was also framed as something American “business enterprises, in effect are being asked to contribute more to the quality of American life” (Committee for Economic Development, 1971) At times, it was also framed as a normative preoccupation with supporting good causes: i.e. philanthropy (Frederick, 1960).

### 2.3.2 CSR as Mitigating Risks and Environmental Concern

The important social movements in the 1960s' civil and women's rights, as well as the environmental movement, led to shifts in the views and expectations of business' responsibilities. This inclusion of new interests lay the foundation for the importance of the stakeholder model and new framings of CSR. The environmental movement was also launched through the documentary bestseller *Silent Spring* (Carson, 1962); critique of consumerism was also raised during this time (Galbraith, 1958; Nader et al., 1976). Notably, scandals such as the Nestlé baby milk substitute in 1974, the Bhopal chemical explosion in 1984, and the Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989 also contributed to the shifting norms of corporate responsibility. These led to the first industry-wide environmental coalitions to better abate the negative impact of business operations.

The *Responsible Care* self-regulation program for the chemical industry is a noteworthy example of these pioneering ventures (King & Lenox, 2000; Bondy, Matten & Moon, 2007); it was established as a result of the Bhopal chemical plant explosion in 1984. During this period, there was a shift in the business attitudes toward environmental issues: from a single-handed exploitation orientation to an eco-efficiency one, in that the environment was still a resource to be used, but with minimal negative impact (Kallio, 2007).

CSR or business ethics, as it was frequently labelled, included taking into account product and employee safety, working conditions, and environmental concern. With the advent of new levels of globalisation, shifts in outsourcing prompted a move to include more global issues and disasters: such as the mentioned Bhopal disaster. CSR was framed as addressing mainly national, but also included international disasters and risks.

### 2.3.3 CSR as Improving Financial Performance

The classic CSR debate expanded throughout the 1960s and the 1970s with multiple views of man and politics evolving. Definitions started to proliferate, and the importance of business responding to its social environment was emphasised (Carroll & Shabana, 2010). One of the first theoretical links between responsibilities and long-term economic benefits came from Davis (1973), who theorised a close link between social responsibility and

power. His “iron law of responsibility” established that a company’s power would deteriorate if it neglected its social responsibilities. The corporate social performance (CSP) was increasingly emphasised and a shift in the literature toward outcomes rather than ethics of CSR emerged. This can be seen as one of the first steps to move toward research on the business case for CSR: i.e. measuring the impact of more responsible business practices (see Section 2.3.5). Instead of focusing upon the macro level, the level of analysis moved to CSR’s impact on a firm’s financial performance (Lee, 2008). Thereby, a dominant framing began to take hold: one of CSR as providing benefits such as profitability.

CSR research developed ever more rapidly during the 1980s and 1990s expanding to different fields: such as environmental management, social auditing, supply chain management, etc. Particularly the importance of the stakeholder model and the necessity for dialogue is often viewed as influential in the development of CSR (Freeman, 1984). Accordingly, stakeholder dialogue became seen as an integral part of corporate strategy and decision-making (Laasonen, 2012). As aforementioned, the field did not start to focus upon the coupling between social responsibility and financial performance until establishing the concept of corporate social performance. The link between social responsibility and financial performance took centre stage during the 1980s (Carroll, 1999; Lee, 2008); hence, the business case for CSR has been an important part of the field ever since: see Section 2.3.5.

#### 2.3.4 CSR as the Solution to the Problems of Globalisation and Capitalism

Starting in the late 1990s and early 2000s, a new shift and framing of CSR started to come to light. With the WTO protests in Seattle and Gothenburg, a discussion around the perceived detrimental role of capitalism of globalisation emerged (Buhr & Grafström, 2007). Accordingly, CSR was put forth and framed as a “solution to the problems created by the increased global free trade” (Tengblad & Ohlsson, 2010, p. 654), which is framed as a solution for the perceived ills of capitalism and globalisation. The negative critique brought up during this time could be seen as a threat to the reputation, legitimacy, and ultimately the license of companies to op-

erate. Irrespective of motivations, CSR allows companies to conform to societal expectations, socially constructed norms and values, and maintain or regain its license to operate.

Related to this, a critical stream of CSR literature maintains that CSR serves only the neoliberal agenda of profit-maximising and avoiding governmental intervention (Lim & Tsutsui, 2012): ultimately, as a way of advancing global capitalism (de Bakker et al., 2005; Den Hond et al., 2007). CSR is framed as greenwashing or a cynical means to an end for big business to legitimise itself (Banerjee, 2008; Solitander & Herlin, 2016; Willke & Willke, 2008). Organising CSR or “private” governance initiatives is, thereby, seen purely as a rhetorical strategy for legitimation of company practices (Castelló & Lozano, 2011; Du & Vieira Jr, 2012). A frequent critique is that of decoupling between “talk” and organisational practice: i.e. organisational hypocrisy (Brunsson, 1989; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Christensen et al., 2013).

### 2.3.5 The Business Case for CSR

During the 1970s and 1980s, CSR was considered detrimental and hostile to the interests of business (Mühle, 2010). Thereafter, several events contributed to change this stance. First, NGO protests and related consumer boycotts and buycotts contributed to placing a price tag on responsibility. Crucially, the academic and practitioner search for a business case for CSR took hold and was found. An environmental business case for CSR could be identified and addressed (Porter & van der Linde, 1995) Social responsibility issues, such as labour, however, were more difficult to quantify. Addressing these issues, thus, became increasingly important for a corporation’s reputation and legitimacy.

The times and tides have changed, so have the virtues. Carroll & Shabana (2010) note that the quest for a business case implies a shift from a normative to an instrumental view of CSR. What CSR can give business (rather than the reverse) is inherited from the classical view of CSR: traditionally seen, as upheld by Levitt (1958) and Friedman (1970). These two icons are feared or revered in CSR research. One explanation put forth for the overwhelming focus upon the business case is that Friedman’s harsh critique of CSR in the incongruence between responsibility-taking and cor-

porate profit, led to an academic focus on proving the link between responsibility and profitability profitable. Thereby, a search for the business case emerged, and an instrumental rationale was embedded in a majority of subsequent CSR research (Carroll & Shabana, 2010). Accordingly, contrary to Friedman's critical views, the current mainstream CSR discourse focuses upon a win-win ideal of business and society (Fougère & Solitander, 2009). Some even claim that Friedman would concur with the current focus on the business case for CSR; indeed, it mainly focuses upon its positive value creating aspects for a firm's shareholders (Vogel, 2005).

During the past decades, this alleged business case has been instrumental in the creation of new markets for organising CSR (auditors, online markets for buyers-sellers, certifications and standards, etc.). Be it in various parts of the supply chain and shifting strategies, it has become a motivation for business to engage in more responsible practices. The business case is also an important motivation for rallying support for CSR internally (Andersson & Bateman, 2000), as well as a possible managerial sense-making frame to align and or resolve the ambiguities of sustainability and CSR considerations. Furthermore, it has also shaped governmental and supra-governmental views of CSR, as contributing to nations' competitiveness rather than seen as impinging on governmental duties (Vallentin, 2015). Focusing upon the instrumental motivation for CSR has become not only appealing for government policy; it is also for social activism and NGOs. Thereby, the normative and ethical motivations for CSR seem all but forgotten.

Many readings on CSR now emphasise links to corporate profitability: profitability standing in straight connection to responsibility (Vogel, 2005). An expansive number has especially attempted to study the ties between the respective levels of corporate social and financial performance (Carroll 1999; Gond & Crane 2010; Margolis & Walsh, 2003; Orlitzky et al., 2003). As noted above, this was not always the case.

The business case for CSR is built upon the premise that the "Market" will reward CSR investments. Naturally, such rewards may not be perpetual in eternity, raising the question what happens when the "market for virtue" appears void (Vogel, 2005). Numerous authors have argued for increased regulation in order to improve the appeal of CSR and to ensure its business

case to consumers (Valor, 2008), and to SMEs (Williamson et al., 2006). Such calls have been heeded, not least in terms of the call for more transparent non-financial reporting (EU, 2017); the question, however, remains: When the limits of the business case for CSR are reached, what responsibility is taken and organised?

The business case discourse for CSR is increasingly pervasive with management on the organisational level; it entails that productivity; economic gains, and/or competitive advantage can be achieved through investing in CSR (Carroll & Shabana, 2010; Frederick, 2016; Kurucz, et al., 2008; Orlitzky et al., 2003; Waddock & Graves, 1997).

CSR is especially proposed to have organisational benefits: in terms of employee orientation and attractiveness (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012; Gond et al., 2017; De Roeck & Delobbe, 2012); it, thereby, provides value to organisational members (well-being, stimulating participation, and knowledge creation) increased productivity, and reduced costs. The benefits of membership are further developed in the pre-study (see Chapter 8). CSR is also believed to have a positive impact upon consumer preference, satisfaction, and loyalty (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Lichtenstein et al., 2004; Brown & Dacin 1997; Murray & Vogel 1997). These aspects mainly relate to gaining competitive advantage.

### 2.3.6 Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)

Framing CSR as protection from the problems created by global free trade includes fears of loss of reputation and legitimacy. One implicit assumption in this framing of CSR is that it relates to large visible MNCs. However, what about smaller and less visible companies, i.e. SMEs?

SMEs are often defined in accordance with the European Commission's definition (2018); they are companies with up to 250 employees and no more than 50 million euros in turnover. They include a broad scope of companies, ranging from traditional family firms to informal micro-ventures. Furthermore, they constitute the largest number of firms in the private business sector; they account for up to 90 per cent of all registered firms in an economy. Accordingly, they are vital for providing employment and as producers of total industrial output (Baden et al., 2009; UNEP, 2003). Differences between SMEs and MNCs are understood as pertaining

to market share, ownership characteristics, and company culture (Jenkins, 2004, 2009)

There is an assumption in the literature that buyer companies are interested in CSR for mainly legitimacy purposes. However, many, especially smaller, companies are able to escape the public spotlight and, thus, are not mainly motivated by such aspects. What propels those companies that are not visible in the media spotlight? As mentioned, those are frequently SMEs and companies in other parts of the supply chain, suppliers/producers, etc.

SMEs, in particular, are constrained by limited resources and have not been very visible in the literature, nor in the practice of producer responsibility (Spence, 2007). When their performance is analysed, they are seen as either pioneers or laggards (Jørgensen & Knudsen, 2006; Baden et al., 2009). Nevertheless, SMEs are frequently involved in local CSR activities in their communities (Vives, 2006), rather than engaging in formal reporting practices. Producer or buyer responsibility is frequently seen as particularly difficult to operationalise and organise, as SMEs have little leverage and bargaining power over suppliers to control, monitor, or sanction, their practices. Also, they have limited resources to engage in such control or formalising CSR strategies, policies, or reporting practices. Nevertheless, when it comes to buyer bargaining power over suppliers, larger companies can be small customers to a particular supplier, thereby, yielding little power (Locke, 2013; Helin & Babri, 2014). This low leverage or bargaining power is one of the main issues facing buyers in the global supply chain wishing to organise responsibility. Furthermore, suppliers also hold limited resources to follow rules, engage in different standard schemes, and its monitoring: i.e. pursuing individual auditing schemes (Lernborg & Sendlhofer, 2017).

## 2.4 Organising CSR

A long discussion on the role of business in society has led to a paradigm of partnerships in order to organise and “solve” sustainability issues (Kolk, 2013). Business is increasingly expected to take responsibility beyond the law. Moreover, it is expected to organise such responsibility through membership in various forms of private governance initiatives. Such organising



frequently takes the form of Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives (MSIs) and roundtables; however, there are also examples of Business-Driven Initiatives (BDIs) and Civil Society Initiatives (CSIs). In governance terms, this implies a shift from self-regulation to co-regulation (Kobrin, 2008; Steurer, 2013). In this context of globalisation, businesses must navigate shifting responsibilities and terrains. The framing and organising of responsibility is naturally interlinked with multiple stakeholder demands, government regulation, media scrutiny, and a wide variety of private governance initiatives. The following sections will provide an overview of the current literature on how CSR is organised in such a context.

Complex global supply chains transcend national boundaries and make it difficult to legislate the level of responsibility. Thus, with regulatory uncertainty and hitherto relatively little governmental intervention, responsibility for organising sustainability issues is seen as muddled and unclear. A popular position to explain the rise of “private” governance is that it has emerged in order to fill the void left by the erosion of nation-state regulation (Bäckstrand, 2006; Smith & Fischlein, 2010 etc.). This is seen as resulting from the imbalance between global corporate operations and the deficient transnational regulation characteristics of the post-Westphalian setting (Kobrin, 2009; Santoro, 2010; Habermas, 1999; Scherer & Palazzo, 2007). With the force of globalisation, governments have allegedly relegated power and freedom to business and markets (Korten, 2001; Scherer & Palazzo, 2007, 2011). Governments, however, appear to take an increased interest in organising CSR (please see Section 2.4.1 below).

#### 2.4.1 The Role of Government in Organising CSR

The government-CSR relationship is counter-intuitive to many, and therefore remains largely overlooked, particularly in theoretical and conceptual terms (Gond et al., 2011, p. 641).

During past decades, a consensus in CSR research appears to have been reached in the realm of government-CSR research, with an overwhelming focus on the deterioration of government power and the rise of governance instead of government (Djelic & Sahlin-Andersson, 2006). As aforementioned, the rise of “private” governance arrangements and especially multi-

stakeholder initiatives (Scherer & Palazzo, 2011) further illustrates this. Knudsen and Moon (2017) argue that the governmental regulation of CSR is increasing and expanding to a growing number of states. This is not captured, however, in the current CSR research; thus, this research gap thus accounts for a missing piece of the puzzle on how responsibility is organised. The government, therefore, constitutes an important actor, influencing and participating in the organising of responsibility in the market.

Although still under researched (Knudsen & Moon, 2017; Dentchev et al., 2017), a budding academic research stream on the role of government in CSR has, indeed, emerged during the last decade (Albareda et al., 2007; Habisch et al., 2005; Lozano et al., 2007; Matten & Moon, 2008; Midttun et al., 2006, Midttun, 2008; Gjørberg, 2009, 2010; Vallentin, 2015).

Focusing upon the role of government in CSR does thus not necessarily relate to dealing with it in the conventional hard law sense. The difficulty in governing issues related to CSR has been established, not the least because of the lack of transnational regulation, but due to its complexity as well. Governments do not necessarily have the traditional toolkit at their disposal for organising an issue, such as formal rules and law making. Instead, governments play multiple roles in the organising of CSR, through the provision of public goods (Ostrom, 1991) as well as through participation in emerging arrangements: such as Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and multi-stakeholder initiatives, legislation (Waagstein, 2011) for CSR reporting or anti-corruption measures. Thereby, through the introduction of varying governmental CSR policies, governments have been seen as important in creating the preconditions, and “enabling environments” for CSR (Fox et al., 2002; Steurer, 2010).

One of the motives established for this increased involvement of government in CSR appears to be the establishing of a win-win logic for business competitiveness and benefits, i.e. a business case for CSR. Two papers have been instrumental in convincing government of these possibilities. Porter and van der Linde’s (1995) paper on environmental standards as improving the competitiveness of business has been seen as influential in the EU (Vogel, 2005). The business case for CSR, especially Porter and Kramer’s (2006, 2011) “shared value” has been promoted at EU conferences and white papers (Vogel, 2005). More importantly, Porter and Kramer’s

(2011) “shared value” concept is also considered a key part of the EU’s CSR policy (European Commission, 2011; Crane et al., 2014). The shared value concept is very much in line with the CSR business case; it creates a win-win argument that cements the traditional market logic, rather than seeks to transform it. A “new” CSR framing that fits in a positive market model, rather than in an idealistic ethical frame, could, thus, explain part of CSR’s increased appeal for government.

#### 2.4.2 Forms of Organising responsibility

A number of new forms of organising CSR have, thus, arisen; these involve both public and private actors (Smith & Fischlein, 2010). There has been a corresponding plethora of research terms within academic that describe this phenomenon: notably, concepts such as non-state market-driven governance (Cashore, 2002; Cashore et al., 2003), global environmental governance (Biermann & Pattberg, 2008), NGO-firm environmental collaborations (Wassmer, 2010; Wassmer et al., 2014), and multi-stakeholder initiatives (Mena & Palazzo, 2012) have arisen.

These different terms have certain commonalities in that they imply non-state, mainly market-driven initiatives, in order to promote improved sustainable practices in the global supply chain, not the least through increased transparency (Auld & Gulbrandsen, 2010; Gulbrandsen, 2009). Inherent motivations include consumer price premiums and new markets, as well as threats to legitimacy and reputation, (Cashore et al., 2003).

There is however a greater diversity amongst private governance initiatives than might meet the eye; in fact, there are three main types of private sustainability governance (as seen in Appendix 1A): BDIs, CSIs, and MSIs. Although under researched (Kolk, 2013), BDIs, in fact, make up the majority of transnational private governance initiatives (Abbott & Snidal, 2010).

## 2.5 Under Researched Areas

This review of governance and collaboration literature found that not only is there is an overlapping plethora of research terminology for private regulation; there is also an overwhelming dominance of research on MSIs and minimal research on BDIs. The literature focuses upon motivations for en-

tering partnership arrangements or membership, its success characteristics, as well as the legitimacy of such arrangements. Systematic reviews of the literature on cross-sectoral partnerships show the literature to be fragmented and suffering from multiple research gaps (Kourola & Laasonen, 2010). The literature can be seen as having shifted slightly away from the optimistic paradigm view of cross-sectoral collaboration as the panacea for sustainable development (Gray & Stites, 2013), as there appears to be limitations on what types of NGOs are suitable for partnerships (Ählström & Sjöström, 2005). Gray & Stites (2013) see great potential for partnerships, yet limitations on which problems they can possibly solve and how can they do so.

The focus within CSR literature has been predominantly on individual companies and their organising efforts. Some research has also focused upon individual standards in isolation with other initiatives (Fischlein & Smith, 2010). Research has also focused upon the motivations for engaging in CSR and/or in initiatives, as well as on the effectiveness of reaching sustainability objectives. Since the 1980s, we have also observed in the discourse the growing importance of the business case as a framing for CSR. This, too, has implications on what is organised and how this may shift over time. The development and the organisational dynamics of “private” governance initiatives remain largely unexplored.

Following the CSR research and debate, there are also still gaps in terms of the respective role of business, government and civil society organisations in organising responsibility in the markets. Private governance, in the form of initiatives, partnerships and collaborations, is intended to perform these tasks, and so tie in to the question of Extended Producer or Buyer Responsibility and its processes. We can thus rest assured that the question of how responsibility is organised in the market remains under researched, especially its dynamics.

The private governance field involved in addressing and organising CSR issues can also be observed as fragmented, as is the lack of consensus and rules in how to do so. A plethora of overlapping initiatives, standards, and partnerships are available in the market for CSR: showing that CSR is still in a state of pre-institution in which the rules of the game have not yet been set. Business, government, and civil society organisations are still all

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trying to leave their permanent mark. How is this done and how is CSR organised over time in the markets? The next chapter will elaborate upon the theoretical framework of partial organising; we will then move onto a discussion about the organising of responsibility in the markets. We will then proceed to the research design, which is involved in answering these research questions. Hence, we will proceed with the empirical context of the global, as well as the local Swedish fashion and textile market upon which we will try to discern how and why CSR is organised. Thereafter, we proceed with the analysis and discussion of the role of business as well as that of government in organising CSR in the markets.

# Chapter 3

## Partial Organising

The importance of organising is brought forth in this chapter. The research question is: *How and why is responsibility framed and organised in the markets?* I will make heavy use of the theoretical toolkit of partial organising (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011). Ahrne and Brunsson (2011) as well as Rasche et al. (2013) provide keen insights into this under researched organising outside the scope of complete organisations. My research interest is empirically focused upon “private” governance initiatives attempting to organise responsibility for sustainability issues in markets. In this, studying the dynamics of organising for CSR (Rasche et al., 2013) proves highly interesting. The importance of analytical differences in different organising along the dimensions of complete to partial organising is especially highlighted.

### 3.1 The Return of Organising

Several have written about management fashions and the travel of ideas (Czarniawska & Joerges, 2006). In this era of postmodernity, it may almost seem as though organisation has gone out of fashion as a research idea. Organisation researchers fear the predominating focus upon institutions and networks and markets has – alas - almost made organisation appear obsolete (Djelic & Quack, 2003; Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011). The notion of organisation is frequently associated with Weberian bureaucracy and hierarchy.

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[...] Contemporary societies are characterized either by less structured forms of interaction among highly autonomous actors, perhaps leading to networks; or by highly structured forms with little freedom of action for individuals and organizations, such as the concept of institution suggests (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011, p. 2).

What is organisation and why is organising needed? According to several scholars, one of the main purposes of organisations is to coordinate the organising of collective efforts (Weber, 1978; Coase, 1937). Sometimes, organisations are labelled as collective social actors, as these can execute action akin to the manner of individuals (Scott, 2003). Similarly to the way an individual can enter into an agreement with other parties, organisations, too, can make decisions. The organisation can be perceived as responsible for its decisions (Brunsson, 1990): for example, over employees. Despite the organising of collective efforts of multiple actors, the organisation itself is also an actor.

The state of organising and organisation theory has recently been put under scrutiny (Greenwood et al., 2014; Meyer & Höllerer, 2014). The different camps contend that organisation studies are under and over socialised. The one camp focuses upon the boundaries of organisation, whilst the other hails the superseding and vitality of organising in non-formal organising. Partially, this might be why there is a great interest in partial organising: it allows for unveiling the organisational elements involved in organising. This is especially relevant when analysing how responsibility is organised in the markets, since so much of these kind of efforts are being organised outside of the confines of formal boundaries of organisation (March & Simon, 1958).

The forms and terminology of organising abound. Networks (Powell, 1990), semiformal (Biancani et al., 2014), meta-organisations (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2005, 2008; Gulati et al., 2012) are but some of the labels. The boundaries of organisations (Santos & Eisenhardt, 2005), thereby, become porous: difficult to delimit and perhaps even deemed unnecessary. “New” fluid forms of production (see Schreyögg & Sydow, 2010) with related terms - such as sharing economy, crowdfunding, and open-source communities - all complicate and blur the identification of the boundaries of organisations and, thereby, challenge key characteristics of classic organisa-

tion theory. Given the popularity of new ideas of spontaneous, lean and more flexible forms of organisation, organisation as an idea may no longer be obvious. Organisations seem to be less hierarchical and bureaucratic, and more flexible and spontaneous. Seemingly, these new forms of organisations defy organising; instead, they appear self-organising. This is where I turn to Ahrne and Brunsson (2011) and their conceptual framework of constitutive organisational elements: membership, hierarchy, rules, monitoring, and sanctioning.

## 3.2 Partial Organising

The focus upon complete organisation and organising takes for granted its characteristics and its multiplexity across social settings; it also averts the gaze from studying alternative modes of organising collective efforts: e.g. the study of “organization outside organizations” (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011): this allows the uncovering of what organising lies beyond the boundaries of complete organisations.

A corporate environment is often understood as an entangled web of institutions, networks, markets, and other informal relationships (Ménard, 1995; Scott, 2001; Powell, 2003). This may give rise to a blurring of the line between what constitutes institutions, networks, and organisations, respectively.

Ahrne and Brunsson (2011), however, differentiate between institutions, organisations, and networks. A network is something that arises organically, spontaneously, yet is not organised. Institutions are decided orders; organisations and organising constitute attempts at changing this pre-decided order. Organisation can be extended past formal corporate boundaries if the organising in question is characterised by membership, hierarchy, rules, monitoring, and sanctioning between actors. The difference between institutions and networks to organisations is networks and institutions constitute emergent orders in social life, whilst organisations are decided orders. Most organisations are built upon pre-existing emergent orders; yet they can be created *de novo*.

The vital importance of organisation and organising is a key to understanding the dynamics of society (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011; Drori et al.,



2006); these insights into society are, indeed, crucial in understanding organisation, and organising (Friedland & Alford, 1991). This new conceptualisation of organisations and organising allows a deepened understanding of these new forms and dynamics of organising.

To note, in this theoretical framework, “organisation” is frequently used interchangeably as a decided social order or a complete organisation. The nature of organisation as a decided order is argued to be contested and ultimately unstable. However, partial organisation implies that it is emergent and shifting. In this thesis, in order to emphasise the continuous efforts and unstable nature of partial organisation, I mainly make use of the term organising. The nature of partial organising is that it is not a complete organisation, rather that it makes use of a selection of organisational elements.

Following this view, organising occurs not only within the boundaries of complete organisations; “organisation” is better understood through the unpacking of the organisational elements involved in the black box of organising: membership, hierarchy, rules, monitoring, and sanctioning. Complete organisations make use of, and have access to, all of the five elements. Partial organising only makes use of some of these elements. Notably, partial organising can make use of all elements at various points in time. By exploring the organisational elements and the dynamics of organising, organising is brought back to the core of organisation theory: a sorely needed injection of vitality.

Institutions are often seen as the taken-for-granted social order: rules, regulations and norms, constraining and enabling behaviour. According to Berger and Luckmann (1966), they are the result of routinisation and habituation of interaction, which are left when organisation fades away. On the other hand, organising is a decided order. In order to reach this order, there are multiple alternative orders available. However, this act can be construed as creating a weak or unstable order, as it allows for questioning thereof. When trying to create change or address sustainability challenges, organising is expected to engender results quicker than through attempts to directly influence institutions (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011); it is rarely worth the wait for institutionalised practices to morph through socialisation. At least, if one wishes to accomplish change in a timely manner. In order to change

a taken-for-granted order of behaviour, a more efficient approach is seen to influence existing practices by the introduction of standards. The shift in sustainability reporting to integrated reporting via the International Integrated Reporting Framework (Gond & Boxenbaum, 2013) is one such example. “The contemporary global order is, to a considerable degree, an organized order” (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011, p. 18).

Although, activities taking place in the corporate environment may not involve complete organisations - but rather, networks, initiatives, movements, and markets - this is not to say that organising does not occur. Thus, in order to disentangle and demystify this mesh of organisations, networks and institutions, Ahrne and Brunsson (2011) attempt to remedy this untidiness by exploring the different organisational elements involved in organisations, thereby, leading to an exploration of what, at times, may be partial organising.

An organisation is a decided order, in which some or all organisational elements are used: partial or complete organising. An organisation may make use of all organisational elements at one point in time, yet remains partial if the use of all elements is not consistent. Partial organising sheds light upon the organising that occurs outside complete organisations (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011). In a complete organisation, each and every organisational element is subject to individual decision. However, there is no possibility to omit an organisational element therein (Brunsson, 2006). In partial organising, this may instead be a strategic choice; actors may actively seek partiality to further organisational ends. The choice of partial versus complete may be due to several reasons: either ideological or strategic. The presence or absence of an organisational element in organising can be associated with issues or tensions, whereto the solution might be to introduce or remove certain organisational elements.

In a world of rules, partial organising allows the bridging of regulatory gaps (Alexius, 2014): of governance without government. Complete organisations are more efficient than individual coordination, thus, reducing the number of units needed for social cooperation. This allows for governing at a distance. The use of merely certain organisational elements may also do the same. Organising constitutes an attempt at implementing a decided social order, through the act of decision-making. What is at stake here is an

order of who should take responsibility for what in a grand challenge. Indeed, issues that are difficult if not impossible to fully organise. Thus, when it comes to taking and attributing responsibility for sustainability issues such as water, there is ample need to take charge and organise for a (new) intended order, rather than remain in the current emergent order.

Nonetheless, organisational elements can be used on their own: individually and separately: or in conjunction with one or two. For example, those who wish to organise CSR issues, such as water use or labour rights, may not necessarily have the means to build a complete organisation. Thus, partial organising constitutes an opportunity to organise CSR when small means are possible or prioritised. The organising actor can, indeed, be a complete organisation, but acts and organises beyond the scope of such organisations.

Issues of collective dynamics also affect decisions made to organise responsibility and social movements, which frequently seek to influence business and the individuals that can, in turn, affect them. The development of collaboration between societal sectors has been described as adversarial (Doh & Guay, 2006); the relationship between civil society and the business sector is characterised by its conflict over “control of economic, cultural or social life” (De Bakker & Den Hond, 2013, p. 574). Benford and Snow (1992) highlight the importance of framing for how social movements can influence business in changing its practices. Corporations are of high interest for non-market and market actors, as these are an integral part of societal web: able to affect mundane life and the governance of society (Courpasson et al., 2008). Thus, business is able to set rules, but must also follow rules (Lernborg & Sendlhofer, 2017). How companies organise responsibility in the markets is, thus, a matter of both internal choice and of external necessity or stakeholder pressures. The empirical phenomenon of business-driven or multi-stakeholder initiatives can only be understood from this backdrop, with multiple stakeholder demands and rules. The emergence of business-driven initiatives seeking to organise responsibility in markets, without the obvious inclusion of social movement actors, may be indicative of preserving a certain value regime and cultural logic (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006; Thornton et al., 2012; Cloutier & Langley, 2013).

### 3.2.1 Partial Organising: For What has it Been Used?

Ahrne and Brunsson conceptualised partial organising was in their 2011 paper *Organization outside organizations*. During the past eight years, it has been cited 365 times, and the number of citations keeps on ticking. How have these advanced the understanding of partial organising?

The concept of partial organising is an attractive theoretical framework, which can be used to deconstruct such varying subjects as the following: organising CSR (Rasche et al. 2013; Brunsson et al., 2012; Norris & Revéret, 2015; Lernborg & Sendlhofer, 2017); CSR as a management idea (Jutterström & Norberg, 2013); standards and standardising (Brunsson et al., 2012; Rasche & Seidl, *Forthcoming*); organising crowdfunding (Roed-Nielsen, 2018; Berkowitz & Souchaud, 2017); the status process of prizes (Edlund et al., *Forthcoming*); queues (Ahrne et al., *Forthcoming*); organising global agendas (Garsten & Sörbom, *Forthcoming*); brotherhood (Sundberg, *Forthcoming*); as well as the organising of crime and terrorist networks (Ahrne & Rostami, *Forthcoming*; Schoeneborn & Scherer, 2012). These also frequently constitute instances of partial organising and organisations. Moreover, the lens of partial organising can be placed on the micro level; Ahrne (*Forthcoming*) deconstructs the organising of intimate relationships. Brunsson & Ahrne (2018) also find it useful to study the organising of markets through this lens.

As aforementioned, a majority of citations view the partial organising framework as a new theoretical lens to understand modern organisational challenges (De Bakker et al., 2013). It is helpful in order to understand numerous topics: the regulative capacity of meta-organisations such as the EU (Levi-Faur, 2011; Kerwer, 2013); organisation as communication (Schoeneborn, 2011; Blaschke et al., 2012); organisational change (Jansson, 2013), and also empirical phenomena such as migration (Weinryb, 2015); governance of marine resources (Österblom & Folke, 2013); social movements (den Hond, de Bakker, & Doh, 2015; Schoeneborn & Scherer, 2012; Dobusch & Schoeneborn, 2015; De Bakker & den Hond, 2013). Further, meta-organisations (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2005, 2008; Berkowitz & Dumez, 2016) have been another area of study. Moreover, the importance of membership as an organising element in meta-organisations is highlighted (Cropper & Le Bor, 2018).

Membership is found to be an important organisational element also for the organising in total institutions. Sundberg (2015) investigates total, and greedy, organisations, with the particular setting of the French Legion. In Sundberg (*Forthcoming*), the relationship between membership in total organisations and brotherhood is studied. Brotherhood may appear similar to friendship, but is different in that brotherhood should extend to members rather than established social ties. In lieu of costly organisational elements, the French Legion creates a greedy culture of obedience; the greedy part resides in the link between brotherhood and membership (Sundberg, 2015). Such membership seeks to reduce or erase affiliations to other memberships. Thus, for reasons of efficiency, total organisations create both material and social dependencies. Material dependency relates to the organisational membership, whereas the social dependency relates to the organisational membership as a means to feel part of something bigger, and also for purposes of friendship. This is relevant also to the case at hand, as motivations for membership relate to both individuals and organisations and may create links beyond formal relationships (see Chapter 8). The motivation for membership, and thereby brotherhood, is proportional to the individual member's economic resources and social ties in the world. Such a member will also be less prone to exiting the membership, if s/he has few close social ties in the outside world.

However, what has not yet been done is to examine the dynamics of elements in organising CSR. In this research, dynamics is thus understood as examining how the different elements are used, as well as in what order over time and why.

### 3.3 Organisational Elements in Organising for CSR

Following, we will go through the importance of organisational elements in organising for CSR: in complete organisations and in the partial organising of “private” governance initiatives.

#### 3.3.1 Complete Organisations

The general CSR literature has long focused upon individual organisations (Rasche et al., 2013): especially Multi-National Companies (MNCs) (Jamali

et al., 2009; Spence, 2007). CSR is often analysed through the lens of individual and complete organisation. Complete organising is only possible in an organisation with access to all of the organisational elements. Although CSR is often organised in a partial setting, few have related this multifaceted organising to the respective organisational elements (Rasche et al., 2013).

### 3.3.2 Partial Organising

The presence or absence of organisational elements in partial organising allows a multitude of combinations: for example, membership is not necessary for organising. An explanation of the individual elements and their relation to the organising of responsibility will follow, irrespective of the significance in organising, I will go through them in the following order: membership, hierarchy, rules, monitoring, and sanctioning.

#### **Membership**

Let us start with unravelling the organisational element of membership. The notion of membership involves mutual agreements concerning closed relationships. A complete organisation decides the boundaries of membership: who is allowed to join or who will be excluded (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011). Membership may also involve certain obstacles for the exit of membership. However, there need not be interaction or recognition of common interest between members. For example, the use of a membership card, such as belonging to retailer clubs such as “H&M Club” or “Lindex Club”, allows a membership despite lack of such interaction.

As an organisational element, membership establishes the direction of a decision: for whom is it aimed? It is essential for establishing a new order of decisions, the implementation of rules, and subsequently ensuring compliance. Therefore, the limits or boundaries of membership matter greatly when attempting to create a new order. There may be a wish to ensure compliance to rules when establishing membership. In order to rally membership, fewer organisational elements may be attractive (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011). In order to accommodate the need for compliance to rules, new organisational elements may be introduced over time (Rasche & Seidl, *Forthcoming*). Indeed, in Rosenström’s (2014) study of the organising of the

market of emission rights, membership and rules were kept very loose initially in order to rally as many members as possible.

Membership in an organisation is highly important to how the organisation sees itself, its organisational identity and, therefore, may potentially influence its understanding of CSR. Social influence theory highlights the importance of in-groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986); the social cohesiveness of a group (Ashforth & Mael, 1989) is important in forming such an identity. Membership in an organisation may determine how an organisation chooses to organise CSR, particularly how it builds stakeholder relationships (Basu & Palazzo, 2008). Conversely, the use of membership in partial organising of responsibility may also have implications for what the members (e.g. CSR managers) learn about CSR, their limited perspective, how they choose to organise CSR, and with what additional organisational elements.

Membership can be restricted to an exclusive category of organisation: e.g. companies in business-driven initiatives or in trade associations, or inclusive diversity of stakeholders, e.g. MSIs (Bendell et al., 2010). Furthermore, the legitimacy afforded to a particular type of initiative may also be tied to its membership (Lernborg & Luistro-Jonsson, 2018). It can be argued that a business-driven initiative's legitimacy is mainly output-oriented, whereas that of a multi-stakeholder initiative is mainly input-oriented (Mena & Palazzo, 2012). As previously noted, partial organising does not necessarily emerge as a result of failure to achieve a complete organisation; the particular use of organisational elements may, in fact, constitute a choice. The criterion for membership sets the limits for those accepted in the organisation and, thereby, which perspectives are allowed therein? The cross-sectoral collaboration literature emphasises the inclusion in membership of diverse types of actors - such as NGOs - further impacts organising choices and the level of responsibility, as well as a higher level of transparency and accountability (Gray & Stites, 2013; Le Ber & Branzei, 2010). Sandebring (2006) advances that it is also possible for public-private partnerships to not use the membership element, as it provides flexibility in changing purpose and related partners.

As aforementioned, most studies of CSR and its organising relate to complete organisations (Berkowitz et al., 2017; Rasche et al., 2013). Today,

scarcely any market can escape the issues of globalisation. Any global market needs to deal with a wide range of sustainability and responsibility issues. Such complex issues of globalisation cannot be resolved through contracts; they may increasingly require the participation of “related or unrelated industries and stakeholders” (Rasche et al., 2013, p. 765). In the case at hand, given the complexity involved with transnational regulation and responsibility gaps, it is clear that cross-cutting issues - such as water - cannot be defined or solved through contracts in order to organise responsibility in the markets (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2005; Gulati et al., 2012). Instead, they need to involve the participation of an entire market, as well as global and local stakeholders in order to address the particular externalities involved or by assuming an extended buyer responsibility: the whole range of its environmental and social impacts.

### **Hierarchy**

Ever since Darwin’s theory of Survival of the Fittest, social sciences has espoused that group hierarchy is necessary for success. Notably, Weber’s functional theory of bureaucracy is built upon this premise. Others in organisation theory have also explored the importance of hierarchy for groups, not least as a means to achieve organisation (Leavitt, 2005; Magee & Galinsky, 2008). The prevalence of hierarchies seemingly provides evidence of their efficiency (Anderson & Brown, 2010). Leavitt (2005) puts forth the argument that if there would be a more advantageous form of organisation, it would have been put into use already.

The element of hierarchy elucidates the responsibility of who is eligible to take what kind of decision (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011). In a complete organisation, it denotes who is responsible for what; in partial organising, it can be also used to push a member or non-member into monitoring of compliance to its decided rules. Without hierarchy, such possibilities are gravely reduced. Furthermore, hierarchy delicately connotes power, as well as responsibility. The lack of hierarchy and/or clear exact rules may also be beneficial in attracting and retaining organisational members (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008): i.e. in meta-organisations. If responsibility is to be avoided, hierarchy is also avoided. “Compliance rather than coercion” (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011, p. 94) is sought; indeed, those complying are thereby ulti-



mately responsible. For example, a fashion buyer can deliberately refrain from using the element of hierarchy in relation to implementing a rule: e.g. a CoC in the global supply chain. With hierarchy, buyers would assume responsibility, and follow-ups on its sustainability agenda would be expected. If omitting the organisational element of hierarchy, then the supplier must instead assume responsibility for its compliance to rules.

The presence or absence of hierarchy indicates a responsibility order: who is considered responsible, and why is it considered responsibility? It may be defined as a decided order in which the perceived responsible party or parties for a particular challenge is identified (Miller, 2001; Alexius, 2017). This responsibility order in the markets is frail and fragile, and is constantly subjected to contestation. This is further in line with the emergent perspective of CSR adopted in this thesis: a “permanent issue and an area of debates in management theory and practice, rather than a well stabilized construct with a clear and constant operationalization” (Gond & Moon, 2011, p. 4). With fluctuating definitions, constructions and framings of CSR, different claims to responsibility are made, accepted or rebuffed by market actors.

The “right to oblige others to comply with central decisions” (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011, p. 86) can be formally or informally done. It leads to the establishing of rules by which members are to abide. This also leads to (meta) rules by which non-members may also have to abide. There is a discussion in the CSR literature whether or not a command and control approach is effective: i.e. controlling suppliers through codes of conduct and audits in global supply chains (Locke et al., 2007; Locke, 2013). Although this type of approach evokes hierarchy, hierarchy relates to exercising influence over another actor in the direction of the decision taken: To whom does it apply? Hierarchy need not merely imply top management, but may of course involve various means to ensure compliance with decisions. This also includes the use of the organisational elements of rules and monitoring.

## **Rules**

Another important facet for complete organisations is the establishment of explicit rules, which members are to follow. The Weberian notion of rules affords them the quality of consistency. Organisations coordinate the or-

ganising of collective efforts (Weber, 1978). Decisions have a direction: if a decision is made in one part of the organisation – then it can be executed in another.

One way to justify and legitimise decisions is the creation of a set of rules. These enable limiting the degree of uncertainty and increase consistency (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011). Rules aim to provide direction for the decisions taken, given that it implies who is targeted by the decision of rules. As previously explained, with a varying legal landscape, cultural and moral differences in views, and multiplicity of business practices, the organising responsibility for sustainability issues takes place in situations of responsibility gaps. This includes what can be labelled, as of yet, a not fully standardised jungle of markets. Which rules are to be implemented? It is also difficult to foresee which rules to follow, and what organisational elements are deemed as necessary.

The most frequent type of rule used by complete organisations to organise CSR is a standard: i.e. a Code of Conduct (CoC). CoCs constitute rules applied to the suppliers in the global supply chain. These are typically monitored in the form of audits in order to ensure the stipulated rules are followed. According to Stevens et al. (2005), codes are found relevant to be integrated into organisational decision-making, specifically when market organisers – for example, NGO watch dogs or shareholders - exert pressure to take the code seriously. CoCs are thus intended for use outside the boundaries of a complete organisation. Rules such as CoCs are merely one way to disseminate the internal organisational view and societal expectations of responsible behaviour. Other formal and informal rules and means of organising are also at the disposal of complete organisations.

As aforementioned, standards are one of the main rules used in order to organise responsibility. They are mechanisms of social order and can be seen as a way of organising society - especially the markets. Standards have become increasingly ubiquitous in many types of exchanges, not least for responsibility issues. They can be seen as a hybrid form of control, combining formal directives with informal norms (Brunsson & Jacobsson, 2000). They often represent compromise between different groups of interest, rather than expert-based solutions. Furthermore, there are many competing standards, with new groups creating other standards and, thus, new groups

becoming standardisers. A common example given by Brunsson et al. (2012) is that of business associations forming meta-organisations in order to produce their own member standards, hoping to be accepted by members and other stakeholders. The barriers of entry for standards are currently very low, with many private and public-private standardisers currently competing.

### **Monitoring and Sanctioning**

Rules lay the crucial foundation for how the elements of monitoring and sanctioning can be used. As the use of monitoring implies the direction of decisions, monitoring allows an understanding of the element of hierarchy and the boundaries of membership. Which actors are to be monitored and how? Accepting such decisions mean different things for those who are being monitored and for those who are interested in the decision about the results of the monitoring (e.g. grades, certifications, and ratings).

A key organisational element is to monitor practices in order to ensure that fellow members adhere to rules: performance, reporting or the occurrence of standards. This can be done through reports, use of measurable targets, and KPIs. The success of partnerships is also often seen as dependent upon the implementation of clear goals and monitoring mechanisms (Austin, 2000; Bäckstrand, 2006).

As aforementioned, rules in the form of CoCs are the most common organisational elements used by a company in order to organise CSR (see Chapter 3). A strand of CSR research debates whether the implementation of CoCs is truly substantive or merely symbolic (Egels-Zandén, 2017; Stevens et al., 2005). When it comes to the organising of responsibility and the element of monitoring, this organisational element is often seen as ensuring the effectiveness of such CoCs (Petersen & Krings, 2009). Monitoring of this common type of CSR rule is frequently executed by an ensuing audit. Singh (2011) establishes that over half of all Canadian firms make use of internal audits in order to ensure compliance with codes (ethics or conduct). However, the demand for more independent monitoring and third-party verification mechanisms has increased over time (Compa, 2008). This is very costly, in terms of resources. Internal or self-monitoring requires resources, yet this also yields low effectiveness and perceived legitimacy.

Independent monitoring can pool resources, and has higher levels of legitimacy. Yet, it is also often found toothless for improving labour and trade union rights (O'Rourke, 2006; Egels-Zandén & Lindholm, 2015; Egels-Zandén & Merk, 2014). Different initiatives make use of different methodologies, including the use of pre-announced visits, different levels of financing, and incentives for suppliers to comply. There are also limitations in what is monitored in audits; mainly management concerns are included. Thereby, auditors do not identify the main issues of concern of workers (Utting, 2005).

Legislation increasingly warrants firms to monitor implementation of such rules (e.g. the Dodd-Frank Act in the USA: Park, 2014; Taylor, 2015); there has been great focus on monitoring, compliance, and verification mechanisms in the past decade. Monitoring as an organisational element is not necessarily confined to auditing. It can also involve a complaint-based system, as well as whistle-blower systems (Beets & Killough, 1990). Other reporting and accounting systems can also provide monitoring effects, by creating more transparency and making it easier to oversee and govern (Miller & O'Leary, 1987). The legislation on non-financial reporting, established by the EU, is also intended to monitor such organising (European Commission, 2016).

Sanctioning rule following is essential. Such sanctioning can be informal or formal: the former can provide identity or legitimacy and, thereby, resources to members. Positive or negative sanctions can also impact the intended rule-follower. Indeed, sanctions constitute a very powerful element by obliging another organisation to comply. Naturally, it may be in the interest of a buyer to monitor and sanction its supplier for compliance. On the one hand, this may incur additional costs and motivate the buyer to remain on a fairly low level of organising for responsibility. On the other hand, as relating to audits, monitoring is frequently outsourced to other market actors for reasons of independence, efficiency, and expertise. This relates to a responsibility order (see Section 3.3.2) in which hierarchy and monitoring imply accountability and responsibility for the conditions at suppliers. This may be both undesirable and costly for buyers.

Furthermore, monitoring is frequently combined with sanctioning when implementing CoCs. Most research focuses upon negative sanctions,

such as fines and legal actions. Even without explicit sanctions, parties may assume the existence of such sanctions. Thus, the absence of this organisational element may not impinge on the threat of sanctioning if this absence is not materialised (Treviño & Ball, 1992). Conversely, organisations can bring positive sanctions in the form of individual rewards, including meeting CSR expectations.

Partial organising occurs when not all organisational elements are present. As noted, various labels exist for organising for CSR (e.g. cross-sectorial or public-private partnerships, multi-stakeholder initiatives, or business-driven initiatives). These increasingly constitute partial organising, making use of different combinations and sequences of organisational elements, thereby, allowing interesting comparisons and theoretical insights. Let us move on to describe the type of organising efforts prevalent in these “private” governance initiatives.

### 3.3.3 Organisational Elements of Private Governance Initiatives

What I refer to as “private” governance initiatives often focus upon the solution to a particular issue. Two popular examples relate to the unsustainable production practices of palm oil or of wood: e.g. the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) and the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). The two most common forms of such organising are Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives (MSIs) and Business-Driven Initiatives (BDIs), which are examined below. Such solving or organising frequently takes the shape of creating new rules for how to address these complex global issues, aiming to create a collective impact. Such rules are often formalised through CoCs, standards or other guidelines.

#### **Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives**

What are MSIs? They constitute collaborative partnerships aimed to deal with so-called wicked challenges (Dentoni & Bitzer, 2015; Waddell et al., 2013); complex global problems that affect the majority must be addressed collectively. Private governance through MSIs involves collaboration and sharing of responsibility between a combination of stakeholders from multiple sectors, civil society, business, and government (Fransen & Kolk, 2007; Le Ber & Branzei, 2010).

The membership of civil society organisations (CSOs) in MSIs is seen as the fundamental guarantee for ensuring that impacted marginalised communities and stakeholder groups are allowed a voice (Laasonen, 2012) and, thereby, provide legitimacy for the initiative itself (Bäckstrand, 2008; Kourola & Laasonen, 2012; Mena & Palazzo, 2012). In business-driven initiatives, membership is organised more exclusively which leads to a lower perceived level of legitimacy (Merk, 2007; Fransen, 2012).

### **Business-Driven Initiatives**

BDIs share the same purpose of creating rules for collective impact. What characterises BDIs versus MSIs is the former have started at the behest of an industry or a market; its competitors cooperate and compete in different ways. This particular type of initiative has been particularly prominent in consumer-oriented markets, such as agriculture (Fuchs et al., 2011), apparel (Marques, 2016) and electronics (Airike et al., 2016). Indeed, MSIs first emerged in the forestry and apparel sectors in the 1990s (Bartley, 2007) and its diffusion appears to have led to multiple overlapping standards (Turcotte et al., 2015) Moreover, concerns such as the increasing number of demands from CSOs placed in MSIs led companies to establish BDIs. Kolk (2013) highlights the trade-offs between inclusive stakeholder participation and effectiveness of implementation. She notes the boundaries between MSIs and BDIs are blurred, in that “partnerships, [...] in reality often seem to be mere business-business collaboration” (p. 36) with NGOs in service-delivery roles and government as mere donors.

MSIs are usually comprised of members from different sectors: private, civil, and public organisations; members in BDIs come from the same sector (i.e. business). All members should be included on an equal democratic footing in MSIs (Van Huijstee et al., 2007). Membership is also non-hierarchical in BDIs; however, membership is not as inclusive. Decisions in both types are to be made consensually and democratically, yet there may be some form of hierarchical element, as actions must be taken, and decisions must be made regarding another group of actors. Hierarchy involves “a right to oblige others to comply with central decisions” (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011). Norris and Revéret (2015) describe its empirical case as involving a group of one chair and two co-chairs of leadership; as work

progressed, the leadership became more shared and decision-making process was increasingly open. Over time, hierarchy became looser and more partial.

The purpose of the ongoing processes in MSIs and BDIs is to establish and implement rules that organise collective responsibility for sustainability issues; another part is to enforce such rules. Not all types of private governance initiatives do both. Furthermore, the possibilities of sanctioning non-compliant participants are limited, with the exception of expulsion. Notably, the UN Global Compact has been criticised for its toothless sanctions for non-compliance (Rasche & Gilbert, 2012; Sethi & Schepers, 2014). Thus, there are few possibilities of monitoring and sanctioning non-compliant business participants and enforcing more sustainable and responsible practices. MSIs are de facto a soft form of law, which derives its strength from societal expectations and adherence thereof (Cashore, 2002) and, ultimately, on the basis of legitimacy. Thus, rules are frequently relevant to this type of organising (Rasche et al., 2013): with internal rules governing the initiative as well as defining membership criteria. However, there are frequently few rules on how to behave within an initiative. The respective use of organisational elements has implications for the organising of responsibility. Such use is frequently a result of conscious choices – particularly enabling enhanced flexibility, plasticity, and diffusion of rules (Rasche & Seidl, *Forthcoming*). Loose rules have a tendency to lead to toothless or lacking monitoring and, thereby, few sanctioning mechanisms. There may also be dispersion of organisational elements: one actor creates the rules; another monitors them. Such separation of organisational elements makes it more difficult to assign responsibility for irresponsible practices (Rasche & Seidl, *Forthcoming*). This may contribute to a responsibility order in which it becomes difficult to assign responsibility, as well as shift responsibility to other market actors.

Membership in private governance initiatives is often seen as such a way to strengthen CSR programs and the organising thereof (Compa, 2008). However, when it comes to monitoring, formal processes are not necessarily in place. Business members, however, will often closely monitor one another in order to assess the results (Bondy et al., 2012). Bäckstrand (2006) highlights the importance of various monitoring mechanisms as

some of the most important aspects of organising “successful” partnerships. When it comes to sanctioning, as is consistent with most voluntary cross-sectoral partnerships or multi-stakeholder initiatives (Glasbergen, 2011), few negative sanctions are available and/or enforced in cross-sectoral partnerships: mainly expulsion from the initiative. Overall, mainly positive sanctions have been used in order to convince parties to continue pursuing and organising CSR goals. These include signaling the positive side effects from engaging in a voluntary CSR initiative.

Monitoring and sanctioning are, thus, tightly linked. Rules and monitoring usually constitute the basis for the use of sanctioning. Additionally, membership is based upon classes of organisations, similar to meta-organisations in organising attempts, such as the one we will observe. These are characterised by a threat to member organisations’ autonomy and identity. Ahrne and Brunsson (2008) argue that meta-organisations hold difficulty in creating rules in the form of hard law as a result of members’ continued autonomy they often create or promote voluntary standards instead: i.e. self-rn et al., 2013; Nikoloyuk et al. 2010) Another empirical example of a private governance initiative provided by Norris and Revéret (2015) also lacked individual sanctioning mechanisms. However, it did have partial implementation of monitoring and rules, and full implementation of membership and hierarchy. This highlights the possibility afforded by partial organising: maintaining flexibility whilst implementing certain organisational elements. In order to allow for a desired social order: for example, it is difficult to know what level of hierarchy, monitoring or sanctions is appropriate or even desirable. Do rules and sanctions need to be explicit?

