Making the General Particular: Practising Corporate Social Responsibility in a UK Higher Education Institution

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Abstract

This research deals with the ways Corporate Social Responsibility is interpreted in a UK Higher Education Institution. It evolved from my initial curiosity about Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), especially the way it is taken up in daily practices. Drawing on the pragmatic tradition of John Dewey (1859-1952), Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) and George Herbert Mead (1863-1931), which gives primacy to experience, I am paying attention to my daily interactions with others. I explore what *is*, rather what *should be*. I also draw on analogies from complexity sciences, as well as on insights from sociology, psychology, anthropology and philosophy, to reflect on how the everyday practice of CSR is evolving in the interactions of interdependent players.

Reflecting on the assumptions that underpin my thinking about organisations and about research, and tracing my evolving beliefs and perceptions, I have become aware of my participation in the processes that sustain and at the same time disrupt the 'community engagement' narrative of my organisation. Iterating my reflective narratives reveals how change in practice and in ideas evolves.

This research was prompted by my introduction to CSR early in my academic career. The idea of organisations being responsible to their stakeholders fitted with my personal values. The more I read about the topic, the more uncomfortable I became – CSR had usually been presented in vague, general and idealised terms. So, when faced with setting up a Unit that would address the CSR of my organisation, I was left with no manual for getting on with my work. Reflecting on the feeling of helplessness, revealed my assumption that such guidance should exist, and that CSR practitioners must know how to practice the generalised idea of CSR. Exposing this and other emotions, I demonstrate how assumptions and beliefs arise in society and in the individual simultaneously.

This research contributes to knowledge in this field by establishing CSR not just as an abstract idea, but as a practice within an organisation. Many authors have called for exploring CSR at the individual level, yet this call seems to remain unanswered. My research addresses this gap in literature and explores CSR from my perspective as a practitioner, thus contributing to the nascent body of literature that focuses on individual and local practice. Exploring interdependence and the emergence of CSR meant understanding that my actions have consequences, and at the same time, neither I nor any one individually can control those

consequences. The outcomes of our working together are at times intended and at times unintended. But they are inevitably unpredictable, because they arise in complex webs of interactions. Thinking reflexively about practising CSR has had a significant impact on my practice. I believe that my reflections will resonate with other practitioners, thus contributing to their practice.

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Abbreviations

AMBA	Association of MBAs (Master of Business Administration programs)
CAS	Complex Adaptive Systems
CFP	Corporate Financial Performance
CMS	Critical Management Studies
CRP	Complex Responsive Processes
CSP	Corporate Social Performance
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
HBS	Hertfordshire Business School
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
GRI	Global Reporting Initiative
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
LTI	Learning & Teaching Institute
PG	Post Graduate
PRME	Principles for Responsible Management Education
SBU	Strategic Business Unit
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEU	Social Enterprise Unit
SR	Social Responsibility
SRI	Socially Responsible Investment
UG	Undergraduate
UH	University of Hertfordshire
VP	Vice President

Chronology of the events introduced in this dissertation

1993 *Marketing executive in the utilities company*

2002 *Introduced to complexity sciences during MBA*

Visiting lecturer at UH **2003**

2004 *Became aware of CSR; developed my first CSR module*

Registered for PhD **2008**

2009 *Director of the SEU; introduced to PRME*

First progression **2010**
Ukrainian research **2011** *HBS signed for PRME*
Second progression **2012**

PRME UK Chapter conference **2015** *PRME conference NY*

Chapter 1 - Introduction

I was first introduced to the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) while redeveloping a corporate governance module at Hertfordshire Business School (HBS). The ethics area of that module had the greatest appeal for me. At the time I started hearing about 'Corporate Social Responsibility', which I understood to be linked to ethics, it sounded more suitable for a Business School module than 'just' ethics. The lack of textbooks in CSR led me to extensive reading on the subject. I became aware of the debates on the topic and of the works that were considered seminal in this area. My attention was particularly drawn to two recurring themes: organizations being discussed as capable of human emotions and functions, e.g. caring and responsibility; and CSR understood as a business function, which led to a search for a 'business case' for CSR. At the time, although intuitively I disagreed with those views, I could not justify my objections, nor propose an alternative understanding of CSR. The desire to address this dissonance was the main impetus for deciding to explore the topic of CSR further.

The more I read about and discussed the topic with students, the more difficult it became to make sense of CSR. So many articles started with introducing CSR as elusive and poorly defined (Sarkar and Searcy, 2016, Sheehy, 2015, Schwartz and Saiia, 2012, Lee, 2008, Quazi and O'Brien, 2000, Aupperle et al., 1985). Yet very few of them added clarity to the concept (cf Crotty, 2016), and I found no papers discussing specific practitioners' understanding of CSR. To explore what practitioners understand by the term, and how they manifest that understanding in practice, I began attending events arranged by Business in the Community, The Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House), British Academy of Management, and other initiatives. During those seminars and workshops I kept asking myself 'Why do the organisers need to convince the participants of the importance of CSR? Why are they talking in general terms and do not specify what they mean by CSR? Why are there no discussions about CSR practice by practitioners?' Going back to the literature, it became evident that those questions equally apply to the academic discourse on the topic. The answer to the first question was straightforward – the best way to convince managers to pay attention to an area that is not their core business is to point to that area's profitability. The second and the third questions remain unanswered. The way CSR is addressed in the academic literature is still poorly defined (see Grosser, 2016, Sheehy, 2015, Vidal et al., 2015). And the specific experiences of CSR practitioners still do not feature in the mainstream CSR literature. Based

on these lacunas in the CSR literature, my initial interest in exploring CSR was focused on two aspects:

- Providing an understanding of what it means to practise CSR;
- Providing a definition of CSR that is more congruent with practitioners' experience.

At the beginning of my PhD studies I chose to focus on CSR in the construction industry. Within a year this line of inquiry proved to be unsuccessful. Although I gained access to the practitioners, I felt I could not gain sufficient insight into their daily practice of CSR in interviews. I began understanding that in order to explore experience I had to have experience of practising CSR.

At the same time a new role was created in HBS – Director of the Social Enterprise Unit. I wrote my expression of interest in one go. I felt the role was perfect for me, it addressed my interest in community engagement, and seemed to offer insight into CSR practice in an academic institution. There were other reasons for my interest in the role. I wanted to give up the previous administrative role that seemed like a dead end in terms of promotion, and I wanted to find a new role that had potential for advancement. The purpose of exposing those very instrumental and not-so-idealistic reasons for applying for the role, is to provide a glimpse into the method of writing this dissertation.

It is also important to note that this role is one of many other academic responsibilities I have in HBS. In workload terms only 40% of my time is allocated to this role. In this dissertation I mainly pay attention to my interactions as Director of the SEU, they are not separate from other interactions and inform and are being informed by other aspects of my working with others at UH.

In order to address my research question: 'How is CSR understood and practised in the UK HEI from a practitioner's perspective?', I am going to explore my CSR practice through iterative reflexive narratives. In reflecting on my narratives, I am paying attention to my participation in the processes of working with others. By paying attention to my intentions, behaviours, responses, thoughts, emotions and many other aspects of experiencing those interactions, I am making sense of those experiences. In relaying those experiences to others in my PhD group, in research seminars and conferences, I gain insights into aspects of my interactions that others can relate to. By turning to literature and interacting with the ideas of the writers, I make sense of my experiences and locate them in the wider body of thought. This critical approach to

making sense of CSR is informed by the pragmatist tradition, especially American Pragmatism, which emphasises primacy of experience:

> as human beings we can never escape our embeddedness with the world of experiencing into which we are thrown as actors. Experiencing itself must here be understood as an active process of exploration within an embodied stream of experience in which the more cognitive dimensions are just one part (Martela, 2015: 539).

This means that we cannot escape our participation in the world which we intend to research, and as researchers we are actors in that world, and thinking is just one form of action (Baert, 2003). Barad (2007), following the thinking of Nobel Prize winning Danish physicist Niels Bohr, claims that 'it is human practices which make the world intelligible to us' (in Mowles, 2015b: 155). The world is simultaneously formed and being formed by our studying of the world. Researching from the pragmatist perspective means engaging in abductive reasoning. Abduction refers to searching for the best hypothesis to describe the phenomenon under investigation (Peirce, 2003 [1998]). Through abductive reasoning we aim to demonstrate how 'something can be' rather than proving that 'something must be in a certain way' (Meyer and Lunnay, 2013). Abductive reasoning means the continuous review of findings, own assumptions, secondary data and existing theories to reach the most satisfactory explanation, according to one's standards of enquiry, and practical insights are gained in iterative processes (Martela, 2015). In Chapter 3 I will explain in detail the methods I chose to research my experience.

I mentioned above that the concept of CSR was new to me; but the ideas that underpinned it were familiar. However, the ideas of complexity and complex responsive processes of relating exposed me to a totally unfamiliar, yet exciting way of thinking; ideas of interdependence, emergence and unpredictability were liberating. They helped to clarify the unexpected events that I felt responsible for, yet was unable to control. Some events seemed minor initially, but turned out to be significant; and sometimes seemingly significant incidents, causing me to lose sleep, were resolved quickly. For example, while working in the advertising industry, I developed a sense of responsibility for creating elaborate scenarios for every possible eventuality, and when the unpredicted happened, I would become frustrated with myself for my lack of foresight. Drawing on complexity insights I began understanding that no one can think

of every possible eventuality. I could not be solely responsible for the outcomes, as any outcome depended on interactions with many others.

I also began understanding that no one can stand outside of the processes of interaction (Stacey and Mowles, 2016, Mowles, 2015b, Larsen and Bogers, 2014, Warwick and Board, 2013, Griffin and Stacey, 2005). Exploring CSR in the construction industry, as I initially intended, could provide me with an overview of the industry. The interviews could give me some insights into the work of CSR practitioners in that industry. But speaking with practitioners, I was bringing my own ideas into the conversations; by phrasing the questions, I was shaping the answers; each interview had an impact on me and my understanding of CSR practice, so I was not the same person asking questions in the following interview. Researching the construction industry would have been interesting, but it could not be reconciled with my developing understanding of research as an emergent exploration of experience (Stacey and Griffin, 2005). On this understanding, our experience and its meaning arise in interaction with others. The practice of CSR in the construction industry is a theme, a pattern that arises in many interactions of many practitioners with many others. Upon developing this understanding of industries, concepts, and other social institutions as patterns of interactions, or themes of conversations, my interest in the construction industry diminished. I wanted to explore the experience of practising CSR from a practitioner's perspective and being offered the role of Director of the Social Enterprise Unit provided me with an opportunity to do so.

Paying attention to my own experience of CSR, interpretation of the concept, and practising CSR in a specific context, requires paying attention to my own assumptions, values and ideology. Yet, some CSR writers, based in a positivist camp, prefer to have an objective discussion of CSR. Aupperle et al. (1985), for example, suggest that being 'value laden and susceptible to particular ideological and emotional interpretations' is a predicament of CSR, which should be overcome by designing impartial 'instruments to measure the degree of orientation to social responsibility' (p.456). This equating of emotional, ideologically based interpretations with the inability to eliminate researcher's bias (Linstead, 1994) and even lack of academic rigour is not unusual (Yanow, 2014). However, a growing number of writers (e.g. Stokes et al., 2016, Lee and Cassell, 2013, Haynes, 2012, Cunliffe, 2010, Bryman, 2008) recognise that interpretive methodologies employed by CSR researchers require us to make judgement calls, which are inevitably value laden. The idea of

> 'Judgement calls'… refers to all of those decisions (some big, some small, but all necessary and consequential) that must be made without the benefit of a fixed 'objective' rule that one can apply, with precision, like a template or a pair of clippers… We suggest… that a set of rules to replace judgement calls not only would be difficult to fashion, but also would be dysfunctional if we had them. (McGrath, 1982 in Schwartz-Shea, 2014: 142)

Bourdieu (1990: 190) remarked that 'the body is in the social world, but the social world is also in the body'. I understand this observation to mean that all social interactions are value laden, susceptible to particular ideological and emotional interpretations. Therefore, exploring values, emotions and ideologies is central to researching organisations and practices.

As a critical researcher, I understand CSR in social terms, not as an object that exists independently of human interaction. This dissertation, informed by complex responsive processes, draws on a radically social understanding of life in organisations. On this understanding, a researcher must tease out and declare her own interests, acknowledge her biases (Mowles, 2007). To do so, I take my experience of practising CSR seriously, paying attention to what arises for me and others as we work together.

In exploring my working with others in making sense of my practice, I pay attention to the interplay of intentions for the future and ever-changing interpretations of the past, as we come together to interpret what CSR means. This means paying attention to everyday, often mundane, practice, as I recognise that global patterns (of which CSR is just one example) arise in local interactions (Stacey and Mowles, 2016, Stokes and Harris, 2012).

CSR at the University of Hertfordshire

Before I go on to explore my experience of practising CSR, it is important to explain why the concept of CSR is applicable to universities, and why I understand my work as part of the University of Hertfordshire's CSR agenda.

Although the C in CSR stands for 'Corporate', it is appropriate to apply this term when discussing my work at the university. The word 'university' derives from Latin *universitas*, meaning 'many bodies united into one'. It has a similar meaning to the Latin *corporate*, meaning 'combined in one body'. As such, the term 'corporation' covers not just business corporations, but also charities, churches, clubs, foundations, trade associations, trade unions, political parties, municipalities, states, international organisations, and of course universities (Gindis, 2016). All these are corporations in the sense that they share the feature of being legally recognised actors, granted separate legal personality, i.e. they can hold property, enter contractual relations, sue and be sued, etc., in their own right, as distinct from any or all of their members. It is the unified legal identity and capacity for legally binding actions that can survive changes in membership that makes them proper corporate bodies. Corporate bodies with these features go back at least to Roman times (Davis, 1897, Micklethwait and Wooldridge, 2003, Gindis, 2009).

Following Crane et al. (2014) I will not attempt to add a new definition to the 'complex jungle of CSR definitions' (p.6), but will focus on the core characteristics of CSR that are present in some form in the contemporary debate. Those include: voluntary engagement, which is beyond philanthropy, managing externalities, multiple stakeholder orientation, social and economic alignment, practices and values (ibid). Many departments in the UH address one or more of those areas. The Social Enterprise Unit was set up to 'engage with local charities', and under my leadership its remit has expanded to engaging with the Third Sector[1]. This understanding of the SEU's purpose echoes several of the accepted CSR characteristics.

The aim of this dissertation is to explore the practice of CSR in a UK HEI. This dissertation traces my developing understanding of CSR, from the initial search for a clear and precise definition to the conviction that such a search is futile. I currently understand CSR as a generalised umbrella term for a wide range of community engagement activities that must be

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[1] The Third Sector is an umbrella term for non-government and non-profit making organisations. These include charities, mutuals, cooperatives, and social enterprises. The common feature of all Third Sector organisation is their social purpose ANON. 2016. *What is the Third Sector and What Does It Do?* [Online]. Northern Bridge. [Accessed December 5, 2016].

operationalised in a specific context. This understanding of the concept requires paying attention to particular activities in a particular context. This cannot be achieved by modelling specific behaviours on abstract formulae, only by reflecting on the actions of practitioners. I've come to recognise that in choosing a course of action, both in conducting research and in practising CSR, I've come to rely on insights drawn from experience, on practical wisdom (Flinn and Mowles, 2014). Many authors have acknowledged the need for a practitioner's perspective of CSR, yet there remains a distinct deficiency in practitioners addressing their experience in the academic literature (Aguinis and Glavas, 2012). In this work I aim to make sense of my experience of activities that I understand as fitting into the broad church of CSR. In making sense of my experiences, I do not follow a chronological order, but attempt to order my thinking, to trace the development of my thought.

The structure of this dissertation is as follows.

Dissertation structure

In Chapter 2 I explain the theoretical underpinnings of this research. The chapter begins with a narrative reflecting on my involvement in a pattern of behaviour that I perceive as irresponsible. In exploring my narrative, I turn to insights from complexity, as well as from sociology, psychology and philosophy. Those insights help me make sense of my behaviour in relation to others, of emergence of global patterns of behaviour, of power relations, of external and self-restraints and the emergence of ethics.

In Chapter 3 I discuss the implication of those insights for researching CSR practice. I trace the development of my thinking about researching. I begin by reflecting on the first academic research project, and discuss my evolving understanding of research. Reflecting on the paper I wrote following a research project conducted in Ukraine, helps me focus my ideas regarding researching and methodology.

In Chapter 4 I begin thinking about what CSR means to me and what can and cannot be considered CSR, and reflect on several incidents that I initially dismissed as non-CSR. Reflecting on those incidents I challenge the underpinning assumption of CSR as being the responsibility of an organisation, as it is addressed in the mainstream literature.

In Chapter 5 I continue exploring the difficulties I have had in accepting the significance of my work as a contribution to CSR. Critically reviewing CSR literature I reflect on the idealisation of this concept and propose an alternative way of understanding CSR.

In Chapter 6 I explore my practice of implementing Principles of Responsible Management Education (UN PRME) in HBS and reflect on my contribution to sustaining the heroic narrative of CSR. I focus on the processes of revealing and concealing when discussing our practising CSR.

In Chapter 7 I reflect on my experience of starting a new CSR initiative – the Social Enterprise Unit, and critically review the literature pertaining to planning and entrepreneurship. In exploring those experiences I focus on my changing understanding of CSR.

Measuring CSR and its impact has been a major strand of CSR research. I have been very critical of this, as in my opinion this reduced complex human interactions to a set of abstract measurements, thereby omitting the human aspect of CSR practice. Yet, I contributed to the creation of such measurements when asked to report on the SEU. I reflect on my participation in the processes of financialising the work of the SEU in Chapter 8.

In Chapter 9 I focus on a theme that emerges throughout the dissertation – struggle. I reflect on my struggles with understanding and practising CSR. In focusing on the theme of struggle I address a topic that is commonly neglected in CSR literature.

I conclude this dissertation by summarising my emerging understanding of CSR as a researcher practitioner. In this concluding chapter I highlight the contributions of this research to knowledge and practice.

Chapter 2 - My understanding of complex responsive processes of relating and how I think about it in relation to my practice

I am human, and nothing of that which is human is alien to me. (Terence, 2nd century BCE)

Introduction

I start this chapter with a phrase attributed to Terence to remind the reader and myself that organisations in which we participate cannot be understood without acknowledging that they are human organisations. Yet, as March and Olsen (1984: 747) put it, 'what we observe in the world is inconsistent with the way in which contemporary theories ask us to talk'. Many of today's contemporary organisational theories are framed in such a way that the human factor is largely absent. To be more precise, individual differences are ignored, and all participants are understood as parts in supra-structures that are organisations, which are perceived as independent beings, existing outside and independent of human interactions (see Stacey and Mowles, 2016 for detailed discussion). Moreover, organisations are reified – considered as real sovereign things - and even attributed human behaviours and feelings (see Motamedi, 2008 for a poignant critique). Focusing on CSR literature we find organisations discussed as being capable of intending (e.g. Green et al., 2016, Porter, 2008), aiming (e.g. Wagner, 2010), feeling (e.g. Ingenhoff and Koelling, 2012) and thinking (Chauhan, 2012).

Understanding organisations in terms of complex responsive processes of relating provides an alternative to mainstream organisational perspectives. In this chapter I explain my understanding of complex responsive processes of relating, and how studying this perspective provides insights into my practice of CSR. I begin this chapter with a narrative that demonstrates how I became dissatisfied with insights from the traditional organisational theories, and how my thinking about working in organisations started changing upon being introduced to complexity.

Emergence of responsibility and lack of responsibility in working together in organisations

Upon graduating with a Bachelor's degree in 1992 I embarked on a career in advertising and marketing, and within a few years became marketing manager for a utilities provider. Until then I had not been involved in 'strategic' marketing decisions, and getting my first 'proper' management job, I felt I could finally put my degree to good use. My first task was to review their current marketing mix and to make recommendations regarding our positioning in the market. I was brushing up on marketing theory in the evenings and conducting marketing research during the day. When I decided I had collected enough data, I prepared a report, which included Ansoff (1957) and BCG (Henderson 1970, 1973) matrices, SWOT and PEST analyses, careful analysis of all 4 Ps[2], and a recommendation based on Porter's (1980) generic strategies. One of the conclusions reached from the analyses was that we should expand our commercial activities in the north of the country.

The VP for marketing and sales praised my report, stating that it was very professional. And then he asked me to restate my recommendations, removing the northern expansion. When I asked why, he evaded the direct answer, saying something about my not knowing everything. I felt ashamed - how had I missed some crucial information that affected the recommendation? I was not told what that information was, what it was that I did not know, but I blamed myself for not having found out. So that recommendation was removed, leaving me in fear of being found out for not seeing the obvious (after all, the analyses pointed out the north was the way to go). But the report was accepted by the board. I was confused, but so happy with my report being well received – after all, this was what I was hoping for – and I did not give it much thought.

One day I joined a sales representative for a client visit. As we were driving north I asked him why he was not trying to generate more commercial business in that area. He replied that he was not allowed. When I pressed I was shocked to learn that the major utility companies divided the country between themselves. They agreed that private customers were 'fair game', but when a commercial customer of a certain size asked for a quote the price had to be agreed among the bidders. This was a textbook cartel. Allegedly it was agreed upon between the VPs, and the

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[2] Marketing analysis frameworks

President and other board members were unaware of this. I had my doubts about this so-called ignorance but did not say anything.

At the time, that revelation had one positive effect on me. It meant I had not missed anything in my report, it was solid, and 'market imperfection' was to blame. I left the company several months later. I would have liked to present this move as a matter of principle, but I was offered a more interesting job. Although considering what I had heard as wrong, I was too involved in my own survival and in establishing myself as a marketing professional, I continued with my job, without even considering blowing the whistle or resigning on ethical grounds. Being told the 'secret' also contributed to my feeling of belonging, of importance. I was accepted as part of an inner circle of those 'in the know'.

So what is the relevance of this short reflection to this dissertation? For years I'd worked with a firm belief that the theory I was taught in my degree was the best way to practice. In the course of my career, I utilised the techniques I learned at the university. The 2x2 diagrams and impressive charts I'd used in my presentations were well received.

Even when shaken, my belief was quickly restored, as I could explain away the glitch by 'imperfect markets' or 'imperfect information'. As I started my MBA I was taught more models and theories, and the case studies demonstrated those theories perfectly. I enjoyed analysing those case studies. Thinking about my experience of working in organisations, I could explain what happened in that and other organisations as lack of CSR, unethical organisational behaviour, or institutionalisation of irresponsible practices.

But reflecting on that experience more than two decades later, I cannot explain away the feelings of shame, of frustration with being complicit in blatant acts of irresponsibility, that I feel today. Reflecting on the narrative would be pointless if I continued ignoring the feeling of shame about my much younger self. I'm ashamed of not being ashamed at the time. These strong emotions are impetus to more careful reflection on that incident. My sense of self was dependent on the report being accepted by the managers. Their acceptance validated my value – I was recognised as a marketing professional. This recognition was so important to me that all else, including my awareness of irresponsible behaviour, was dismissed.

Taking the 'Managing in Complexity' module, I realised that not only do I not have to dismiss strong feelings evoked by experience, but paying more attention to my experience is important for making sense of working with others. I could no longer dismiss the 'glitches' I experienced

in my work. I did not need to disregard my intuition and bury my relationships under reams of tables and data. The module introduced me to a different way of understanding my experience in organisations. Introduced to complexity and specifically complex responsive processes of relating I felt liberated. My experience counted. Drawing on understandings from complexity sciences helped me make sense of the previously disregarded 'externalities' (Helbling, 2010), the 'shadow themes' (Larsen and Bogers, 2014) encountered in my work. I allowed myself to acknowledge that many documents I'd produced (the one discussed above, for example) were often a product of not just impartial deliberation and objective investigation, but also reflected behind-the-scenes interactions, expectations and hopes of all participants, their personal histories and ambitions. I realised that the exclusion of personal and 'subjective' from the traditional management theories, left me anxious and frustrated with the lack of control I'd experienced when I was supposed to be in charge.

I tried to incorporate my newly found fascination with what I called at the time 'CRP theory', into my MBA dissertation. At the time, I was eager to 'apply CRP theory' to the data I collected in the interviews. Soon it became obvious that my understanding of the perspective was very limited. The perspective could not be summarised in a table, nor could it be 'applied' in the way I applied traditional management theories. I needed to study complexity in-depth. Paying attention to one's own experience is central to the perspective of complex responsive processes of relating. Making sense of experience is a continuous iterative process. I became fascinated, I had to learn more, to explore more, to understand how complex responsive processes of relating inform my practice – lecturing, managing SEU, and researching.

In the next section I will introduce the ideas that I found so illuminating, ideas that helped me make sense of my experience.

Influences on complex responsive processes of relating

Reflecting on the topic of this dissertation, it is ironic that the first narrative I chose to introduce deals with lack of responsibility. I had not thought in those terms at the time the incident took place. But initial exposure to social complexity highlighted the importance of embracing paradox and dialectical thinking (Stacey et al., 2000, Larsen, 2005, Mowles, 2015c). This thinking is based on the philosophy of Heraclitus, emphasising continuous change and the principle of negativity (Kahn, 1979). On this thinking knowing and understanding arise in appreciation of the opposites. Our awareness of justice depends on the existence of injustice;

we can only appreciate health because we know disease, abundance because of scarcity – nothing in human existence is exclusively good or bad (Williams, 1989).

> the doctrine of opposites is, among other things, an attempt to attain a larger vision by recognizing the life-enhancing function of the negative term, and hence of comprehending the positive value of the antithesis itself (Kahn, 1979:189)

Exploring what I mean by responsibility involves understanding how I, in working with others, contributed to socially irresponsible behaviour.

The concepts and ideas embraced by the perspective of complex responsive processes (Stacey et al., 2000, Stacey, 2001, Stacey and Griffin, 2005, Mowles et al., 2008) are not arranged neatly in a linear form but are interrelated, interlinked and interdependent. Responsive, reflexive, iterative ways of thinking are central to this perspective. Expressing this in writing proves remarkably difficult, as the only way to write is linear, word after word, line after line, paragraph after paragraph. To address this challenge, I will first provide a brief summary of my understanding of the perspective and then explain how this understanding provides a different focus which helped me make sense of earlier experience.

Complex responsive processes proponents do not claim to create a wholly new organisational theory, but acknowledge integrating many influences on their thinking (Mowles, 2015a). In the following section I will highlight the main influences that I found resonant with my experiences.

Complexity sciences

A major influence on the development of the complex responsive processes perspective are the insights from complexity sciences. The title 'complexity sciences' is an umbrella term for various theories in natural sciences that have been developed since the second half of the last century (Waldrop, 1992). Complexity scientists from many disciplines suggest that nature can be understood as a system, emphasising the importance of the interaction of its parts, and not just the parts themselves. On this thinking, in order to understand the system one cannot concentrate on researching just one part of it. Natural systems - the weather, the human brain, or the bee hive, are just a few examples - are non-linear (there is no efficient, 'if X… then Y', causality between cause and effect), non-deterministic (the outcomes of interaction are not prescribed), and are not reductionist (simple systems may give rise to immense and unpredictable consequences) (Holland, 2014).

In a variety of branches of the natural sciences, scientists have developed computer models using non-linear equations (Campbell, 1987). Such equations have no solutions, but take the output of one iteration as the input of the next. Those non-linear models have been used to simulate behaviour in nature, such as flocking birds or evolution of landscape, even to model synapses in the brain (Holland, 1992, Gell-Mann, 1994). The most interesting models for the purposes of thinking about human behaviour are Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) (Mowles, 2015a). The study of CAS has been aided by the development of sophisticated computers, allowing simulations which are too complicated to be conducted by hand. CAS comprises large populations of bit-strings of code – 'agents' - which interact with each other according to a set of rules initially specified by a programmer (Stacey and Mowles, 2016). Yet there are limitations to understanding human organisations as complex adaptive systems (see Appendix 1). Complex responsive processes of relating is another perspective which explores insights from complexity sciences in relation to human interaction. In doing so, the researchers turn to complexity but also to social sciences – sociology, psychology, anthropology, philosophy, politics – to make sense of our working together. In their work researchers use complexity sciences as a source domain for analogy with complex systems (Stacey et al., 2000, Griffin and Stacey, 2005, Mowles et al., 2008, Warwick and Board, 2013, Norman et al., 2015) and use terminology utilised by other complexity scientists. I will briefly expound on my understanding of these terms, which will be used throughout this dissertation.

Complexity arises in multiple interactions of many interdependent parts (Waldrop, 1992). Interdependence means each agent's action is affected by and affecting the action of other agents. Each agent is enabled and constrained by other agents. Central to the notion of complexity is emergence. Scientists, using computer models with non-linear equations, have demonstrated that even a set of simple rules for homogenous agents produces emergent behaviour. When agents are diverse and some randomness is introduced into the system, complex unpredicted evolutionary patterns emerge. To reiterate, emergence does not mean creating something out of nothing. Emergence is a property of complex systems that arises in the interaction of multiple interdependent agents. Complex systems are self-organising. This means emergence of coherent patterns of behaviour without blueprint or direction. In a computer model, agents interact with a (relatively) limited number of other agents. The order – coherent structure - emerges in the local interaction of agents, rather than being pre-planned, commanded or managed by an external source[3]. Interactions between agents produce nothing

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[3] In computer simulations, the programmer only programs initial rules for interactions.

more but further interactions, and each interaction results from previous interactions; this means that behaviours of complex systems are non-replicable. As a result of many local interactions between agents, minor changes in the action of one agent can potentially be amplified to a great extent in the iterative processes. There is no possibility of reverting to the 'beginning' of the simulation to replicate the iterations. Each new simulation with the same set of rules will produce a different pattern. This is referred to as the butterfly effect (Gleick, 1988) in the general literature, which is based on the title of Edward Lorenz's lecture 'Does the flap of a butterfly's wings in Brazil set off a tornado in Texas' (Palmer, 2009). In complexity sciences terms this property of complex systems is referred to as sensitivity to initial conditions (Lorenz, 1993).

To summarise, global patterns in complex systems emerge because of the interdependence of its agents. No agent acts independently of others, and any action by any agent is affected by others and at the same time affects them. The remarkable feature of the interaction between agents is that it produces coherent global patterns that change over time. The global pattern emerges simply and only because of the interaction of agents locally with other agents, meanwhile it constrains the way that this local interaction can be conducted.

Implications for human interactions: the emergence of social control and self-restraint, power relations, social self and ethics

Analogous to complex adaptive systems, organisations are self-organising, there is no blueprint for their emergence. In CAS, order arises as agents interact according to initial rules specified by the programmer (Waldrop, 1992). There is no external programmer in organisations. As people interact, the outcomes of their interactions cannot be predicted or prescribed by any of them (Stacey and Mowles, 2016). In CAS, each agent is restricted and enabled by other agents it interacts with. Members of organisations too are enabled and constrained by other members. Coherent patterns and order emerge as people interact, but, unlike a computer simulation, power relations are a feature of all human interactions (ibid). Social control and self-restraint also emerge in their interactions. They emerge because of the ability to reflect, a uniquely human quality, which I understand as the awareness of self in relation to others, the ability to see ourselves as others might see us, both in our immediate environment and in the wider community.

Human interactions, all human interactions, imply ethical choices. Our interdependence with each other means that in making our decisions we are weighing up our options and perceived potential consequences of our actions, in relation to others. Although our awareness of all consequences is impossible, we assess the perceived possibilities, and act upon those assessments. Whatever we do has ethical implications – in our interactions with others we constantly consider what is right, a consideration that is continuously negotiated and evolving. These unique features of our interactions, all human interactions, will be discussed in the remainder of this chapter.

Parallels between social and complexity sciences

Human organisations arise in the interactions of people, of human bodies. As such, all human interactions cannot be devoid of feelings, thoughts and emotions (Stacey, 2005). As no one can step outside of the interaction to control it, no one can step outside of the body to control emotions and thoughts.[4] Emotions cannot be denied in analysing human behaviour. Computer-based agents' interactions are responsive, while human interactions are also purposeful. The patterns of behaviour emerge in the interdependence of intentions, beliefs, and past experiences of human participants. Being interdependent with others, our actions are always constrained and enabled by others, and we are enabled and constrained not just by the actions of others, but by our perception and interpretations of those actions. Before I expand on the discussion about the unique nature of all human interactions, I would like to draw attention to parallels in thinking between sociologists and complexity scientists.

In the first half of the 20th century, two sociologists, working independently of each other, discussed the interconnectedness of individual and social behaviours. George Herbert Mead (1863-1931), an American Pragmatist, provided important insight into the emergence of self and society as simultaneous processes. A German sociologist, Norbert Elias (1897-1990), who fled Nazi Germany in the 1930s and worked in the UK, studied the evolution of Western civilisation by exploring the evolution of manners over centuries. In 'The Civilizing Process' he attempts to answer the following question 'How did this change, this "civilizing" of the West, actually happen?.. And what were its "causes" or "motive forces"?' (Elias, 1939 [2000] : ix-x). Both Mead's exploration of emergence, especially the emergence of self and society, and Elias's 'The Civilizing Process' predate the development of complexity sciences. Yet,

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[4] I do not mean we are incapable of having some ways of controlling our emotional reactions; rather I draw attention to the fact that we cannot decide not to have them.

Mead's concept of 'emergence' (Mead, 2007) is analogous to the way emergence is understood by the complexity scientist. Elias' notion of 'figuration' (Elias, 1939 [2000] , 1978, 1991) refers to interdependence of individuals in society.

Related to this is the analogy between Mead's pragmatism and Elias's figuration sociology, and between complexity sciences are the ideas of self-similarity and scaling (Holland, 2014), which in complexity sciences refer to the property of the complex system (see Appendix 2). In human interaction, self-similarity and scaling means that there is no separation to macro and micro. Elias 'dispensed with false oppositions that result from dualistic thinking' (Layder, 2005: 141). Elias (1939 [2000]) demonstrated the development of a separation between the individual and society as part of the historical process of 'civilizing', as people gradually exercised more self-control and needed less external restraints. Mead (1934), in establishing that self and society arise in the same processes of interaction, also rejects the Cartesian distinction between individual and society.

In human complexity terms, there are no levels of analysis, but different scale and contexts of self-similar behaviours. In complexity, local and global are not special terms. Rather, local means 'that each of us, however important in the world, can still only interact physically with a relatively few people - hence "local" interaction; we can only hold and sustain a limited range of relationships' (Noble, 2012). All local interactions are self-similar, because in our interdependence with others, similar possibilities and limitations exist, thus generating similar patterning of interaction. Of course, differences in power chances impact the significance of communicative interacting, affecting how and the number of people paying attention and responding, as well as the outcome. But from our experience of relating we can have a general understanding of what goes on for people in their local situation. Global patterns, or 'social objects' (Mead, 1934), emerge in local interactions. 'Local' and 'global' refer to the scale of interaction. I will discuss the interdependence between local and global in detail in the next sections.

Stacey and Mowles (2016) draw attention to the parallels between Elias's and Mead's ideas of the emergence of social order and complexity scientists' ideas of self-organisation, interdependence and emergence. I am drawing attention to the emergent and interdependent nature of various branches of sciences.

Social control and self-restraint

Engaging with the emerging ideas of evolution theory and relativity (Shalin, 2008), Mead saw humans as having evolved with a particular ability of stimulating in themselves a response that is similar to the response that is stimulated in those with whom they are communicating. This ability of taking on both verbal and non-verbal communication by one person are gestures that call out responses in another. It is important to emphasise that this 'conversation of gestures' is ongoing, and no single gesture is to be understood as the 'original' one, as each gesture is also a response to previous gestures. The individual joins the web of ongoing conversations as soon as she is aware of her environment and her environment becomes aware of her. From a very early age, well before we learn to speak, we are able to communicate with our carers, anticipate their responses to our gestures, and respond to their gestures.

Mead (1934) argues that conversations of gestures are not deterministic. Although we are able to anticipate the response of others, there is always the possibility of an unexpected response, of shared understanding and misunderstanding at the same time. Even a simple gesture can elicit multiple responses. A raised hand can be a gesture of friendship or an act of aggression. As individuals interact with each other, taking the attitude of the other, they assess the possible responses and consequences a gesture may evoke. The more interactions we experience, the wider the range of responses we are able to conceive of, and we are able to take the attitude of many others. This ability to take the attitude of others is called 'the generalized other' (Mead, 1934: 154). The generalised other is our belief about how we are being perceived by 'others'. We do not have any specific 'other' in mind, but an abstract idea about the world-view of our social environments. The generalised other is our tendency to act in a way we expect is anticipated by others in our community.

> The illustration used was of a person playing baseball. Each one of his own acts is determined by his assumption of the others who are playing the game. What he does is controlled by his being everyone else on that team, at least in so far as those attitudes affect his own particular response. We then get 'other' which is an organization of the attitudes involved in the same process.

> The organized community or the social group which gives to the individual his unity of self may be called 'the generalized other'. The attitude of the generalized other is the attitude of the whole community' (Mead, 1934: 154)

'The generalised other' is not a monolith speaking to us in unison, providing a unified guide for action. As we encounter multiple 'generalised others', there arise pressures and conflicts of often contradictory 'generalised others'. In my earlier narrative several generalised others are evident. I was responding to the perceived attitudes of my colleagues, my managers, my family. Although it is obvious that attitudes of individual people within those groups vary, it is what we *perceive* as the attitude of the group in general which becomes a 'generalised other'. I could not know what each of my colleagues thought about the practice of price-fixing in the company, or how each of them would react to whistle-blowing on this practice, but it was my perception that they – a generalised 'they'- would frown upon my jeopardizing their workplace by speaking up. Our expectation of the generalised other's responses guides our actions, enabling and restricting them. Yet, the generalised other is our own perception, so the social controls are simultaneously self-controls. I was never instructed to be quiet about the unethical behaviour, which I discussed in the narrative. I refrained from reporting those actions, because I was expecting retaliation from my manager had I done so. Retaining that job was important, and I did what I *thought* was expected of me to keep it. In order to act, we prioritise 'the generalised others'. When I worked for that utility company, 'the generalised others', that for me represented the expectations of managers, were more prominent.

This understanding of social and self-control is echoed in Elias's interlinking of societal and self-restraint:

> The social standard to which the individual was first made to conform by external restraint is finally reproduced more or less smoothly within him, through a self-restraint. (Elias, 1939 [2000] : 109)

This argument follows from the idea that we are always interdependent with others:

> It is as if first thousands, then millions, then more and more millions walked through this world their hands and feet chained together by invisible ties. No one is in charge. No one stands outside. … No one can regulate the movements of the whole unless a great part of them are able to understand, to see, as it were, from outside, the whole patterns they form together. … They can only look at whatever happens to them from their narrow location within the system. They are too deeply involved to look at themselves from without. Thus what is formed of nothing but human beings acts upon

each of them, and is experienced by many as an alien external force not unlike the forces of nature. (Elias, 1956: 322)

So, while no one is in control, we experience control which arises in this interdependence. For many millennia we have depended on others for our existence. We are not self-sufficient, but specialise in specific areas and procure everything else we need from others. The increase in the division of labour results in growing interdependence, and the more interdependent we are, the more we are enabled and also restrained by others.

According to Elias, the processes of self-control are long term and are not always results of '*conscious* self-regulation' (Mennell, 1992: 96). Born into a specific social environment, we are compelled to behave in certain ways in order not to risk being rejected by that environment. At times, we are aware of these compulsions; often, we follow the norms without being aware of them. The societal restraint becomes 'second nature', and is perceived by us 'as highly personal, something "inward", implanted in [us] by nature' (Elias, 1939 [2000] : 127-8).

> The web of actions grows so complex and extensive, the effort required to behave 'correctly' within it becomes so great, that beside the individual's conscious self-control an automatic, blindly functioning apparatus of self-control is firmly established. This seeks to prevent offences to socially accepted behaviour by a wall of deep-rooted fears, but, just because it operates blindly and by habit, it frequently indirectly produces such collisions with social reality (Elias, 1939 [2000] : 367-8).

Our perception of what is 'correct', what might be acceptable in our society, is what guides us in our behaviour. By complying with what we think is 'correct' we maintain the norms, by acting against what is 'correct', we undermine those norms. To emphasize each person, in local interactions, plays a role in the evolving norms of society. Social controls can only act as self-restrictions as long as we contribute to them. This understanding of social and self-control is echoed in Elias's interlinking of societal and self-restraint. As we are socialised into our environment, initially we are required to conform to the norms (external restrains), that are eventually reproduced in our thinking and behaviour as self-restraint (Elias, 1939 [2000] : 109).

 This process of the societal becoming the individual, is what Elias referred to as habitus:

By 'habitus' – a word which he used long before its popularization by Pierre Bourdieu – Elias basically means 'second nature' or 'embodied social learning'. (Dunning and Mennell in Preface to Elias, 1996: ix)

The perceived attitude of others is general and abstract, and it must be particularized in every interaction. We are taking not just an attitude of the generalised other, but the attitudes of many generalised others. Moreover, as we belong to various social groups, at times those attitudes are incompatible and conflicting. Although I thought of the collusion described in the narrative as wrong and unethical (as it is perceived in modern Western society), I perceived that it was an acceptable practice in that organisation. Not exposing it was violating my values of fair competition, but exposing it would violate my values of supporting my family. Later in this dissertation I will expand on our negotiating these sometimes conflicting generalised others. In this chapter I continue to focus on the interrelatedness of social and self control.

Power relations

Interrelated with societal controls and self-regulation is the concept of power. Most organization theorists tend to take their point of departure from the definition of power offered by American political scientist Robert Dahl (Ailon, 2006), who offered 'A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not do otherwise' (Dahl, 1957: 202-3). On this understanding power is a zero-sum game, in which A's 'power credit' is equal to B's 'power deficit' (Pels, 1998: 28). This understanding of power suggests that power is a 'thing' that can be had. Sociologists have conceptualised power as a relational phenomenon, rather than a possession (e.g. Lasswell and Kaplan, 1950, Easton, 1953).

Unfortunately, power lacks a common verb form, which in part accounts for frequent tendency to see it as a mysterious property or agency resident in the person or group to whom it is attributed. (Wrong, 1979: 6)

Elias offers an alternative, social understanding of power

> We say that a person possesses a great power, as if power were a *thing* that he carried about in his pocket. This use of the word is a relic of magico-mythical ideas. Power is not an amulet possessed by one person and not by another, it is a structural characteristic of human relationships – of *all* human relationships. (Elias, 1978: 80 emphasis in original)

Power arises in the processes of human interaction. Reifying power, 'one is inclined to personify or reify interdependence' (Elias, 1978: 94). Interdependence means that we are dependent on others, and others are dependent on us at the same time. But '[p]eople who are interdependent are not necessarily *equally* interdependent' (Mennell, 1992: 95 emphasis in original). If A is less dependent on B than B on A, then A has more power chances than B. The idea of 'power chances' emphasises the dynamic nature of power relations. Power is not 'an isolated object in a state of rest' (Elias, 1978: 115), so rather than talking about 'having power', it is more appropriate to speak about changes in power dynamics. No one is totally independent from others. Being intertwined in our relationships means that one can have more power chances, yet no one has absolute power.

This has implications for thinking about our participation in organisations. One is never completely powerless. In the situation described in my narrative, I was not powerless. In the relationships between my managers and myself, they had more power chances than I did. I was dependent on them for my job, but they were also dependent on others and myself to sustain collusion by avoiding reporting or by actively engaging in it.

Often the differences in power chances are not great. In a situation when many people are interdependent, and most have similar power chances (as is the case of colleagues in a workplace, for example), an individual might be inclined to act as if under compulsion (Elias, 1978). In such cases, we tend to think of 'society' or 'organisation' as having power. But what we experience are constraints that emerge in our relationships with others. I felt my future professional prospects were dependent on my turning a blind eye to what I had learned. I was taking my cues from my colleagues, who never spoke up against it, and from my managers, who were keeping it a secret. I felt totally powerless to go against the 'company'.

Elias argues that individuals always act in relation to others. As we pursue our plans, we are intertwined with others' pursuing theirs, and in doing so we respond to each other. No one

individual can determine what is happening in an organisation. '*It is the order of interweaving human impulses and striving, the social order, which determines the course of historical change*' (1956: 365 emphasis in original). Organisations are not objects that exist independently outside human interactions. Organisations are better understood as global patterns of interactions that arise in myriad local interactions of purposeful, feeling, cooperating and competing individuals (Stacey and Mowles, 2016). Those patterns evolve and continuously emerge over time, are always imbued with power relations, and are sustained through the means of social control and self-restraints.

Interlinked with the idea of power as an essential characteristic of any human relationship is Elias's idea of a game. In his discussion of game models, Elias (1978) describes various scenarios of human interactions using the metaphor of the game. He does not use the word 'game' pejoratively, as in 'children's game'. He uses the term to describe how the individuals participate in interactions and experience those interactions as if guided by an external force 'the game itself has power over the behaviour and thought of the individual players' (ibid: 96). The 'game' for Elias is a way to express the interdependence and interrelatedness of people, and the 'relational characteristic of power' (ibid: 75). Power ratios arise in this interdependence. By referring to the 'game', Elias focuses our thinking on power relations that are shifting in relation to other players, and to the game we are playing. In a game of football, a team from the Premier League has more power chances when they are playing a team from League Two, and the outcome of the game may be predicted. However, facing another Premier League team the power chances are more equal, and the outcomes are more unpredictable. Similarly, if a Premier League football team faced a lower division basketball team in a game of basketball, the power ratio may shift in favour of the basketball team.

In referring to working in organisations as a game, I follow Elias in paying attention to the way the game is played, i.e. how we interact with each other. I also pay attention to the ways the rules, i.e. social and self-constraints, arise, and to the way the 'relative strength of the players' (ibid: 75) is continually changing.

The idea of human action always taking place in relation to others is also explored by Mead (1925, 1934). In the next section I will focus on another important aspect of social complexity – a thoroughly social understanding of the individual.

The social self

Earlier in this chapter I referred to the idea of 'communication of gestures' introduced by Mead. He described the communication of gestures as a 'social act' (Stacey, 2011). By 'social act' I understand an act between conscious individuals.

> We are conscious of our attitudes because they are responsible for the changes in the conduct of other individuals. A man's reaction towards weather conditions has no influence upon the weather itself. (Mead, 1910: 403)

Meaning, according to Mead, arises in the social act. This is radically different from the understanding of interaction as a linear process, in which meaning is independent of that process and 'resides' within an individual.

Our consciousness, our 'self', also arises in the social act. For Mead (1934) 'self' is not a final state, but the ongoing social processes of 'I-me' conversations of gestures. These processes are not linear with rational causality. There is no 'if I act in this way, then I will become that'. Using the complex adaptive systems terminology, the 'self', as an 'output' of previous interactions, becomes the 'input' in the following interactions. We are always acting in the 'living present' (Stacey, 2001), in a complex web of interactions in which our past is being continuously reinterpreted and impacting our actions, which are at the same time influenced by our expectations of future possibilities. Although there is no rational causality to our actions, there is always fear – 'unless I act like this… the outcome will be…'. I feared that in speaking out against collusion, I would be rejected by my colleagues and my employers. Based both on previous experiences (reading about whistle-blowers, being brought up in an atmosphere of distrust of government authorities, and in my late teens establishing the view of cooperation with authorities as tantamount to betrayal), and on future expectations (of establishing myself as a marketing professional, of promotion, of secured employment), I feared that exposing the alleged collusion would jeopardise my prospects in this and any potential workplace. Our 'self' is always impacted by both our perception of the past and our anticipation of the future at the same time. I could not attribute my reluctance to blow the whistle to any single event in the past, nor could I single out any event in my biography to explain my expectations of the future. No single interaction is the sole source of 'self', and every interaction in the living present is reinforcing and challenging, affirming and disrupting our 'self'. The 'self' is always becoming, never becomes.

For Mead the processes of interaction with others are similar to the processes of individual thinking

> But only by taking the attitude of the generalized other towards himself … can he think at all; for only thus can thinking – or the internalized conversation of gestures which constitutes thinking – occur. (Mead, 1934: 154)

Therefore, the emergence of self is a continuous conversation of gestures between 'I' and 'me'. 'I' and 'me' are processes of gestures and responses; the 'I' and the 'me' are inseparable, as only through 'I-me' interaction the social act of the emergence of self exists. Mead's idea of self is inherently social, 'for selves exist only in relation to other selves' (Mead, 1925: 262). Therefore any social act is an act of 'cooperation of more than one individual, and whose object is defined by the act...' (ibid: 263). A social object is a type of social act.

> I mean by a social object one that answers to all the parts of the complex act, though these parts are found in the conduct of different individuals. (ibid: 263-4)

Social objects, therefore, are not physical things, but communicative purposeful acts of many individuals addressing the same objective (each in their own way, locally), and can only be understood through social acts. Social objects are generalised tendencies to act in similar ways in similar situations (Stacey and Mowles, 2016). Human organisations – families, universities, hospitals, factories, the church, football clubs, and many others - are social objects. This resonates with Elias's (Elias, 1978) understanding of organisations as emerging patterns of human interactions. On this understanding, organisations are both stable and changing acts of communicative interaction.

Mead argued that society and self arise in the same communicative processes. Therefore, as argued earlier, social control and self-control arise simultaneously and are inseparable. Social control is linked to the social object – a general tendency to act in a specific situation - so social and self-control arise in the individual particularising the social object. In other words, self-restraint depends on the individual's need to conform, or to take the attitude of the generalised other. Our belonging to different social groups may lead to difficulty in particularising the conflicting attitudes of others. By making choices how to respond to the generalised others and enacting those choices our 'self' arises. As Mead puts it, the 'self' arises in those processes of 'me' - the perceived attitude of the generalised other - being particularized by the 'I'. This

understanding of social and self-control is echoed in Elias' (1939 [2000]) interlinking of societal and self-restraint.

I believe a major influence on my not reporting the collusion when I had become aware of it, was the social norms of that environment at that time. Whistleblowing was frowned upon not just by employers, but by society in general. This social attitude had been so deeply embedded in my attitude that I was barely aware of it. Not even considering reporting, was how this social norm was manifested in my behaviour.

To summarise this section, social control and self-restraint are impacting individual action, and at the same time the individual acting into these constrains influences them. These controls cannot be eliminated; arising in human interaction, they are a feature of all interactions, but they are constantly changing. We are becoming who we are in the social acts, the interaction with other conscious selves. Social objects, a tendency to act in a *similar* way in *similar* situations, arise in social acts. But no two situations are the same and our interactions are always (if even in a minor way) different. No situation can be exactly replicated. Each interaction is evolving as a result of previous interactions of the participants that had evolved in even earlier interactions with many others. We can never know which interaction may become significant in the future to which participant. The significance of the outcomes only becomes clear as they emerge. Therefore, any present event, interaction or situation is heavily dependent on numerous previous interactions of many individuals. History never repeats itself.

The emergence of ethics

One of the main limitations of thinking about organisations as complex adaptive systems, is that systems thinking leads to reification or personification of organisations. Addressing an organisation as a system, we endow it with human capabilities of thinking and feeling. In organisational literature this personification is taken for granted, and expressions like 'organisational aims', 'organisational behaviour' or 'organisational values' are rarely questioned. The term 'Corporate Social Responsibility' itself is a manifestation of such personification. Today social responsibility is ascribed to organisations almost unopposed. Even critical management writers who challenge the motives for and the outcomes of social responsibility (e.g. Kuhn and Deetz, 2008, Shamir, 2008, Banerjee, 2008) rarely question the capability for responsibility ascribed to organisations. Yet this has not always been the case. Friedman (1962, 1970) was the most vocal challenger to organizations accepting 'social responsibilities'. His opposition to corporate responsibility was based on the premise that only people can be responsible. His opponents mostly disregard his view of responsibility being vested in individuals, not in organisations, and address the economic arguments he voiced (e.g. Schwartz and Saiia, 2012, Ahlstrom, 2010).

A debate regarding the nature of organisation developed in the 1980s on the fringe of the CSR discourse between philosophers, who discussed the moral agency of organisations (e.g. Goodpaster and Matthews Jr, 1982, French, 1977). This debate was short-lived, and was concluded by overwhelming acceptance of an organisation as a morally capable entity (Velasquez, 2003), a personification of an organisation. As a result, we see social responsibility of organisations being understood as separate from individual social responsibility. This separation is inconsistent with an understanding of an organisation as coherent patterns of interaction (Stacey and Mowles, 2016). In practical terms, this may lead to what de Colle et al. (2014) refer to as erosion of individual responsibility. Imbuing organisation with moral personhood raises a question of individual responsibility. If an organisation is a morally capable entity, why does any individual have to worry about his or her responsibility in an organisational setting? This is not just a theoretical musing. As a CSR practitioner and an educator I grapple with it daily. In Chapter 4 I discuss how my thinking about individual responsibility in practice has evolved.

An additional limitation of conceptualising organisations in systemic terms is in perceiving ethics as a separate system, independent of human interaction. From this perspective, it is

unproblematic to produce a system of organisational norms and values that members of an organisation should adopt. This thinking is based in the Kantian system of the categorical imperative, which conceives universal moral laws that are independent of any social context (Campbell and Christopher, 1996). Yet, by introducing 'organisational ethics', systems thinkers contradict Kant's caveat that autonomous individuals' minds are not 'governed by the laws of nature' (Stacey, 2010: 33). Applying the notion of organisations as wholes to human interaction, we are required to conceptualise individuals as being parts of that whole and to adopt that whole's values. On this thinking individuals are, contrary to Kant's argument, not autonomous, but must submit to the ethics of the whole.

Griffin (2002) proposes an alternative way of thinking about ethics that reflects a profoundly social understanding of human experience. In our working together we are not interacting with and within some imaginary whole, but are interacting with each other. Interacting directly with each other, we are impacted by others and impacting them at the same time. In those interactions we are continually negotiating together the meaning of good, the ethics of our actions. Every decision, every action (not doing anything is an act in itself) has an impact on others. Therefore, every action has ethical implications. Whether in public conversations with others or private (silent) conversations with ourselves, we are always making choices and negotiating possible actions. The ethics of those negotiated choices is not some sort of prescribed set of ideas, that is independent of our interaction. The ethics of our actions arise in our highly contextualised interactions with others, which always involve individual desires and societal constraints.

In my opening narrative I discuss the wrongness of the practices with which I found myself associated. Pausing to think about those practices, I also recognise them as being understood as acceptable by those involved. Otherwise they could not have been sustained. In the way I justified my actions (or rather inactions) to myself, I presume others justified theirs. A commonly accepted pattern of behaviour evolved. We may dismiss this behaviour as 'honour among thieves'. But it must have been considered acceptable, or justified (and therefore, ethical) in their group, although insisting on secrecy suggests their awareness of wider society rejecting it.

Ethics, as consideration of what is good, is fluid, contextual and temporal. This is not to be misconstrued as justification of any behaviour, but to draw attention to ethics not being just a prescribed set of rules. I am also not trying to defend the practice of collusion described in my narrative, or to suggest it was ethical. Rather, I am drawing attention to how everyone involved

- some in minor ways and others significantly - contributed to promulgating this behaviour. What is important to recognise is that people usually do not engage in acts that they consider wrong without some consideration. Behaving otherwise would be consistent with psychopathy or sociopathy – an antisocial personality disorder (NLB, 2010). At times, we engage in behaviours that we consider wrong, which we need to justify to ourselves and our social group. Often, only in interaction with others do we become aware of the moral implications of our behaviour.

This understanding of ethics follows Mead's (1938) understanding of social act and meaning, detailed above. We cannot know the meaning of our action before we act. The ethical implications of action arise in the conversation of gestures. Ethics and morality, on this understanding, are not static, but evolving and 'constantly reconstructing and recreating the world as individuals evolve' (Stacey and Mowles, 2016: 386).

To reiterate, the aspects of social interaction, although described in three separate sections, are interrelated and cannot be examined separately.

> As social structures, organizations may be understood as the patterning of complex responsive processes of relating. These processes, as with every social interaction, have three fundamentally and inextricably interlinked aspects, the first being communicative interaction, the second power relating, and the third the evaluative choices people make.' (Stacey, 2005: 93-94)

In the previous sections I explained how insights from social sciences contribute to a more realistic account of life in organisations. Analogies from complexity sciences help understanding social interaction as emergent, unpredictable, arising in the interaction of numerous people, where even a minor event can potentially be amplified to result in major consequences. Stacey and colleagues (Stacey, 2003, Stacey, 2001, Stacey and Mowles, 2016, Griffin and Stacey, 2005) also point out that social organisations cannot be seen as complex adaptive systems. Human communication, unlike the interaction of agents in computer simulations, is always an interaction of human bodies, which inevitably involves feelings and thoughts, and is always contextualised. No-one stands 'outside' of interaction to manage it.

Summary

Returning to one of the early narratives about my practising of CSR, I examine how analogies from complexity sciences help make sense of my practice. Turning to complex responsive processes of relating that draw on complexity, as well as on philosophy, sociology, and other social sciences, I begin to understand my interaction with others differently. This changing understanding, this taking my experience seriously, has been liberating. Distinct features of human interaction no longer need to be excluded, or explained away. This understanding opens the possibility of thinking about my practice without being stuck in the dualisms of individual and society, objective and subjective, stability and change and many others. I also do not have to keep agonising and taking sole responsibility for failed initiatives, and at the same time I am not absolved from acting (or choosing not to act) into set behaviours. I am no longer a 'victim of the system'; I am not to blame myself for failures of some actions, nor am I a lone hero when other actions are successful.

In the following chapters I will examine how my practice of and thinking about CSR have developed, and focus on how working together we continuously reinterpret the meaning of corporate social responsibility. Before I turn to my practice of CSR, I will discuss how different understanding of working in organisations impacts my research.

Chapter 3 - Implications of taking my experiences seriously for researching CSR

Yesterday I did not do anything 'researchy', so I'll go back to my thoughts about my work (JF diary entry from August 2011)

Introduction

The purpose of a methodology chapter is to explain and justify the way one conducts a research project. To remain true to research informed by complexity, it is important to trace my evolving understanding of research, rather than just introduce the reader to my current thinking.

In the previous chapter I introduced the concept of reflection – awareness of ourselves in relation to others. Closely related to this is the idea of reflexivity - our awareness that 'any explanation [we] produce are the products of who [we] are, as determined by [our] histories' (Stacey and Mowles, 2016: 33). People are always members of communities, so our histories are never individual and independent of others. Our thinking is never independent but is always embedded in the histories and traditions of thought of our communities. In this chapter I explore the development of my thinking about researching in relation to different traditions of thought.

Evolution of my thinking about research

The complexity of human interaction means that there is no direct cause and effect relationship between two events, but each event emerges in many interactions. It also means that no single event can be understood as the root for present thinking. There is no clear beginning of my current understanding of researching. As a starting point for the purpose of this dissertation I am introducing the incident when I became aware of thinking about researching and research methods.

The first time I was required to conduct significant academic research was for my MBA dissertation. As mentioned earlier, while studying for the MBA, I was first introduced to ideas on complexity in general, and to complex responsive processes specifically. This perspective was refreshing; my experience finally made sense. That experience involved confusion, unintended consequences of any detailed plans and often no apparent link between cause and effect, and I did not have to fit it into the earlier learned models. However, at that time, it remained just that for me, another perspective introduced on the MBA. Complexity was interesting, but I did not understand how it could be 'applied' to my research. So when I

approached my dissertation, it was not surprisingly conducted by researching a remote (literally and metaphorically) entity, conducting surveys and interviews, while I remained a detached outside observer, unaware and not paying attention to the way I was involved in what I was doing. Complex responsive processes of relating remained another 'research method' that I chose not to 'use'.

That project resembled other research that I had conducted or commissioned previously at work. As a marketing director for a TV station, I was very comfortable with the results of the quantitative statistical analysis conducted by the operators of the 'people-meter'. As I write those words, and see them black on white, I recognise their absurdity. Yes, they were claiming they were measuring people (number of people watching a specific television channel at a specific time) accurately. And they might have. But I, based on the figures delivered to my desk each morning, was making far-reaching assumptions about the reasons, and mental and emotional states that underpinned those figures, and based on those assumptions I was making decisions regarding our marketing strategy. I hardly recognised the fact that for those viewers, the act of being 'measured' (there was a box attached to their TV set), i.e. my research, was affecting their behaviour. I also never considered that my world view and emotions affected my interpretations.

Not considering my involvement, the research and I, the research commissioner, always remained separate, and removed from the research subjects. Working on my MBA dissertation, therefore, was naturally continuing my detached researcher stance. Cassell et al. (2009) recognise that qualitative research is difficult for MBA students, as well as managers, who are used to 'producing formulaic accounts in their workplace based on the use of figures' (ibid: 522), and that new researchers are overly reliant on prescribed procedures for research. Complex responsive processes did not offer any standardised techniques, and I could not find a way to engage with this perspective in my research.

A few years later I applied for PhD studies. During the in-between years, while working in HBS alongside colleagues whose work has been informed by critical and complexity perspectives, discussing these approaches, attending seminars and masterclasses and continuing reading on this perspective, I became more familiar with complexity theories. I no longer saw complex responsive processes as a 'research method', but understood it as an alternative for understanding human interaction. Before enrolling on a PhD programme, I was invited to join a group of PhD students and their supervisors who were approaching their research from a

perspective of complex responsive processes. I felt peripheral at those meetings. Other students were writing and sharing their work, which made me feel like an intruder. I was not convinced I could or should expose myself in my research. I was uncomfortable with writing reflective narratives; I did not feel that reflecting on my experiences was as legitimate a research method as conducting interviews, nor was I convinced that my practice was interesting or important enough to be researched. So for my PhD I was going to 'utilise' complex responsive processes in researching the UK construction industry. I was going to do it by 'presenting my interpretations of interviews with industry practitioners'. Several years later, this approach seems naïve. But today I also understand that this was a stage in developing my understanding of research.

When I was applying for PhD studies, I was interested in researching the topic of Corporate Social Responsibility. The initial context for my research was supposed to be the UK construction industry. So initially I was still hoping to take a somewhat detached, observer stance, albeit recognising my involvement. I kept attending the PhD group meetings, becoming more involved in the group, feeling less of an outsider. I still believed, though, that researching an industry of which I was not part was compatible with a reflexive approach. Although my supervisors kept bringing to my attention the inconsistency between reflexive methodology and researching the practice of others, I insisted on continuing with my approach. This insistence highlights the inadequate understanding I had of complex responsive processes and of reflexivity as a method of researching those processes. In Chapter 2 I drew attention to all human interactions being complex responsive processes. On this understanding engaging with organisations we are impacted by them and impact them at the same time. There is no position of outside observer; a manager is not a programmer of a simulation, but a participant in interactions. All interventions we make, we make from the inside and cannot step outside. Researching too is complex responsive processes; and there is no position of an outsider researcher. Yet, in the beginning of my PhD research, this is what I intended to do – take a position of an outsider researcher, while intending to reflect on my involvement with CSR if and when I chose.

In the second year of my studies I was appointed as Director of the Social Enterprise Unit. Several months later, when asked by my supervisor whether my appointment was impacting the way I was researching, my immediate reaction was 'yes'. I was surprised by the question. Later I understood that this question was raised because my writing at the time did not reflect this.

In the first progression examination, a question of this compatibility was raised by the examiner. Only then did I stop to think about this seriously. Now I recognise that the group discussions, the conversations with my supervisors, my readings, the discussions about my PhD with practitioners in the construction industry – all led to my (what at the time seemed sudden) understanding that my initial approach was not sustainable. I could research the construction industry, or I could engage in reflecting on my own practice – but I could not meaningfully combine the two.

As I am writing this chapter, I recognise that the way I describe the events of the past is very much influenced by my current understanding of research. I keep referring to a 'reflexive' method, but I do not recall thinking in that way at the time. I am also writing this with expectations of potential readers and the purpose of this writing – my hopes for the future. This brings the understanding of 'living present' (Stacey, 2001) into focus – there is no way for me to write neatly separating the past, the present and the future. They are intertwined in my writing and in ongoing understanding of my practice and research, which are also intertwined and inseparable.

Accepting the logic of the progression stipulations, I still tried to hold on to the idea of researching the construction industry. Letting go of the idea I held for several years was too difficult. Researching the construction industry became part of how I perceived myself; abandoning this idea was to undermine my identity. I decided to apply to several construction companies with the hope of gaining a role in their CSR department. To my surprise, although I offered my services for free, which I expected would encourage positive responses, there were no takers for my offer. Even more surprising at the time was that I was offered access as a researcher, but not as an unpaid practitioner. In trying to make sense of this situation, I thought that this was an example of how reluctant companies are to exposing their CSR activities. I was aware that access as a researcher would be limited and I would be allowed to observe and discuss only the aspects that the company was willing to expose. Today I can suggest another reason for this reluctance (in addition to the simplest and most obvious one, that they were just not interested) – they could not understand what it was that I was trying to do. This way of researching was not familiar and might have made the recipients of my letter suspicious of my 'true' intentions.

Understanding my initial assumptions about researching

The tension between my interest in reflexive practice and my perceived need to remain an objective researcher, which I experienced in the early stages of researching, was paralyzing. I lacked the confidence to reflect on my experience, but I could no longer ignore the new insights gained from engaging with complexity. Denzin and Lincoln (2013) suggest that qualitative researchers face a disconnect between a belief in objective observation of social reality, and the acknowledgement of a researcher who is 'present' in the world. They suggest that resolving this tension could potentially lead to a method, in which a researcher should be able to 'blend own *observations* with the self-reports provided by *subjects*' (ibid: 24 emphasis added). This recommendation suggests reverting to Kantian dualism, as described in the previous chapter. Researchers can reflect on their own observations and analyse the reports of others. To me this approach resonates with the approach I was trying to take when thinking about researching CSR in the construction industry - blending the reflection on my experience with analysing the experience of others. Now I recognise two major inconsistencies.

Firstly, the inconsistency between the assumptions underlying the two research positions. While paying attention to and making sense of my experience from an interpretivist position, 'characterised by taking human interpretation as a starting point for any analysis, with a concern for how we construct social reality' (Cassell et al., 2009: 516)), I was hanging on to positivist beliefs in researching as an observer (or a participant observer) of the CSR practice of others.

Secondly, the belief that the 'reflection on others' is inconsistent with what I now understand as reflective practice. Reflection has been discussed from various theoretical perspectives (Brannick and Coghlan, 2006, Hatton and Smith, 1995, Cassell et al., 2009, Haynes, 2012). Yet, most researchers agree that it involves bending on oneself (for example see Oren, 2014), which to me means recognising one's own beliefs, motives, assumptions, and actions. To attempt to reflect on the experience of others is to attempt to stand outside of that experience. Yet, the moment we enter, through research, into a relationship with others, the experience is ours, and 'we can never claim to stand outside of our own experience, outside the web of relationship that we are a part of' (Stacey and Mowles, 2016: 35-36). And 'reflecting on others' is trying to do exactly that – experiencing researching while standing outside of that experience.

This understanding has developed over time, with my continuous engagement with others and with practice, with critical perspectives, and with complexity sciences and their social

analogies. In the early stages it was difficult to abandon the need for what I perceived as more accepted research methods. My reservations about reflecting on my own practice can be understood in light of the contemporary research literature. Despite the proclaimed importance of reflection in management research (Vanharanta et al., 2014, Elbanna, 2015, Schneider, 2015), reflective research is still in the minority. A growing body of research (Van der Stede, 2011, Ford et al., 2010), especially in the critical management studies tradition, is seen to be adopting reflective research. Yet their approach adopts the definition of Alvesson and Scöldberg (2009), who suggest that reflective methodology

> has two basic characteristics: careful interpretation and reflection. The first implies that all references … to empirical data are the results of interpretation … The second element, reflection, turns attention 'inwards', towards the person of the researcher, the relevant research community, society as a whole, intellectual and cultural traditions…Reflection can, in the context of empirical research, be defined as the interpretation of interpretation (ibid: 9, emphasis in original).