### 3.4 Discussion

Partial organising is one possibility of organising in an increasingly fragile global order, suffering from responsibility gaps. How necessary are all five organisational elements for organising responsibility in the markets? The concepts of complete and partial organising (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011) are appealing in order to enable further unpacking of CSR and related concepts: such as guidelines, Codes of Conduct and standards, etc. Rasche et al. (2013) point to several avenues of further research in order to unpack



the dynamics of organising CSR; the prominence of certain forms of organisations in order to institutionalise CSR activities: What is the role of certain organisational elements in this process? By providing the basis for the actions of the latter elements, membership and hierarchy are strong premises for rules, monitoring, and sanctioning.

Until now, few have made use of partial organising in their analytical processes. This is a promising avenue for theoretical development, especially considering the topic of this thesis: the organising of responsibility in markets. This is a topic that evokes theories of organisation, responsibility, CSR, as well as markets. The possibilities brought forth by the concept of partial organising to study the integral organisational elements are manifold: absence or presence, and its respective significance. Rather than limiting the study through merely the boundaries of complete organisations, this allows us to elucidate the chosen phenomena of organising responsibility: business-driven initiatives with undetermined organisational boundaries of control and influence.

Private governance initiatives have been particularly established as attempts to organise responsibility. Similar to meta-organisations, these make use of differing types or classes of membership, rules, as well as of monitoring and sanctioning. Hierarchy is seldom used actively in order to allow for consensus-based decision-making. The type of membership involved is particularly important in order for it to be seen as modern and legitimate. The categories of membership used are especially interesting in order to understand the boundaries of responsibility and, thereby, relevant to the topic of organising responsibility in the markets.

In the upcoming chapter of markets, organising and responsibility, I will further investigate how markets are organised, rather than self-organising. Markets are, indeed, partially organised, involving a number of different types of organisers, including government. The specific importance of the idea of the Market for organising responsibility is also examined.

# Chapter 4

## Markets, Organising and Responsibility

Organising markets in the age of the Anthropocene is, indeed, organising society. The links between business and society have never been clear-cut; however, the responsibility of merchants has been elaborated upon since at least the advent of liberalism and John Stuart Mill's treaties. The particular blend of Scottish morality and liberty, moral philosophy and economics, prevalent in Mill's (1859) and Smith's (1759; 1776) works, appears to have been forgotten. The ideal of markets has since been based upon a utility-maximising formula. All that remains is an idea of the Market.

Markets are all over. We transact and interact with them almost daily. We do not reflect upon it; it is just there. Stockbrokers believe in it; politicians tell us it will prevail: we only need to believe. We also hear of its downside: death, despair and homelessness; the path of destruction which leads poor labourers in the global supply chain to barely survive on less than a living wage, and associated environmental failures. More and more, it seems that society wishes for markets to solve these issues. Increasingly popular, marketisation involves pricing public goods such as water into commodities. Creating new markets characterised by standards and private governance initiatives is hailed as the solution to business' and our planet's survival.

Given the prevalence of transnational regulation and responsibility gaps in a globalised world, the role of nation-states has been made obsolete, according to some observers (Beck, 1992; Rosenau & Czempiel, 1992) Where do we take responsibility? How do we take responsibility instead? The pop-

ular answer has been in and through the market. As in the self-regulating ideal of markets, there is no need to organise responsibility. However, in practice, there are numerous instances of the lack of responsibility taken. Accordingly, there are numerous claims of, but also attempts at taking responsibility. As this chapter states, the idea of the free and self-regulating market is idealistic yet unrealistic, and remains a staple of society discourse and practice.

I concern myself in this thesis with how responsibility is organised in the market. Accordingly, I follow the organising of a particular private governance initiative aimed at organising water use in the global supply chain. Responsibility is, at its roots, a deeply moral and ethical issue. Why take responsibility is at the core of the whole CSR debate. However, the moral roots of responsibility are largely omitted in current CSR literature and discourse. Instead, responsibility is often reduced to its instrumental market potential: the business case for CSR or the market for virtue<sup>5</sup> (Vogel, 2005). The importance of CSR as a market idea is further emphasised. I argue in this chapter that the organising of CSR in the market, is also part of (re) organising the market.

Therefore, we will first proceed with an overview of the conceptualisation of markets, their organising and their limits for organising responsibility. The chapter concludes with a discussion on organising responsibility in the markets, what is involved and especially the importance of the market idea for organising responsibility.

## 4.1 Conceptualising Markets

### 4.1.1 The Ideal of the Free and Self-regulating Market

Let's start at the very beginning: What is then a market? Herzog (2013) defines it as an institutionalised space in which goods and services can be ex-

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<sup>5</sup> Chapter 1 introduced the concept of the business case for CSR. This implies that there is a short- or long-term material or immaterial gain in relation to taking and organising responsibility. Vogel (2005) labels this the market for virtue, applying to individual companies, as well as to constellations thereof: such as in the case study in this thesis.

changed for reasons of direct self-interest, most often via monetary means. This is the classical meaning of a market: the planned gathering for mercantilism, organised forums for buying, and selling in a state of competition.

Since the Age of the Enlightenment, the notion of freedom – both for man and markets – has been a main preoccupation of political theory and philosophy. The most famous spawn of which is Liberalism, the proponents of which are also frequently associated to ideas of free markets. In its ideal state, with no governmental intervention, markets are frequently defined as free. An example of a free market is usually considered the stock market, in which the intense and frequent buying and selling most resembles the models in economics textbooks. Ahrne, Aspers and Brunsson (2018) highlight the paradox that these alleged free markets, stock markets, or exchanges, in fact constitute some of the most highly organised markets (Weber, 2000; Aspers, 2011). Indeed, the more an individual market is to reflect a perfect market model, the more organising efforts are needed (Furusten, 2018).

The ideal of free markets is different to that of pure markets. The ideal of free markets is associated to a freedom of choice of market actors and a complete lack of governmental intervention. Pure markets, however, are associated to an ideal of market competition, and thereby also require significant organisational efforts. Strandqvist (2018) in his study of the Swedish pipe and tube market finds that the use of cartels was not considered problematic when the free market ideal dominated the discourse, but became increasingly so with the growing popularity of the ideal of the pure market. The idea of “competitive collaboration” is sometimes likened to a cartel-like situation and is therefore seen as alien to the pure market ideal. Competitive collaboration would have been seen as unproblematic in the era of the free market ideal.

Economists favour markets because they think, under the right or perfect conditions, markets promote an efficient allocation of resources. The development of material prosperity over the past centuries is that of is often explained as the rise of (the) markets (Smith, 1776; Herzog, 2013), thereby, allowing the satisfaction of individuals wants and needs at an unprecedented scale. Thus, it is often taken for granted that markets are the best way of organising production and distribution. Under perfect condi-

tions, markets are thereby thought to be self-regulating and, thereby, most efficient means of allocating resources. However, there are rarely if ever ideal and perfect conditions in the world; instead, there is a lot of organising efforts.

#### 4.1.2 The Powerful Idea of the Market

Markets and the ideas about them are constantly attributed new meaning and are, thus, gaining influence in new spheres (Brunsson, 2014). The conceptual importance of the idea of the market has wavered throughout modern history. The financial crash in 1929, and the ensuing Great Depression, led the appeal of markets to wane. However, we appear to be back focusing once again upon the idea of the market. The spread of the Market idea is quickly expanding to new sectors and settings (Brunsson, 2014).

Markets are seen as having autonomous power: formidable forces of nature. According to its proponents, market forces are thought to be able to organise society itself, rather than society organising markets. The consequences thereof are at the root of the current CSR discourse; it is up to market actors to organise CSR. CSR can be seen, however, as rooted in a particular flavour of liberalism (Djelic & Etchanchu, 2017) in which the markets play a particular role. Furthermore, the modern market economy is, indeed, a very particular, historically rooted, and embedded social organising (Dobbin, 2004; Block, 2007). Markets are often historically established and taken-for-granted, rather than based upon the homo economic utility-maximising logic that neoclassic economics model associated to it (Fligstein & Dauter, 2007). Brunsson and Jutterström (2018b) note that market actors do not always act as expected, particularly they can be less rational and utility-maximising than what is expected by market organisers.

Given the increase of the importance of economic news, it can seem as though society serves the market, and not the other way around (Grafström, 2014). Markets can even be viewed as performative (Callon, 1998; MacKenzie, 2005; MacKenzie & Millo, 2003), based on the neoclassical model. Aspers (2007), however, stresses that this literature does not realise that the neoclassical model was originally based on actual, and highly organised, markets. Markets are man-made and as such, that which is in man is in the markets. Economic models still rule the world. Yet, such models at

times make simplistic assumptions about human agency and social interactions. The assumptions in decision-making include rationality and pure self-interest. These assumptions do not necessarily hold, yet continue to be used to make wide claims for reality. Notably, the concept of homo economicus has been disproven yet continues to be a staple assumption of economic models (Siebenhüner, 2000).

The great crash in 1929 turned society away from the market economy for a time since the financial risks involved were considered to be too great. However, any time “the market” run amok these days, there are invariably societal and governmental interventions. Nevertheless, the idea of the market economy is so seared into our society and culture that financial crashes are treated as interim anomalies or even mishaps, and the rowdy markets are left back to its devices. According to Herzog (2013), market ideology has the highest turnover in the marketplace of ideas in promoting the belief in its idea and premises. Thus, the idea of the self-regulated, non-organised, market is still very much alive.

The implications of the market idea are very important for who, why, how and where responsibility is organised. Not only does it promote the so-called self-regulating aspects of markets for organising responsibility; it also leads to the markets being the arena in which all this organising takes place. In terms of responsibility, companies have been encouraged to self-regulate, through Codes of Conduct and various other rules (see Section 2.3). Such encouragement is linked to a market incentive for efficient functioning: that is to say the business case for CSR. The reasoning for this is that when such a business case has been framed, companies will take on and self-organise responsibility accordingly. This will, indeed, require continuous organising efforts. Governments also have a self-interest therein; therefore, and Chapter 7 will reveal regarding the case at hand how STWI can be seen as governmental intervention to shape the market towards more responsibility, all the while preserving the sanctity of the market exchange.

#### 4.1.3 Limits of and to Markets

In this secular day and age, it may at times seem as though the Market has replaced the all-mighty Father. In our time, the Market is divine, and mod-

ern economics are its scripture. The Market are both revered and feared. Market fundamentalism appears to have, indeed, gained a strong foothold in Sweden, which is consistent with a strong belief in the idea of the Market being the provider of solutions, as well as of efficiency. This stance, however, is not without critique, especially regarding the limits of markets (Jacobsson, 2000).

Markets are different kinds of animals today than those that Adam Smith (1776) theorised. Still, their ideas form the basis for much of the debate on markets by political philosophers and economists alike, and naturally for business administration scholars who have been shaped by their ancestor economics. Many of their most important ideas have been translated and transformed to another meaning than the definitions held in their days. To note, a metaphor such as the invisible hand (Smith, 1776), has taken on a life of its own. Thus, often our ideas of the Market are inherited, and translated, by relatively recent adapters. We do not see the ideas of the market in its actual form, merely the translation of a theoretical market ideal. The idea of the invisible self-regulating hand of the market is much more refined and less categorical than what is attributed to Adam Smith. This is also the case herein, as it is not so much responsibility that is organised in the market; rather it perhaps the market idea organising responsibility. The idea of the Market involves ideals of efficient self-regulation, which constitutes a key aspect in the framing of CSR as a business case and has had considerable influence on organising choices.

There are considerable critiques and concerns of the limits of markets and market economy or society. One important critique comes from economists themselves and concerns the efficiency of market. They frequently point out the limits of markets, and that markets should only be used when considered more efficient than other organisational and institutional arrangements. Market specific arrangements are quite demanding, and sometimes – alternative institutional arrangements are considered more efficient. For example, when it comes to public goods such as drinking water, it is more efficient to have public ownership of the pipe network than to have competing fleets of water tankers. This is the reason why drinking water costs less in a European capital than it does in Nairobi or Jakarta (Jaglin & Bousquet, 2011).

A decided responsibility order in the markets includes the decision of who is to be involved in such organising. It is vital to establish who is responsible and who should be involved in the organising. Such classification includes framing of related responsibility issues, and thereby its organising. Increasingly, the idea and ideal of the market as free and self-regulating is influential in how responsibility is to be organised. Alas, in practice, markets are neither self-regulating nor free, but rather are partially organised. To note, this partial organising involves both public and private actors. Nevertheless, hope remains that if markets or the idea of the market is introduced in a setting, efficiency and competition will ensure efficient self-regulation. So too in relation to the organising of responsibility for sustainability issues. With globalisation a number of responsibility gaps have arisen, particularly in relation to the global supply chain. Many actors act in parallel in order to establish their particular responsibility order. This is mainly done through the establishing of a market of standards (see Section 4.2.1), contributing to overlaps and increased competition and fragmentation.

#### 4.1.4 How are Markets Organised?

As aforementioned, markets are frequently purported to be self-regulating or self-organising. As such, markets have been viewed as inherently different to organisations and organising; they are seen as alternatives rather than complements. However, as I argue in this Chapter, markets too are organised. Markets are not neutral forces of good or evil. Rather, man and all of our ideas shape them. And the idea of the market influences the why how, who and where to organise responsibility.

Addressing or solving problems through markets is frequently seen as an alternative to organising including governmental regulation. Nevertheless, reality is messier and does not follow neat models:



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It is only by trying out beautiful ideas in practice, that we come to undermine them<sup>6</sup> (Brunsson, 2014, p. 21).

One of Polanyi's (1944) main arguments centres upon the continued importance of the role of the government in the economy, particularly the involvement in the three fictitious commodities: land, labour, and money. Farmers constitute such an example: in order to ensure continuity in the food production, they are protected by number of state and supra-state devices from market pressures and conditions of nature. Additionally, the state secures the supply of labour through agricultural education and also shields labourers from unemployment through benefits. Also, even though a market-based economy may be deemed self-regulating, the government adjusts money supply. Thus, it is hard to argue that the state is de facto outside of a full-fledged market-based economy. It becomes clear that a certain measure of organising and regulation is required to keep a market alive, be it by non-market, or market actors. What is defined as market and non-market however appears to have become increasingly difficult to ascertain. The market economy as such is, thus, dependent upon governmental decisions.

Further, the state-government is not only an important market organiser, creating, shaping and monitoring markets; particularly in the Swedish context, it is also an important buyer and seller in many markets. Indeed, one fourth of all Swedish state authorities hold an assignment of market organising (Andersson et al., 2017).

Polanyi's (1944) main claim is that it is rarely possible, if not impossible, for markets to self-regulate. In line with Polanyi (1944), Kobrin (2008) finds that the idea of a self-adjusting or self-regulating market is impossible. Even a libertarian laissez-faire economy is planned; governmental instruments and social control afford its legitimacy. Markets and their organising require large endowments of administrative functions of the state-government: so-called self-regulating markets are never alone or natural; they are always embedded in a particular social and political order. Thus,

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<sup>6</sup> Author's translation, original quote: "Det är genom att pröva vackra idéer i praktiken som vi undergräver dem".

markets are always organised to a certain degree. Sustainability issues discussed in relation to markets increasingly relate to the struggle between markets' limitless needs and those of nature and human beings. Thereby, market organising involves issues of morality: that of preserving the dignity of nature and of human beings.

What is important in relation to the chosen theoretical framework is to consider that, when discussing the organising of markets, they are not completely; rather, they are partially organised (Alexius, 2014a; Ahrne & Brunsson, 2015). This is important to bear in mind when reflecting upon the importance of the market idea for organising responsibility.

## 4.2 Organising Responsibility in Markets

When it comes to markets, this is an area in which there are often unforeseen consequences and unclear patterns of responsibility. Especially for areas in which there has never been governmental regulation. As established, organising responsibility in markets involves several parallel organisers, with varying levels of resources and of willingness. These discrepancies naturally contribute to the difficulty in organising responsibility in markets.

The hope for achieving change and improving issues of responsibility and sustainability is increasingly directed to the market. For example, adjusting to market pricing of natural resources for example has become a popular idea regarding how to organise for the saving of precious natural resources, such as rain forests (Vijge, 2016). Although there may be such potential, it is important to note that markets do not self-organise spontaneously. The agency for organising responsibility is thus lent to markets. In accordance, affordances must be made, and markets be persuaded. How are markets persuaded to do so? The name of the game is efficiency, and in turn, profitability. Chapter 1 introduced the concept of the business case for CSR. This implies that there is a short- or long-term material or immaterial gain in relation to taking and organising responsibility.

Organising responsibility in the market is complex. From an emic perspective, such responsibility is often reduced to CSR. Although a concept with many definitions, CSR constitutes a particular form or version of responsibility: influencing its organising. As elaborated in Section 2.3.5, the

business case for CSR has become ever more popular. This is to be seen in the light of organising responsibility is to take place in the market, in which self-regulation is seen as key. Thus, the benefits of organising responsibility in the markets need to be clarified. CSR has moved from an ethics to a performance orientation. As presented in Chapter 2, an overwhelming number of motivations, pitches or framings for business to organise responsibility have emerged, thus, accommodating such behaviour. Even in the face of human suffering and natural disasters, activists have taken to motivate CSR action and organising by its bottom-line financial impact (Vogel, 2005).

In the German context, Lohmeyer and Jackson (2018) examine the understanding of the overwhelming importance of the idea of the business case for CSR through discourse analysis, especially how it has rallied support as a coalition magnet. The CSR business case has currently gained support from previous adversaries such as NGOs and government. This is in line with the aforementioned. Overwhelmingly, it is found that the CSR business case is an important motivation for engaging in CSR: in literature, as well as in practice.

Transparency and accountability are seen as particularly key concepts in CSR (Laasonen, 2012) and its organising. As such, they are benefitted by the organisational elements of hierarchy, monitoring, and sanctioning. Yet, market-based initiatives and solutions to organise responsibility – such as STWI – constitute examples of sites of partial organising and do not necessarily have access to all of these elements (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011). As exemplified in Table 4.1, Alexius (2014a) compares the preconditions of markets versus organisations to organise responsibility, underlining the complexity involved in organising responsibility in markets.

Table 4.1 Preconditions of Markets vs. Organisations to Organise Responsibility, based on Alexius (2014a).

<b>Organisational Preconditions (Completely Organised)</b>	<b>Markets' Preconditions (Partially Organised)</b>	<b>Site of Partial Organising (STWI)</b>
Membership	No membership Difficult to determine who belongs to market(s)	Membership
Hierarchy (and managers with overall responsibility)	No formal hierarchy	Little hierarchy
Rules and regulations (contracts, etc.)	Unclear who leads and decides in markets	Unclear who leads and decides
Mission statement	Generally lower degree of joint regulation	Mission statement of intent
Easy to identify decision-makers Decided order that enables surveillance and higher degree of transparency	Difficult to identify decision makers <b>Generally more difficult to monitor and accomplish transparency</b>	Difficult to establish a decided order that enables monitoring and transparency

Thus, I argue that markets are not self-regulating or self-organising. In fact, they can often even be considered partially organised, with one or several organisational elements at their disposal. Frequently, government sets the preconditions and rules of their functioning. However, in a common, yet, idealistic view, they are purported to be spontaneous, free and self-regulating. Given the complexity of factors, and gaps in regulation and responsibility, the role of the government appears to be obsolete in order to organise for responsibility in the markets.

#### 4.2.1 Market of Standards

There is now a market of rules or of standards. Many organisations, particularly in CSR matters, pay hefty fees to follow other organisations' set of rules or standards to be certified, thus reflecting their commitment to societal norms. Some rules have gained more legitimacy than others, especially

those based upon certain types of membership in governance initiatives (see Chapter 3).

The rise of “private” governance of global supply chains has led to a plethora of rules, norms, standards, and particularly CoCs that deal with a vast array of social and environmental issues. This proliferation of standards and codes has, in itself, become a concern at the international policy level. The fragmentation of overlapping, conflicting, and competing non-state regulations creates a tangled web of confused customers, as well as overwhelmed buyers and suppliers. This in itself is a hindrance of sound and efficient global governance of supplier responsibility (Bartley, 2010; Black, 2008; Locke, 2013; Vogel, 2010). Indeed, it appears that a new and partially organised market has emerged: one with its own advantages and drawbacks.

As discussed in Chapter 3 in relation to meta-organisations, multiple “private” governance initiatives compete for members in the same markets. These have frequently varying policy focus, thus, creating artificial boundaries between issues; despite inter-relatedness, in isolation focus upon governing slightly different issues (Fransen & Conzelmann, 2015). This creates difficulties in organising interconnected sustainability issues: especially wicked problems or grand challenges such as land use, water, and climate change. As such, these grand challenges require coordination; instead, varying approaches may be counterproductive to its organising. Also, initiatives with a similar focus may engage in “standard wars” instead of cooperating (Reinecke et al., 2012; Brunsson et al., 2015).

#### 4.2.2 The Swedish Empirical Context of Organising Markets and Responsibility

The particular organising of responsibility in the markets studied in this thesis occurs in a particular context: Sweden; it is known for its extensive welfare state, but also one for the popularity of marketisation. Its historic economic dependency of international markets and high level of individualism are often seen as factors thereof (Brunsson & Jutterström, 2018a). This is a context which holds a disproportionate number of large MNCs for its size, and what is sometimes labelled a corporatist path dependency has emerged. Starting with the Saltsjöbadsavtalet and the Swedish model, there

has been a long period of consensus between the business sector and government (Schön, 2014). This has contributed to a very strong position of the state-government as market organiser. Further, as we will see below, governmental ideas of the Market and markets have emboldened over the past decades.

Andersson et al. (2017) identify the era of the “Green People’s Home”<sup>7</sup> (1995-2006), which was a particularly formative time period for shaping the preconditions of organising markets in Sweden. This was a period in which the idea of the free market was abandoned by the state-government, in favour of the pure market. The state-government’s role as market organiser thus was to contribute to build and care for them. This view is made explicit in the Proposition “Competition Policy for Renewal and Diversity”<sup>8</sup> (Swedish Government, 2000): “It is clear that the market and competition model is vastly superior to other economic systems when it comes to creating prosperity, growth, and renewal.” (p. 46) Competition was therein presented as not only a source of prosperity and growth, but also of other values such as societal power distribution, and ultimately, democracy:

The efficiency of the market creates a foundation for prosperity and its distribution. [...] Competition has clear effects on prosperity for consumers with low levels of income, as it provides the possibility of a greater supply of goods and services at a fair price. (Ibid, p. 26)

Although the efficiency of markets for a wide range of purposes was held forth, certain negative effects could also be identified. Particularly, the past market policies had placed too much emphasis on economic, in relation to environmental and social aspects. During this time period, the concept of “sustainable development” had been established in Swedish politics (Andersson et al., 2017) and was presented as the overarching aim of the Swedish Government’s policies (Swedish Government, 2002). However, there was scepticism regarding the possibility of the markets solving the environmental issues at hand. Andersson et al. (2017) also emphasise the ex-

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<sup>7</sup> Author’s translation of “Det gröna folkhemmets marknadspolitik” (p. 60-67)

<sup>8</sup> Author’s translation of “Konkurrensolitik för förnyelse och mångfald”

pressed idea in this proposition (2002) that given time, markets would become self-regulating.

This is in line with Brunsson and Jutterström's (2018c) conclusions that market organisers, despite extensive organising, the belief in the idea of markets never faltered, however, "the realization of this idea was believed to occur in a glorious future rather than in the complicated present." (Ibid, p. 261)

Further, Andersson et al. (2017) highlight that with a political shift to a Liberal-Conservative government in 2006, there was an increased connection between market and administrative policy and labels this period "A state at the service of the business sector". The role of the market was thereby emphasised additionally, especially its importance for reaching goals of growth and global competitiveness of Swedish firms. To this end, the state-government needed to simplify its rule-setting, possibly even scale down, in order to assist the well-functioning of the market. In light of the governmental framings of CSR analysed in Chapter 7, we will see that this idea of the Market has major implications for how and which actors contribute to organising responsibility in the markets.

### 4.3 Discussion

As markets prove to be a wildly popular concept and metaphor, there are consistently efforts to tame, shape and organise markets (Alexius, 2018). These efforts do not necessarily involve less organising than classic governmental regulation (Brunsson, 2014). As coined by Adam Smith and defined by classical economists, the concept of the invisible hand entails that the ideal market sorts itself out. Although well-intentioned, this invisible hand may not be all reaching. The efforts to curb markets involve multiple organisational elements: efforts to monitor, impact and possibly even create the needed buyers and sellers. The reregulation of the deregulated taxi market in Sweden is a case in point (Alexius, 2018): its regulation, deregulation, and subsequent market organising illustrates some of the drawbacks of both regulation and deregulation. When deregulated, the lack of a rulebook forced different market actors to enter the stage and organise. In the taxi market, market actors stepped in to organise queues outside airports, sta-

tions and hotels, thereby, impacting and organising the market. There is a motley crew of actors that can attempt to organise markets. Some are voluntary – such as certification schemes, industry organisations (Marques, 2016) and trade associations; others are less open forums and actors, such as international think tanks (Djelic, 2014; Garsten, 2013; Garsten & Sörbom, 2018).

Markets hold unclear patterns of responsibility, involving numerous regulatory and responsibility gaps. Who is ultimately responsible and for what? In the Swedish context, an idiomatic expression reads “Shared responsibility equals no responsibility”. Responsibility for global sustainability issues is currently organised mainly through “private” governance initiatives with different classes of membership. It is argued herein that such organising is mainly partial, how can we understand these differing combinations of organisational elements, often involving unclear rules and lack of monitoring?

CSR has long been seen as a voluntary, business-driven phenomenon. This is not necessarily the case any longer. With the original concept of CSR embedded in a liberal market ideology (Djelic & Etchanchu, 2017), CSR should perhaps be seen as market – rather than corporate – responsibility. Increasing private governance of CSR does, indeed, serve to organise responsibility in the market, rather than in complete, individual, organisation. CSR is becoming increasingly organised amongst actors: sometimes a limited number, at times an entire “industry”. The responsibility gaps addressed by CSR efforts are denoted market externalities by economists. As per noted, efforts to organise CSR frequently involve a wider range of actors than companies therein; these efforts are intended to organise the market. For a long time, CSR was seen as something frivolous and irrelevant, and counterintuitive to market concerns; market proponents tend to speak of moral limits as rendering the market inefficient (e.g. Friedman, 1970). With the growing importance of the idea of the business case for CSR (Lohmeyer & Jackson, 2018), however, it has also become integrated into the concerns of the market. Thus, this idea of the business case is translated to both business and government. Accordingly, when matters of responsibility become a matter of market concern, market organisers take note.



It can be observed in several market-based solutions to responsibility gaps that attempts are also made to establish new markets or sites thereof, in order to ensure cost-efficiency and transparency of achievements in up-keeping of labour rights (Sendlhofer & Lernborg, 2017) or improved water practices, between buyers and sellers. Such market sites, however, contribute to even more fragmentation and competition in the market of standards, certifications, and private governance. Therefore, the importance of the market idea influences the organising of CSR: in terms of not only the topics addressed, but also the limits to the market and its inherent idea of competition.

This chapter has identified the idea of the Market as an important actor for organising responsibility: not only when it comes to the actors involved; it is also true for the [lack of] responsibility taken, the current proliferation of “private” governance initiatives, and the reliance upon the business case as an organising principle for action. Indeed, the idea of the market and organising through self-regulation allows continued responsibility gaps. As will be seen in Chapter six, when it comes to both environmental and labour issues in the fashion and textile market, there are numerous overlapping “private” governance initiatives. Few, however, take a holistic view of issues, and interconnect related issues. Most are isolated and continue to organise in silos. Certain issues remain ever popular to address, and others never. The market of rules and standards breeds ever more competitors. A wide number of multi-stakeholder initiatives and business-driven initiatives have accordingly been created. Progress is made when it concerns some issues, yet not with regard to others. New “private” governance initiatives and various partnerships are created, whilst others are abandoned. All in all, the process appears to be slow, with a considerable amount of cherry picking between issues and forms of organising that enable the most flexible or advantageous arrangements.

All in all, a common characteristic appears to be the vast majority of this organising of responsibility is of a partial nature (Rasche et al., 2013). Similar to the organising of markets itself, partial organising allows numerous benefits for the actors involved, as well as drawbacks from a holistic perspective. Partial organising even allows the potential chimera of appearing to organise, with very few resource investments. This also allows actual

organising, yet organising of responsibility is often very selective in issues: the drawing of limits around the inclusiveness of membership, choosing which issues to address and which rules to apply or design, and even whether to include monitoring or sanctioning. A self-regulating business case for CSR negates the need for monitoring and sanctioning – the market itself will reward or decry the organising action taken.

We will in chapters ahead further uncover how responsibility is organised in the markets. As elaborated upon in the previous as well as in the current chapter, private actors as well as the government play large roles therein. Notably, the latter provides the infrastructure for organising CSR, as well as for organising the markets. Furthermore, the involvement of governmental regulation of markets may in some cases be based upon ideology; however, as we have noted, the market idea has spread to new settings and displaced or dispelled most ideological concerns (Brunsson, 2014).



# Chapter 5

## Research Design

One of the most pressing issues in the social world is responsibility for sustainability issues in the global supply chain. Organising is increasingly characterised by a new social order in which companies seemingly take an additional proactive responsibility stance for sustainability issues. The rules of the game are continuously redefined. This chapter will proceed as follows: I will provide an understanding of the field when I began my PhD journey; the ontological and epistemological bases for the study will then be presented; and, lastly, I will attempt to describe the research journey with its methodological choices and non-choices, in terms of data collection and case study approach.

### 5.1 Preunderstanding of the Field

When embarking upon this PhD journey in 2013, I was not a blank slate; rather, I had an understanding of the CSR and standards fields: I also knew of the potential biases - both positive and negative – that stemmed from previous academic and practical experiences. During my graduate studies at Stockholm School of Economics, I had first come across the concept of CSR, and also gained some understanding of it through the course *Sustainability Management*. This particular course sparked my interest in pursuing further career opportunities in this area, which prompted me to write my MSc thesis on IKEA's CSR strategy, gain experiences in microfinance at Hand-In-Hand India, and work as an advisor at a CSR consultancy. This further

led me to work as a Sida trainee in Marketing and Development stationed at a hardship post, working practically with FairTrade products. Prior to this interest, I had also interned at a logistics firm in Hong Kong, conducting an ISO standard evaluation for the firm. Without prescience, I had taken a practical interest not only in CSR, but in standards as well: particularly, ISO and FairTrade. My research has allowed me to pursue my academic interests and to also see the importance in the development of standards and rules in society. Thereby, I was able to observe the overwhelming presence of rules, “private” governance, overlaps, and potential improvement. What is it good for? How is it actually organised? If the government, indeed, appears to abdicate its rule-setting power, how can and is it organised? This thesis is an attempt to elucidate these matters: *How is responsibility framed and organised in the markets?*

Starting in the later 1990s, market solutions for CSR and development were hailed in microfinance: in development and, above all, via a business case for CSR (Prahalad & Hammond, 2002; Yunus, 1998; Altafi, 2015). Traditional measures appeared to have failed in development; microfinance and trade were now the means available. The market would prevail! It would not only lead to poverty alleviation; it would also propel women’s empowerment (Banerjee & Jackson, 2017). The downside to microfinance and its control mechanism, however, is social ostracising; its success in India had prompted an overexpansion of more or less serious microfinance companies, leading to satiation and loans to people who could never repay them (Schicks, 2010). What became increasingly clear was the fact this market needed regulation and did not organise itself. On the other hand, I discovered that FairTrade labels had become one of few means for trade export in the West Bank, due to government regulation restricting market mechanisms. Increasingly, it became abundantly clear that, contrary to some undergraduate teachings, markets were not necessarily self-organising and required pruning to account for some of the externalities and responsibility gaps that followed. The deficiencies in the market of standards also became obvious, thus, belonging to the field of “private” governance.

After seeing some “CSR action” on the ground, I realised this was something that I wished to magnify in a petri dish instead. My view of science and academia was just that: a vague positivist notion that, through

“private” governance and collaboration, a magic success formula for CSR could be achieved and replicated. This research journey has allowed me instead to explore the nuances, the complexity of the issues, and the difficult solutions. Yet, I still harbour hope for improving CSR and sustainability and, by further understanding how responsibility is organised, my research may contribute to CSR’s development and subsequent improvement.

## 5.2 Critical Realism

Critical realists combine objectivist ontology with a social constructivist epistemology. Our knowledge is, thus, fallible: reality and truth existing beyond our knowledge (Sayer, 2000). The aim of critical realism differs from its ontological cousins – to explain, rather than to interpret or describe (Easton, 2010).

The critical realist perspective resonates with my personal views on science: particularly, with regard to fallibility of the human condition. Critical realism involves a healthy dose of epistemological caution, recognising the potential for mistakes by human beings when reproducing knowledge. Science is seldom pure, and its production of knowledge may be flawed by ideological or cognitive biases. Furthermore, it is important to note, as did Kuhn (1957, 1970), even scientific production of knowledge is situated in a context of such biases. Knowledge is also situated in a particular culture and history; such production is not necessarily historically linear (Potter & López, 2005). In the critical realism tradition, however, the context is also important; so, too, is it in this study (see further Section 5.4). This is why the empirical context is presented in Chapter 6: both currently and historically. Additionally, this is why an additional case is presented and analysed in Chapter 9. It is based on secondary sources and provides a historical understanding of motivations for the principal case to organise responsibility in a particular manner, e.g. for the dynamics of elements.

In critical realism, social structures are important, as are the meaning to which individuals and organisations ascribe in investigating and explaining any given phenomenon (Bhaskar, 1978). Furthermore, the contextual conditions of an academic study are considered crucial. The causal relationships depend upon such conditions (Tsoukas, 1994). In the study of

organising responsibility in the markets, it was important to look at both the social structure of organising – the context of “private” sustainability governance initiatives and the involved market actors’ motivations for organising - as well as the agency and decision-making of the individual member actors participating in the initiative. Also, as described in Chapters 2 and 4, the complexity and lack of formal global rules for responsibility has increasingly led to partial organising of these issues (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011; Rasche et al., 2013). While looking at this from a social structure perspective, the partial organising aspect became a prime focus, as did the reasons why related organising choices changed over time. The principal case study serves to strengthen this proposal of the partial organising of CSR becoming a staple of the global order, as well as to investigate its dynamics: a particularly under researched theme in literature (Rasche et al., 2013).

### 5.3 Research Journey

The objects of social study, institutions, organisations and markets, in this case, are the products of multiple causalities and forces. Social systems are open and usually messy; the methodology at social scientists’ disposal does not allow for isolation of components. Abstraction and conceptualisation are the means at our disposal. Only when this has been accomplished can we return to the object of study and make sense thereof.

The nature of the phenomenon of study frequently guides the connected research questions and the subsequent research approach. So, too, is the current case. However, studying a partial order makes it difficult to capture its nature and understanding thereof through a generic qualitative research design, composed of semi-structured interviews at a certain point in time. Instead, given the importance of contextual and historical factors, an abductive approach that traces these factors back through a non-traditional longitudinal case study approach became apparent.

The research journey starts with the discovery of an incomprehensible phenomenon (Czarniawska, 2014). The particular puzzling issue in the social world was initially the motivations for, and the organising of, responsibility for CSR (environmental) issues in this market: especially the resulting collaboration amongst competitors.

### 5.3.1 Literature Review(s)

As mentioned, this thesis is the result of an abductive approach. First-hand data was collected on motivations for membership in private governance initiatives and interspersed with a review on the related literature. This revealed that the main research gap of collaboration and private governance literature lay in the (longitudinal) particular aspects of CSR: how it was organised, and how it shifts over time. The literature search, thereby, shifted to include that which focused not only on general CSR, but also on CSR's standards and private governance: notably in the global supply chain.

### 5.3.2 Case Study Approach

The phenomenon under study is relatively new; there is a definite need for more empirical investigations and development of new theory (Neuman, 2006). Alas, there has been minimal theory development in the dynamics of elements in organising CSR. A qualitative case study research method has been used in order to understand the organising of responsibility in the markets, in the particular context of the Swedish fashion and textile market. Furthermore, such an approach allows for an in-depth analysis of the specifics of this context-dependent phenomenon (Yin, 2009). Moreover, it allows the triangulation of data in order – capturing of various perspectives (Baxter & Jack, 2008) – which is in line with the critical realist approach.

A flexible qualitative research strategy allows the researcher to constantly put in question the method, potentially leading to new results (Robson, 2011). When completing a case study, it is important to be mindful of its pitfalls. Nevertheless, a qualitative research strategy is built upon researcher interpretations, thereby, constituting an implicit risk of foregoing certain interpretations. This thesis has made use of an abductive approach - similar to that of retroduction (Easton, 2010) - in which theory, empirics, and analysis have been reviewed interweaved: simultaneously, and continuously (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008). This reduces the risk of foregoing interpretations. In order to reflect the theory, the data collection and the building of the theoretical framework have occurred in tandem, as has interviewees' perceptions and experiences. Furthermore, an abductive approach allows for several data sources, thus, allowing triangulation of evidence, as well as increasing the reliability of the study.



### 5.3.3 Case Study

The purpose of this research is to understand how responsibility is organised in the markets, which led me to delve deep into the understanding of the dynamics of elements in partial organising of CSR.

Yin (2009) finds that a revelatory case is one with potential for insights into an understudied phenomenon. This particular initiative was initially chosen as the primary object of study, as a revelatory case of the motivations for collaboration of competitors for sustainability: that which is sometimes called “pre-competitive collaboration” or “co-opetition” (NBS, 2014). A call to research this understudied phenomenon was put out by NBS (2014), as well as by Marques (2016). As an example of “private” governance, it further proved to involve numerous other market actors; additional layers of such a fleeting target proved difficult to pinpoint.

This particular case study was chosen for its revelatory potential. The Swedish government showcased the success and novelty of the initiative and brought it to the EU as a model to follow (Swedish Government, 2015), as well as a noteworthy example in the Swedish Governmental Policy for Sustainable Business (Swedish Government, 2014b). Further, this collaboration did not emerge out of media scrutiny or threat of legislation; two of the most common motivations for organising CSR according to the widely cited review by Le Ber and Branzei (2010). This nuanced the range of such motivations. By following the dynamic process of organising CSR in a particular initiative, insights can be gained on the role of organisational elements, and which ones are instrumental in *de facto* organising CSR in the market.

Through interviews I discovered a previous example of attempting to organise responsibility for labour rights in the Swedish fashion and textile market, involving some of the very same buyer companies. The emergence of STWI is not situated in a historical, cultural or political vacuum. In order to understand the initial motivations for organising membership, as well as subsequent organising choices STWI, it was necessary to understand what came before it. An archival case study was therefore conducted, allowing enhanced understanding of the organising through cross-comparison. This research integrates several levels of analysis (Blundel, 2007), which is in line with the critical realist approach to methodology and highlights the contex-

tual (historical and cultural) factors contributing to shaping the organising of CSR in the Swedish fashion and textile market. This, thereby, links the macro to the meso.

#### 5.3.4 Explorative Study in a Dramatic Market

##### **Justification for Sample Selection**

This thesis focuses upon the fashion and textile market: one that is of particular interest as it is one with great impact upon the environment (UNECE, 2015); the pre-purchase production process involves high levels of chemical usage, resource usage, and long transportations (Battaglia et al., 2014), as well as a high environmental impact stemming from the post-purchase phase and the ensuing washing practices (Gwowdz et al., 2017).

The fashion and textile market is a complex and mobile one, with a multitude of sustainability challenges and responsibility gaps waiting to be organised. The organising under study is closely connected to the Swedish context; even though it is part of a global context, it has yet to make great strides in becoming an international initiative. Yet, due to the achievements of this initiative, there is interest from foreign companies to join the initiative, which is part of a global portfolio of alliances and partnerships. As noted, there is great fragmentation of “private” governance initiatives and collaborations in this market, thus, contributing to the importance of this topic (see Chapters 2, 6, and Appendix 1A).

The overall purpose of this research is to understand how responsibility is organised in the markets. The chosen theoretical framework further allows the exploration of the dynamics and implications of partial organising: its possibilities for flexibility and malleability. The principal case study is of a business-driven initiative aimed at organising responsibility for water use in the global supply chain and, thus, contributing to improved sustainable practices in the fashion and textile market.

STWI is a prime example or site of partial organising, going through many organisational changes, and exposing how and why certain organisational elements are used in order to organise responsibility. Moreover, it provides an interesting insight into the governmental framings of CSR: as part of foreign policy, development, and/or trade. The market is increasingly hailed as the means through which CSR will self organise. This case

illustrates a paradox: in order for self-regulation to be deemed successful, active governmental organising is involved.

### **Study Approach: Pre-Study**

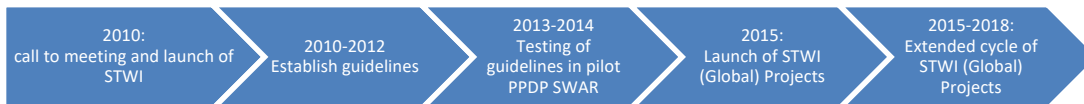
The initial pre-study was based upon this being a revelatory case of collaborating competitors. As the study deepened, however, the involvement of numerous other market actors became apparent. This indicated the need to organise markets – and the difficulties involved in so-called self-regulation. The principal case study has been undertaken in the light of the theoretical framework: particularly, the partial organising framework. This has been tantamount with certain methodological and practical difficulties. STWI, as a pre-competitive collaboration, is a site of partial organising. The public-private (development) partnership with Sida is also an example of partial organising, as well as the subsequent expansion STWI Projects; thus, it involves different actors, as well as involvement: many acronyms and many actors. However, how to capture partial organising? Where does the action occur? Where to delimit the beginning and end of the partial nature? Furthermore, the importance of certain individual members in both the forming of the partial organisation, and its subsequent development were identified as particularly important. Who are the members: are they the CSR manager individuals participating in the meetings or the organisations standing behind? To some extent, it appeared to be both. Exploring a site of partial organising - such as STWI with its fluid boundaries - is different from studying a complete organisation.

This thesis presents the motivations for engaging from the vantage point of the first two periods of its history: in which the membership in this partial organising was mainly composed of the (competing) individual companies. In order to test the guidelines in India, three companies in collaboration with the NGO: SIWI and the development aid agency: Sida formed a public-private partnership (PPP) in the parallel second phase after its initial development in the first phase of STWI (2010-2012). After two years of this PPP (2012-2014), they were launched at a grander scale, with 15 companies in 5 countries.

Only after conducting this first explorative study of motivations for membership in the initiative did the organising aspects of it became a part

of the study. The idea of the market informs how and what companies choose to divulge to one another, as well as how the government chooses how to promote and organise responsibility.

Figure 5.1 Chronological overview of phases in STWI.



## Data Collection

The primary research data used in this thesis dates from 2010 to 2018, with at first retrospective accounts of the years 2010-2013 as well as live accounts for organising choices; interviews were conducted between 2014 and 2018. Secondary research data looks at the time period between 1999 and 2018. During this period, there was substantial development in Sweden of how CSR is defined, motivated, and organised. This is true for a wide range of stakeholders, companies, NGOs, and government. From a period in which there was no formal CSR policy, yet related to foreign policy, to being a part of trade policy. From a period in which NGOs did not collaborate, it has moved to a period in which there is prolific collaboration or partnerships between certain types of NGOs and business; it has also moved from a period in which companies did not communicate any implicit or explicit CSR activities or strategy, to one in which CSR reporting is mandatory and ubiquitous. Lastly, we have seen CSR go from a period in which it was not organised, to being organised in individual Codes of Conduct, and finally being organised in collaboration with NGOs, competitors, and government. At times, they are even all rolled into one.

## Secondary Data Collection

I have also looked at the participating members' sustainability reports, and when necessary, annual reports, in order to assess what themes emerge as the most important CSR themes, as well as means of organising, not least

“private” governance initiatives and partnerships. What emerged thematically more generally was a quite reactive stance in terms of what themes had been scrutinised and generated outcries in media outlets (e.g. controversial practices such as angora picking and mulesing of sheep), as well as providing charitable donations to relief scenarios such as the earthquake in Haiti (2011) and in recent years responding to the humanitarian crisis in Syria and related migrant camps (2015) (see Appendix 1A, Table 6). The size of the company and naturally of its sustainability efforts and journey also appeared to have an impact on how much was communicated specifically on the studied membership. Large MNCs such as H&M initially did not mention participation or membership in STWI, but after environmental savings had been established communicated these in fineprint. Medium-sized players who were active in the establishing of STWI and SWaR, such as Lindex communicated more, but also played up other commitments in their reports. However, Gina Tricot for example has dedicated almost a whole page in its yearly sustainability report to STWI for the past 3 years. Small enterprises however did not necessarily produce a sustainability report, but rather emphasised the membership on its website, under the heading of “CSR”, “Our Responsibility” or “Sustainability”.

### 5.3.5 Difficulty with Terminology of Collaboration and Organisation

When I came across STWI, I did not know which terminology to use, as the literature offers diverging typology for this type of initiative or collaboration. How is it organised and by whom? Is it a complete organisation, say a meta-organisation: an organisation made up of other member organisations? Or is it a case of partial organising? Is it a network with spontaneous ties? Who is a part of the initiative? Is it the individual members? Is it the secretariat? Is it the research institute in charge of implementation? Where does the level of analysis lie? In fact, it has elements resembling those of a meta-organisation (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2005, 2008) Furthermore, there are different ways of labelling a particular phenomenon within the context of one’s study (Czarniawska, 2014). An emic approach suggests using the labels as described by the particular actors studied. Thereby, some companies may choose to label their responsibility activities or strategy as being CSR,

CR, shared value or sustainability. Other terms involved may be accountability or transparency, or sustainable business (Swedish Government, 2014, a, b, 2018). Indeed, academic colleagues have suggested emic labels, for example see that STWI appears to be a multi-stakeholder initiative; some see it as a public-private partnership, whilst others highlight the brand-based features of collaboration and the risk of collusion. The companies, the “brands” involved, as they refer to themselves, most often highlight the brand-driven aspect, whilst the financing agent Sida, sees it as a pure example of a Public-Private Development Partnership (PPDP) (Sida website, 2016).

Partial organising allows assistance with the difficulty of establishing membership and level of analysis, in a case in which organisations are members. In such an organisation, are the members and stakeholders the individual (sustainability) managers, or rather are not the organisations the members? It appears similar to a meta-organisation, yet, it is not a complete organisation. The organisational members are not a form of environment as contended by some in similar scenarios (Barnett & Finnemore, 2004); indeed, they are the centre.

This is a great shift in terms of defining, motivating, and organising CSR. The particular initiative epitomises most of these shifts, and certainly the fashion and textile market in Sweden has experienced them all, thus, leading to particular organising choices and motivations. One of the most important issues is the redefining of CSR as occurring for moral, normative, and for reasons such as (profiting from) shared value (Porter & Kramer, 2006, 2011). The latter has been reformulated to almost solely include instrumental and utilitarian reasoning. The business case for CSR gained a strong foothold among Swedish larger MNCs during the 2000s: a motivation that has then been reproduced through initiatives, such as STWI.

There have been numerous attempts to reconsider the partial organising of STWI, particularly by including more organisational elements. Furthermore, not only have I looked at the particular dynamics of organising responsibility; I have also looked at the governmental CSR policies during the past two decades, especially the international development cooperation agenda is heavily linked to the Swedish CSR governmental framing: in part due to its strong internationalist tradition (Kuisma, 2007). Therein, I have

looked at how the governmental framing of CSR as market-oriented trade promotion has impacted the development of partial organising of responsibility in Sweden. Governments are key market organisers, adhering to a pure market ideal, and framings of CSR as serving markets therefore contribute to answering the how and why of organising of responsibility in the markets.

## 5.4 Data Collection

The empirics of this thesis are based upon diverse sources of information in order to allow for an improved understanding of the framing and organising of responsibility in the markets, including perspectives of different market actors and organisers. They can be divided into four main sources of information: (1) primary data of interviews with the companies involved in the collaboration, the implementation agents, the financiers, and NGOs related to the topic; (2) primary data of observing internal brand member meetings and attending other public events, such as a book launch, sustainable fashion seminars, and water-related seminars; (3) secondary data in the form of internal evaluation reports of the initiative to Sida; (4) secondary data in the form of publicly available data from brands (sustainability reports and websites), media reports (articles), movies (produced by Sida and SIWI), Twitter and Youtube accounts, as well as the book about the initiative, and the guidelines themselves. All of these will be accounted for in the following sections.

The organising process of this particular site of partial organising has formed a natural time frame to study in detail: 2010-2018. However, the context is shaped by events preceding it, thus, leading me to make use of secondary material from 1999 onwards. Such data collection has permitted me to follow the dynamics of organising CSR in a partial manner: something that would not have been possible otherwise.

In order to follow the process of organising responsibility in the markets, I have mainly focused upon the actors involved and related to the emergence and subsequent development of STWI as a site of partial organising and organiser of responsibility. Interviews, sustainability reports, Twitter accounts, seminar series, and particularly a published book on the

initiative penned by key actors, which the Trade council Handelsrådet financed (Andersson & Bergkvist, 2016) all contributed to the framing of this initiative as being a success story to emulate. This also mirrors closely the societal and governmental development of approaches, expectations, and organising of CSR. Throughout 2014-2018, there has also been continuous informal and formal dialogue with representatives of the research institute: SIWI. The topics in the formal interviews were related to the design of the guidelines and the subsequent challenges in implementation, as well as to the success factors and potential tensions. Thereby, a retrospective account of the process of developing the guidelines was formed, as well as the initial rollout to suppliers. Further, I have attended 10 seminars in which representatives of SIWI and brands have presented this initiative and discussed its role in panel debates.

#### 5.4.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Primary data collection has been conducted through semi-structured interviews. Such interviews build upon the interviewer, following an interview template and goes through a number of themes, yet leaves room for the interviewee to answer questions in their own way (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Interviews hold great potential for highlighting important details, ideas, and explanations to problems (Yin, 2009); however, they place great demands upon the interviewer to secure the validity of the results (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

The primary data collection was, thus, conducted through interviews with representatives of participating brands and organisations linked to the initiative, companies, NGO, and government agency alike. In total, 41 interviews were held between 2014 and 2018 (for detailed overview see Appendix 1A, Table 2). In-depth interviews were held with sustainability managers at participating brands, with involved representatives of the main responsible implementation NGO: SIWI, with financing actor government aid agency: Sida, with the secretary of the initiative, and with the Indian IT implementation company of the initial pilot period (SWAR). Additional interviews were also held with NGO and private governance initiative representatives, government officials working with CSR policy and practice, as well as with sustainability managers of companies - and not members of



STWI. The managers mainly held roles related to sustainability and purchasing. The main topics of the interviews were views held about CSR and sustainability, pre and post-joining of the initiative, motivating factors influencing their decision to join and/or remain inside or outside the initiative, their experience of working with these issues with competitors, their partnership portfolio, and their general approach to sustainability management and CSR. These topics allowed a further understanding of shifts in purpose of the initiative over time, as well as the use of organisational elements, i.e. its dynamics of elements.

The semi-structured interviews allowed retrospective accounts of the motivations for engaging in a private governance initiative, as well as the ongoing individual management struggles of resource constraints, membership fees, and time management. These focused especially upon the collective organising of CSR, the struggles, benefits, and drawbacks of engaging in such fora. The elaborated discussion of the organisational elements involved varied between members, tempting to ascribe to varying levels of sustainability maturity. The interviewees were encouraged to speak freely and develop their own reasoning. The larger, more experienced companies - in terms of CSR and sustainability efforts - had longer discussions surrounding the meta-rules of governance, as well as the important role of governance and or government. Some of the less experienced had a more practical, pragmatic approach to some organisational elements - especially rules and membership. The interviews gave insight into practical, as well as theoretical, discussions of the promise and perils of organising CSR. The interviews took between 30 minutes and two hours.

A number of quotes are used in this thesis in order to illustrate these dynamics, mainly from interviews and from secondary sources. The quotes from secondary sources, ranging from the private to the public sector (sustainability reports, debate articles, government action plans) serve to clarify how the definition of CSR has shifted over time as well as the ideal form of organising it. Furthermore, the interviewees are kept anonymous to a large extent, due to the varying wishes of anonymity.

Certain key actors have been interviewed twice in order to gain a more continuous overview of the organising process. As mentioned, the overturn of CSR managers involved in this initiative has sometimes been relatively

high; as such, certain key actors have not been available for further interviews. The first step in understanding the motivations for engaging in collaboration was to interview the company members. A total of 13 member companies were interviewed in a first round, as well as the independent secretary of the initiative and the project manager. The contact persons responsible at Sida were also interviewed. Due to the requests of the interviewee, not all interviews were recorded and subsequently could not be transcribed; a total of eight interviews were not recorded. However, field notes were taken during all of them. Other actors allowed recording of lengthy conversations, yet did not want to be formally quoted.

Following the first set of interviews in 2014, certain joint motivations for participating in such collaboration were established (see Figure 8.1). While reviewing the literature, I found the organising process was under researched, rather than the motivations therein. The second round of interviews (2016-2017) also involved motivations, yet focused more upon the related processes of organising and choices therein. Interviewees were also asked about membership choices, portfolios, how they experienced the process, etc. A total of 10 additional interviews were held with member companies. Four interviews were also held with sustainability-conscious fashion and textile companies - which had chosen not to become members - in order to understand their membership rationale and for organising CSR. During this period, I gained access to and attended three half-day and one full-day member meetings (see Section 5.4.2). The main representative of Sida responsible for the PPDP portfolio was also interviewed twice, in order to understand better the governmental engagement and contributions over time. Representatives of SIWI involved in the organising of STWI were also interviewed at various points in time, in order to gain more knowledge and understanding of their role in the use of organisational elements. To further this end, a continuous informal dialogue was also held with both representatives of Sida and SIWI. To gain additional perspectives of the organising efforts in the global supply chain, a representative of the IT consultancy implementing the tools for measuring savings was also interviewed in 2016. Additionally, a government official at the CSR Centre in Beijing, liaising with STWI, was also interviewed, in order to both gain more understanding of the governmental framing and organising of re-

sponsibility, and to understand the framing of STWI by external actors. In order to grasp the organising choices, representatives of other global and local private sustainability governance initiatives have also been interviewed: ranging from Sustainability Apparel Coalition to the Swedish Kemikaliegruppen.

#### 5.4.2 Participant Observations

An additional methodological choice involved participant observation at four member meetings during 2016-2018 to which I gained access: ranging between three and seven hours. This resulted in a total of fourteen hours of observation and 30 pages of (transcribed) field notes. This involved actively listening and taking field notes during presentations, keynotes, and member discussions. The active participation of participant observation involved engaging directly with the present members in an assigned group setting, in which we at all three meetings were tasked to discuss particular issues related to the past and future of the organising of the initiative: e.g. experiences of reporting, upon which Sustainability Development Goals were most relevant to focus, the suitable initiatives with which to ally, etc.). Furthermore, as a participant observer at repeated occasions, I was also asked to present myself, describe my research, and formulate my opinion as a researcher in the smaller discussion groups, as well as in the full plenary sessions.

Participant observation implies the strength of taking into account researcher insights and perspectives; however, this is difficult to discern from researcher bias. Ideally in an abductive and critical realist approach, the reflexivity in the analysis process should contribute to minimising this risk. Moreover, I was distinguished as a researcher from the members of the studied initiative, and did not run the risk of “going native” (Kanuha, 2000) and lack enough critical distance to observe what was happening. Throughout the research process, I also developed informal relationships with key informants from different organisations and from different sectors. This is one of the key tenets of participant observation as a method (Fine, 2001). However, as noted, this has been but one of the several methods used in order to capture the partial order of organising CSR in the market.

Participant observation involves not only observation and participation; it also includes the inscribing of such activities into field notes. There is

ample discussion about how to present such notes (Van Maanen, 1988). Nevertheless, my field notes were initially taken frenetically by hand in a notebook à la Lois Lane, prompting comforting comments from a speaker to the audience that I was not in fact a journalist, but a researcher. Furthermore, I chose to do so in order to enable more private/confidential notes of my observations about what was going on at an interpersonal level, as well as the transcribing of factual events, quotes, and notes from the PowerPoint presentations.

The ethical issues outlined in Fine (2001) such as deception, informed consent, and confidentiality were more or less resolved by the members' personal adherence to the Chatham House Rule, to which through my presence I was also asked to confine. Thus, as the Chatham House Rule is in play in these meetings, it was and is also applicable to me as a researcher. As a participant, one is free to use the information received, "but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed" (Chatham, 2018). For my research, this implies that no information or quote stemming from an individual may be indicated for my participant observation, so as not to enable identification. Instead, the content of the meetings is discussed in more general terms; themes of discussion (hopes, fears, and sought organisational choices) are identified and discussed in this thesis.

Of course, there can be an ethical slippery slope in terms of informed consent. Particularly, in terms of being upfront about exactly which topics were of research interest. In a critical realist and abductive approach it is not always clear from the onset which issues will become central to the researcher. Nevertheless, all parties present have been informed of the research intent, both by myself, as well as by the Secretary of the initiative. However, this distinction also led to certain informal discussions possibly being stifled by my presence, as it became unclear in what capacity I was there. Thereby, possibly incurring unavoidable loss of insight into the organising efforts.

### **Participant Use of Meetings**

In order to study a site of partial organising, my initial research design choices involved interviews. With the apparent importance of membership,

it became increasingly evident that member meetings were essential to observe in order to understand the initiative. Indeed, what my interviews were about was essentially the topic of the meetings: how did they self-narrate what went on in meetings, their learning from these meetings, what future strategies emanated from meetings, etc.

Furthermore, it became clear, to a quite high degree, that not only the meetings constituted the site of organising; it is also the organising, what de facto “is being produced”. Thedvall (2018) finds that “private” governance, and its decision-making, is mainly organised through meetings. What does, and does not, happen at a meeting is important. Without meetings, how can membership be organised? The “network” portion of the initiative was especially meeting-based. The implementation less so, although it was based upon the decisions made at the meetings. Those decisions that were not made at meetings – those that were either ignored or tabled - also became apparent. These underlined a source of contention or conflict. Thus, it became evident the meetings were an essential source of data collection.

Unfortunately, but not unusual, access to meetings needed to be negotiated - and renegotiated. As such, my attendance at these meetings constituted “punctuated entries” (Sandler & Thedvall, 2018; Thedvall, 2013). The room itself, artefacts, devices, dialogue and discussion, as well as moods, are all salient aspects of observing a meeting.

#### 5.4.3 Non-Participant Observations

In order to understand the various framings of the initiative to both members and also non-members, it was important to observe how its purpose and the ongoing organisational efforts were communicated to the outside world and to other market actors and organisers. Therefore, during this period (2014-2018), I continuously kept tabs on the initiative’s website, blog, Twitter account, followed SIWI’s newsletter, and attended seminars: all of which mentioned or related to the water and textile focus of the initiative. In order to understand its framing in the market, I also attended sustainability events organised in collaboration with Stockholm Fashion Week and World Water Week, in which STWI-affiliated people contributed to the panel. In order to gain more insight into the governmental framing of CSR, I also attended events at Sida, which related to “private” govern-

ance, CSR and development issues, as well as the governmental launch of the follow-up Action Plan for business and human rights in March 2018 (Swedish Government, 2018b).

#### 5.4.4 Secondary Sources

For triangulation of theoretical and empirical arguments of the prevalent fragmentation of “private” governance initiatives, as well as the perceived dominant instrumental framing of CSR, I have also looked at secondary sources. To this end, I have looked at the participating members’ sustainability reports and, when necessary, annual reports in order to assess which themes emerge as the most important CSR themes, as well as their engagement in partnerships and membership in initiatives (for overview see Appendix 1A, Tables 5 and 6). In order to understand the role of CSR in the governmental agenda, I have also looked at the general discourse on CSR and development cooperation during the past 15 years, which criticised the inefficiency and perverted externalities of the previous mode of organising for (CSR-related) development cooperation (Biståndsdebatten 2010-2017). The concept of CSR in itself was also long contested by business and formal business associations, such as Svenskt Näringsliv. However, it has since changed official position and, in later years, has articulated staunch support of the voluntary aspect of CSR; governmental tools, such as mandatory reporting do not serve its purpose, considering the variety of company sizes and resources.

A wide range of source of empirics is used, thereby, allowing the capturing of different interpretations, perspectives, and nuances.

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Table 5.1 Sources of Data

<b>Type of Data</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Observations</b>	Four brand meetings: 2016-2018 Book launch: 2016 Seminars at SIWI: 2014-2018 Seminar on Sustainable Fashion at Fashion Week 2015 Seminar Make-In-India: India 2047 Informal dialogue with employees at SIWI and Sida Field notes SWESIF seminar in 2017 Dell seminar on EICC: Electronic Industry Citizenship Coalition Launch of Vattenresan: A food industry water initiative World Water Week seminars and webinars: Water Seminar Sofa Governmental launch of follow action plan for business and human rights
<b>Interviews</b>	With Sustainability Managers members of STWI With Sustainability Managers not members of STWI With Project Managers at NGO SIWI With Managers at financier Sida With NGOs managing other water-related projects With representatives of other private governance initiatives With government officials working with CSR policy implementation
<b>Internal Documentation</b>	Annual reports to Sida Report on SWAR and STWI; STWI water Guidelines
<b>External Documentation</b>	Movies from Sida Book on STWI by founders Reports from Sida Media reports Annual corporate reports Annual corporate sustainability reports Corporate sustainability websites Twitter Podcasts Press releases
<b>External Documentation From Standards and "Private" Governance Initiatives</b>	International Codes of Conduct, Standards on sustainability issues, etc. Websites for "Private" Governance initiatives

## 5.5 Unfolding the Messy Phenomenon: Effects on Data Collection

### 5.5.1 A Dramatic Market

The global as well as local fashion and textile market in Sweden is currently in a state of turmoil. Low profitability and a high level of competition have led to a fight on margins. To a degree, this is but a source of the responsibility issues that ail it. This also presents methodological issues, concerning the constant restructuring occurring of company departments, of employee retention, and resources to commit to the partial organising, as well as to commit to research endeavours (e.g. interviews). As the number of interviews indicates, there has been straightforwardness and willingness to share information about this particular initiative. However, there are multiple potential interviewees, which have not responded or have been unwilling to discuss the initiative. Moreover, the SME members, as well as larger MNCs, have suffered from verging on - or filing for - bankruptcy to reorganisations, a change in top management, and CEOs with downsizing requirements. MNCs are often studied in relation to CSR whereas SMEs are not (Baden et al., 2009). Even though numerous interviews were held with SME interviewees, it is mainly their perspectives that are missing. Their understanding of CSR as well as of this organising may thus have been different to those I have gained access to. Particularly, the view of precompetitive collaboration may have differed given that SMEs may have comparatively fewer resources than MNCs.

Another such concern from the corporate side has been the unwillingness of certain interviewees to be recorded. Suffering from the vestiges of being exposed for CSR infringements in the media, or fear thereof, certain companies and managers fear additional scrutiny. Since parts of this organising attempt involves public funding, this is also possibly a source of fear of the media on certain parties' ends, considering the prominence of such scrutiny and the strong moral component to such in Sweden.

As aforementioned, most interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim; however, some interviewees did not allow the recording of interviews: directly or indirectly (outright denying to stating preferences). In



hindsight, some interviews were hampered by the use of recording, in that answers became stilted. According to Harvey (2011), such preferences are common in elite interviews as recording an interview may impede outspokenness on sensitive topics. In some cases, the conversation that flowed after the end of the hour-long recorded interviews were much more frank about difficulties involved and provided additional insights into the organising efforts.

### **Partial vs. Complete Organisation and Organising**

Many CSR studies have focused upon single complete organisations, particularly in the fashion and textile market. H&M has frequently been studied, considering the plethora of available secondary information, as well as the transparency and willingness to be interviewed. Notably, Lehner (2015) finds studies of H&M overrepresented in the literature. Numerous “private” governance initiatives have been studied, often examples of partial organising; some have even been researched from a partial organising perspective (Norris & Révéret, 2015): mainly studying the organising at a certain point in time, most frequently at the point of founding the initiative.

### **Identifying the Framings of Success**

Another difficulty in the pre and follow-up study was to identify the particular components of “success”, as the interpersonal relationships not only gained strength through this particular initiative; this was also achieved through previously established relationships in other initiatives, as well as simultaneous ongoing ones. For an overview of private governance membership in the Swedish fashion and textile market, see Chapter 6.

#### **5.5.2 Satiation?**

Prior to conducting the pre-study, the aim was to interview all members of the initiative. After transcribing interviews and cleaning field notes of each 17 one to two-hour interviews, a point of satiation was met. With satiation, I refer to the Berger and Luckmann’s (1966) grounded theory version; at a certain point, there was little variation between the motivations of the member representatives interviewed. The normative motivations of the community showed considerable unanimity: both when it came to the ex-

perience of being a CSR manager and the motivations for engaging in a sustainability initiative. Efforts were exerted in order to interview all present and former members of the initiative at least once. Nevertheless, as described in Section 5.5.3, it was also difficult to get a hold of certain interviewees, which impacted the data collection goal.

Certain interviewees were more cooperative, as well as more eloquent than others. Czarniawska-Joerges (1998) and Alexius (2007) find that [management] consultants are thankful interviewees as they are accustomed and happy to provide the interviewer with additional information. CSR managers, in a sense, also constitute happy elocutionists, experienced in speaking and, when engaged, are also frequently happy to discuss their views on sustainability and experiences, yet naturally tend to focus upon the positive aspects. This flowery tendency to talk about their experiences, however, runs the risk - similar to that of consultants - of leading to a strong focus upon past experiences, which are most likely tangent, yet not necessarily at the core of the questions. Gentle nudging to the issue at hand has therefore been required at times in order to answer the research question. This has not always worked in all cases; certain interviewees are very happy to talk about certain aspects of organising, but not others. This prompts an increased understanding of which parts of the initiative are or are not considered relevant. The CSR managers from companies with a longer CSR journey appeared to be more avid speakers and reflective on a macro-level, than those CSR managers from companies that had shorter journeys. The latter tended to have a more practical and hands-on interpretation of the ongoing organising efforts of the initiative.

Furthermore, when it comes to the processing and interpretation of the data collection, I have listened to the interviews multiple times, as well as read the verbatim transcriptions and my field notes. Thus, I have been able to progressively delve into the material and find new layers of meaningful [patterns]. For example, the first time I listened to interviews and read my field notes I found it ominous that I had not been able to find the particular formula for a successful collaboration; indeed, the interviewees had very little concept of any previous or future planning of organising efforts. By the iterative process of going through this data collection, however, I noticed the lack of having direct targets and future planning efforts was signif-

icant; the way in which they talked about “success” in general also held promise for the analysis of the purpose of framing and partial organising (See Chapter 9).

The research journey has not been a direct and straightforward one. The methodology used in this thesis is explorative and abductive. I started by interviewing the companies involved in the collaboration, looking for motivations, and only found more questions. By unlocking the main motivations for becoming members in this initiative, I was to find the theoretical lens with which to understand the mechanics of it – its organising (see Figures 5.1 and 8.1).

### 5.5.3 Access [to Data Collection]

The level of social trust in Sweden is considered high (Rothstein & Uslaner, 2005); correspondingly, it is commonly held truth among researchers in Sweden that access to high-ranking individuals in the country is relatively easy. Congruently, in my experience, to being granted access to interviewees in many cases, but not all, did not require a particularly large amount of networking or trust building. However, numerous interviewees did, in fact, have poor media experiences in these matters and were sometimes weary of recordings. Newitt (2013) and Marques (2016) further corroborate this; business-driven initiatives (BDIs) are, indeed, generally less transparent than MSIs, and are additionally more protective of members. The reason for this included negative experiences in the past, as well as fears of data being used to fuel NGO campaigns. Nevertheless, gaining access as a participant observer in member meetings did, in fact, take time and trust building. Indeed, these constitute key aspects of any data collection (Smith, 2006). However, with the exception of the Chatham House Rule, once granted, such participation was relatively unconstricted.

With different reconstructions and reorganisations taking place during this time period, a majority of the companies have experienced financial difficulties. This is reflective of the state of competition in the market. Some are no more; Nyblom and Kollén, and Boomerang have even filed for bankruptcy. A majority of members have however chosen to remain since the inception of the initiative. Four companies declined to be interviewed since they were either considering leaving the initiative, had re-

source constraints or faced bankruptcy. Seven companies did not respond at all or responded initially and, thus, made themselves unavailable.

### **Pseudonyms**

As aforementioned, some interviewees wished to be anonymous; therefore, it became necessary to use pseudonyms for interviewee quotes, in order to allow for such anonymity. These pseudonyms for company names were based upon Norse and Indian gods and goddesses. However, quotes and excerpts from official sources remain transparent. The quotes stemming from the book edited by the founder and the secretary of the initiative (Andersson & Bergkvist, 2016) are especially used to counter these calls for anonymity, thereby, offering more transparency. A majority of interviewees in this book have also been interviewed in this study; therefore, they are a testament to - and a triangulation of - its findings: particularly, in terms of motivations, framings, and the organising process.

#### **5.5.4 Partial Organising Impacting Research Design**

The phenomenon of partial organising can be seen as messy – with considerable impact upon methodology and research design. In a conventional study of a complete organisation, access is perhaps negotiated with a central management figure or locus of authority. In a complete organisation, all organisational elements are present and membership and hierarchy is, thus, clear. For example, membership and hierarchy may not necessarily be quite as straightforward in partial organising. Who is then to give access? And, who is to negotiate? Who has the right or mandate to even grant access to a researcher? Different gatekeepers have assisted me in different parts of my journey throughout this study and in my quest to understand this example of partial organising; however, none have seen themselves as having legitimacy to provide “full” access to the organising. Where does it even reside? There are no headquarters: a project manager here; a secretary there; and, company members can be found all over Sweden.

This presents multiple opportunities as a researcher, but obviously many challenges. One such example is that of telephone interviews. Communicating by phone is sometimes seen as poor interviewing practice, as it does not allow the interviewer to appreciate facial expressions and other

body language (Shuy, 2003). Certain of these features can be overcome in Skype interviews, but not all. Nevertheless, in order to capture the ongoing partial organising, I have resorted to many such interviews in order to accommodate the many interviewees' busy schedules and global travelling plans. The benefit lies in that the meeting between a researcher and interviewee can be without any preconceived notions of shape or form of an idealised-type image of either. Of course, this does not contribute to the dismantling of the preconceived notions of a researcher stereotype (reflexive emancipation). Although there may be benefits to thwarting that idealised type image, at least overcoming biases, I have found that I have frequently had a good rapport with the interviewees over the telephone: sometimes to a higher degree than in face-to-face interviews. To note, in the second round of 27 interviews, 11 of them were conducted face-to-face. Considering the fluid borders of partial organising, however, I have nevertheless met the majority of interviewees at sustainability-related seminars, industry or Mistra Future Fashion events, or at STWI member meetings, pre or post-interview and engaged in conversations. I have, thus, established relationships accordingly.

A contested stream of methodological (interview) reflections is that of "elite" interviews. There is no unanimous definition of what constitutes an elite in this context: whether it relates to the general public or particularly to the interviewer (Harvey, 2011). During the data collection process, I did not conceptualise the interviews as being elite. When I came across this literature, however, some particularities stood out and resounded with my own experience. As Smith (2006) points out, professional titles do not necessarily equate to a corresponding proportionate (perceived) level of power and influence. CSR or sustainability managers may be considered as being elite and yield considerable level of influence (particularly in comparison to a lowly PhD student). Yet, within their organisation, this may also be a position with relatively little influence. To note, CSR managers in Sweden have a relatively low level of board representation (Johansson, 2015).

Smith (2006) explains the similarities between common researcher difficulties and particularities attributable to elites. Overall, a researcher's struggle(s) remains the same. However, the discussion in Harvey (2011) regarding elites and the facilitation of access through telephone interviews

is highly relevant and reminiscent of my own research process. In some cases, in lieu of a telephone interview, there would have been no interview.

An additional aspect has been the difficulties in identifying the key actors involved. Follow-up interviews were organised: either with a particular position in the initiative (e.g. the project manager of the initiative) or a key member. Such requests, however, have been constrained with regard to organisational resources. Follow-up interviews as well as informal talks have mainly been organised with the initiative's secretary as well as its project manager(s), with financier representatives from Sida as well as with large company representatives, and those active in the board ("steering group") of the initiative.

#### 5.5.5 Researcher and Interviewee Biases

The immersion of a researcher in the domain of the real is sometimes feared to lead to a lack of objectivity or subjective bias to the case (Yin, 2009). Relating to the influence of cognitive biases in decision-making and agency and in the production of knowledge, the researcher's biases may also influence the fieldwork. Interpretations of events and observations can never truly be "objective" (Miles et al., 2013). Additionally, as was noted in the initial interviews in the pre-study, the stories and topics chosen by the interviewees themselves were mostly positive, and reflecting a favourable view of the initiative, as well as that of the participant. This requires critical reflexivity in the analysis of the data (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2008). I have attempted to keep a symmetric attitude (Czarniawska, 2014) free of bias and, thereby, have kept an objective stance toward the initiative and its actors: neither deriding it nor hailing it as a success. I have attempted to describe events as they have been presented to me, thereby, informing my analysis of the unfolding events.

Nevertheless, bias is not exclusive to researchers; retrospective bias by interview subjects is seen to arise in longitudinal studies (Huber & Power, 1985; Golden, 1992; Azar, 2000). Furthermore, actors also move around in and between companies in the growing market of CSR professionals (Gond & Matten, 2011; Ghadiri et al., 2015) and were, thereby, unable or unwilling to participate.

## 5.6 Data Analysis

The following three may be seen as distinctive stages, yet there was considerable overlapping between and within stages in this abductive approach: particularly in order to allow for critical reflexivity and the understanding of dynamics. Primarily, I made use of the coding software Nvivo in order to code interviews, documents, and field notes.

As reflected in the Tables 5.1 and 5.2, this thesis is mainly the result of a textual analysis – interviews transcribed into text, participant and non-participation observations converted into field notes, as well as numerous journal articles, reports of various kinds, as well as documents, books that have followed and preceded STWI's wake. In order to understand the organising of responsibility in the markets, and its dynamics of elements, the struggle for a time was for more in-depth empirics and more text. Slowly but surely, the issue was the reverse: in terms of how to sort, analyse, and map out this vast allotment of text (for an overview of the extent, please see Appendix 1A, Table 2).

As noted, the first step was the pre-study, consisting of 14 interviews with company, two with initiative representatives, and 1 with a Sida representative (see Section 8.2). Several sub-studies were then conducted in order to understand the initiative, as well as in a wider context of private governance and of government. The understanding of the initiative was mainly explored through the semi-structured interviews and participant observations, and other aforementioned non-participant observations. This was done over several rounds of data collection. Understanding the place of this initiative in a wider context of private governance was explored instead through an interplay between literature, attending seminars, as well as interviews with representatives of other private governance initiatives and partnerships. I especially took part of academic articles on the establishing and dismantling of the labour rights initiative: DressCode, which allowed me to gain insight of the role of other non-market actors. This is further described in Chapter 9. Over time, the realisation of the important role of non-market actors became apparent, especially the government. Therefore, a study of government CSR and development policies was conducted, fol-

lowing the different framings of CSR over the past two decades. This partial study is described in Chapter 7.

The data was analysed in an abductive, iterative, four-stage process, including:

- In-vivo data coding, which established retroactive motivations and framings of the foundation and first phases of STWI, including its pilot implementation SWAR;
- In-vivo data coding which established motivations for further organising, updated framings, as well as the narrative episodes of the events and key factors therein (Langley, 1999);
- Creating a chronological database of events related to the individual or collective organising of CSR over time - partial or complete - including governmental and extra-governmental policies that inform the different episodes and the translations and framings involved in organising CSR;
- Axial coding of all initial coding and further refining of the analysis.

My initial research interest related to the collaborative paradigm and its potential for transformative change. The first step consisted of the collection of primary data on motivations of co-opeting brands participating in this “brand-led” initiative. These were coded through Nvivo analysis software, using in-vivo codes, which replicated the language used in interviews (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). This empirically grounded coding led to establishing a number of first-order codes. These were subsequently regrouped into several different categories, resulting in membership being motivated to individual or organisational benefits.

What is known as the Gioia template (Langley & Abdallah, 2011) was applied in the data analysis of the pre-study (see Chapter 8), which is considered suitable for interpretive single case study research. This typically involves a three-stage data analysis process. In the first order, the motivations for membership of brands were identified. Subsequently, these were grouped into second-order themes. These were instrumental in identifying and categorising the motivations, as individual and organisational motivations, respectively (initial and sustained) the membership in the initiative.



As also discussed in Chapter 9, membership was one of the first and most important organisational elements used to organise CSR. Furthermore, interviews were mainly retrospective (four years) during this initial data collection; the initiative had already undergone two different phases (see Figure 5.1). Thus, narratives of different events and phases were established, as well as different framings of CSR and its business case.

The subsequent and simultaneous literature review (described in 5.3.1) led to the identification of under researched areas, especially that of the organisational dynamics of CSR as well as that of partial organising. The identified gap and theoretical lens led me to conduct further interviews with members in the initiative, as well as with cooperating and other related (market and non-market) actors.

Archival materials and other secondary data were also identified and coded. This contributed to the identification of the subsequent unfolding/narration of events during 2015-2018, as well as those preceding the formation of the initiative (1999-2010). This allowed me to produce a chronology of events in the global and local Swedish fashion and textile market, as well as the emergence of the global and local private governance initiatives therein. My pre-existing knowledge was enhanced through numerous academic papers, books, theses, websites, sustainability and annual financial reports, as well as media coverage.

This interpretation of data allowed a preliminary theorisation of the organisational dynamics of CSR in a sustainability initiative (Langley, 1999). Through the analysis of such secondary materials as well as interviews, it also became clear that these companies were members or participants in several initiatives and or dyadic collaborations. The sift through sustainability reports allowed me to establish not only a chronological event database. In the overview of membership in sustainability initiatives and its fragmentation, I was also able to identify the high overlapping memberships in the Swedish fashion and textile market. The largest companies therein were established by size, of which a majority are members of STWI. The varying partnership portfolios of STWI members were also mapped out. This further allowed the establishment of overlapping and the steady increase of memberships (as well as of reporting) during 2010-2018. The mapping of memberships was sourced from the interviews as well as from sustainability

reports, and corporate and initiatives' websites, which enabled triangulation. This data was analysed in the software program yEd, and the results are illustrated in Figure 6.1 of Chapter 6. The secondary materials also allowed for complementing the chronological event database with information on the focus of key areas and topics of CSR during this time period. This allowed the investigation of the organising of CSR in the market, as well as the development of the market of organising CSR.

This chronological event database contributed to comprehending the embeddedness of actors, as well as the initiative in the socio-political landscape during the studied time period. The importance of the main non-market actor – namely, the government - further begged the question of its attitude and reasoning for CSR involvement and support. Providing a detailed chronology of governmental attitudes to CSR was also necessary. Thereafter, I conducted a framing analysis of the varying governmental and NGO documents available from 1999-2018.

The approach has been abductive, and the description above bears witness of the iterative, simultaneous, and continuous approach necessary. Based upon the preliminary coding and establishing a chronology of organisational dynamics of CSR, it was possible to group together the codes into more theoretical categories and gain a more conceptual understanding of the organisational dynamics involved in (partially) organising CSR.

### 5.6.1 How Framing Informed the Data Analysis: Understanding the Organising of Responsibility in the Markets

In this thesis, I find that framing is a central method of analysis, as it allows the understanding of how responsibility, as well as its operationalisation, is understood by the members, and non-members, of this partial organising. Framing as a lens can be used across different levels of analysis (Cornelissen & Werner, 2014). On the micro level, it has mainly been used for priming and activating of individuals' perceptions and actions. On the meso level, strategic framing and meaning construction can be applied to organised groups and social movements (Benford & Snow, 1992; Kaplan, 2008).

Frames allow an interpretive schematic ordering that renders social reality meaningful (Goffman, 1974). Frames are “principles of organization, which govern the subjective meanings we assign to social events”

(Goffman, 1974, p. 11). Frames are transformed by individuals who construct and assign meaning to its surroundings (Litzky & MacLean, 2008). Certain aspects are emphasised within a frame, whilst others may be ignored. Thornton et al. (2012) highlights that frames allow cultural resonance: a critical factor in group identification and mobilisation. Therefore, organisations often make use of framing for legitimacy purposes (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005). To note, frames are distinguished from framing: the latter involves using rhetoric or symbolic acts in order to reinforce existing frames or develop new frames. The use of the framing lens allows an enhanced understanding of processes of how issues come to be rhetorically framed and subsequently addressed (Schön & Rein, 1996; Triandafyllidou & Fotiou, 1998).

How an issue is framed influences whether or not it will be part of the political agenda and arena. Any chosen framing of an issue is indicative of political self-interest. Rein and Schön (1994) find that political actors frame issues in an instrumental manner in order to further specific interests. Once identified as an issue relevant to the political agenda, its framing will influence policy responses and other potential organising efforts. Once an issue is on the political agenda, its framing may contribute to shaping coalitions of interest in order to further policy actors' self-interest (Schattschneider, 1960).

The framing of CSR as an issue that is voluntary and isolated to companies leads to a different type of policy, than if it were to be framed as part of a broader sustainable development discourse and agenda. Moreover, if CSR is framed as a normative position rather than an instrumental one, this also leads to different types of policy actions. These frames involve different governmental agencies and success metrics. Therefore, governmental policy actors have an interest in framing the CSR discussion to further their own interests. Unveiling the predominant governmental framing of CSR enables a deepened understanding of the ways in which specific policies emerge and, also, how responsibility is organised in the market. Identifying which view of CSR is established during this time period allows us to better understand the context in which the case study of partial organising arose and developed. Motivations for partial organising may also become more apparent.

Cornelissen and Werner (2014) identify multiple overlapping concepts in their overview of the uses of framing in management and organisation literatures, as well as a strong focus upon the strategic nature of framing; strategic framing allows managerial shaping of organisational member interpretations. However, a strong critique thereof is the neglected agency of organisational members. Therefore, framing alone is not enough in this case study of partial organising (with a lack of hierarchy), to understand the motivations for collective action and resulting organising efforts. Therefore, in order to understand how responsibility is organised, translation as a concept is also needed. This allows for the understanding that there are numerous actors that impact which ideas circulate and become popular (see Wedlin & Sahlin, 2017).

Given the purpose of partial organising to set a decided order, I argue instead that the organising and framing occurring is akin to the new call for action prevalent in social movements. In social movements, framing serves to interpret what is going on in a particular process, yet allows for additional agency in that this framing enables the problematisation of previous framings as well as a new call for action. This added agency is relevant to the current research since multiple members and non-members have the possibility to influence the new framings of responsibility, as well as its organising in the market.

This chapter has unfolded the organising of this thesis, the decisions taken that have informed the research design. Interviews, participant observations, and secondary archival materials constitute the primary sources of data used. The upcoming chapter will delve into the empirical fashion and textile context in which the study is set.

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Table 5.2 Overview of Members' Size, Revenues, Membership Period and Interview. (Partially Based on Public Information from Allabolag.se from 2014/2015)

Company	Employees	Turnover MSEK	SME	Membership	Interview
Acne	417	1 174		2010-	<i>Could not be reached</i>
Björn Borg	133	638	SME	2010-	<i>Could not be reached</i>
Boomerang (bankrupt 2017)	92	180	SME	2010-2015	<i>Declined</i>
Didriksons	39	208	SME	2010-	2018
Ellos	678	2 611		2010-	2018
Eurosko	55	209		2016-	2017
Filippa K	261	662	SME	2010-	<i>Could not be reached</i>
Fjällräven	51	1 009	SME	2010-	2014
Gant	107	1 443		2016-	<i>Could not be reached</i>
Gekås Ullared	885	4 081		2010-	2014
Gina Tricot	564	1 686		2014-	<i>Declined</i>
H&M	93 351	151 419		2010-	2014 & 2017
Haglöfs	146	729	SME	2010-	<i>Could not be reached</i>
Hemtex	492	992		2010-	<i>Could not be reached</i>
Hestra	61	253	SME	2010-2015	<i>Declined</i>
ICA	22 684	88 068		2010-2015	<i>Declined</i>
IKEA	6037	21 321		2010-	2014 & 2017
Indiska	497	760		2010-	2014
Intersport	623	1 902		2010-	2014
K&Us	9	12	SME	2010-	<i>Could not be reached</i>
Kappahl	2960	4 742		2010-	2014
Klättermusen	19	46	SME	2010-2015	2014
Lindex	1464	3 295		2010-	2014
Monki (part of H&M Group)	NA	NA	NA	2010-	2018
MQ	608	1 524		2010-	2014
Nilson Group	1324	2 294		2010-	2014
Nyblom & Kollén (bankrupt 2016)	7	9	SME	2010-2015	<i>Declined</i>
Odd Molly	65	294	SME	2010-	2017
RNB	1040	1 927		2010-	<i>Could not be reached</i>

Rudholm & Haak	213	280	SME	2014-	2017
Snickers Workwear	72	975	SME	2014-	<i>Could not be reached</i>
Stadium	1857	5 101		2010-	2014
Stockholms Läns Landsting (SLL)	NA	NA	NA	2016-	2016
Textilimportörerna	NA	NA	NA	2016-	<i>Could not be reached</i>
TPC	4	67	SME	2010-	2014
Vagabond	486	627	SME	2016-	2018
Varner	13 612	11 682 MNOK		2016-	<i>Could not be reached</i>
WeSc	63	164	SME	2010-	<i>Could not be reached</i>
Åhléns	3300	4 900		2010-2016	2014



# Chapter 6

## Empirical Context: The Fashion and Textile Market and its Organising

This chapter provides an overview of the historical conditions, as well as the current characteristics of both the global as well as of the Swedish fashion and textile market. These, in turn, provide the backdrop in answering the questions of how and why CSR is organised, which is essential in understanding the empirical context in which the current case study of partial organising is situated.

### 6.1 Historical Overview of Fashion and Textile Market

The importance of fashion, textile, and clothing in the economic development of Western society cannot be understated (Godley, 1997). Since the inception of Spinning Jenny<sup>9</sup>, textile clothing has been paramount for global economic development: from cotton picking to manufacturing, thus, linking actors from East to West. The “single most important industry in the economic history of the Western world” (Godley, 1997), has been increasingly scrutinised for its CSR practices and, as a result, has become a popular empirical context for studying CSR (Lehner, 2015). The fact that

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<sup>9</sup> A spinning tool that precipitated the Industrial revolution (Allen, 2009).



the responsibility to act on social and environmental sustainability issues was established relatively early on is but one of the reasons why the fashion and textile market remains a stimulating subject to study. Although initially controversial, buyers in this market have had to deal with the multiple market and societal (moral) shifts in stakeholder expectations (Åhlström, 2017). The fashion and textile market – particularly its largest companies – remains a highly popular subject of scrutiny in the daily and business press, as well as in academia (Grafström et al., 2015). Although the fashion and textile market has become more popular to study, Mann et al. (2014) finds that little is known about the implementation of CSR practices therein. This thesis shows that the fashion and textile market is currently in a new phase of organising CSR: one in which the boundaries of market responsibility are shifting terrain, not yet fully defined and organised. More specifically, market responsibility is currently partially organised. This is the topic of inquiry in our research, which will be further investigated in chapters 7, 8 and 9. When it comes to matters of organising responsibility, the prominence of a wide range of initiatives, partnerships and standards, as presented in chapter 2, is indicative of a state of flux and pre-institution. The fashion and textile market features a wide number of “private” governance initiatives in order to organise such responsibility (see Tables 6.1 and 6.2), which can thereby serve to function as excellent testing ground to understand the organising of CSR in the market, as well as the dynamics thereof.

### 6.1.1 The Fashion and Textile Market

The fashion and textile market is one of the largest in the world, with revenues totalling USD 750.6 billion dollars in 2017 (WTO, 2018). A multifarious market, it is one of the most mobile, yet maintains a long and complex relationship to CSR and sustainability (Romani-Rinaldi & Testa, 2014). The techniques involved in the manufacturing of textiles have remained relatively unchanged in spite of the great technological advances over the past century (Nordås, 2004; OECD, 2004). This labour-intensiveness aspect is also part of the reason why this market has often been seen as an early step in the industrialisation process of developing countries: its production requires few sophisticated skills, as well as small capital requirements (Abernathy et al., 1999). The latter allows developing countries to establish

production with relative ease; the fashion and textile market becomes attractive for governments wishing to transition from household to workplace production (see Section 6.3.2). The former features also imply that labour force is easily substitutable. This shift is evident in the current move of textile and Ready Made Garment (RMG) production from China to neighbouring lower-wage countries such as Vietnam, Cambodia, and Philippines (CNBC, 2018).

For these reasons, the textile sector may well be seen as the original motor of globalisation. With the wind of liberalisation and globalisation sweeping in over the 1970s and 1980s, manufacturing of labour-intensive fashion and textile items was mainly outsourced to South East Asian countries and certain Latin American countries. This contributed to the fragmentation and global dispersion in terms of value chains (Lund-Thomsen & Lindgreen, 2014) or production networks (Egels-Zandén, 2014). With this outsourcing and change in governance structure, individual firms decreasingly remained in control of ownership over manufacturing facilities. In combination with lacking regulation in production countries, as a result, the social and environmental issues of yesteryear, re-emerged. Issues such as child labour, unfair wages, and poor working conditions have since plagued the market's reputation.

As a motor for globalisation and through the establishment of a global market, the fashion and textile market has also been paramount in perpetuating questionable social and environmental practices through history. From Dickensian conditions in the textile factories of Victorian England and Scarlett O'Hara's cotton-picking slaves in Georgia, to the current exploitation of workers in South East Asia, it may seem as though history is doomed to repeat itself. Or quite possibly the cyclical mode of fashion is mirrored in the responsibility gaps of its manufacturing processes.

Child labour on the supplier level has long epitomised the public's view of the market's lack of responsibility – beginning with the name and shame campaign against Nike in the 1980s and leading to a near eradication of the phenomenon (Financial Times, 2012). Abysmal production facilities and sweatshop conditions were common features of this new global setting, with details of these conditions slowly emerging in the global press. When it comes to the fashion and textile market over the past decades, it is mainly

the chronically unsafe working conditions that have become headlines in the media. Underpaid workers – at times children - endure deadly workplace conditions, and de facto contributed to the continued progress in this market. This is a market rife with detrimental environmental practices, which are often linked to labour practices: examples thereof abound from the sand blasting of jeans, the heavy use of toxic chemicals, the poisoning of ground water, and chemical sludge (FairTrade Center Report, 2010).

Unsurprisingly, since the 1980s, there have been protests surrounding labour conditions in the RMG and shoe sectors: especially “name-and-shame-campaigns”, such as Nike. The popular use of sweatshops in this type of manufacturing was first protested by mainly students at US university campuses (Rivoli, 2009; Klein, 2000) and then spread globally. These types of activist and NGO campaigns have been commonplace in order to force buyer-brands to address poor working conditions (Bartley, 2007; Rivoli, 2009). These campaigns led to numerous stakeholders increasing demands for accountability and responsibility in the market (Ählström, 2003, 2017). The combined heavy media scrutiny with the threat of boycotts led buyer-brands to first develop individual self-regulatory systems in order to ensure worker rights and protect themselves from further scandals, thus, leading the way to the proliferation of self-regulation initiatives and market self-regulation.

### 6.1.2 History of CSR in the Fashion and Textile Market

The history of modern CSR literature originates in many ways in the quest toward improving labour practices in the global fashion and textile supply chain. In the early 1990s, media picked up scandals regarding slave labour in the global fashion and textile market: particularly, child labour practices. Nonetheless, the defensive initial response of most targeted buyer companies was to argue that, since most buyer companies no longer owned any factories, such conditions went beyond individual corporate responsibility (Zadek, 2004). Threats of boycott and campus protests led by NGOs, was part of the emerging process of exposing and targeting buyer companies for irresponsible practices. Jeans pioneer Levi Strauss was quick to respond by implementing its own Code of Conduct (CoC) for its suppliers (Braun & Gearhart, 2004). Other buyer companies quickly followed suit and, by the

mid 1990s, the majority of the largest MNCs in the fashion and textile markets had implemented CoCs for labour issues (Pearson et al., 2013).

As aforementioned in chapters 1 and 2, CSR is an emergent concept that shifts through time. One of the points upon which there was initially consensus was that CSR was voluntary, commitments to responsibility, on top of legal ones (Carroll, 1979, 1991; Blowfield & Murray, 2008; Garriga & Melé, 2004; Laudal, 2010). Furthermore, CSR is also often seen as a way in which to further a company's legitimacy (Oliver, 1991). Nevertheless, given the numerous forms of formal regulation and legislation, as well as the industry standards that have resulted from industry collaboration, the definition of CSR no longer necessarily involves voluntarism.

### 6.1.3 Media Scrutiny

There are multiple social and environmental challenges facing the fashion and textile market, which also has a long history of reacting defensively to different scandals (Spar & La Mure, 2003; Zadek, 2004): a factor that can be instrumental in learning the importance of how to integrate sustainability in its strategy (Elg & Hultman, 2011) and achieve best practice.

Furthermore, the fashion and textile market has been more heavily scrutinised by media than other markets. In Score's (2015) report on media scrutiny of responsibility issues by Grafström et al., do-it-yourself home improvement retailer Clas Ohlson, was much less scrutinised than some of the fashion and textile buyer companies in their sample. This also relates to the size of the enterprise; it is difficult for retail giant H&M to pay its weight in terms of sustainability. Of comparable size, H&M as well as furniture retailer IKEA, succumb to the same media logic; however, they also simultaneously engage in multiple collaborations for sustainability and responsibility. Domestic as well as international media sources of scrutiny, thus, provide different arenas to consider when organising responsibility.

Furthermore, in response to the accusations and responsibility placed upon the buyer company, CSR in the Swedish fashion and textile market was framed early on as not only one of buyer-brand responsibility; it was seen as an instance of supplier ignorance and attitudes as well:

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To place all the blame on the buyer is to simplify the issue. Mainly it is about supplier lacking knowledge about which laws and rules apply to the labour area and how to run a factory efficiently. (H&M's CSR manager Ingrid Schullström, *Aktuell Hållbarhet*, 2003)

Today we work long-terms with a uniquely small number of suppliers in order to build trust and thereby create the preconditions for attitude changes. (Kappahl's CSR manager Ann-Marie Heinonen, *Aktuell Hållbarhet*, 2003)

There are also early examples of feeling misunderstood and misquoted:

We are encouraged to start using external audits, but we already do as the only company in the industry, she says.

Fair Trade Center also claims that we communicate that we do not have any issues with our suppliers, but that is not the case. It is stated clearly on our website, that many do not live up to the demands. (Kappahl's CSR manager Ann-Marie Heinonen, *Aktuell Hållbarhet*, 2003)

Zadek (2004) illustrates his theory of organisational learning and CSR strategy with Nike's trajectory: going from a defensive, and then reactive and finally to a pro-active CSR strategy. This is a journey that many in this market share with Nike. Nike, however, has since obtained a relatively high level of legitimacy (Locke, 2013). This, however, is not necessarily a straight journey; the examples above indicate there can be simultaneous strategies for different areas.

The most recent media outcry on labour-related issues in the global fashion and textile supply chain involved the "Rana Plaza disaster" of 2013, named after the building that collapsed after supplier neglect, in which over 1100 workers lost their lives. As noted in the historical overview of CSR in the fashion and textile market (see Section 6.1.2), labour rights infringements and poor working conditions are not a global or a historical novelty in the market. The Rana Plaza disaster prompted many historic parallels in the global press to the New York Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire of 1911, in which doors were locked and 146 workers died in a matter of twenty minutes. The Triangle Fire prompted an outcry, as well as a government-led response and efforts for labour rights improvement and enforcement.

(Hobson, 2016) The parallel also lies in the hope for Rana Plaza to be a seminal moment in the same way the Triangle fire was.

The Rana Plaza tragedy did, indeed, prompt “private” governance efforts through the formation of multiple stakeholder initiatives in order to address the lack in work and workplace conditions (see Table 6.1 below). However, this is not an isolated incident; under-reported fires occurred in a shoe factory in Wenling, China (BBC, 2014; 2015) and in Lahore, Pakistan in 2012, 2014 and 2015 (New York Times, 2012), killing more than 300, 14, and 37 workers, respectively. According to the international Clean Clothes Campaign, more than 600 workers were killed in over 200 fires and accidents between 2006 and 2012 (Clean Clothes Campaign, 2013).

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Table 6.1 Partnership formations in 2013 following the Rana Plaza disaster in Bangladesh.

<b>Resulting Col-laboration</b>	<b>Actors</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Coordination &amp; Monitoring</b>	<b>Research</b>
<b>Sustainability Compact</b>	EU, Government of Bangladesh & ILO (state- & transnational actors)	Improve labour rights (freedom of association & the right to collective bargaining, as well as working conditions and factory safety)	ILO	
<b>Accord on Fire and Building Safety</b>	Global unions and over 150 fashion brands and retailers	Conduct factory safety assessment and improve building safety and working conditions	The ILO, with the Government of Bangladesh and social partners	Rahman, 2014 Reinecke et al., 2015
<b>Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety</b>	26 apparel companies in the US	Improving safety in factories used by its members	The ILO, with the Government of Bangladesh, and social partners	Brown, 2014
<b>Arrangement and Donors Trust Fund</b>	Representatives from the government of Bangladesh, and national and global representatives of the RMG sector, employers, trade unions, and NGOs	Pay employment injury benefits to Rana Plaza victims and their families	ILO as neutral chair	

## 6.2 The Move to Fast Fashion

### 6.2.1 The Democratisation of Fashion

Fashion is no longer class-driven; rather, it is consumer (Blumer, 1969) and brand-driven in order to accommodate consumer taste. Fashion and con-

sumption have become important parts of our lives, and increasingly contribute to building our social and consumer identity (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995). As such, it has become built into our societal practices, thus, making it more difficult to change the way we make habitual and impulsive purchases.

The fast-paced quality of fashion and its affordability and availability is sometimes referred to as the “democratisation of fashion” (Crofton & Dopico, 2012; Majima, 2008; Menkes, 2002). Notably, the entrance of popular bloggers to the front row of fashion weeks – exclusive positions that were traditionally reserved for the fashion elite – have also been labelled in this tradition (Crewe, 2013). Historically, democratisation of fashion has allowed access to cheap clothing and goods for the masses; such access is sometimes proclaimed by buyer companies to be part of their CSR program:

We want to make sustainable, good-quality fashion accessible to as many people as possible. (H&M Website, 2016)

We call it ‘Democratic Design’ because we believe good home furnishing is for everyone. (IKEA Website, 2018)

Lately, some find the term to be hollow, giving rise to the question: democratic access for whom? The increase in the quality of living standards has been afforded by the development of the fashion and textile market in developing countries, not least through the offering of employment opportunities and, thus, the continued emancipation of women in this traditionally female market<sup>10</sup> (Prieto-Carrón, 2008; Ruwanpura, 2011). However, it has not necessarily involved global democracy through fashion. With globalisation and the outsourcing of production to democratic and undemocratic countries, issues of labour and human rights have many times gone amiss and even afoul. Such struggles are never easy or straight forward, however. With the discourse on business responsibility shifting to include increased

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<sup>10</sup> Of course there are notable exceptions: for example, the Indian textile industry is male dominated (Delaney et al., 2015).



responsibility for such issues (Laasonen, 2012), the alleged democratisation of fashion no longer merely entails consumers in the Global North; those of the growing middleclass in the Global South are also included. Increased consumption and production also place greater strain on our planetary boundaries (Rockström et al., 2009).

These influences aid in constructing what is new and modern in the ever more quick-paced cycle, thus, contributing to the rise of what is increasingly called fast fashion in which the continuous changes and short-timed orders minimise costs and risks in the fashion and textile markets – or displaces them further back the production chain (see Section 6.3.1). The implications of this fast-paced development upon suppliers, workers, and local communities are also part of the problem that the CSR equation attempts to resolve through standards and organising efforts. This may also be why it is difficult for voluntary CSR actions and initiatives to resolve all deeply-rooted issues in the fashion and textile market's global supply chain. Indeed, three decades of auditing suppliers appears to have accomplished relatively little (Egels-Zandén & Lindholm, 2015) other than self-diagnosed audit or the monitoring of fatigue amongst suppliers.

This potpourri of simultaneous trends is not consistent with the binary nature of fashion: traditionally, either you were in, or you were out. Fashion brands and their intermediaries continuously strive to balance the emphasis upon novelty and demands for sustainability. Most consumers are neither completely swayed by the pull of novelty, nor by the ethical demands for sustainability.

Further, Köksal et al. (2017) highlight the importance of consumer (price) pressures for organising responsibility in the fashion and textile market. Consumers seek low prices of fashion clothing: a staple of overflowing wardrobes with shifting styles. Although consumers increasingly tend to state that CSR is important in purchases (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004), this is not in line with practice, thus, leading to an attitude-behaviour gap.

## 6.2.2 Fashion or Fast Fashion?

According to Forbes (2016), the average American wardrobe holds 120 pieces of clothing<sup>11</sup>. An optimal wardrobe holds around 30 capsule items<sup>12</sup>, something more closely resembling the amount of clothing the generation of our grandparents held. Also, the view on clothes and fashion, has changed immensely over a relatively short amount of time. Fashion is even becoming a field of research in its own right, with a pioneering Master's education at Stockholm University premiering in 2007 (SU, 2018).

These days, when you enter a fast fashion chain, you may observe a 1980s-inspired tank top with a retro print, a 1990s choker necklace and 1970s high waisted flare jeans. In reality, this panoply of wide-ranging garments resembles more a smorgasbord of eclectic 20th century fashion, rather than the exhibition of the latest cry in “fashion”. Which was the case until around a decade ago, when high street retailers were still “copying”, to a certain extent, fashions from the catwalk.

Meanwhile, anecdotal signs of the organisational fashions of responsibility are also increasingly exhibited in fast fashion retail stores. At Swedish retail fashion chain Lindex, a postcard of their water savings for their jeans is displayed by the cashier. At competitor Indiska, their windows illustrate the buyer company's CSR work by displaying the slogan *We fight for change*. Some items at H&M have labels showcasing the garments' organic cotton content, others with recycled materials. A dress from H&M's hailed Sustainable Collection 2017, which sells for 2999 SEK, is made from recycled plastic bottles. This constitutes evidence of the growing importance to organise and communicate responsibility. The examples also illustrate the need for communication of a separate brand identity, all whilst communicating the buyer company's supposed responsibility through partnerships and initiatives. According to industry observers, the prominence of eco-

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/sites/emmajohnson/2015/01/15/the-real-cost-of-your-shopping-habits/>  
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/deborahweinswig/2016/09/07/millennials-go-minimal-the-decluttering-lifestyle-trend-that-is-taking-over/>  
<https://cladwell.com/about>

<sup>12</sup> <https://bemorewithless.com/project-333/>

labelling or “green tags in the fashion industry” appears to have increased exponentially (Podcast, Frendberg & Moderådet, 2017).

## 6.3 Characteristics of Fashion and Textile Market, Relating to Sustainability Challenges

### 6.3.1 Outsourcing, Technology, and Cost Levels

The international fashion and textile markets are heavily fragmented and is sometimes characterised as a “buyer-driven commodity chain” (Gereffi, 1999) with asymmetric power relationships between buyer and supplier(s). With growing outsourcing in the fashion and textile market to lower wage cost countries, certain observers claim there has been a race to the bottom (Fransen & Conzelmann, 2015). Global buyers have demanded shorter and shorter lead times and sustained quality whilst public outcry has simultaneously led buyers to demand suppliers also take responsibility for environmental and social sustainability. Constantly faster responses and smaller batches have been a staple of the fashion and textile market since the 1990s (Schmitz, 2000). The dichotomy and decoupling is clear in the words of an Indian supplier interviewed in Schmitz (2000): “We are expected to produce at Third World prices to First World standards”.