As a result, we see more papers acknowledging researchers' predispositions and assumptions, problematising the taken-for-granted beliefs and traditions. However, the assumption that reflective research can be conducted 'while maintaining the belief that the study of suitable … excerpts from this reality' (ibid), suggests that it is possible for the researchers to objectively choose, after careful consideration, the 'reality' that is 'out there', which is 'suitable' for reflecting on. As a result, the majority of critical management research is still conducted based on the experiences of others (e.g. Alvesson and Spicer, 2016, Chaudhri, 2016, Zutshi et al., 2016). While being reflective about their own involvement in their research (i.e. not attempting to step outside of their research), those scholars separate themselves from their research subjects. This understanding of reflection (and reflexivity)[5] is rooted in the views of Pierre Bourdieu, who suggested that 'the primary target of [reflexive analysis] is not the individual analysis but the *social and intellectual unconscious* embedded in analytical tools and categories' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 36, emphasis in original). Thus, research and methods of analysis must by subjected to systematic critique and critical historical exploration (Swartz, 1997). The experience of the researcher is not, therefore, the subject of reflection.

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[5] Following Alvesson (Alvesson and Ashcraft, 2009; Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2009) in this section I will use the two terms interchangeably

The type of research I was drawn to, examining my own practice, was (and still is) rare in organisational literature (e.g. Menzies, 1960, Haynes, 2006b, Adler, 2008, Cunliffe, 2009, Yassour-Borochowitz, 2012, Norman et al., 2015). Although this method was taken up on the DMan programme at the UH, and other scholars have begun engaging with it (e.g. Zhu, 2007, Stanley, 2009, De Zilwa, 2010, Eyben, 2010, Marais, 2014), I believed that it would not be accepted by the wider academic community, and by the CSR research community in particular. At the time I believed all research had to have 'analysable' data. Being interested in CSR, I'd read extensively both theoretical and empirical articles on CSR. I had not come across any paper that analysed a researcher's own practice of CSR. Aguinis and Glavas (2012) analysed '588 journal articles and 102 books and book chapters' (p. 934) and found that only 4% of the articles focused on an individual level of analysis. But even this small minority discussed employees and managers as subjects of research, not the researchers' own practice.

Another aspect that concerned me was the significance of my work. I could understand how my work might have some impact on those in my immediate community, and I believed that the outcomes of my work could be justifiably considered CSR. Yet I was unconvinced that my daily practice would be of any interest to the wider academic or CSR community. In chapters 4 and 5 I discuss in depth the evolving thinking about CSR, and how I found it difficult to consider my daily practice as CSR. I feared that focusing on the daily and the mundane would not yield 'proper' research. Reflecting on this concern, I wonder if this was one of the reasons I was unable to gain access to the daily work of CSR practitioners in construction companies – is it possible they too were not sure of the value of their daily work?

As the latest attempt to reconcile researching my practice and the construction industry failed, I found myself in the same position I had been in several months prior – needing to decide on the focus of my dissertation: the construction industry or my own practice. A progression report stipulated that I was required to focus my research. Although it felt daunting to let go of the idea of researching the construction industry, the idea I'd been clinging to for several years, I decided to follow what felt more congruent with my developing understanding of complexity and explore my practice.

Nonetheless, moving on from the first progression was not easy. Writing reflective narratives and showing them to others beyond the PhD group was a daunting prospect. One such attempt is reflected on in the next narrative. Written in 2010, it explores the experience of attempting to

engage with a traditional research method, and the insights gained by reflecting on that experience. My current reflections on what I wrote back in 2010 are inserted in *italics*

Changing understanding of research: the Ukrainian Project

Preamble

After completing my first progression I decided that it was time to try and get a paper published in a peer-reviewed journal.

I recognise now that the anxiety following the first progression was largely due to my choice of methodology. There was a tension between the need to adhere to what I perceived to be accepted research methods - interviews, observations, surveys - and being drawn to complexity. This tension caused me to question my previous beliefs about what was the legitimate approach to 'legitimate' research. Although I'd begun recognising that there is more than one way of researching, I had doubts about my ability to convince the academic community of the validity of reflective narratives. The desire to publish was my way to test the need to be recognised as belonging to the research community. Publications have become proxy for academic legitimacy (Parker, 2014, Martin, 2016), so I had hoped that publishing in an academic journal would establish my credibility.

Having met Vladislav Kolinko, a Ukrainian CSR practitioner, at one of the CSR conferences a few months earlier, I saw an opportunity for very interesting research. At that stage I had no clear idea about the exact topic, all I knew was that I was interested in looking into CSR in Ukraine. I also felt it might be of interest to journals. I lacked confidence to proceed on my own, and was looking for an established researcher to advise me. Greg Hill was suggested as a possible mentor; he agreed this was an interesting topic and said he would like to work with me when I obtained sufficient funding. When a call for applications for seedcorn funding was advertised shortly afterward, I decided to seize the chance to carry out that research. The research is now completed and I have already presented a paper at an international conference.

Writing up the paper and presenting at a conference was seen as the 'completion' of that research. Yet, I kept thinking about it, and reflection on it is part of this dissertation, which supports the view that there is no definitive point of ending a research project.

Writing that paper I was mindful of its final destination, and, at Greg's suggestion, was modelling it on what is being published in the journals I might target. The paper was a straightforward description of research, but lacks the details that might be rejected by traditional academic journals. It lacked soul; I was missing from it.

This paper picks up where that paper left off. I will tell my story of taking part in that research. My discussions with Greg following our visits to Ukraine and in the process of writing the paper, revealed that our perceptions of interviews, the seminar we attended, the conference where I presented and our general impressions of Ukraine were so dissimilar, that at times I wondered whether he and I were present at the same events. We definitely experienced those events differently. This should not be a surprise, as Greg and I approached this research with different motivations, different understanding of CSR and of research in general, and with different emotional engagement with Ukraine. Being brought up in Soviet era Ukraine, my practice of CSR in the Business School, and my disillusion with CSR orthodoxy, played a great part in my perception of this project, and coloured my experience in hues that could not be perceptible to Greg. Yet, the paper, which we agreed would be co-authored, had to present a unified, objective and authoritative stance. As I was writing that paper, I felt that it was a compromise; it caused me discomfort and I started noticing physical signs of unrest. At that time I decided to write a 'shadow paper' which was effectively a diary of writing that conference paper. In that shadow paper I was paying attention to themes that were arising in the diary I was keeping throughout what I came to call 'the Ukrainian project', themes that were left unexplored in my conference paper. In this narrative I will explore those themes and locate them in the existing literature.

The shadow paper

From the very beginning, when Vladislav and I first discussed the possibility of researching CSR in Ukraine, I was apprehensive, worrying that such a project might distract me from working on my PhD. I now understand this concern as being closely linked to my understanding of my PhD work. It was as if researching CSR for me was only limited to working on my PhD, which in itself is only a research apprenticeship. This concern highlighted my lack of confidence as a researcher. It also highlighted my delegitimising of approaches to CSR research that were different from my PhD research. This paper aims to demonstrate my changing understanding of my engagement with various aspects of CSR.

The Ukrainian project demonstrated to me that there are many ways of practising and researching CSR, rather than a single 'correct' way, that can be known prior to the engagement with the project. I took that project on against the advice of my supervisors, but it felt right at the time. That project provided a great opportunity to explore different ways of researching, and how it affects and is being affected by practising of CSR. But I recognise this post ante, having the benefit of knowing the outcomes of the project. There was no way of knowing whether it would have been beneficial before embarking on it.

The funding awarded for conducting research in Ukraine was 'to begin investigating CSR in Ukraine by looking into what drives CSR in that country' (from application form). Initially there was no pre-set hypothesis; I had no clear ideas of how to progress with this research; I envisaged open-ended discussions, rather than interviews, as the data collection method; I had no specific respondents in mind; I was going to proceed in the spirit of my PhD research – paying attention to how I was to interact with the interviewees and the emerging themes. Greg seemed to have supported this approach (later I realised that this was not so much an agreement with my approach, but his laid-back approach in general). Vladislav was arranging the interviews and was more anxious – he wanted to know who we'd like to interview, the length of each interview and the interview questions.

The parallel between Vladislav's approach and the responses I got from the contacts in the construction industry – the need to know before the action – is evident to me today. Drawing on the similarities between the responses from the different potential research partners; and between my need to cling to the familiar research methods, I suggest that those responses signify the need for feeling in control and the anxiety arising with the lack of control.

I later got to know him as quite an anxious person, but he was also the one with the most to lose at that stage – he was using his contacts, and he was hoping that participating in this project would propel his CSR practice to the top stratum of CSR consultancies in Ukraine. What I'm drawing attention to is not simply the difference in personalities and agendas, but how these differences that had been instrumental in starting this research, later became an impediment to it.

Vladislav was beginning to put boundaries around what we could investigate. He cautioned us not to bring up corruption in our interviews, warning that talking about it was a taboo in Ukraine. According to him, the interviewees wanted to know what we were going to ask. Reluctantly, we provided general guidelines, but no questions yet. Two days before our flight we had to cancel the trip for personal reasons. Vladislav was hesitant to cancel the scheduled meetings and, after brief discussion, Greg and I decided that he should go ahead with the interviews. This meant that our unstructured conversations were to become 'semi-structured interviews'. Reluctantly I produced interview guides, being aware that the interviewees' responses would be explored differently by a proxy researcher, compared with if they had been done by me.

Vladislav conducted over 10 interviews. When the translated transcripts started arriving, I realised that my apprehensions about having the interviews conducted by someone else were justified. It was obvious that Vladislav had a specific agenda for the interviews. He asked a wide range of questions, as if intending to produce some generalisable responses. In contrast to his approach, I thought I would have probed deep into the interviewees' general statements. It became clear we had to conduct some follow-up interviews. Vladislav scheduled one new and four follow-up interviews to be conducted in two days in Kiev in the following month. In preparation I read the transcripts with those interviewees so many times, I felt I knew them by heart. I knew exactly what areas I wanted to expand on with which interviewee. I was ready.

[I was also extremely nervous. I'd never been back to Ukraine after leaving as a young girl some 30 years prior. I was ambivalent about Ukraine – my memories were a mix of happy childhood and an experience of belonging to a rejected and marginalised ethnic minority. When my family decided to emigrate, we were branded as 'traitors of the people' and were stripped of our citizenship. How would I be received by my former motherland? Was I motivated by the need to prove something to the state that discarded me so easily? I am not seeking answers to those questions. What I intend to do is to emphasise my mental state at the time. By allowing

myself to raise those questions, I am also led to ask another question: how important was my upbringing in the former Soviet Union to my interest in CSR?]

Today I understand the above paragraph as pertinent to that paper. Recognising my own mental state is vital for reflection. At the time, though, I put it in brackets, unsure of the importance of those insights.

Upon landing in Ukraine we were informed of changes in plans. Two of the four follow-up interviewees cancelled. Vladislav was expecting confirmation from two other contacts. Unexpectedly, and without consulting us, he also arranged a dinner with the UN Global Compact Network Coordinator for Ukraine. We were then told that the next day he had to go to a CSR seminar in Cherkassy (180-km from Kiev), and we were invited, but not required, to join him. Although we were unable to proceed according to the original schedule, we were still able to continue researching CSR in Ukraine, albeit not according to the original design, which to me was an achievement.

The following two days were a flurry of travelling and meetings. Throughout the hectic activity I was becoming aware of my mixed feelings - I was shifting from sadness to satisfaction, bordering on *Schadenfreude*, to surprise, to annoyance and anger. What I experienced in practice was the inability to 'keep an open mind'. Although I had earlier claimed that I had no preconceived notions about my research, it was evident that I was too emotionally involved to claim open-mindedness. Although I tried not to fence my thinking about this project into specific research categories, I did not arrive in Kiev without preconceived ideas about Ukraine. There is no unbiased position. I had certain expectations from this visit. The two days were filled with the expositions of my initial position. I relaxed at the sight of decay because I was expecting to see dilapidation. And what surprised me were the sights and situations that proved me wrong. I was surprised at the excellent level of English of many of our Ukrainian interviewees. I was surprised at the signs of wealth and even luxury in the centre of Kiev. I was sad, but not shocked, to see outdoor toilets in the villages on the outskirts of Kiev, where the size of the cemetery was twice the size of the area populated by houses. There is no view from nowhere. I came to Kiev expecting to find a third-world, poor country, as an expert in CSR, almost like an anthropologist going to research a jungle tribe.

These observations of life in Ukraine were shared by Greg and me, as we discussed them throughout the trip. I had an additional agenda. At the sight of peeling sanatorium-green paint

on the walls of the largest and most prestigious university in Ukraine, I could not ignore the pangs of gloating at the thought that the institution that would never have admitted me as a student because of my '*pyataya grapha*'[6] now welcomed me as a respected researcher. The country that spewed me out without a second thought, now was to become thesubject of my research. The power relations have definitely shifted. But all these emotions that were influencing my research had to be ignored when I was writing the conference paper.

I also felt compelled to ignore my impressions during the interviews. And I feel that those nuances were more telling about the interviewee and his/her approach to CSR and our researching CSR in Ukraine. It was obvious that one interviewee who agreed with Vladislav to a follow-up meeting on short notice did not realise that he was bringing UK researchers with him. When we entered her office, she was just finishing a phone call. She was wearing suit trousers and a turtle-neck sweater, she was laughing at what was said on the other end of the phone. She was still smiling when we were introduced. And then her demeanour changed. She became serious, almost unfriendly. She put on her suit jacket and buttoned it, and I felt at that moment as if a wall was erected between us. Her answers were short and laconic. She kept referring us to the company website. I felt she could not wait for the meeting to end. Since the meeting was unplanned, I had not read the transcript of the initial interview with her prior to it. When I was comparing the transcripts from the meeting with us with the transcript of the initial interview, I could find very little deviation, in specific phrasings and in content in general, which was almost identical to the company CSR report on their website. What it exemplified to me was the limitations of interviews. For whatever reason, this manager wore armour and our interviews could not penetrate it. In light of this, what was the value of that interview?

I recognise now that the visit to Ukraine and writing the conference paper was a momentous occasion in finding a research method I would be comfortable with. This was the first time I openly questioned the value of interviews. To emphasise, I do not suggest that interviews are never useful, but instead want to draw attention to the change in my previous perception of interviews as indispensable for valid research.

During that visit we were introduced to academics from two universities, and were invited to present the findings of our research at a local conference organised by one of them several

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[6] In the former Soviet Union ID (called 'passport'), the fifth rubric (in Russian 'pyataya grapha') was 'nationality' which meant ethnicity. The expression '*pyataya grapha*' has become synonymous with discrimination against Jews and other 'undesirable' ethnic minorities.

months later. On the way back from Ukraine, Greg and I started discussing possible directions for developing the paper, an abstract for which had been accepted for an international conference. By that time I was becoming increasingly uncomfortable with the abstract (Appendix 2). I felt the proposed framework (Garriga and Mele, 2004) would require forcing our findings into limited categories, rather than allowing us to follow whither the findings take us. But when I suggested to Greg that I would like to explore why we suggested the framework in the first place, he seemed to ignore my suggestion, and kept talking about which categories he thought our findings would fall into. He also seemed to interpret the interviews differently from my understanding. I stopped short of arguing with him, and instead I tried to focus on completing the conference paper. I was beginning to think that the very reasons that led me to ask him to mentor me with this project were the reasons that would make writing a joint paper increasingly difficult. Was his experience stopping him from taking risks?

Was I more willing to let go of what seemed safe, while he was holding on to the more certain approach? Discarding our abstract, we risked rejection by the conference conveners, which posed more risk to him, the experienced researcher, than to me, the novice.

I was anxious, the deadlines were tight, and I did not know how to overcome my frustration with the way I structured the abstract and at the same time how to write a conference paper that would be acceptable to my co-author. Sometimes I managed to 'sneak' a personal reflection into the conference paper; the fact that this slotted smoothly into the paper and was not rejected by Greg surprised me.

I started writing the 'shadow paper' as a way to voice my reservations about the conference paper, as I could not stifle them any longer, and initially I had not intended to show it to anyone outside of the PhD group. In the conference paper I included details about my personal experience of growing up in Soviet Ukraine as a background for our research context. What I now find interesting is that I was surprised that a personal experience was unquestionably accepted as a legitimate part of the research paper. This demonstrates that at that stage I was still thinking in dualisms - 'reflection vs. traditional research methods', 'conference vs. shadow paper'.

It was easier to grind my teeth and keep working on finishing the conference paper.

This experience reminds me of a recent conversation I had with an experienced researcher. He forwarded me the freshly accepted authored chapter for an edited book, with a caveat, that the

chapter does not really reflect his understanding of the subject. He openly acknowledged that by the time he had made several revisions, as suggested by the editors, he was no longer happy with the chapter. But he had already invested too much time and effort to back out from that project. Likewise, I had too much investment in the conference paper; I could not jeopardise it by deviating too much from the accepted abstract.

I seemed to be able to produce a conference paper that followed a traditional structure, keeping the appearance of objectivity. At the same time, I had an outlet – the shadow paper - to express my feelings, my thoughts, my confusions.

As the conference paper was progressing, my dissatisfaction with it diminished. I found several areas of discussion very interesting. But just when I started developing those areas, I stopped to think that this was my subjective observation which could not be included. I was still feeling frustrated with the need to stick to the transcript of the interviews, with my inability to write about nuances of our experiences of interviewing that I found more important than what was reflected in the transcripts. What frustrated me most was the awareness that restrictions were self-inflicted. I was censoring my writing, and although the shadow paper allowed some outlet to my frustrations, I could not avoid the feeling that at some stage I'd like to bring the shadow paper into full light.

Researching this tactic later, I found this approach being taken up by others, especially PhD candidates, who publish a reflective narrative of their experience of conducting research, after successfully defending their PhD (see Daigneault et al., 2014, Doloreirt and Sambrook, 2009, Lopez and Medina, 2015)

But, at that stage, an emotion, which I had experienced faintly since the start of the project, intensified, and I felt that I needed to pay attention to it; I had a hunch that making sense of it would help me make sense of other aspects of my research. When I talked with the PhD group about the experience of writing these papers, I voiced my nagging feeling of cheating, of infidelity. I felt I was being unfaithful to my PhD supervisors by working on a project with Greg, and at the same time I felt disloyal to Greg for talking about the Ukrainian project with the PhD group. It was suggested that I might want to try and make sense of this sentiment by reflecting on my understanding of research and what I perceive as legitimate. This shed light on my thinking throughout the project and the writing. Several questions come to the fore: what

is my understanding of research in general? Where does this understanding originate? Where, in light of this understanding, do I see my research fitting?

In the remainder of this chapter I will address those questions.

My current understanding of research

The previous section highlights my struggle to make sense of research, of its boundaries and of various approaches as I have been developing as a researcher. At the start I adopted a very rigid, positivist view. This was affected by my previous schooling and experience at work. When my experience did not fit with that approach, I dismissed the experience as being 'faulty', as statistical error. I believed I could remain an objective researcher. Being introduced to complex responsive processes of relating led to a shift from perceiving myself as a passive observer to an involved researcher. I became aware of the paradoxical nature of the position I attempted to take. By aiming at being an objective researcher, I was seemingly in control of research, but I was not involved with it. By taking a detached position, I condemned myself to a passive acceptance of the findings. Understanding research as complex responsive processes, highlights to me that any decision on my part impacts me and at the same time is impacting others with whom I interact. Therefore, any decision has ethical implications. This shift was anxiety-provoking, as I was questioning my deep beliefs about researching.

Definitions of research are abundant. Some are broad and inclusive, embracing any investigation that contributes to new insights (e.g. REF, 2011). Others are more detailed and include specific steps of a research process (Creswell, 2002). One's understanding of the nature of being (ontology) and the nature of knowledge (epistemology) will determine one's definition of research. Influenced by the 'unity of opposites' embraced by Heraclitus and Hegel (Kahn, 1979, Williams, 1989, Beiser, 2005), the pragmatic philosophy of Mead and Dewey, the processual sociological theories of Elias and Bourdieu, and complexity sciences, I understand being and knowing as interdependent and inseparable social processes. In these processes our being in the world is informing and being informed by our knowing. The way we understand social interaction is informing and being informed by the way we study it. According to this understanding, knowledge is not an objective product of investigating, rather knowing arises in these processes of continuous becoming. On this understanding objectivity in research is impossible. Therefore, researching CSR means researching a socially constructed, evolving and changing phenomenon, a social object, and the processes of researching impact and are being

impacted by that social object. Researching CSR involves making sense of CSR. In taking this approach, I draw on Holland (a professor of engineering, computer science, and psychology), who stated that '[t]he essence [of science] is comprehension and explanation' (in Waldrop 1992: 255). Following this, I understand my research as exploring experience in order to gain insights and expand understanding of the practice of CSR.

I was initially drawn to complex responsive processes of relating because it offered insights through which I could make sense of my experience. The perspective emphasises participation and reflexive understanding (Stacey and Mowles, 2016). This means understanding from within the experience, taking experience as a starting point. Clough (2004 in Cassell et al., 2009) raises the question of the ways of researching when 'the boundaries between subjects and objects are opaque and fuzzy' (ibid: 515). Taken a step further, rejecting the subject-object dualism, one becomes the subject and the object of the research.

Many writers have alluded to the need for more CSR research at the 'individual level of analysis' (e.g. Frynas and Yamahaki, 2016, Aguinis and Glavas, 2012, Den Hond et al., 2007, Wood, 2007). This usually means examining causal (mainly of the efficient 'if… then…' kind) relationships between managers or employees and some proxy for measuring CSR engagement (Alt et al., 2015, Boddy, 2015, Boesso et al., 2015, Madsen and Bingham, 2014, Santhosh and Baral, 2015, Shaukat et al., 2016). From a perspective informed by complexity sciences there are no different levels of analysis as global patterns emerge in local interactions, which become the focus of research. There can also be no search for efficient causality (direct link between cause and effect); because people always interact locally with other people, what arises is continuously iterated patterns of interaction that are potentially stable and changing at the same time (Stacey and Mowles, 2016).

If we understand organisations and institutions as ongoing patterns of interactions, or generalised tendencies to act in similar ways by a large number of people (see Chapter 2), it is important to understand how those norms of conduct are interpreted by an individual, and how generalised patterns of behaviour are particularised locally. In the 'shadow paper' I draw attention to the ways I particularised the social act of research. I explore how my understanding of research was changing throughout the project and how in different interactions I had to reinterpret the meaning of research, at times in collaboration and at times in conflict with others. This understanding of institutions has specific implications for research. How one participates in local interactions and paying attention to one's subjective experience becomes central.

Our (intra) actions matter – each one reconfigures the world in its becoming – and yet they never leave us; they are sediment in our becoming, they become us. And even in our becoming there is no 'I' separate from the intra-active becoming of the world. Causality is an entangled affair… (Barad, 2007: 394).

This 'entanglement' means that there is no objective world that is out there, separate from our 'intra-actions'. This is consistent with the ideas of Dewey (1925 [1997]) and James (1909 [1996]), who suggest we form objective understanding of the world by paying attention to our subjective experience in the world. Our objective experience is subjectively formed. In this dissertation, the method of exploring CSR is paying attention to my participation in the local interactions that I understand as CSR.

Examining and reflecting on my own experience, which is always both social and individual at the same time, is paying attention to how I interact with others when we come to recognise our practice as CSR. My experience of CSR is always in relation to others, and at the same time it is embodied, involving thinking and feeling, as well as acting. Making sense of that embodied experience involves constructing narratives (Cunliffe and Coupland, 2012). Researching one's experience means creating a narrative of thinking, feeling, acting and making sense. Therefore, the research method in this dissertation is writing and iterating reflexive narratives of my interacting with others while particularising CSR.

The narratives that I'm writing are reflexive, and this particular feature distinguishes narratives as research from works of literature. The initial narratives are written as a diary, in which I record activities that may or may not become significant to my understanding of CSR. Each separate diary entry in itself is usually unremarkable. However, reflecting on those entries, I recognise certain patterns of interaction that are significant to my sense-making. Exploring those patterns further, I write narratives about particular experiences that spark my interest, unsettle me, which make me feel compelled to probe the experience further. Tracing the development of the heroic nature of CSR (Chapter 4), for example, was prompted by rereading several consecutive entries, which started by me dismissing my work as non-CSR, getting angry at that dismissal in the following entry, which led me to think about why such strong feelings arose in the first place.

The narratives are abstracted from my experience, providing some simplification of that experience, what Stacey refers to as 'first-order abstracting' (2013, Stacey and Mowles, 2016).

This brings me to another significant feature of reflective narratives as my research method. Narratives are used in other methodologies to analyse behaviour (e.g. Karaman, 2014, Daigneault et al., 2014, Baden and Parkes, 2013). The purpose is usually to generalise from those narratives, to create some sort of categorising, measurement, identify regularities, or, in short, to abstract further from the experience, which Stacey (2013, Stacey and Mowles, 2016) calls 'second-order abstracting'. Paying closer attention to my experience, I do not intend to generalise in that sense (I will discuss generalisability of my research later in this chapter). The aim is to explore the interaction, to understand the motives and thinking that contributed to the way I relate to others. In this respect, the reflective narratives are individual, as I can only reflect on my own thinking, feeling and participating in interactions. I can explore my biases and the reasons for choosing a particular focus. Yet, my narratives are also social, because I am trying to locate my thinking in the scholarly literature, 'in the traditions of thought of [my] society, differentiating between these traditions in a critically aware manner' (Stacey and Mowles 2016: 510). Reflexive narratives explicate my interpretation of the experience and my ideology. Yet, these always arise in the social context, in relation to others (Cassell et al., 2009).

Researching in this tradition requires awareness of 'involved detachment' (Elias, 1956). Elias claims that we are never fully involved with or completely detached from our experience. There are always degrees of involvement and detachment, at the same time, in anything we do, including researching. Abstracting from our experience, having a more detached understanding of it, provides different insights: 'the research process is a process of estrangement, which creates an orientation in which some things come into view that had previously been obscured' Ahmed (2012: 10).

To summarise the methodology so far, I'm paying attention to my experience, and write reflective narratives to make sense of it. Another important feature of my research method is the iterative nature of those narratives. Reading the narratives always brings up questions: why did I behave in a certain way? What were my assumptions? Am I still understanding the situation the way I did when it happened or when I initially wrote my narrative? Yet, reading my own narratives is of only limited value, so the narratives are shared with my PhD group, which consists of several current and past PhD students and supervisors. We meet regularly, every 6-8 weeks. Prior to the meetings we share the narratives with other group members and discuss them during the meetings. The colleagues call attention to the points that need clarifying, question inclusion of some aspects and exclusion of others, and comment on the literature we draw on, and the way we make sense of the experience on which we reflect. As

each of us comes with 'social baggage' (the social context on which we draw in our sense-making), the iterations of our narratives inevitably reflect wider social contexts and deeper understanding of the narrative. This resonates with the method of researching on the DMan programme, as described by Stacey and Griffin (2005), and bears similarity to action research as defined by Reason and Bradbury (2001, cited in Reason, 2002: 169): 'It [action research] seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others'.

The strength of this method is in the richness of the detail, in evoking emotions, in insight that can only be gained from reflecting from 'within'. Its limitation maybe seen in its focus – one person's experience. This focus is usually not taken in CSR research and, therefore, is innovative.

Although the process of writing is individual, and even sometimes described as lonely (Gannon-Leary et al., 2011, Bendemra, 2013), as a researcher I always relate to others, either by communicating with others, or by silently communicating with myself. I also write with the reader(s) in mind. From the perspective of complex responsive processes individual and social are not separate, but arise simultaneously in human interaction and are features of human interdependence (Mead, 1934). Following this understanding, the research is both individual and social at the same time.

Reflection, reflexivity and generalisability in my research

The terms 'reflective' and 'reflexive' are sometimes used interchangeably (Alvesson and Ashcraft, 2009, Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2009). In this dissertation, I refer to 'reflection/reflective' and 'reflexivity/reflexive' as related, but distinct terms. Haynes (2012) makes a useful distinction between the two, which resonates with the approach taken by Stacey and colleagues (Stacey et al., 2000, Stacey, 2007a). 'Reflective' refers to the narratives of the 'first-level abstraction' (see Stacey and Mowles, 2016). By this I mean thinking about my experience, asking what happened and why. I use 'reflexive' to signify thinking about my thinking, asking questions, such as: why I was thinking that? In what tradition of thought can I locate my understanding? So the early iterations of my narratives were reflective. Making sense of those narratives, relating the narratives to the relevant literature, I become reflexive.

In this sense reflexive narratives are not 'a form of autobiographical self-study in which the private experience of the self can engage and illuminate the experience of others who share the same practice setting' (Daigneault et al., 2014: 270). My reflexive narratives are not forms of

'self-study'. If I were to label them as 'studies' I would say they are studies of interactions. Rather than learning a lesson that can be applied in a similar 'practice setting', my narrative can be relevant to others (generalisable) in so far as they recognise the themes arising in their own experience. Although my personal reflections cannot be generalised into wider populations, the feelings evoked may be recognisable. I intend to achieve reliability, by others in my community of research and practice finding my interpretations plausible (Brower et al., 2000).

The rigour in my research is achieved by my reflective narratives making sense to others. My research must capture the interest of others, resonating with their experience. A personal account of my experience must relate to general aspects of their experience of life in organisations, by highlighting the uncertainty and emotions of everyday practice. In addition, my narratives must make sense to others in the way I relate them to the wider traditions of thought. Stacey and Mowles (2016: 511) claim that the value of this kind of research is in being more 'reality congruent'. I understand this as better reflecting the experience of the reader. By providing contextualised narratives of my experience of practising CSR, including uncertainty, anxiety and power struggles, I hope to engage the reader, to connect to some aspects of his or her experience. I also hope that the reader finds my engagement with the literature 'persuasive, or at least plausible or convincing' (ibid).

My understanding of research is affected by complexity writers, who acknowledge that 'at heart, … research is about the telling of stories – stories that explain what the world is, and how the world came to be what it is' (Doyne Farmer in Waldrop, 1992: 318). Reflective narrative as a research methodology is part and parcel of understanding the aim of research in these terms – making sense of the social world, specifically of the social object of CSR. A complexity-informed perspective emphasises social interaction, paying attention to individual experience. To make sense of the way I, in interaction with others, contribute to the ever-evolving meaning of CSR, I interpret and reinterpret in the living present my reflections on my experience, based on value judgements. As such, there can be no claim to objectivity.

This does not render my research lacking in rigour, 'so long as the analyst makes explicit her or his reasoning and the standards being used for judgement and interpretation' (Schmidt, 2014: 335). I understand this quote as an appeal to engage reflexively with my narratives. Reflexive engagement with the narratives, explicating my theoretical biases and affiliations, is central to this dissertation. The rigour in my research is also achieved by being credible (Lincoln and Guba 1985), by remaining true to my original narratives, often at the cost of revealing my

vulnerabilities. Although iterating the narrative inevitably means making changes, introducing different understandings, and editing the work, sometimes I reproduce excerpts from my diary verbatim. Below is an example of such a passage

> Thinking about the analogy between therapy and PhD group discussions. I am quite aware of myself. In therapy I often find myself saying that I know what such-and-such means, but the other part of my behaviour or reaction remains unclear. I see the role of my therapist as raising a mirror to the part in my thinking that remains opaque to me. Therefore I find it important to be honest with her, as it allows her to hear what I'm not saying. In the same way in the PhD group, discussing my writing, I am being asked questions that illuminate areas of my writing that I am not aware of. And the importance of being honest in my writing is clear, because the value of the comments I am receiving from my colleagues, depends on the honesty of my writing. In other words, I receive what I give. If my writing is honest, their comments will be on that honest narrative, which in turn can be developed and the obscure (to me) aspects can become clearer. Lack of honesty, on the other hand, will probably lead to flat one-dimensional responses. And even if somehow the comments are rich and multi-dimensional, their value would be questionable. To return to the analogy with therapy, in one of the sessions I told Nina about my dream, which was disturbing, but I could understand the underlying meaning of many aspects of it. To allow me to work through the obscure aspect she asked me a question I could not ask myself, as at the time I could not see the importance of a small detail. Had I concealed that detail, which was quite unflattering to me, I probably would not have got the response from Nina that helped me work through a very uncomfortable, but important issue. If I'm trying to make sense of my experience, I need to expose my experience, even when some aspects of it I'd like to keep hidden, because my colleagues can only help me to make sense of what I'm writing (From research diary on 15.12.13).

This excerpt is an example of the sense-making processes in which I engage. It demonstrates that those passages are often confused, muddled, disordered and, more often than not, lack coherence and consistency. I resist editing, as the raw material reflects the rawness of my experience. By leaving those passages unedited, I hope to reproduce that intensity of feelings and thoughts in my reflective narratives.

Qualitative researchers agree that a single set of evaluative criteria is inconsistent with the uniquely specific and contextualised nature of interpretivist research. Yet, all research must be

evaluated. I agree with Schwartz-Shea (2014: 142) that 'giving reasons for our judgements to the members of our epistemic communities is the best that we can do'. In this chapter I have explained the reasons for choosing the research method to explore my research question 'How is CSR understood and practiced at the UK HEI from a practitioner's perspective?'

Ethics of reflecting on own experience

Often when I describe my research method, I am asked about the ethics of writing reflective narratives. Do I obtain consent from people to be included in my research? How do I write about the people with whom I interact, preserving their anonymity and integrity? Writing about my practice, I cannot know which interaction I will find significant and, therefore, cannot inform every person I interact with every time about the possibility of writing about him or her in my final narrative. To address this issue, I initially informed my colleagues about my research method. I continually remind my colleagues about the possibility of reflecting on our conversation. The purpose of the narratives is not to assess or analyse the behaviour of others, but to explore how I relate to others and why. Power relations are inevitable in our interactions, and exploring them provides insights into our working together in organisations.