The shorter lead times for production have also allowed fashion buyers to introduce new lines more frequently. Zara offers 24 new clothing collections annually, whilst H&M offers 12 to 16 with weekly refreshers. Among European fast fashion buyer brands, the average number of clothing collections has more than doubled: from two per year in 2000 to approximately five per year in 2011; the cost of clothing has fallen in relation to purchasing power (Caro & Martínez-de-Albéniz, 2015).

The challenges involved in organising CSR issues in the fashion and textile markets are deeply embedded in the fast fashion sourcing model and the consumer purchasing habits it has brought about, which is exacerbated by the lack of formal regulation. The diffusion of responsibility between stakeholders, the resulting (simultaneous) shifts in responsibility from buyer to supplier to buyer, to consumer, and to government, all contribute to the scale of the problem (Marx et al., 2015).

### 6.3.2 Supply Chain Relationships

#### **Power Distribution of the Fashion and Textile Market**

The global supply chain is fragmented, with suppliers located in different countries. This leads to a lack of transparency between buyer and supplier - particularly in its lower tiers. The power distribution of corporate value chains in the fashion and textile market reveals unskilled workers and a weak initial investment barrier on the supply side. Thus, power resides with the buyers and the fashion brands. Suppliers work under conditions of almost perfect competition instead (Gereffi, 1994; Braun & Gearhart, 2004).

Fashion and textile buyer companies choose between alternative countries and regions for sourcing. The business model for fashion and textile - or "fast fashion" - requires movement toward the lower cost regions in order to maintain a competitive edge, in terms of price. Thus, suppliers compete heavily when it comes to price and/or lead times. This leads to heavy pressures to comply with price pressures, as well as sustainability standards. The latter involves the regulation of overtime, which often paradoxically contradicts the buyer company's lead-time preferences (Verite, 2012; Kim & Chung, 2016).

Furthermore, employees, workers, as well as labour union in production countries, often have a weak position in bargaining with fashion buyers (Braun & Gearhart, 2004; Lipschutz & Rowe, 2005). Nevertheless, suppliers can have a somewhat better bargaining position over large MNCs in terms of accepting or refusing implementation of sustainability standards, as even large MNCs can remain relatively small customers (Helin & Babri, 2014).

Another feature of the fashion and textile market is the different cost levels between sourcing and recipient regions. There is competition between sourcing regions; however, opportunities provided by technological progress in terms of telecommunications and transport has contributed to the fragmentation of the market. As a result, fashion and textile buyer-brands can take advantage of the most advantageous cost levels for various sourcing needs. Production is most often completely outsourced to low-cost regions (Baden, 2002; World Bank, 2007). With a global market share of 35,6% in 2016, China is currently the world's dominating clothes export-

er (WTO, 2018; CNBC, 2018). In 2004, the average hourly labour cost of clothing manufacturing in coastal China was USD 0.88, compared to USD 8.89 in the USA (Abernathy et al., 2004, p. 34). As clothing production moved from China due to the increase in wages (and minimum wage), the average hourly labour cost was USD 3.60 in China in 2016 (CNBC, 2017).

The outsourced production of fashion and textiles to developing countries provided cheap labour, thus, allowing for substantial profits. According to certain researchers, this profitability has led to political resistance in regulating the market on the supply chain level (Hillier, 2011; Ma et al., 2016). Furthermore, governments of the Global South compete for the employment opportunities offered by fashion brands, thus, aiming to offer a favourable investment climate through low taxes and minimal regulation - especially when it concerns labour rights (Young, 2006).

Management trends, such as lean, have taught buyer companies to order more frequently and less in advance, in order to allow for more product variation (Abernathy et al., 1999). Given these new flows of information, supplier manufacturers must comply with orders quickly, often within a week. Stock keeping is kept low to non-existent - particularly when it comes to fashionable brands (Nordås, 2004; Lopez & Fan, 2009). The hasty changes in fashion, as presented in Section 6.1, have led to an unprecedented increase in the number of seasons with corresponding short lead times. Thus, shorter deadlines and low order predictability has become a staple in the fashion and textile market. This increasingly built-in feature is at odds with the efforts of stifling and bridging responsibility gaps, since this lack of predictability exacerbates the potential of labour rights abuses.

The fear of governmental legislation and added societal pressures is one of the main motivations for buyers in organising CSR issues and reaching social goals (Zeller, 2012). In the global fashion and textile market, however, this motivation appears to be given marginal weight (Köksal et al., 2017). Rather, in order to gain a social license to operate, membership or requiring adherence to particular management standards and practices are commonplace and necessary: such as the CoC of BSCI (Amfori) or Fair-Wear Foundation. Such adherence is often mainly of instrumental use and maintaining the status quo, rather than improving conditions, more than just nominally (Egels-Zandén & Lindholm, 2015). Instead, ensuring suppli-

er compliance with such standards causes further pressures for suppliers, who are forced to comply and finance such membership, whilst concurrently reducing costs and staying competitive on the buyers' market.

Buyers pass onto suppliers the pressures and costs for compliance with regulations: voluntary standards such as CoCs (Milne et al., 2013; O'Rourke, 2006; MacCarthy & Jayarathne, 2012). Compliance with governmental and "private" governance then becomes mandatory for suppliers. Non-compliance can lead to failed orders and a discontinued relationship (Huq et al., 2014). In return, such compliance and certification can lead to a competitive position in the buyers' market (Perry & Towers, 2013), as well as to employee attraction and retention (Huq et al., 2014; Sendlhofer & Lernborg, 2018). A supplier can, thereby, improve its position through market differentiation, as well as improve its operational performance. Third-party certification through recognised multi-stakeholder initiatives can especially contribute to improving bargaining power (O'Rourke, 2006) and building collaborative long-term relationships with buyers.

### 6.3.3 Relationships in the Fashion and Textile Market

Most buyer companies in the global North (including Sweden) do not produce domestically; instead, they are engaged in complex global supply chains with suppliers and a number of different levels of sub-suppliers. Engaging in long-term relationships with suppliers and evaluating them while improving<sup>13</sup> social and environmental aspects of production, are often seen as key facets of responsible global supply chains. Making suppliers follow demands expressed in corporate documents such as CoCs is at the core of media discussions of CSR since there is an inherent challenge to organise responsibility. This literature stream is sometimes called that of private governance and focuses upon how companies attempt to bridge regulation gaps (Locke et al., 2007; Locke, 2013). Different strategies of compliance are also evaluated: the command and control versus the collabora-

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<sup>13</sup> Long-term relationships to suppliers, supplier evaluations, improvement of workplace conditions, diminished chemical, and water and energy usage are activities described in all three companies as being necessary in achieving sustainable SCs

tion/cooperation and long-term relationship streams. The former involves exerting control over suppliers through said contracts and stipulated requirements in CoCs. Locke's (2013) studies, however, show evidence that such a strategy may not be meaningful or conducive in actually changing responsible practices. Instead, a more collaborative buyer strategy to engage with suppliers is found to be more conducive to change. Similarly, Gimenez, and Tachizawa (2012) argue that command and control buyer strategy over suppliers may instead be damaging; control must be combined with cooperation in order to reach the intended effect.

There is a built-in component that trades flexibility for sustainability; this is especially the case with the fast fashion aspects of global supply chain (Caro & Martínez-de-Albéniz, 2015). Cooperation is increasingly seen as necessary as controlling a global supply chain can be very difficult. Reasons for this include a lack of resources, knowledge, and/or the willingness to fulfil CoCs (Grimm, Hofstetter & Sarkis, 2014). Furthermore, corporate control tends to only extend to first-tier suppliers (Elg & Hultman, 2011); thus, business barely remains knowledgeable or controlling its own direct suppliers' behaviour.

#### 6.3.4 Transparency and Collaboration

The demand for coordination and measurability for reliable and comparable sustainability reporting has increased amongst market actors, as well as from consumers and government. The recent EU rules on sustainability reporting are, indeed, a contributing factor when it concerns this need for more transparency on environmental and social sustainability (European Commission, 2017).

Transparency is built upon trust: an important component in business relationships (Ciliberti et al., 2009). With good business relationships in the global supply chain, it may become easier for fashion buyers to react quicker to market changes. Global fashion supply chains need to be integrated in order to coordinate resources (Wu & Blackwurst, 2009). Perry and Towers (2013) argue that long-term and well-developed cooperation is needed for the market to develop toward sustainable and responsible SCs. Thereby, risks are minimised and all actors take responsibility for moving the market in the right direction (Spekman & Davis, 2004).

Transparency and collaboration places demands upon buyer companies to be willing to share information, yet creates the potential risk of losing its competitive brand advantage. In fashion, previously competitive advantage was partially built upon price, and more importantly related to design. Despite a current more fast-paced process of design (see Section 6.3.1), designers tend to maintain a tradition of secrecy. Additionally, the production department may be less reluctant to take help and collaborate in order to solve common issues. This is no longer as prominent in the sustainability department, in which sustainability is seen as a common issue and not necessarily as a source of competition. As we will see in chapters 8 and 9, organising such issues collectively in the market is sometimes described as “pre-competitive collaboration” and is, thereby, seen as not impinging upon competitive advantage.

For a long time, very few fashion and textile buyer companies disclosed supplier lists (ETAG, 2003; Doorey, 2011; Laudal, 2010), thereby, making it more difficult to verify CSR reports and scrutiny. Recently, buyer companies are increasingly sharing their supplier lists, however, which contribute to one form of transparency. As Egels-Zandén et al. (2015) hold, numerous forms of transparency and opaqueness are intermingled in corporate practices. For example, a buyer company may publish its list of suppliers in a particular context; yet it might not fully disclose all rankings. This mixes various forms of transparency.

Suppliers are often pressured to comply with numerous rules and regulations: i.e. CoCs. These frequently have slight variations, contributing to a lack of cohesion in rules (Huq et al., 2014; Locke et al., 2007). The investments in facilities, training, and wages involved and at times audit costs, naturally raise factories’ costs (Sancha et al., 2015; Stigzelius & Mark-Herbert, 2009; Yu, 2008). Such improvements should potentially increase product prices. Given the prevalence of a buyer’s market, however, it is difficult to compete with increased product prices. Thus, this creates a paradoxical situation in which labour rights issues are forsaken in order to compensate for increased operational costs (Locke et al., 2007; Hoang & Jones, 2012). Merk (2009) finds CoCs mere managerial instruments that frequently ignore workers in its development process. Other barriers for successful code implementation involve communication and comprehen-



sion issues. Workers also frequently lack awareness about their labour rights (Stigzelius & Mark-Herbert, 2009; Lernborg & Sendlhofer, 2017). Notably, given the low-skilled nature of the work involved, factory workers frequently lack education, a factor that may render traditional trainings ineffective (Sendlhofer & Lernborg, 2018).

Although a buyer company may have some degree of transparency in its supply chain, it may be difficult to rely upon intermediaries, such as interpreters, in order to certify the implementation of CSR efforts: for example, CoCs. To this end, Locke (2013) finds that having a “command and control approach” is less helpful than having a cooperative, long-term, and close relationship with suppliers. Thereby, trust is built and transparency improved.

Difficulties also arise in the auditing process. Factors such as corruption (Huq et al., 2014), inexperienced auditors (Locke et al., 2007), and mock compliance on the suppliers’ part (Hoang & Jones, 2012) all contribute to the ineffectiveness of CoCs. There is also a lack of trust for labour unions amongst many workers in the fashion and textile market (Anner, 2012). This may be due in part to threats from managers, and may lead workers, when interviewed, to omit exposing the reality of working conditions with auditors (Locke et al., 2007; Hoang & Jones, 2012).

Furthermore, there has been a perceived need of increased “intra-industry transparency” in order to drive the development toward responsible and sustainable supply chains (Khurana & Ricchetti, 2016). A number of dialogue fora and collaborations have been initiated to this purpose or side-purpose. There are numerous “private” governance attempts - digital and otherwise - aimed at capturing this. Establishing that which suppliers are truly responsible and fulfilling related corporate buyer demands, has led to an explosion of standards and certifications for (sustainable) suppliers. Business actors request solutions to share more easily information around supplier factory choices; one responsible entity would connect buyer companies, thereby, establishing sustainable alternatives for factory selection and suppliers, thus, contributing to resource efficiency. In essence, organising responsibility in the markets. To this end, arenas for buyers and suppliers to meet and for the latter to be graded – at least through creating new platforms and intermediaries for responsible “Markets” - contribute with

transparency on CSR and its rankings. New initiatives and organisations such as STWI and Better Mills Initiative are examples of how such practices are shared.

There are numerous barriers to the implementation of CSR efforts - individual or collective - in the competitive and complex fashion and textile market (Perry & Towers, 2013). Egels-Zandén (2014) finds that improvement in labour conditions has been substantial in some aspects during the past decades, whilst many remain the same.

## 6.4 The Swedish Fashion and Textile Market

### 6.4.1 Historical Overview of the Fashion and Textile Market in Sweden

Historically, the development of the Swedish textile market started in the early 19th century, and started to really take off in the mid-1800s. This was mainly established in the Western part of Sweden in one of its main hubs: Borås, which remains a centre for textile in Sweden. This long history is part of the reason why there is a relatively high number of fashion retailers in Sweden; indeed, why fashion and textile continues to be an important source of export and competitiveness for the country (TEKO Report, 2016; Navipro Report, 2018). At the height of the flourishing of Sweden's textile market in the 1960s, Algots<sup>14</sup> - the nation's largest and most important player - sold almost 4 million clothing items. This led the price war of the time, perpetuating the democratisation of fashion (see Section 6.2.1), which can be seen as a precursor to the current fast fashion movement.

Similar to the composition of workers in the current textile global supply chain (Ruwanpura, 2011), most employees at Algots and other textile factories were young and female. Their relatively modest salaries offered some independence. It was, as still is, a highly manually intensive work, requiring a great deal of stamina from its workers. In the 1920s, with poor labour conditions, this female-dominated market had the highest incidence of workplace accidents. A downturn in the textile market started in the

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<sup>14</sup> Established in 1907.

1950s, after the Golden years. And in the 1970s, with the liberalisation of markets and opening up to wage competition from newly industrialised countries, the domestic Swedish textile market – as well as Algots - all but disappeared (Hesselgren, 1993; Segerblom, 1983).

In practice, there is no production of fashion products in Sweden; instead, similar to the global fashion and textile market, its production is part of a complex chain in low-cost countries. Since 2000, Swedish consumption of fashion products has increased by 40 per cent; yet, in terms of purchasing power, Swedes spend as much now as they did in 2000.

Currently, a few exceptions of more socially conscious enterprises have tried to re-establish some production in Sweden, notably Swedish Stockings (2018). The emergence of H&M as a global actor has paved the way to the revitalisation of the Swedish fashion and textile market; however, with the outsourcing of production, numerous responsibility issues and gaps exist. Yet, just as it is globally, the fashion and textile market in Sweden is fragmented; there is a large number of SMEs and it is plagued by problems of efficiency and profitability (Navipro Fashion Report, 2018; Volante Fashion Report, 2016). Sweden and Swedes have also come to be known as a fashionable nation and people: both in terms of fashion consumerism and its antonym, sustainability consciousness.

#### 6.4.2 Swedish Fashion

What has become known worldwide as Swedish fashion, has a minimalist clean aesthetic, is as understated as it is functional, and is more casual than its more elegant counterparts. Lately, it has also become increasingly well known for its precursory focus upon sustainability: not only through famous high-street retailer brand H&M; smaller and medium-sized brands such as Fjällräven, Houdini, and Filippa K, have also gained international appreciation.

The Swedish fashion and textile market is a brand and consumer-driven with a high level of productivity with a turnover of SEK 305 billion in 2016, of which 68 per cent came from exports (see Appendix 1A, Table 4). In 2005, the Minister of Trade in Sweden coined the phrase “Swedish fashion wonder” referring to it (Swedish Fashion Council, 2017); it is now con-

sidered one of Sweden's primary and fastest growing export markets, alongside the computer gaming market (Volante Report, 2015).

Sweden's fashion and textile market is composed of approximately 60 000 companies, including actors in textiles, shoes, clothing, accessories, and bags (Tillväxtverket, 2016, p. 3). The majority of companies are small enterprises, of which 95 per cent have less than 10 employees, respectively. A mere 0.1 per cent of these companies are large enterprises with 250 employees and above; the rest constitute small and medium-sized companies (ibid). In terms of the total number of employees, the fashion and textile market is quite important for the Swedish economy (See Appendix 1A, Table 3).

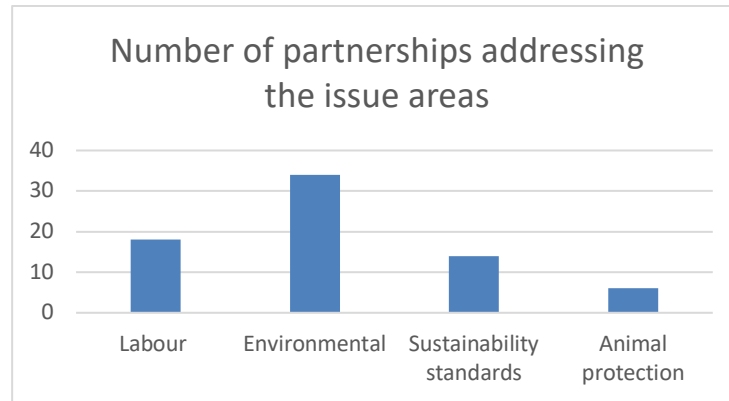
According to Tillväxtverket's (2015) report, a majority of Swedish fashion and textile companies report a positive attitude toward being associated with Swedish brands: 84% of fashion companies find it positive to be associated with Swedish or Nordic brands.

#### 6.4.3 Organising CSR in the Swedish Fashion and Textile Market (2010-2017)

As previously noted, the organising of CSR in the Swedish fashion and textile market has led to establishing numerous local initiatives. Fashion and textile buyer companies have taken on membership in a mix of global and local collaborations, partnerships, and initiatives. The following section will present an overview of the linkages of membership in different initiatives between 2010 and 2016/2017.

The role of partnership portfolios (Wassmer, 2010; Wassmer et al., 2014) or partnership networks (Bitzer et al., 2012) is explored – with an emphasis of the linkages between different actors. A selection of partnership portfolios in the Swedish fashion market are identified and serve to illustrate the way in which there is both a cohesion and fragmentation in membership: for example, the largest buyer companies in the Swedish fashion and textile market, as well as the STWI members. This serves to demonstrate the fragmentation of “private” governance in the Swedish fashion and textile market, as well as the importance of the chosen case study as a rallying point in the Swedish fashion and textile market, of which a majority of the largest buyer companies are members.

Figure 6.1 Number of Initiatives and Partnerships in Swedish Fashion and Textile Market, according to issue areas (2016)



The following figure shows the overlapping memberships in 2016/2017 and partnership portfolios of the largest fashion and textile buyer companies active in Sweden, as well as sustainability-conscious SMEs. As aforementioned, a majority of the buyer companies are members in STWI (28/35). Many held overlapping memberships in Kemikaliegruppen (2018): 17 out of 28. On average, a buyer company holds six memberships, a large MNC has nine memberships, and a SME holds four. Inditex and H&M stand out, in terms of both the number as well as the nature of the memberships (26 and 13, respectively). The latter is involved in initiatives to a much higher degree, which collaborate with governmental and supra-governmental agencies/actors and universities. The company also tends to be members of MSI coalitions to a much higher degree. Large MNCs, on the other hand, tend to be members of recycling and charity projects.

The companies are members in 73 initiatives, of which 18 directly relate to labour, of which eight are MSIs, three are BDIs, three are CSIs, and three are industry collective agreements. A total of 14 relate to general sustainability goals: ten of which consist of industry dialogue or networks, three are MSIs, and 1 is a BDI. There are six initiatives related to animal protection and 34 to environmental issues. Of these, eight relate to recycling and water, five to more sustainable cotton, and four to chemicals. This illustrates the fragmentation of “private” governance, and the plethora of issue-specific initiatives, which contribute to a competition therein.



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Table 6.2 Main “Private” Governance Initiatives for Labour Rights in the Global Fashion and Textile Market

<b>Organisational form</b>	<b>EU-based</b>	<b>US-based</b>
<b>NGO-based coalitions</b>	<b>Clean Clothes Campaign</b> (Amsterdam)	<b>WRC</b> (Workers Rights Consortium, Washington)
<b>Multi-stakeholder initiatives</b>	<b>FWF</b> (Fair Wear Foundation, Amsterdam) <b>ETI</b> (Ethical Trading Initiative, London)	<b>FLA</b> (Fair Labor Association, Washington) <b>SAI</b> (Social Accountability International, New York)
<b>Business-led initiatives</b>	<b>BSCI</b> (Business Social Compliance Initiative, Bryssel) <b>SEDEX</b> (Supplier Ethical Data Exchange, London) <b>GSCP</b> (Global Social Compliance Programme, Paris)	<b>WRAP</b> (Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production, Washington) <b>FFC</b> (Fair Factories Clearinghouse, New York) <b>SAC</b> (Sustainable Apparel Coalition, San Francisco) <b>TSC-CFT</b> (The Sustainability Consortium, and Textiles Sectors Working Group, Fayetteville, Arkansas)

Table 6.3 Largest Fashion Retailers in Sweden, Revenues, Headquarters and Membership in STWI Based on Information from Allabolag.se (2018)

Company	Sales 2017 (MSEK)	Headquarters	Membership in STWI
<b>H&amp;M</b> H&M -Monki -Cos -&Other Stories -Weekday	200 000	Stockholm	YES
<b>Kappahl</b>	4916	Mölnadal	YES
<b>Lindex</b>	3301	Göteborg	YES
<b>RNB</b> -Brothers -Polarn & Pyret	2251	Stockholm	YES
<b>MQ</b>	1836	Göteborg	YES
<b>Åhléns</b>	4910	Stockholm	YES
<b>Gina Tricot</b>	1057	Borås	YES
<b>Indiska</b>	721,2	Stockholm	YES
<b>Zara Sweden</b>	977,5	Stockholm	NO
<b>Varner Brand Stores</b> -Carlings -Bikbok -Cubus -Dressman	240	Stockholm/Norge	YES
<b>Twilfit</b>	365	Stockholm	NO
<b>Joy</b>	264	Göteborg	NO
<b>Desam Fashion Group</b>	52	Mölnadal	NO
<b>Lund Fashion</b> -Flash -Dea Axelssons	377	Lund	NO
<b>Springhill Holding</b> -Topeco, Gripsholm, Crossbow, Gutz	302	Helsingborg	NO





# Chapter 7

## The Role of the Swedish Government in Organising CSR: Governmental Translations and Framings

We live in a world that is the shared responsibility of us all. We know that our actions affect the lives of people in other parts of the globe, and will affect the lives of future generations. We know that the resources of the planet that we share are limited and that humanity needs to embark on a new, sustainable path. We depend on each other to make this global transformation a reality.

*Policy Framework for Swedish Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid, 2016, p. 3*

With a critical realist approach, the starting point of this thesis is that events and practices in the social world can be interpreted, as well as contested, in different ways. Thereby, it is understandable in the realm of policy that policy actors may have differing views on a particular issue such as CSR, which may change over the course of time. Framing allows insights into the dy-

namics of the policy-making process. The policy-making process in this thesis is viewed as a contest between competing conceptualisations of issues, as well as its solutions; it is helpful in allowing the denaturalisation of these shifting or differing understandings (Schön & Rein, 1994). Therefore, this chapter draws upon the concept of framing in order to highlight how CSR is defined, conceptualised, and represented in strategic attempts to further different political actors' interests. The way in which an issue or a concept such as CSR is framed is of great importance as it opens up to certain policy responses, whilst preventing others. The dominant framing allows certain political action, or may make such action impossible. Identifying which respective framings of CSR are established during this time period allows us to better understand the context in which this case study of partial organising arose and developed.

This chapter sets out to identify the active role of the government in organising responsibility in the market. There are more options in the governmental toolkit than hard law, so this chapter explores how CSR is defined and framed by the government, which CSR practices are promoted, and what are the intended outcomes. To this end, it identifies the different shifts in governmental framing of CSR that have occurred between 2002 and 2008, as well as the government's role in these. Unveiling the predominant governmental framing of CSR allows a deepened understanding of the ways in which specific policies emerge: in this case, how responsibility is organised in the market, ideally and in practice.

The governmental CSR rhetoric is often packaged as a win-win promise, including both trade promotion and social value creation (Vallentin & Murillo, 2012). An increased focus upon the instrumental aspects of CSR as value creating and cost-saving, is also identified as guiding the CSR activities promoted and supported by the Swedish government. Moreover, this analysis of the government's role in organising CSR allows the identification of the varying combinations of organisational elements used in order to contribute to the organising of CSR in the market.

The chapter proceeds as follows: first, the role of government in CSR is presented and its role in the Swedish context is then briefly presented, in order to allow for an analysis of the various governmental framings of CSR over three political regimes. Subsequently, these different governmental

framings and related CSR activities are analysed from a partial organising perspective in order to unveil the importance of government in partial organising efforts: such as private governance initiatives. Finally, the section concludes with a discussion of findings in relation to the overarching research question of how responsibility is organised in the Swedish fashion and textile market.

## 7.1 Government and CSR

The government-CSR relationship is counter-intuitive to many, and therefore remains largely overlooked, particularly in theoretical and conceptual terms. (Gond et al., 2011, p. 641)

As highlighted in chapter 2, a contemporary and common framing of CSR is one that allows addressing the problems created by the force of globalisation (Tengblad & Ohlsson, 2010). With the rise of global issues, certain researchers have identified an erosion of nation-state regulations (Bäckstrand, 2006; Smith & Fischlein, 2010). Accordingly, given the complexity of global sustainability issues, the possibility of state-government to legislate transnational issues is framed as being limited. Thereby, the organising of CSR is linked to the emergence of more soft private governance arrangements. Transnational regulation gaps can, thereby, be addressed (Bendell, 2000; Ruggie, 2003).

In CSR and “private” governance research, governments are important in creating the preconditions, or “enabling environments” for CSR (Fox et al., 2002; Steurer, 2010) through the introduction of governmental CSR policies despite inherent limitations. Focusing upon the role of government in CSR does not necessarily relate to dealing with it in the conventional sense of hard law. Thereby, it is difficult to govern or organise CSR issues, not least because of the lack of transnational regulation, but also due to its complexity. Governments do not necessarily have the traditional toolkit at their disposal for organising an issue, such as formal rules and law making.

### 7.1.1 The Nordic and Swedish Context

Sweden is often cited as being a front-runner when it comes to CSR and sustainability issues. In the Nordic context, however, its government has not always been a first-mover in terms of CSR. Much of the Scandinavian attitude toward responsibility and CSR in particular, as well as sustainability is routinely attributed to the social democratic welfare state model and egalitarian policies promoted for most of the past century (Strand et al., 2015; Lapsley & Knutsson, 2017).

Similar to its Nordic neighbours, the Swedish setting provides a socially embedded market economy (Midttun et al., 2006). Sweden has a history of establishing policies in a close institutionalised setting with the state in conjunction with centralised interest groups (Naurin, 2001). Furthermore, Nordic welfare states have a tradition of high levels of regulation and active state involvement. Therefore, according to Gjørberg (2010), they can be expected to adapt and translate the notion of voluntary CSR.

Improving responsible supply chain practices - be they in the environmental or social realm - was long assumed to be beyond the scope of government. The Swedish government in particular has long shown an interest in matters of international environmental and social sustainability and responsibility. According to its CSR policy, Sweden is a promoter of free trade as well as sustainable development. Swedish businesses, thus, follow a high ethical standard and serve as role models internationally; and they use this as a competitive advantage. "Sustainable business", thereby, promotes a favourable image of Sweden (Swedish Government, 2014a, b). One of the latest examples is the CSR centre implemented at the Swedish Embassy in Beijing with a memorandum of understanding between Sweden and China (CSR Centre Website, 2018; MFA, 2010).

An overarching aim of Swedish policy is to promote Swedish business and strengthen its competitiveness in terms of sustainability, as well as to strengthen the Nordic cooperation in this field (Swedish Government, 2015). The Swedish government, thus, informs, encourages, and assists companies in their work with these issues. Rather than a critical counterpart, this is a political arena that seeks to assist companies in their road toward taking responsibility for sustainability.

As an actor in the political arena, the government plays multiple roles. For example, it funds critical watchdogs (e.g. Swedwatch), whilst seeking to promote the revenues of those Swedish businesses that such watchdogs scrutinise. Nonetheless, the government is ultimately responsible for ensuring human rights, labour rights, fighting corruption, environmental concerns, etc. (MFAid, 2005).

Table 7.1 Key Events of Swedish Government's CSR-Related Actions

<b>Year</b>	<b>CSR &amp; Government Event</b>
1999	Globkom Parliamentary Committee is Formed
2002	Launch of Globkom Report
2003	Launch of PGU (Policy for Global Development)
2002-2009	Swedish Partnership for Global Responsibility
2007	Memorandum of Understanding on CSR with China
2009	Protect, Respect, Remedy Conference in Stockholm
2009	Launch of CSR Ambassadorship
2010	Launch of CSR Centre in Beijing
2010	Launch of Sida's Business for Development (B4D) programme
2011	Launch of EU Commission's CSR strategy and Wish for Member States to Draw up National Plans
2013	Launch of Swedish Leadership for Sustainable Development
2014	Launch of National Policy for CSR
2015	Launch of Action Plan on Business and Human Rights
2016	Launch of New Policy Framework for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid
2016	Co-Launch of Global Deal for Improved Social Dialogue and Labour Conditions with ILO and OECD
2018	Launch of Swedish Governmental Agenda 2030: Action Plan
2018	Launch of Follow-Up of Action Plan on Business and Human Rights

An easy overview of key events relating to Swedish government's CSR actions, positions, and policies is presented in Table 7.1, which identifies the relative late starting date of the Swedish government's interest in CSR, particularly in comparison to its Nordic neighbours. Few governmental actions were taken during the 2000s. Instead, a quick glance through the table reveals the identification of a proliferation of events and actions between

2010-2018. These identified events form part of the basis for the three different governmental framings of CSR identified during 1999 to 2018, coinciding with three subsequent shifts in political regimes.

### 7.1.2 Governmental and NGO Expectations of CSR

Of the 115 Swedish articles related to CSR coded on the online portal *Biståndsdebatten* (“Foreign Aid Debate”, 2010-2018), 24 related to extended producer responsibility: particularly, in terms of the need to improve labour rights. A majority of these articles referred to the Swedish fashion and textile “industry”. Therein, Sweden’s largest fashion and textile company H&M was not only mentioned as a positive or negative example; it was frequently the focus of the entire debate article (Birgersson, 2010; Risberg & Fröjmark, 2012; Hemstad et al., 2016; Lindberg, 2016; Bengtsson, 2016; Pechter, 2017). Authors came from both civil society and government, yet the absence of business and its interest organisations in the debate landscape was palpable, which Markstedt et al. (2013) also noted: “Where is the business sector in the CSR debate?” There is one notable exception in which business members of the Swedish Leadership for Sustainable Development (organised by Sida) urged other prominent companies to take more responsibility for society (Berg et al., 2014).

When it comes to government, the Minister for International Development Cooperation, Gunilla Carlsson (2006-2013) was active with numerous debate articles, promoting the cooperation between business and government to alleviate poverty and contribute to sustainable development (Carlsson, 2011). Petri Gornitzka (2010), then Director of Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency Sida also contributed to the debate with a positive outlook upon business-government cooperation and public-private development partnerships: “Much better when the business sector and aid cooperate”. Furthermore, in terms of fair trade, Ministers for Enterprise and Innovation and those representing International Development Cooperation and Climate (Damberg & Lövin, 2015) raised the CSR debate in the subsequent Social Democratic government (2014-2018) to an eclectic group of countries (Bengtsson, 2015). Furthermore, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Mikael Damberg, Minister for EU Affairs and Trade Ann Linde, and Minister for the Envi-

ronment Karolina Skog visited China in 2017 in order to promote Sino-Swedish cooperation on sustainable business. On the topic of the relationship between trade and democracy, Ann Linde stated:

It allows the possibility of raising issues in which we have different views, such as unionising rights or democratic development. Swedish companies can, through their way of being, contribute to changing the situation as they promote labour unions or, as in Saudi Arabia, to improve the possibility for women to work. (Arbetet, 2017)

## 7.2 Swedish Government Framings of CSR

The active role the Swedish government has played in the translation, framing, and organising of CSR is investigated in this chapter. The use of these concepts is explained in Chapters 1 and 5. As mentioned, Sweden has emerged as a front-runner in sustainability and CSR (Strand et al., 2015), and is often evoked as a role model. This strong status is not only related to strong social welfare, corporate behaviour, and consumer rights; it also concerns the governmental efforts to promote itself in relation to CSR.



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Table 7.2 Chronological Development of Governmental Framings of CSR.

<b>“International Solidarity” Framing</b>	<b>“Trade Competitiveness” Framing</b>	<b>“Swedish Brand” Framing</b>
1998-2006 <i>Foreign Policy</i>	2006-2014 <i>Trade, Foreign &amp; Development Cooperation Policy</i>	2014-2018 <i>Trade, Foreign &amp; Development Cooperation Policy</i>
Separate issue Light engagement National initiative formed	Key issue to be integrated Efficiency New development agenda Public-Private Development Partnerships (PPDPs)	Key issue Expansion to new markets
International Solidarity	Launch of Centre for CSR & Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with China First national action plan (at the behest of the EU) Trade Competitiveness	Deepening of CSR centre engagement (renewed MoU)  Swedish Brand
Guided by international frameworks (OECD, UN)	Guided by international frameworks (ILO, OECD, UN)	Guided by international frameworks (ILO, OECD, UN)

### 7.2.1 International Solidarity Framing

From a Nordic perspective, the governmental and business interest in CSR occurred relatively late in the Swedish context. The analysed political regime constitutes a time in which there was considerable debate on the useful or uselessness of CSR (Svenskt Näringsliv, 2003). Windell (2006) describes the heated discussions and subsequent adaptation and translation of CSR into the Swedish context. It was not until the mid to late 2000s that the Swedish business community broadly accepted the concept of CSR (Gjølberg, 2010; Windell, 2006). Even in 2011, Svenskt Näringsliv’s member journal *Entreprenör* described CSR in terms of “the CSR mafia forcing us to sign documents”.

Issues of CSR were first discussed among Swedish politicians after the founding of the UN Global Compact in 1999. That same year, a parliamentary commission was created with the explicit goal of investigating Swe-

den's global development policy. The elected committee, under the leadership of the social democratic Minister for International Development Cooperation, Maj-Inger Klingvall, chose to name this committee *Globkom* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2001). In March of 2002, a report was published and the concept of CSR was mentioned in a parliamentary document for the first time later that year. In the Globkom report, it was concluded that Sweden should attempt to implement the UN Global Compact framework on the national level. The three goals that should guide the Sweden's new development policy<sup>15</sup> were as follows: a just global development, a preventive and sustainable handling of common global issues, and improving poverty alleviation.

As a result of the Globkom Report, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) launched the national initiative "Swedish Partnership for Global Responsibility" ("Globalt Ansvar"), based upon the United Nations Global Compact and OECD principles; it was intended to stimulate corporations taking on social responsibility (Pagrotsky, 2003): such as human rights, labour conditions, etc. (MFA, 2004). Additionally, the Swedish government implemented legislation regarding the ethical requirements on Swedish pension funds (see Sjöström, 2008).

An open letter on the 6<sup>th</sup> of March 2002 from the Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Development Assistance, Industry and Trade, was addressed to the Swedish business community, urging corporations to take an active part in developing a "human globalization" through this initiative (Lindh et al., 2002).

The debate on corporate social responsibility is becoming increasingly intense. It is gratifying to see that Sweden's corporate community has played an active role in the efforts to realise a sound environment and good working conditions. The Swedish Partnership for Global Responsibility is a joint effort to encourage Swedish companies to become ambassadors for human rights, decent economic and social conditions and a sound environment. (Anna Lindh in MFA, 2002)

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<sup>15</sup> The Policy for Global Development (PGD) or Politik för Global Utveckling (PGU)

In a Nordic context, Gjølberg (2010) sees this governmental CSR initiative (“Swedish Partnership for Global Responsibility”) coming comparatively late in Sweden, yet nevertheless quite forcefully (MFA, 2002): championed by the Social Democratic Prime-Minister, Göran Persson. Windell et al. (2009) find that government ministries are especially important to the business community given their role as “map makers of the borders of corporate responsibility”. Additionally, government ministries are also capable of mobilising and encouraging various societal actors to different ends and ideas, which can have an impact upon the business community at large. In the Swedish context, ministerial interest has been particularly important for the framings of CSR (Gjølberg, 2010).

The Swedish Partnership for Global Responsibility initiative held a dual mission primarily upholding human rights, as well as strengthening Swedish companies’ competitiveness. Gjølberg (2010) also relays its purposes as facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogue. Tengblad and Ohlsson (2010) find that it was not successful in rallying corporate membership. After three years, only 15 companies had joined; this included many state-owned enterprises. Following the change in government 2006, however, to a Liberal-Right coalition government, the newly appointed Moderate Minister for Foreign Affairs, Carl Bildt wished to discontinue this particular initiative. Notably, it was seen as a very Social Democratic initiative, spearheaded by leading Swedish Social Democrats, such as former Prime-Minister Göran Persson (Swedish Prime-Minister: 1995-2006). However, the initiative was not discontinued until 2009.

The governmental initiative was aimed at more directly promoting and involving business in issues of CSR (MFA, 2002): especially in the global value chain, rather than something that needed to be addressed in the Swedish domestic context. Engagement and membership of business was purely voluntary in the initiative. However, admission requirements included similar to those in the UN Global Compact. Companies, thereby, needed to provide written statements published on the initiative’s site, as well as disseminate information to the public about participation in the initiative. The offering further included monthly seminars, workshops, and discussion forums, training on multi-lateral regulatory framework, stakeholder exchanges, and support.

The Swedish government further saw CSR as something pertaining to business operations in foreign markets:

CSR is for those situations where there are no regulatory frameworks. The political leaders are very clear on this. (Interview, Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Gjølborg, 2010)

CSR was, thereby, framed as being something Swedish companies could and should accomplish on their own. The government could support the initiative; the execution, however, had to come from the companies. This upheld a view of CSR as being voluntary and contributing to global governance. Trade promotion was an important - yet ultimately secondary aspect - of CSR. The overarching government view of CSR was the attainment of normative ideals of sustainable development, poverty alleviation, and human rights.

Thus, we can initially see that the Swedish governmental was quite slow to address CSR, and was quite limited in its engagement. Commitment was - and remains to be - heavily based upon international multi-lateral frameworks. Sweden was the only Nordic country that formed a national CSR initiative. Gjølborg (2010) advances the notion that, had the subsequent success of the UN Global Compact been foreseen, the national CSR initiative would not have been formed. This relates to the Swedish internationalist policy preference for the inherent legitimacy of multi-lateral institutions and contributes to a governmental translation of CSR as contributing to the development of a specific international CSR norm.

Thus, CSR was mostly seen as relating to issues of globalisation and global governance in the governmental arena. CSR was seen as integrated with foreign policy and was not considered a policy area in its own right: especially in terms of policy. Gjølborg (2010) further notes that the Swedish CSR agenda is based upon an international solidarity and humanitarian approach, yet has gradually been extended to include aspects of competitiveness. Overall in this internationalist solidarity framing, CSR was viewed as a tool for sustainable development and poverty alleviation: i.e. contributing to noble and moral goals in Sweden's overarching foreign policy. Further, Gjølborg (2010) conceptualises the Swedish CSR policy as a corporate layer

of the Nordic internationalist solidarity: “promoting global norms of cooperation and humanitarianism” (p. 219). Thus, the findings of the CSR policy area parallel the fact that Sweden and Norway are the most famously internationalist<sup>16</sup> countries of the Nordic states (Lawler 2007): to the extent that Trägårdh (2002) describes Swedish foreign policy as a “holy mission to spread the Good message of Swedish Social Democracy to the World.”(p.132) As such, CSR can be assumed to resonate strongly with the Nordic normative heritage in Sweden – to the extent that CSR was practically assimilated into the normative internationalism and humanitarian foreign policy agenda of the Swedish government.

This international solidarist framing of CSR can, thus, be considered an extension of the Swedish foreign policy: aimed to promoting global governance and companies to self-regulate, which is in line with the expectations of the foreign policy ideals of the Swedish state:

The Swedish Partnership for Global Responsibility is a joint effort to encourage Swedish companies to become ambassadors for human rights, decent economic and social conditions and a sound environment. (Anna Lindh, Minister for Foreign Affairs, in MFA, 2002)

In line with the focus upon supporting multi-lateral organisations for development and CSR<sup>17</sup>, the development of Swedish government policy on CSR has mainly focused upon the translation of multi-lateral and transnational organisations’ guidelines: such as the UN Global Compact and the OECD guidelines for Multi-National Enterprises (MNEs). Moreover, it has also very much developed in line with EU’s guidelines and policy-making. The first Swedish national Action plan on CSR or “Sustainable Business” (2014) notably came in direct response to the European Commission’s 2011 request to member-states:

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<sup>16</sup> Internationalism is a political ideal that finds nationalism largely irrelevant and that governments in the world should cooperate to advance mutual long-term interests. The Nordic internationalist ambitions are further framed in terms of solidarity and directed towards the ideals of justice and equality and, as such, rely heavily upon support to multi-lateral support in development cooperation efforts. (See further Kuisma, 2007)

<sup>17</sup> Half of the Swedish development cooperation co-operation budget is transferred to such organisations, see MFA, 2014

The national action plan aims to translate the UN Guiding Principles into practical action at national level. The plan responds to the European Commission's request that Member States draw up national action plans. (Swedish Government, 2014a)

## Untying Aid

Tied aid consists of different forms of foreign aid (loans, credits), which must be spent in the donor country (OECD, 2013). Such protectionist promotion of domestic companies was long prevalent in the field of development cooperation (Easterly & Pfutze, 2008). In the Swedish context, this involved large Swedish industrial companies, such as Skanska, in infrastructural development cooperation projects in developing countries (Frühling, 1986; Odén, 2006). Braunerhjelm and Lindbaek (2011), as well as Hopkins (2007), note that development cooperation instruments and policies have long been heavily criticised for efficiency concerns. Tied aid, with perceived low competitiveness and ditto cost-efficiency, became increasingly seen as problematic in the 1990s and early 2000s. An OECD Report in 2001 provided evidence that tied aid was relatively more costly for recipient developing countries. This prompted a global trend of untying aid (Diakonia Report, 2011, p. 5). Vähämäki (2016) notes in her thesis the issue of results and its management in Swedish development cooperation has become an increasingly important and contentious issue over time, leading to the implementation of a results and market-oriented approach to development cooperation.

The process of untying aid in Sweden started in the early 2000s. With vested interests, however, there were heavy protests on behalf of the Swedish business sector (Concord Report, 2010; Windell, 2006). The Social Democratic government reached a compromise in 2006 and certain forms of aid were kept tied (Swedish Consultants Report, 2006; Concord Report, 2010). Nevertheless, Sweden officially untied aid with the signing of the Paris Agreement in 2005 (Sida Report, 2008). This further led to a period in which companies felt marginalised in the stakeholder dialogue on development cooperation issues (Concord Report, 2010) In the next governmental framing of CSR, new ideas started to take shape on how to integrate the private sector in Swedish development cooperation. These were also influ-

enced by the international community, in which private sector development cooperation was made more explicit (Hydén 2011; Odén 2006; Diakonia Report, 2011). We will see how Gunilla Carlsson, Swedish Minister for International Development Cooperation (2006-2013) translated these global ideas and trends in Section 7.2.2.

### 7.2.2 Trade Competitiveness Framing of CSR

Government ideology is sometimes seen as linked to changes in development cooperation and humanitarian aid, as decision-makers may have differing preferences (Kilby, 2006; Stokke, 1989; Tingley, 2010); however, this stream has inconclusive results (Breuning, 1995). Nevertheless, left-wing parties are assumed to be more internationalist solidarity-oriented (Gomez, 1999), and more generous than its right wing party counterparts: in terms of volume of development cooperation aid (Stokke, 1989). Furthermore, soft-law regulation is perceived as involving lower costs than hard-law regulation (Moon, 2002). The downsizing of development cooperation aid, as well as the involvement of market actors in the pursuit of efficiency, is very much in line with the ideological governmental shift that occurred in 2006: in which a Liberal-Right coalition government took over with a new agenda.

Gjølberg (2010) notes there has been a close connection between the level of CSR engagement of the Swedish government with changes in government. This appeared to be a blessing prior to 2006, providing the Swedish Partnership for Global Responsibility with strong support, yet appearing to limit the focus on CSR with the change in government to a Liberal-Right coalition. Thus, this shows the considerable impact of political shifts in the government policies. The International Solidarity Framing was seen as associated to the Social Democratic government of Göran Persson.

Instead, a new agenda also took over with the new Liberal-Right coalition of Fredrik Reinfeldt (Swedish Prime Minister 2006-2014), in which considerations of global solidarity were not fully abandoned, yet were considerably downsized (Diakonia Report, 2011). Instead, a new rationality for foreign policy and development cooperation took over: one in which trade competitiveness and especially market efficiency were deemed to be of

outmost importance. This new agenda, indeed, constituted a new direction for CSR governmental framing, thus, distancing itself from the old international solidarity framing, which was associated with inefficient markets and with the long-running reign of the Social Democratic party in Sweden. Therefore, the new agenda was coloured by a business or market rationale with clear tangible goals and measures for improving market efficiency, both domestically and internationally (Vähämäki, 2017). This became particularly important for the development agenda moving forward (see below). CSR was no longer framed in relation to a solidarity movement; rather, it was connected to a pragmatic approach in the age of globalisation, with the intention to promote Swedish companies' competitiveness. The focus, therefore, mostly related to competitiveness efforts through a win-win business case of CSR, and presenting the benefits of such engagement to companies. This is also in line with the CSR policy development of the EU (EU Peer Review, 2013; Vallentin & Murillo, 2012).

This new governmental framing, indeed, provided an increasingly instrumental monetisation or economic rationalisation of CSR. This framing is not unique in the global context, as this understanding of CSR has become dominant for governments and not only in the EU (Steurer, 2013; Moon, 2002). CSR is understood, therefore, as a means to an end: ultimately, of promoting economic competitiveness.

Up to 2010, only the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of Economic Affairs had initiatives labelled CSR. A CSR Ambassadorship of Sweden was established in 2009, under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In interviews with government representatives in Gjølberg (2010), as well as in reports (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2002), it is noted there is no governmental need to assist Swedish corporations since many companies already had comprehensive CSR programs. The low profile of government on CSR appears to lead to a mutual disinterest by business. An account of the proceedings of the 2012 Social Responsibility Day is presented in an article from *Aktuell Hållbarhet* (2012). Prior to informing the public on the topic, Lisa Emilia Svensson - then CSR Ambassador in Sweden - questioned the business audience if anyone had any pre-existing knowledge of Swedish government's policies on CSR. A mere 10 out of 300 participants raised their hands accordingly.



There is a very normative and ideological approach to CSR, used to promote values or goals of sustainable development; it is clear that government plays a role, yet it is positioned as up to the companies themselves to realise the potential of competitiveness. The following quotes illustrate this:

Swedish companies are far ahead and attractive. They have integrated CSR issues in their companies in a serious manner, and not as a sustainability curtain separate from companies' usual operations (Svensson, CSR Ambassador, in *Aktuell Hållbarhet*, 2012)

Companies have a responsibility for how their operations impact human rights, but it is state-governments that are to drive these issues forward. (Svensson, CSR Ambassador, in *Veckans Affärer*, 2012)

### **New Development Agenda**

In 2006, newly appointed Minister for International Development Cooperation, Gunilla Carlsson rapidly presented a new agenda in which the private sector was to play a new role. This was deemed as improving the perceived low results and efficiency of Swedish development cooperation. The untying of aid presented a lull in the active involvement of the Swedish business sector in development projects (Concord Report, 2010). New opportunities for the private sector to be involved in a more results-oriented development aid involved a number of new institutions and practices: notably Public-Private Development Partnerships and Development Finance Institutions. The private sector was allowed to gain financing for projects, which were mainly to benefit the overarching sustainability goals rather than the individual company. Notably, companies need to provide 50 per cent of the financing of public-private development partnerships.

In response to the perceived lack of transparency and results of the Swedish development cooperation arena, Gunilla Carlsson launched the site [www.openaid.se](http://www.openaid.se), which lists its different commitments and endowments. Her rationale thereof was presented as allowing the countering of the previously opaque development cooperation agenda and promoting the new efficient market values of Swedish development cooperation.

As established in Section 7.2.1, Sweden formally untied aid in the mid 2000s, in order to allow for global competition and cost-efficiency. Yet, Sida's policies for private sector involvement in development cooperation explicitly state the intent to promote Swedish companies and values. Some NGOs have heavily criticised this for keeping some forms of tied aid (Dia-konia Report, 2011, 2014).

The view of companies as active agents in development cooperation, rather than service providers as well as of trade promotion, was realised at the Busan conference in 2011<sup>18</sup>. Notably, the international framework to which Sweden adheres emphasises the role of companies in reaching such goals, which was also very prominent in the development sector. The Minister for International Development Cooperation, Gunilla Carlsson vocalised this in 2011 in Göteborgsposten:

Within the aid sector, we have not been good enough at taking care of the initiative, expertise and resources that characterise the business sector. This is changing. For the first time in the international discourse on aid effectiveness, business sector cooperation is on the agenda. Sweden has been a driving force therein. In Busan, the Swedish aid and business sector will together show how to jointly create employment and contribute to sustainable development.

Then CSR ambassador Bengt Johansson also concurred (Miljörapport, 2012):

It is the new CSR directives from the government, to dedicate ourselves to the interventions that truly yield results at the company level. Not so much research and policy instruments are needed, what is important is to make large as well as small and medium-sized companies to act more sustainably.

The Government doesn't want to legislate the CSR area, and I can contribute with knowledge on how companies work, to push the voluntary work.

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<sup>18</sup> At the Busan Conference in 2011, the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, the progress on implementing the principles of the Paris Declaration of 2005. The delegates reached an agreement "the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation". This declaration established a framework for the first time that formally included private funders as partners in development cooperation. (OECD, 2018)

As of 2010, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency Sida (Sida, 2010) formed new collaborative governance arrangements in order to cooperate with business actors, thereby, further stretching the governmental responsibility for CSR. This is labelled Business for Development (B4D). CSR was framed therein as a way to address governance gaps and promote overarching sustainable development and foreign policy goals through private sector involvement, thereby, contributing to making the old internationalist solidarity framing of CSR obsolete and replacing it with a new results and market-oriented focus.

Sweden did not have a formal policy on CSR until 2014, stating that CSR was not a policy area in itself, and was instead to be integrated with other areas (Gjølberg, 2010). However, the Swedish Government (2014) indicates this first policy document on CSR was not voluntary; rather, it was a response to “the European Commission's 2011 CSR strategy, in which EU member states were invited to draw up a national plan or a list of measures to promote corporate social responsibility.” Since 2014, Sweden has, thus, had a formal CSR agenda, which has also been followed up with a policy for Sustainable Enterprises (2015b), and an action plan for Business and Human Rights (2015a), as well as a follow-up plan thereof (2018). To note, the Swedish government uses the terms “sustainable business” and “CSR” synonymously, seeking to translate CSR to the Swedish context:

The Government has chosen to adopt the term 'sustainable business' (hållbart företagande) in preference to corporate social responsibility, as it wished to use a Swedish term and not an abbreviation. In the remainder of this report, 'sustainable business' will be used synonymously with CSR. (Swedish Government 2014)

### 7.2.3 The Swedish Brand Framing of CSR

The Swedish governmental CSR agenda continues to be based upon international guidelines, notably, the UN Global Compact and UN Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights, as well as the OECD guidelines for MNEs. The agenda further leans upon a trinity of pillars: public pro-

curement, steering of SOEs<sup>19</sup>, and development cooperation aid. Furthermore, the Swedish government also has a large role to play in the development of responsible and sustainable business: especially in terms of development aid, particularly trade competitiveness. The Swedish National Action Plan for Sustainable Business specifically addresses four areas: human rights and labour issues, the environment, and anti-corruption.

The Swedish Government continues to see Swedish companies as good role models for social and environmental responsibility. Thereby, they can contribute to “increased awareness and implementation of universal codes of conducts and other instruments such as UN Global Compact and OECD Guidelines for MNEs” (Swedish Government, 2015a).

This political regime seeks a more ambitious policy in this area: “the Swedish Government has drawn up a more ambitious CSR policy (Swedish Government, 2016a). This is concurrent with the CSR Ambassador’s view:

Earlier government thought that companies should deal with these issues themselves, whilst the current one wants a more engaged policy when it comes to sustainable enterprising. (Madunic, CSR Ambassador in Miljöutveckling, 2015).

Instrumental arguments for such corporate engagement are also given:

Companies have a lot to gain by being good at sustainability (Madunic, CSR Ambassador in Close, 2015).

The change to the “Swedish brand” framing also corresponds to a shift in government: from the Liberal-Right coalition government, to a Social Democratic-Green coalition in 2014. It would be natural to think that this might also coincide with a return to the internationalist solidarity CSR framing of former Social Democratic governments. Nevertheless, this has not been the case. Instead, the latest regime meshes the moral arguments of the internationalist solidarity framing with a renewed focus upon trade competitiveness and private sector development cooperation: with a keen

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<sup>19</sup> GRI reporting was made mandatory for state-owned enterprises as of 2008.

focus on the business case. Such business involvement is focused upon the possibility of Swedish companies to be international role models contributing to what is framed as the “Swedish brand”: “A clear Swedish profile in this area can contribute to strengthening Sweden as a brand.” (Swedish Government, 2015a) This is also expressed clearly in the CSR ambassadorship role: “What I find particularly important is establishing a close connection to Swedish companies. I see that an important part in making a difference in this area” (Madunic, CSR ambassador in Close, 2015).

This view is dominated by a continued view of the business case for CSR, which involves a shared value proposition, as espoused and popularised by Porter and Kramer (2006, 2011):

The Government can act as a catalyst for efforts by businesses to integrate sustainable business and as a communication platform between business’ and the international community. The Government is engaged in an ongoing dialogue with Swedish enterprises both in Sweden and abroad, mainly through its missions abroad, on the importance of addressing sustainable business issues. (Swedish Government, 2014a)

Business enterprises appear to have a greater awareness of their responsibility to respect human rights and of the role this plays in creating value and building business competitiveness. The Government’s ambition is to assist enterprises in their efforts in this area. (Swedish Government, 2015a)

The action plan is also an important part of the Government’s heightened ambitions for foreign trade, through the export strategy, CSR and other areas. (Swedish Government, Action Plan, 2015a)

The Swedish national action plan on business and human rights (Swedish Government, 2015a) finds that CSR or sustainable business is compatible with Swedish values and contributes to strengthening its “brand”.

A clear Swedish profile in this area can contribute to strengthening Sweden as a brand. (Ibid, 2015, p. 6)

It is very important in this regard that Swedish businesses serve as role models:

Sweden and Swedish enterprises must be able to serve as examples of how social and environmental responsibility can be integrated into business activities and used to competitive advantage. Sustainable business strengthens the interest and confidence in Sweden around the world. (Ibid, 2015, p. 15)

This trade-oriented approach provides a clear contrast to the previous approach in the early 2000s in which CSR was seen as something extraneous to government, and delegated solely to the realm of corporations: Government promotion of business and trade goes hand in hand with other key components of Swedish foreign policy, such as the promotion of human rights and poverty reduction.

It is essential that Swedish promotion of trade and investment maintain a high ethical standard at all levels. (Swedish Government, 2014a)

CSR was framed as a way to achieve the sought goals of improving market efficiency in the trade competitiveness framing, with a new market-oriented view of development cooperation. Business involvement in development cooperation is of course nothing new; however, during the process of untying aid, relations between Swedish business and government broke down and no natural fora for such interaction remained (Concord Report, 2010, Swedish Consultants Report, 2006). New forms of organising for communication and interaction emerged, such as the Swedish Leadership for Sustainable Development under the direction of Sida. The following quote emphasises the win-win proposition and the dual motivation of engaging with CSR:

I am pleased to learn that the Swedish business community, through the program of Swedish Leadership for Sustainable Development, has embarked on the road to “inclusive business” integrating social values and sustainable development into core business. These companies may become the new generation of sustainability pioneers. They can lead by example, through demonstrating the role of business in society and in tackling global challenges. In other words, through inclusive business, they will be able to tap both into development potentials and make positive changes in a resource and pollution-constrained world. (Speech, K. Persson, Minister for Strategic Development for the Future, 2014)

The Swedish government views sustainable business as a matter of corporate agency – it is dependent on companies' will to integrate sustainability in their core business (Swedish Government, 2014a, b). Moreover, it is iterated that many Swedish companies already have ambitious sustainability work and goals in place. Therefore, it is seen as instrumental for the Swedish government to further support these strides. An important motivation is the following:

In a larger perspective, it is about getting more successful and world-leading companies in Sweden, creating jobs, growth, wealth and welfare. Sustainable enterprising can and should go hand in hand with a sustainable and competitive development. (Swedish Government, 2015b)

Many companies already do a good job and have clear ambitions. My impression is that the sustainability agenda is considerably stronger in Sweden than in many other countries. (Madunic, CSR Ambassador in Miljöutveckling, 2015)

A clear instrumental reason for supporting CSR or sustainable enterprising can be identified as the pursuit of Swedish goals of growth and welfare.

### 7.3 Competing Frames of CSR?

One can argue that CSR policy in the “Internationalist Solidarity framing” closely mirrored the preferences of market actors in that the Swedish business community did not accept the concept of CSR. During this period in the late 1990s and early 2000s, Windell (2006), indeed, describes the heated discussions surrounding CSR and the struggles to translate it to the Swedish setting in which there was no perceived need for it. Gjølberg (2010) further explains how CSR was framed as something external to the Swedish setting. CSR was, thus, something framed as being extraneous to governmental intervention, and governmental policy actors did not disagree. Policy actors wishing to avoid policy and government regulation may attempt to frame an issue as being insignificant in order to keep it off the political agenda. Principles of liberty or individual responsibility may be invoked in order to promote less interventionist forms of governmental regulation (Hawkins & Holden, 2013). In this case, the principles of market self-regulation and the

voluntarism of business' was invoked by policy actors located outside the institutions of government; prominent members of the business community were very vocal in its negative attitude toward CSR, which was still seen as detrimental and hostile to business interests. At this point in time, no policy controversy or competing frames ensued as the Swedish government took relatively little interest in CSR. Instead, it accepted the frame of CSR as bearing little relation to conditions in Sweden. During the early 2000s, however, the advent of the United Nations Global Compact inspired the establishment of a national Swedish CSR initiative for the communication and dissemination of knowledge. The global ideas emanating from the UN - to commit business to more responsible practices - were translated to the Swedish setting. However, the framing of CSR remained voluntary and passive. Perhaps unsurprisingly in light of the aversion toward CSR, this national CSR initiative did not constitute a success in terms of rallying support from business. Comparatively, few companies became members in this "Swedish Partnership for Responsibility": mainly state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and a few consumer-oriented ones (Tengblad & Ohlsson, 2010). CSR remained framed as a voluntary feature of individual companies: not a collective industry action, nor one in line with government.

CSR remained framed in the second governmental framing identified in this chapter "CSR as Trade Competitiveness", as being a voluntary feature of business self-regulation. However, CSR had become increasingly important in the global discourse and had been translated and established in the Swedish setting. As discussed in chapter 2, the idea of a market for virtue (Vogel, 2005) had become popularised in academia as well as in business practice. The notion of (ir) responsible business practices had become a market concern. Thus, taking extended producer responsibility became part of market considerations. A framing of CSR as a business case was continuously developed, establishing associated CSR with cost cutting rather than costs. Making cents of sustainability rather than sense of it. The importance of addressing CSR for appeasing or pleasing the markets grew. Private governance initiatives and partnerships produced new guidelines for responsibility and sustainability. These forms of organising became hailed as leading to win-win outcomes, direct environmental savings or social improvement, as well as leading to improved reputation, legitimacy and,



thereby, license to operate. A framing of CSR as the solution to the problems created by globalisation (Tengblad & Ohlsson, 2010) had been translated to the Swedish context, and was found to be attractive. The business community appeared to accept the framing of CSR as improving competitiveness and diminishing risk. Thereby, the government and its self-interest of improved trade competitiveness found that CSR was an essential part in promoting trade.

Simultaneously, global ideas of untying aid (see Section 7.2.1) and involving the private business sector as active partners in development cooperation had started to change the policy in many countries. With a new political regime focused upon trade competitiveness, Sweden also followed suit in shifting its development cooperation policy: a symbolic political area of prestige. This can be seen as a contradictory frame to the former international solidarity frame of Swedish foreign and development cooperation policy framework. The traditional policies in development cooperation were globally considered as being obsolete and inefficient. Focus was instead upon efficiency, tangible results, and private sector involvement. In short, the idea of the market had entered the Swedish development cooperation policy area. This focus on efficient market measures led to establishing Public Private Development Partnerships (PPDPs) and Development Finance Institutions (DFIs). These provided much support and resources to allow for efficient partnerships with business. They also, perhaps inadvertently, served to give preferential treatment and partner mostly with Swedish companies (Diakonia Report, 2011, 2014). In certain PPDPs, Swedish business actors can, for example, gain access to financial support for global supply chain improvements: be it in the social or environmental sustainability domain. This can be seen as serving to subsidise the improvement of their – voluntary – CSR practices. A national action plan for CSR was produced, yet this plan was, paradoxically, not voluntary; it was instead EU-mandated. During this time period, the government considered Swedish companies to be global leaders in terms of CSR.

Moving forward to the third and final political governmental framing in this chapter: CSR is framed as part of the Swedish brand. This political regime corresponds to a time period in which CSR is tied in even closer to trade policy and competitiveness in new export areas.

Once an issue is on the political agenda, its framing may contribute to shaping coalitions of interest in order to further policy actors' self-interest (Schattschneider, 1960). Lohmeyer and Jackson (2018) make use of the concept of discourse coalition in order to argue that the instrumental business case for CSR became the dominant motive for CSR "eclipsing other relational and ethical motives" (Ibid, p. 2). The business case serves as a coalition magnet for collective actors participating in the German discourse on CSR. This coalition magnet engages diverse groups that share this particular vision, and I would argue, the framing of CSR. In the Swedish case, it is argued here that the framing of CSR - in terms of the business case - has become dominant over the course of the past decades:

Companies have a lot to win by taking charge of their supply chains. If problems are discovered, this usually incurs a large cost if it is to be handled retroactively. (Madunic, CSR ambassador, in Miljöutveckling, 2015)

As mentioned in the Research Design (see Section 5.6.1), competing and incompatible frames lead to political controversies. Such policy controversies can be resolved through a process of "frame reflection" (Schön & Rein, 1994). As noted, policy actors external to government may also try to launch their particular framing as the dominant frame for a particular issue, invoking various market freedoms and liberties. In this case, the framing lens allows the identification of the overall lack of policy controversy on CSR between business and government. Instead, the governmental rhetorical framing of CSR over these time periods follows closely that of the Swedish business community. The inherent goal conflicts or controversies with pursuing a foreign policy agenda of democracy and human rights, whilst seeking to promote Swedish companies in countries with low levels thereof, are silenced. Instead, the goals of promoting market attractiveness of Swedish companies are continuously emphasised, in order to reach overarching goals of trade and growth in the Swedish economy. Notably, the publication of the Governmental Action Plan for Business and Human Rights was heavily critiqued by leading Swedish CSOs: in that it had a weak consultation process, lacked binding human rights due diligence mechanisms, and also did not present specific and measurable action points (Corporate Jus-

tice, 2015). The language therein was also quite vague in that government “considers” or “examines”. A clear expectation of Swedish companies is presented, in respecting human rights and its guidelines globally. Yet, how this is to come about is not presented. Instead of making use of a mix of hard and soft regulations, non-binding measures are presented. This is reflective of the framing of Swedish companies as leading in CSR and that CSR contributes to a self-organising of markets. In this third established governmental framing, CSR is even more strongly connected to the CSR business case and a market-based view:

Swedish companies are competitive when it comes to sustainable solutions and systems. Many have been established for a long time in developing countries and can be a positive force for change when it comes to spreading the principles of sustainable enterprising. Through Sweden’s export strategy, the support to these companies has been strengthened, especially in new growth markets. (Swedish Government, 2018a)

The chosen approach to CSR herein depends on a framing of CSR as market-based. It privileges economic considerations, the promotion of trade and the Swedish brand over human rights. It emphasises free and self-organising markets, and business voluntary responsibility.

This chosen governmental framing of CSR with an increased focus upon market responsiveness and attractiveness is indicative of such interest. The rhetorical framing is firm in its clear alignment with business interests. Yet, considerable action is also taken in this political regime to design and implement CSR policies. These are extended to include mainly trade policies, and intended to strengthen the global attractiveness of the Sweden brand. Rhetorically, this political regime involving a Social Democratic-Green coalition also refers to values of human and, especially, labour rights. The governmental co-launch of Global Deal, together with ILO<sup>20</sup> and OECD<sup>21</sup>, a multi-stakeholder initiative for social dialogue and better conditions in the labour market, also contributes to associating cooperative labour relations to the “Swedish brand” (Swedish Government, 2016c). This

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<sup>20</sup> International Labour Organisation

<sup>21</sup> Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

allows a return of a moral component to the framing of CSR. Yet, it is phrased and framed in terms of the market: of a brand. The political self-interest may of course be motivated by prestige; ultimately, however, it relates to a favourable positioning of Sweden in the games of globalisation.

As established in Chapter 4, the government holds dual roles: it is an important rule-setter as well as an important market actor; it is both buyer and seller. The governmental toolkit is not only composed of hard law; it may also involve more soft regulation. In the CSR domain, this could involve promotion of responsible business behaviour, rather than the regulation of it. With these dual roles or perspectives, it is important for government to contribute to the well functioning of markets. In the case at hand, we can observe that large global trends of development cooperation, as well as CSR itself, have been translated to the Swedish context. This has led to the adoption of instruments and tools, such as CSR initiatives, as well as promoting public-private partnerships in development. What is argued in this thesis is these translations contribute to a predominant framing of CSR as being instrumental and part of the business case. The idea of the self-organising market has been important in encouraging these loose and partial forms of organising efforts. The instrumental framing of CSR allows for the promotion of Swedish companies in certain aspects, particularly of market attractiveness. Swedish companies have for a long time also been framed as winners in sustainability aspects in a global perspective. Therefore, the governmental rationale is that it is not necessary to legislate; rather, it is to promote partial organising efforts involving the business case that, in turn, contribute to added global competitiveness. Partial organising is instrumental to integrating contradicting frames: normative and instrumental motivations for organising CSR.

## 7.4 Discussion

As has been elaborated in this chapter, the government is an important actor in the organising of responsibility in the markets; it, indeed, plays a large role in providing policy infrastructure and certain resources for such organising. The role of companies in the partial organising of responsibility will be further investigated in coming chapters.

Through a framing lens, it can be observed that the interest and influence of the Swedish government in contributing to organising CSR in the fashion and textile market has not been idle. As outlined in Chapter 6, the fashion and textile market constitutes one of Sweden's key export markets and the "Swedish fashion wonder" has a great symbolic value to the strength and luminosity of the "Swedish brand" (Swedish Fashion Council, 2017).

The direct effects of outlined governmental policy activities may not appear to be substantial; however, the indirect effects may, indeed, be. The adoption of explicit CSR strategies has been prominent among large companies: from the trade competitiveness framing moving forward. Explicit CSR practices for SMEs have also become less uncommon. This is also an explicit goal stated by the EU: a goal to which the Swedish government has also had to relate (EU Peer Review, 2013). The contribution of the framing lens is, thus, to identify the way in which government exerts such power and contributes to reinforcing the current market view of CSR, and subsequent organising of CSR among companies.

CSR could be interpreted as corporate zeitgeist or increased expectations on a socially aware market: i.e. the market for virtue (Vogel, 2005). However, it is also influenced by governmental efforts and its view of corporate behaviour. The framing of CSR and business sector involvement has contributed to an increased adoption of an explicit strategic CSR perspective, especially in the development cooperation field. The instrumental business case for CSR is not only part of a "rational" corporate rationale; it is also expected, increased, and influenced by governmental framings.

This chapter concludes that the latest identified government framing of CSR serves to promote the Swedish brand, yet is characterised by contradictory policies: both internationalist solidarity: including human rights and trade competitiveness. It further identifies that the Swedish government promotes a win-win framing of CSR in which it is seen as a means to a profitable end. This framing is not exclusive to the Swedish context, yet has become particularly important in numerous European countries (Vallentin, 2015; Vallentin & Murillo, 2012). This development can be seen as an instance of the moralisation of markets, in which the social becomes a facet of the economic (Shamir, 2008). Unsurprisingly, the government answers

part of the question regarding how responsibility is organised in the markets: Companies should organise responsibility amongst themselves.

As noted, Midttun et al. (2012) sees conflict in means, but harmony in goals of the Scandinavian CSR agendas. Although there may be harmony in goals, however, there is an inherent conflict between environmental, social, and economic sustainability, which is seldom - if ever - discussed. The potential conflict between economic growth and environmental degradation is seldom brought to the surface. Framing CSR as intrinsically win-win, with positive outcomes on trade, export and sustainable development, human rights, and democracy, is deeply problematic. In order to implement the sustainability development goals in Agenda 2030, which Sweden has signed, such conflicts need to be acknowledged if they are to be addressed (Concord, 2018). From a governmental perspective, companies are also seldom held accountable for CSR issues in the Swedish context. Relating to a global context, they are hailed almost exclusively as positive examples. A good-enough perspective on Swedish companies can be discerned: a motor for additional future competitiveness, growth, and prosperity.

The contribution of the framing lens to the organising of CSR in markets may be an obvious one. As noted in Chapter 4, markets are not self-regulating and require substantial governmental intervention and, thereby, organising efforts. The construction of markets is something that does not occur organically; rather, it is constructed. Many actors are involved in creating the conditions and rules under which markets arise and act. However, markets have become seen as autonomous, indeed, formidable forces of nature. According to its proponents, market forces have been thought to organise society itself, rather than society organising markets (Polanyi, 1944). The consequences thereof are at the root of the CSR discourse, and the increased promotion of its business case.

This chapter has explored the evolution of diverging governmental framings of CSR, thus, influencing the subsequent organising thereof. These framings are at times at odds with one another. This investigation, therefore, allows for further understanding of how responsibility is organised in the Swedish fashion and textile market, which provides part of the answer to the overarching research questions in this thesis.

The organising of responsibility in markets relates to the *de facto* organising *of* markets: something that does not occur organically; rather, it is constructed (Callon & Muniesa, 2005). Notably, markets did not historically occur outside of the government's control, contrary to the current upheld divide between the public and private sector. Rather, they were either created by government policy or as a "side effect of government operations" (Graeber, 2015, p. 8). As markets are constructed and maintained, rather than flow effortlessly, so-called self-regulation is frequently coupled with high levels of governmental regulation and policy. Before we move on to the actual organisational dynamics of CSR, the following chapter will delve into the initial motivations for organising CSR in a "private" governance initiative. The partial aspect of organising responsibility in the markets will be highlighted and the varying combination of organisational elements used will be presented.

# Chapter 8

## Pre-Study: Motivations for Collaboration and Membership in a “Private” Governance Initiative

My research interest in CSR initially related to the potential of collaboration and partnerships as vehicles to propel change in the supply chain: in both material and cognitive aspects. The question was whether the paradigm of partnerships or collaborations as a means to solve sustainability challenges in the literature truly held in practice. The assumptions were there needed not only to be changes in regulation to achieve material impact; there also needed to be a shift in mindset and norms across the whole supply chain for such changes to be long-term and de facto sustainable.

My empirical field happened to be in the fashion and textile market. I heard about an intriguing initiative in which competitors were collaborating for sustainability: a phenomenon that was high profile in Sweden, given that there were not many, if any, such examples. The market as well as its initiative was relatively high profile, and the phenomenon appeared enticing. What was the role of this type of collaboration, and what would it even to be called: *pre-competitive collaboration*, *co-opetition*, *private or market-driven governance*, *business-driven initiatives*? The search for vocabulary is described in Chapter 5. Also, as noted in Chapter 2, the role of business-driven initiatives has been under researched, whereas theories and accounts of cross-sectoral partnerships - such as business-NGO interactions - were plentiful (de Bakker Groenewegen & den Hond, 2005; Kallio & Nordberg, 2006;



Lockett, Moon & Visser, 2006; Egri & Ralston, 2008; Kourula & Laasonen, 2009).

The studied initiative includes two main characteristics: collaboration among competitors as well as an inclusive composition of the membership, featuring the largest global players in the fashion and textile market, alongside large MNCs and the smallest of SMEs (For overview of size and revenues, see Chapter 5).

My main empirical investigation sought to answer questions of motivation for collaboration: Why and how do they collaborate? What are the respective challenges and opportunities? Similar to the motivations for CSR as established in Chapter 2, legitimacy is frequently highlighted as a potent factor (Gray & Stites, 2013) when participating in sustainability collaborations and governance initiatives. As we also see in Chapter 2, NGOs and other social activists play key roles in pushing business to address its social environment (Frederick, 2006) and responsibility (Carroll & Shabana, 2010). NGOs are often considered powerful institutional actors that shape the legitimacy of business activities (Doh & Teegen, 2002; Spar & La Mure, 2003; Boli & Thomas, 1997; Kourula & Laasonen, 2009). Self-regulation for bridging responsibility gaps is seen in the sustainability governance stream of literature as providing firms with legitimacy (Bitzer et al., 2012); thus, the focus is upon improving such issues that provide legitimacy (Anner, 2012). What happens then when NGOs are not at the helm of, or even included in an initiative? Is legitimacy still an important motivation when collaborating mainly with competitors; if so, how is this legitimacy achieved? With the proliferation of alliances and collaborations, why then engage in this particular initiative rather than another one?

When I initiated the pre-study, the initiative had already undergone two phases with varying member trajectories in the second phases; they were just embarking upon the third phase. Thus, my initial interest was mainly the motivations for joining the initiative; however, motivations for continued membership became equally interesting to study. However, now, I'm getting ahead of myself. Hence, this first study or pre-study delves into the motivations for collaboration and "self-regulation"; this involved a parallel process of reviewing the literature as well as conducting interviews with

CSR or sustainability managers in order to understand the underlying motivations for membership.

## 8.1 Short Case Summary

After learning about the toxic environmental impact upon water in the fashion and textile market, the Swedish clothing and interior design company Indiska, initiated talks with the renowned Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI). In 2010, Indiska called a meeting for collective action and 25 members of the Swedish fashion and textile market heeded the call and committed to taking collective action to address water use in the global supply chain. Thereby, the studied initiative Sweden Textile Water Initiative (STWI) was formed. The purpose of the initiative was for it to be a learning project with the aim of establishing shorter yet comprehensive guidelines for water usage and its related consequences: in terms of sludge, chemicals, and energy use. Two years were dedicated to this endeavour.

The second phase (2012-2014) was devoted to individual company implementation of said guidelines. Parallel to this phase, Indiska, Lindex and Kappahl – together with Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency Sida and SIWI - formed a public-private partnership called *Sustainable Water Resources Management for Textile Industries in India* (SWAR). The aim was to attempt a scalable collective pilot implementation of the guidelines, and establish the necessary conditions and pre-requisites for scaling up the operations. The financing of the partnership was split between Sida and the member companies. Thereafter STWI was split into two: STWI and STWI Projects. Membership in the former entails continued access to expertise and guidelines. STWI Projects however, involves a scaling up of the public-private partnership; 17 out of 27 companies are involved therein, working intensely with an increased number of suppliers, in five different production countries.

## 8.2 Methodological Approach

The fieldwork for this pre-study was carried out during between June and October of 2014. A total of 16 semi-structured interviews were held with representatives of sixteen organisations (thirteen brands, SIWI and Sida representatives, and the secretary of STWI). Interviews were mainly conducted with senior CSR or sustainability managers; the managers interviewed are directly responsible for the collaboration and, due to the dynamic nature of the initiative, are directly involved in the interaction within the initiative.

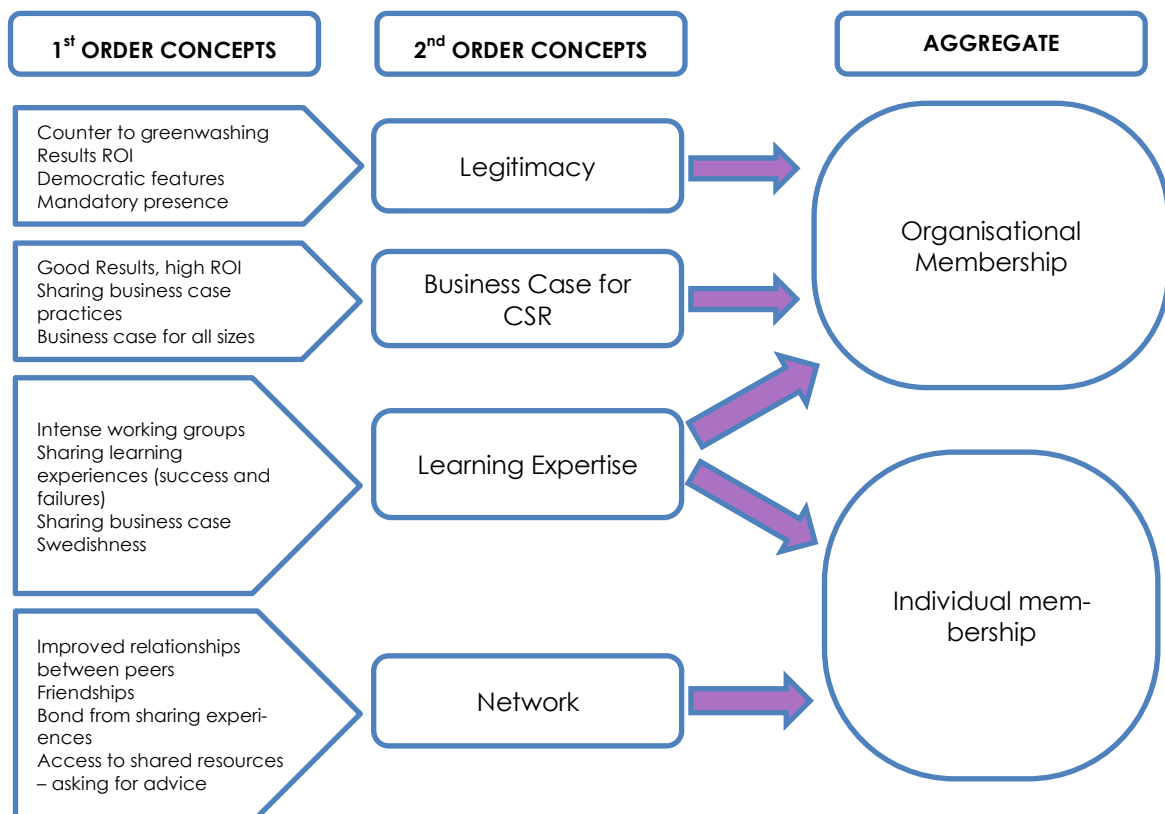
In order to find a structure of motivations, I initially made use of Gray and Stites' (2013) review of partnership literature, which divides motivations for collaboration into legitimacy, competence, resource, and society-oriented motivations. While coding the data, however, I found that motivations often differed from the typical cross-sectoral motivations in strength, as well as differing motivations between SMEs, large MNCs, and global companies. The importance of legitimacy varied particularly between companies, which raised questions for further research.

Coding the data iteratively and crystallising the codes enabled me to view a different pattern concerning motivations. These were not as easily obvious in legitimacy, competence, resource and society-oriented motivations; rather, they were related to the type or source of membership. CSR initiatives may share some characteristics with meta-organisations (Bruns-son et al., 2012): organisations in which other organisations are members. Individual managers represent organisations. Given the importance of certain individuals in advancing ideas and practices (Andersson & Bateman, 2000), it stands to reason that this kind of membership can be ambiguous: Who is the member, or how do both types of membership relate to one another?

Most of the collaboration and partnership literature focuses upon the organisational meso-level of motivations. The main question of the field has long been: Why do companies engage in CSR? This has now become: How do companies engage and or how can companies become more en-

gaged? Nevertheless, there is a budding stream of literature, focusing upon the micro-level of CSR professionals<sup>22</sup> (Risi & Wickert, 2017; Jones et al., 2017; Wright et al., 2015) and its motivations and practices. Many of the identified motivations were particularly relevant for organisational survival and prosperity. Yet, many of the most important motivations related to the individual CSR professional's reasons for engaging and participating in the initiative. Therefore, I see the motivations derived from this pre-study as relating to two different concepts: organisational and individual membership in an initiative (see Figure 8.1). These will be further described and analysed in the discussion below.

Figure 8.1 Motivations for membership: individual and organisational.



<sup>22</sup> CSR professionals consist of professionals in the growing market of CSR services: consultants, managers, and experts (see Furusten et al., 2013 for an overview of CSR consultants in the Swedish context).

## 8.3 Motivations for Organisational Membership

### 8.3.1 Legitimacy

The dominant view within the “private” governance literature is that self-regulation of CSR issues aims to provide companies with legitimacy (Bitzer et al., 2012), thus, such efforts focus upon improving the issues that provide legitimacy in the eye of the public (Anner, 2012; Niforou, 2014). The focus is mainly upon labour issues; however, it may also relate to environmental issues. The interviewees frequently mentioned that the engagement in this initiative was driven by the business community, rather than derived from media or NGO pressures. The initiative is well known in the business community and government, yet not necessarily amongst the general public. In 2014-2015, most of the participating SMEs mentioned it on their respective websites as part of their environmental endeavours, whereas only some of the large MNCs highlighted it in online CSR communication. In contrast, none of the two global corporations specifically mentioned it in their CSR communication.

On an organisational level, it was seen as:

impossible to stand outside the collaboration, when so many others were joining. (Brand Bastet)

In Sweden, we have a tendency to ‘follow the flow’. Once we learned that many had joined this new project, many others followed suite. (Hägglund, in Andersson & Bergkvist, 2016, p. 29)

Absolutely, it sounds like a politically correct answer to say that all are active and so on, but it really has been peer pressure. We should remember, that just like in other industries, it is very small. Also in sustainability, everybody knows each other, and has worked with one another, in another company, a few years ago and so on. (Interview, Bergkvist, 2014)

There are many signs, ranging from the Global Development Goals to the EU requirements for non-financial reporting and so on, that show that all of a sudden the sustainability issue in its dimensions has become good managerial behaviour and that it is something that you need to do not only for show, but also to be successful. And I think it will go very quickly because in the business sector there is this fear of being left out, fear of being one of those that are not on top of things. That can shift really quickly. (Interview Bergkvist, 2016)

This importance of not standing outside the collaboration when other actors are joining in can be interpreted as isomorphic pressures, related to the struggles of gaining and maintaining legitimacy. Considering that legitimacy is found one of the main motivations in the CSR and governance literatures, this is not necessarily surprising. The fact that other competitors are mentioned as those that pressure membership is slightly more unusual. Nevertheless, Bondy et al. (2012) highlight the importance of competitors in shaping CSR practices.

There are two aspects of the legitimacy motivation: the first stems from organisational members to (individually) achieve legitimacy through membership. The second is that, in order for this to materialise, the initiative itself must be organised so as to achieve legitimacy. An adversary to legitimacy in CSR practices can be seen as the accusation of greenwashing. The latter can be seen as the result of decoupling and organisational hypocrisy (Brunsson, 1989) in which it is frequently advanced that the organisation says one thing, yet does another or even acts differently in different departments (Schuessler & Lohmeyer, 2018) Thus, in order to provide legitimacy for its members, this initiative must act so as to avoid accusations of greenwashing.

Many sustainability initiatives are criticised for greenwashing, and enabling membership with toothless sanctions if members do not abide by the agreed-upon rules (Rasche, 2009). Therefore, presence at members' meetings is mandatory in this initiative and participation in working groups was also mandatory during the first phase of establishing guidelines.

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In contrast to many other networks, we have had and have very high demands on participation. Because there is a fear of greenwash, and now in general in Sweden, with the risk of becoming a grand Swede, greenmuting<sup>23</sup> is probably a greater problem than greenwashing. (Interview, Bergkvist, 2014)

There have been very strict rules; greenwashing is about being active, not being a free-rider. (Interview, Bergkvist, 2014)

If a member does not participate in meetings, then it is excluded. Thereby, it is no longer allowed to make use of the initiative's logo on its website. Such CSR communication is intended to provide legitimacy (Morsing & Schultz, 2006), and such legitimacy is only afforded through active membership.

Cross-sectoral initiatives are seen as legitimate in that they offer more democratic features and transparency: through the inclusion of a diverse set of stakeholders. In this particular initiative, even though the diversity of stakeholders is low, the members emphasise that the initiative is democratic in its set-up. Irrespective of size, each member pays the same fee and is also granted one vote when ruling on decisions for the direction of the initiative. Following, there is a high-perceived level of transparency within the members of the initiative.

Another point of pride, and an important source of legitimacy are the results produced by the pilot implementation: in terms of reduction in water, energy, and chemical usage. This is the reason why, according to its members, the initiative is a success, and why it has gained attention and recognition through newspaper articles and awards (Glasa Award, 2015)

SWAR was nominated for the Global Leadership Award for Sustainable Apparel (GLASA), in 2014. SWAR won the first Swedish Sustainable Fashion Award of Habit in 2015. The project was awarded for its concrete results and the exceptional strength of co-operation between project members. (Andersson & Bergkvist, 2016, p. 57)

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<sup>23</sup> Contrary to greenwashing, greenmuting is a term that refers to not sharing positive improvements or progress on environmental and social practices with stakeholders.

Such results can be viewed as output-oriented forms of legitimacy (Mena & Palazzo, 2012; Kalfigianni & Pattberg, 2014). Business-driven initiatives traditionally focus more upon legitimising themselves through output-oriented legitimacy rather than input-oriented legitimacy: such as democratic stakeholder inclusion (Lernborg & Luistro-Jonsson, 2018). The potential of creating an industry standard that has high impact is also one of the reasons it has attracted government support (Swedish Government, 2014a, b).

### 8.3.2 Business Case for CSR

The previous point on results and output-oriented forms of legitimacy closely relates to the formulation of a business case for CSR that is propagated within this initiative. Indeed, a majority of members interviewed found that it was necessary to take responsibility for corporate water impacts. Water was framed as a risk; several members expressed that if water issues were not addressed, this would be a hindrance for future access to resources and, thereby, a threat to corporate survival. One of the main motivating benefits in joining and engaging in this particular initiative was that it not only allowed for improving CSR and sustainability in the production countries; it also simultaneously saved costs in terms of water, energy, and chemicals. Combining cost reduction with CSR investment is a classic business case for CSR (Kurucz et al., 2008). Especially impressive was the calculated return on investment (ROI): in some cases, ranging up to 765 per cent (SWAR Report, 2015). Mirroring this motivation, ROI and cost reduction was also mentioned as the main motivation for suppliers engaging in the public-private partnership SWAR and, additionally, suppliers in the upcoming up-scaling of the implementation: STWI Projects.

This further established a business case for CSR for different types of organisations/companies of varying sizes. With small means, “low-hanging fruits” could be plucked and thereby contribute to a better world. The organisational buyer members contributed to environmental savings, and lower environmental impact of garments, thus, gaining legitimacy; suppliers made environmental and financial savings. Compared to larger companies, SMEs traditionally have less possibility to influence CSR practices in the global supply chain (Helin & Babri, 2014). In this case, they too were able to contribute to environmental savings. Members increasingly shared an



instrumental view of CSR (“low-hanging fruits”) and framed the issue of water use in the global supply chain as a risk of losing access to resources. Global competition for land and water resources for food production is expected to grow further (Oxfam Report, 2011); thus, securing access to water is positioned as being vital for survival. After being introduced to the urgency of the topic at the initial STWI meeting in 2010, some interviewees articulated their views by saying: “There will be a war on water.”

There is not one single business case for CSR and, thus, business case practices shared through organisational membership did not only relate to the realisation of a particular ROI. Sharing additional instrumental CSR practices in related areas was also part of the learning curve. The issue of sustainability and CSR in the global supply chain was primarily framed as issues of regulation gaps, and motivation of suppliers in the face of an overwhelming number of standards and Codes of Conduct. An additional layer of difficulty in order to overcome such challenges, was the lack of leverage toward those suppliers that were unwilling to accommodate such buyer demands for CSR. Such issues are well known in the CSR literature (see Chapter 3); however, there are varying approaches in order to deal with them. The internal transparency and sharing of supplier practices in this initiative allowed multiple business case practices pertaining to improved quality and potential cost reduction. For example, shared suppliers could be identified so as to improve leverage and pressure to take on CSR issues. Furthermore, strategies to gain more leverage were identified and shared: such as consolidating the number of suppliers.

## 8.4 Combined Motivations for Organisational and Individual Membership

### 8.4.1 Learning Expertise

The learning of expertise on sustainability is identified as one of the main motivations for organisational, as well as individual, membership. As identified by Gray and Stites (2013), organisational membership is a matter of value for money: gaining access to resources, legitimacy, competences, etc.

This initiative centred upon the topic of water: a topic that many companies had hitherto ignored due to ignorance or lack of resources. Nevertheless, the more general topic of CSR and sustainability was also discussed and experiences of success and failures were shared. The largest companies with longer sustainability journeys, resources, and competences initially participated only so as to contribute to pass on knowledge to less experienced companies. This was seen as warranted by the gravity of the dire situation: in terms of environmental sustainability. After the perceived success of the public-private partnership SWAR with its environmental savings, even the most experienced of companies took a greater interest in being active members: teaching and learning.

The knowledge sharing, and working groups enabled relatively quickly learning on the topic, as well as strategies to improve CSR practices. The working groups dedicated to particular water-related topics engaged in a total of 2000 working hours during a two-year period. Many of the interviewees mentioned this created a steep learning curve, especially for the SMEs. Several mentioned they were lucky to be able to benefit from the largest global MNCs' presence: "They are so experienced in these matters". Nevertheless, the sharing of knowledge and the ease of it was seen as underpinned by the facilitating factors of shared language, culture, and values of democracy.

Thus, as aforementioned in the business case for CSR practices, it allows organisational membership allowing learning expertise on instrumental business case practices, and thereby fulfils a strategic role for the respective company. Notably, through the sharing of expertise around what practices contribute to the financial bottom-line or provide added value: supplier selection, consolidation, and the transparency of supplier lists. As the importance of sustainability issues rises in society, CSR managers are however seen as being pushed to the organisational periphery (Risi & Wickert, 2017). They meet internal resistance and at times yield little influence: for example, in the Swedish context, they are seldom part of the board (Johansson, 2015). Chapters 3 and 6 mention that the fashion and textile market is in a turbulent state; there is a lot of competition and with low margins the

search for profitability is relentless. CSR managers must, therefore, motivate their partnership portfolio<sup>24</sup>; thus, it becomes important to showcase the results thereof: a successful business case for CSR. The way in which to deal with the struggles of being a CSR professional striking a balance between profitability and sustainability can also be discussed in this initiative, which is why I also argue the motivation of “learning expertise” as equally pertaining to the motivation for individual membership.

#### 8.4.2 Network

A primary motivation for membership identified by the majority of interviewees was gaining access to a large network of CSR professionals and managers. In my analysis, I find this is an important aspect of individual membership in which members gain individual ties to other members. By getting to know other companies’ sustainability managers, and their established principles of transparency, they could share internally without the fear of slander. Thereby, the individual managers increasingly become peers, rather than competitors. As identified in the section on learning of expertise, the members are able to share knowledge in this setting, and there are also more informal experiences of dealing with the role of CSR manager. Numerous instances of friendships hailing from membership in this initiative were mentioned.

As mentioned, a framing was formed around the initiative as being a successful business case for CSR; this was primarily based upon the “impressive” results of the public-private partnership. This framing was also enhanced by endorsement from external actors: nominations, awards, and governmental support. In social psychology, perceptions of organisational prestige is an important mediator of work performance and commitment to the organization (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Woschedl et al., 1998; Pilegge & Holz, 1997). Moreover, a collective identity based upon strong performance is likely to increase member self-identification (Dutton et al., 1991). Relating to individual membership, participating CSR managers repeated that they saw themselves as colleagues rather than competitors. Therefore, I

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<sup>24</sup> Wassmer et al. 2010/2014: selection of membership in various private governance initiatives and dyadic partnerships to address sustainability issues.

argue there is a strong member self-identification with this particular initiative for the individual members, considering they mention that they have contributed and worked hard to reach this state of success. Thus, a heroic self-narrative of the individual members was formed, based upon both practical impact and moral superiority. Together, they claimed to have achieved truly impressive savings of water. To an extent, this achievement was seen as being related to individual, rather than organisational membership. However, the resources attached to the organisational membership were a prerequisite.

At the time of the pre-study, some of the organisational members communicated the practical results of the organisational membership in sustainability reporting. However, when using such data in their customer-oriented communication, they do not communicate that the results are a group effort. When results and numbers are forwarded to the communication and PR departments, and subsequently used in such communication, the promotion of a positive organisational brand image is sought. Thereby, there appears to be little to no organisational member self-identification.

## 8.5 Discussion and Conclusion

In this pre-study, it became apparent that there were multiple forms of collaboration structures under the guise of one single initiative: organised with different forms of membership. This was not only between the dichotomy of organisational and individual membership. Organisational membership was also exclusively organised among company members. Certain organisations were also afforded “observer member” status; it became clear that membership was essential to the organising of this initiative.

Additional questions that appeared after this pre-study were the following: Who is part of the decision-process? Are the suppliers, the local communities, the water institute or the sustainability managers calling the shots? In a sense, who is accountable and how does this affect the environmental impact? Does the “democratic” setting amongst the brands apply to the mirrored collaboration amongst suppliers?

There was, however, a piquant discrepancy between larger MNCs and SMEs in formulating a political CSR role of companies. This is a new re-

search stream in the CSR literature: whether it is companies' responsibility to take on an active political role and supply public goods (Scherer & Palazzo, 2007, 2011). This argument is mainly based upon size, considering some of the largest MNCs rival or surpass GNP of large countries (Crane, 2014). Accordingly, the argument goes that such large companies also have greater responsibilities. In Scherer et al. (2016), the political role has been amended to also include SMEs. Yet, SMEs saw the motivation and purpose of this particular initiative mainly as a local and global response. Whereas, some larger MNCs articulated that it was necessary and purposeful to influence policy development in a long-term perspective. This corresponds to the political CSR perspective in which corporations are political actors who bridge policy and regulatory gaps.

As identified, legitimacy is a prime motivation for participating in this initiative. The source of this legitimacy, however, was identified as differing from typical cross-sectoral collaboration in which business and NGOs are given equal participation in terms of membership. These are important indicators in terms of output-oriented performance measures, rather than traditional input-oriented legitimacy (Mena & Palazzo, 2012). The important role of the government became apparent over time through additional interviews and archival studies. This is further discussed in Chapters 7 and 9.

The overwhelming importance of the business case for CSR became evident with the sharing of instrumental language and increasingly shared business case practices. The high level of cohesion between members and the positive framing of the business case for CSR can be seen as the development of a profession (Powell & DiMaggio, 1983): in this case, the development of the CSR manager. Nevertheless, it was clear that, although the search for the business case for CSR started decades ago, this framing was new to most of the SMEs.

The setting of a business-only membership allows for shared ideals, worldviews, as well as struggles to rationalise CSR, allowing a harmonious decision-making process (Gulbrandsen, 2009). Thereby, the business case for CSR becomes very attractive to organise: including the measures chosen and the stakeholders included. This also informed the framing of the water issues: e.g. "water as risk management" or "prevailing hierarchies in suppli-

er country lead to wasteful practices”. This also contributed to CSR managers framing sustainability issues in their respective organisations in this manner: potentially moving from “hippie to board member” (Wright, Nyberg & Grant, 2012). The business case for CSR is translated to new actors and settings: less experienced SMEs and suppliers in the production countries. With the business case for CSR, less emphasis is placed upon normative or ethical reasoning for CSR; values and norms become subordinate to practices. Optimism around the boundaries of this business case is also apparent (Mintzberg, 1983); however, such growth may not be perpetual. And if there is no market for virtue, where are the boundaries to CSR? (Carroll & Shabana, 2010; Vogel, 2005)

The role of MNCs in this organising has been well researched; in order to further financial interests, these are argued to shun regulation and instead heed voluntary standards. The concepts of industry regulation (King & Lenox, 2000), industry collaboration, or post-partnership strategy (Egels-Zandén & Wahlqvist, 2007) have recently become a topic of research: competitors collaborating for implementing sustainability regulation or guidelines.

Furthermore, when individual motivations for engaging in CSR have been examined, the focus has predominantly been upon the struggles of motivating CSR inside an organisation (Andersson & Bateman, 2000; Wickert & de Bakker, 2015; Hahn & Figge, 2011), or the benefits involved for the organisation (Jones et al., 2017). Nevertheless, the bulk of literature has mainly investigated the organisational motivations involved in joining CSR initiatives (Gray & Stites, 2013), i.e. the initial motivation for membership. Little focus has been placed upon the organisational path such initiatives take, and the reasons for it. Certain success factors have been identified: mainly in the interaction between sectors in cross-sectoral partnerships (Cloutier & Langley, 2013; Crane & Seitainidi, 2009; Le Ber & Branzei, 2010; van Tulder et al., 2016). Thereby, the specific interaction within a principally business-driven CSR initiative is largely unexplored.

There are various lenses under which this membership can be analysed: not least in communities of practice (Lernborg, 2018) or as the role of the individuals in framing and selling these issues. Andersson and Bateman’s (2000) examination finds that environmental issues are framed as being op-

portunities for profit maximisation. Hahn et al. (2015) highlight that the ambiguities stemming from the conflicting nature between the three dimensions of sustainability - social, environmental, and economic outcomes - lead managers to adopt different frames in order to deal with these. The business case frame especially leads managers to place economic attributes first, and only take social and environmental aspects into account when aligned with financial performance. Given the unequivocal focus upon economic attributes, this allows clear guidance for decision-makers to deal with the ambiguities related to CSR and sustainability. Thereby, a sense-making framing lens could also be applied to this investigation.

There are additional issues in the literature surrounding membership. The issue of enrolling actors in organisations and achieving rationally motivated consensus through membership in meta-organisations is also posed in the framing literature (Kaplan, 2008) of cooperation and alignment of strategies. Establishing consensus and a collective framing of the issues to be organised allows further dialogue: negotiation as well as coopetition (Bor, 2014). How issues are framed has effects on how the membership base aligns frames and achieves rationally motivated consensus. The social activist literature also emphasises the influence of the spectrum of non-members to full members (insiders) on the impact of campaigns. Shareholders for example fall somewhere in between. This type of difference is likely to influence both behaviours and outcomes (Ferraro & Beunza, 2018).

This pre-study has provided some insights into the motivations for engaging in a business-driven initiative. The importance of membership of both organisations and individuals, as well as for organisational design and dynamics, is hopefully clear through this pre-study. What actually goes on in a CSR initiative is black-boxed and shrouded in uncertainty, with varying degrees of transparency. Many questions remain on how these are organised, and which role different actors play. Thus, when we move to the next chapter, we will proceed by looking at the other organisational elements involved in this initiative as well as their dynamics.

## Chapter 9

### Partial Organising of Buyer Responsibility and CSR

This empirical chapter aims to explore the partial organising of responsibility in the Swedish fashion and textile market over time. In order to place the partial organising of CSR in its historical context, in the first section I present a historical look at partial organising of CSR, starting with the late 1990s and organising of labour rights in the global supply chain. Since then, responsibility in the fashion and textile market has undergone several framings and translations. Claims to responsibility are often directed at buyer companies by NGOs: some, but not all claims, are accepted. Buyer companies, in turn, frame the causes of these criticised practices as emanating from suppliers' ignorance or lack of resources. Accordingly, the solution is framed as capacity building.

The CSR debate takes hold of Sweden in the mid 1990s: particularly, in the fashion and textile market. Nevertheless, pre-1996 the debate upon buyer company responsibility (i.e. buyers like H&M) is slow to start in Sweden. At the centre of the debate is the use of child labour and abysmal labour conditions in the global supply chain. Initially, social aspects are focal to the discussion and the organising of CSR and subsequently environmental aspects come to be included.

In the analysis of the organising of responsibility in this chapter, I have been influenced by the dramaturgic development of reality TV shows (Montemurro, 2006). This also allows the delineating of the chronological and par-



allel episodes involved in the redefining of fashion and textile companies' buyer responsibility and subsequent organising. Particularly, in my efforts to find a suitable form that does justice to partial organising, I here try the metaphor or format of reality TV. To me, it appears suitable as it, just like the partial organising described, does not have clear boundaries, nor a clear ending, rather a seemingly endless stream of happenings. With multiple lead characters, it also lacks redemption and catharsis (Czarniawska-Sevón, 1997; Meisiek, 2004). This may be apt, as in the age of the Anthropocene; perhaps no redemption may be possible – the point of no return may have already been reached.

As explained in Chapters 3 and 5, the borders of partial organising are porous and fluid. This is also why it may be difficult to establish who is included or not in membership. It also makes it difficult to neatly delineate the chronological events of this organising. Thus, I have dramatised the events into an episode format; it mirrors the messiness of partial organising. It can be argued instead that the role of the researcher is to bring order from the mess and derive theoretical contributions. However, such ordering would not only be detrimental to capturing the dynamics of the elements involved.

This format can also be seen as a reference to the importance of popular culture and media in framing and translating ideals of buyer responsibility. A recent example is the fashion blogger reality web-series *Sweatshop*, which frames the taken buyer company responsibility as insufficient (Aftonposten, 2015; Aftonbladet, 2017). This form is not intended to, in any way, belittle the involved actors or events; rather, it serves to find a way to more readily understand the complicated twists and turns, and moments of suspense involved in redefining and reorganising responsibility in this market.

Thus, I start by exploring the first collective attempt at organising CSR in the Swedish fashion and textile market: DressCode. The three episodes involved in this organising of labour rights will be described; thereafter, the particular use of organisational elements and motivations thereof are presented. A spoiler alert: DressCode is dissolved in 2002. A hiatus in the collective organising of CSR in the Swedish fashion and textile market ensues between 2002 and 2010. This period is examined in terms of the emergence of certain global governance trends for CSR. The translation of these global trends lead to the formation of the business-driven initiative STWI: intended

to organise responsibility for water use in the global supply chain (see Sections 8.1 or 5.3.4 for a short case description). Following, the five episodes involved in the eight year long history of STWI are presented in turn, and present the parallel processes of organising and varying use of organisational elements. Motivations thereof will also be presented.

The emergence of STWI is thus not situated in a historical, cultural or political vacuum. Instead, it is situated in a political context of inclusive business governance (Sida, 2016): a historical context of previous, failed and successful, attempts to organise responsibility. The motivations for engaging in STWI and its future development cannot be understood without understanding what came before it.

Both DressCode and STWI can be seen as examples of partial organising making use of membership. Furthermore, both attempt to establish rules that define responsibility. Both initiatives also introduce more organisational elements over time. Thereby, both initiatives appear to strive for more complete organising, perhaps even complete organisation? We will see what organisational elements are used, why, and at what point in time. What are the benefits and drawbacks to partial organising, and why it is so attractive, yet so difficult, to organise CSR through partial organising?

## 9.1 Organising Responsibility for Labour Rights

The dramatisation of the following episodes is mainly based on secondary sources which have researched this particular case, phenomenon, and/or context (Egels-Zandén, 2006; Egels-Zandén & Ählström, 2008; Windell, 2006; Ählström & Sjöström, 2005; Ählström, 2017).

In the late 1990s, a new framing of buyer responsibility emerges in the Swedish fashion and textile market, which now includes responsibility for suppliers' labour rights and conditions. The framing stems from the emergence of the CSO-based initiative DressCode. It aims to create a new responsibility order in which buyer companies are to take responsibility for labour rights by organising new harmonised rules and joint monitoring. Several organisational steps are taken to reach this decided order. Yet, after a few years, members in the initiative abandon it and leave the buyer companies to their own devices.