Having said that, whenever appropriate, individuals are anonymised to preserve their privacy. Often full anonymity cannot be ensured. It is clear that in reflecting about my practice, there cannot be organisational anonymity. Parker (2014) is very disparaging of his former employer, but giving it a fictitious title (Euro University) did not prevent others in his community from identifying the university he is criticising. Today's technology can link me to my workplace in a matter of seconds. And since mentioning some roles is imperative to emphasising a specific issue (e.g. in Chapter 6 I refer to a comment made by the Dean. The fact that it was the Dean who made the comment is of great importance as it explains my strong reaction), mentioning the specific person, even by his or her role, is essential for preserving the integrity of the narrative. My dissertation spans the tenure of three Deans and by keeping the narratives related to the Dean gender-neutral and by anonymising the name, I trust the anonymity of the Deans has been preserved. Another example is the inclusion of my correspondence with a senior manager from the university (Chapter 5). Initially I kept the title explicit. Upon rereading the narrative, I concluded that the specific title was not germane to the story, and identifying the individual as a senior manager was sufficient.

To emphasise, I cannot make the decision about the ethics of a narrative before I write and iterate it. From complex responsive processes perspective there can be no one single ethical guide to follow in order to achieve this. It is impossible to pre-empt every possible ethical dilemma 'in the sense of thought before action' (Stacey and Griffin 2005: 26). I judge the ethics of every situation as it arises. In making choices about our behaviour, we constantly make choices regarding what is appropriate at that time; we assess how our decisions impact ourselves and others. Those are ethical choices, even if we do not refer to them as such. Ethics is not a set of rules that one must adhere to. Ethics continuously evolves in our enacting together in local interactions the norms of our society and our values. Ethics is an emerging and continuously evolving negotiation with those with whom I interact and with myself (Griffin, 2002).

Relating my research method to autoethnography and micro-foundations

Often following a presentation about my research, I am asked to explain how my method relates to autoethnography. Autoethnography encompasses awide range of approaches, whose purpose is to 'describe and systematically analyse (*graphy*) personal experience (*auto*) in order to understand cultural experience (*ethno*) (Ellis et al., 2010: 273). Like autoethnographers I write stories of my experience. I too problematise often uncritically accepted ideas (Alvesson, 2009). There are many other similarities: reflective narrative writers, similar to autoethnographic researchers, give a voice to the practitioners and engage reflexively with their own practice, focusing on the everyday experiences (Ellis et al., 2010). Reflexivity, recognising one's own beliefs and assumptions, is a central tenet in autoethnographic research (Cunliffe, 2003). Those researchers recognise that there is no position from nowhere (Denzin and Lincoln, 2013). Like autoethnographers, I produce a 'thick description' of experience (Greetz, 1973: 10), and as I am reflexively making sense of my experiences, I find the experience of writing my narrative therapeutic (Kiesinger, 2002). The ethical questions I raised in the previous section, have also been raised in relation to autoethnography (Doloriert and Sambrook, 2012).

Researchers adopting the reflective narrative methodology have faced similar criticism to autoethnographers. Both methodologies have sometimes been criticised for a lack of academic rigour, subjectivity and even have been accused of navel-gazing (Ellis et al., 2010). These criticisms have been addressed elsewhere (in the above section for reflective narratives, and by autoethnographers (e.g. Bochner, 2000)), and it is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss them. The purpose of mentioning them is to highlight major similarities between the two research methods.

There are, however, differences between the two approaches. One major difference is in the purpose of the research, and the other is in the way researchers approach the idea of individual and society. One of the aims of autoethnographic research is to give a voice to 'experiences shrouded in silence' (Ellis et al., 2010), to topics that are often taboo, such as sexual harassment (Parry and Boyle, 2009) or expressing breast milk at work (van Amsterdam, 2015), or to the often unheard voices in organisations, such as immigrant women of colour in leadership (Ngunjiri and Hernandez, 2017), Muslim women in football (Cox et al., 2017), or asylum seekers (Kynsilehto and Puumala, 2015). I, however, approach my research from a fairly privileged position – as a Director and a Principal Lecturer. In my work, I do not intend to expose the unmentioned. Both the context and the topic of my research are mainstream – CSR in a HEI. The purpose of my reflective narratives is to explore and to make sense of my everyday experience, thus explore what it means to practise CSR.

Another major difference is the approach to the general and the particular. Autoethnography aims to explore personal experiences in order to understand the cultural practices (Ellis et al., 2010), 'directly linking the micro level with the macro cultural and structural levels' (Allen-Collinson, 2013: 281). This points to autoethnographic research being embedded in the systems thinking, separating between the micro and the macro. Being informed by complex responsive processes, reflective narrative researchers reject this dualism (see previous chapter), adopting Elias's concept of figuration (Elias, 1978). In this dissertation I demonstrate how a general idea (CSR) is being particularised by a specific player (me), in a specific context (HEI) at a specific time. I argue that my work demonstrates how global patterns arise and are sustained in local interactions, both impacting and being impacted by each other at the same time.

Similarly, I have been asked to clarify how researching my own practice – local interactions - relates to micro-foundations. The concept of micro-foundations originated in economics, as an attempt to provide a better understanding of the role of individual firms within the economy (Eichner, 1983, Eichner, 1976). The concept has been adopted by scholars from other disciplines, and specifically it has become a major theme in strategic management, with an aim to improve understanding of 'exploratory mechanisms located at the "micro-level", that is the level of individual action and (strategic) interaction' (Abell et al., 2008: 489).

The idea that 'micro' is the basis for 'macro' is firmly embedded in systems thinking, where micro systems are parts of a larger system, and an output of micro-processes contributes to the behaviour of the system. As Eichner (1983: 136) states, 'if that macroeconomic behaviour… is

to be adequately explained, it is necessary that macro model rest [sic] on a solid micro foundation'. Based on this approach, the macro and the micro are linked, but still separate. This thinking has permeated CSR research as well, and in a recent study Hafenbradl and Waeger (2017: 1582) attempt to isolate the reasons for executives' commitment to CSR in order to 'advance knowledge about the micro-foundations of CSR'. This suggests that the macro system (CSR), rests on micro-foundations (executives' beliefs).

As described above, informed by Elias's concept of figuration (Elias, 1978), I do not make a distinction between macro and micro. Rejecting the macro - micro dichotomy, I suggest that there is no global CSR being built on a multitude of CSR micro-interactions. Instead, I understand CSR as a social object, a global pattern of interactions. As any social object, CSR arises and is being particularised in many interdependent players' interactions, impacting and being impacted by local interactions at the same time.

Summary

In this chapter I detailed my research method. It spans many years of my evolving thinking about research. I started the chapter with a quote from my research diary from the early days of my PhD, when I was still thinking that only collecting or analysing data, or at least specific reading, can be considered 'researchy'. What I had not realised at the time was that what I did next, 'go back to my thoughts about my work', was as much part of research as other activities, that I recognised as 'researchy'. This chapter traced my developing thinking about research and research methods, from the early understanding of research as a detached objective enterprise, to my current understanding of research as complex responsive processes of relating. Researching is highly personal and social at the same time. Reflecting on the narratives requires a high level of exposure. So why do I do this? To me it is important, as it demonstrates that my thinking has not been straightforward and logical, but messy and confused. Muddling through confusion, with and in relation to others, trying to make sense of my experience, is my method.

Chapter 4 - Making sense of my practice; what is and what is not perceived as CSR?

Life tends to be an accumulation of a lot of mundane decisions, which often gets ignored
(David Byrne)

Introduction

The aim of this dissertation is to explore CSR practice from a practitioner's perspective. Yet, every time I think about my daily practice, I find the prospect of discussing actually 'doing' CSR paralizing. A coffee-room chat in 2015 triggered a different way of thinking about my work. My colleague and I were gossiping about possible candidates for the Dean's role. When Martin's name was mentioned, I expressed my dissatisfaction with his 'narrow focus' and 'lack of imagination'. I mentioned how in the process of writing the current HBS strategic plan, his suggestion for community engagement was adopting a charity. In telling this my sense of disappointment and indignation resurfaced. I do not disagree with adopting a charity as part of our community engagement, but I believe so much more can be done to meaningfully engage with the local community. In relaying this I uttered 'this disregards all my hard work in trying to come up with imaginative ways to bring CSR into what we do'. As I was saying this, I realised I have worked hard and I did find some creative ways to make sure that our community engagement fits with what we do at HBS. What was it that I did to achieve this?

In order to clarify how my work relates to the general understanding of CSR I started searching for descriptions of CSR engagement in academic writings and practitioners' accounts. I raked through recruitment websites for 'CSR executive' job descriptions; I read the guidelines for industry standards, searching for resonance with my work. The more I read, the more frustrated I became with myself, for not being able to identify my work in the hundreds of pages in front of me, and for not being able to articulate my practice. After all, when asked by others about my role, I come up with a long list of 'CSR engagements'. So the next step for me was to turn to the interviews in which I was asked about my role, and to revisit the documents I've submitted in the last nine years to various management meetings, reports, presentations and committees.

Pages and pages of documents in front of me gave me some sense of security, but not enough confidence to start writing about my practice. Reflecting on my own work is the hardest thing I have had to do in relation to my role so far. Anything presented to others, whether in a formal

document or a more relaxed interview, has been directed for the consumption of others. This is not to say it is not true or embellished. It does not conceal the truth, as I perceive it, but also does not reveal all of my truth. It is presented from a detached perspective, talking about my work in a third person – 'The unit' - or in the plural 'we'. Reflecting, on the other hand, requires relinquishing the protecting, safe detached stance. Reflecting carries the danger of exposing aspects of practice that I would rather were obscure.

And then I thought I had found a way to start my describing of a practitioner's perspective. In April I received the following e-mail from the Office of the Vice Chancellor

> Dear All,
>
> Following on from the new strategic plan it is proposed to set up a group as part of the Community and Partners strand to discuss and promote the University's engagement with the local community. This group will meet twice yearly to give an opportunity to discuss the current and planned projects being undertaken across the University and the Students Union. The group will primarily focus on work undertaken in and around Hatfield and will aim to create a greater awareness of the projects the University is undertaking within the town.
>
> If your School is involved in undertaking any projects in and around Hatfield, or you plan to be involved in the future, could you please suggest a suitable representative to attend this group? (Lambert, 2015)

I thought that by reproducing the slide that was forwarded to the participants in that meeting (Figure 1), and by discussing the specifics of some of the items, I would be able to overcome my writer's block.
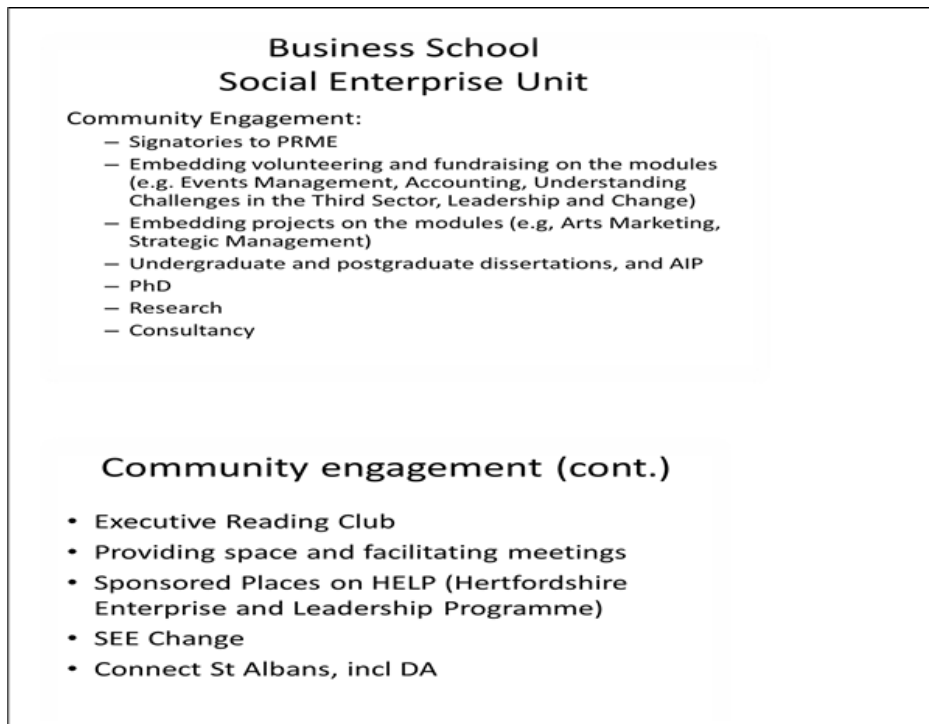
Figure 1. Presentation slides for the Community Engagement Forum 27.5.15

The need to fill my desk with copious documents, bringing in the presentation slide, and reading the transcripts of the interviews I had given, was a way of dealing with my anxiety about exposing my self, about contemplating my practice in CSR terms. Even now, reflecting on my experience of approaching the writing about my practice, I feel my heartrate increasing. But throughout the process of writing this dissertation I learned to accept anxiety as an inseparable part of practice and researching. Nonetheless, I find that I have a lot to say, that I would like to make sense of yet more narratives. Perhaps I should abandon the quest for 'discussing the daily CSR practice', and focus on what attracts my curiosity.

Is this CSR?

The enormous interest in CSR in the past few decades produced consensus about the nebulous nature of the definition of CSR (see Chapter 1). Attempts to analyse existing definitions led to sets of equally vague dimensions of CSR. For example, Sarkar and Searchy (2016) revisited 110 definitions and found there were 'six recurrent, enduring dimensions that underpin the CSR concept. These dimensions are economic, social, ethical, stakeholders, sustainability and voluntary' (ibid: 1423). The main difference between these and Carroll's four responsibilities – economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic – is the explicit recognition of the voluntary dimension. Most scholars agree that CSR is about *organisational* undetermined *duties* to

unspecified *society* (Van Oosterhout and Heugens, 2008). At first glance the following two narratives do not fit even the broadest definition of CSR. The first narrative describes a situation that occurred several years ago; the second occurred more recently. First, I will present them as they were written in my research diary, following which I will draw parallels between the two.

In March 2012 I wrote the following entry:

A seemingly minor incident sticks in my mind so I might as well spend some time thinking about it. On my way to work early one Saturday several weeks ago, I was disgusted with a vista of bottles and cans strewn on the lawn just in front of the main entrance. I have no idea who did this, but it was clear that the place had been a venue for a serious drinking party. I was thinking that the maintenance department ought to take care of it immediately, not to wait until Monday to clear the mess. As I entered the car park, seeing several families walking towards the building, I asked the security guard whether it was an Open Day. It was. I felt ashamed that the first impression of the potential students of MY university is that of alcohol-infused mess (on second thought, some potential students might be attracted by this). After visiting several universities with Dana (my daughter) recently, I'm quite sensitive to first impressions, and I assume other parents are as well. As I entered the kitchen to make tea, I met Rachel, a very young colleague from the study abroad office. We exchanged our indignation about the state of the front lawn. And then Rachel surprised me by saying that she thought that everyone driving in noticed the rubbish, and many probably felt that 'someone' ought to do something. But no one reported this to Estates. So she did. And I thought – well done, girl; I told her as much, without the 'girl'. I consider myself to be a responsible employee; I'm sure others feel the same about themselves. I am also supposed to be paying attention to 'responsibility', but somehow I did not think it was my responsibility to phone Estates to make sure they are aware of the need to clean the entrance. I definitely do not think this was beneath me; I have phoned them complaining about other maintenance issues. But perhaps those issues had been directly relating to me and my convenience. And the lawn strewn with evidence of last night's activity did not directly impact my ability to write a paper in my clean(ish) office. This incident, as insignificant as it might seem at first, raised questions about responsibility – what am I responsible for and who am I responsible to? Do I perceive my role as director of SEU and, more recently, PRME champion as the full extent of my responsibility and, as a result, the boundaries of my research? I do not feel upset

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with myself, this is not another attempt at self-criticism. But this does raise more questions than I have answers for at this stage.

And then in 2013:

> Another project that I had not intended to take on, but felt compelled to undertake, was my participation in the Green Impact awards. When an e-mail arrived from a University Sustainability Manager stating
>
> I am writing to you as you were named in the Business School's planning round submission as the member of the management team within the SBU who would take responsibility for sustainability activities (appendix 6 – sustainability). The submission noted that in order to develop at least one Green Impact Team within the SBU during 2013/14 that it would be useful to have discussions with a member of the Environment and Sustainability Team. (Mayfield, 2013)
>
> I was very surprised. Who suggested that I was the person to take this responsibility? Why was I not consulted? The dean confirmed I was indeed tasked with this in my absence, and asked me to 'take a look at it'. I met with the Environment and Sustainability managers and, having my dissertation in mind, agreed to sign for the Green Impact. I was interested to see what this entails, how this (environmental) side of CSR works at the University. I also thought it would be much easier to sign myself, than trying to convince my colleagues to form a team. [In retrospect I was right in that respect. At the end of the year I presented the scheme at the HBS away day. The comments were encouraging; some colleagues said how they might be interested to sign. Getting them to sign was more difficult. It was getting PRME[7] embedding all over again, and I had to concentrate my efforts on projects that I felt were more consistent with the remit of SEU, so I stopped nagging. Interestingly, I myself have never participated since, justifying this by saying 'we do all this anyway', 'we do not have time to engage with the bureaucracy of it']. Getting my roommates to sign was easy; I promised to deal with the paperwork myself. I was surprised to realise that we would tick many boxes by just continuing doing what we'd been doing in the office, and just recording this in the official diary. To tick other boxes we were becoming somewhat creative. Car-sharing, for example, would give us extra points. At the

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[7] In Chapter 6 I discuss this in detail.

auditing meeting, my roommate and I remembered that she often offered a ride to our supervisor for the PhD meeting. We mentioned this to the auditor, and duly got our extra points. By phrasing our team's engagement in the 'Green Impact' terms, we achieved the Bronze Award. The delicate web woven by many demands and intents, conveniences and necessities, remains obscure.

Reviewing my notes, I keep coming back to these two seemingly unrelated narratives that I initially tagged as 'non-SEU'. Since becoming the director of the SEU, I've come to equate CSR practice with my work in SEU and later also with PRME. As a result, the two narratives had been put aside; for me non-SEU became non-CSR. Yet, my attention kept being drawn to them, and rereading them for yet another time, I've come to realise they ARE about CSR. Further consideration reveals that these narratives are about my own participation in and contribution to the university's CSR agenda. These narratives also draw attention to how I am becoming identified with CSR in UH, and how the contacts I am receiving reveal what others see as constituting CSR, and how their definition of themselves and of others are evolving. By paying attention to these incidents I am able to explore how and why individuals get involved in and contribute to the evolving institution-wide patterns. They are about individual actions that in conjunction with many individual actions of many others emerge as the University CSR engagement.

Motives for CSR

As C in CSR stands for 'Corporate', it is not surprising that the vast majority of CSR literature addresses organisations' engagement with CSR (Aguinis and Glavas, 2012). The writers talk about a 'firm's engagement' and 'firm's motivation' as if a firm is an entity capable of these distinctly human activities and emotions. Elsewhere I've explored the limitations of this approach; I highlight it here to demonstrate that this approach also leads to neglecting the individual motivation in CSR literature. In this chapter I explore what motivates individuals to engage in CSR projects. According to Dhanesh (2012) very little research has focused on employees. Within this limited body of research, the consensus is that the employee attitude to CSR is mainly influenced by the 'tone at the top' (Collier and Esteban, 2007). Some authors state unequivocally that 'ethical leadership contributes to the success of CSR initiatives' (Godkin, 2015: 15), producing models of harnessing the managers' attitudes and behaviours in order to influence employee behaviour (Maon et al., 2009). Those who pay attention to employee motivations (e.g. Blackman et al., 2013, Aguilera et al., 2007), link individual

motives to an organisation's CSR engagement, exploring how an organisation's attitudes to CSR impact individual employee's CSR engagement.

The main merit of this strand of literature is that it addresses individual motivation. My critique of it is based on the way the authors approach this subject matter. Although they talk about 'the individual', they are not addressing a specific individual, but an individual as a level of analysis, aggregating the findings about all individuals in their research into one rubric. But each individual has a different understanding of and responds differently to the managers' attitudes. This seems like a truism; nevertheless, this simple assumption is being disregarded when all employees are seen as a single unit. For example, Ditlev-Simonsen (2015) conducted an empirical study, performing a statistically robust analysis of her data, into the links between a firm's CSR and employee commitment, and found a positive correlation between the two. An often-quoted Greening and Turban (2000) paper presents seemingly strong evidence of a firm's CSR performance affecting its attractiveness to a potential employee. But we must not be swayed by statistics, as sophisticated as they might be; statistical analysis can only test a population of incidents, not a specific incident. So despite the conclusion that overall employees care about a company's CSR, we are no wiser about individual employee X's attitude towards her company's CSR. I do not dispute the robustness of statistics in these specific research articles, but I wish to raise the limitation of statistics when trying to understand individual motivations.

Throughout this dissertation I come across as critical of my organisation's managers' approach to CSR, questioning their commitment, sincerity and motivations. There is no question that my perception of their approach has impacted my motivation for engaging in CSR projects. However, the impact has not been as straightforward as the literature would lead us to believe. At times my motivation has been tested, but I remain strongly committed to practising CSR. It is clear that not all employees at UH feel the same about CSR. Again, mentioning this might seem redundant, but relying on the empirical findings we may think that the commitment of all employees has been shifting according to the managers' interest in and engagement with CSR.

Aguilera et al. (2007) propose three distinct types of employees' motives for adopting CSR projects: instrumental, relational and morality-based. I agree that a combination of these three motives influenced my decision to undertake a specific project and my attitude to CSR. I suggest, however, that we must understand that those motives are not distinct, but interconnected. My motives to get involved with 'Green Impact' or Rachel's motives to call

estates, were not 'ordered in an upward hierarchy such that employees will exert the most pressure on organizations to engage in CSR when their needs for meaningful existence are paramount, followed by belongingness and control', as suggested by Aguilera et al. (2007: 843). I can only attest to my motives, and I certainly did not get involved in 'Green Impact' because of morality-based motives. Thinking about other projects I initiated and got involved with, I cannot agree with the claim by Aguilera et al. there is some sort of hierarchy of motives. The narratives presented in this dissertation demonstrate a less neat arrangement – intermingled, often confused and sometimes unrecognised motives that led me to adopting or rejecting any project.

Emerging CSR

Moreover, our individual interconnected motives also interlink with those of others. Ditlev-Simonsen (2015) claims that decisions about CSR are usually taken by the senior managers of organisations. I agree that CSR policies are often made by senior managers, but those policies are implemented employees regardless of their seniority. In this section I draw attention to how (what in retrospect is seen as) CSR arises in individual actions and interactions of different employees, not just the managers, of an organisation. Although the university's strategic objectives include 'Positively improving our impact on the environment' and 'Investing resources to develop a vibrant university town' (UH, 2015), yet it was Rachel's initiative that ultimately resulted in a cleaner environment.

My decision to include a 'community project' in one of the modules I teach was not original; I was inspired by participating in a similar project while on a non-academic course run by another colleague. I am aware of at least two colleagues who incorporated charity projects into their modules long before SEU was established. Yet, these initiatives were not recognised as CSR or community engagement, nor were they perceived as CSR by those colleagues, until I started producing reports, articles and presentations gathering them under the SEU/PRME umbrella. I wonder how many other 'CSR engagements' have been initiated by non-managers in my workplace and in other organisations, but are not recognised as CSR until they find their way into some management report?

Implications of understanding CSR as the organisations' responsibility

Baden and Harwood (2012) highlight the impact CSR terminology has on behaviour, and especially ethical behaviour in business. I suggest that the terminology also has an impact on us, the researchers, when we come to analyse that behaviour, and perhaps using CSR terminology leads to most researchers focusing on organisations' responsibilities and behaviour. This emphasis has implications for the individual's understanding of

I am very fortunate to be able to deliver lectures on CSR to a large number of students, in my role as PRME champion. The widespread assumption about CSR being an organisational rather than individual issue that underpins the CSR definitions, such as the one by the European Commission (EC, 2011), is evident when I discuss the issue with the students. When talking to the final year students, I find they are able to cite CSR initiatives, such as outreach programmes, energy conservation or volunteering. Most of them are familiar with Carroll's pyramid, and understand, or at least claim to understand, that to be considered responsible the organisations must fulfil four responsibilities: economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic (Carroll, 1991). I then show them a picture of a group of students standing under the big 'no smoking' sign at the main entrance, some smoking and others chatting to the smokers. When I ask about the smokers most agree that they are wrong; if smoking is illegal in that area, they should move. Yet, when I draw their attention to the non-smokers and ask what is their responsibility, many say that they have no responsibility; it is university's responsibility to enforce the regulations. Even when I point out that by standing next to the smokers and not moving to where smoking is permitted the friends are enabling irresponsible behaviour, the majority of students always continue to say that it is not the non-smokers' responsibility. I am always perplexed by this; how do they not see what is so obvious to me, that it is all of our responsibility not to enable breaking the law. Yet, perhaps I should not be surprised. Their response resembles my approach, when I was greeted by mess on the Open Day – calling the estates was not my responsibility. These attitudes are consistent with the approach taken in the literature – CSR is the organisation's business.

I keep repeating this 'exercise' hoping this might contribute, albeit in a minor way, to a different understanding of CSR. I hope the students will start understanding that the University cannot do anything - only people, employees, students, and others who associate themselves with the University, can act. Rachel did; she did not wait for 'the university' to take responsibility. My friend does, by turning the lights off every time she leaves her office. I have noticed myself and

other colleagues have started doing the same. Many of us have been recycling printer cartridges since the facility became available, regardless of 'Green Impact'. In conducting a review of the HBS modules, I found many more colleagues introducing the topics of responsibility, ethics and sustainability into their teaching. The examples are too many to mention. The point I am making is that all these 'small acts of responsibility' in interaction with other acts are performed by embodied, rather than just legal, persons. And in those many interrelated acts of responsibility my university's CSR has been emerging.

It is conceivable that using the terminology of CSR the researchers and the practitioners focus on major and measurable outcomes, while losing sight of those 'small acts of responsibility' in which CSR is emerging.

Small acts of sensemaking

The aim of this research is to make sense of my practice. It might have been expected that in a work that centres on sensemaking I would make links to Weick (1995). Yet, there is no reference to his seminal book in this dissertation. In this section I suggest a reason for focusing on the ways the concept of 'sensemaking' has been taken up by organisational scholars.

In organisational literature the term 'sensemaking' has become associated with the work of Karl Weick (1995). 'Sensemaking in Organizations' has been cited in over 21,000 published works. A comprehensive review of the concept is beyond the scope of this work. I would, however, draw attention to the way sensemaking has been appropriated by various writers and how it has been elevated to a special status of desired behaviours that help to achieve organisational goals.

In my reference to making sense I follow the basic definition of the term - 'find meaning or coherence' (Oxford, 2017). When I say I try to make sense, I mean creating a plausible narrative of my interacting with others. In this case, making sense is a continual process in which we, as human beings, engage habitually. In the mainstream organisational literature sensemaking is regarded as a goal (Holt and Cornelissen, 2014), a tool (e.g. Battles et al., 2006), a framework (e.g. Vickers, 2007), and a model (Weick, 2010). There are sensemaking studies and sensemaking theories. Many of those studies tend to focus on extraordinary events (Maitlis and Sonenshein, 2010), studying senior executives and 'ignoring or discounting experiences of sensemaking in ordinary organizational life' (Holt and Cornelissen, 2014: 526).

Critics also argue that sensemaking scholars' assumptions of sensemaking as being desirable, a tool that can 'tame' flux and uncertainty, remains unchallenged (Holt and Cornelissen, 2014).

This dissertation does not intend to contribute to sensemaking theory, as initiated by Weick (1995). Instead I aim to tease out how I am involved in practising CSR. I do not wish to demonstrate how making sense of my experience follows (or does not follow) a specific model. Rather than using sensemaking instrumentally, as a way of taming opacity and instability (Holt and Cornelissen, 2014). I continually and iteratively make sense. Although my sensemaking is always in and about interaction with others, it is not a 'shared sensemaking' (Balogun et al., 2015, Palus et al., 2003), but an examination of my contribution to the evolving meaning of CSR. Taking a complexity perspective, I suggest that similar to CSR emerging in 'small acts of responsibility', sense arises in small acts of making sense.

Summary

Having reflected on the narratives I had not initially intended to explore in this dissertation, I began discussing my daily practice of CSR. In their seminal article 'Managers Doing Leadership: The Extra-ordinarization of the Mundane', Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003: 25) dispel the myth of leadership as encompassing

> grand ideas, visions and engaging speeches that encourage people to take part in great missions. Leadership is connected to radical change and inspiring ideas that facilitate people to rethink old ideas, there's a revolutionary, heroic and romantic epic figuring in contemporary leadership.

Instead, they claim, leadership is often performed in 'listening and informal-talking' (ibid). In this chapter I have demonstrated that CSR engagement is conducted in the acts of talking and listening. The grand gestures of CSR arise in those mundane interactions of individuals, with often less-than-grand motives and intentions. At times those interactions are purposefully directed at achieving CSR goals; at other times, we ascribe them CSR meaning post factum.

In the next chapter I will explore in depth my reticence to think about mundane everyday activities as CSR, situating my thinking in the broader organisational and CSR literature.

Chapter 5 - Heroic narrative of CSR

He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool. Then they said, "This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt' (Exodus 32:4)

Introduction

In the previous chapter I started thinking about the difficulty of considering my practice as CSR. I discussed how some of the practices I initially discarded as 'non-CSR' are on reflection recognised as contributing to the emerging understanding of CSR in the context of UH.

In this chapter I reflect on my changing understanding of CSR, exploring my reluctance to embrace my work as CSR in relation to the current CSR orthodoxy. I begin by focusing on the way CSR is discussed in the mainstream organisational literature and reflect on how my understanding has been impacted by that literature. In the latter part of the chapter I propose a different way of understanding CSR; I suggest that understanding CSR as a social object is more congruent with my experience and practice.

Taking my experience seriously: impetus for rethinking CSR

The narrative below was written in 2014. In some ways it still resonates with me today.

> It's been over five years since I undertook a role as the director of SEU, and three years since becoming business school PRME champion. Although I have written many reports about adopting, embedding, practising CSR, I still struggle with the very concept of CSR. After nine years of teaching and researching CSR, the idea remains as elusive to me as it was when I began working on this dissertation. To clarify, I could recite the key definitions, name the main contributors, discuss the latest research with confidence. What I lack is conviction in my work being considered CSR. I experience dissonance presenting my work as an example of CSR. I find it difficult to reconcile my practice with the dominant CSR discourse. Taking my experience seriously means recognising that not fitting the theory does not invalidate that experience. I also recognise the great impact many years of studying theory had on my perception of CSR. I also start recognising the difficulty of challenging my own assumptions, which have been developed in engaging with those theories.

In 2011, while reading my research diary, I was shocked to realise that for nearly a year, much of my work and my research had not been addressed in it at all. In this narrative I attempt to understand why. What were the reasons that prevented me from doing exactly what I request of my students – paying close attention to my experience? To trace my changing perceptions of my work and my understanding of CSR, I will introduce excerpts from my diary verbatim[8]

August the 22, 2011:

What I find interesting while having a brief review of the last year is that:

- *I've gone through my first progression and nothing from this diary was included in it.*
- *I had a year with an admin assistant, whose behaviour drove me crazy, and yet I did not want to write about it.*
- *I've applied and won a seedcorn fund grant for a CSR research, and this too did not push me to write.*
- *PRME seems to be happening! And… no writing about it.*
- *I've read a lot about methodology, and some of it I found useful. Have not written a word.*
- *The SEU won the VC Awards in the category of 'Community Engagement' – and guess what?*

But re-reading the diary of last year I found another recurring theme – although I keep doing my job as a Director of SEU, and keep very busy, I still find it difficult to say what I do in my role. And it is time to face the question – why? Reflecting back on the last year's diary, it seems that there are two main reasons for it.

Firstly, although intellectually I know that whatever happens in the every-day it is always a small addition to the work done previously and major events are rare, I keep on cultivating the fantasy that engaging in CSR means doing something big, important. So what is the point in writing about another meeting, another discussion? They are never earth shattering experiences. And yet, even as I write this, I remember the feeling that something exciting has happened, that I was a witness to a change

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happening in a meeting with Sharon Bramford, Chief Executive of AMBA[9]. So big things do happen, but they are very infrequent. And in my mind, CSR is still about big gestures, plans, strategic reviews. This view is reinforced by my discussions with CSR executives from other companies. For example, Andy mentioned that they were embarking on a project of 'mapping their activities against GRI principles'; Caroline mentioned that this year they were concentrating on 'environmental management issues' – wow, that sounds big, important! In comparison, meeting with a representative from a local charity, seems to pale into insignificance.

And secondly, most of the time when I think about my role, I have a nagging feeling of being a fraud. Because I know minor details of what is happening in my role, and most of the time they are that – minor. For example, although the SEU was nominated for, and subsequently won, the VC Award for community engagement, I found it very difficult to summon the required excitement. After all, what do I do? I meet with people and talk to them. So the seemingly important accolade becomes a farce, and Zahira's and my portrait hanging proudly in the Atrium becomes an embarrassment. So to try and justify my role to myself and to avoid being 'found out' I write reports, proposals, 'big up' my role while discussing it with others. But in the process of 'bigging it up' I also realise – I am not a fraud! I have achieved. I did not make up those figures in the last year's report – but they were achieved in very small steps, and while taking those steps, I was unable to see what they would lead to.

I still remember feeling somewhat disappointed with myself after writing that entry. Yet, at the same time, I felt that something important was happening. Coming back to the diary the next day, I continued exploring that feeling.