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One can find below an analysis of how and why this occurred. I see this as an interesting parallel to the case of STWI, involving some of the very same actors. Nevertheless, it will also become apparent there are also aspects in which they diverge, particularly in the sustained efforts of partial organising. The dynamics of elements in organising buyer responsibility are also made possible to analyse. It is possible to see DressCode as a case of partial organising that failed in its attempts to become complete. However, not all partial organising strives to become complete. Instead, this makes it possible to reflect upon why partial organising may be attractive, and particularly which organisational elements. The organising choices involved in remaining partial or becoming complete organisations are also described.

Table 9.1 Summary of Episodes in the Partial Organising of Responsibility (1996-2018)

Episode	Years	Summary
1. It wasn't Me: Caught in the Act	1996-1999	Buyer companies are targeted in a postcard campaign by the newly launched SCCC.
2. The Birth of DressCode: Launching a CoC	1999-2001	Buyer companies become members of the SCCC and work together to define and launch a CoC. A pilot implementation is done at suppliers and monitoring is executed by buyer companies. Thereafter, third party monitoring is used.
3. It's the end of DressCode	2002	Labour unions leave the SCCC for three reasons: lack of inclusive membership, the illegitimacy of CoCs as organising principles, and lack of mandate to negotiate for workers in developing countries.
Hiatus: Responsibility Anarchy in the World?	2002-2010	Buyer companies work on their own again but also start joining private governance initiatives.
4. Business makes a comeback: Founding of STWI	2010-2012	STWI is founded and attempts are made to organise responsibility in the fashion and textile market; it establishes rules, guidelines, for water processes in the global supply chain. The first business-driven initiative for sustainability is thereby born in Sweden, translating international trends of governance.
5. Let's take a trip, piloting the implementation of the guidelines	2012-2014	Three buyer company members join forces to pilot the implementation of the guidelines and partner with civil society and public actors. The implementation is considered a success, and allows the establishing of a new model for competitor collaboration and a business case for CSR.
6. Are we there yet: From partial to complete organising?	2015-2016	STWI scales up the pilot and attempts to adapt to market needs and keep both brands and suppliers happy. To this end, a number of organisational elements are introduced and refined.
7. The final countdown or the end of the PO as we know it?	2016-2017	The initiative tries to become a complete organisation and fails. Funding is coming to an end – and options are reviewed. Will it remain a site of partial organising, scale up or down in terms of organisational elements, or is it the end? The membership role assumed by the state-government, herein, is deemed important.
8. Buckle up and hit the road Jack	2017-2018	A few months later, the options are still open. What will happen? New options emerge: creating a new market site for buyers and sellers to meet based upon CSR criteria and/or merging with other initiatives. The difficulty in aligning 27 companies' interests remains, as well as the difficulty of democratic consensus once there are more organisational elements in place than membership.

### 9.1.1 Episodes 1-3: Partial Organising in Order to Redefine Buyer Responsibility

#### **Episode 1: It wasn't Me: Caught in the Act**

In the early 1990s the spotlight is on the shocking labour conditions at suppliers in the global fashion and textile supply chain. Brands such as Nike and Levi's Strauss are chastised for not taking their responsibility. A few years later, this discussion reaches Sweden; Swedish fashion and textile buyer companies are criticised for their lacking responsibility. The Swedish Clean Clothes Campaign (SCCC) sees the light of day in 1996. Founded by the Fair Trade Center (FTC) and inspired by global social movements, SCCC seeks to extend buyer responsibility for labour conditions in the supply chain of Swedish fashion and textile buyer companies. Multiple civil society organisations (CSOs) quickly become involved in the SCCC. The first members in this organising are thus various NGOs and labour unions: FTC<sup>25</sup>, Röda Korset Ungdom<sup>26</sup>, Världsbutikerna för Rättvis Handel<sup>27</sup>, SAC Syndikalisterna<sup>28</sup>, Stiftelsen Global Kunskap<sup>29</sup>, Emmaus Stockholm<sup>30</sup>, Kooperation Utan Gränser<sup>31</sup>, Förbundet Vi Unga<sup>32</sup>, Industrifacket<sup>33</sup>, and Handelsanställdas förbund<sup>34</sup>. At this point in time, local as well as global labour unions are unsure of which role to play in defining and redefining buyer responsibility for labour rights, given prior experience limited to cooperating with other labour unions. Nevertheless, several labour unions choose to become members of the SCCC alongside NGOs.

They quickly involve consumers in a post-card campaign with pre-printed messages and the corporate addresses of dominating brands: Lindex, Kappahl, Indiska, and H&M; the post-card reads:

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<sup>25</sup> Swedish NGO Fair Trade Center

<sup>26</sup> Swedish NGO Red Cross Youth Organisation

<sup>27</sup> The local Swedish branch of the World Fair Trade Organization, connecting FairTrade retailers

<sup>28</sup> Swedish Labour Union: the Swedish Syndicalist Group Movement

<sup>29</sup> Global Publications Foundation

<sup>30</sup> Swedish NGO

<sup>31</sup> Swedish NGO – now renamed WeEffect

<sup>32</sup> Swedish NGO

<sup>33</sup> Swedish Labour Union

<sup>34</sup> Swedish Labour Union

Hi!

I support the Clean Clothes Campaigns demands for labour conditions in the clothing industry. These are: Provide a living wage; Respect the right to unionizing and the right to bargain collectively; No forced overtime; No discrimination on the basis of gender, religion, ethnic, social, or political belonging; Offer a safe and healthy work environment; No child or forced labour.

I would be grateful if you introduced these demands in your production and also that you introduce an independent audit to guarantee me as a customer that these demands are met. With kind regards, Name and address (Rena Kläder, 1997 in Ählström, 2017).

Involving consumers in this post-card campaign to persuade these buyer companies to take on responsibility for labour rights at suppliers is intended to persuade also other buyers in the market. It can also be seen as threatening buyer companies by consumer boycotts: a form of sanctioning. In light of an extended view of buyer companies' social responsibility, the misconduct of buyer companies holding a narrower view of social responsibility is highlighted.

Thus, the purpose is to force the "straying" companies to adapt joint harmonised rules and together monitor suppliers. The main issue for the SCCC is to remedy unacceptable working conditions at suppliers: conditions for which Swedish companies are seen as responsible. Buyer companies continuously struggle with organising of responsibility in the market. Different buyer companies have slightly different wordings and content of CoCs, resulting in confusion and additional work for suppliers trying to comply with CoCs. The proposed solution to this issue is for companies to adopt an industry-wide CoC.

The SCCC is as a typical example of partial organising in that its main organisational element is membership, moving towards establishing rules for buyer companies. However, members of the SCCC are equal and no hierarchy is discerned. A sense of hierarchy and sanctioning, however, can be hinted as the organising, through the use of customer pressures, aims to force non-members take responsibility for labour rights. As targets of the post-card campaign, the buyer companies initially refute the authority of this partial organising and do not accept any claims to responsibility for labour rights.

Multiple methods are used to gain media attention and put pressure on the buyer companies: movies, post-card campaigns, debate articles, manifestations, and lists of signatures. With thousands of distributed post-cards in this extensive customer-oriented campaign the four dominant companies in the Swedish fashion and textile market (H&M, Lindex, Kappahl, and Indiska) are persuaded to comply with the members' extended view of buyer companies' responsibility for labour issues. If you cannot beat them, join them! This admittance of buyer responsibility for supplier labour conditions in 1997 is a pivotal point in the Swedish context. From this moment on, Codes of Conduct are seen as the obvious way of organising this extended view of buyer responsibility.

### **Episode 2: The Birth of DressCode: Launching a CoC**

The SCCC now includes the targeted companies and is promptly renamed DressCode. The organising changes in terms of membership; a minimum number of rules for membership are introduced. An important one for the new members is that all members need to coordinate any negative campaigns aimed at criticising fellow [buyer company] members. The more radical labour union member, SAC, ignores this rule and campaigns against H&M, Lindex, Kappahl, Indiska, and multiple other buyer companies by organising a new independent post-card campaign in schools, with the following message:

I would gladly pay 5 crowns extra for each clothing item I buy in your stores if your company contributes as much and guarantees that the money is used to substantially raise the salaries of clothing workers, and make sure that they have decent working conditions. I also demand that the company guarantees: The laws in the producer country are followed; The right to unionise; The right to bargain collectively; No child labour; Healthy work environment; No discrimination; Certificate of Employment; A Living Wage. (SAC, 1998 in Ählström, 2017)

This member thus ignores the established rules of membership. By mutual decision, SAC exits the membership. A first sanction is issued: exit from the membership is therefore necessary.

The members initially focus upon establishing a harmonised CoC, based on the internationally recognised rules: principles of the UN declaration of

human rights, the ILO conventions, and a principle of living wage. Company members object to the latter principle of living wages and sought instead to promote a principle of minimum wage. The remaining CSO members are positive to the inclusion of a living wage, yet abandon it in the face of the company members' strong resistance based on "practical" reasons. The bulk of the propositions are, however, passed: including ILO conventions and UN human rights principles. The practical reasons against implementing a living wage proposition are the same as those that would be argued almost two decades later: practical difficulties in calculating a (fair) living wage, as well as practical difficulties in renegotiating supplier contracts (Egels-Zandén, 2017).

DressCode tries to include Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency Sida as a financing member for pilot testing the harmonised CoC and the independent audit system. At this time, however, the governmental framing of CSR is related to foreign policy rather than to development cooperation and trade competitiveness. Accordingly, Sida disavows involvement. Instead, the buyer company members fully finance the first three years.

The members continue organising, using rules and monitoring. The newest members of DressCode, the buyer companies, suggest that they can monitor the implementation of the CoC themselves. However, the results of individual corporate audit schemes prove unsatisfactory to the rest of the members, as monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms are dissatisfactory. The labour union and NGO members lack trust in non-verified audits, therefore, the members agree upon a joint independent audit system: independent monitoring through third-party verification. Organising CoCs in global supply chains does not seem to allow enough organising elements to satiate member demands for legitimacy and transparency. Accordingly, the members propose a more complete organising that will allow for the transparent and legitimate functioning of monitoring and sanctioning: an independent foundation in order to administrate independent audits. The foundation shall own a non-profit organisation that, in turn, can sell independent audits to all interested actors in the Swedish fashion and textile market: i.e. Swedish fashion and textile buyer companies. This will allow fashion and textile companies to regain



the consumers' vote of confidence in terms of labour rights. Nevertheless, this is never attempted; the end of DressCode is looming.

### **Episode 3: The End of DressCode**

In 2002, the two main labour union members of DressCode exit the partial organising attempt. Their three main arguments for doing so are the following: 1) Insufficient content of rules, as the harmonised CoC does not incorporate all ILO<sup>35</sup> conventions; 2) Global labour union deals are more desirable to operationalise fashion and textile companies' responsibilities; to this end, CoCs are unsatisfactory rules; and 3) labour unions do not have the mandate to negotiate labour rights and conditions for workers in developing countries. Thus, the first argument questions the content of the definition of the fashion and textile companies' responsibility: e.g. the content of the harmonised rules: the established CoC. The labour unions, however, have at least implicitly approved these rules by virtue of their participation and membership. Moreover, their second argument puts in question the very foundation of DressCode's existence. In other words, organising responsibility through rules in the format of CoCs is not accepted by labour unions as a legitimate tool for organising labour rights. The third argument relates to the diversity in membership, the membership is argued by the exiting members to be too diverse in terms of including NGOs as equal partners to labour unions, yet not inclusive enough as it does not include labour union representatives from the production countries. The remaining members criticise this exit heavily, especially considering the labour unions have signed the agreement that they are now criticising.

An explanation for the behaviour of the labour unions is provided by the following events. The global labour union of the fashion and textile market, the International Garment and Leather Worker's Federation, to which one of the local labour unions is a member, has now chosen to reposition itself in regard to CoCs and auditing. As aforementioned, the global labour unions in the mid to late 1990s did not have a firm stance in this matter. Now at the start of the 2000s, these labour unions start to see the growing importance of

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<sup>35</sup> International Labour Organisation

CoCs, and the competition in rules it poses in terms of organising labour rights. Thus, the International Garment and Leather Worker's Federation chooses a firm stance to not support CoCs.

Thereby, the Swedish labour unions choose allegiance with a complete organisation, and to align themselves with their international agenda rather than to support the implementation of DressCode's CoC. In the end, the FTC and the remaining NGOs do not wish to launch a CoC and audit system without the support of the labour unions. Thus, this attempt to become a more complete organisation fails. The membership base for the initiative is decimated. Instead, the buyer companies revert to their individual projects of organising this vague, now extended, buyer responsibility through CoCs and audit compliance.

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AND TEXTILE MARKET

Table 9.2. Organisational elements involved in the episodes, showcasing DressCode as a site of partial organising.

<b>Episode/ Organisational elements</b>	<b>1. Caught in the Act</b>	<b>2. Launching a CoC</b>	<b>3. The end of DressCode</b>	<b>Hiatus: Respon- sibility Anar- chy in the World</b>
Membership	Membership is composed of NGOs and labour unions.	Membership is composed of NGOs, labour unions & companies.	Labour unions decide to exit the membership prompting its collapse.	Responsibility is organised in complete organisations and membership in other POs is initiated.
Hierarchy	Any use of hierarchy is directed towards buyer companies – who refute it.	With buyer company membership, there is no longer any direct hierarchy.		
Rules	The members with companies to adopt a CoC i.e. rules on labour rights.	The diverse members establish rules (CoC) for organising responsibility for labour rights. Cooperative rules of membership are also established.	The exiting members criticise the established rules (CoC) for organising responsibility for labour rights, and find them illegitimate.	Multiple actors attempt to persuade the adoption of their own rules.
Monitoring	The members attempt to conduct some independent monitoring of the conditions in the buyer companies' supply chain.	Important in adopting rules is to monitor them, and companies try to monitor on their own. This is found lacking and so independent third-party monitoring is introduced.		
Sanctions	The members attempt to persuade buyer companies to adopt new rules by directing extensive negative customer pressures.	A labour union exits the organising as it has chosen to disregard a rule of membership.		

### 9.1.2 Inclusive/Diverse Membership as Organiser of Change

During the first episode (1996-1999), the SCCC manages to challenge and extend the definition of buyer responsibility and, subsequently, which methods should be used to operationalise such a definition: namely, harmonised CoCs and independent audit systems. This is made possible by extending membership to other NGOs and labour unions that could then act together to change the status quo. Letting other members act individually and together to promote this idea of extended buyer responsibility is key in persuading companies to accept an extended definition of CSR.

As the second episode is about to start, the targeted, yet initially reluctant, buyer companies relent and start to accept the ideas of the SCCC members. Thereafter, the buyer companies choose to become members of the SCCC and contribute to a new responsibility order. By becoming members of the partial organising, they gain some possibilities to negotiate, as well as to compromise. The main ideas behind the SCCC are accepted, such as including ILO conventions and UN declaration of human rights in a CoC; however, the idea of living wage is not. The buyer company members fiercely resist this claim to responsibility. By the end of the second episode, the members manage to agree upon a detailed CoC with a detailed proposal for the organising of independent audits through more complete organising that makes use of all organisational elements. The buyer responsibility changes and is extended and translated (Czarniawska & Sevón, 1996) from international trends of corporate responsibility and accountability, and development of multilateral responsible business principles.

During the third episode, the members continue working incessantly on implementing the harmonised rule: the CoC. However, despite initial support and to all members' disappointment, the labour union members choose to reject this particular extended buyer responsibility, as it is not extensive enough, nor is it operationalised or organised in a suitable manner from their point of view. Instead, the now departed labour union members wish to promote an alternative form of organising responsibility: a global collective labour deal. Without the support of the resource-strong labour unions, remaining NGO members of DressCode are at a loss as how to continue the process: DressCode collapses in 2002. With the dissolving of membership, the previous members all attempt to establish their own responsibility order.

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For an overview of the alternative forms of organising responsibility sought by different market organisers see Table 9.3.

In conclusion, through high levels of stakeholder pressure and ensuing legitimacy threats, the members of SCCC manage to force the buyer companies to extend, redefine, and reorganise social responsibility. When the labour union members leave DressCode and the partial organising dissolves, it is up to the buyer companies themselves to define and operationalise their respective views of responsibility.

Table 9.3 Alternative Forms of Organising Responsibility In the Markets

	<b>Labour Unions</b>	<b>CSOs</b>	<b>Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives</b>	<b>Business-Driven Initiatives</b>
<b>Alternative organising of responsibility</b>	Global Collective Deals	Independent audits	Voice stakeholder ideals, and independent audits in a coalition of different stakeholders	Harmonise CoCs and joint audits
<b>Examples</b>	Metall, TCO, International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers Federation	Clean Clothes Campaign	FWF, FLA	BSCI, SAC

### 9.1.3 Use of Membership: Inclusion and Exclusion

The CSO members in DressCode spearhead the change in establishing the definition and operationalisation of responsibility. Once buyer companies join and become members they now include a diverse set of members: business, NGOs, and labour unions. However, the criteria for membership can also be argued to be quite exclusive. Which buyer companies are included? It is those dominating ones that appear to fear stakeholder pressures and fear loss of legitimacy. It is not clear whether other buyer companies were barred from membership, yet, no others were invited. Further, upon including the

buyer companies as members, the rules of membership were updated to prohibit unannounced NGO campaigns against the buyer companies. Thereby, effectively excluding critical members as well as potential members. Another type of exclusion is more indirect. Some organisations are never invited to become members in this partial organising and, thereby, participate in defining and organising buyer companies' social responsibility. Particularly, representatives of those immediate stakeholders in production countries that are directly affected (e.g. workers, labour unions, and NGOs) are missing. This constitutes part of the labour unions' argument for exiting. However, changing membership criteria to include a more democratic representation is not championed by any of the remaining members.

Egels-Zandén (2006) explains this choice in membership: given their size, fragmentation, and notoriety, these excluded members (i.e. employees, labour unions and NPOs from production countries) is not perceived as sufficiently relevant to convey legitimacy in the Swedish context. The redefined buyer responsibility is taken from rules from legitimate organisations, such as the UN and the ILO: documents that were previously ratified by both industry organisations and government in production countries. There is no perceived need to address and translate these stakeholders' direct requests for labour conditions. These texts have already pre-defined the needs of stakeholders, and still constitute the basis for most CoCs and tools on labour rights, although those of business-driven initiatives (i.e. BSCI) have become increasingly important in "private" governance (Lernborg & Sendlhofer, 2017).

We now move on to an overview of what happened between the organising attempt of labour rights, DressCode and thereafter the case of organising environmental issues regarding water in STWI.

## 9.2 Hiatus: Responsibility Anarchy in the World?

With the collapse of DressCode, we are put on hiatus. Swedish buyer companies in the fashion and textile market no longer attempt to organise responsibility collectively for sustainability issues. However, during this hiatus (2002-2010), following the collapse of DressCode and before the emergence of STWI, the question of why engage in CSR shifts to its operationalisation: i.e. how to engage in CSR, and to what extent. Even though some buyer re-

sponsibility for labour rights has been established, global stakeholders are not satisfied, instead, new demands are raised. In the fashion and textile market, such demands are mainly related to integrating environmental and social sustainability concerns in the global supply chain concerns. Some of these stakeholder demands are translated into action and strategy, whilst other demands are rejected. The emergence of the business case for CSR also gains importance globally, especially an environmental business case for CSR. A win-win proposition gains a strong foothold among large MNCs attempting to further legitimise their business and society relations, whilst simultaneously profiting from these types of activities.

### 9.2.1 Emergence of Private Governance Initiatives

At this point in time, the experience of being threatened by NGOs in and outside of collaborations leaves companies feeling tired. Trying to organise responsibility in collaboration with NGOs is so difficult and inefficient. Building trust is so time-consuming. Also, where are the results?

The experience of failing to organise CSR also wears thin on the buyer companies that participated in DressCode. Collaborating with those holding a different world view is so frustrating. Also, it seems as though NGOs only place a magnifying glass upon certain companies' CSR practices, why does it always have to be same ones? How would it be if buyer companies could organise amongst themselves instead?

An international trend of business-driven organising can be discerned in the 2000s. After lengthy negotiations between stakeholders in Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives (MSIs), many buyer companies choose to reject this form of organising and create instead Business-Driven Initiative (BDIs): notably BSCI and WRAP. These argue for industry-wide rules i.e. CoCs and joint monitoring, thereby, ironically creating additional fragmentation.

Starting in the mid 2000s, some of the largest companies in the Swedish fashion and textile market also become members of MSIs: for example, in Better Cotton Initiative, a capacity building programme (BCI, 2018). Already in 2005, however, two of the largest companies in the Swedish fashion and textile market became members in a EU-based BDI: BSCI (Lindex, 2016; Kappahl, 2014). Dyadic cross-sector collaborations with corporate-friendly

NGOs are also established, such as the water stewardship between H&M and WWF (WWF, 2018a, b).

### 9.2.2 Put on Hiatus: Sweden

The link between DressCode and STWI originates at a time when some of the very same actors involved in DressCode find themselves ready to take the learnings from participating in DressCode and implement it in the environmental domain. During the eight years following DressCode's collapse, the future members of STWI work further on their own: in terms of both environmental and social issues. So do also many of the future members. Some also join other initiatives, both cross-sectoral and same-sectoral ones: MSIs and BDIs. The practical implications and learnings from DressCode constitute an awakened risk aversion to CSR scandals and media scrutiny. Companies do not wish to be surprised by negative media attention and campaigns: those, which negatively impact consumer confidence and profitability. By facing an issue directly, there needs not be a fight of who is to decide; instead, companies can choose its members, and decide who will or will not be included.

In 2006, textile and interior design company Indiska, with Renée Andersson at the helm as Sustainability manager, starts collaborating with Professor Bo Mattiasson at Lund University on research on improving chemical sludge issues in the global supply chain. Financial support for this project is sought from Sida:

‘Are we supposed to spend tax payers’ money on a supplier in India?’ they asked. We tried to explain that it was for research and would benefit the whole textile industry. Not just in India, but in the whole world. It is a question of enormous environmental problems. (STWI Website, 2015)

After a year they are granted funding; this corresponds to a shift in the governmental framing of CSR (explored further in Chapter 7). CSR is linked to an international development cooperation agenda in the Swedish governmental view (Gjölberg, 2010); as such, it can be used to advance the weakest stakeholders for poverty alleviation (Sida, 2016):



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In 2005, when Lund University and Indiska requested financial support from Sida to conduct their research project on the sludge problems in the textile industry, it was a little easier to get the government on board. The understanding that this was not the problem of a single Swedish textile retailing company and its suppliers, but for an industry as a whole that is important to millions of people in many developing countries. An industry that at the same time causes environmental problems, just as it did in Sweden and Europe, not too long ago. (Andersson, in Andersson & Bergkvist, 2016)

Through this research, Renée Andersson is made aware of the mounting environmental pressures placed upon the groundwater in India. In particular, as a result of textile production toxic dyes emanating from textile plants pollute both ground water and rivers, rendering the water fit for neither human consumption nor farmland irrigation.

Given the learnings from DressCode:

I knew some of the other textile companies in Sweden, bigger or much larger than Indiska, which were also involved in interesting water projects in different production countries, but we had no interaction on these issues. Then the idea of collaboration for water issues was born: why not collaborate in the same way we did when tackling the social problems under the auspices of the DressCode project? (Andersson, in Andersson & Bergkvist, 2016, p. 24)

Not speaking of a potential regulation or legitimacy crisis facing the market in the face of consumers gaining awareness, the growing global water scarcity also places threats on access to vital resources:

we need to cooperate on water – both for the survival of the industry and our own. (STWI Website, 2015)

Perhaps, the time has come for a new effort to organise and tackle the environmental hazards that are facing the fashion and textile market? On top of fear of regulation and wavering consumer trust, growing water scarcity in the world also places threats upon access to resources vital for the market. Similar to the experiences of DressCode, the need is not only to establish rules: i.e. a harmonised CoC; it is also how to ensure the accountability and transparency of its implementation. Ms. Andersson decides to organise a meeting,

a call for action, for businesses in the Swedish fashion and textile industry. Further, she engages water expert Karin Lexén from water institute SIWI to co-present these issues to the fashion and textile industry. SIWI becomes engaged in the process of convincing the companies. The latter are experts in the water area, yet consider themselves enthusiastic novices in collaborating with business.

However, although the fashion and textile market is one of the most polluting ones, environmental issues - especially water - have largely been ignored in the Swedish context: at least hitherto:

While attending seminars at SIWI with environmental managers from a number of Swedish industries, we learnt about our water footprint and the water-stressed areas in our production countries. These seminars were eye-openers for us all. (Andersson, in Andersson & Bergkvist, 2016, p. 23)

Prior to joining STWI, Odd Molly had focused its CSR efforts primarily on social issues, and to a lesser extent on the environment. Water issues were not even on our agenda. (Roos, in Andersson & Bergkvist, 2016, p. 80)

A second reason for joining was that we didn't know much about water challenges. (Lerner, in Andersson & Bergkvist, 2016, p. 78)

We have de facto an intense environmental crisis quietly occurring in the global fashion and textile supply chain. Furthermore, there is a context of NGO and media actors' severely scrutinising fashion and textile companies in the past and present, thus, leading to a fear of future persecution. A new favourable market-oriented governmental framing of CSR has also appeared.

Here is a large contentious issue, upon which there is no decided responsibility order – yet! Media have not picked up this issue, nor has political regulation. Come quick, it's time to take charge! Let us, the brands, decide! What Will Then Happen Next?

### 9.3 Episode 4: Business Makes a Come Back: The Founding of STWI

May 4th, 2010: The scene is the Indiska headquarters: a medium-sized clothing and interior design retailer in Frihamnen, the remote harbour in Stockholm, Sweden. Representatives from a total of 40 textile-related companies are in the audience: an open invitation to discuss water conditions in textile production, courtesy of Indiska's passionate sustainability manager Renée Andersson, in conjunction with leading water institute Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI). The audience does not know exactly what will happen. They listen to a presentation on the growing sustainability challenges related to water and chemical usage.

A polluted river, with colors of the latest worldwide fashion. Huge piles of sludge at dyeing and printing units; women and children queuing up to collect their daily drinking water from tankers because piped water is too dirty to drink; farmers protesting about their land and water being polluted by dirty water, and water shortages. (Andersson, in Andersson & Bergkvist, 2016, p. 20)

Ms. Andersson's passionate speech provides a convincing yet alarming image of the situation worldwide, interspersed with her own memories. Pictures, facts, and figures are provided by SIWI: a factual objective basis for the dire global water situation – especially, the seldom-highlighted problem of chemical sludge.

A grim picture of a threatening future and a devastating present is painted. Only by organising responsibility collectively can this future decline be reversed:

We need to do this together. (Brand Bastet, 2014)

The sense of imminent threat is felt by many of the participants:

If nothing is done, there will be a war on water! (Brand Irma, 2014)

All the convincing Aristotelian elements of persuasion in a speech are present: ethos, pathos, and logos. The talk ends with an open call for action to form learning groups in order to improve the situation. The leadership role is obvious; Renée Andersson is in charge. 34 companies out of the 40 present, join to great acclaim: small and large, savvy and naïve. Sweden Textile Water Initiative (STWI) is born.

At this point in time, these companies are under a lot of pressure from regulations, standards, and other rules as well as from legitimacy concerns to act responsibly. The fashion and textile market constitutes one of the most polluting ones in the world: one, which has appeared most frequently on the media stage, in order to personify the narrative of the excessive unsustainable consumer society (Grafström et al., 2015).

Given all earlier critique of the industry, tensions are - and still - run high. Their own organisational lifeblood causes these environmental externalities. This initiative – a partial organising attempt - can potentially be seen as a means to change the narrative, to appear as another more responsible and sustainable organisation-as-person (Czarniawska, 1996). Mainly social issues, especially labour rights, have long been highlighted in the media discourse. By initiating this meeting and opening up for inter-organisational collaboration, a new forum for dialogue between competing companies is created. This allows them to not only discuss and define responsibility for a particular environmental issue; perhaps it may also allow more benefits?

As aforementioned, the meeting and future initiative is supported by SIWI: a prominent water institute. Thereby, a certain level of input legitimacy may be potentially afforded, given the association to such an expert organisation. Nevertheless, this format also allows the companies to set its own agenda: restriction of membership, allowing a new framing of CSR. Ultimately, a new decided responsibility order is sought in which business can attempt to set its own rules and organise responsibility on its own terms.

The new decade starting in 2010 marks the time to engage in a new area of sustainability; it is time to do right by the environment, what has been attempted in the late 1990s with labour rights. Only this time they are going to do it right, organising membership, rules, and monitoring differently and independently.

Thus, a criticised club of companies take the lead in organising responsibility, rather than wait for yet another attack by NGOs. How do they frame responsibility and how do they organise it?

### 9.3.1 Organising Membership

One of the main organisational elements used is membership. Buyer company membership in DressCode can be seen as a pivotal point in the history of buyer responsibility in the Sweden fashion and textile market since it constitutes the first admission of buyer responsibility for suppliers' labour conditions. Fast forward to 2010 and the forming of this initiative with buyer company-only membership to collectively "solve" the supplier water issue in Sweden, constitutes yet another shift in what is buyer responsibility, as well as competition and collaboration. This type of collaboration is labelled "pre-competitive collaboration" or "brand-driven initiative" in later interviews. Several dialogue fora for CSR professionals are created during the interim years of the 2000s, yet these are not tasked with creating any particular rules or guidelines, of having an impact upon the ground. The formation of STWI can be seen as the writing of a new chapter in the Swedish history of organising buyer responsibility, obtained by an exclusive - or excluding - use of membership.

The question is what one exactly wants to achieve in the context of this initiative. At first glance, it appears to only use the organisational element of membership, thereby, appearing to be a site of partial organising. The purpose of an initiative that is at first only organised through membership is yet unclear. How does this change and who takes charge? Most buyer companies present become members instantly. Many actors can play a role in this new dialogue forum for responsibility of sustainability issues. The few rules established, relate to membership: namely, that participation is essential, mandatory, and recorded:

It is not more complicated than an Excel spreadsheet and see there is a tick, has someone from the company been there or not, and then you make the call. (Interview, Bergkvist, 2016)

Through this organising of membership, the companies together raise the importance of this environmental issue and can take a proactive stance, as well as be seen as responsible corporate citizens and, ultimately, create a heroic collective identity: “All of a sudden one can feel a little bit like an environmental hero.” (STWI Website, 2015) This resembles the action-oriented framing of BDIs, namely “NGOs may just talk and talk, but we companies can act and change things on the ground.” Or as Bergkvist (2016) says:

Here it was an example of companies going together and working for sustainability. And then it was a strength that it was not a NGO, but de facto a company network. Or it is a strength that it is so.

The importance of regulation gaps is also identified, yet, only one interviewee highlights the importance of foregoing legislation through this membership. Perhaps this is due to the low probability of transnational legislation? All interviewees, however, choose to frame this engagement and the resulting membership, as that which contributes to save the environment. This is to be done, preferably by a win-win arrangement: increased monetary and environmental savings:

It is a win-win-win-win situation. It is good for the supplier, good for the worker, good for the environment, and good for us the buying companies. (STWI Website, 2015)

Many of the interviewees describe the inaugural meeting as truly emotional and earth shattering - a wake-up call of sorts - and through their future engagement in the initiative, changes are to be made as a result, in terms of supplier and CSR strategy.

### **Hierarchy**

Organising allows the use of five organisational elements. Establishing hierarchy allows the sense of direction of decisions in the group. However, although one person was instrumental in calling to action, there is no formal hierarchy. Instead, each [buyer company] member is deemed equally important in achieving this collective goal. An explicitly democratic ideal is

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sought: with one company and one vote. A steering group is created, not on the merits of size or resources, but on votes.

We can observe what is there at the moment, and that which is not. Membership is the main organisational element used to rally buyer companies in order to organise collective action. The membership is also company-only; in which the hope is that this may prompt increased action and less difficulty to get along than in previous organising attempts with more diverse membership. However, there is strength in numbers; members can achieve more together than if they were on their own. There are multiple motivations for membership, as seen in the pre-study (Chapter 8): individual as well as organisational-based. There was originally only one simple rule stipulated in the membership agreement:

We are aware and determined to contribute to the process through participation (work hours) in the working group that we are part of and through our membership fee that contributes to the process management (Andersson & Bergkvist, 2016, p. 37)

In this first loosely organised stage, this is also all that is needed to organise membership.

There are numerous “networks” and “initiatives” in which CSR professionals can partake. Why choose this one, and what is this initiative to organise? What responsibility will it take? The future is yet unclear.

On this rocky road, it is of course difficult to foresee the future. It is hard to ascertain the next steps; there are seldom any definite answers from the interviewees. No interviewees mention a long-term strategic goal or purpose of the organising. When asked about the future goals, only the present needs are emphasised. These needs are based upon the industry characteristics and perceived risks.

The members have widely diverging levels of prior experiences of taking, working on, and organising CSR. Some do not have any formal CSR policies in place whereas others have more than a decade’s worth of experience. Apart from the largest MNC members, few companies report on sustainability and responsibility issues: integrated or separately. However, multiple members start to report on CSR and sustainability in 2012, and a majority follow in the subsequent years: corresponding to the end of the first episode

of STWI (see Appendix 1A, Table 5) Thus, for many companies, this membership appears to mark the start of explicit and formal responsibility reporting and policies.

Further, we have previously observed that the DressCode initiative was seen as instrumental in learning about the issues of CoCs and independent auditing: rules and monitoring. CoC compliance was framed as the issue and the solution. Indeed, the 1997 campaign that prompted Indiska, Kappahl, Lindex, and H&M to become members of DressCode constitutes one of the first times that CSR was put on their agenda. However, they discovered in the subsequent years that the admittance of extended buyer responsibility was a can of ecological worms, forcing them to organise issue after yet another issue. Compliance with CoCs was fraught with infractions – suppliers found it too time and resource costly with varying, continuous, and updating of trainings and subsequent audits. Nor did suppliers appear to see any added value. Thereby, independent auditing appeared not to be the perfect solution either. Not only was it necessary to adopt a more collaborative stance with suppliers; a change of values was needed, as it was necessary to find a best practice solution that could convince suppliers that it was in their best interest to participate in this organising – if not for moral reasons, then why not for reasons of profitability?

### 9.3.2 A Shift in Defining and Organising Responsibility: Translating Global Governance Arrangements

A shift in organising CSR in the 2000s is identified: moving from individual and complete to collective, yet partial organising. Large buyer companies no longer solely rely on implementing their own CoCs, instead, they join private governance initiatives, with varying membership criteria. This shift first occurred in the contentious area of labour rights: the issue most prominently featured in media and watchdog NGO scrutiny. Environmental issues are also high, but not as high, on the agenda. Yet, with growing environmentalism, it is seen as but a question of time before consumers also discover the link between textile and pollution. This even appears to be news to some of the participants at the first meeting.

These environmental demands thus need to be taken into account:



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So it is from thread and on to store shelf, or transport to store shelf. So we haven't looked at sustainable water use when it comes to user or recycle phases, we haven't looked at what happens when you develop the fibre or breed animals. It is not because it is unimportant, but rather partially because many others have done so, in both directions. And then we had the need to focus on something, and there it is the processes in production that we have concentrated on. And it is also so that even in the delimitation we have done, that is water, by nature somehow it has broadened to also include energy and chemicals. (Interview, Bergkvist, 2014)

There is a stark delimitation on the environmental responsibility through this organising. The question is not only how this responsibility is organised, but also how it is framed. Notably, there may be selective responsibility and organising may offer particular opportunities, as we will see as we move forward (see Section 9.9).

The general definition of buyer responsibility is loosely set since before. Buyer companies have some responsibility for labour issues at suppliers; this is now extended to also include environmental issues arising at suppliers. Some participating members have worked with environmental issues for a long time; others are barely aware of any. Nevertheless, the definition of buyer responsibility does not appear to be the focus of the initiative. Instead, its organising is emphasised: Taking responsibility by organising. By establishing membership of STWI, the members can in turn establish guidelines, rules, of environmental producer responsibility in the water domain. Thus, the establishing of non-binding rules is at the heart of the initiative<sup>36</sup>.

### 9.3.3 Establishing Rules 2010-2012

The first episode is set during between 2010 and 2012, in which the explicit goal is to establish explicit *rules* for the global supply chain: the water guidelines. In this endeavour, the members meet a few times per semester in Gothenburg and in Stockholm for both working group and formal member meetings. Presence at meetings is mandatory: one of the few rules instituted. Several interviewees mention the grand sum of 3500 hours put in by the members during this period, which serves as a testament of the dedication to

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<sup>36</sup> See further Pre-study, Chapter 8

the cause. The aim is set: to amend, simplify, and shorten existing guidelines for efficiency purposes; pre-existing water guidelines range up to 500 pages. Two years of STWI working groups, an input of 3500 working hours allows for a more easily translatable and implemented 35 pages on water use in textile production. To have easy-to-use rules is beneficial, but how does one organise to ensure its full implementation?

### **Establishing Rules of Membership**

After participating as members for two years, some choose to not continue for much longer. Bellona (2014), for example explains it, saying they are more interested in “tangible outcomes than networking”. As established above, in order to promote inclusiveness, the few rules established at this time concerning the initiative relate more to physical attendance than to actual sustainability progress. Over time, however, the rules are simple, yet amplified:

- Attend at least one (out of three) member meetings per year.
- Actively contribute to the work of STWI including, but not limited to participation, in working or reference groups.
- Distribute the STWI guidelines to all of company textile and leather suppliers, and seek implementation with major suppliers and sub-suppliers. Alternatively, integrate them into equivalent internal review systems.
- Actively promote the STWI Guidelines and support the aim of STWI.
- Pay the annual fee.

(Andersson & Bergkvist, 2016, p. 37)

Some of the largest companies in the market are not “active” or “full” members during this first phase, as they already profess to have superior environmental practices, and water guidelines in place. Yet, they are very happy to provide advice and participate in order to follow their creed of industrial collaboration and helping other companies transition to sustainability:

Most important of all is H&M’s willingness to collaborate with other brands to drive significant and lasting change in the industry. (H&M Report, 2014, p. 42).

What rules are established in partial organising can relate to different aspects. The rules of membership appear important to establish in this first stage, not least in order to counter accusations of greenwashing. The first aspect is, indeed, who is included in membership; only companies can constitute members. Nevertheless, all companies in the Swedish fashion and textile market are invited to join. This asserts the including aspect of the membership, in terms of size. The modest membership fee is perceived as a testament thereof.

SMEs are often ignored in the organising of sustainability and responsibility; they frequently lack resources for the hefty membership fees in initiatives directed at global MNCs. However, all companies are welcome and have the possibility of participating. Nevertheless, an excluding aspect lies in the first rule of membership – that membership is only open to companies. Who is then further excluded? Technically, all other spheres of society are excluded, as well as suppliers belonging to the buyer companies' global supply chain. Further, local and global civil society actors are excluded. Local NGOs in production countries are excluded from membership and influence what types of water issues will be addressed thereafter. Further other related governance initiatives cannot be members either, which could have contributed to additional benchmarking and coordination of the issue. The rules of membership, thus, appear of prime importance for the type and the way in which responsibility is organised.

STWI starts with the dual aim of creating “guidelines for sustainable water use in wet processes for textiles and leather; and to do this in a learning process where the learning and individual development of participants is as important as the outcome of the process itself” (Andersson & Bergkvist, 2016, p. 27).

Dual motivations for membership can thereby be discerned: organisational struggle for sustainability and CSR, as well as the aim of individual learning (see Chapter 8). Particularly, informal learnings are identified as important. In the safe and confidential space that are the working groups, members share stories of past struggles and even failures, thus, allowing other members to learn from their mistakes.

We worked in a respectful and nice spirit and it was a great ambience, we have truly shared with one another. (STWI Website, 2015)

Notably, members also share their current view on sustainability and CSR. Especially, how it needs to be coupled with profitability in order to be worthwhile: particularly, in order to get suppliers on board, which was the sad missing piece of the puzzle for most organising of responsibility. Fast-forwarding and bypassing many of the stages that most companies pass through on their maiden voyage toward strategic CSR (Zadek, 2004); companies can directly learn the importance of the business case for CSR, as well as of having a longer-term relationship with suppliers.

The members try to establish rules of how to organise and improve water practices in the global supply chain. The aim here is to provide short guidelines that will allow easy implementation in the global supply chain. This is driven by the perception that there are already too many fragmented water guidelines. The solution is, thereby, to contribute with yet another set of more practical “rules”. The hope is that more market actors will rally around these guidelines, and contribute to enhanced learning of these issues.

Members can establish rules; yet they cannot necessarily implement them. This is where partners come in.

## 9.4 Episode 5: Let's Take a Trip: Piloting the Implementation of the Guidelines (SWAR)

After establishing the rules - the water guidelines - the plan is to continue with implementation of said guidelines. Most members choose to evaluate these at an individual company level, rather than to participate in a joint co-operation with other members. When doing so, no one is watching or evaluating their water performance; there is no monitoring, surveillance or sanctioning of the brands during this time. Such lack of monitoring is sometimes said to be necessary in order to make companies wilfully join and participate in such initiatives.

However, when buyer companies create their own script, it is also possible to set, or avoid, rules. In general, this does not shield them from doubts and heavy questioning from external actors. However, the input legitimacy

afforded by involvement of governmental or civil society organisations may lead to an expectation of more control: of monitoring.

As aforementioned, the failure of DressCode to become complete was in part attributed to the lack of government involvement and political legitimacy. Members in STWI, thus now find it essential to tie the initiative to the political arena. The governmental CSR framing has already changed, as evidenced by public support to a research project between Indiska and Lund University. Thereby, it appears development cooperation policies now support buyer companies to organise more sustainability practices in the global supply chain. Accordingly, SIWI and STWI apply and are granted funding from Swedish international development cooperation agency Sida for a two-year trial to test these water guidelines. Yet, another site of partial organising emerges.

In this episode, technical competence is sought to improve and monitor supplier performance. Thus, let us take a look at the “catwalk” process, a fashion metaphor used by the interviewees themselves. The catwalk is the runway on which models attempt to sell the clothes they’re wearing, and make the audience believe a fantasy. Selling something on a catwalk is also a metaphor for the performance itself. Membership is exclusively restricted to buyer companies, however, they also need partners and access to knowledge. If an organisation is to share expertise - an NGO or technical IT-consultancy etc. – it must first walk the catwalk. One or two guest speakers per meeting would thereby be invited to contribute to the learning process:

Otherwise, those who have lectured, it has been... either from academia or a limited number of, not suppliers, but rather consultants like auditors and so on [...]. Because when you have these 30 companies, from H&M and all the way down in size, a lot of suppliers see that ‘oh really easy, sales visit, I can get 30 of them at once in Stockholm. Great’ That’s why we have been reticent, but allowed them to walk the catwalk, as we call it, they have been allowed to come and talk for 45 minutes followed by 15 minutes questions. So it hasn’t been a sales pitch, but rather their goal, or our goal, to spread knowledge to us. Maybe five, six, seven global actors have done that. (Interview, Bergkvist, 2014)

### 9.4.1 On the Catwalk: Choosing Partners

We are catapulted back in time to bustling yet cool winter in Rio de Janeiro in late June 2012; we are at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development. The international political and governance arena enters the orbit of our reality TV show. Part of any major governance event is the networking that takes place there. By chance, Pawan Mehra, Director of cKinetics, an India-based sustainability advisory firm, meets up with an acquaintance from SIWI's World Water Week, Karin Lexén. He hears about this new testing of water guidelines in India at a “cozy affair” where 20-30 people attend this Swedish delegation party. As he has recently finished a similar small project with a large Swedish company in Bangladesh, this seems to be a match made in heaven. He gets formally introduced to Renée Andersson and several other key actors in STWI. cKinetics along with a few other firms get invited to walk the catwalk [for SWAR] and are thereafter chosen as its IT supplier. The company's previous work experience with a global dominant buyer company and the “sound methodology” involved, weighs the most. The IT system CoMMit is offered to overview and monitor the suppliers' performances: especially in energy usage.

The ensuing Public-Private Development Partnership (PPDP) between Sida, the three brands and SIWI is labelled *Sustainable Water Resources Management for Textile Industries* (SWAR). A most symbolic homonym, Swar allows a play on words in both Swedish and Hindi: a homonym to the word for “answer” in Swedish, as well as for the word for “harmony” in Hindi, which is particularly apt for a project attempting to provide part of the answer to environmental deterioration. The project runs in two water-scarce areas of India: the Delhi National Capital Region and Jaipur, Rajasthan, both located in the Northwestern part of the country. Involving 34 Indian factories, it is aimed at improving “the water management in the textile production while also decreasing the amount of chemicals and energy that is used”<sup>37</sup>. This number increased to 42 during the course of the 2-year project. In order to

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<sup>37</sup> <http://www.sida.se/English/where-we-work/terminated-development-cooperation/India/a-sample-of-results/Sustainable-Water-Resource-Management-SWAR/>

allow for improvements, only supplier factories with a water plant that can be monitored, are eligible for nomination or self-nomination.

With a new actor involved, and several more coming on board, there is a need to understand the organising challenges ahead. Pawan Mehra describes it as there is a “need to grasp the scope”, with the brands having high-flying ambitions. There is a need to investigate what is possible before committing to results. As mentioned, cKinetics has experience from a similar project in Bangladesh and knows that everything does not always play out as planned. Changing the scene to India and involving suppliers, and subsuppliers, is tricky.

We were experimenting, we were almost joined at the hip. (Interview, Mehra, 2016)

We became one team in about six months. (Mehra in Andersson & Bergkvist, 2016, p. 63)

In order to get suppliers on board, a lot of trust is needed. This is construed as adapting the Swedish consensus model to the Indian context, stressing the importance of meeting over a “fika” or “chai”:

it takes many cups of tea – from all involved to ‘create a common language’ and to build confidence. (Andersson & Bergkvist, 2016, p. 49)

meetings with factories would happen in almost a cyclic fashion with so many rounds of teas [...] fika in Sweden. This process of consensus building involving each party, accepting disagreement and re-approaching for a solution made many feel comfortable. (Sheth, in Andersson & Bergkvist, 2016, p. 69)

It took many chais with the factories to get them to buy into projects. Change management is a slow and deliberate process, and it relies on relationships. The fruits of the relationships were realized in the second year where many larger projects were implemented. (Mehra, in Andersson & Bergkvist, 2016, p. 65)

The ultimate goal for cKinetics when working with a supplier is to change its behaviour. With a positive outlook on the possibilities of creating incentives for behavioural change, it uses mainly arguments of monetary savings. Sup-

pliers are often seen as disinterested in matters of sustainability, yet, it perceives that through small measures behavioural change can be achieved. Moving from apathy towards organising responsibility to one in which suppliers are committed to doing so. Competing suppliers also are made to join cluster groups for dialogue: in itself seemingly contrary to common business market practice. Initially, this leads the suppliers to act out their own show of antagonistic behaviour and silent treatment, while slowly moving toward another play: that of common agreement and engagement in saving resources (Interview, Abdelrahman, 2014; SWAR Report, 2015).

However, it is found that, in order to create lasting sustainable change, a minimum number of factories must participate: “We arrived at about 15-20 through iteration in the first year.” (Mehra in Andersson & Bergkvist, 2016, p. 65) Once the business model of resource savings is put into action, then behaviours can evolve and change.

Thus, the way to enable change is through the translation of the business case for CSR and making use of peer-level pressure; this behaviour and knowledge can be transferred “from one manufacturer to another within a matter of weeks” (Interview, Mehra, 2016). Thus, by framing the membership in STWI around a business case, i.e. of resource savings on water, chemicals, and energy, the framing of the water issue is changed – its importance is increased to both buyers and suppliers, thus making it more attractive to change behaviour (see further framings Section 9.9). Through market-driven solutions, the situation on the ground can change, as well as the framing of business’ organising of responsibility. By providing positive results on environmental impact, perhaps NGO stakeholders can be a little less suspicious? And perhaps even a bit optimistic toward companies? Perhaps even business does not always need to be the bad guy, perhaps it could even be the hero of this show?

## 9.5 Episode 6: Are we There yet: From Partial to (more) Complete Organising?

A windy, rainy day. 8 am on November 1st, 2016. Inside the imposing brick red 19th-century office complex of Garnisonen, sits prestigious interior de-



sign company Svenskt Tenn, innovative front-runner Bisfront, and the water institute Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), the host organisation of STWI. Today the last member meeting of the year is held for looking ahead at what 2017 will bring. What has happened thus far and what will happen moving forward? What is to be discussed are the improvements and challenges that have been made and remain outstanding for STWI, its members, and its suppliers.

A generous selection of organic juices, coffees, and teas are served before the meeting starts. Around a large ellipse shaped table sit representatives mainly from the Stockholm-based brands, a representative from International Development Cooperation Agency Sida, the coordinator of the implementation, as well as the secretary of STWI, who coordinates the network aspects of the initiative and thereby this meeting. All corporate representatives are female; the two presenters are male. The Chatham House Rules are in play, so everything in the meeting is open for sharing, but not open to attribution outside the room.

We sit in a windowless room on this dark November morning, with a less than cheery outlook on the situation for water. “We don’t need to engage suppliers in doom and gloom scenarios, as we are already in it. Better to look ahead, positively, at opportunities!” the project manager urges on stage. A picture shows a vision of what would appear as snow; unfortunately, it is not a cheery rosy winter image. Instead, it is a gloomy vision of chemical sludge and industrial foam, from the outskirts of Delhi, which bears a striking resemblance to the more optimistic of water-based substances. This picture echoes the first founding meeting of STWI in 2010, in which the pathos of such a picture and the insights of the damning environmental impact of the textile industry prompted an outcry and need for this particular initiative. A minority of those present at this meeting were also there at that first meeting of STWI; nevertheless, this partially new audience is equally dismayed.

The agenda is ample: a historic recap of goals met, strategy moving forward, expanded focus on leather, reports, as well as “democratic collaboration” in the form of group discussions on the future vision of STWI, particularly in relation to the UN’s SDG goals. Indeed, the public funding from Sida is expected to end in 2018 and the plan is for STWI Global Projects to perform on its own, basing its income from brands and factories (see

Table 9.4). This represents a marked development from its current status, which is based upon substantial sponsoring from Swedish international development cooperation agency.

Table 9.4 Timetable of STWI Phases, Past and Future Expectations

<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Organisational forms</b>	<b>Annual Budget (SEK)</b>
2010	Founding of STWI Network	300 000
2012	SWAR	7 million
2014/15	Launch Global Projects	25 million
2018	Goal of Self-Perpetuating Global Programme	20 million

A summary of what STWI can do for its participating suppliers is offered: teach them to hold hands, potential monetary savings, as well as provide technical support to meet set target. So far, supplier participation in STWI has proven attractive. The first year of their pilot project SWAR, there was an estimated return on investment (ROI) of 765 per cent meaning that, for every Indian rupee spent, the supplier got 765 back in savings (SWAR Report, 2015).

The main areas of implementation of STWI Global Projects 2015-2018 were in major production hubs: such as in Bangladesh and the Shangdong and Guandong Provinces in China. These are also chosen as they carry substantial water risk, according to STWI's own research. A pair of jeans requires 7000 litres for production. Thus, as mentioned, production requires considerable amounts of water, yet water scarcity is also an issue for factories. They compete with the needs for food production and domestic drinking water production and consumption. It is estimated that by 2030, most of these markets will be suffering from water withdrawals. In OECD countries, an increase in water needs is estimated at 65 per cent, whereas in the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, Indonesia, China, South Africa), a hefty 725 per cent more water will be needed; the number for developing countries is 370 per cent more (STWI, 2015).

With issues of water scarcity on the rise, competition for resources will but increase. This is also why many of the members of STWI mention risk-

assessment and acting in self-interest so as to secure access to resources as one of their prime motivations for participation.

There are five local projects: in China, Bangladesh, India, Turkey, and Ethiopia (STWI, 2017). China is the largest in the global programme, also delivering the most improved results. The comparative savings of water are double than that of the other countries. Savings amount to 1 400 000 m<sup>3</sup>. There are relatively few projects in China; however, the size of one of these factories amounts to that of Old Town in Stockholm. Thus, the achieved savings might not be too surprising, especially in light of the added incentives from institutional and governmental pressures to address environmental issues in China (China, 2018).

The choice of countries to address is of great importance to the fashion and textile market; China and Bangladesh constitute the largest and second largest textile production markets in the world. China accounts for 37 per cent of total textile exports traded in the world in 2013 (WTO, 2018). The range of water scarcity is also vast between the projects, Bangladesh has no direct shortage of water currently: eight per cent is even drinkable, whilst in the North of India there is immense water scarcity (STWI, 2015; SIWI, 2017).

The positive outlook on STWI membership and outcomes is often held forth amongst interviewees; it is also repeated at member meetings, such as this one. However, there are rapid changes in organising the initiative; the rules have been set, but the nature of membership is changing. With the global implementation of rules, a new set of factories and select group of brands are engaging. A total of 20 brands have nominated factories and are involved with factories in five different countries. Thus, a total of 72 factories are engaged in the process in 2015, involving around 20 brands in a global context of 5 countries. This leads to 8 per cent water savings, 11 per cent energy savings and 6 per cent savings of chemical usage. With different pre-conditions, the forms of measurement vary depending upon local context. The levels of maturity of course also vary between countries: with China at the most advanced level, and Ethiopia at the lowest level of maturity.

In order to promote the goals of building more long-term relationships with suppliers and reaching more impact, the initiative invests mainly in capacity building. 12 000 workers received awareness training in 2015, and the

investment by factories totalled 43,3 million SEK. The operational cost savings amounts to 39 million SEK. The total return on investment made by factories is 89 per cent. Furthermore, there is an increase in private capital mobilised by 128 per cent. Sida invests 15 million SEK; brands and factories mostly invest time. Nevertheless, supplier factories pay an almost symbolic sum of 10 000 SEK to participate in the programme in order to receive extensive training and support, etc. This sum is at times covered by the nominating buyer company.

### 9.5.1 Keeping it Fresh

#### **“No Longer Scandi Hippies”: Introducing New Forms of Organising**

At the Members meeting in November 2016, the direction for the future is discussed and the principal theme for 2017 that emerged was the continued and constant need for updating the value added for suppliers: “Keep it fresh!”.

In order to attract and maintain suppliers, it is important to continuously offer new different “projects”, from which there are currently 400 available to choose. As always, the voluntary aspect needs to be stressed. Therefore, arguing for a win-win business case is of supreme importance. Some figures to attract them include annum water savings of 2.5 million m<sup>3</sup>, corresponding to the daily needs of 50 million people or the annual need for 136 000 people<sup>38</sup>.

As seen in this episode, a large quantity of numerical results are presented to the members by staff. This may be a consequence or evidence of the results and output-oriented nature of the initiative, but it is also part of the professional framing of the initiative’s increased staff: professional, efficient and delivering results. They produce a number of reports for the members, stakeholders, and other stakeholders: baseline country report, midterm country report, closing country report, brand country report, and global country report. It is important that the staff convince both buyers and sellers to trust them, in reaching targets, but also keeping confidentiality.

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<sup>38</sup> These calculations were made by STWI staff and are based upon UN human rights access to water (STWI Report, 2016)

The professionalism of the new global projects has to be established further in order to challenge the view that STWI encounters: that they are a bunch of impossibly naïve “hippies from Scandinavia” (Meeting, Abdelrahman, 2016). The introduction of a nice glossy brochure stating the benefits of STWI is also part of this reframing: especially as it highlights the unified impact of all the brands as a good selling point according to project management.

### **Expanding STWI’s Reach: Staying Relevant in a Changing Market**

This initiative is important for raising awareness, but remains quite niched in scope. Involved brands highlight that even though water is important, it is only one part of the sustainability puzzle. “There is a need for a more comprehensive solution” (Adephagia, 2014). According to STWI project management, the initiative is no longer only about water; it is also about circularity and chemicals. The need to look at all externalities of business is especially emphasised by the Project Manager in this present meeting. There is a need to frame and continuously reframe what STWI is about, in order to allow suppliers to keep finding added value.

Thus, in order to keep it fresh and satiate “Market” needs, STWI staff aim to provide continuously updated offerings in order to promote and attract both brands and factories, buyers and suppliers. Reporting and certificates are attractive in the interaction between buyers and sellers. These may contribute to enhanced competitiveness in the Market, as well as enhanced efficiency in the organising of responsibility. To this end, new forms of organising are introduced through membership, rules, and monitoring. This episode also involves moving from a Swedish-only setting of brands to a Nordic one.

### **Introducing the SDGs**

Moving forward, an additional framing of responsibility was offered by the UN Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs, 2017). During the member meeting in Spring 2016, held at mega-budget outlet Ullared Gekås, members settled on “fighting” for three particular goals (SDGs, 2017):

- 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
- 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production.
- 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development.

STWI is dedicated to enabling a world with clean water and sustainable textile and leather industries. We help all of our stakeholders deliver on SDG #6 Sustainable Water and Sanitation, #12 Responsible Consumption and Production, and #17 Partnerships For the Goals. (STWI Website, 2018)

The related goals for number six are perceived as obvious, as well as included sanitation: a social sustainability issue that had, hitherto, not been included in issues to organise. For number 12 (Sustainable Production and Consumption) it included improving 6% annual benchmark in water and circularity in water with 10%. This also included training a minimum of 50% of workforce and 80% of management annually. Furthermore, 50% of the factory base was to achieve improvements in maturity from stages one, two, or three, and additionally improve application of the best available technologies and best management practices. The specific goals for number 17 (partnership for the goals) included increasing the number of brands by at least five annually: by pressing the value of a joint Swedish and Nordic engagement model.

### **More Benchmarking**

There are numerous “private” governance sustainability initiatives in the fashion and textile market; indeed, it is famously fragmented. By virtue of its existence, STWI has contributed to yet another layer of fragmentation; it has not necessarily coordinated with other similar initiatives. Post SWAR, however, there has been some benchmarking with one business-driven initiative: Leather Working Group (LWG). Project management urges members to connect with those brand members also belonging to LWG. Additionally, SIWI, the host organisation, is member of Roadmap to Zero (ZDHC) and Sustainable Apparel Coalition (SAC), in order to align goals and minimise fragmentation (STWI Website, 2017).

A plan to establish a new global cluster group in Hong Kong constitutes another step in adapting to the Market and the needs of brands. The rationale is that it is timely and desirable, as the main production offices in the world are based there (Adidas, Gap, Target, H&M, and Columbia). Other mainly business-driven initiatives in the fashion and textile market, such as the Sustainable Apparel Coalition, have operations there to accommodate its members (SAC, 2015). However, in the end, these plans do not come to fruition.

### 9.5.2 Moving Away from the Swedish Setting

Many of the members highlight the Swedishness of the initiative as key to its success and survival in interviews. Other key actors in the initiative also express this. The project management express the particular aspects as entailing the following values:

- a pragmatic approach
- a personal engagement
- a democratic collaboration.

One of the outcomes of SWAR, STWI's pilot implementation, is that it was also seen as an extension of the "Swedish model", and a positive model for others to follow:

One thinks that this is the Swedish Model in some way, and there are more that have thought so, for example the former Minister of Foreign Aid [Gunilla Carlsson]. It has become, I won't say coddled, but we have received a lot of positive attention from the current majority, as well as the opposition. (Interview, Bergkvist, 2014)

This is also part of the motivation for spreading this example to the EU through Sida presentations to the European Commission; there is also additional international attention (SWAR Report, 2015). Furthermore, the importance of STWI as an illustrative and important example of the Swedish model on CSR is illustrated by the mention of STWI and SWAR in the Swedish national CSR policy (Swedish Government, 2014b).

The importance of growing membership in order to accommodate SDG goal number 17 is emphasised in this quote. One way to achieve this is to move away from a Swedish country setting. According to project management, the interest to join has been expressed repeatedly by international brands. The time and timing, however, has not been seen as quite right. In order to conserve the above cited values, a Nordic union was sought in which such aspects such as democratic collaboration and pragmatism are highlighted. Accordingly, two new brands – one Norwegian and one Danish – start a one-year trial membership in 2016; they have since become full members. A representative expresses that he/she does not see anything particularly Swedish with the initiative:

They speak English and they communicate with the members in that way. [...] No, I don't really feel like it's very Swedish. It's more what they have managed to do out there. (Brand Bia, 2017)

### 9.5.3 Organising and Motivating Suppliers in a State of Standard Fatigue?

In the early days of STWI, the members come together in order to establish rules for water use in the global supply chain. A pilot implementation of the rules was accomplished through SWAR, select number of suppliers applied the rules in a particular setting: India. These suppliers were then monitored, yet not necessarily sanctioned. Positive sanctioning was, at most, desired, and realised when the “low-hanging fruits” of the programme allowed for monetary savings for the suppliers. The rest of the STWI members are free to test the established rules during this time: all at their leisure, without any monitoring or sanctioning. Since 2015, however, more members come together and implement the rules in four additional countries.

After achieving the aforementioned low-hanging fruits also in these other settings, it becomes clear that there is a need for more *organising*, as well as introducing several more devices and motivations for both brands and suppliers. All suppliers in the global programme receive diplomas based upon participation. Such diplomas were, and are, highly coveted by suppliers: “they love diplomas.” (Meeting, Abdelrahman, 2016) Buyers mainly view them as a signal of qualification and compliance. For the suppliers, however, it is not



enough to just be certified or accredited for completion of these projects or programmes. Moreover, the access to global data benchmarks, which could be subject to international scrutiny and comparison, in terms of established coefficients for GHG emissions is another added value by STWI for suppliers. As measurability is seen as key, this can also potentially be used as a traditional marketing tool for suppliers: in order to become more attractive to buyers in the global market.

As of the beginning in 2015, the global roll out for the implementation of the guidelines is labelled *STWI Projects*; it is subsequently relabelled *Global Projects* in 2016. The aim to stay competitive on the market of standards and training involves making “an offer you can’t refuse”. Rankings have long been established depending upon maturity: ranging from minimum through achiever to the highest level of improver. There is a need to continuously reinvent itself in this market of standards, in order for suppliers to see the *raison d’être* of STWI. Further attempts to motivate suppliers include the possible introduction of “best performer promotion”: if they are on the top list of best savings. This prize entails they are promoted for their environmental work among the brands.

#### 9.5.4 Monitoring Supplier Engagement Level

There are multiple attempts to increase the level of factory engagement or motivation through various schemes of prizes, diplomas, and different levels of certification. These are all designed to increase interest and motivation. However, how is factory supplier engagement level de facto measured and monitored? According to project management, this has previously been measured very much at random or ad hoc; however, there will now be a formal monthly engagement score. This also very much reinforces the idea that there is increased monitoring of participating suppliers. In order to take responsibility, there is a need to overview the actual process. Just as in many other types of partnerships, initiatives and collaborations, there is frequently a lack of monitoring, which may allow a lax attitude of participation. With growing maturity of STWI, this may be a sign that it is attempting to become more completely organised.

Reaching additional impact requires more monitoring, coordination, and inclusiveness of related topics. Otherwise, the impact of initiative is limited.

In a perfect world, we will find the perfect way, but it is hard to know your own supply chain (Meeting, Abdelrahman, 2016).

SWAR and STWI Projects have involved the first two tiers, and has typically involved relatively easy targets. Over time, however, this is no longer enough to motivate both brands and suppliers. Organising must be attempted through increased variation and possibly elements?

The host organisation SIWI plans to have staff present in all production markets. Thereby, there will be less reliance upon middlemen and instead, they will deal directly with suppliers. This is another example of more complete organising; This will increase the monitoring as there will be an increased level of on-site visits. This will have the added benefit for SIWI: that its local employees can draw upon its expertise and legitimacy, and thereby, promote increased awareness about environmental issues amongst suppliers.

### **Monitoring Supplier Financial Engagement**

The goal for 2017 is to almost double the number of participating suppliers, which includes more than 200 factories. In order to prepare for the future and promote the independence of the project, project management admonishes the importance of buyer companies and seller-suppliers consistently participating in financing of the projects. A slight range of prices for participating buyer companies is planned. The new fee for participation will now be equal for buyer companies and suppliers.

Part of the commitment of STWI is to build more sustainable relationships with suppliers. In contrast to a lot of other private governance initiatives, suppliers participating in the programme are only initially expected to contribute moderately financially; however, efforts are mainly time-consuming.

Supplier participation in the initiative is built mainly upon trust. Participating suppliers do not necessarily sign a full contract, but rather a one-page letter of commitment. Some suppliers simply do not pay the fee altogether: a total of 7 out of 72 suppliers. Instead, the nominating buyer company is informed and picks up the bill: partial organising, can potentially be easier and more efficient in a situation of mutual trust. However, there are a lot of issues with this loose organising, and a lot of bureaucratic red tape needs to be

managed with the multitude of back and forth of interactions. It is proposed that participating suppliers must now sign a full-standard variety contract, with everything specified in respective languages: countries, details, roles, and particular responsibilities. Also, the amount of time that needs to be allotted for each step of the programme must also be determined, as well as all financial information and the confidentiality and transparency of the participation. It is important to be clear in the contract so as to avoid shock of sharing results for the suppliers. Thus, by signing a full standard variety contract participating suppliers can be held accountable for their actions. The possible sanctioning involved is, thereby, increasingly formalised. STWI is choosing more complete organising when it comes to rules: monitoring and, potentially, sanctioning.

#### 9.5.5 Reporting: Rules and Monitoring of Factories

The establishing of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 and the EU requirements for non-financial reporting (2017) also contribute to placing new requirements and expectations upon companies to organise responsibility:

There are many signs, ranging from the Global Development Goals to the EU requirements for non-financial reporting and so on, that show that all of a sudden the sustainability issue in its dimensions has become good managerial behaviour and that it is something that you need to do not only for show, but also to be successful. (Interview, Bergkvist, 2016)

Future benefits of STWI membership mainly relate to reporting and there is a perceived need for access to easily collected data, for reporting purposes; this is especially the case for medium-sized companies. All production countries targeted by STWI have a very high positive environmental key performance indicator (KPI) change, potentially supporting the need for high-quality indicators for environmental impact. This is framed as a way in which STWI can assist its brand members in providing high-end indicators on environmental impact to plug in mandatory non-financial reporting.

Pursuing and transmitting audit information about hygiene and sanitation at supplier factories can also contribute added value deriving from STWI membership. This is also one of the identified relevant UN SDG goals (SDG

number 6 Sustainable Water and Sanitation). This is something which STWI can contribute to the members' CSR efforts, rather than the other way around (Meeting, Abdelrahman, 2016). As these indicators are already informally "observed" by STWI staff, it is expected that can easily provide added value in terms of brand indicators for reporting. Thereby, responding to "Market" needs.

In order to establish and maintain trust between STWI and the supplier factories, it is important that the individual supplier factory report is not shared in detail with buyer members. Instead, the buyer will receive a summary of progress and recommendations for engagement, and can then decide what level of scaling up and further investment is needed. This is to be indicative of how STWI promotes long-term collaboration and trust, rather than quick fixes. This is also revealing of how with the professionalisation of the staff, it is an intermediary between the participating buyer companies and suppliers. Accordingly, it must build trust with both of them; increased formalisation of rules and reporting is thereby not unexpected. However, it is also thereby increasingly unclear who the members are; who is deciding – who is organising?

#### 9.5.6 Brands & Suppliers: Nominations, Influencing, and Translating (Membership and Monitoring)

Transparency is also important between brands and suppliers, as well as between suppliers and sub-suppliers, as well as for brands then to know what's going on in a factory. In order to foster such trust, brands shared KPIs about suppliers in 2016. Another suitable way to confidentially share results between supplier peers is through the hosting of workshops, thereby, promoting transparency in an intimate setting.

On the buyer company side, some confidentiality issues have been resolved, whilst others appear and reappear over time. The main way for brands to know whether they share factories is through the "black box" of nominations. Buyer brands nominate factory participation in the programme; if two or more buyer brands nominate the same factory, this shared supplier factory becomes known through opening this "black box". Due to intense competition in this market, transparency around suppliers was a concern for many companies in the early 2010s. This has, nonetheless, changed over

time. Currently, many large MNCs in this context are increasingly transparent about supplier lists and even publish lists online (Fashion Transparency Index, 2018). However, one major MNC member does not; as such, the procedures for further opening this “black box” are halted. At meetings in 2016, 2017, and 2018, this issue is lifted and sometimes appears to be resolved; however, as nothing happens, it is raised again. On an individual level, members are able to be transparent about suppliers; however, this is not formalised within the initiative. Some brands even complain about lack of cooperation between brands when sharing suppliers.

For suppliers, there is still frequently an underlying assumption that taking responsibility for sustainability issues is a cost or a luxury and, therefore, is not part of the core business activities. STWI urges buyer companies to make use of their sphere of influence on the supplier factory level in order to make the business case for CSR. The perspective of buyer company must be heard so that supplier directors and managers can be influenced, motivated, and committed; the initiative’s voice is not sufficient therein. Therefore, it is of the essence that brand representatives attend the annual supplier meetings which occur in all production countries. Especially, as their presence contributes to increase the willingness of key actors in the global supply chain, such as local agents to participate. This is something to which members who have already participated in such meetings are willing to attest.

### 9.5.7 Membership and Rules

#### **Updating Rules of Membership?**

The need to also monitor whether buyer companies follow the established rules of membership is lifted throughout its existence. Indeed, the presence at member meetings is considered of outmost important. These occur three to four times annually. It is important to collect who is attending the meetings, and it is of outmost importance to remind those who do not regularly attend. Since the beginning, it is important to be a part of a working group that meets one to two times per year to update the guidelines. When the working groups aimed to establish the guidelines during 2010-2012, they met at least 4-5 times per year. The secretary of the initiative maintained at the meeting in November 2016 that there is no need to police, as they all share a common interest. Greenwashing relating to membership is solely equated to

presence or rather absence at meetings, rather than any other aspect or investment in organising sustainability. The common interest and shared work tasks become the basis of being a member. Other actors scrutinise brands for their sustainability and related reporting.

The buyer companies' commitment to concretely participate in the implementation projects is also discussed. In terms of participation for both brands and suppliers, it is important that both parties find value and contribution. Participation for its own sake is not advantageous and could lead to waste of resources. As aforementioned, the rules on participation in the practical implementation regarding what constitutes membership are not updated. Are the rules of membership based on participation in meetings, or in global implementation? Conflicting views on the purpose of membership are expressed at this meeting. As an ideal state, "membership should lead to concrete impact" (Meeting, Abdelrahman, 2016). However, in the current membership rules of STWI, there is no need to nominate suppliers and actively participate (Interview, Bergkvist, 2016). Rules can, of course, change; however, this has not been the case thus far. In fact, it is even "ok to hang around", as a new form of time-limited membership has been established: "observer member" for a maximum of two years (Interview, Bergkvist, 2016). These many considerations and alterations in organising membership are not strange considering the long process from changing from a network-oriented cluster group, via a small pilot project with governmental support, to the current state involving operations in five countries and hundreds of suppliers.

The basis for this initiative has always been a pragmatic one: a business-driven project with a results-oriented focus. Even if some members only "hang around", it can be quite expensive to do so: especially for a small company. The base fee started at 12 000, yet has increased to 25 000 SEK in 2016. However, this entails a five to ten-fold value compared to other partnerships, according to Abdelrahman (Meeting, 2016). The membership fee has been raised once throughout its existence, and has mainly funded the "network" aspects of the initiative: of meetings, agenda-keeping, and certain personnel functions. Bergkvist (2014, 2016) also emphasises this fee is competitive, especially compared to other mainly network-oriented initiatives:

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12 000 crowns is nothing in this context, it's a matter of hours for very senior staff (Interview, Bergkvist, 2014)

The members' fee is not the big investment, that is rather time and presence (Interview, Bergkvist, 2016)

Further, the costs involved in nominating suppliers for participation are also seen as highly competitive and efficient:

We didn't speak out clearly enough about how cost efficient this model is. We normally calculate a yearly cost around SEK 75,000 to 100,000 for such a deep engagement with a factory; something we get here for a third of that. (Björkander, in Andersson & Bergkvist, 2016, p. 93)

Other parties, however, subsidise the remaining budget for the global implementation of the guidelines, thereby contributing to an even higher value added for the participating brands.

### 9.5.8 Epilogue

As observed in this episode, the initiative is growing both in terms of buyer companies and suppliers, as well as in functions. More and more forms of organising are needed in order to accommodate the market needs of both brands and suppliers. Thereby, membership is extended to non-Swedish actors. Triple forms of membership are identified: trial, observer, and active membership. Monitoring of brands activities' remains low; participation at meetings continues to be emphasised as the main rule of membership. Furthermore, growing societal and governmental requirements for accountability, lead to growing needs for corporate sustainability reporting. STWI, thus, adapts to these market needs and updates its offering to include SDG and other KPI indicators: in order to offer and simplify reporting processes, thus, creating value added of membership. Suppliers also face growing market demands for certification of improved environmental performance. Therefore, different certificates are proposed in order to motivate them further to specifically engage in STWI Global Projects. Ultimately, STWI is fighting for its place in the market of "private" governance initiatives; it is not enough to be a Swedish niched initiative after the public financing comes to a halt. It is not

a standard – should it be? A self-perpetuating global programme is sought for and owned by the brands. Thus, the initiative starts to intensify the use of organisational elements, more than ever before. Membership, rules, monitoring, and positive sanctioning are on the table. Which organisational path to choose?

## 9.6 Episode 7: The Final Countdown or the End of the PO as we Know it?

We descend upon yet another rainy winter day in Stockholm. No snow to behold on the 8th of December 2017, prompting people to comment on the effects of the Anthropocene and climate change already upon us. The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency Sida is housed inside the mighty glass and concrete complex on Karlavägen. At 10 am, the members of STWI are invited to discuss its future prospects: to continue or not to continue, that is the question. A sense of impending gloom? No, the smell of saffron buns and fresh coffee serve to counter such notions. Upbeat Youtube clips produced by SIWI are displayed on a screen and VR glasses are offered to watch a Sida-produced movie on the positive impact of STWI on a Bangladeshi factory (Youtube, 2016, 2017). The initiative's secretary JP swiftly calls the meeting to order. Mingling between brand members, SIWI employees, and the Sida hosts comes to a quick halt. Most people know each other well and have met many times before; nonetheless, the 23 people sitting in a U-shaped form each introduce themselves. The format does not resemble a courtroom; instead, the many uplifting facts and figures from the successful STWI Projects contribute to an optimistic mood.

### **Erase and Rewind**

The past year was an eventful one for STWI. During a member meeting in 2016, the goal of a self-perpetuating global programme is formally announced as of the end of the public funding of the Global Projects in 2018. During the spring of 2017, the work of finding a solution has continued and a plan to instate a limited company with SIWI as the backer is elaborated. However, the support from contributing organisations is not favourable for



allowing the fruits of this publicly funded labour to become a private rather than a public good.

Simultaneously, STWI management try to rally support from SIWI. As observed previously, the organising of STWI includes more organisational elements, such as the formalisation of contracts to suppliers with ensuing sanctions. Yet, the organising element had not been strong enough to shield them from additional lack of payments; having a limited company based partially upon very insecure payments from suppliers is a disfavourable argument. The board of SIWI is not convinced; the risk is deemed too great and the work too cumbersome to be viable. Instead, cooperation with one of the main members, H&M, is proposed. A suggestion is put forth that H&M will stand as the financial guarantee for the limited company, and would guarantee buying the services of STWI.

The SME members present this plan to me with some concerns. The loss of the symbol of the Swedish crown on the contracts with suppliers will possibly be detrimental in gaining the support from new (nominated) suppliers and, accordingly, lead to loss of legitimacy for the initiative itself. Additionally, there are concerns for what will happen to the rules of membership if one single large actor will be so dominating: will it still be democratic? Most likely, the cost incurred will also be prohibitive for SMEs, which can severely limit their influence. These concerns are seen as deeply troubling. Ultimately, though, none of the plans are materialised.

This brings us back to the ambience of the member meeting on this rainy December Day. Sida host Mats Åberg inaugurates the meeting and presents the importance of the initiative, contributing to realise the 17<sup>th</sup> SDG goal of collaboration. Several members also thank Sida for the support. The motion goes on to present the facts and figures, which provide uplifting thoughts of what this room of people has managed to achieve. Katarina Veem, the Director of Swedish Water House, one of SIWI's departments, goes on to address the elephant in the room: the uncertain future and the challenging months behind us. She presents her vision of what are the opportunities and possible alternatives for the initiative in terms of alternative structures, expansion of membership (in both scope and type) and/or merging with other initiatives. The "uniqueness" of the initiative and the achieved business case are emphasised.

Possibilities of merging with a more socially oriented initiative are presented. Such merging would provide benchmarking and added value for both buyers and suppliers, in line with the previous year's plans of reporting on several more social SDG goals.

With those options in mind, the members are divided into groups in order to further discuss the future. With a unanimous yes, everyone wishes to continue with STWI: "It would be so sad if this were it: of course yes" (Brand Irma) However, when it comes to what to do in the future, some brands do not want anything to change. Everything should remain as is. STWI is compared to other initiatives, with more cost-prohibitive measures and furthering the status quo:

Where are we going? Do we want to continue to try things or just become a paper product like all the others? (Brand Freya)

What these brands wish to know is what needs to be done in order to survive and stay the same: size, countries, and scope. Sida is consulted; they mention the need to include the aim of addressing the social conditions for the poorest of stakeholders and possibly embrace a regional strategy, yet cannot promise anything. SME representatives worry that they will never be able to stand on their own feet and organise producer responsibility. Consumers are also raised as important stakeholders to consider – should STWI have a label: "This should also be desirable for consumers" (Brand Lua). Hitherto, when communicating these results to consumers, individual brand rather than collective efforts have been highlighted. They also brainstorm for other sources of financing: a rumour goes around that Better Cotton Initiative used to get funding from a lottery.

The general discussion gets heated at times, yet is not particularly dramatic. All wish to keep the initiative going, but the organisational form is undecided. The discussion ends on keeping all the different lines of enquiry open and to reconvene in four months' time. Will the initiative survive, and what will it organise?

## 9.7 Episode 8: Buckle Up and Hit the Road Jack?

At the next member meeting on an equally gloomy February day 2018 at SIWI headquarters, multiple lines of enquiry are still open for the initiative: merging with other initiatives to incorporate more social impacts, thereby, providing added value to stakeholders and members. This would potentially align with new and updated overarching development cooperation goals. Support from a recently founded impact institute for environmental improvement in the fashion and textile sector is another, as is resuming to just a “network”. Creating a platform for buyer-supplier interactions is another. The vote is split on which way to proceed; all alternatives are shrouded in doubt and mist. The members’ are not appeased, and no answers are provided.

The struggle to reach consensus for an initiative of approximately 30 companies becomes increasingly clear. It is also equally difficult to rally the troops for optimism of the bumpy road ahead. Not only is it difficult to reach democratic consensus when there is no clear goal ahead; issues of the past, once deemed sorted, return centre stage again. Democratic consensus guides the membership yet, as noted previously, team staff has taken the lead more with the swelling of the project, and attempts to adapt to “Market” needs: for example, those of the brands and suppliers. Issues of transparency between brand members return to the table: those who no longer have as close interactions as in the early stages of STWI. Should only nominated suppliers be shared, or should there be full transparency of all suppliers? What level of certified suppliers are being nominated for participation by brands? Is this still a capacity building initiative or should it involve more auditing? With the uncertain future of the initiative, some of the CSR managers wish for a list of the arguments for its business case to convince management to stay. These appear to have been forgotten with an autopilot placed on the initiative in the past years.

However, strategic concerns of which factories are to be included and nominated are mainly ignored, what level of “proficiency” in water issues should be sought? The course was set almost a decade prior for organising responsibility for water use. Many organisational changes have since been made. The course for STWI Global Projects is set on autopilot: satisfying

figures delivered to plug in to the sustainability reports that more and more of the members are producing. The membership is no longer driving the initiative forward; with the increase of organisational elements, it is relying more and more upon rules, and especially monitoring. However, the members initially decided the rules and the path; however, in this setting, no one appears to have questioned them: if perhaps they should be updated, and the course they should take? The public funding is coming to a halt – and what is and should the initiative be? An association, a limited company or a network?

With the shift to other organisational elements, it is perhaps not surprising that the inclusion of membership is discussed for the first time. An extension of commercial members is suggested: the long-excluded participating factories are perhaps to be included as members. Other actors, such as technical consultants, are also proposed to participate in the network: at least to allow for market exchange with certified members and also supplemented member fees.

The members cannot agree upon the way forward. This present meeting marks the date for when a new proposal from the steering group should be presented. Yet again, however, all possibilities are open. Thereby, consensus is very important. With growing complexity, scaling up and the resulting formalisation of the initiative, the vague rules of the steering group and the democratic set-up make it difficult to set a straight path forward. Different companies have different needs and according preferences, making it difficult to satisfy all members. No detailed course is set at the following meetings, leaving the members in limbo. Many wish to continue, yet it is very unclear on how to proceed. With growing involvement of governmental and civil society actors, the initiative can no longer be considered a purely brand-led initiative. Is the curse of the inertia of collaboration, differing goals, and visions finally upon them?

Organisations and organising are built upon cooperation rather than on exchange; membership is incredibly important as members can and do coordinate in order to decide what to do together and what each individual should contribute. Decisions are made by a small number of members; other members are swayed to follow, in case they wish to remain members. Indeed, organisations submit members to common decisions, irrespective of participation in the decision-making process. Thereby, an organisation cannot be

built upon collective participation and agreement in the decision-making process; individual members must instead submit to common decisions (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011; Brunsson, 2014).

## 9.8 Summary: Organisational Dynamics in STWI: Use of Organisational Elements

As noted in previous sections, various organisational elements are used at various points in time for organising responsibility for water uses (for an overview, see Table 9.5). At first, membership is the single most and sole important organisational element used in STWI, allowing the rallying of members, with little effort needed. Once established, it makes use of more organisational elements to organise [buyer company] responsibility – especially the need to establish new rules for water in the global supply chain: easy to use and so on. This further adapts to business needs. A few important rules for membership are established, especially in terms of mandatory participation in working groups to establish aforementioned rules. Keeping track of participation is a simple matter of ticking off members' presence at meetings. Furthermore, the participation is based upon a democratic consensus ideal, in which one company equals one vote; everyone needs to agree before making a final decision. Once rules have been established, how are they to be implemented, and what organisational elements are needed?

The suppliers involved are nominated but need to be convinced, thus, indicating little to no hierarchy. The rules emanate from the buyer companies, yet the suppliers can choose whether or not to participate, and also leave the implementation at their volition. Performance in the programme is monitored, however: monitoring and improving water, as well as chemicals and energy usage. To note, the suppliers are not members of the initiative. A select few companies implement these rules and guidelines at nominated suppliers in two different regions of India. This becomes a Public-Private Development Partnership (PPDP) through the involvement of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency Sida and the water institute SIWI.

Whilst this is ongoing, the remaining members are tasked with implementing the guidelines at their own leisure; no one is monitoring them, and no viable sanctions are afforded, as per traditional “private” governance initiatives.

Once this PPDP is deemed a success, there is considerable interest among both business members and government agency Sida to renew and scale up this venture. Thus, STWI Projects emerges. The business case for CSR appears to be proven (see framings Tables 9.6 and 9.8). Twenty business actors are now involved instead of three, and 200 instead of 40 factories. Factory supplier performance must of course still be monitored, yet the remaining ten members who do not actively participate in the Projects, remain unmonitored. However, through membership, they can still reap the benefits of this monitoring. This monitoring allows the delivery of several key performance indicators, which is important for the augmenting number of buyer companies that have started to report on sustainability (see Appendix 1A, Table 5) over the course of the initiative.

With an increased number of actors involved, it becomes important for the initiative to formalise rules on participation of factory suppliers: not least in terms of contractual agreements. With the personnel group in the initiative also growing, it is important to gain a better overview, rather than the informal flexible way of arranging agreements.

Once the project starts nearing its completion and the aim is to be self-perpetuating, adding all remaining organisational elements becomes attractive: especially the hierarchy. Smaller companies become afraid they will no longer have a say or afford continued membership. However, there are no resources and the mandate is to reach a state of becoming a complete organisation. Thus, they stand still, and so do the use of organisational elements.

The question remains what decision to take for the future – with the democratic consensus ideal and lack of hierarchy, the decision proves to be difficult. However, it is clear the most important changes that need to be made relate to membership and its rules. The business-only membership appears to be abjured – suggestions are now made to include suppliers as well as technical consultants. These possibilities would not least allow for additional financial resources. Other possibilities involve merging with other “private” governance initiatives: not least ones that are related to social la-

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bour issues, but also prompt a move toward more formal multi-stakeholder arrangements: i.e. inclusive membership.

The buyer members would lose flexibility, in terms of what issues to address, as well as the possibility of being a member without participating in the programme. On the other hand, it would allow for more input legitimacy: something with which a business-only membership struggles. What to do?

Table 9.5 Organisational Elements Involved During the Episodes, Showcasing STWI as a Site of Partial Organising.

Episode/ Organisational Elements	1. Business Makes a Comeback	2. Let's Take a Trip	3. Are We There Yet?	4. The Final Countdown or the End of the PO as we Know it?	5. Buckle Up and Hit the Road Jack
<b>Membership</b>	Membership is composed of business 'brands'	Membership remains exclusive to business, but partnership with new members is initiated.	Membership remains business-only exclusive, but partnership is extended (government) New category of members is introduced: observer members not participating in the partnership.	Business-only membership in STWI; observer members remain. Trial members from non-Swedish buyer companies are introduced. With unclear future – business-only composition of membership is opened up for discussion.	All categories of membership remain. It is time to decide who are members, should the initiative merge?

<b>Hierarchy</b>	Democratic consensus ideal among members, steering group with unclear mandate.	Guidelines are directed at suppliers, yet voluntary to adapt. Democratic consensus ideal among members, steering group with unclear mandate.	Guidelines are directed at suppliers, yet voluntary to adapt. Democratic consensus ideal among members, steering group with unclear mandate.	Democratic consensus ideal among members, steering group with unclear mandate. Thereby difficult to take decisions about future.	Unclear leadership, difficult to take decisions about future.
<b>Rules</b>	The members work on and establish overarching water guidelines, rules. The few rules for membership centre on participation.	An attempt is made through a PPDP to implement the rules for water usage in the global supply chain	There are rules for membership, as well as the rules for the supply chain. However, rules for the factory suppliers are formalised, with clearer contracts and clearer commitments.	Membership rules are put into question. Rules for the suppliers prove difficult to implement.	Time to decide to keep or update the rules – which rules for membership moving forward? Should it merge with another initiative and adopt additional rules?
<b>Monitoring</b>		Factory performance is monitored for water, chemicals and energy. Observer members are not monitored.	Factory performance is monitored for water, chemicals and energy. Observer members are not monitored.	Factory performance is monitored for water, chemicals and energy. Observer members are not monitored.	Factory performance is monitored for water, chemicals and energy. Observer members are not monitored.
<b>Sanctioning</b>	Negative: Expulsion from membership is repeated absence from meetings.	Negative: Expulsion from membership is repeated absence from meetings.	Positive: Association to legitimacy through nominations and awards	Positive: Association to legitimacy through nominations and awards	



## 9.9 Framings: Organising Responsibility in Markets

This section will present the ways in which STWI is framed as a unique and successful model for cooperation, as well as how the responsibility organised is framed. Accordingly, this bears a strong connection to the instrumental business case for CSR, and the ways in which the business case for CSR is framed will also be presented and analysed.

### 9.9.1 A Unique and Successful Model for Cooperation

Nordic textile giants have saved almost 7 billion litres of water, enough to meet the daily needs of 134 million people (SIWI Press release, 2017)

The positive results from STWI and SWAR are displayed and played up on multiple fora, at panel debates World Water Week, Stockholm Fashion Week, MakeInIndia etc. For setting a good example for the industry, the sustainability category at Habit Fashion Award is won. With the support of the Swedish Trade Council, in the hope of inspiring other markets, the Secretary of STWI, Jan-Peter Andersson and recently retired Indiska Sustainability Manager Renée Andersson publish a book together entitled “The Textile Challenge” (Andersson & Bergkvist, 2016). The “unique” aspects of competitors collaborating are especially emphasised as well as the potential of this being a “new” cooperation model for tackling sustainability challenges:

How could tough competitors start working together? What is a learning process that allows useful guidelines for improved water management and efficient working methods? And how does this contribute to increased sustainability in the production countries? (Swedish Trade Council, 2016)

How did it happen – and is it something that can be copied and used for different environmental and sustainability challenges in other industries? (Swedish Trade Council, 2016)

We are honoured to be awarded this significant prize and hope that sharing our success story can inspire others to enter into similar collaborations. The cooperation between Sida, SIWI and KappAhl, Lindex, and Indiska achieved substantial results in both water and chemical savings and was a winning formula

within itself (Petri Gornitzka, then Director General of Sida, in STWI Report, 2015)

However, through the rules of engagement in the dialogue groups of the first episode, members learn more about sustainability and CSR: the business case for CSR that is proving highly efficient. Also, information is shared by the members participating in the SWAR project is shared to the rest of the members: what low hanging fruits can be plucked; measurable data and costs for energy and chemicals saved. Institutional constraints, however, remain in the water conservation context. As mentioned in Chapter 6, all claims to responsibility for this situation are not accepted by the buyer companies:

To place all the blame on the buyer is to simplify the issue. Mainly it is about supplier lacking knowledge about which laws and rules apply to the labour area and how to run a factory efficiently (H&M's CSR manager Ingrid Schullström, in *Aktuell Hållbarhet*, 2003)

It is of course not only the textile industry that causes pollution in developing countries. [...] almost 70 per cent of industrial wastewater is disposed of untreated. (Andersson, in Andersson & Bergkvist, 2016, p. 23)

The picture given by him [Sasja Beslik] is very simplified. We don't own any factories, we buy from the same factories as many other brands. (H&M Sustainability Manager Anna Gedda in *Omni*, 2017)

Thereby, a framing of [organising] responsibility as capacity building emerges. Suppliers first had to be taught about labour rights, and then to manage their factories in an environmentally efficient manner:

It is the same process as when we started working with Codes of Conduct and social issues 16 years ago. The suppliers only saw increased workload and costs, until they started the process and made their factories clean and safe and started paying the salaries and benefits they were legally bound to. The factories were structured, production increased, a little bit more loyal workers, better quality, new buyers, and they became role models in their area and in the industry. (STWI Website, 2015)

Table 9.6 Framings of the Initiative

Framing of Initiative	Explanation & Nuancing	Illustrative Quote
<p>"Unique cooperation of competitors"</p>	<p>In the Swedish context, STWI introduced this type of cooperation for sustainability. However, there are numerous examples of such cooperation internationally, and of course also cooperation between competitors for strategy purposes. The unique aspect here would be the large number of/mix of SMEs and large MNCs.</p>	<p>"At the time when we decided to initiate SWaR, collaboration between competitors was not an obvious activity. There were concerns from all parties whether we would be able to separate commercial secrets from our common challenges." (Kindgren, in Andersson &amp; Bergkvist, 2016, p. 60)</p> <p>"The unique aspect rather lies in the interaction with industry colleagues, get information from the SWaR project, this new big project, and that is things that one will share, practically speaking. So it will be communicated online, in order to, not brag, but inform and lift the brands, and the benefits for the greater good and for the brands. But in order to have it explained and truly understand, it is an advantage to be part of STWI." (Interview, Bergkvist, 2014)</p> <p>"We are competitors when it comes to sales, but not when it comes to the environment and human rights. There we must cooperate." (STWI Website, 2015)</p>
<p>"Successful"</p>	<p>The initiative first accomplished impressive results in SWaR, with measurable savings in water, chemicals, and energy; its impact was considered a success, prompting additional involvement of the largest companies, as well as secured future access to governmental funding and support.</p>	<p>"STWI is the world's sustainability superstar" (C&amp;A Foundation, on STWI website, 2018)</p>
<p>"Win-win"</p>	<p>The appreciation of this initiative leading to a win-win situation - i.e. shared value between environment (society) and business - is derived from the successful output/impact mentioned above. However, the initiative focuses mainly upon such output, which is easily measurable. Thus, the true sustained impact of this initiative is not measured, and the extent of this win-win is difficult to appraise.</p>	<p>"What appealed to us was that STWI saw the big picture and aimed to create a win-win-win situation. Financially for suppliers/factories through efficient process optimization. Environmental benefits through reduction of pollution and efficient use of natural resources. Societal profit for the factory workers and the local population in the form of improved health and more water available for purposes other than textile manufacturing." (Lind, in Andersson &amp; Bergkvist, 2016, p. 35)</p> <p>"STWI is lightweight, inexpensive, flexible and efficient - has all the right components for global success, GPO representative (STWI website, 2018)</p> <p>"Combine ethics, environment, and economy, with global governance and harmonisation" (STWI website, 2015)</p>

<p>Swedish</p>	<p>The Swedish model involves values of democracy, consensus, and solidarity. By emphasising the Swedish aspect of this initiative, these positive values are associated. This market focus, however, can be considered an update of the Swedish model.</p>	<p>"The tradition to co-operate rather than compete, (aside from healthy competition on the market place), may be a bit unique for Sweden, and is born out of our egalitarian society, I assume. When we co-operate for a common goal outside normal economic competition, then it's fine. In Sweden, we have a tendency to 'follow the flow'. Once we learnt that many had joined this new project, many others followed suite". (Hägglund, in Andersson &amp; Bergkvist, 2016, p. 29)</p> <p>"And the Swedish model, according to us, consists of cooperation, and it is not so that these 30-ish companies, which is almost the whole current Swedish textile retailer and industry, they don't just go in and spend some money on a consultant who makes a guideline, instead they have made these guidelines themselves. This is an important dimension of the Swedish model according to us. That it is a knowledge-bearing, knowledge-creating process in the organisations." (Interview, Bergkvist, 2014)</p> <p>"When we get out in the world, we have truly been 'Sweden' Textile Water Initiative and we have had launching workshops together with ambassadors. We have the Swedish logo on us when we talk about ourselves and so on. And the working method, I mean with 12 000 educated workers etc., it really speaks to the fact that it's not just the factory manager, it is indeed those working that can contribute, even if they also get an insight and so on. So the Swedish part... I personally really believe that the Swedish part has an importance, I think that Sweden has an amazing possibility to market itself as a brand with this form of leadership view." (Interview, Bergkvist, 2016)</p>
<p>Democratic</p>	<p>The initiative's inner governance is deemed democratic, as all companies have one vote. However, in terms of democratic accountability and legitimacy, it is not necessarily deemed democratic. As the traditional demos aspects are not involved, democratic accountability is often perceived as compensation by inclusion of membership from different spheres. The company-only membership does not ensure a democratic ideal. Yet, between members, decision-making is democratic.</p>	<p>"For me, it (Swedishness) stands for a strong sense of democracy, both in working processes in general, but also a leadership characterized by openness, transparency, and a sharing culture." (Björkander, in Andersson &amp; Bergkvist, 2016, p. 12)</p> <p>"A lot of it is about shaping a participative democratic proves and there are probably very many organisations and cultures that would benefit from that. At the same time, one must have respect for, and understand in what context one is implementing in, so that it is not perceived as lazy and indifferent, or as a lack of leadership" (Interview, Bergkvist, 2016)</p>
<p>Cost-Efficient</p>	<p>This initiative is also upheld as a very cost-efficient alternative to other initiatives. This was mentioned frequently by the secretary of the initiative in interviews as well as in member meetings, but is also put forth by certain members. Also the cost for engaging in implementation is considered very cost-efficient, compared to other initiatives.</p>	<p>"We didn't speak out clearly enough about how cost efficient this model is. We normally calculate a yearly cost around SEK 75,000 to 100,000 for such a deep engagement with a factory; something we get here for a third of that." (Björkander, in Andersson &amp; Bergkvist, 2016, p. 93)</p> <p>"We get much value for money, Swedish brand HQ" (STWI Website, 2018)</p>

### 9.9.2 Framing the Issue(s) to Organise: A Blame Game?

A highly selective view of the emergence and complexity of the situation arises amongst members. Several members initially position the main problem residing in the lack of cost attributed to water, and that it is free of charge in India. It is also highlighted that this is due to lack of legislation. Another is valuation – water is seen as something free of charge:

More dialogue is needed here, a process further complicated by the lack of an agreed value of future water – a key element is determining its price. (Hägglund, in Andersson & Bergkvist, 2016, p. 32)

Relatedly, it is highlighted that water is not seen as something that is truly “used” in textile production in India; instead, it is seen as a carrier:

You can see water as a carrier of other challenges, energy, chemicals and so on. (Interview, Bergkvist, 2014)

All these explanations for the situation contribute to one overall framing of responsibility: that suppliers themselves lack knowledge, make many mistakes and must, therefore, be educated and empowered to address these challenges through capacity building. This can be seen as an attempt to shift responsibility, suppliers must be made aware so as to take and organise responsibility.

Now we have made the 64 suppliers of SWAR see the important connection between water, energy, and chemicals. That water has a cost, even though it's free. That one must measure and control one's use of water, chemicals, and energy, and one's processes. (STWI Website, 2015)

However, the level of education and capacity building needed is also dependent on the particular context and culture:

The challenge is to have transparency and there are some difficulties in China and there's other issues in India. So it's based on culture and it's based on challenges within that country. (Brand Bia, 2017)

Hierarchy in the Indian context is emphasised therein: employees do not dare ask superiors for dosing instructions; thus, they waste chemicals and, thereby, pollute the water.

No one is framed as a villain in this scenario: a mix of complex interactions serve to exacerbate an already tough situation; however, the framing is initially that there are quick and easy solutions. There is no point in looking at the past, but rather it is better to be pragmatic and look at what can be done. Thereby, the buyer companies can increasingly position themselves as responsible, saving our most precious resource: water.

Table 9.7 Framing of Responsibility Issues Related to Water and Sustainability

<b>Framing of Issue</b>	<b>Market Solution</b>
"Water is free of charge"	Attribute cost and value to water through awareness-building
"Water as risk"	Collective action to secure access
Transparency & trust	Collective leverage Long-term relationships to suppliers
"Hierarchical relations at suppliers exacerbate issue"	Education and capacity building of supplier managers and workers
"Lack of leverage"	Collective leverage Consolidate number of suppliers
Pre-competitive issue	Capacity building
Lack of investments	Collective action to overcome issue

### 9.9.3 Framing the Business Case

This section presents the numerous business case arguments offered by engaging in this initiative for buyers: especially for SME buyers and suppliers.

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Table 9.8 Framing of the Business Case for CSR

	<b>Business Case for CSR Proposed</b>	<b>Illustrative Quote</b>
Practices:	Share certain suppliers in order to:	
- Buyers	Leverage control & Quality together Consolidate number of suppliers CSR as risk management - secured access to resources	<i>"If one comes as a company, apart from H&amp;M possibly, and says that "yes, you should implement your laws a little better, and not bribe one another", it is a steep hill. But if you come from Sweden and say 'can we help out and build capacity and knowledge in your water agencies?' Then something exciting happens, and that is a part of STWI Projects. That means that all of these companies have a possibility. There will be a big Swedish badge on them, but also the Three Crowns and all that. It has its advantages." (Interview, Bergkvist, 2014)</i>
- SME buyers	Above of particular importance for SME buyers	
Suppliers	Easily adhere to buyer demands and be more attractive on the market Realise the risks involved in water shortages and secured access to resources Environmental savings on top of monetary savings: <i>"Plucking the low-hanging fruits"</i>	<i>"Of course, that depends on how you see its benefit. And benefit, that is pretty interesting, because the benefit is not mainly economical for STWI's members, but primarily for their suppliers." (Interview, Bergkvist, 2014)</i>

Legitimacy	Impressive impact Government actor involvement	<i>"One thinks that this is the Swedish Model in some way, and there are more that have thought so, for example the former Minister of International Development Cooperation Gunilla Carlsson. It has become, I won't say coddled, but we have received a lot of positive attention from the current majority as well as the opposition"</i> (Interview, Bergkvist, 2014)
Consumer	Identification of a <i>potential</i> consumer price premium	
Communication	Results communicated in sustainability reports, on an individual or aggregated basis (certain members communicate the total impact) Allows communication of important SDG goals Results communicated in individual brand campaigns (i.e. brand enhancement)	<i>"Rather, the benefit for STWI's members is that it contributes to their sustainability work, and actually makes their lives a little easier"</i> . (Interview, Bergkvist, 2014)
Limits to individual action for transformative change	Industry collective action	<i>"The fact that we shared facilities with other STWI members, and that we also were very conscious of our limited ability as an individual buyer to influence the factories to more sustainable production to any greater extent, made us see the potential in what we could achieve together with our industry colleagues in collaboration with expert companies and organisations."</i> (Lind, in Andersson & Bergkvist, 2016, p. 35)



### **Organising Collective Action or Competitor Pressures?**

When all other companies were joining, it was seen as impossible to stand outside of the initiative (Brand Irma, 2014)

The fact that we shared facilities with other STWI members, and that we also were very conscious of our limited ability as an individual buyer to influence the factories to more sustainable production to any greater extent, made us see the potential in what we could achieve together with our industry colleagues in collaboration with expert companies and organisations. (Lind, in Andersson & Bergkvist, 2016, p. 35)

The composition of membership is not only attractive in that it appears to allow enhanced impact and, thereby, engages governmental support; it also appears to attract additional buyer company membership. When many companies initially become members, the pressure on the remaining ones to also become members appeared to increase. [Business] competitors emerge as important stakeholders for companies to engage and organise responsibility.

Membership in STWI has contributed to a collective framing of the addressed issues, as well as the view of responsibility and motivations thereof: e.g. the importance of the business case for CSR. Over time, however, there has been little growth in terms of membership. Indeed, a few companies have dropped off, two have gone bankrupt, two re-joined, and two new ones (from Nordic countries) have also joined.

It is also a very small industry.[...] Of course during these six years, the challenges of industry have changed, sometimes it has gone better for some, and worse for others. It has been tougher, it has been... Also conjuncture development and so on. (Interview, Bergkvist, 2016)

### **Collective Leverage on Suppliers?**

One of the main benefits of membership is framed as membership allows all companies, especially SMEs, to consolidate joint leverage in order to gain more influence in their global supply chain. Many companies in the same market may share some suppliers. Nevertheless, even a large or mid-sized company alone does not hold much leverage on a supplier (Helin & Babri,

2014). Several interviewees explained the importance of leveraging impact and change, similar to the following quote:

It was actually a little ‘cool’ when we later were out visiting the suppliers and in addition to our own requirements, were also able to show them STWI’s guidelines with 30 other company names behind. This clearly helped in the continued improvement process. (Lind, in Andersson & Bergkvist, 2016)

Additionally, another lesson arising from the membership in STWI centres on supplier strategy. Through sharing internal practices and lessons learned, a shared view arises around practices: how to choose suppliers. Not only do members lack leverage on matters of responsibility, but also on common business concerns. The solution, therefore, appears to consolidate the number of suppliers, allowing deeper relationships, as well as more leverage to organise responsibility as well as quality control:

We strive to minimize the number of middlemen and limit the total number of suppliers. (Åhléns Sustainability Report, 2013)

We want to develop and improve the supplier base by bringing in new suppliers with a good sustainability performance, while continuing to reduce the total number of suppliers and facilities used by Åhléns. (Åhléns Sustainability Report, 2015)

Supplier consolidation can, thus, be seen as part of the business case for CSR, in which legitimacy risks are minimised and other business aspects may be improved through increased leverage. Thus, the benefits of acting together for buyers - in terms of leverage and influence on suppliers - is a prime motivation for entering and staying as members of such an initiative.

### **Supplier Business Case**

The view within the initiative is that suppliers often perceive and assume a classic economic perspective in that organising CSR issues constitutes a cost and, as such, is not part of its core business. Nomination by buyer companies makes suppliers aware of the benefits of organising responsibility for water.

Through increased monitoring, increased efficiency and, thereby, increased savings can be measured and achieved: monetary as well as environmental.