23 August 2011

As I was finishing writing yesterday's entry, I became really angry with myself. This feeling intensified the more I thought about what I wrote. But upon rereading it today, my indignation is being replaced with curiosity. Why have I been thinking that my work is insignificant, meaningless, not worth mentioning? Reflecting on the previous entry, I can identify two main reasons for denigrating my work. Firstly, I can see the

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[9] As this is a verbatim passage from my research diary, I decided not to change my entry and leave this sentence unchanged and unexplained in this section. I will explore this in later chapters.

recurring pattern of behaviour – I see what I do is not good enough, my achievements become insignificant the moment I accomplish them, and I see myself as deceiving the people around me by presenting an image of a confident and high-achieving professional. And secondly, I think I fell victim to the dominant CSR paradigm – that CSR has to fall into one of the recognised categories or fit into one of the frameworks. Unfortunately, what I do does not fit Carroll's CSR pyramid (1979) nor can it slide neatly into any of the theories proposed by the big names of CSR. Brief reminder of Garriga and Melé (2008) mapping highlights that my experience does not fit with any of the 4 proposed categories. So it seems to me that I forgot to follow my own preaching, I did not take my experience seriously. This also demonstrates the strength of the influence of the dominant discourse – although for years I've been criticising the dominant CSR theories as not fitting with everyday experience, when it comes to thinking about my own experience I tend to dismiss my experience because it does not fit those theories. What are the implications for my research?

Reflecting on my writing I began identifying what it was that made me feel uncomfortable. I started paying attention to my experience and recognising patterns of acting[10]. My inability to accept that I was doing an important job seemed to make sense, as I recognised it as part of my recurring pattern of thought, not just relating to my work in SEU. Rereading my diary I start recognising that the enormous amount of work I had put into the Unit was probably in part the need to alleviate this feeling. Reflecting on my work I recognise how my past experiences informed my understanding of the current role.

Feeling a fraud was further intensified by my frustration of not doing anything that could fit into the CSR category in the literature. I tried to explore further my thinking about CSR. The belief that CSR refers to something outstanding was being crystallized through writing, discussing the diary with the PhD group, and reflecting on what I'd written

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[10] In the methodology chapter I argue that thinking and acting are inseparable. To be more precise thinking IS acting. Here I use 'acting' to highlight the difference between the understandings at the time of writing the research diary and now.

25 August 2011

> *... falling into the CSR paradigm, I think of CSR as something big, important, with grand implications, with positive outcomes. This understanding is supported by how I perceived, and previously described, what I have done – the decision to adopt PRME, or the winning of the VC award – a grand achievement, demonstrating an external recognition of the importance of what I do. Since most things I do are not on such a grand scale, how can they be seen as CSR activities?*

As the above passages are fragments of the diary, and are not necessarily as clear to the reader as they are to me or to those familiar with my work, it is important to reiterate the understandings that had started to develop during that time.

Firstly, I recognised that previous patterns of thought were recurring in my work. 'Suffering' from the 'impostor syndrome'[11] and having a tendency to denigrate my achievements impeded my ability to recognise the significance of the work I'd been doing.

Secondly, I recognised that despite lecturing on the importance of a critical review of models and frameworks, I accepted the same models and frameworks as a norm. Deviating from this norm became difficult to perceive as CSR. The more I read the more critical I became of the mainstream literature. Yet, at the same time, the 'damage' had been done, I'd absorbed the sanitised version of CSR presented in the mainstream CSR literature.

Lastly, the 'grand narrative of CSR' had an immense impact on my perception of what can and what cannot be considered CSR. The need for my actions to conform to that perception, impeded my ability to recognise that in my daily interactions with others, in those 'smalls act of responsibility', my sense-making of our responsibility to the community has been evolving.

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[11] Assessing a university leadership development programme, I came across many colleagues describing similar emotions, feeling like a fraud. Having read those reflections, I went on to read some literature on the 'impostor syndrome' or IP (Clance and Imes 1978; Clance 1985; Clance et al. 1995). The scope of this dissertation does not allow discussion of this aspect in detail.

Evolving CSR idealisation

Producing yet another review of the development of the CSR concept would be of little value. Carroll's excellent historical reviews of the concept (Carroll, 2008, Carroll, 1999); Melé's (2008) and Garriga and Melé's (2004) useful classification of CSR theories, and Lee's insightful retrospection (2008) have become cornerstones of the CSR literature and have been cited in numerous CSR publications. The aim of this review is to trace the process of CSR idealisation, to understand how 'CSR has swept across the world and has become one of the buzzwords of the new millennium' (Pedersen, 2006: 137)

Before Bowen

Interest in our responsibilities to the environment, both social and ecological, can be traced as far back in history as biblical times. The Hebrew Bible (believed to have been written during a millennium between 1200 and 100 BCE (Das et al., 2014)), particularly the Torah (Pentateuch) provides practical guidance for conducting business. It addresses many areas that today are being included in the CSR construct – fair treatment of employees and suppliers, caring for the poor, maintaining honest prices, and environmental concerns (Friedman, 2000). The theological-philosophical questions regarding morality and responsibility have been addressed throughout the ages. From Plato and Aristotle, to John Stuart Mill, Immanuel Kant and G. W. F. Hegel, philosophers have written on justice, economic matters and morality.

In Ancient Greece 'captains of industry' were held to account for failing to adhere to contemporary codes of morality, or if they did not demonstrate using their wealth for 'the greater good'. In medieval times the Church became the main guardian of business morality, and businessmen were required to uphold biblical ethical standards. Accumulating wealth through business was seen as positive only if it was the means to his own and his neighbours' wellbeing (Bauer and Fenn, 1972).

During the mercantile era (16-19th centuries), as the power of the Catholic Church diminished, and businessmen became more respected and more influential, the state ensured that business behaved responsibly (Eberstadt, 1973). People of Germany for example, were benefitting from social security provided by the state and local districts, as well as wealthy citizens, guilds and churches. The main example of this was the contribution by Jacob Fugger II, a wealthy merchant, who established an endowment in Augsburg to build social housing for poor people, which became known as Fuggerei. Critics of Fugger were quick to remind us that his support

was a rational business decision, rather than an expression of charitable spirit. His family were at the centre of the debate about usury, monopoly and speculative trading, so the establishment of the endowment can be seen as an attempt to refute the critique (Waldkirch et al., 2009). Philanthropy prevailed during that period, but it existed mostly as local activity (Van Leeuwen, 2012).

The industrial age saw the rise of the corporation. With it the balance of power tilted towards business owners. Although the corporate charter was given only to companies who were to perform some public duty, governments were unable to control corporate heads, who drove down wages and were not concerned with workplace safety, or fair competition. They engaged in monopolistic practices and price-fixing, e.g. 'Representatives of the various coal companies met at the house of Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan this Week and informally decided to limit coal production and maintain prices' (Commercial and Financial Chronicle, March 27 1886, quoted in Cantillo, 2007: 24). Cornelius Vanderbilt was involved in corruption, 'stock watering' and corporate collusion. Andrew Carnegie effectively broke the Unions and the Homestead Lockout led to several deaths (Shanker, 1992). John D. Rockefeller Sr was notorious for his anti-competition and other questionable practices (Chernow, 1998). In England the Cadbury brothers continued to purchase cocoa from the Gulf of Guinea islands, although William Cadbury had been aware of the use of slave labour by the Portuguese for many years (Killingray, 2006).

The idea that companies have responsibilities to society were commonly accepted during the process of industrialisation in Europe (Berthoin Antal et al., 2009). In the growing Swedish industry the responsibility for workers' welfare was mainly with the employer (De Geer et al., 2009). *Caja de Pensiones para la Vejez y de Ahorros (la Caixa)* is an example of 'financial institution with a profound social sense' (Argandoña et al., 2009a: 336) and its establishment can be seen as 'an exercise in social responsibility' (Argandoña et al., 2009b: 327). In Japan the responsibility between employee and employer was based on the sense of duty. Nonetheless, government began regulating working conditions and environmental pollution in the 1880s. Indian merchants contributed to the community, through what was called 'merchant charity'. With industrialisation of India in the mid-19th century, leading industrialist families participated in social development of the country, largely through foundations that supported health, educational and cultural aims (Husted, 2015).

The industrial age was also the beginning of grand-scale philanthropy in the USA. The same people who engaged in ethically questionable (even by contemporary standards), and at times illegal, business practices donated some proportion of their at times ill-gained fortunes to charitable causes. Today they are mostly remembered for their benevolence, rather than ruthlessness, and hailed as great businessmen and leaders (Pomerantz, 2013). As their economic clout increased, so did discontent with corporate practices, and the Populists and the Progressives in the USA were able to make some progress in 'forcing the large corporations into compliance with standards of common honesty' (Eberstadt, 1973: 81).

World War I halted those reforms, and as the war ended and business was booming again, wealth creation became revered and an image of a wealthy businessman was elevated to an almost religious status. As President Coolidge stated, 'The man who builds a factory builds a temple. The man who works there worships there' (Leuchtenburg, 1958/1993: 188). This megalomaniac expansion of business culminated in the collapse of the economy in 1929. Some attribute this collapse to corporate irresponsibility (e.g. Eberstadt, 1973), which demonstrates cultivation of a certain fantasy about what responsible business ought to be.

In the period between 1929 and the beginning of WWII cartelisation, price fixing and production limitations – antithetic to the currently accepted CSR actions – were advocated by captains of industry, like Gerard Swope, president of GE, in an attempt to revive the economy (McQuaid, 1978). The struggles of the Great Depression overshadowed ideas of responsibility. The post-WWII economic boom was paralleled in the expansion of the corporation. However, during the Cold War, being responsible meant merely taking an anti-Communist stance (Eberstadt, 1973); and since any social movement had to support the anti-Communist purges, social problems increased and corporate commitment stagnated (Foner, 2011).

The beginning of CSR idealisation

The watershed for CSR was in the 1940s. Until WWII any mention of responsibility referred to individuals and not to corporations. From Biblical times through to the Industrial Age, it was the businessman (a businesswoman was never mentioned) who was supposed to be responsible, and later who was the benevolent philanthropist[12], and they were (supposed to be) responsible as individuals. Following increases in the size and relative power of corporations since the Great Depression, academics and business leaders began discussing responsibility in terms of the social responsibility of organisations. And those who were still referring to businessmen (e.g. Flanders, 1945, Bowen, 2013/1953) were discussing their responsibility *on behalf of business*. Spector (2008) traces the roots of the 'CSR movement' to the early Cold War period, when D.K. David (1949), the dean of Harvard Business School began urging business people and graduates to consider the responsibilities of *business*. However, glimmers of shifting responsibility towards business had begun appearing even earlier. Reference to chain shops as citizens appears in 1943 (Converse and Beattie, 1943). Ballaine (1947) argues that business (note, not business people) should participate in community forums. Francis (1948) and Jones (1949) referred to social responsibility of business and industry.

The 1940s also marked the beginning of the idealisation of social responsibility. Up until then people in business behaved responsibly because such behaviour was prescribed by religious or social norms. Since the 1940s we can witness justification of responsibility as a means for achieving some lofty goals, and as such it began to be idealised. For example, Spector (2008: 314) notes that corporate responsibility started gaining momentum 'as a means of aligning business interests with the defense of free-market capitalism against what was depicted as the clear-and-present danger of Soviet Communism'. In the grand style of the 1940s Clarence Francis, chairman of the board of General Foods, in his speech to Harvard Business School graduates, claimed that the superiority of American industry rests in its motivation to be responsible (Francis, 1948). Jones, addressing the Society for Advancement of Management, claimed:

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[12] Although the famous case of Dodge vs. Ford Motor Company reveals that Henry Ford intended to invest in social causes on behalf of the corporation, this was an exception to the zeitgeist of the early 20th century in the USA.

> If industry accepts its economic and social responsibilities and tells its story honestly and completely we are prepared to meet any change. We will be masters of our fate. Not slaves (Jones, 1949: 254).

Dempsey (1949:399) compared business to family, providing an unrealistic description of both institutions:

> The union of economic factors in efficient cooperation has a strong analogy to the family. The firm like the family is a union of equal persons with different but essential contributions.

According to Dempsey, Social Responsibility is a manifestation of this 'efficient cooperation'. Following this logic, questioning SR would be akin to questioning family values.

The advocates of Social Responsibilities did not go as far as specifying what those responsibilities were, or how the 'business' should go about being 'responsible'. Nevertheless, the seeds of aggrandising CSR were sown by those speeches. Bowen provided one of the first definitions of those responsibilities:

> It refers to the obligation of businessmen to pursue those policies, to make those decisions, or to follow those lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society (2013/1953: 6).

Defined in such a way, who could object to Social Responsibility? Objecting to it, would be objecting to 'objectives and values of our society'. Bowen (ibid) proceeded to define the *doctrine of social responsibility* as referring

> to the idea, now widely expressed, that voluntary assumption of social responsibility by businessmen is, or might be, a practicable means toward ameliorating economic problems.

It is therefore little wonder that Eberstadt (1973) suggested that the Great Depression was caused by irresponsibility of business, and that CSR could have prevented it. Later, others (e.g. Herzig and Moon, 2013, Curran, 2015) followed this reasoning to blame the latest (2007-9) financial crisis on business irresponsibility.

Bowen warns that the doctrine is no panacea, 'no cure-all', but 'it contains important truth' (2013/1953:7). In the ensuing years since the publication of the book this qualification seems to have been ignored, and CSR is often proposed, if not as a cure for all societal disorders, but definitely as a remedy for most ailments.

Current discourse

The 20 years after the publication of *Social Responsibility of Businessmen* were mostly devoted to defining CSR, with little empirical research or significant change in practice, i.e. there was 'more talk than action' (Carroll, 2008: 28). In an attempt to persuade the executive to adopt CSR, the writers presented various arguments. Davis (Davis, 1897) (1973: 313) claims that paying attention to the social needs of the community would lead to magnificent results:

> Labor recruiting will be easier, and labor will be of a higher quality. Turnover and absenteeism will be reduced. As a result of social improvements, crime will decrease with the consequence that less money will be spent to protect property, and less taxes will have to be paid to support police forces.

In short, CSR will lead to a better society and the business will benefit from this. Davis accepts that some of these points have limited theoretical underpinning, and numerous studies that have been conducted to confirm Davis's premise remain inconclusive (Orlitzky et al., 2003). Yet, the argument of 'doing well by doing good' remains prevalent among academics, public officials and executives (Karnani, 2011). The first group in Garriga and Melé's classification (2004), instrumental theories, are largely concerned with trying to convince us of that.

Other authors kept idealising CSR and its potential. For example, Frederick (1960) claims that organisations' resources must be used for broad social ends. Votaw (1972: 28) suggests that 'there may be more to the doctrine of social responsibility than we had first thought. It may be one of the building blocks for new social, political and economic structures in our society'. Drucker (1984) proposed nothing less than the idea that

> the proper social responsibility of business is to tame the dragon, that is to turn a social problem into economic opportunity and economic benefit, into productive capacity, into human competence into well-paid jobs, into wealth.

Russell (cited in Kraus and Brtitzelmaier, 2012: 284) recognised this glamorising of CSR and pointed out that

> social responsibility, according to these definitions, refers to idealistic views on organisations performing activities that protect and improve society's wellbeing.

By 1972 the glamorising of CSR had spread to business leaders, politicians and other opinion shapers. As illustrated by Votaw (1972: 25)

> Corporation presidents and chairmen of the board rarely make public statements without giving it [Social Responsibility] prominence. The editors of *Fortune* and other business periodicals devote whole issues to it. Politicians are enchanted by its broad appeal.

Given the political atmosphere of anti-communism and McCarthyism in the US, CSR was seen as a way to defend the American capitalist ideology from the assault of socialism (Bowen, 2013/1953). This required cloaking CSR in strong, emotive and heroic rhetoric.

In the previous section I mentioned that the practices, which are currently addressed as CSR, existed in the US and Europe long before the term CSR was introduced. Wealthy benefactors (sometimes) invested in social security of their fellow citizens. Yet the development of those practices has taken different forms on the two continents. From a complexity perspective, this divergence is not surprising; very different backgrounds, social norms, religious interpretations, political systems, and numerous other factors could only result in different practices of responsibility. The issue of responsibility 'is viewed mainly as voluntary and unregulated in the US, as intertwined with laws and government policies in Europe' (Argandona and Hoivik, 2009: 227) . Of course there is no unified 'European' CSR, but there are some traditions that are common to European, especially Central European, countries, which are significantly different from the US

> Because of its tradition of individualism, legalism and pragmatism, business culture in the United States is more reluctant to accept the view of the firm as a socially embedded institution, unlike in Continental Europe, where this notion is welcome and prevalent despite variations (Sison, 2009: 244)

It is possible that for these reasons the concept had to be presented in beneficial terms in the US, whereas in the early years of CSR research, it was not explicitly discussed in Europe. CSR started gaining importance in American discourse, while in Europe it was implicit in practice, and relations between business and society were governed by societal norms, legal requirements, welfare state and strong Unions in many European countries (Albareda et al., 2008, Cantó-Milà and Lozano, 2009, Midttun et al., 2015, Signori and Rusconi, 2009, Waldkirch et al., 2009).

Although different contexts lead to the emergence of different practices and understandings of CSR locally, globally those understandings have 'family resemblances' (Mowles, 2017). Researching CSR in Ukraine (Chapter 3), we did not explain what we meant by CSR, and as a result were sometimes surprised, but the respondents knew what we were talking about in general. And it was understandable to us why some of the practices discussed by the Ukrainian participants, e.g. paying taxes, were considered CSR in the Ukrainian context – it was about voluntary contributions of business to society[13].

During the 1970s and 1980s two debates were taking place on the fringes of CSR discourse - the moral personhood of an organisation and the necessity of CSR. The former was short-lived, and as Velasquez (2003: 531) laments, 'many feel that the issue has been resolved in favour of the view that corporate organizations are morally responsible for their actions'. The latter has been ongoing for over 50 years, having its most vocal and controversial advocate in Milton Friedman. Since his famous (some may say infamous) article 'The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits' (Friedman, 1970), there have not been many critics of the need for CSR. Admittedly, there is a thread of theory critiquing the concept of CSR (e.g. Van Oosterhout and Heugens, 2008, Freeman and Liedtka, 1991). Another thread, also led by Critical Management Theorists, is sceptical 'about the motivations and effects of corporate action' (Kuhn and Deetz, 2008: 173). Even fewer follow Milton Friedman and take a stand against corporations assuming social responsibility (Karnani, 2011, Henderson, 2009). In the dominant CSR discourse the idea that the corporation (and other organisations) can and should assume CSR is promoted. As one prominent academic put it:

> CSR is infiltrating into corporate consciousness and corporate culture, finds expression in the workplace, sparks stakeholder involvement, molds company strategy, enriches

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[13] Taxation is compulsory in Ukraine, corruption and tax avoidance are rife DANILOVA, M. & SATTER, R. 2014. How Ukraine's Tax Cheats Stole Billions from the Country's Coffers. *The Guardian*..

the quality of community life, broadens business vision, and seeks to humanize economic enterprise wherever it is found (Frederick, 2008: 528)

This highlighting of a highly idealised and unrealistic view of CSR is largely ignored in the dominant discourse. After all, it is not easy to object to such a lofty idea. CSR became accepted as desirable, and even magical, 'as a panacea that will solve the global poverty gap, social exclusion and environmental degradation' (van Marrewijk, 2003: 96).

There have been some attempts to demystify the idealised perception of CSR. Doane (2005), echoing Freeman and Liedtka (1991), is concerned that as long as CSR is presented as the 'friendly face of capitalism', while operating within the traditional free-market framework, the expectations of CSR are naïve. She debunks the 'myth of CSR', as a collection of unrealistic and unachievable claims: 'CSR can hardly be expected to deliver when the stock market provides disincentives for doing so' (Doane, 2005: 26).

Entine (2003: 352) also warns that '[s]ocial investment advocates rely on sketchy, highly selective research and pseudo-objective ratings', yet the draw of Social Responsibility is irresistible. The numbers of Socially Responsible Investment (SRI) funds and their volume are increasing (Sparkes, 2002 cited Mill, 2006, Becchetti and Ciciretti, 2009). These findings are puzzling in light of studies demonstrating that SR stocks perform worse than the controlled sample (Becchetti and Ciciretti, 2009). I have not found any studies examining the motives for such financially-irrational behaviour. Jansson and Biel (2014, 2011) found that institutional investors believe that SRI funds deliver better long-term results. One has to ask: what is this belief based on? Why are institutional investors and fund managers, supposedly rational economic agents, holding beliefs which are contrary to the presented evidence? In my view this has little to do with the *ethical* stance of the fund managers, as the authors examined beliefs about *performance*. One possible explanation is that the aura of CSR is strong enough to overcome the financial rationality of funds managers and investors alike.

In the last two decades the focus of CSR research has shifted from theorising CSR to empirically investigating national and industry-level CSR (see Carroll, 2008), and there has a continuous quest to establish the link between CSR and performance (e.g. Corporate Financial Performance (CFP), and other types of performances that are associated with it: reputation, legitimacy, customer and employee loyalty, and competitive advantage). As alluded to earlier, the fact that the researchers seek to establish those links points to the belief that CSR may lead to such

outcomes, which in itself is a manifestation of CSR idealisation. The enormous attention given to CSR research around the globe, from Algeria (Gana-Oueslati and Labaronne, 2011) to Zimbabwe (Nyahunzvi, 2013); and to investigating various industries, from advertising (Hyllegard et al., 2012) to water management (Chaklader and Gautam, 2014); demonstrates the prevalence and eminence of CSR as a research topic.

The volume of CSR research and coverage of CSR issues in the news media has been on the rise (Lee and Carroll, 2011) . CSR reporting has been increasing as well (Lydenberg and Sinclair, 2009). Based on this attention, one could be lulled into believing that CSR is currently at the top of the management agenda. But Steger (2008) soberly urges us not to mistake reporting for performance. He, having worked in both camps, academia and industry, claims that the rate of accepting CSR is very slow and 'the impacts of such efforts currently remain significantly below the academic expectations' (ibid: 563).

Pruzan (2001, 2008) asserts that organisations have been adopting, and are currently focusing on operationalising CSR. This seems to be contradictory to Steger's claim. However, the still very generalised and ambiguous definitions of CSR result in the possibility of both claims being true. Steger refers to CSR as 'breakthrough innovation and new business models', which have not been forthcoming (Steger, 2008); Pruzan understands operationalising CSR as 'how to integrate it [CSR] into the corporation's vocabulary, policies, stakeholder communications, and reporting systems', which he finds is currently the state of corporate affairs (Pruzan, 2008: 552-553). The two authors' views converge in relation to the grand scale and idealisation of CSR. Steger suggests that CSR will result in 'innovation and new business models'; Pruzan proposes that the CSR agenda '*will be characterized by organizational existential inquiry as to corporate identity, success, and responsibility*' (emphasis in original).

It is impossible to cover the vast body of CSR research produced in the last 20 years in detail. For the purpose of this dissertation I will focus on one aspect – what is being considered as CSR, what is included in and what is excluded from CSR research. CSR is still being referred to in very general terms. Those terms allow many aspects to be incorporated under the CSR umbrella: from employee volunteering (Sheel and Vohra, 2016), to corporate philanthropy (Hadani and Coombes, 2015), to the reduction of environmental impact (Eweje and Sakaki, 2015). In the majority of studies CSR is unquestionably referred to as desirable. What is missing from those studies is the discussion of how people (not organisations) operationalise CSR; what people are actually doing when they say they engage in CSR activities. It is of little wonder,

therefore, that I could not comprehend my daily interactions, which have usually been less grandiose than corporate community programs (Rehbein and Schuler, 2015) or gender equality strategies (Larrieta-Rubín de Celis et al., 2015), as engaging in CSR.

Cult value of CSR

The above literature review traced the process of idealisation of CSR. To understand the enduring appeal of CSR, I will draw on the work of George Herbert Mead. In *The Philosophy of the Act* (1938) Mead presents the idea of social objects which are different from physical objects. Physical objects exist as *things* in nature, and they exist independently of the meaning we attach to them. Social objects can only be made sense of in terms of social interactions. They can be understood as a large number of people having a tendency to act in a certain way in a certain situation (ibid). The market is one example given by Mead. In order for the market to function all involved must take a similar attitude. All participants know, in general terms, what is expected of them and what they expect from the others. Perhaps a contemporary example of shopping as a social object could demonstrate this point. Having moved to Israel from Ukraine, on my first venture abroad from Israel, I went into a shop in Manhattan. Upon entering the shop I was asked 'to check my bag', meaning I had to leave it in the shop storage box. Coming from a country where every public space had airport-style security, I did not think twice to open my bag to show its contents to the security guard, expecting he wanted to check its contents. He was surprised and told me to close my bag and to 'check it'. I was puzzled how he could expect to 'check it' without opening it. We both spoke English, but this situation required the intervention of an Israeli-American friend to explain to each of us what the other was saying. Without the shared tendency to act upon entering a shop, the notion of 'shop security' became meaningless. Incidentally, at the time, the late 1980s, my Soviet relatives would not have understood the idea of 'shop security' – there had been no reports of acts of terrorism in the USSR at the time, nor was there anything in the shops to be stolen.

CSR can be understood as a social object. Highly generalised, and continuously changing, its mention, nonetheless, evokes in us a certain reaction that is common to those who are involved in CSR. We have come to refer to voluntary acts on behalf of the organisation that have some value outside of that organisation as CSR. No one will argue that my volunteering in the local school is an act of CSR. However, my participating in the local steering group whose aim is to bring local business and community together (CVS St Albans, 2014) is a part of the university's CSR portfolio.

The enactments of social objects in every-day life do not follow precise prescriptions. We have *some* expectations of how to act and how others might act. As social objects are a tendency to act by a large number of people, rather than a 'recipe to act', they are taken up in many interactions, by people with various and often incompatible intentions, which inevitably leads to conflicts. This understanding of CSR is useful to both practitioners and academics, as it renders conflict an inherent feature of enacting CSR, rather than a negative by-product of poor communication or a sign of failing in assuming CSR. This understanding helps me realise that such disagreements are inevitable, thus reducing my anxiety when they occur.

Mead (1923: 229) draws attention to highly idealised social objects and the way we unwittingly and unquestioningly accept and enact them:

> there is a structure in our experience beyond what we ordinarily term our consciousness; that this structure of idea determines to a degree not generally recognised the very manner of our perception as well as that of our thinking, and that structure itself is generally not in the focus of attention and passes unnoticed in our thought and perceiving.

By 'structure' I believe Mead means the values that we hold so strongly that we do not usually pay attention to the way they buttress our thinking and acting. We cannot 'do justice to [those values] in their whole import, and yet when they are once envisaged they appear too precious to be ignored, so that in our action we do homage to them' (ibid: 239). He refers to those social objects as 'cult values'. Mead does not use the term 'cult' pejoratively, but rather to demonstrate the strength and endurance of those values. They can be 'good or bad or both' (Stacey, 2011: 376). Mead's examples include Christendom, democracy and patriotism. Being idealised, they are rarely realised in everyday life, but we tend to believe they are achievable in the future, which is free of obstacles. They are aspirations, rather than reflections of behaviour. We tend to forget that they are unattainable in their pure theoretical conceptualisation. We must 'translate' them into our contextualised living present. Flemming and Jones (2013) note that there is very little resemblance between the idea of democracy and the 'joke that is parliamentary democracy'. Quality improvement in healthcare (Brown, 2007), and leadership (Griffin and Stacey, 2005) are also examples of cult values – idealised aspirational values, whose meaning is being radically transformed from the theorised version to operationalisation in organisations. Similarly 'social responsibility', currently one of the university's graduate

attributes, is an aspirational value that must be, and is interpreted by each of us in our everyday interactions.

The way CSR is addressed in the dominant CSR literature resonates with Mead's discussion of 'cult values'. CSR is viewed as desirable, and even magical, 'as the panacea that will solve the global poverty gap, social exclusion and environmental degradation' (van Marrewijk, 2003: 96) – a reified 'something' the organizations must aspire to. The myth of CSR as a progressive and transformative way of 'socializing the firm' (Fleming and Jones, 2013: 6) is perpetuated in the mainstream management literature. Freeman and Liedtka (1991) point out that current CSR rhetoric is based on acceptance of capitalism (I would argue a cult value in itself) as 'an immutable system' (ibid, 1991: 93). Yet, some authors go as far as to suggest that 'CSR and stakeholder theory… must also find some way of instilling habits that run contrary to those defined by the nature and logic of capitalism itself'(Reiter, 2016). The extent of the idealisation of CSR is illustrated by Van Oosterhout and Heugens's (2008: 206) critique of the extensive application of the concept of CSR in empirical research, 'in spite of it being highly ambiguous what CSR is'. The continuous quest to establish the link between CSR and organisational performance indicates the underlying assumption that such a link may exist.

Cult values provide us with aspiration and a sense of belonging, and are sustained in social interactions (Mead, 1923; 1934). Social institutions are required to perpetuate the cult values (ibid). CSR could not have become so prominent had it not been for the social institutions, like the British Academy of Management CSR Special Interest Group, CSR-dedicated academic journals, university courses on CSR, the UN Global Compact, PRME, who perpetuate the ideal of CSR by creating social situations which reinforce our individual values as shared values, to evoke our sense of belonging on a basis of holding and idealising the same value. In the latest call for papers for the PRME 10th Anniversary Special Issue International Journal of Management Education, the phrasing describing what type of papers was sought left little doubt that the special issue is intended to perpetuate that positive image of PRME.

> The special issue will be published in 2017 (PRME's 10th Anniversary) in time for the Global Forum, so the call is twofold: *Papers looking at what has been achieved in the last decade* and papers looking towards the SDG[14] agenda for PRME. (Parkes, 2016, emphasis added).

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[14] Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) are 12 goals by United Nations Development Programme in 2012

Idealised social objects/cult values are highly generalised and must be functionalised and enacted in ordinary everyday interactions. 'Social responsibility' is one of the six 'graduate attributes' introduced by the current Vice-Chancellor. This word combination is stencilled on the walls across the university alongside 'creativity', 'respect' and other idealisations. As I struggled to 'embed' responsibility in the curriculum, I turned to colleagues in other schools and in the Learning and Teaching Institute (LTI) to learn how others addressed this attribute. It became clear that others found this highly generalised attribute difficult to particularise. When I asked for 'examples of best practice', I was told that the LTI is still (three years after the introduction of graduate attributes) compiling the document. I was also told that every school took a different approach. Within the business school each colleague interpreted this idea differently. In compiling the PRME progress report in the summer of 2013, I emailed all colleagues asking if and how they embedded the PRME principles in their modules. Only 24 colleagues (out of nearly 200) responded identifying 27 modules (out of over 200 modules delivered in the business school). The interpretations ranged from fundraising for charities, to volunteering, to embedding a practical project in a module, to an evaluation of a case study on euthanasia. Reading those module guides it became clear that I was reading 24 understandings of the meaning of responsibility.

Dissenting voices

As suggested earlier in this chapter, the critique of CSR in the academic community is minimal. The most vocal opponents are also the most unlikely allies in critiquing CSR. Neo-liberal economists (e.g. Henderson, 2009, Lal, 2006) critique the current doctrine of CSR, seeing it as overarching and indiscriminate in its application to all organisations: 'not only CSR is radical in what it prescribes for businesses, but it admits of no exceptions' (Henderson, 2009: 12). The critics also believe that acting upon such doctrine is harmful to world economies. The underlying assumption of their critique is that the current doctrine of CSR is incompatible with the basic capitalist idea, that efficient markets will address social and environmental needs (Karnani, 2011).

Critical Management scholars draw our attention to the contested nature of CSR, and their main critique is that contemporary CSR is firmly embedded in capitalist ideology (Freeman and Liedtka, 1991, Banerjee, 2008, Shamir, 2008, Devinney, 2009, Fleming and Jones, 2013).

The new ethos of global responsibility is thus able to put capitalism to work as the most efficient instrument of the common good. The basic ideological dispositive of capitalism…is separated from its concrete socio-economic conditions,…leaving those very capitalist relations intact (Zizek, 2009: 35 cited in Fleming and Jones, 2013: 31).

The two streams of scholars disagree about whether the current CSR discourse is too capitalist or undermining capitalism. They do agree on two points: firstly, the highly idealised approach to CSR. 'Responsibilization' and the processes of market 'moralization' (Shamir, 2008), the 'myth of CSR' (Doane, 2005), the 'grand illusion'(Karnani, 2011) and the 'new opiate of the masses' (Fleming and Jones, 2013) are some of the extreme terms used to describe CSR.

Secondly, the critics agree that 'there is now a general consensus, both within the business world and outside it, that businesses today should embrace and put into effect "corporate social responsibility"' (Henderson, 2009 : 11).

While CSR is mainly discussed in general terms, the details of practising CSR are absent, and the daily mundane activities are being ignored by the academic discourse. My difficulty in perceiving my daily work as CSR seems to reflect that. Yet, in private conversations I've held during conferences and workshops, I've noticed that my colleagues from other universities have been recognising that our interpretations of CSR arise in such everyday conversations, in mundane activities, rather than in grand gestures.

But when I began thinking about this, I had not given those activities sufficient attention. For example, after attending a workshop on 'embedding social responsibility in HE' in 2012, I wrote this entry in my diary:

> *I noticed … that several times (as in more than once or twice) the importance of 'sitting down and having tea' was mentioned. It felt as if this was mentioned in order to elevate the value of this activity, to legitimise it, implying that the participants do not (or maybe, defensively, they do) perceive this as an inferior activity.*

In suggesting that the participants were attempting to attach greater value to 'sitting down and having tea', I had fallen into the trap of diminishing these daily activities. In looking for why those activities were mentioned, and attributing to the others' intentions to legitimise tea-drinking, I was de-legitimising it. The influence of the grand narrative of CSR on my thinking was so strong that I ignored my own experience of practising CSR in daily interactions with

others, very often while having a 'cuppa'. It is perhaps due to this thinking that I initially found it difficult to classify Rachel's not-so-grand act of notifying estates (Chapter 4) as CSR.