The fashion and textile market is considered a buyer's market; a market in which buyers may have an advantage in price negotiations. When it comes to buyer pressure to organise responsibility issues, sometimes considered extraneous, it appears more difficult to influence practices. As established in Chapter 6, the pressures of the fast fashion production chain are especially at odds with organising responsibility; for suppliers, it frequently involves a trade-off between maintaining flexibility and upholding labour rights. The cost of organising/implementing responsible practices appears difficult to motivate to the financial bottom-line. *However, this may be another story when these responsibility practices can actually save money for suppliers. How to do so?*

We started 2014 with the motto 'Whatever gets measured gets done'. By installing metres on all units, all 2013 participants learnt that by measuring a resource and making someone accountable for monitoring it, the consumption of that resource decreases. Moreover, improved measurement systems enabled units to provide more accurate data for KPI measurement and calculation of best practices/benchmarks (Andersson & Bergkvist, 2016, p. 53)

This is where the framing of CSR comes in. In order to find the missing piece of the puzzle: the lacking motivation of suppliers who do not hold the same view of CSR nor perhaps wish to participate actively in its organising. How should CSR then be framed? Indeed, a calculative business case framing is used in order to enrol suppliers in the organising of responsibility and save water. It appears to hold large promises for motivating suppliers:

Initially we had advocated measurement systems and metres. We are grateful that SIWI and the Management Group accepted that approach; because without measurement we could not create a case for further action. The major challenges were getting factories to take them on. But when they did, we obtained good data. (Mehra, in Andersson & Bergkvist, 2016, p. 67)

The programme was able to develop some key performance indicators and that information fed into the newsletters and updates that we provided all participants with, throughout the project. That in turn, created more action. (Mehra, in Andersson & Bergkvist, 2016, p. 67)

A number of different framings of this partial organising are here identified, as well as of what constitutes buyer responsibility, sustainability issues, and the business case for CSR. These all contribute to a framing of a unique collaboration which organises collective action so as to allow suppliers' capacity building. These framings thus impact the responsibility accepted and subsequently organised; the responsibility for water use in the global supply chain is thereby transferred to the suppliers. Further, we have now also observed a dynamic variation of elements used over time in two different initiatives. A tendency of partial organising attempting to become more complete or even a complete organisation can be observed. Why? In both cases, suppliers were not members of the initiative, nor were local stakeholders included. However, in both cases, a difficult feat of persuading the suppliers was involved. Thus, one reason may be that in order to succeed in transferring responsibility to suppliers, the sanctioning element is needed. The tension between autonomy and hierarchy thereby appears unresolved with partial organising and a complete organisation is sought. Another perspective may be that the norm of complete organisation is so strong that in order to survive as organising it appears the only viable option. Nevertheless, retrospectively, the case of DressCode is seen as a success in terms of organising or influencing collective change: "That time, it led to a revolution in these issues!" (STWI Website, 2015) Thereby, reminding us that collective change may be the result of partial, rather than complete, organising.



# Chapter 10

## Concluding Discussion

The purpose of this thesis is to better understand how responsibility is organised in the markets, through the study of “private” governance initiatives in the fashion and textile context and its organising choices. Implicit research questions addressed include who is included in organising, and what is de facto organised, as well as the follow-up questions of who is not included, and what is not being organised. These questions have been addressed through a theoretical framework of partial organising, framing, and translation. Particularly, which types of actors from the public and private spheres are included, as well as the dynamics of elements used in such organising, is examined. Chapters 7, 8, and 9 especially uncover the results of this empirical and theoretical investigation. One of the main conclusions drawn from this material is that organising of responsibility over time has become the site of partial organising. Notably, multiple “private” governance initiatives have at varying stages of existence used organisational elements to different ends, but only some, not all of them. As established in Chapter 9, in the principal case study, it has involved a move from a membership to a rules-based form of organising. This organising appears to have allowed the business sector to attempt to move from a position of rule-follower, to that of a rule-setter. Nevertheless, such organising and rule-setting capacity appears to require more resources than the business sector is necessarily prepared to give. The important role of government in assisting and legitimising such rule setting is identified herein.

A discourse ideal of partnership, collaboration, and collective action has emerged as the means to “solve” the complex global issues that plague the world and our common future (Kolk, 2013). These organisational efforts do not follow the organisational boundaries of individual organisations; rather, they overlap and make use of certain organisational elements. Thus, as argued in this thesis, there has been a shift from organising responsibility in complete organisations to partial settings (Rasche et al., 2013). This shift to partial organising can be explained from a multitude of perspectives: such as cost-efficiency and the grandiose scale of sustainability and responsibility challenges involved. Others relate it to the popular translation of neoliberal ideas into governance (Djelic & Etchanchu, 2017).

This work draws upon two particular cases in the empirical context of the fashion and textile market, involving both global and local settings and actors. To this end, business actors attempt a particular responsibility order. In order to organise responsible supply chain practices pertaining to water use, a number of organisational elements were drawn in or left out for various reasons. Membership was considered particularly important in order to start organising, whereas hierarchy has been used to a low degree. In hindsight, whether such uses also constituted conscious decision is not always clear.

These phases of organising have been analysed as episodes, in which particular framings of responsibility, sustainability, and organising have dominated. In certain episodes, there has been governmental support for organising. Motivations for organising responsibility have also been analysed, and these have varied over the course of the past two decades. Thereby, we find that the responsibility order has shifted over time, involving numerous claims to responsibility: causal, moral, and prospective.

## 10.1 Responsibility Order: Partial Organising of Responsibility in the Markets

The efforts to organise responsibility in the markets are partially organised; so, too, are markets. There are limits, however, to both organising and markets. Nevertheless, the market setting appears advantageous for organising

responsibility: for business and government alike. However, as aforementioned, organising does not necessarily equate to taking responsibility. As markets are partially organised, organising for responsibility therein may not involve costly organisational elements: such as clear and detailed rules, yet may rely mainly upon membership, vague rules, and partial monitoring.

### 10.1.1 The Different Roles in Organising Responsibility in the Markets: Who is included in Organising?

The roles of market actors to organise responsibility in the markets is yet unclear. With various regulation and responsibility gaps in a globalised world, it is not surprising that a number of different actors attempt to establish a decided responsibility order. Who is considered responsible, what claims of responsibility are accepted or denied, and what responsibility is de facto taken? Some market organisers, especially civil society organisations (CSOs), increasingly attribute such responsibility to the business sector. Accordingly, business alongside other market actors, government, and CSOs have become involved in a wide number of organising forms: “private” governance efforts to organise responsibility in the markets. An interest is frequently taken in organising issues in the global supply chain, beyond the legal and contractual boundaries of these links.

### 10.1.2 Responsibility Order

What are the roles of different market actors in organising responsibility in the markets? Business, CSOs, and government have all taken on different roles over time. As observed previously, business initially attempted to achieve a decided responsibility order: one in which it sets its own rules for the boundaries of responsibility. A research institute provided legitimacy for the venture in that it secured access to expert knowledge, thereby, providing societal value as well as monitoring of its rules. As discussed in Chapter 7, for a long time, government did not show much interest in CSR and its organising. Involvement in the organising of responsibility in the market was seen as lucrative once the governmental framing of CSR had shifted to one of trade competitiveness: including the “Swedish brand.” Involvement, however, was limited to funding.



Thus, the organising of responsibility in markets has shifted over time. The importance of markets for responsibility has gradually increased, especially the idea of the Market. Despite what governmental market organisers may assume (Andersson et al., 2017), markets are not self-organising and require continuous organising efforts. Both soft and hard law regulation are in the government's toolkit to organise markets; NGOs are found to use external consumer pressures in order to organise responsibility in markets. Voluntary standards are created by a range of actors in order to organise responsibility for various types of sustainability issues. To counter such external pressures, the business sector has constructed a wide number of trade organisations, industry associations, and business-driven initiatives that contribute to a particular framing of CSR and, thereby, to its preferred organising of responsibility.

### **Use of Organisational Elements in Deciding a Responsibility Order**

#### **Membership**

Defining who exactly is a member may not be as obvious as it may seem. Furthermore, this becomes increasingly difficult to discern when hierarchy is not used. Over time, the purpose of membership became increasingly unclear; staff increased in numbers as well as in professionalisation. Who is the member?

In Chapter 8, two levels of membership were identified: organisational and individual. Some motivations for membership were conflated, others separate. Organisational motivations for membership included legitimacy and the business case for CSR, whilst individual motivations included "network" relationship-building aspects; both included and learning expertise. Particularly, the "network" aspects contributed to the building of a collective identity through membership. In a meta-organisation, this is not surprising, as creation of collective identity is one of its three general purposes (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008). The other two purposes are interaction among members and collective action among members. These two purposes are also fulfilled in this case. However, as noted, the studied initiative of STWI is not a complete organisation. Berkowitz et al. (2016) proposes instead that there are a wide variety of goals available; meta-organisations typically hold an "information production function" in order to support these varying purposes and

goals. In matters of organising responsibility and sustainability challenges, the development of collective responses is seen as the most important purpose (Vifell & Thedvall, 2012).

Herein, we can thus observe that with the two levels of membership, the individual level served to develop a collective identity, whereas the organisational level mainly served to develop a collective response or action. Over time, with the increased formalisation of staff and increased level of organising, an information production function was created that particularly served members' sustainability reporting purposes, and suppliers' need for certification of participation. So far so good. However, with increased "information production function" there was less need for interaction among members. Over time, however, with less interaction, the individual membership, and thereby, collective identity, became less pronounced or important. Indeed, in episodes four and five, the organisational "we" constituted STWI. Once professionalisation was underway, STWI became an external "it" or "they", which was at the service of the member organisations. One can also argue that membership shifted from organisational members to its staff. What was now the purpose of membership? To build a community or "network", to implement guidelines, monitor and improve local stakeholders' conditions, or is it the continued access to the results of the monitoring? Ultimately, leading to confusion of the purpose of membership: participate in meetings or in global implementation. Or possibly is it the access to the "information production function"? Following this unclarity in purpose, the responsibility of members also grew unclear.

In her investigation of the French Legion, Sundberg (2015) finds that instead of using costly organisational elements, the French Legion creates a greedy culture of obedience. Indeed, forming a collective identity may allow readier consensus-based decision-making. In the early episodes of STWI it was difficult and too costly to make use of more organisational elements than membership. In lieu of organisational elements, thus, a strong collective identity served as substitute.

Sundberg (2015; *Forthcoming*) further notes that membership is heterogeneous in aptitude for brotherhood and that this leads to dynamic use of elements; the sanction of expulsion is one possible way of dealing with this. At hand, there is heterogeneity in the resources available to the different mem-

ber organisations in STWI; they range from the smallest of SMEs to large MNCs. There is also asymmetric resources between members and the site of partial organising. Similar to meta-organisations, the partial organising has few resources in comparison to its members (Ahrne et al., 2016) Ahrne et al. (*Forthcoming*) relate the development of International Governmental Organisations (IGOs) to the theoretical issues of meta-organisation. Therein, there is also asymmetric relations and resources. Different countries have different resources, yet, may all vote. This too is similar to the case at hand, in which different-sized companies adhere to a democratic ideal of consensus, in which different resources and needs lead to difficulties in decision-making and possibly to inertia. With organisational membership, the increased use of elements, or more complete organising, makes it ever more difficult to reach consensus and/or shift the purpose of the organising.

### **Hierarchy**

Notably, the absence of the hierarchy element in organising responsibility in the fashion and textile market allows buyers to avoid accountability for non-compliance of rules of sellers. Thereby, the most resourceful actor in this market may refuse responsibility. Claims to responsibility and accountability may, instead, be directed at less resourceful actors: such as suppliers or customers. In this empirical case, responsibility can be seen as directed at the supplier.

### **Rules, Monitoring, and Sanctioning**

The use of organisational elements does not necessarily involve taking more responsibility in the markets. As observed in Chapters 6 and 9, the global fashion and textile market has organised responsibility through the use of rules (i.e. mainly standards) with varying levels of monitoring (i.e. audits). Rules, in the form of standards, are often dispersed in terms of who is to do what – one actor creates the rules, another can monitor and or sanction. The use of rules does not necessarily imply that an actor will enforce the rules. The content of rules may also hold an element of plasticity, in that they can be remolded to suit the current purpose. In fact, the prolific organising attempts by complete organisations have accomplished relatively little; Lindholm and Egels-Zandén (2015) find few positive outcomes in terms of responsibility for labour rights. What is the purpose of all this organising? A multitude of CSR researchers focus upon the prevalence of decoupling

(Meyer & Rowan, 1977) or organisational hypocrisy (Brunsson, 1989); others find that such perceived decoupling between talk and action can be performative, and that talk can lead to future action (Christensen et al., 2013). The purpose is not to assess the impact of organising or decoupling; however, the quest for legitimacy is an undeniable part in the motivations for organising responsibility. Such motivations also form the basis for participating in partial organising. Thus, choosing to integrate more or all organisational elements in the organising of responsibility is more resource-intensive and/or costly, which may lead to loss in membership.

### 10.1.3 Framing and Translating Involved in Establishing a Responsibility Order

A responsibility order is not given; rather, it is continuously shaped by organising efforts. Various organising efforts construct and frame the one who is perceived as responsible. Section 9.1 describes the first attempt to establish a decided responsibility order for labour rights in the Swedish fashion and textile market; it highlights the disinterest of government in becoming a member of DressCode, indicative of governmental disinterest in CSR and its organising. Fast-forward a decade later, the governmental framing of CSR has shifted and includes an updated Development Cooperation policy. Accordingly, the Swedish government now wished to participate in organising responsibility in markets. The key word here is markets, as the Swedish government is an avid organiser of markets (Andersson et al., 2017). CSR had now become a matter of market concern, so it was vital to support the organising of responsibility in markets from a somewhat concealed position. The Swedish government did not become a member in this site of partial organising nor did it place explicit demands upon the organising. The instrumental framings of CSR and responsibility established within the partial organising were accepted instead as facets of rational calculative market actors.

In the early phases of attempting to establish a responsibility order in this market, societal and NGO discourse identified and framed buyer companies as being responsible for supplier conditions (Ählström, 2017). The buyer companies refused such responsibility, arguing that no legal basis existed. The increased acceptance of voluntary CSR and framings of CSR as global governance and as capacity building, led large global buyer companies to ac-

cept certain claims to responsibility that were placed upon them. Subsequently, efforts to organise ensued<sup>39</sup>. Rules in the form of CoCs and monitoring through auditing were used in the first stage (as described in Section 3.3.2). Suppliers have mainly covered the financial costs for such organising (Stigzelius & Mark-Herbert, 2009), thus, indicating a shift in responsibility. However, this approach has been largely fruitless in terms of achieving substantial improvement in labour rights practices. Other organising efforts - particularly capacity building and knowledge improvement amongst workers in the global supply chain - have thus become popular. Lernborg and Sendlhofer (2017) find that such knowledge transfer attempts contribute to responsabilising suppliers and workers in the global supply chain.

Few, if any, stakeholders consider the distinctive responsibility of suppliers in organising responsibility in the markets: What is it and how is it framed? Claims to responsibility from NGOs are not placed upon suppliers; they rely on business' moral and causal responsibility for past actions. As noted, the responsibility order in this market has shifted over time, with differing framings of CSR and subsequent organising efforts. A framing of responsibility as capacity building has arisen; it has also become widespread in the development domain (Hennink et al., 2012). Capacity building is a popular idea, which involves empowerment by helping people help themselves. This has been used in microfinance (Ali & Hatta, 2012), as well as in the collaborative redesign of audit processes (Utting, 2005): in which workers are given a voice to address their concerns. Another stream of literature claims that such empowerment may also be indicative of a shift in responsibility: a *de facto* responsabilisation of the suppliers (Shamir, 2008; Alexius, 2014a).

#### 10.1.4 The Boundaries of Responsibility

What are the boundaries of responsibility? As previously noted, a framing of responsibility as capacity building was established through partial organising efforts. Initially, a certain causal responsibility was assumed by members, yet, the responsibility taken and organised was for capacity building. Such capacity building could provide an instrumental incentive for suppliers' engage-

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<sup>39</sup> Kallio (2007) notes that those claims to responsibility that are not in contradiction to profit motives have been accepted, whereas those that are too costly (i.e. living wage) have been refuted.

ment, as well as legitimacy for the members' engagement. However, what responsibility is not assumed? As noted by the absence of related local and global stakeholders in membership, causal responsibility for the local setting is not accepted, addressed, or organised. Responsibility for the impact(s) of suppliers' water use in the local community is not assumed. Furthermore, a requirement for being part of the capacity building programme is for the supplier factory to have a wastewater facility. This requirement excludes supplier factories that have not come so far in addressing sustainability issues, and are not as well-equipped or resourceful so as to participate.

#### 10.1.5 Motives and Expectations of Partial Organising of Responsibility

STWI is lightweight, inexpensive, flexible and efficient – has all the right components for global success, GPO representative (STWI website, 2018)

What can we expect from the partial aspects of organising? The distribution of roles in organising responsibility in the markets shows there are a number of market organisers directly and indirectly involved: buyer companies, suppliers, government, and NGOs. These all have varying perspectives and motives for participating in partial organising.

In the principal case study, members were initially motivated by causal responsibility as well as instrumental concerns for future access to resources: i.e. water. Showing images of chemical sludge caused by the production of textiles prompted an outcry among members and a sense of direness. Moral responsibility on the individual level was also discerned: "We need to do something." Organising responsibility in the markets is also organising hope: hope that there is an easy solution to the responsibility issue at hand. Over time, however, the sense of urgency and moral motivations wore thin. The dynamics of membership and the interaction between different forms of membership also contribute to a shift in the purpose of the organising, and the responsibility taken.

There are, indeed, benefits for companies to partially organise for responsibility versus doing so in a complete organisation both collectively versus individually: particularly, choosing its membership, cherry picking issues (Gulbrandsen, 2009), and goals. As mentioned in Chapters 3 and 6, however,

there are differences when it comes to the type of “private” governance initiative that is organised. MSIs vs. BDIs have many strengths and weaknesses, respectively. The former’s main source of legitimacy can be seen as deriving from its inclusion of membership, while the latter tend to focus upon less inclusive membership, yet take strength from partnering with government and civil society actors: in the form of implementation and funding partners (Lernborg & Luistro-Jonsson, 2018). Both provide a market solution, an addition to the growing market of standards and initiatives and, indeed, of private governance. Both have difficulty in making use of monitoring.

Partial organising allows a flexible way of pooling resources, expertise, learning, and so on (see Chapter 8). Partial organising, thereby, gives hope that these first steps will be enough to organise responsibility and shift markets to a more responsible course of action.

### **Legitimacy of Partial Organisational Efforts**

How does a partial organising attempt gain and maintain legitimacy? As established in previous chapters, partial organising attempts can gain input legitimacy by virtue of inclusive membership and the framing of such membership as democratic. However, this can lead to output legitimacy if the attempt is framed as being efficient and results-oriented (Mena & Palazzo, 2012). In the principal case, it was framed thus. As this was seen as a market-based organising attempt of responsibility, its independence was of outmost importance. The governmental funders, i.e. market organisers, also appear to have found such market ideas important for the legitimacy of the partial organising attempt. As argued previously regarding the distribution of roles, the research institute constituted a source of expert knowledge, the governmental agency provided funding, and business donated in-kind time (meetings, reports etc.), business acumen and knowledge on top of its “cost-efficient” member fee. These are all different types of contributions and constitute various sources of legitimacy. Through such different forms of contributions, the distribution of roles appears quite segregated and business has a privileged position. Both civil society and government organisations provide resources in order to allow business or market actors an opportunity to set a decided order and to organise responsibility in this market.

### 10.1.6 Have Your Cake and Eat it too

The principal empirical case was initially created in order to set its own rules, and as few as possible: such freedom from inclusive membership and rules allows autonomy to set a decided order; yet, it does not enable the sought legitimacy. There are always trade-offs and necessary contributions to allow for coordination.

This organising of responsibility has framed responsibility as capacity building, thereby, contributing to enhanced efficiency in the markets. The inclusion of a knowledge actor enables this. Such responsibility as capacity building can be simultaneously reported and communicated to key stakeholders in the local setting. This is in line with a win-win proposition, and framing responsibility as a CSR business case.

The professionalisation of the staff in STWI, its new members if one so will, contributes to this narrow chosen conception of responsibility. The purpose of the organising and the principles of responsibility guiding it are open for interpretation. With its principles of transparency, accountability and democracy, CSR has been criticised for being an empty signifier (Fougère & Solitander, 2009): a concept that can mean something different to various actors, meaning it is imbued with significance. Buyer companies are keen to show commitment to such responsibility through use of membership; yet, the responsibility *de facto* taken can be seen as limited. Particularly, as the presence of membership and absence of hierarchy allows a shift in responsibility to suppliers.

The sought responsibility order does not take historical responsibility for how collective market/industry practices have arisen. Rather, it is pragmatic and prospective (Miller, 2001; Müller, 2018) – in that, with capacity building, in the near future, suppliers in this market will be empowered and capable of addressing responsibility gaps on their own.

### 10.1.7 Much Ado About Nothing?

Partial organising is flexible through the use of various organisational elements. The purpose of the organising can be kept vague, as well as the level of responsibility assumed. What was the purpose of organising responsibility for water use? Was it solely legitimacy through numbers: do numerical savings and results for reporting satisfy buyer companies' demands? The num-



bers have been verified by an esteemed research institute; responsibility as capacity building appears to have been organised. Mission accomplished. Under such conditions and definition of responsibility, it is not surprising the purpose of organising membership becomes unclear, and members' enthusiasm for further organising subsequently wanes.

I argue that efforts to organise responsibility increasingly occur in the markets and create new markets, and that such attempts are frequently partially organised. Further, the idea of the Market is instrumental in shaping the motivations for how and why to organise markets. What is then the outcome, in terms of responsibility? The idea of the Market contributes to shape the idea that the organising of responsibility for sustainability issues will be most efficient if membership is restricted to traditional market actors such as businesses. There is hope that market efficiency will contribute to solving complex sustainability issues. Nevertheless, if motivations to organise responsibility are restricted to short-term profitability concerns, the responsibility taken for complex sustainability issues will not take into account a long-term perspective. This leads to goal conflicts between efficiency and responsibility that cannot be ignored, yet often are.

## 10.2 Dynamics of Partial Organising

The theory of partial organising, to which I aim to contribute, is in a pioneering phase; further empirics are needed in order to substantiate its claims. Notably, in terms of which order its elements may be used, what changes over time, as well as what determines whether partial organising remains partial. Is the secretariat, the organisational members, or the host organisation SIWI the site of the partial organising? How can one gain access to it and who is the gatekeeper? The analysis of organisational elements in complete and partial organisation allows the denaturalisation of the organising of responsibility in the markets. Yet, as noted in Chapter 5, it is difficult to establish the boundaries of fluid partial organising, which also shifts over time.

There have been attempts at particular points in time to create a particular responsibility order. This responsibility order, however, is unstable and, with the involvement of numerous market actors and organisers, has shifted over time. Therefore, in order to investigate the organising of responsibility

in the markets, the use of organising is more apt than that of organisation. Organising, rather than organisation, involves dynamic rather than static or decided aspects. This is an attempt to be more precise in what I argue constitutes the dynamics of partial organising.

The principal site of partial organising studied has had several phases of organising over the course of its existence; it has made use of various combinations of organisational elements. Initially, most decisions centred upon membership, yet membership became increasingly less and less important. Instead, the organising became based on rules and some monitoring. The particular lead members in the initiative left or disengaged to a degree. With implementation in five production countries all over the globe, it is not surprising that things could not continue as before: i.e. that rules remained implicit and unwritten. In order to avoid regulations and overt rules, the founders of the initiative had initially ruled out becoming a complete organisation:

We decided [...] to establish our co-operation as an initiative instead of an association, to avoid the regulatory requirements related to association status. (Andersson, in STWI, 2016, p. 25)

Over time, both suppliers and buyer companies required increased formalisation of rules. This implied that rules covered more and more aspects of the organising. Furthermore, the monitoring of rules, especially of the impact thereof at suppliers, led membership as an organising element to become less central. Rather, continued membership was rewarded with attractive resources. As a result of this monitoring, members were served impressive quantified results. Thereby, members could report impressive results and just “plug in” important KPIs. The initiative was looking for ways to increasingly organise more monitoring, adapting to the needs of the “Market” and to the suppliers and especially buyer members. Over time, these members had been able to reap the benefits of the partial organising of responsibility: particularly, in terms of the legitimacy awarded to it and its members.

Through partial organising, a new decided responsibility order was sought. In this case of organising, once the individual level learning for members became less important, so too did the achievement of a decided

responsibility order. The business category of membership became less visible or emphasised. Simultaneously, the formal staff grew in size and in strength, thus, providing strategic direction and offering organising choices to accommodate “Market” needs.

Once membership no longer propelled partial organising, complacency ensued; members were assisted by the initiative, rather than actively contributing to its organising. It can be argued that the staff constituted the new members of the organising. This was possible since the initiative had swelled in size and in budget (see Table 9.4); yet, most members had not necessarily markedly increased monetary or other types of contributions. This can be seen as the result of the generous governmental support through which members did not need to substantially increase financial endowment, but mainly dedicated their time. Thereby, environmental results had perpetually continued to pour into this self-framed resource and cost-efficient initiative. This alleged cost-efficiency was mainly enabled through public funding. This partial organising resulted in a business case for CSR, which attracted governmental support, enabling a total focus on organising for instrumental purposes and needs. The complete focus upon certain aspects of resource-efficiency was furthered by the partial organising’s implementation staff.

## 10.3 The Governmental Role in Organising Responsibility in the Markets

### 10.3.1 Governmental Framing of CSR

There is a mutual dominant instrumental framing of CSR involving the business case between the EU, government, business, and parts of academia. As mentioned in Chapter 7, policy actors often frame a particular issue in order to pursue self-interest. Bendell (2005) finds that CSR requirements may be a hindrance to global “free” trade, and notes the example of Colombia’s flower market, in which CSR requirements became unfair competition, as there was no access to certain CSR standard inspectors in the region. The framing of CSR as a business case allows governmental policy actors to pursue their self-interest in supporting and promoting Swedish companies in the global market.

Over time, a shift in not only the governmental framing of CSR, but also in its involvement in subsequent organising, can be noted. As seen in Chapter 9, in the Internationalist Solidarity CSR framing, the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs chose to initiate and organise the Swedish Partnership for Global Responsibility: with open membership for business, loose rules for participation, and no monitoring or sanctioning of corporate actions. This initiative did not attract many members and was discontinued in 2009. However, there was no governmental interest in participating in the partial organising effort of DressCode, which business initiated. The involved business actors also suggested the lack of governmental participation as leading to a lack of legitimacy and failure of the attempt to organise responsibility for labour issues in the market. It attempted, but did not succeed in becoming a complete organisation, with the possibility of implementing a joint CoC: the preferred mode of organising at the time.

Move forward a decade, and we have entered a new governmental CSR framing, in which the business community at large had accepted CSR and governmental actors as a matter of market concern. The framing of CSR as creating solutions for the problems of globalisation, and the potential for win-win outcomes in the market, had now been established. With this new framing, government was eager to be involved in business' effort to organise responsibility for water use in the market. This also fitted the new development cooperation agenda in which private sector involvement and partnerships were encouraged. Thereby, the idea of market efficiency would contribute to reaching overarching sustainable development goals. To a certain extent, the government can be considered a member of the public-private partnership, yet not of the network itself. However, instead of including itself in membership, government mainly made use of monitoring in the form of evaluation and reporting.

In 2013, Sida also initiated the Swedish Leadership for Sustainable Development, in which around 20 large MNCs and three expert organisations are members. Government was a convenor of membership. This membership has remained relatively constant over time, and organising has not expanded to the use of rules, hierarchy, monitoring, or sanctioning. Thereby, the government can be seen as instrumental in contributing to partial organising efforts by business. In order to facilitate an alleged self-organising mar-

ket, the government thereby continues to contribute to partial organising attempts. Its involvement is a source of resources, and a stamp of approval that allows for legitimacy and a continued illusion of the self-regulation of markets.

When looking at the role of government and its contribution to partial organising, the following can be surmised: 1) although it is an important partner in the implementation of the initiative's established rules, it is not included in membership; 2) The rules of its engagement are kept vague, and; 3) monitoring and sanctioning are kept at a minimum. The assumptions for this contribution can be construed as the Market knows best; the strategic acumen of business/market actors will guide them to organise responsibility so as to best benefit this market. Business actors are further assumed to have no responsibility beyond legal requirements (see Chapter 7), and are driven purely from a utilitarian and profit-maximising perspective, thus, signalling a view of companies as identical to the *homo economicus* of neoclassic models: a view that internalises a socially disembedded market view, and to which there are no particular limits.

### **Contribution to Understanding the Role of Government in Organising Markets**

The sought responsibility order has evolved over time, with no decided order or institution in sight. Extended Producer, or rather Buyer, Responsibility appears to expand constantly to new social and environmental sustainability issues. A more comprehensive organising of responsibility may involve including more aspects of producer responsibility: i.e. taking responsibility for the impacts or externalities of a firm's operations. Organising responsibility in the markets, thereby, involves addressing this responsibility order in which responsibility for new issues arises: in this case, water use. How such responsibility is organised is dependent upon context; the focus here is on Sweden. The corporatist tradition prevalent in Sweden entails that there is also a long and strong state-government tradition of organising markets (Andersson et al., 2017). Over time, the beacon for this market organising has shifted from the idea of the free market to that of the pure market. This involves a move from the idea that markets are completely self-organising to one in which markets will be self-organising. In the meantime, governments must inter-

vene and create the conditions for these pure markets and, in turn, organise. This ideal is highly important for the role of government in the organising of responsibility in the market: and thus CSR. Governments provide the conditions for companies to organise in order to allow a pure market, in which responsibility is a prime market concern. To iterate, CSR is equated here to market responsibility, as the responsibility organise to this end mainly serves to organise the markets.

Further, the prerogative of the state-government as market organiser is that it holds a legitimate position as a rule setter, whereas the business sector does not necessarily. Guided by rationality and efficiency, businesses are seen as the market actors that can achieve a pure market. Detachment or independence is also sought from the partial organising by providing the majority of funding for such an attempt to organise responsibility in the market, yet seemingly choosing to not act as a member. However, it appears very important that, although establishing its rules, businesses do not foot the bill for this organising. Business could be seen as a threat: a usurper of the throne of rule setting. Nevertheless, this organising takes place in the Market, for the Market. Yet, it appears to be fickle and requires certain preconditions. However, the Market is not seen as righteous, or responsible. The state-government in the Swedish context, however, has long been considered as having good or honourable intentions (Berggren & Trägårdh, 2015).

In terms of responsibility, the governmental agency places importance upon the source of funding – it would be undesirable if companies paid for this themselves, thereby, assuming responsibility for remedying/solving sustainability issues. The Market constitutes a means to organise responsibility, rather than a legitimate actor in itself. Thereby, its monetary contribution can be seen as having a particular social meaning: of lending a particular form of legitimacy to the organising. Money is often reduced to an abstract quantity, and yet it holds social, cultural, and symbolic meaning (Zelizer, 1997) The Three Crowns seal stamp provides legitimacy for the partial organising attempt, especially in terms of rallying support and interest from international suppliers. In the Swedish context: a country in which the state-government yields high levels of trust with a long tradition of dominating social structures and market organising, it is perhaps not surprising that it also takes a central role in organising responsibility in the markets.

As established in Chapter 9, partial organising was sought in the principal case study in the form of an initiative or project, rather than complete organisation (Andersson, in Andersson & Bergkvist, 2016, p. 25). This was to avoid regulations. Given exclusive membership, public funding was sought; it also provided a source of legitimacy. Governmental support, however, is an enabler, as well as a source of constraint. Once support has been lent for partial organising, certain rules can no longer be rejected at will.

### **The Different and Dispersed Roles of Government in Organising Responsibility in the Markets**

As argued, government was a member of the public-private partnership. Yet, this partial organising had multiple sites, and possible overlapping categories of memberships. Government was not considered a member of the partial organising, however; its importance grew over time; yet, it kept its distance. The government involvement in this partial organising is a facet of organising markets. The Swedish government adheres to a pure market view of markets (Andersson et al., 2017) in which competition is upheld. This partial organising of responsibility is seen as an instance of market organising, and such market-based organising is to be given the proper pre-conditions for “self-organising”. Symbolically, the governmental representatives seldom participated in member discussions at the meetings; rather, they observed or left the premises in order to promote open unstifled discussions – thereby, letting the Market self-organise.

The state-government has dispersed roles in the organising of markets, and of organising responsibility. One governmental leg may participate in membership, whilst another monitors through reporting or funding monitoring NGOs, and so on. Multiple governmental agencies participate and contribute to various market organising efforts (Andersson et al., 2017). The Swedish Consumer Agency, Competition Authority or Agency for Marine and Water Management can all be seen as potentially relevant governmental agencies that could have contributed with different insights and legitimacy to the organising of responsibility for water use in this case.

The particular mission of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency is to contribute to the development of nations, promote equality, and fight poverty (Swedish Government, 2017). Development co-

operation policies are symbolic for government in this context, and may also play a part in promoting corporate interests in the global markets. The importance or symbolism of development cooperation may be different in other national contexts with other traditions; the strong internationalist and corporatist tradition in Sweden is often seen as a contributing factor.

As noted, the state-government may hold dispersed roles in the same partial organising and, thus, make different contributions. This may also infer methodological difficulties in establishing the boundaries of membership. Traditionally, complete organisations find a sharp distinction between themselves and their organisational environment. Therein, governmental agencies are most definitely considered outside the boundaries of (the) organisation. In partial organising, this is less clear: partial organising of responsibility in the markets involves not only different actors or categories of members; it also includes different resources and contributions. Thereby, it is difficult to ascertain who are the respective members and non-members. Nevertheless, this affirms that the role of government in organising responsibility in markets may, simultaneously, take dispersed and different roles. Government need not be a member in order to contribute to this organising; rather, it may support membership in various forms - especially those that are business-driven.

## 10.4 Framings, Translations, and Organising in “Private” Governance

This study of partial organising has allowed tracing the longitudinal steps of CSR framing(s) and translations, linking the Swedish fashion and textile market to popular global ideas of how to organise CSR: i.e. of “private” governance. The studied initiative has, indeed, translated international trends of governance, first taking inspiration from BDIs and then, increasingly from MSIs. In studies of the translation of popular (management) ideas, it is argued that concepts are transformed by selective adaptations. Predominantly, the quest for legitimacy is the main motivation in such translations (Czarniawska & Sevón, 1996; Røvik, 2000). This shows that the translation of in-



ternational trends of governance to the Swedish context has led to selective adaptation in order to ensure the sought legitimacy.

#### 10.4.1 Organising Responsibility or “Private” Governance Initiatives

MSIs and BDIs are both examples of partial organising efforts to organise responsibility. Their main purpose is to establish, implement and, sometimes also enforce rules that contribute to more responsible and sustainable practices within and across industries. Some of these partial organising efforts serve to establish rules, often standards; others also implement them. Not all do both. Additionally, relatively few initiatives enforce these rules extensively; monitoring as an organisational element is relatively poorly used. Moreover, it is difficult and can be resource intensive to use the organisational element of monitoring.

Thus, there are few possibilities of monitoring and sanctioning non-compliant buyer companies and enforcing more sustainable and responsible practices. MSIs are de facto a soft form of law, which derives its strength from societal expectations and adherence thereof (Cashore, 2002) and, ultimately, on the basis of legitimacy. Thus, rules are frequently relevant to this type of organising (Rasche et al., 2013); internal rules govern the initiative as well as define membership criteria. Typically, there are few rules on how to behave within an initiative.

MSIs comprise members from public and private sectors, whereas members in BDIs are business-only. Thereby, membership in respective type of initiative is organised by different categories. Membership in meta-organisations is based upon organisational members; they constitute complete organisations, yet, make use of partial organising. Using all elements can frequently be difficult due to the peculiarity of highly autonomous organisational members. Furthermore, decisions in meta-organisations are often consensus based. The continued autonomy of members is juxtaposed to the possibility of organising collective action: i.e. of setting a decided responsibility order in which members’ framing of responsibility allow such action. “Private” governance initiatives are similar, in terms of organisational membership. Accordingly, these too make decisions primarily based upon democratic consensus. Ample difficulty remains in organising responsibility through “private” governance initiatives.

### 10.4.2 Framings of BDI and MSI

MSIs are framed as democratic collaborative initiatives, which contribute to the exchange of worldviews: where BDIs frame themselves as time and cost-efficient alliances, thus, creating shared value between society and business, thereby, enhancing the “Market”. They are most attractive for governmental support, seeking to organise and influence markets from afar. BDIs focus upon addressing market concerns through the implementation of efforts that yield a business case. They can be seen as contributing to addressing market matters of concern.

The business sector is very attractive for the government to engage in a partnership. Business is seen as being driven by market logics: efficiency, rationality, and pragmatism. This bodes well for achieving market objectives. When organising in a complex setting, however, a balance needs to be struck between many complex issues and demands. If efforts yield little to no tangible outcomes, then it is also possible to attribute such inertia to the complexity at hand.

The framing of STWI shifted over time from a business-driven to a more multi-stakeholder arrangement. The important role of government is increasingly acknowledged as the basis for action. As noted, particular constraints arise when government is included, although not in membership. Business entered this quest of organising responsibility as a call for business to set a new decided responsibility order in the Swedish fashion and textile market. Yet, it could not do it alone. The strategic and results-oriented attitude of business in this partial organising effort was sought and established by government actors in order to further organise the “Market” and ultimately improve the “Swedish brand”.

## 10.5 Contributions and Implications for Research

The primary goal of this research was its theoretical contribution to the study of organising, particular to the dynamics of the elements involved in partial organising of CSR.

This thesis concerns itself with why and how responsibility is framed and organised in the markets. To this end, it provides insight into how a decided

responsibility order is attempted. There is an assumption in the CSR literature that implementation of rules or principles are merely the result of stakeholder pressures (Aguilera et al., 2007; Husted & Allen, 2006). This thesis challenges the prevailing view that so-called self-regulation or “private” governance is mainly motivated by the risks posed by social movements and governmental legislation, i.e. legitimacy-seeking and avoiding reputational risk. Thereby, they seek to appease social movements and pre-empt governmental legislation. Instead, the importance of the framing of CSR as the business case is highlighted, as a ground for businesses, large and small, to organise a decided responsibility order, motivate managers to engage, as well as convene governmental involvement.

### **Dynamics of Membership**

This thesis opens up for new questions regarding organising and the use of organisational elements. Especially membership has been seen as central when it comes to the organising in meta-organisations (Cropper & Le Bor, 2018). A membership decision is not neutral, but rather is associated to a particular decision. It is difficult to imagine organisation without membership, yet, organising without membership is of course possible. However, in order to rally support, membership is important. Over time, once membership has been established, rules often become formalised and stricter. Furthermore, when membership is restricted to a particular category, rules and requirements may be implicit. What rules and requirements are embedded in membership may also shift over time.

The possible embedding of rules in membership can be argued to be reminiscent of the unorganised consulting world (Alexius, 2007); recruitment is made strictly from a particular setting – there business schools, in this study, the business sector. However, following relatively exclusive membership, few formal rules are associated thereto; few rules are sought for varying reasons. Therefore, it may be difficult to initially fathom that certain requirements may be embedded in membership; creating boundaries of membership in itself is associated to the creation of rules.

In relation to standards, Rasche and Seidl (*Forthcoming*) corroborate this possible dynamic process of membership and tightening of rules. Yet, they also nuance this by emphasising that there may be a dispersion of organisa-

tional elements by different market actors; some organisations may set the rules, whereas others monitor and/or sanction their use. Indeed, in the observed cases, there is dispersion of the organising of rules; some set the rules, whilst others monitor their use. However, in both analysed cases, when they have attempted to make use of more organisational elements, i.e. to set and monitor the rules itself, and thereby conflate these roles, they have failed to realise this goal. In both cases, but for different reasons, internal resistance from members halted the dynamics of elements to a more complete organising.

### **Private Governance**

This thesis also makes a contribution to, what is known as, private governance literature. Wahl and Bull (2014) find there is little research on the evolution of private governance initiatives; this thesis answers this call by precisely doing this: an in-depth analysis of the trajectory of the organising of a private governance initiative. Particularly, the implication that within private governance, public actors may also have an important role to play during its trajectory.

The strategic necessity of, as well as the difficulties involved in, addressing CSR issues at a collective level, rather than at the traditional individual firm level are raised. So-called private governance initiatives carry a wide breadth of purposes, as well as ranges, and make use of varying levels of monitoring and sanctioning. These should be evaluated in terms of possibilities as well as drawbacks. As illustrated by the empirical evidence, companies with different levels of sustainability proficiency may benefit unevenly from membership in CSR initiatives. Certain companies may need to develop improved stakeholder relationships and thereby legitimacy, whereas others may be more benefitted by increased technical know-how. On an individual level, membership may also allow an increased professional network and increased well-being. A well-thought out partnership portfolio allows access to diversified knowledge, and pooled resources. Especially for SMEs with limited resources, it is important to evaluate the motivations for joining and maintaining membership. Especially the composition of membership may be indicative of the possibilities of influencing an industry agenda, and thereby

power over how CSR issues are defined and implemented. Indeed, it is indicative of the possibilities of being a rule-setter, rather than a rule-taker.

### **Practitioner**

Furthermore, I contribute to practitioner learning, by delving into the remote possibilities of de facto controlling the global supply chain. The use of rules has now become commonplace, e.g. CoCs and other standards in order to take responsibility in the markets, whilst simultaneously keeping closer tabs on the global supply chain. Nevertheless, very little improvement in terms of labour rights has hitherto been accomplished despite decades of organising. This thesis establishes the partial nature of such arrangements for controlling and improving sustainability issues in the global supply chain by assessing the potential benefits and drawbacks for such organising. Specifically, drawing clear lines around membership may allow for easier consensus; yet it may also lead to a disregard for such issues that are not easy to organise.

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# Appendix 1A – Tables

Table 1. Private Regulation Initiatives - Examples by Form and Sector from Lernborg & Luistro-Jonsson (working paper)

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Business-driven Initiatives (BDIs)</b>	<b>Multi-stakeholder Initiatives (MSIs)</b>	<b>Civil Society Initiatives (CSIs)</b>
<b>Agriculture</b>	Global G.A.P. Sustainable Agriculture Initiative Field to Market Tea 2030 CottonConnect	Roundtable on Sustainable Biomaterials Bonsucro (former Better Sugarcane Initiative) Roundtable on Responsible Soy Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil International Cocoa Initiative Swedish Initiative for Sustainable Palm Oil Cotton Campaign	Sustainable Agriculture Network Rainforest Alliance
<b>Apparel</b>	Sustainable Apparel Coalition (SAC) Leather Working Group (LWG) The Sustainability Consortium Clothing Footwear, and Textiles Sector Working Group (TSC-CFT) Fair Factories Clearinghouse (FFC) Business Environmental Performance Initiative (BEPI) Supplier Ethical Data Exchange (SEDEX) World Responsible Apparel Production (WRAP)	Fair Wear Foundation (FWF) Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) Social Accountability International (SAI) Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) Fair Labor Association (FLA) Rugmark International (former Good weave) Social & Labour Convergence Project (SLCP) Fair Wage Network (FWN)	Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC) Workers Rights Consortium Good Weave International Fur-Free Alliance
<b>Fishery</b>	Global Aquaculture Alliance International Fishmeal and Fish Oil Organization	Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC)	Friends of the Sea



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<b>Forestry</b>	Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Sustainable Forestry Initiative	Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)	
<b>Mining</b>	International Council on Mining and Metals Responsible Jewellery Council Responsible Minerals Initiative (former Conflict-Free Smelters Initiative)	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance Kimberly Process Certification Scheme	
<b>Tourism</b>	Tour Operators Initiative Sustainable Slopes Program	Global Sustainable Tourism Council	
<b>Energy</b>	Global Sustainability Electricity Partnership Equitable Origin	Hydropower Sustainability Assessment Protocol Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels	
<b>Electronics</b>	Responsible Business Alliance (RBA) (former Electronics Industry Citizenship Coalition, EICC) Responsible Minerals Alliance (former Conflict-Free Sourcing Initiative, CFSI)	Kimberly Process Certification Scheme Responsible Labor Initiative (under the umbrella of RBA)	
<b>Cross-industry</b>	Amfori BSCI (former BSCI) SEDEX Responsible Business Alliance (RBA) Global Social Compliance Programme (GSCP)		
<b>Jewelry</b>	Responsible Jewellery Council		
<b>Manufacturing</b>	European Automotive Working Group Tire Industry		
<b>Finance</b>	Wolfsberg Principles	Equator Principles Association (EPA) Partnering Against Corruption Initiative (PACI)	

Table 2. Sources of data used in the study

Source	Extent
Interviews	41 interviews spanning 41 hours (average of one hour per interview, ranging from 30 minutes to 2 hours)
Reports (Official and NGO)	12 reports spanning 838 pages
Internal documentation (Reports and briefs)	4 reports +1 brief spanning 188 pages (85+17+18+3+65)
Sustainability reports	20 companies, 95 reports, 4563 reports
Participant observations	13 hours of participant observation (30 pages of field notes)
Seminars	Vattenresan (25/4/2016) (2 hours) Make In India Textile 2047 (17/8/2017) (1 hour) Fashion Talks (26/8/2016) (1 hour) Dell Sustainability Talks (27/4/2016) (4 hours) SWESIF seminar (5/10/2017) (1,5 hour) Textile event Regeringskansliet (23/10/2015) (2 hours) Follow-up Action plan Business and Human Rights (9/3/2018) (1,5 hour) SIWI seminar Water (12/3/2015) (2 hours) SIWI seminar Water (1/12/2015) (3 hours) Swedish Water House (23/10/2014) (2 hours) Swedish Water House (3/2/2015) 2 hours Swedish Water House (20/3/2015) 4 hours Book launch (2/12/2015) (1 hour) Inclusive Business Forum (23/10/2016) 4 hours 31 hours
Debate articles	115 debate articles from Bistandsdebatten.se
Book	120 pages

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Table 3. Industry Structure Based on Corporate Size (2012), Excluding H&M (Mouwitz & Svengren Holm, 2013)

	One person enterprises	Micro-enterprises	Small enterprises	Medium-sized enterprises	Large enterprises
<b>Company</b>					
Number	10638	5679	625	95	23
Share	62	33	4	1	0.1
<b>Employees</b>					
Number	0	14909	12192	9890	19 999
Share	0	28	23	18	32
<b>Employees</b>					
Number	1808	14909	12192	9890	19 999
Share	3	27	22	18	31
<b>Domestic revenues</b>					
MSEK	5209	30311	21773	13996	24877
Share	6	24	25	16	29
<b>Export</b>					
MSEK	642	2473	6844	5548	7476
Share	3	11	30	24	33
<b>Sum revenues</b>					
MSEK	5851	22784	28617	19544	32353
Share	5	21	26	18	30

Table 4. Total sales in fashion industry 2016, SEK billions (Teko, 2016)

	Sales			Share	
	Domestic	Exports	Total	Domestic	Exports
Entire market	98	207	305	32	68
Excluding H&M	91	32	124	74	26
Excluding larger chains	81	30	111	73	27

Table 5. Prevalence and Types of Sustainability Reporting Among STWI Members

<b>Start of Sustainability Reporting</b>	<b>2005-2010</b>	<b>2011-2012</b>	<b>2013 - 2014</b>	<b>2015-2017</b>
Individual	H&M (2005) Kappahl (2008) Lindex (2006) Nilson Group (2008) RNB (2007) IKEA	Björn Borg Filippa K (2012) Åhléns (2012) Gina Tricot (2012)	Haglöfs (2013) Fenix Outdoor (2013) MQ (2013)	Vagabond (2016) Ellos (2015) Hemtex (2015) Stadium (2016) Gekås Ullared (2017)
Integrated			Odd Molly (2013) Kappahl (2013)	
Social reporting with third-party MSI (FairWear Foundation or ETI/IEH)	Acne (2009)		Varner* Eurosko*	

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Table 6. Overview of “Current” Issues Addressed in Corporate Textile Sustainability Reports (2010-2016) and Responses

<b>Year</b>	<b>Controversy or current issue addressed</b>	<b>Resulting partnership or initiative</b>
2010	Floods in India & Pakistan  Haiti Earthquake	IKEA donations to UNICEF & Save the Children H&M donation to UNICEF  IKEA & Save the Children H&M & UNICEF
2011	Fukushima Earthquake Hunger Catastrophe in East Africa	H&M & Red Cross H&M & UNICEF
2012	Syria Refugee Crisis	H&M & UNICEF IKEA's Refugee Housing Project with Refugee United
2013	Rana Plaza Disaster	H&M, Gina Tricot: membership in Accord for Bangladesh IKEA: IWAY standards
2014	Living Wage	In response to labour union protests in Cambodia, H&M's membership in Fair Wage Network highlighted
2015	Sourcing from Myanmar  Nepal Earthquake	H&M's commitment to Fair Living Wage Roadmap with stakeholders and signing of memorandum of understanding with IndustriALL highlighted IKEA Foundation donation to UNICEF H&M & UNICEF
2016	Global Refugee Crisis	IKEA: formation of a new initiative – International Organization of Migration (IOM) Gina Tricot: working according to BSCI guidelines for Syrian refugees in Turkey

# Appendix 1B – Acronyms

ASC Aquaculture Stewardship Council  
BCI Better Cotton Initiative  
BEPI Business Environmental Performance Initiative  
BSCI Business Social Compliance Initiative (now Amfori BSCI)  
BDI Business Driven Initiative  
CCC Clean Clothes Campaign  
CSI Civil Society Initiative  
CSP Corporate Social Performance  
CSR Corporate Social Responsibility  
CoC Code of Conduct  
CSO Civil Society Organisation  
EPR Extended Producer Responsibility  
EICC Electronic Industry Citizenship Coalition (now RBA)  
EITI Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative  
EPA Equator Principles Association  
FLA Fair Labor Association  
FWF Fair Wear Foundation  
FWN Fair Wage Network  
ICS Initiative Clause Sociale  
IDI Industry Driven Initiative  
ILO International Labour Organisation  
ISO International Standard Organisation  
IGO Inter-Governmental Organisation  
ETAG Ethical Trading Action Group  
ETI Ethical Trading Initiative  
FSC Forestry Stewardship Council  
FFC Fair Factories Clearinghouse  
GSC Global Supply Chain  
GSCP Global Social Compliance Programme  
GTZ Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Agency for Technical Cooperation)  
ICEM International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions  
IGO Inter Governmental Organisation  
IITA International Institute of Tropical Agriculture  
IMF International Metalworkers' Federation  
IndustriALL Global Union composed of IMD, ICEM and ITGLWF

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ITGLWF International Textiles Garment and Leather Workers' Federation  
IOM International Organisation of Migration  
IWAY IKEA Way on Purchasing Products, Materials and Services  
KPI Key Performance Indicator  
LWG Leather Working Group  
MNC Multi National Company  
MoU Memorandum of Understanding  
MSC Marine Stewardship Council  
MSI Multi Stakeholder Initiative  
NBS Network for Business Sustainability  
NGO Non-Governmental Organisation  
NPO Non-Profit Organisation  
NPM New Public Management  
OECD Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development  
PACI Partnering Against Corruption Initiative  
PaCT Partnership for Cleaner Textile  
PGU Partnerskap för Global Utveckling  
PPP Public Private Partnership  
PPDP Public Private Development Partnership  
RBA Responsible Business Alliance  
PRO Private Regulation Organisation  
RMG Ready Made Garment  
ROI Return on Investment  
RSPO Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil  
SAC Sustainable Apparel Coalition  
SAI Social Accountability International  
SC Supply Chain  
SCCC Swedish Clean Clothes Campaign  
SEDEX Supplier Ethical Data Exchange  
SLCP Social & Labour Convergence Project  
SME Small and Medium-sized Enterprise  
SSEI Swedish Shoe Environmental Initiative  
SIWI Stockholm International Water Institute  
STWI Sweden Textile Water Initiative  
SWaR Sustainable Water Resources  
SCCC Swedish Clean Clothes Campaign  
TSC-CFT Footwear, and Textiles Sector Working Group  
UN United Nations  
UNGC United Nations Global Compact  
UNICEF United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund  
USAID U.S. Agency for International Development

ZDHC Zero Discharge of Hazardous Chemicals  
WCF Workers Compensation Fund  
WWF World Wildlife Foundation  
WRAP World Responsible Apparel Production  
WRC Worker Rights Consortium  
WTO World Trade Organization