Describing CSR as an activity that has nearly mythical powers resonates with Alvesson and Sveningsson's (2003) discussion of another highly idealised construct – leadership. In the following excerpt I deliberately replace the original term 'leadership' with 'CSR'.

> Most of the CSR literature emphasizes that CSR is very significant and something quite special. There is a lot of mystique around CSR as it appears in academic texts and the mass media, as well as in conversations among practitioners. The signifier CSR frequently leads people to associate with acts and accomplishments beyond the petty and mundane. CSR creates results. Contemporary writing usually frames CSR in visionary and heroic terms …It does so in a way that is positive for most participants (adapted from Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2003: 1435-1436).

The passage is as powerful for the CSR discourse as the original is for the leadership discourse. The authors suggest that we need to rethink leadership, taking ordinary, trivial acts, such as 'listening, chatting and being cheerful' (ibid: 1436) seriously. I suggest we need to treat our conceptualisation of CSR in the same manner.

Re-telling CSR

I suspect that another reason for my difficulty in accepting my work as meaningful CSR practice was the way CSR practice was accounted for in official reports (e.g. case studies, company accounts, practitioners' as well as academic writings[15]) - smooth, planned and seamlessly executed, and mostly unchallenged. These descriptions did not resonate with my patchy, at times opportunistic, often Sisyphean practice. In my diary entry quoted at the beginning of this chapter I mentioned how my practice was being developed by acting in the moment, not knowing what the outcomes would be. Scott (2012) focuses on the aspect that is very rarely addressed in literature – historic accounts are written in retrospect, post-factum, specifically for the purpose of highlighting a specific past event. As such, the outcomes are known, so the details that do not contribute to that outcome, or that seem less important to the author, are excluded. And many of the 'random' or opportunistic behaviours are, in those accounts, endowed with a meaning that fits with the outcome. Scott argues that:

> [it] is hardly surprising that historians and social scientists should typically give short shrift to the confusion, flux, and tumultuous contingency experienced by the historical actors, let alone the ordinary by-standers, whose actions they are examining.

> One perfectly obvious reason for the deceptively neat order of these accounts is precisely because they are 'history'. The events in question simply turned out one way rather than another, obscuring the fact that the participants likely had no idea how they would turn out and that, under slightly different circumstances , things might have turned out very differently (ibid: 134).

This particularly resonates with the responsibility or ethics stories. In light of the idealised narrative of CSR, highlighting the heroics and obscuring the confusion seems almost necessary. The more coherent the CSR story is, the more appealing and reassuring the CSR prospect. A coherent story also requires a logical sequence of events, presentation of relevant information and evidence to support the claims. Pinto (2001) suggests that telling a coherent story is similar to a prosecutor building a case in court 'by assembling items of testimony and physical evidence which, if accepted and interpreted as she wants us to interpret them, will point to the guilt of the accused' (ibid: 71). Like in a prosecutor's case, in the case of CSR only information that is

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[15] I separate practitioners' and academic papers, as most academic writings, with very few exceptions (e.g. Steger, 2008), are not written by practitioners about their practice.

relevant to the case (according to the presenter) is offered. It is no surprise then that CSR practice is presented in an uncomplicated way. The events are post-rationalised to fit the responsible story. To emphasise, I do not suggest that the writers intentionally mislead the reader. I suggest that we omit some seemingly irrelevant details in order for the story to make sense to us. For example, the story of the American pharmaceutical giant Johnson & Johnson (J&J) in dealing with the Tylenol poisoning crisis[16] is celebrated as a beacon in crisis management and ethical behaviour. Newspapers reported it as a rapid and effective response to a crisis (Rehak, 2002). The writers would make us believe that there was no hesitation in making the right decision, and that the executives knew what the right decision was (Trevino and Nelson, 2014), and that 'every public relations decision was based on sound, socially responsible principles' (Lawrence G. Foster, Corporate Vice President for PR at J&J quoted in Stateman, 2008: 7). Business ethics textbooks still present it as an example of J&J's 'proactive Credo' in action (Robinson and Dowson, 2012: 68). I myself have told the story numerous times in teaching business ethics. A few critics (e.g. O'Dwyer, 2013, Bartz, 2012) highlight the details that make the Tylenol story less heroic, and Dezenhall (2004) points out that the story represents 'a rare confluence of events'. These details are not concealed, but also not highlighted in the mainstream literature. The reason I (unwittingly) perpetuated this myth was to demonstrate a case of responsible behaviour, to prove that behaving ethically does pay off – in short, to present a business case for CSR. I do not presume to know the authors' reasons for this. Mena et. al. (2016) suggest that 'collective forgetfulness … prevents cognitive overload and helps communities make peace with their past'. Perhaps it is easier to present acting responsibly as directly linked to rewards (customer loyalty in the case of J&J).

Although it is important to understand the reasons for this 'collective forgetfulness' of irresponsibility, my intention in this chapter is not to speculate about the motives, but to highlight the endurance of this heroic narrative.

Working in HEA leads to our thinking being influenced, to a certain degree, by institutional talk. We learn to present our work as a 'success story' (see Chapter 8). Working in institutions enables and constrains us to deliver one-dimensional accounts of our work. Including failures and weaknesses in our reporting to senior managers would be a career limiting decision. To remain in the game (Elias 1978), we must know and play by its rules. 'To work for institutions,

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[16] In 1982 seven people died of what later was revealed as cyanide-laced Tylenol (OTC pain-relief) capsules. Several days after being alerted to the cases the managers recalled all Tylenol capsules in the US. The poisoning was not linked to the J&J supply chain. The perpetrator has not been apprehended.

as practitioners do, can require that you develop a habit of mission talk, what we can call "happy talk", a way of telling a happy story of the institution' (Ahmed 2012: 10)

Closely related to my work is the case of the 'Inspirational Guide for the Implementation of PRME: Placing Sustainability at the Heart of Management Education' (Escudero et al., 2012). The Guide is a collection of 63 case studies from 25 countries. As this is an 'inspirational guide' it is a tale of 'progress in implementing PRME' (ibid: 2), and it 'highlights the important changes already taking place across management education today, and the role of PRME in effecting such change' (ibid: 3). As a result, the Guide presents 63 success stories, which frustrated, rather than inspired, me as a practitioner. Examples of 'management commitment', colleagues' 'buy-in' and students' enthusiasm left me desperate - there must have been something wrong with what I was doing My experience of 'PRME implementation' was that of difficulty, lack of interest (at best) and resistance (at worst). At a PRME summit in Bled in 2013, during formal workshops and informal conversation with colleagues from other institutions, and with some of the contributors to the Guide, I heard the 'behind-the-scenes' stories. Those resonated more with my experience. The common theme of those discussions was the difficulty of engaging people. But the Guide only captured the outcomes, so the details of the processes of achieving those outcomes were lost, and so the seamless narrative of implementing PRME principles was created. When the 'call for contributions' for the UK version of the Guide was announced, it was important to me to submit a case study. In order for it to be published, I chose two 'inspiring' cases (Filosof, 2014). The cases are factually correct. What I omitted was the discontent of the students on realising the projects were mandatory, the second-guessing by the colleagues, the difficulties students faced when writing them up and the challenges of marking those reflections. But I doubt that a less-than-inspiring case would still have been published.

Scott (2012) uses the analogy of a televised basketball game to explain how historic accounts impact our understanding of events. The camera hovers above the events, distancing the viewer from those events, with the editor choosing which episodes to replay in slow motion.

> Combined, the bird's-eye perspective and slow motion make the players' moves seem deceptively easy to viewers, who might fantasize mastering such moves themselves. *Alas, no actual player experiences the actual game from a helicopter or in slow motion*. And when, rarely, the camera is placed at floor level and close to the action in

real time, one finally appreciates the blinding speed and complexity of the game as players experience it; the brief fantasy is instantly dispelled (ibid: 136, my emphasis).

Scott draws our attention to inevitable simplification of the experience when it is described by the outsider. However, I maintain that not even the camera 'placed at floor level', or a researcher recording a 'subject's' experience, can fully appreciate the nuanced and complex nature of the event as experienced by the 'player'. By paying attention to my experience, I have begun noticing the way I understand the practice of CSR.

Being a 'player' I can present a version of events, accounting for motives and understandings at the time of those events taking place. The story of the Open Day events (Chapter 4) demonstrates my struggle to make sense of what my social responsibilities are, of how being 'in charge' of the school's social responsibility left me blind to my personal responsibilities. Focusing on my actions, draws attention to what I was including in CSR and what I was leaving out. By trying to address the questions 'what does CSR mean to me?' and 'how do I practice CSR?' from my own practice and interactions, I aim to tell a rich, nuanced, meaning-full story of CSR practice, a story that might resonate with other practitioners.

Summary

In this chapter I've traced the processes of idealisation of the social object of CSR. The overwhelmingly positive CSR narrative could not be sustained had it not been useful. The cult value of CSR holds the promise of a better future if only we adopt CSR. However, the notion of CSR is highly generalised, and must be functionalised in local interactions. Although it is often experienced as being externally imposed, it is being sustained and perpetuated only by our acting into it in working locally with each other.

Local interactions are not an abstract notion, but everyday activities of people with different histories, and often incompatible aspirations, which inevitably leads to conflict. Conflict is an integral part of any practice, and practice of CSR is no exception. But the heroic narrative of CSR allows for no discord, so the struggles that I've experienced in practising CSR and in thinking about CSR   affected my perceiving my practice as 'incorrect' and of myself as a 'fraud'. Reflecting on my own thinking about CSR as a grand aspirational ideal, influenced my thinking about my practice as not being worthy of CSR title. Not taking my experience seriously, I kept propagating the idealised narrative of CSR in my teaching and discussions with others.

Another feature of the grand CSR narrative is omitting the details of everyday practice. Aspiring to be part of the CSR community, engaging with numerous CSR writings, and participating in CSR institutions, I inadvertently became indoctrinated in CSR orthodoxy. Therefore, when I was thinking about my practice, which inevitably consisted of less-than-grand everyday interactions, I was unable to perceive those 'minor' interactions as CSR. Paying attention to our participating in what sometimes seems like mundane activities, we can begin recognising patterns of interactions in which we are active participants, rather than passive recipients.

Mead (1923) argued that to study cult values one needs to study local interactions, rather than focusing on visionary goals. Mainstream CSR discourse, however, encourages generalisations. In this dissertation I focus on local interactions, paying attention to the immediate and particular, aiming to understand aspects of my practice that are often obscured by the grand heroic narrative of CSR.

In the next chapter I will explore my evolving understanding of PRME as responsibility activities. Reflecting on the changing understanding of engaging with PRME, I will explore revealing and concealing as inseparable processes of our daily interactions.

Chapter 6 – Changing narrative of PRME implementation: making sense of practice

All the variety, all the charm, all the beauty of life is made up of light and shadow (Leo Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*)

Introduction

In Chapter 4 I reproduced a presentation slide for the Community Engagement Forum (Figure 1). It is not surprising that the United Nations Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME) is the first item. It became part of the Social Enterprise Unit remit, because the six principles (PRME, 2013) provide a generalised framework for embedding responsibility in HE, which fits with my understanding of what can and should be included in the Unit's activities.

Although I formally hold two separate roles – director of SEU and PRME champion – most of the work I do can be ascribed to either. In both roles, the way I understand them, I am responsible for ensuring responsibility is embedded in our practice. Since signing up, PRME has become a convenient tool for me to approach conversations about our social or community engagement. The UN authority legitimises my work, gives it more gravitas, and opens some doors. As the Unit's director, I'd been trying to speak to the university senior managers for several years. It never went further than a polite reply to my e-mail, which was a de-facto brush off. In my recent e-mail to the Deputy VC I asked to present our work at the deans' meeting and mentioned our being signatories to PRME. A regular 'thank you' e-mail followed, yet two months later I was invited to that meeting. Of course, this might have been a coincidence, but the fact that I felt more confident with myself in approaching the topic again, framing it in PRME terms, demonstrates the impact of PRME on my interactions with others.

In the previous chapter I discussed the evolving narrative of CSR, which can be understood as a cult value – an idealised vision of what is achievable in an obstacle-free future. In this chapter I continue thinking about the evolving nature of this heroic narrative. I reflect on the way I talk about PRME – a CSR-related initiative introduced at HBS - and the way I address difficulties in embedding this initiative in different situations. Reflecting on my experience of discussing PRME may provide insights into similar experience of others.

Being a representative of a PRME signatory, I have also become part of a PRME community, attending conferences, being invited to contribute to their publications, and sent a newsletter. I

feel comfortable around others who are interested in PRME and what it represents. Although it represents different things to different people, the emerging theme in our conversations is how we go about making sense of our role as the PRME champions in our organisations. Being a member of that community, and representing it in my workplace, I often discuss the signing for PRME, engagement with PRME and what it means to me. Initially I was surprised at how my story about signing for and embedding PRME kept changing, the aspects that were once pertinent later became marginal; and what I ignored at the time, became central in a later iteration. I am no longer surprised at those deviations, but try to pay attention to them, as the way we talk influences and is being influenced by our practice. In this chapter I pay particular attention to the processes of revealing and concealing in the way we discuss our practice, as a way of making sense of my practice and of my self.

Talking about PRME: what am I trying to present to others?

The level of detail in my description of our signing for PRME differs in different contexts. In the *Inspiration Guide* chapter (Filosof, 2014) I presented the most succinct and the most detached version, toeing the party line – we signed in 2011. This is the version I presented at the Deans' meeting. A somewhat more detailed version – it took us over two years to sign – is usually presented when discussing PRME with colleagues from other universities, in less formal discussions. The least guarded version I've presented to 'outsiders' so far, was the very detailed narrative in my Doctoral Report. My PhD group have been involved in the story as it has evolved, helping me make sense of the events as they were happening. But until my second progression report, I had never allowed anyone outside the business school to learn about my frustrations, difficulties, doubts, and cynicism about signing for PRME. In 2014 I was interviewed by Jonathan Louw for his research on PRME. While reading the transcript I was surprised to see how much the story I told him was similar to my progression narrative. It was almost rehearsed, less raw, more sanitised. It is interesting, because while writing I had the opportunity to 'polish' the story, an opportunity that was absent when interviewed. There was no opportunity to delete and rewrite; what had been said could not be unsaid. Yet, the transcribed version was detached, processed.

Reading it I could almost see myself talking to Jonathan, wanting to share my story, but retracing my steps, as I felt I was exposing too much. After my describing the reluctance of the managers to sign for PRME, he tried to probe why. I did not say what I thought at the time, 'because it was not high on their priority list'. Instead I told how PRME principles coincided

with what we had been doing anyway (which I have never questioned, but it still needs probing), and how PRME was just a way to formalise our activities. This two-steps-forward-one-step-back conversation continued [17]

> JL How would you describe the journey of discovery, or..or implementation?
>
> P2 Sisyphean would probably be the word because people are doing their jobs and with all the QAA and all the regulations, we have a lot of regulations from the university's QPR's [*UPRs (JF)*]. And again me trying to tell them how to do their job, there is a lot of resentment going on.
>
> JL This is the other Module Leaders or Programme Managers or whatever?
>
> P2 Yes. So the management are saying all the right things, go ahead and do it but the everyday implementation seems to be near impossible. Those who are already doing it are like why do you want to tell me how to do my job, I already do it? And those who are not are like well why do I need to change things? I'm not the most popular person, but it's fine.
>
> JL You're used to being unpopular then are you?
>
> P2 No I'm not being unpopular, it's just I don't bring joy to people anymore you know.
>
> ... I bring them more work.
>
> JL And because it feels like work, do you think the lack of joy is because they are in some way resistant to what it is you are trying to say or just because it means more administrative..
>
> P2 I think it's the latter.

By admitting the Sisyphean nature of my practice, I felt I implicated my colleagues. So I went on to 'acquit' them – they are overworked, and I bring more work. They are accomplished professionals and I was coming to tell them how to do their job.

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[17] I introduce these transcripts verbatim, as forwarded by the interviewers. In the interview with Jonathan Louw my responses are were anonymised as P2.

At the UN PRME Global Forum in New York and the UK and Ireland Chapter conference in Glasgow in 2015, the theme of difficulty in engaging colleagues was recurring. It was evident in formal and informal discussions. Yet, I could not find any reference to that difficulty in writing. And certainly there is no mentioning of lecturers refusing to incorporate the topic of responsibility into their teaching. The report presented at the Global Forum (PRME, 2015) highlights the importance of 'PRME-related faculty development'. I understood this as implying that the lack of engagement is a result of a lack of skills and competencies, rather than lack of interest. This was not my impression from table discussions and coffee-time conversations I had with colleagues. But in formal presentations this felt taboo, and I wondered why. If we all faced this difficulty, why do we not talk about it openly? I did not have a chance to probe this with other participants, as we were moving swiftly from one session to another. Trying to understand why I avoided this discussion may shed light on some of the dynamics of avoiding this very pertinent challenge I face as a CSR practitioner.

When 'defending' my colleagues' resistance to PRME in the interview, there was some truth in stating that the issue was administrative burden. I do believe that some colleagues saw me as a bearer of yet another management-imposed initiative, and some resented being introduced to more issues to consider in their practice. But there was more – I believed that some colleagues were just not interested in CSR. Yet, being aware that everything I said was recorded, how could I say that I actually believed there were academics for whom CSR was an insignificant appendage to business and management studies. The memory of being told several years ago by a programme tutor that the CSR module was irrelevant to the MSc International Business programme had not faded away. But I chose not to disclose it, accepting the social norm that dirty laundry must never be washed in public.

In the interview with Charlotte Warin nine months after being interviewed by Jonathan, I acknowledged that the process of signing for and engaging colleagues with PRME was lengthy, but there was no more referring to it as 'Sisyphean'. The management was supportive of the initiative

cw - so have you always had managerial support do you think on this area

jf- to an extent you know the idea is yes we always have this support, so,...we are talking in terms of money, so that's the biggest evidence of support that you can see so otherwise

you would just you know it would just be lip service but I don't remember any initiative that was proposed in that respect that wasn't supported, so er yeah I would say yes

Here, as well, the disclosure was only partial. My annoyance and desperation that led to the signing up for PRME, my feeling of being on my own in trying to get PRME accepted by the colleagues, all this remained unsaid. I had workload allowance for SEU and PRME, and I had a small budget, so saying I was supported was not inaccurate, but it was definitely not the whole picture.

Keeping my thoughts to myself was not just about protecting the image of my workplace. I was also protecting myself from facing the potentially painful explanation for my managers' and colleagues' indifference. It is easier to believe that the lack of interest in PRME, and in CSR by proxy, is related to extra work, to being busy and protecting their professional identity, rather than accepting that a major aspect of my work and my identity is irrelevant to many people in my workplace.

In my Doctoral Review I wrote about setting up a series of conversations after signing for PRME. At the time of setting those up and of subsequently writing about it, I managed to shield my feelings of disappointment with low attendance by anticipating it. What I was not expecting was the dean's comments in one of the conversations.

> [The dean] also mentioned that at the conferences he attended lately the theme of responsibility seems to be overused; 'people get fed up with hearing the same people giving the same talk on the same topic' were his words. His comment shook me slightly, as it could be perceived as a threat to my position, if the subject I'm championing is no longer considered to be topical.

Acknowledging rejection of CSR was tantamount to acknowledging my insignificance to HBS. So when pressed to reveal the difficulties with the adoption of PRME, I clammed up.

> JL So being more specific, can you tell me a story about something that's happened which is broadly connected to the PRME agenda, where things haven't gone well for one reason or the other and what happened?

> P2 I can't think of things that didn't go well, it's just the time it takes, maybe I'm just impatient.

Teaching, researching and practising CSR is a significant part of my identity. Rejecting CSR was not just academic disagreement; it was rejecting me, my relevance. As long as it is my impatience, what I perceive as the lack of engagement with what I do, it does not mean indifference to or rejection of what is core to my professional identity, and can thus be tolerated. I will discuss identity in the next chapter. Here I would like to draw attention to the complex web of feelings, motives and emotions that are inseparable from our practice. The way we talk about our practice is also inseparable from those emotions.

The way I discuss engagement with PRME differs according to audience, but also according to many other factors – whether it is in writing or oral, chance conversation or scheduled interview, the way I feel about that engagement at the time of the discussion, the purpose of and the audience for the discussion. Those factors influence what I reveal and what I conceal about PRME. It would be wrong to say 'what I choose' to reveal and conceal, as often it is not an intended decision, and only in reflecting on the discussions do I realise the disclosed and withheld aspect of my narratives.

Yet, to me, who the audience is seems to be one of the most important influences on what I choose to expose. Very loosely I can classify the discussions into private and public conversations. I am more cautious of what I convey publicly. In the interviews with other researchers I was careful to protect the image of the business school – more so in the later interview with Charlotte, but to a certain degree in the earlier one with Jonathan. In creating slides in response to the request for showcasing our projects, in the presentation to the deans of schools, in my chapter for the *Inspirational Guide* – I carefully crafted the story of success and achievements. In discussions with colleagues from other institutions at various conferences, I would open up, very often in response to someone else acknowledging the difficulty of PRME engagement. In my conversations with my PhD group and in my writing, I would concentrate on the difficulties, dismissing the achievements. In talking to my husband I aired the exasperation of dealing with frustrating colleagues.

Initially I found the rudimentary distinction between public and private talk useful in trying to understand the differences in my conversations. Since the definitions of 'private' and 'public' are fluid, it is important to explain what I mean by them. The public/private division is extensively debated in sociology, law and public policy, yet there is no single definition for it (Armstrong and Squires, 2002; Marginson, 2007). According to Buss (1997), international law claims to set clear and objective boundaries between the two realms, but the boundaries of the

'great divide' have been constantly redrawn since the 19th century (Boyd, 1997). Political scientists tend to adopt one of the two – the classical or the liberal – approaches to analyse the private and the public (Armstrong and Squires, 2002). Historians note that the concepts of 'private' and 'public' are constantly shifting according to context (Klein, 1995; Davidoff, 2003). Feminist researchers challenge the private/public divide, drawing attention to gender inequality created by the separation between the public and the private spheres in the orthodox discourse. Although approaches to understanding the nature of public and private domains vary, the common feature for all those approaches is that the private and the public are separate, and that different conversations are held in different spheres. The references to 'boundaries' and 'spheres/realms' highlight a systems approach, which is based on a spatial understanding of public and private debate.

For Stacey (2011), public/private is not a physical (street or home) or structural space (public or private ownership), but a way to describe forms of everyday conversations, public being vocal with others, and private being silent with ourselves. Following Stacey I understand the two as relating to the type of discussion one is able to have: by public I mean formal conversations, and by private I refer to informal talks and my internal conversations.

This public-private distinction is useful when I'm trying to make sense of the formal discourse within the PRME community, a community I feel a part of, a community with its conferences, publications, institutions and discourse. That discourse is overwhelmingly congratulatory, encouraging, cheerleader-like, and it resonates with what Scott (1990) refers to as 'public transcript'. For Scott the public transcripts are 'a kind of self-hypnosis… to buck up their courage, improve their cohesion, display their power and convince themselves anew of their high moral purpose' (ibid: 67). The glorified CSR discourse (Chapter 5) is an example of a 'private transcript'. Scott examines the discourses of dominant and subordinate groups in various societies. He concludes that the public transcript is a way to maintain the established social order, and the hidden transcripts challenge it. Although the PRME/CSR community is not a 'ruling elite', it is part of the wider 'establishment', set up by the UN. There is an accepted public transcript that emphasises the importance of embedding responsibility in higher education, that is not openly challenged by the members of this community, nor by invited guests. In keeping with the crude public-private continuum, I could say that the more public the discourse, the more the difficulty is downplayed and the achievements are highlighted.

Although I refer to the 'PRME community', it is not an independent physical entity, but a social object, a tendency of a large number of people to act in a similar way in similar situations (Mead, 1938). Like any organisation, PRME is 'the ongoing patterning of conversations' (Stacey, 2012: 365). Therefore, when talking about the 'community' discourse, I am talking about the themes that arise in many conversations of interdependent people who, for various reasons, identify themselves with PRME. The discourse is sustained in many individual conversations. Each one of us, in our discussions, potentially contributes to and challenges those themes. And our contributions to this particular discourse are contingent on numerous other discourses in which we all participate. Several themes have arisen since the establishment of UN PRME that can be conceptualised as a 'public transcript'. One of these themes is the importance of embedding responsibility and sustainability in HE curricula. However, as each practitioner has to interpret those principles in her/his daily work, and those interpretations differ from one practitioner to another, rather than talking about the public discourse of the group, I can only talk about my understanding of, my interpretation and my participation in that discourse.

So what is the purpose of my presenting the affirmative description of my practice? Who am I trying to convince? I believe it is both for the benefit of communicating my achievements to others, and of convincing myself of the importance of these achievements. Paradoxically, recognition by others both contributes to my sense of success and at the same time enhances my feeling of dissatisfaction, of being able yet again to 'pull it off', and of needing to do more to make the appearances of achievements 'real' to me. In Chapter 3 I suggested that I may 'suffer' from 'impostor syndrome'. I believe this is a simplistic explanation for more complex processes of maintaining identity. By wanting to fit in with the PRME/CSR community I choose to participate in the discourse in the way I think will allow me to continue identifying with it. Contributing to the 'public transcript', avoiding disclosing too much controversial information, such as reluctance of my colleagues, my own feeling of being marginal, difficulty in mustering enthusiasm from the managers - to outsiders, I feel secure in my participating in this group.

So public-private for me is linked to the extent of exposing or hiding my thoughts. Recently I have become more sensitive to what seems to me to be attempts to redact a less than favourable story of PRME, in my conversations and in the accounts of others. During the latest conferences it was encouraging to hear the 'employers'' perspective about the importance of introducing the principles of responsibility in our teaching. One after another, representatives from an investment bank, a major consumer goods company, an energy company and a commercial

bank reiterated the importance of teaching the skills of responsibility and sustainability, with no one questioning what those 'skills' might be. My initial enthusiasm waned quickly, when they admitted that 'social responsibility' or 'sustainability' was not part of any recruitment requirement. I realised that they too, as I do, tailor the message to the audience. I do not disbelieve that they all agree that the employees should be responsible. But I also believe this is not a priority. The same applies to the students. A student representative revealed that in a recent global survey 80% of the graduates said they would not work for a company whose values they disagreed with. And I thought 'Really? How exactly do graduates assess the employer's values? With 46 applicants on average applying for each graduate position (Anon, 2015), I wondered if any of the big banks would have a great difficulty in recruitment that year, despite 58% of the UK public distrusting the bankers (YouGov-Cambridge, 2013). This student survey result seemed as hollow as the notion of ethical consumerism (Carrington et al., 2014)[18]. Yet, the story was too good not to be told.

The following week, at another conference a representative from a very large bank, which had been rescued by the government during the latest financial crisis, was talking about their commitment to responsibility and sustainability. One of the 'achievements' he chose to focus on was the commitment of the board to have 30% female representations among senior executives by 2020. My ears pricked up. Will this be considered an achievement? I questioned the speaker and was given a very unsatisfactory answer, which I continued to challenge. At the break many other participants came up to me thanking me for bringing up the question and saying how pleased they were with my comments. Reflecting on the two incidents, I cannot help thinking about the similarities and the differences. The main difference that draws my attention is my decision whether to question what seemed to me as an uncritical lip-service to the responsibility narrative, and the absence of questioning by the others. Numerous reasons come to mind – the much bigger crowd at the former, it was easier to be seen as sceptical of the representative of the huge bank, than of the delegate from a student union, my interest in the topic (I am much more passionate about underrepresentation of women in senior roles, than I am about surveys among students). Perhaps the timing of the conferences was important as well, and being self-silenced for the first conference, I decided to speak up at the second. By

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[18] Studies found that people are less ethical than they claim to be (Banaji et al., 2003). As consumers we tend to claim to be prepared to pay extra for 'responsible products'. But in front of the store shelf we still tend to choose based on price (Auger et al., 2003).

reflecting on why I avoided asking the question at the earlier conference, and going ahead with grilling the speaker at the latter, I expect to have gained some insights into experience of others.

Becoming aware of the themes that are kept obscured in the arguments of others, I am becoming more aware of the apparent signs of self-censoring in my presentations. I cannot avoid the question about whether I really believe others are unaware of things I leave unsaid. I have no doubt that my suspicious reception of the two presentations was shared by my peers, as evidenced by post-presentation conversations. And I'm certain that when being introduced to a trouble-free picture of the work of the SEU, colleagues and managers at the University, peers at the conferences, and readers of my chapter have some doubts about this unproblematic narrative. Yet, I've never been questioned about the things that remain unsaid. The way I self-censored my questions, others have censored theirs, avoiding publicly confronting my presentations. By avoiding public confrontation I mean the lack of questioning of the validity of the overwhelmingly cheerful tone of my narrative. Other aspects, such as methodology, have been questioned unreservedly. This demonstrates once again the issues that are allowed and precluded from being challenged openly. I am not privy to the private conversations that follow my presentations, but taking part in many post-presentation private conversations, I am certain that what is publicly unopposed, is privately critiqued.

The crude distinction between public and private conversations echoes Scott's (1990) distinction between public and hidden transcripts. My initial excitement about his work was compounded by the fact that the distinction is somewhat blurred, not sharp, as it is in the mainstream organisational literature. Those transcripts are not perceived as attributed to two different groups of people, but both the public and the hidden transcripts 'embodied in the same individual' (ibid: 44). I could identify with Scott's discussion of the dangers of abandoning the public transcript. I myself felt the need to maintain the upbeat public attitude to maintain my own legitimacy, to validate my role, to protect the budget. By admitting my doubts about PRME and my 'championing' of it could potentially lead to managers questioning the need for remaining PRME signatories. This could be tantamount to committing professional suicide.

Yet, on further reading of Scott and rereading my narratives, I find some limitations of these concepts in making sense of my experiences. Scott understands the two transcripts as presented at different times and at 'different sites' (ibid). His moving the discussion between the 'group' and the 'individual', without explaining how the two are linked, gives the impression that the individuals may embody both transcripts, but the group somehow 'decides' when and where

the public or the hidden transcripts are presented. Yet, there is no account of the impact of the individual on sustaining and changing the transcripts. I recognise how, for example, in writing my chapter in the *Inspirational Guide* I was very much aware of the cheery tone the editors expected from me, and how that awareness impacted the chapter. I am also aware that by presenting this chapter in various forums I have been contributing to maintaining that tone of idealisation of CSR.

Another limitation of Scott's work is his choice of 'transcript' terminology, which implies intention, awareness and control, as if one is always capable of making a decision between what to make public and what to keep private. The revealing/concealing question is also addressed in the academic literature in relation to information in organisations and in discussing research methodology. In accounting (Lys et al., 2015) and marketing (Prabhu and Stewart, 2001), 'signalling' is used to address the information disclosed in the official firms' literature in order to demonstrate a specific issue to stakeholders. Steinel et al. (2010) and Pincus and Bixenstine (1977) discuss the implications of revealing or concealing on decision making, while Ison et al. (2013) examine the revealing and concealing in social learning. The ethics of revealing sensitive information is explored in relation to whistleblowing (Andrade, 2015), while other scholars (e.g. Micelotta and Raynard, 2011) explore the revealing or concealing information as a strategic decision. Management consultants (Bierck, 2000, Krattenmaker, 2000) dish out advice about what information to share with the public and when to do so. The common thread in these varied literature strands is the way revealing and concealing is conceptualised. The underlying assumption is that we are in control.

Research methodology explores the ethical dimensions of disclosure and concealment (Murphy and Dingwall, 2001). Considerations of protecting the identity of the research participants and sensitive information are given especially in ethnographic and autoethnographic research. Ellis (2007, 2004) draws attention to the need to consider how our personal exposure affects others: 'I tell [my students] that they don't own their story. That their story is also other people's stories' (2007: 25). This strand of literature is also underpinned by the assumption that the researcher can choose what to expose and what to keep deliberately concealed, and it is the author who decides on 'negotiated disclosure, choices made about writing strategy' (Rappert, 2010: 577).

Often, even when we attempt to anonymise our research, we cannot conceal the identity of the participants. Earlier I mentioned the bank representative. The workplace is salient to my

narrative, it emphasises the point I was trying to make – the lip service an organisation, which is being saved by public funds, pays to responsibility. However, any participant at that conference can identify the speaker, and even those who were not present, can do so by obtaining the agenda of the conference. Researchers reflecting on their own practice (e.g. DMan programme at the UH) grapple with revealing and concealing, since their work relates to their own work place and often it is impossible to anonymise places and people. Some work is especially sensitive due to the unique nature of the organisation researched (e.g. Miller, 2003), or a the role of the researcher in the organisation (e.g. Flinn, 2011, Monaghan, 2010), yet the power relations of those researchers in their organisations is germane to their work. Freadman (2004: 128) warns that 'self-revelations always involve revelation about others'. To avoid this exposure I could omit the work affiliation of the speaker, or even the conference details, but those omissions diminish the relevance of the narrative. Striking a balance between preserving anonymity of participants and confidentiality of the sensitive information, and integrity of research is difficult. Concealing all identifying information may result in 'a stilted jumble that hides as it discloses' (Rappert, 2010: 581).

But even when others are sufficiently protected in our narratives there remains a matter of what we think we are allowed to disclose. What we say is impacted by our considered decisions, but also dictated by custom and our need to belong. Very often those are not deliberate choices. We are not always aware of what we reveal or conceal in our narratives. Our thoughts, beliefs and values, as well as our embracing and rejecting of the dominant discourse, arise in the numerous interactions with many others in our environments, and in silent conversations with ourselves. Only in sharing our narratives with others do we recognise what we may have tried to conceal. Iser (2002: 293) notes that the reader (or the listener) is an active participant in research, completing the unspoken, making meaning together with the researcher 'What is said only appears to take on significance as a reference to what is not said'. By talking to my PhD group and by putting my narratives in writing and reading them, I recognised some reasons for my self-censorship. Challenging the dominant discourse, in silent conversations with myself or by speaking up against convention publicly, I risked being marginalised and excluded. But our awareness of the motives for our actions evolves as we iterate our narratives, and ascribing intentional choice to our decisions retrospectively is analogous to going back in time.

Another limitation of Scott's work is the use of the term 'transcript' which also implies a static, unchanging text. In my experience I am often surprised by what I say, by how much I reveal and conceal. The two interviews, for example, demonstrate what Scott might call 'public

transcript'. I revealed the difficulties of engaging colleagues to Jonathan Louw, revealed the management support to Charlotte Warin, and concealed my doubts about my ability to 'embed' PRME. These were not premeditated texts delivered on two different occasions. These were my opinions at the time I voiced them, and upon reading the two interview transcripts I was surprised at the similarities and the differences between the two.

Although Scott's ideas shed some light on my experiences, the distinction between public and hidden (private) does not explain the revealing and concealing in my private conversations, especially in my diary, which I could keep undisclosed if I wished. By abandoning the dualism of public/private, concealing/revealing, and accepting the dialectical nature of those experiences, I am able to understand my behaviour better. Rather than seeking answers at either end of the private-public or revealing-concealing continuum, I am embracing the paradox of 'both at the same time'.

By paradox I mean the contradictions in the way we think about the world in general and about our professional practice in particular. Researchers from the Complexity and Management Centre at UH argue that contemporary management literature tries to eliminate paradox, resolving it to dualisms. Yet, the contradictions in our thinking are not resolvable, and being aware of them, rather than trying to eradicate them, might be a more useful way of thinking about our practice. Therefore, recognising the revealing and concealing dialectic allows me to understand my practice, and the practice of others better, to recognise that the public and the private are always present in our interactions.

There is no totally public or absolutely private discussion. In the very public presentations or discussions, there is always the private, the individual motives, intentions and understandings. We may wish to conceal some of those private emotions from public presentations, but we cannot expunge them; the two are inseparable, and assuming one can strip the public discussion of the private influences is self-deceiving. By revealing and highlighting what we want to make public, we at the same time attempt to keep other aspects concealed, and by doing so we inadvertently reveal them. Even the fact that I reproduced the slide (Figure 1) in this work reveals my need to have my work externally validated. In my book chapter on PRME engagement, by leaving a gaping absence of acknowledging the difficulties, I reveal their existence. Whatever we make public inadvertently reveals our private beliefs, our allegiances, our aspirations, our needs and our anxieties.

And even our most private discussions, the ones we hold with ourselves, are not devoid of audience. Mead (1934) points out that as humans we have a unique ability of taking the attitude of others. In our numerous interactions with others, we learn how others (initially a specific other, and later the other as a general representation of a specific group) react to us. In time we learn to anticipate the reaction of the 'generalised other', developing a capacity to take the attitude of the entire group (Stacey, 2012). The conversations I hold with myself in my mind are the interplay between myself – 'I', and the attitude of the generalised other – 'me'. The meaning I make of a situation I am thinking about arises in the I-me conversations. In those conversations, 'me' is the audience to myself, I. Those most private conversations are constantly changing. Similar to the iteration of written narratives that change as new insights are being developed, silent conversations with myself are always changing, different aspects emerge at different times, and others become less relevant; my perception is constantly changing.

In conversing with ourselves we also do not reveal all. Rappert (2010) suggests that what we know and subsequently reveal is limited due to 'bounded rationality'. I suggest that our awareness is limited not just because of our capacity to deal with information, but also because the meaning of the information is constantly evolving. I do not reveal all not necessarily because I intend to conceal details. Sometimes they are not mentioned because I try to avoid dealing with them, and often because I am not aware of them. Awareness presupposes existence. But our thoughts, emotions and beliefs do not exist independently of our interactions. They evolve, diminish, and sometimes disappear, in our interactions. Therefore, they are not fully knowable, and we cannot be fully aware of them. In order to fully reveal or conceal, even in conversations with oneself, one must have unbounded awareness, which is impossible. Full disclosure or total concealment is simply unachievable.

Summary

By iterating the PRME narrative I have gained insights into how I, a practitioner, talk about my engagement with CSR. In the spirit of critical approach to my practice, I have tried to be open with myself and with my reader about my aspirations and doubts, about my hopes and disappointments. By taking the risk of 'showing perceived warts and bruises as well as the accolades and success' (Ellis, 2007: 17), I have highlighted my experiences of talking about CSR.

In the previous chapter I explored the overly optimistic narrative of CSR. In this chapter I focused on my experiences of discussing PRME (as one interpretation of CSR in HE) in conversations with myself and others. Several insights emerged from reflecting on those conversations.

First, although I remain critical of the overly cheerful discussion of CSR in the academic and professional literature, I have explored the processes in which self-censoring of less flattering aspects of our practice arise.

Second, I discussed the difficulties of exposing the challenges of practising CSR in various forums. Reflecting on those difficulties I began understanding difficulties others might face in exposing their own discouraging experiences.

Third, reflecting on the processes of revealing and concealing in my conversations, I began paying attention to the nuances of revealing and concealing in the discussions of others.

I do not claim that my experience is identical to the experiences of others. What I highlight is the similarity in our experiences of choosing to expose our thoughts publically. The reasons for the decision to do, or rather not to do, so might be different, but those decisions, taken locally, contribute to the emerging meaning of PRME. Similarly to the global evolvement of CSR in local micro-interactions (Chapter 5), PRME global patterns of relating emerge locally. Although UN PRME is experienced as an external force, it only arises in the interactions of many interdependent actors, as people can only ever act locally.

In this chapter I focused on how the current CSR narrative has been sustained by participants in those conversations, and reflected on the emergence of CSR discourse.

In the following chapters I will continue paying attention to what is revealed and what is concealed in CSR literature, in relating various discourses to my practice. In the next chapter I will focus on my experience of setting up a CSR-related unit, which allowed me an insight into the processes and purpose of planning and vision.

Chapter 7 - The experience of setting up the Social Enterprise Unit (SEU)

It does go to show how these big decisions are just drifted into in a rather messy way (Alexander McCall Smith, *The Sunday Philosophy Club*)

Introduction

A significant proportion of my work, both in terms of my workload and in terms of the attention devoted to it, is my role of Director of the Social Enterprise Unit (SEU). In Chapter 4 I alluded to the way I have come to identify the work of the Unit with my practice of CSR, which at times was detrimental to my understanding of other interactions as contributing to CSR. In this chapter I discuss the initial stages of developing the Unit, as I reflected on them five years after its announcement. The latter part of the chapter addresses my further thinking about that period.

My story

The Unit was established in 2009. I applied for the role of director, as soon as it was advertised. When I read the job description it felt as if it was written for me. The job description focused on promoting engagement with charities. Since the role was newly created, I thought it would be possible to create new opportunities for engaging with CSR, as I understood it at the time. Not prescribing to a specific definition of CSR, I understood it broadly as discretionary activities on behalf of the organisations having benefit (including reducing harm) beyond those organisations. Getting the role seemed like a great opportunity to finally become involved in practising CSR, which became central to my PhD. In preliminary discussions with the Head of Department, it was also suggested that it may lead to promotion to the next pay grade. I was determined to get it. At the interview I was asked to describe my 'vision' for the Unit. I managed to link it to the role description, but I think what got me the role was the enthusiasm I conveyed for 'assisting the charities to become more enterprising'. But the moment I was told that the role was mine, I became nervous – what was I supposed to do? I was excited about the opportunity to develop something new, to put my imprint on the Unit. But this prospect was also frightening. I had no guidance; there was no predecessor to explain the role. How was I to be successful with no criteria for success?

Coming from a strategic management group, it might have been expected of me to proceed 'strategically' – define the vision and the mission of the Unit, and create a business plan. But I was also a PhD student, at the early stages of exploring complexity perspectives. So I decided

to take a 'conversational approach', and my first action was talking to others. I expected these conversations to lead to some sort of firm idea about how to progress, or at least the next steps. Reading these lines with the benefit of hindsight, knowing (to an extent) both how these conversations developed and having developed further my understanding of complexity, this thinking seems naïve and mechanistic. But at the time, at that stage of my research, I understood plans and emergence as incompatible. What I failed to appreciate was that the decision not to have a plan, the decision to have conversations with colleagues about the Unit, was also a type of plan.

Following the advice of the Head of Department, I arranged a meeting with Lisa Crown, CEO of the local Centre for Voluntary Services (CVS), who was on the advisory board of HBS. It became apparent that she was instrumental in the decision to create the unit. It was also suggested that I met with Stewart, who was about to become the VC Regional Engagement, and with Allan, Director of the new Centre for Sustainable Living (CSL). It was interesting to learn that both had new roles that had been created recently, whose meanings had just begun emerging.

Lisa was sceptical. She had met with others from HBS, trying to get any kind of cooperation with us and got nowhere, so she agreed to meet, but informed me that until she sees some work done, she would remain doubtful about this initiative. Leaving the meeting, I felt energised, wanting to prove that I was different, I was going to prove her wrong. This feeling fuelled my motivation for several years, until I heard 'well done' from Lisa.

Stewart was in the process of moving offices, since the faculty he had led was in the last stages of dismantling. He was very pleasant, and we chatted about his last job. He also talked a little about the new CSL, and generally seemed very welcoming. What we did not discuss is the nature of his job, what this 'community engagement' was that the Unit was supposed to be 'affiliated' with, or indeed the nature of this 'affiliation'. I would never know why he seemed so relaxed. Was it because at that time he was secure in his job, having the new CSL under his management, and learning about SEU, which would be affiliated with his role, 'beefing up' his role, thus increasing its (and his) legitimacy? Was it his natural behaviour? Or was my anxiety about the new role more apparent against his (what seemed to me) relaxed approach to his new position?

It took longer to meet with the Director of CSL. He was very busy shaping his newly formed centre. He was curious about the Unit and seemed pleased when I assured him of my commitment to affiliating the Unit with the Centre. He told me he was not sure what the Centre was supposed to do, who else was going to be associated with it, or how the SEU was supposed to be linked to his centre, but it seemed that he was strongly inclined towards the engineering/environmental aspects of sustainable living and was happy to leave everything else to other units (as long as the units were affiliated with the centre). He was very nervous talking about his targets, which were expressed in monetary terms, and was uncertain how to approach that. It seemed to me that both managers of the newly established units were happy that the SEU was created, as it seemed to reaffirm their own roles.

It is interesting to note that I was not alone in my uncertainty about the new role. Both managers, although more senior and more experienced than me, were also confused and unsure about the new roles they were appointed to. They, as did I, started by talking to others in order to figure out what they wanted to do and what they were supposed to be doing. In uncertainty, in order to make sense of what we are expected to do, we turned to the most obvious – talking with others, figuring together the meaning of our roles. This important aspect of talking to others, making sense of leading and managing in conversation with others, is highlighted by critical management scholars (e.g. Cunliffe, 2008, Hosking, 2011, Cunliffe and Eriksen, 2011) and by the proponents of complex responsive processes (e.g. Griffin, 2002, Shaw, 2002, Burr and Larsen, 2010, Norman et al., 2014). Those authors understand conversations as central to emergence of meaning. All of us - Lisa, Stewart, Allan and I - were uncertain about how to proceed, yet we moved on, constantly interpreting and reinterpreting the meaning of our roles in conversations with each other and with others. As discussed in Chapter 2, meaning does not reside in the sender or the receiver of the message, nor has it an independent standing. Meaning arises in the ongoing conversation, it is always social. Yet, the traditional management literature portrays the leader as the singular person (or a group of people) who is responsible for giving meaning to the organisations (Stacey and Mowles, 2016).

We began by focusing on the aspects of our roles we were most interested in and passionate about, and also on the areas we felt more familiar with. Stewart and Allan took the environmental route, I decided to focus on the social aspect of CSR. It also became apparent that each of us was eager to be affiliated with others. The uncertainty of a new role was frightening to me; working with others, creating networks was a way of dealing with those anxieties. Perhaps being part of a larger network, expecting strength in numbers, gave us the

sense of security and legitimacy. Belonging to a group may be motivated by the need to reduce uncertainty (Hogg et al., 2006). Yet, some argue that leaders (and sometimes managers) are required to provide their followers with tools to succeed in uncertainty (e.g. Cook, 2016, Horney et al., 2010). Others claim that the transformational leader knows how to lead the organisation in uncertainty (Tyssen et al., 2014), and is an objective designer of the organisation and its activities (Worren, 2013). On the other hand, understanding that the manager is never a detached choreographer who is able to put his or her feelings and history aside, but is an embodied participant in ongoing conversations with others (e.g. Stacey and Griffin, 2005) is more congruent with my experience. As embodied participants we are unable to step out of our experience, which always involves uncertainty.

To gauge the views of HBS staff, I invited colleagues to a meeting with no formal agenda, asking them to join me to discuss how they thought we should proceed and to share ideas about the Unit. Many came out of curiosity. Some had agendas to promote, expecting the Unit to advance those agendas. Some were more vocal than others. Silvio, for example, insisted on taking the environmental position and on 'greening' the Unit. His position reminded me of Allan's discussion and his 'green' agenda.

I started those conversations, aiming to discuss the possible development of the Unit. Although I had some ideas of what I wanted to do, in order to gauge whether those ideas were viable, I had to sound them out, to hear what others thought. At the time I believed I was open-minded about what we could do, I had ideas about what I did not want to do. In my mind, I dismissed any 'green' idea. I had not considered it as important as the social agenda. So I was not as open, and as agenda-less, as I wanted to believe. I was only open to hearing the views that I thought could help me promote my ideas. I should not be surprised, then, when many colleagues remain less enthusiastic about some aspects of my work, if it does not promote their interests.

Although I wanted to be 'systematic' in my approach, at least this is how I perceived it – first talk to people, then act - my attempts were 'interrupted' by people who did not know nor cared about my efforts of orderly development. Meeting and talking to those 'intruders' had a significant impact on the way I was thinking about the role of the Unit. Jasmin contacted me several days after my appointment. She heard the dean talking about the intentions of creating the Unit at a function, had contacted him and was directed to me. We met the following week. She was excited about the 'business school wanting to help charities'. She was talking about her charity, Cancer Hair Care, with infectious enthusiasm and passion. She was working on

several projects at once and felt she needed help to take them forward. Her story fascinated me, I wanted to help. So I asked her what she would like us to do. As she was talking about the need to develop a strategy for each of the projects, I immediately thought of the strategic management module, on which the students are required to evaluate the strategy of a given company, based on a case study, and make recommendation. I thought that on this module we could use Cancer Hair Care as a 'live' case study. Further discussion exposed this suggestion as inappropriate, but we both agreed that matching charities' needs with a specific module was appropriate for the Unit to undertake. This activity has been central to the Unit's activity since.

The above paragraph betrays my then deeply-rooted beliefs about managing. Although I claimed interest in complexity and complex responsive processes, I still discussed talking and acting as separate. Claiming significance of conversations and beginning my engagement in the Unit with conversations, I perceived them as a precursor to the 'real' action, rather than action in itself.

Others failed to get me interested and I could not find a way to fit with what I considered to be the purpose of the Unit. Anna came to seek assistance in promoting her charity. She needed assistance with volunteers who would engage in fundraising for her charity. Although I had not intended to include volunteer recruitment in the Unit's activities, only while talking through the request with her was I able to make sense of why it was not a feasible activity to undertake.

Feelings and personal history played a significant role in what I was doing, which projects were promoted and which were put on the back-burner, thus shaping the activities. These, in turn, became part of the Unit's portfolio and shaped my approach to later requests. I relied on friendships with colleagues in developing some projects. Paying more attention and putting more effort into projects that I thought I could develop more easily, relying on colleagues whose interests were closely aligned with the proposed project, enabled some of the ideas to turn into clearly defined projects quicker.

The ideas for developing the Unit and the ways of going about the role have not been a sequential step-by-step progression, but an iterative and evolving process. The linear way of writing about the events may give an impression of linear processes, but the development has been neither linear nor orderly. As discussed above, clients started coming to see me long before I finished the 'conversations round' with colleagues. My conversations with them impacted the subsequent discussions with colleagues, and at the same time my conversations with colleagues

impacted my thinking about possible avenues for the development of the Unit and allowed me to figure out how one client could benefit from the Unit and to justify to myself why another could not. The meaning of the Unit has been arising in continuous conversations with many others.

My narrative draws attention to the very messy nature of creating the Unit. By 'messy' I do not intend to attach a negative value judgement to my experience, I do not mean 'bad'. I mean 'messy' as opposite to 'orderly' or 'neat'. 'Calling things a "mess" should not be seen as something unpleasant or negative, but as a part of the open and creative becoming of life, inexhaustible and unfinalizable' Steyaert (2004: 11). The process I describe points to the emergence of meaning in intertwining multiple intentions and individual preferences of many interdependent players.

Almost eight years after the Unit was established, I still find myself continuing to define and redefine its parameters, what to get involved in and what to reject. Revisiting the details of the initial stages of setting up the Unit, I am reminded how hectic and chaotic it felt at the time to speak to different people with differing agendas, to try figuring out my own agenda and attempting to make sense of the purpose of my work. I also am aware that the decisions made and projects undertaken emerged in these interactions. My intentions, ambitions and understanding of the purpose of the Unit have been intertwined with those of others whom I met and talked to. Some were more influential than others; some ideas have been developed further, while others were short-lived. Yet, even the decision to exclude some aspects, such as the 'green agenda', were part of the ongoing process of making sense of an emerging remit for the Unit. These were not individual, independent decisions; they were conceived and delivered in the course of my working with others, as responsive processes of interacting with others. Some decisions were deliberate and planned, and some were made 'on the spur of the moment'.

In the following section I demonstrate how the mainstream CSR literature (Parker, 2014) is largely embedded in the managerialist discourse and is confusing to the CSR practitioner, as it describes the process of establishing CSR activities as discrete, orderly and residing with an individual or a group of managers. This is contrary to my experience of being enabled and constrained by others in making choices regarding the Unit. As this narrative focuses on the creation of the SEU, I will draw comparisons with the entrepreneurial literature.

Making sense of the literature addressing CSR adoption in an organisation

Playing a major part in the creation of a unit that in my understanding was meant to address business school's CSR, allowed me a privileged position to examine the development of CSR in this organisation. CSR is often described as poorly defined (Carroll, 2008, Garriga and Mele, 2004, Votaw, 1973, Baden and Harwood, 2012). Nevertheless, there is a general consensus about what can be included in and what should be excluded from this concept. Although Carroll's (1991) pyramid, including legal responsibility, is still a highly cited definition, most authors agree that CSR is voluntary, not just legally mandated organisations' actions (Aguilera et al., 2007, Van Oosterhout and Heugens, 2008), aimed at improving social and environmental conditions (Scherer et al., 2014, Mackey et al., 2008). Despite the term including the word 'Corporate', CSR refers to various organisations, not just corporations or business firms, but 'other types of institution apart from business in the narrow sense' (Maclagan, 2008: 371).

Empirical research into CSR is prolific. The discussion is often kept at national (Yu-Shu et al., 2014, Omazic and Banovac, 2012, Jackson and Apostolakou, 2010, Jamali and Neville, 2011) or industry level (Soana, 2011, Dobele et al., 2014, Scholtens, 2011). Great attention has been devoted to discussions of CSR at an organisational level (Crane et al., 2008b). The 'unit of analysis' differs, but the focus remains the same: what is done, and how it is linked to other factors, for example - financial performance, reputation and staff retention.

Still limited, but a growing body of research is devoted to examining the motivation for adopting CSR. Authors tend to focus on the organisations' motives (e.g. Crotty, 2016, Shnayder et al., 2016, Shao-Chi and Heng-Yu, 2015, Chernev and Blair, 2015, Arend, 2014, Ervin et al., 2013), including a minority of researchers focusing on Higher Education Institutions (Atakan and Eker, 2007). 'Motives for adopting CSR' was initially the emphasis of the Ukrainian project Greg and I undertook in 2011 (Chapter 3). But exploring that stream of literature in depth, as well as the results of our primary research, left me disappointed. The discussion in literature (e.g. Galbreath, 2010, McWilliams et al., 2006, McWilliams et al., 2016, Hosoda and Suzuki, 2015) is often of a process that is intentional, planned, linear and systematic. Our interviews with those responsible for CSR in their organisations echoed this approach. From the incredibly rehearsed responses of the head of corporate communications of a self-service wholesaler, to the very honest replies of the PR manager of a local bank, a picture emerged of a 'strategic' approach to CSR. Some, very honestly, addressed difficulties and challenges – focusing on those faced by their organisation. But I could not find in my literature review, nor in my

Ukrainian research conference papers, any discussion of the everyday mundane acts of starting a socially-related activity. Anything that was related to my experience of establishing the Unit, as discussed in the above narrative, was excluded. Crane et al (2008b) claim that individual actors are central to the CSR debate, but the literature does not address individual experiences or personal narratives of engaging with CSR activities.

As well as the everyday, the very personal is missing from the CSR literature too, as is the role of opportunity and temporality. Organisational and strategic management literature is largely context and time neutral (Fulk and Boyd, 1991, Moreland and Levine, 2012, Brinkerhoff, 2015). Similarly CSR and related ideas are discussed as decontextualised activities (Moon et al., 2005, Schwartz and Tilling, 2009). But all the events discussed in the narrative happened because of the interactions of certain people at certain points in time. It is possible that had any other applicant been successful in his or her application to become director of the SEU, the Unit today would have been different. The current CSR literature, firmly embedded in the dominant management discourse, does not resonate with my experience of establishing a CSR-focused unit in an organisation. Nor does the literature address the interpersonal, interrelated, social nature of my experience.

Given the start-up nature of the SEU, I looked into entrepreneurship literature to seek congruence with my experience. There are many similarities between CSR and entrepreneurship literature. Firstly, both CSR and entrepreneurship are usually perceived as planned. Secondly, both literature threads tend to disregard the individual experience of practice. And lastly, both strands perceive the object of discussion as unquestionably positive.

Earlier authors addressing CSR included the debate regarding the importance of CSR. However, since the 1980s, this debate has been resolved in favour of CSR as a desirable phenomenon (e.g. Smith, 2003, Vidaver-Cohen and Altman, 2000). Crane et al. (2008a: 12)) recognise that 'one of the key features of CSR has always been its contested nature', but very few critiqued the concept or its application (e.g. Kuhn and Deetz, 2008, Husted and De Jesus Salazar, 2006). In Chapter 4 I discuss in depth the overwhelmingly positive approach to CSR. A more recent entrepreneurship literature similarly views entrepreneurship 'as something positive and desirable in societies' (Rehn and Taalas, 2004: 235).

Planning, emergence and chance events

One similarity between the two literature strands is that both CSR and entrepreneurship are perceived as planned activities (e.g. Maon et al., 2009). This planned and structured nature of CSR remains unchallenged (Ackerman, 1973, Bowman and Haire, 1975, Burke and Logsdon, 1996, Frederick, 1986, McWilliams et al., 2006, Schwartz and Saiia, 2012, Waddock, 2008). Similarly, Bewayo (2010) reminds readers that preparing a business plan is seen as essential for starting a new venture. He also claims that only a small fraction of ventures begin with the business plan. Those entrepreneurs that do prepare a plan often do so because of the funders' requirements. Perhaps because the Unit did not rely on external financing, I had not felt compelled to prepare a detailed plan. As stated earlier, not having a plan was a plan in itself. But, on the one hand, having 'allowed' myself not to be restricted by a written document, diminished my anxiety, freed me to pay attention to my participation in the conversation and stopped me from stressing about the 'next step'. On the other hand, not having a clear 'strategy', feeling free to do what I thought was best (the emphasis is on feeling, rather than being free), without the safety net of a plan, was overwhelmingly restraining.

Although I assert that there was no detailed plan, I cannot claim that the emergence of the Unit was totally unintentional. The decision to have the Unit was intended by the senior managers in the business school. I intended to have conversations; I had certain expectations of those conversations; I chose to respond to some clients (that's how I refer to the charity representatives that were seeking our assistance) and not to others. Starting with the conversation rather than with a written document was, paradoxically, my 'intended strategy'. The purpose of the Unit and its activities arose in the intertwining of the intentions of all involved. At the time I 'planned' emergence, being influenced by my interest in complexity sciences, but also unable to fully grasp the nature of emergence. This attempt to 'fit' complexity into the mainstream organisational literature, is evident in books that suggest ways to turn complexity to one's advantage (Kelly and Allison, 1999, Morieux and Tolliman, 2014), to tackle complexity (Probst and Bassi, 2014), or to simplify complexity (Gerver, 2016, Segall, 2016). Others suggest that a company 'should renew itself to avoid the risk of drifting away over the edge of chaos' (Fisser and Browaeys, 2010: 66), and discuss the edge of chaos in spatial terms of an 'abyss' (Frederick, 1998: 381). Although I began understanding that complexity cannot be 'tamed', like the authors above are suggesting, I was eager to 'utilise' my newly acquired insights. I tried to 'encourage' complexity.

Additionally, at the time, I understood planning and emergence as incompatible. This was heavily influenced by my understanding of planning as a rigid blueprint for the future

(MacNamee, 1998). However, if plans are understood as expressions of our *intentions, expectations and wishes*, it is inevitable that my living present (Stacey, 2007b) was encompassing both my experiences, learning, and understanding of the past – including my perceptions of planning and strategy, my understanding of what might be expected from the head of a university unit, but also my growing interest in complexity; and my expectations of and desires for the future – succeeding in the role, anticipating the contribution of the role to my PhD - all at the same time.

The tendency to discuss planning as an essential role of the manager in the literature (Stroh et al., 2003) is closely linked to overlooking chance in the mainstream management and CSR literature. Although the inability to predict the future is obvious and no one will argue to the contrary, the massive body of literature devoted to planning, and indeed the academic discipline of strategy, suggests, albeit implicitly, that any success stems from careful planning (Mintzberg, 1990) and, consequently, any failure is a result of ineffective planning and/or incorrect implementation of plans (e.g. Pinto, 2013). Lakein's famous phrase 'failing to plan is planning to fail' has become widespread and permeated popular and academic writings. The search in Business Source Complete database (on May 13, 2014) reveals that it appears in 132 papers, 32 of them scholarly (peer-reviewed) journals. This approach is echoed in the CSR literature:

> Strategy scholars argue that responding to environmental stimuli requires a formal, system [sic] strategic planning effort to guide the initiatives and activities required to adapt to the environment, including those related to CSR. This paper contributes to the literature in confirming that formal strategic planning is positively linked to CSR (Galbreath, 2010: 520).

Mintzberg (Mintzberg and Waters, 1985, Mintzberg et al., 1998, Mintzberg, 1990) introduced the idea of 'emergent strategies' to the mainstream organisational literature. The authors acknowledge that a perfect deliberate strategy probably does not exist: 'Emergent patterns are rather common in organizations, or, more to the point, almost all strategies seem to be in some part at least, emergent' (Mintzberg, 1979: 582). This opens the door for acknowledging and recognising the unexpected. It can be argued that this perspective takes into account the aspect of chance or opportunity that is missing from other schools of thought. However, according to Mintzbeg (1985: 258) '[f]or a strategy to be perfectly emergent, there must be order …in the absence of intention about it' or 'emergent' strategies, patterns realized *despite or in the absence* of intentions' (Mintzberg, 1979: 582 my emphasis). I understand Mintzberg's use of

'emergent' and 'emerging' as something that is externally imposed, with no contribution from the participants, the planners, and the diagram from the article introducing the term (Figure 2) only reinforces this understanding.
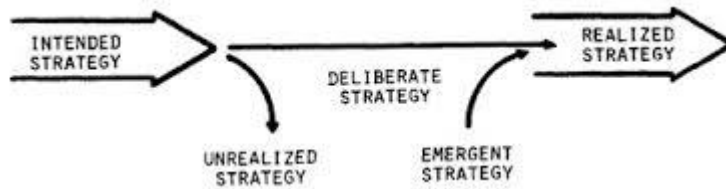

Figure 2. Types of strategies. (Source: Mintzberg and Waters, 1985)

Mintzberg's definition of 'emergence' does not resonate with my experience of emergence, as lack of intentions and deliberateness. My experience points to the intentions that are always in interplay with the intentions of others, so what is emerging is deliberate and unintended at the same time. This is different from 'some seem more deliberate to me, others more emergent, but in general they appear to represent a *blending* of the two' (ibid, my emphasis).

My growing interest in the complexity sciences had begun to contribute to my understanding of planning as an expression of needs and intentions, and as a way of coping with uncertainty. Nevertheless, years of training, learning and practice firmly embedded in the managerialist paradigm resulted in emotional dissonance. The stress of not having a formal strategy, and teaching a CSR module that approached the subject in a systematic way, was at times overwhelming. Recognising that having a written document would not mean that the practice would follow it, and at the same time worrying that what I was doing was lacking structure and therefore lacking meaning, caused me many a sleepless night. Reconciling the newly found insights from complexity sciences with habitual managerial thinking was provoking anxiety.

The previous section highlights the underlying assumption in the management literature, that better planning will result in desired outcomes. Even the recognition that we cannot plan everything is accounted for by the introduction of external factors. Careful planning is designed to eliminate chance from strategy. Planning is inseparable from anxiety – when we plan we think about the future and this leads to anxiety (MacLeod and Cropley, 1996), and at the same time one of the ways to deal with that anxiety is to create plans.

This assumption is closely linked to the lack of attention paid to chance occurrences in the management literature. Smith and Rubenstein (2011: 54) claim (ironically) that the emergence of responsible gambling practices was 'more happenstance than the result of prudent planning'. A study by Lemley and Sampat (2012: 817) suggests 'that the most important decisions made by the patent office are significantly affected by the happenstance of which examiner gets an application'. Discussing the impact of governance on the 2007-9 financial crisis, Prager (2013: 12) claims that '[l]uck rather than skill determined outcomes'. These references to chance or serendipity are sporadic and do not go beyond the simple statement of facts (as perceived by the authors) to explore the social nature of these events. When Quinn and Roberts mention that traditional dominance of checks in the U.S. payment system 'resulted from historical happenstances' (ibid, 2008: 1) they do not discuss the historical events that led to the mentioned phenomenon, but allude to the luck factor in this outcome. In other words, the chance occurrence as an important factor in any event is ignored.

Happenstance as a factor in the outcomes is addressed in the popular management literature. *Get Lucky: How to Put Serendipity to Work for You & Your Business* and *Heart, Smarts, Guts & Luck: What It Takes to Be an Entrepreneur & Build a Great Business* are just two of the titles that tend to provide a prescription for harnessing luck. This is not what I mean by 'chance'. What I mean is acting into the unpredictability and the unknowability of the future. Understanding that we are interdependent with others means accepting that we always play a part in what is emerging but that part is never a solo. It is clear that any event I reflect on in the above narrative has an element of unexpectability and unpredictability: from my being appointed to the role, to my meeting various clients, to my actions and emotional reactions.

This phenomenon is addressed, to some extent, in the career counselling literature:

> The closely related phenomena of happenstance (Miller, 1983; Mitchell, Levin, & Krumboltz, 1999), serendipity (Betsworth & Hansen, 1996; Krumboltz,1998; Watts, 1996; Williams et al., 1998), and chance events (Bandura, 1982; Cabral & Salomone, 1990; Scott & Hatalla, 1990) in career patterns have been well documented and discussed.(Guindon and Hanna, 2002: 122)

Some career counselling scholars also question the validity of the 'traditional person-environment fit models of career choice, wondering whether they fail to capture adequately the complexities, uncertainties, and dynamic aspects of modern work' (Bright and Pryor, 2005:

292). Similarly, I felt that traditional CSR models failed to capture my experience. The 'Chaos Theory of Careers' draws on insights from Chaos Theory (Gleick, 1988) to incorporate complexity and unpredictability into career counselling. Bright and Pryor (2005) cite work of Stacey, Griffin and Shaw (2000) – complex responsive processes scholars- as providing useful insights into human behaviour in organisations.

Referring to 'happenstance' or 'chance events', I mean chance in the sense of not being premeditated. There were no blueprints to pre-determine every action each of us was to take. They were not chance in the sense of fate or a 'Hand of God' (Guindon and Hanna, 2002). Drawing on the insights from complexity sciences and on Elias (Elias, 1939 [2000]) and Mead (1934) I understand the emergence of the Unit as the ongoing processes of interaction of people. I was appointed as director of the SEU, as if the Unit existed. But the Unit and its meaning arose in the intertwining of many individual intentions.

The everyday and the personal

Entrepreneurship studies, similar to the studies of CSR, tend to ignore the individual aspect of entrepreneurship. Although entrepreneurship is recognised as 'a practice-oriented endeavour' (Berglund, 2007: 75), research into (social) entrepreneurship 'favours large studies' (ibid), and 'is focusing [on] its entrepreneurial management, surprisingly ignoring the social dimension' (Barinaga, 2012: 243). Reviewing the entrepreneurial management literature, she points out that 'these studies often de-contextualize the initiatives studied and the individuals leading them' (ibid: 246). We are reminded that

> mundane and ostensibly trivial activities are routinely bypassed in the social sciences, as their very nature of seeming self-evident and natural hides them from us. That … citizens had friends and acquaintances, and that they arranged to help each other out does not seem like enough of a finding to warrant serious study. As a result of this implicit assumption, warns Brekhus (2000), we are in fact turning a blind eye to that which is most common, and thus most central in social systems (Rehn and Taalas, 2004: 242).

There seems to be a developing trend 'towards a narrative and discursive turn that focuses on everyday, prosaic practices of entrepreneurship' (Engstrom, 2012: 42) . The proponents of this 'turn' (e.g. Steyaert, 2004) emphasise the importance of a narrative approach to researching entrepreneurship. The pointing out of the deficiency in personal, socially situated experience has not produced a major trend of sharing personal experiences. Very few tell a story of personal

involvement with starting a new venture (e.g. Lacho and Kiefer, 2012). Even fewer (e.g. Engstrom, 2012) narrate their own experience in the first person. Those that do expose the unintentional, the unpredictable and serendipity in starting up a venture. Their narrative resonated with me because they reflected on the micro-experiences, paying attention to the everyday, mundane behaviour. This is what is largely missing from CSR as well as from the entrepreneurship literature.

In an edited volume entitled *Professionals' Perspectives of Corporate Social Responsibility'* Idowu and Filho (2009) claim to provide an 'insight into how professionals are attempting to absorb the ethos of corporate social responsibility into their daily professional activities' (Idowu, 2009: 3). Twenty two chapters are dedicated to various accounts of CSR. However, none addresses a practitioner's personal experience. There are perspectives from lawyers and company secretaries, bankers and engineers, investors and educators, but all from a managerialist perspective, addressing aggregate data from surveying, reviewing and interviewing representatives from those professions, rather than a perspective from a lawyer or a banker or an educator. Even a chapter entitled 'A Hotelier's Perspective of CSR', claiming 'an insight from within the industry' (Luck and Bowcott, 2009: 289) and stating that 'it discusses the perspective of a key internal employee about how a specific company has been engaging in CSR within the UK and internationally' (ibid) discusses CSR engagement, but from a very detached, organizational perspective. The promise of the key internal employees' perspective does not materialize, we do not learn how the decisions were made, who talked to whom, and employees' thoughts and actions remain obscure. And the result is another 'case study' of CSR in a specific hotel chain.

The need to address the individual practitioner's experience, the personal nature of practice, has been recognised explicitly and implicitly in the CSR and entrepreneurship literature. This need has started to be addressed, albeit sparingly, in the entrepreneurship literature; however, the CSR literature remains deficient in this aspect.

My narrative and the ensuing discussion have focused on the anxiety and struggle with thinking about developing the Unit, which I was appointed to lead. As I am writing these words, I realise that even my title has been uncomfortable for me. To be a director presumes the ability to provide direction. This chapter points out the struggle with living up to that requirement. There are other themes that arise from the narrative. Using words such as 'I planned', 'I aimed', 'I intended', while talking about not knowing what to do, calls attention to the paradox of knowing

and not knowing at the same time. Another paradox that is evident in my narrative is that of excitement and terror. Lastly, the separation of thinking, talking and acting, which was not addressed in this chapter, has been playing a major role in the development in my thinking.

The following narrative was written two years after the previous one. A seemingly minor event triggered my thinking about the emergent nature of the SEU and provoked me to continue making sense of the setting up of the Unit.

Ongoing thinking about the early days of the SEU

During the latest PRME Global Forum the delegates were invited to take part in an envisioning exercise. The facilitator asked us to close our eyes and imagine the future as we would like it to be. I am usually very sceptical of such group activities. But not wanting to upset the facilitator, I followed the instructions, duly closed my eyes and ...thought about the past, about the setting up of the Social Enterprise Unit. Thinking about the early stages of setting up the Unit, I realised that the initial slide presenting the Unit could be understood as a type of envisioning exercise. The slide (Figure 3) was created a few months after I started my role, to introduce the Unit to others. But at the time, all those 'activities' did not exist. It was not a summary of the past activities, but an aspiration for the future. By documenting this 'vision', by putting it on paper, I was expressing what at the time of writing I thought was possible to achieve in the future. By including the ideas stated on the slide, I excluded other potential considerations. The slide was a declaration of intent, yet all the ideas would have to be subjected to interpretation and particularisation.

In the following months the slide was presented as the official introduction to the Unit. Thinking about that time and how I was solely entrusted[19] with creating the 'vision for the Unit' (which was approved without questioning by the dean and the pro-vice chancellor), makes me wonder about the processes of creating vision statements in other organisations.

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[19] By saying that I was solely entrusted with creating the vision, I do not mean I was independent in setting that vision. In reflecting on the previous narrative I emphasise the interrelatedness with others in making sense of the unit. Here I emphasise the way the task of creating vision was delegated to a single individual by the managers.

Figure 3. SEU presentation slide from June 2009.

As is the case with many other management concepts, there is no single accepted definition of vision. But the importance of a vision statement has been unequivocally accepted by management writers (Bennis and Nanus, 1985, Quigley, 1994b, Thornberry, 1997, Rotemberg and Saloner, 2000, Levin, 2000, Kantabutra, 2008, van der Helm, 2009). Some authors suggest that a lack of vision is one of the main reasons for organisational failure (Kotter, 1985) and that it is 'often THE essential quality of a leader' (Manaase, 1985 cited in Christiansen, 2011: 150). The literature is abundant with characteristics of 'correct' vision, but the processes of crafting vision statements has not been explored (Christiansen, 2010). Nanus (1982) noted that the professionals had difficulty in describing how they created their organisational vision. If asked how I had arrived at my vision for the Unit I would find it very difficult to describe. The 'vision', as it was presented on the slide, but also as I had become accustomed to thinking about the Unit, evolved in messy processes of responsive interactions with my PhD group, colleagues, managers, representatives from charities and other organisations, students, graduates, and in silent conversations with myself.

Given the huge emphasis that is placed on vision in the traditional management literature, both popular (e.g. Collins and Porras, 1994) and academic, one may find the everyday activities of talking to people, often in informal settings (Kotter, 1985), as too mundane to be perceived as crafting a vision. The same writers that emphasise the importance of leaders do not discuss the

processes of 'envisioning', despite the titles of their work (see Quigley, 1994a, van der Helm, 2009). This is not surprising. Defining vision as

> a picture of the future. Something not yet real, but imagined. What organisation could and should look like. Part analytical and part emotional (Thornberry, 1997: 28)

and that articulating a 'strong' vision results in optimistic, motivating, and energised followers taking on difficult challenges (Berson et al., 2001). This presents a highly idealised idea of what leaders must and can do. Putting such great emphasis on a single statement elevates the activity of envisioning from a daily activity into the exclusive realm of 'inspirational visionary leaders' (ibid). It is no wonder, then, that 'managers spend over a year trying to evolve this vision' (Thornberry, 1997: 28).

Often there is a requirement that vison is shared by followers, 'encompass[ing] everyone related to the organisation' (Bogler and Nir, 2004: 137), and 'proclaimed by all organisational members' (Kantabutra, 2008: 130). Given the abundance of idealised representations of vision, how can a leader arrive at a statement that would represent a picture of the future that makes sense to all? How can one present 'a thing of imagination' (Bell and Harrison, 1995: 5), in a way that is clear and acceptable to all in an organisation? In order for the vision to make sense to 'all organisational members' it needs to be presented in very generalised, abstract, thus unclear, terms.

The lofty purpose of vision discussed above, may confuse a practitioner as to the purpose of vision in organisations. In my experience the role of vision provides a focus for continuous conversations about working together. In the previous narrative I discussed in detail the making sense of what I was supposed to do as director of the Unit. These processes of figuring out with others can be considered 'the envisioning' of future actions. Crafting a vision is creating a narrative of the future as perceived in the present. The experience of putting together in the present a slide as a way of presenting how I expected to work in the future, what I intended to focus on, fits with Quigley's description of vision as 'a road map to the future' (Quigley, 1994: 37). I do not suggest that my experience of composing the slide, of creating a vision for the Unit, is identical to the experiences of others. I draw attention to the experience of 'envisioning' being a highly contextualised exercise in expressing intentions, in imagining what might happen. No amount of protracted painstaking deliberations will make it happen. In no way can a general statement of intention guide individuals on 'how … to act and interact to attain what

they regard as desirable' (ibid). A vison statement, even after consultations and discussions, can never be interpreted identically, or accepted, by all. It will be enacted in an organisation, will become a social object, in multiple local interactions in which it will be continuously reiterated and reinterpreted.

The slide is an expression of what I interpreted as appropriate CSR practices at HBS. I decided that environmental issues should not be included in the remit of the Unit. It was so obvious to me that I never thought it needed expanding. However, my later reflection on the choices I make about revealing and concealing alerted me to the importance of explaining this choice. I must confess that I am not an avid environmentalist and have never been. As a child in the Soviet Union, my classmates and I participated in collecting paper and scrap metal, and at weekends we went planting trees on the river banks, but we never thought of these activities in environmental terms. We enjoyed the extracurricular activities, each other's company, were motivated by the competition with other classes in our school and never asked what happened to all the materials that were collected. To clarify, I am not anti-environment; I am, however, not interested in focusing my work on this issue for two interrelated reasons. Firstly, I believe that environmental issues have been extensively addressed in literature and in practice. Sustainability has become the new buzzword (Cole, 2015). In my university we have several departments dealing with the environment. Employees are encouraged to cycle to work, to car share and to use two electric university-owned cars. There are car charging stations on both campuses; the latest building on deHavilland campus is environmentally 'smart'. We receive monthly e-mail updates regarding recycling data and energy and water consumption. I am less interested in this aspect of social responsibility, and feel it is sufficiently addressed at UH.

This leads me to the second reason for my reluctance to focus on environmental issues. Environmental engagement is relatively easy to measure. And a lot of attention in management is being paid to what is measurable, as the infamous McKinsey maxim 'What we can measure we can manage' (Baker, 2003) exemplifies. During the last PRME summit, the head of one of the accrediting agencies said 'What is not inspected cannot be expected', alluding to the need to include some CSR/PRME metrics into the accreditation requirements. Environmental measurements are at the heart of many sustainability indexes (ISO 14000, SA8000, GRI, ILO, AA1000). I will discuss the importance measuring on our practice, and my reluctance to succumb to it in Chapter 8.

I also created a rationale for those choices. By defining the remit of the Unit, as 'contributing to the local community, while benefitting the students', I inadvertently put boundaries around the work of the Unit. I understand today that having some ideas of what to be included in and excluded from the Unit was essential to keep working, as having a 'do as you want' attitude would have had a paralysing effect on me, the Unit and its funding, I would not have know how to proceed. The remit was never put in writing, but keeping it in mind allowed me to have more focused conversations with potential beneficiaries, with colleagues and with senior managers at the university. It also allowed me to make decisions about taking on or rejecting projects. The list on the slide was stating my preferences. It was constraining my practice – those are the areas I was going to focus on, other areas were excluded; at the same time it enabled me to make decisions, and to justify them.

Later, when I went on to offer the use of our facilities to the local Third Sector organisations free of charge, I managed to reconcile that decision with the initial idea of 'benefitting the students', by reinterpreting that general statement to include 'as long as it is not harming the students'. It is evident that I kept on working and adapting the rules I set to be able to get on with my work. I still believe that providing facilities is morally right; I have not compromised myself ethically, not in my understanding. But I did keep adapting the rules as the meaning of the Unit kept evolving.

Summary

In this chapter I drew attention to the interdependence of many participants in setting up the Social Enterprise Unit. Working with many others, participating in numerous local interactions, I was enabled and constrained by them in deciding on appropriate actions. The decisions of what is appropriate and what is not, the ideas of what should be included and excluded from the activities of the Unit, arose in the processes of interdependence and power relating. Making those choices was not guided by a blueprint, but involved ethical decision-making, continual adapting of the rules, and evaluative choices that have been made in our interactions. Our intentions for the future and our reinterpretations of the past intertwined, and the meaning of the Unit has been emerging.

In the next chapter I will discuss the experience of contributing to the very processes I have been so critical about – quantification of social engagement.

Chapter 8 - Making sense of my contribution to CSR reporting

*Хотелось как лучше а вышло как всегда (*Russian folk wisdom*)*

Introduction

The Russian saying above can be loosely translated as: wanted the best but it turned out as before. It is used in retrospect to describe the actions of idealistic political candidates that seem to become part of the establishment after being elected, or the avant-garde projects that got bogged down in minor details. This saying kept coming to mind while I was rereading the narrative that introduced the SEU reporting, written in 2012. At the time I felt it was important but could not explain its significance to CSR. Coming back to it, I am surprised at my inability to make the link to my thesis; after all this is a story about my contribution to the practice of, and the narrative about CSR at UH.

One of the motives for my interest in researching CSR was my discontent with the fact that Friedman's (1970) article was heavily criticized in the CSR literature for emphasising profit over responsibility (e.g. Mulligan, 1986, Gallagher, 2005, Schwartz and Saiia, 2012), while a significant strand of CSR writings aimed to provide a 'business case for CSR' (e.g. Vogel, 2005, McWilliams et al., 2006, Carroll and Shabana, 2010, Meyer, 2015, Lee and Jung, 2016). Prior to undertaking the role of SEU director, my view of CSR practitioners was quite cynical. This view was reinforced by meeting several CSR executives while conducting my Ukrainian research (Chapter 3). I saw them as missionaries at the service of business, providing a fig leaf for the exposed corporations. I was naïvely idealistic, hoping to demonstrate that there was another way – engaging in responsible activities because those activities had intrinsic value and not simply being a means to the university's ends.

Friedman's article (1970) has been heavily criticised as anti-CSR (e.g. Gallagher, 2005). In my reading of Friedman I do not share the view that he as rejecting CSR. I understood his article as having two major points. Firstly, his assertion that only people can have responsibilities, resonated with my understanding of moral agency. Secondly, I understood his reference to the use of the 'cloak of social responsibility' as rejecting the contemporary *rhetoric* of CSR. He objected to describing those actions and behaviours that promote organisations' self-interests (Friedman, 1970: 124), rather than criticising the undertaking of actions that are often classed as 'social responsibilities'. I too felt uneasy about what I saw as self-serving actions being disguised as addressing the social responsibilities of organisations. In this chapter I explore how

I contributed to the exact phenomenon I had been so indignant about – using responsibility rhetoric to promote the university's self-interest. Today I do not see the two – CSR and self-interest – as necessarily opposing values, but understand that self-interest and responsibility arise in the same processes and often coincide. To trace this evolving change in my attitude, I begin with a review of what stimulated my interest in researching CSR – the CSR literature and the literature on measuring CSR - and my uneasiness with the rationalisation of CSR. I proceed to reflect on the period of five years of engaging in one aspect of the standardisation of my practice, which is followed by my sense-making of those developments.

Managerialising Higher Education

Before I proceed to discuss the processes of managerialising CSR, it is important to highlight that the discussion that follows, which is primarily based on the literature emphasising business organisations, also applies to the Higher Education Institutions (HEI), as universities have been undergoing similar processes. Elsewhere in this thesis I argued for the appropriateness of applying CSR terminology to universities. In this section I argue that HEIs 'are becoming increasingly corporatized' (Banerjee, 2008: 56). A growing number of authors (Barry et al., 2001, Anderson, 2008, Parker, 2014, Ayers, 2014, Martin, 2016) have begun focusing on managerialism in Higher Education. They address aspects such as performance management (Sousa et al., 2010), demand on senior academics to undertake administrative roles (Parker, 2008), increasing marketisation of HE (Ntshoe, 2004), and the audit culture of universities (By et al., 2008, Bosco, 2011).

This comes as no surprise for me. In the nine years since I started working at UH the bureaucracy has increased immensely, and is now bordering on ridiculous (for example, currently, to order a pen, we must submit a form, which has to be signed by a department manager). The only promotion route from lecturer to principal lecturer is through taking on an administrative role, rather than through demonstrating teaching excellence or through research. Increasingly students are being referred to as 'customers'. The new strategy consultation rounds focused on whether we should be known as 'international business-facing university' or an 'internationally renowned business-facing university' – the business-facing agenda was not up for discussion. We have a business development department comprising fourteen people (compared to thirteen permanent staff in the academic strategic management group). The purpose of business development is 'to support businesses, public sector organisations and charities in tackling strategic problems, carrying out research…' and to 'play a supportive role

to academics and professionals in the development and growth of commercial activity…' (UH, 2014). These are only few examples of the managerialist discourse at UH.

Liz Morrish, a researcher at Nottingham Trent University, collects examples of managerial communication and has 'a large collection of horrors from several institutions' (Morrish, 2014). Her analysis of all UK universities' mission statements points to 'neo-liberal anxieties: sector leading; benchmark; performance indicator, sustainable excellence (sustex); business (meaning a university); company spin-outs; customer focus; talent management…'(ibid). UH, with the mission statement 'An innovative and enterprising university, challenging individuals and organisations to excel' (UH, 2014), seems to suffer from similar anxieties.

Recently the social responsibilities of universities began to be discussed in the literature (e.g. Othman and Othman, 2014, Wigmore-Álvarez and Ruiz-Lozano, 2012), which also highlights appropriating CSR as a management tool. Brown and Cloke (2009: 479) argue that:

> rather than seeing universities as public institutions under attack from the encroachment of marketization and the private sector, we would do better to view our own institutions as corporations in their own right. Whilst UK Universities may not be accountable to shareholders or driven only by the profit motive, they are increasingly operating as if those were their chief considerations.

In recent years it has been my experience that managerialisation of the HE sector has become more prominent. In the section below I elaborate on the argument adopted in the mainstream management literature for a managerialist approach to CSR.

CSR as a management tool

While conducting a literature review several questions started to trouble me. In Chapter 4 I addressed the question of CSR being discussed as a generalised idea, with no discussion of how CSR is particularised by practitioners. Additional concern arising from this generalised approach has been the instrumentalisation of CSR and its subjugation to managerial rationale.

Since the term Social Responsibilities was coined by Bowen in his 1953 book *Social Responsibilities of the Businessman (SRB)*, the concept of Social Responsibility (SR) and later CSR has been developed as a managerial(ist) idea. By managerial(ist) I mean an idea that is being promoted to and adopted by the managers in an organisation as a tool or vehicle for

advancing the goals of that organisation. One of the more important features of a managerial(ist) idea, as I understand it, is that those who espouse it are conceptualising an issue or a problem as a *thing* that exists out there and managers as using the tools from their managerial toolbox to fix whatever in their view needs fixing. In the relationships of business (and other types of organisations) and society, that tool is CSR. This thinking is firmly embedded in the systems views, limitations of which are discussed in Chapter 2. The purpose of this discussion is to demonstrate how the concept of CSR has been shaped as a managerial(ist) tool.

Published in 1953*Social Responsibilities of the Businessman* was commissioned by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ (Acquier et al., 2011), and was not published as an academic monograph, but rather was 'intended for nonacademic readers' (ibid: 612). The environment of the time, mid-20th-century America was ripe for social responsibility becoming 'not only acceptable in leading business circles, but even fashionable' (Bowen, 2013/1953: 44). Separation between ownership and control in corporations (Berle and Means, [1932] 1968), growth in the number of business schools (Khurana, 20017), an increasing concern with the legitimacy and image of 'big business' (Frederick, 2008), and the post -WII reawakening of negative sentiments towards corporations - were the background for Bowen's manuscript. The book clearly demonstrates that CSR was initially developed as a management idea, and only later it was theorised by academics[20].

The 1960s saw a proliferation of CSR definitions (e.g. Davis, 1960; Frederick, 1960; Walton; 1967). One of the most influential contributors to the CSR discourse was Clarence Cyril Walton (1967: 18), who claimed that:

> [t]he new concept of social responsibility recognizes the intimacy of the relationships between the corporation and society and realizes that such relationships must be kept in mind by top managers as the corporation and the related groups pursue their respective goals.

I understand this quote as drawing managers' attention to the possible negative impact of ignoring or avoiding addressing societal issues, especially those caused by the corporation, and the need to harness 'the new concept of social responsibility' as a means to mitigate those

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[20] Similar to the evolution of many other management ideas, and the emergence of the academic field of management in general, as discussed by Khurana (2017)

effects in pursuing corporate goals. Walton goes on to concede that *sometimes it may not* be possible to measure the direct economic benefits of accepting social responsibilities (thus implying that a direct link usually does exist).

Keith Davis, who 'should be considered as a the runner up to Howard Bowen as the "Father of CSR" designation' (Carroll, 2008: 27), suggests that one of the reasons businessmen (on behalf of corporations) put social responsibility 'into the business' kit of tools' is to avoid losing its [the business'] power' (Davis, 1960: 73). Davis draws on Bowen's claim that businessmen 'would hardly be permitted to continue without some assumption of social responsibility' (Bowen, 1953:4). This approach was further developed by Archie Carroll (Carroll, 1979) and later by Donna Wood (Wood, 1991) as Corporate Social Performance theory . For the purpose of this discussion, suffice it to say to that one of the main arguments from the proponents of this approach for the adoption of CSR, is the dependence (rather than interdependence) of business on society. CSR is seen as a tool that allows organisations to maintain their 'licence to operate', or to uphold their social contract with society (Donaldson , 1982).

Ackerman (1973; Ackerman and Bauer, 1976) approached organisations' social responsibilities as a response to societal demands, which led to the concept of Corporate Social Responsiveness. This approach is consistent with the Corporate Social Performance theories and Bowen's, Davis's and Walton's conceptualising of CSR, as a means to the end of organisations' endurance in the social environment. Another significant development in theorising CSR was Stakeholder Theory. Harold Johnson mentioned 'multiplicity of interests' as early as 1971, but Stakeholder Theory was developed by Ed Freeman in 1982. Many authors (e.g. Mele, 2008, Rönnegard and Smith, 2013) promulgate the so-called 'Friedman-Freeman' debate, juxtaposing Friedman's economic and Freeman's stakeholder theories. Freeman, however, clarifies that stakeholder theory is not contrary, but complementary to economic theory; it is a strategic management theory, providing a manager with an alternative way of increasing profits:

> The primary responsibility of an executive is to create as much value as possible for stakeholders because that's how you create as much value as possible for shareholders' (Freeman in Agle et al., 2008: 166)

Therefore, I maintain that Stakeholder Theory does not depart far from neo-classical economic theories, and the main difference is how the maximization of profits is perceived – the latter sees profit maximization as a goal, while the former sees it as an outcome. And according to

the former, attending to stakeholders (another way of understanding CSR) is a way to look after shareholders.

By the end of the 1990s the concept of CSR had undergone managerialization. The research had become focused on the CSR-CFP link in organisations (Moore, 2001, Orlitzky et al., 2003, Lankoski, 2008) and on the instrumental benefits of CSR (Porter and Kramer, 2006, Greening and Turban, 2000, Fombrun, 1996, Lai et al., 2010, Godfrey et al., 2009), thus contributing to the development of 'business case' rhetoric in the management literature.

The proliferation of theories and approaches to CSR created confusion and dissonance amongs various CSR writers. In Carroll's study (1994: 14) the participants described the field of CSR as 'an eclectic field with loose boundaries, multiple memberships, and differing training/perspective; broadly, rather than focused, multidisciplinary; wide breadth; brings in a wider range of literature; and interdisciplinary'. This led to several writers attempting to classify the theories and to 'map the territory' (Garriga and Mele, 2004).

Klonoski (1991) identified three types of theories: fundamentalist, moral personhood and social institutions. Fundamentalist theories are based on a neo-classical economics claim that organisations are artificial entities, whose sole responsibility is to make profit, as espoused by Friedman (1970). Moral personhood theories argue for the moral agency of organisations (French, 1977, Goodpaster and Matthews Jr, 1982). Finally there is a group of theories that understand organisations as social institutions that should comply with the social contract, as is argued by Donaldson (1982).

Garriga and Melé (2004) propose classifying the CSR theories into four groups: instrumental, political (emphasiing the social power of organisations), integrative (emphasizing the dependence of business on society), and ethical. Following the 2004 study, Mele (2008) discusses four 'contemporary mainstream theories': Corporate Social Performance, Shareholder Value Theory, Stakeholder Theory, and Corporate Citizenship.

The three classifications (Klonoski's, Garriga and Melé's, and Melé's) essentially overlap. Regardless of the categorisation of each of the theories, most of them adopt an instrumental approach. By instrumental I mean using CSR as an instrument for achieving either economic or political goals, or a combination of the two.

Ethical theories, based on the philosophical traditions of Aristotle (common goods) and moral philosophy (universal rights) would be considered non-instrumental. However, there has been limited adoption of these approaches in academic circles (Argandona, 2012) and they tend to remain the focus of policy documents (e.g. UN Global Compact, 1999).

The instrumentalising of CSR goes hand in hand with the 'corporate social responsibility is good for business' slogan promulgated by CEOs, NGOs and government officials (Banerjee, 2008). This rhetoric is rooted in the capitalist economic discourse (Freeman and Liedtka, 1991). I became acutely aware of this when interviewing CSR practitioners in Ukraine (Chapter 3). During this research the executives cited the 'business case' as their main motive for CSR, even when the actions they had taken had no apparent benefit for the company. Ukraine, a relatively young market economy, is still emerging after 70 years of Soviet era influence. The socialist past is rejected, and capitalism is seen as the future. As one of the research participants stated: 'CSR is capitalism's mechanism to win over socialism'.[21] It is conceivable, therefore, that the attempt to establish close ties between CSR and financial benefit derive from the need to be seen as a legitimate *capitalist* enterprise. Executives are looking for ways to participate in a discourse that is dominant today in the international business community. CSR is one of the themes in that discourse. They look for clues in the West, and the CSR discourse in the West is deeply embedded in capitalist mentality. CSR strategy must be linked with the business strategy, as advocated by the strategy 'gurus' (e.g. Porter and Kramer, 2006). A Ukrainian executive understands CSR as

> *the means for the company to contribute to the community, where we live and work , in a way that also has, of course, a benefit for the company. What is said at any CSR conference? If you`re not doing this, if it has no way to contribute to your business, it`s not CSR, it`s philanthropy'.*

It is also plausible that the interviewees demonstrated a 'Hawthorne Effect' in relation to the research. Since the research was conducted by a British academic, the interviewees might have given the answers they thought the Anglo-Saxon researcher might expect. A way to understand the overwhelmingly instrumental approach to CSR, is as executives' rationalisation of their socially-directed activities. Talking to the Ukrainian executives, it became apparent how deeply

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[21] I doubt he was aware of Bowen's claim that the 'assumption of social responsibilities, therefore, is at least a partial alternative to socialism' (1953: 28). The participant, by his own admission, had not read Bowen.

the understanding of CSR as a management tool has become entrenched in the practitioners' mentality.

In the summary above I explained my claim that most of the contemporary CSR theories have instrumental, i.e. managerial(ist), underpinning. It is also my claim that this managerial(ist) approach to CSR is closely linked to the demand for systemising CSR in general, and for reporting on CSR activities specifically.

Measuring CSR

In the early '70s, following the emergence of the idea of Corporate Social Responsibility in the '60s, the demand for social reporting started to be heard. The response was delivered by the corporations and the attempt by academics to address this demand shortly followed (Sethi, 1972). Since then, the demand for and attempts to measure CSR have been on the increase. The Business Source Complete database accessed on June 29, 2014 returned 1,151 items for the combination of 'CSR' and 'metrics' keywords. However, despite the abundance of CSR indexes, from Dow Jones Sustainability to ISO14001, management tools, from triple bottom line to Social Return on Investment; and the academics' attempt to provide a comprehensive framework (Székely and Knirsch, 2005, O'Connor and Spangenberg, 2008, Gjølberg, 2009, Bouten et al., 2011), no metric emerged as a front-runner for measuring CSR activities of organisations. As Sethi (1972) observes, in order to arrive at an operational measurement tool, we must define what social responsibility; or, more precisely, socially responsible action, is; we must consider how it can be measured; and we must determine to whom the organisations are responsible. And since CSR remains vaguely defined, the ways of measuring keep proliferating.

The discussion above demonstrates that the main CSR theories adopt a systems point of view. The outcomes of actions, on this view, can be analysed and predicted, and the organisation needs to choose the right actions to achieve a desired outcome (McWilliams and Siegel, 2001). These theories, as well as empirical research, aim to demonstrate how CSR impacts financial performance, legitimacy, image and attracting employees and other stakeholders (see Khanifar et al., 2012, Kyj, 2011, Peloza and Shang, 2011, Hayward, 2006, Maignan and Ferrell, 2004). CSR orthodoxy is rooted in a positivist perspective, 'a paradigm that tries to uncover correlations and causal relationships in the social world by using the empirical methods of

(natural) science' (Scherer and Palazzo, 2007: 1096). A further thread, which follows from taking a positivist stance, is that CSR is viewed as an independently existing object that is created by management, and is subject to manipulation by managers. This brief review of CSR theories demonstrates that CSR is used as a stepping stone to creating an effective CSR 'system' that will assist in achieving one or more of the organisations' outcomes. It also demonstrates how CSR has been conceptualised as a Weberian 'rational action', one that is 'directed by the strategic, instrumental, calculated pursuit of a specific goal' (Bond and O'Byrne, 2013: 139).

Dissent from the predominantly instrumental approach to CSR is limited. James C. Scott observes:

> A critique of ... hegemonic ideas comes, if it comes at all, not from within, but typically from the margins, where intellectual point of departure and operating assumptions ... are substantially different (Scott, 1998: 279).

Critical management studies' (CMS) central themes of de-naturalisation of existing order and rejection of social relations being thought of in terms of profit maximisation (Grey and Willmott, 2005), provide a different point of departure, and offer an alternative way of thinking about CSR.

CMS scholars do not speak in unison. Many address the role CSR rhetoric has in perpetuating the capitalist discourse (e.g. Freeman and Liedtka, 1991), questioning the logic of social activities and whose interests are served by these actions (e.g. Banerjee, 2008, Scherer and Palazzo, 2007). Kuhn and Deetz (2008: 191) claim that 'many critical theorists are sceptical of common CSR interventions and corporations' claims of virtue'. A CMS-informed approach is useful in problematising the uncritical acceptance of CSR as a heroic narrative and in critiquing the instrumental approach to CSR.

By bringing to the fore the question of whose values are addressed by CSR initiatives, CMS scholars provide a valuable alternative to the mainstream understanding of CSR. Banerjee, for example, highlights that 'the mainstream literature in management and organisational studies has either ignored corporate political activity or narrowly circumscribed its extent' (Banerjee, 2010: 265). He points out that the majority of CSR research focuses on the CSR 'providers', so we actually do not know how CSR initiatives affect society (Banerjee, 2011). Critical management writers draw attention to the limitations of CSR strategies, and to the lack of discussion of power in the mainstream literature, and suggest that corporations often

'incorporate citizenship activities in order to benefit corporate agendas' (Nyberg et al., 2013: 433). Being critical of the appropriation of CSR for the benefit of large corporations, CMS scholars, however, share some of the limitations of the dominant CSR discourse. Firstly, both address CSR and related concepts from a systems perspective. In addition, both approaches tend to discuss CSR in abstract terms, favouring generalisations and avoiding specifics.

It is clear that the demand for CSR reporting has been increasing. It can be argued that this is a natural development – in order to be adopted, every management tool must demonstrate its contribution to management goals. And this contribution must be concrete and measurable. What remains less clear is how a particular practitioner is to find her way in this wide array of measuring options. Theoretically it is possible to select a standard (e.g. ISO 26000 (ISO, 2014) or triple bottom line (Savitz and Weber, 2006)) and to apply it to her organisation. However, this is only a hypothetical possibility. Adopting this in a particular practice is anything but straightforward. In addition to the vagueness of the measurement schemes, problems 'often arise at the interface of general ideas and local practice' (Jutterstrom and Norberg, 2013: 166). Little attention has been paid to how a practitioner deals with those problems and what issues may arise in the particular adoption of general ideas. Related to my research question is the question of how this instrumentalisation of CSR is being taken up by a practitioner. In the narrative below I explore how and why a particular metric was adopted to assess the contribution of the SEU to the university's strategic plan.

Experiencing managerialism

Since being appointed to the role of director of the SEU, I have been left to work and 'develop the role' (UHBS, 2009) with very little interference from management. Every meeting to report on progress was initiated by me. I could interpret this as the management having confidence in me, but this would be a very limited interpretation. If I'm being more realistic, this probably reflects the priority that is given to the activities of the Unit by management. The existence of the Unit is, of course, vital. It demonstrates HBS' commitment to the community and to social responsibility (one of the six graduate attributes). But it also serves an instrumental purpose. Every time there is a need to demonstrate entrepreneurial spirit and innovative schemes, I am brought out to speak to visitors, or asked to write a paragraph for a press release. The Unit even won the Vice-Chancellor's award for community engagement in 2011. The Unit was the first item in the 'Community Engagement Strategy' drafted by the Pro-Vice Chancellor Regional Engagement. This, in my view, is not contradictory. The establishment of the Unit is important

to signal the intent of engaging with the 'external community'. But, at the same time, since these activities are not regulated or monitored by HEFCE or any other external body, the way those activities are undertaken requires less strict management supervision. This allows me to explore various ways of working; however, less monitoring also means less guidance.

In this chapter I would like to explore how I experienced being in the midst of the standardisation of my activities.

I met with the Pro-Vice Chancellor shortly after being appointed to the role, since the newly created Centre for Sustainable Living, where I was supposed to represent the business school, was under his responsibility (Chapter 4). He was very enthusiastic about the Unit, and the ways I proposed to develop it. He asked me to keep him updated on developments, but after that meeting I did not hear from him for several months. Almost a year later (March 2010), I received an e-mail which included a draft Community Engagement Strategy, with the request to comment on the Social Enterprise area. I was flattered that the Pro-VC placed the Social Enterprise Unit first of the six Key Areas, adopting my wording about the Unit almost verbatim. But the next paragraph alarmed me. It stated:

> **Performance Indicators:**
> the number of charities being supported each year;
> the total value of fundraising carried out for those charities through the Social Enterprise Unit. [22]

I did not think my activity in the previous year could or should be attached to numerical values. Measuring outputs by number of charities supported would be reductionist and would not allow me to demonstrate various activities we had been undertaking. I met with tens of representatives of various organisations; I managed to embed some projects in the modules, organise events, fundraising, room use, etc. How can all this work be reduced to just the number of charities and value of fundraising? But I also realised that this was the game played and I could either play it, albeit trying to modify the rules, or quit. And since I had no intention of quitting, I was going to use the rules to my advantage. I had to provide some 'performance indicators', and I thought those indicators should reflect the entire range of activities, not just relating to charities. I came up with the following proposal:

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[22] In this narrative all quotes are from internal correspondence between the Pro-VC and myself, unless otherwise indicated

Dear Stewart,

I've been considering your question about performance indicators and I think I have a solution. We still put a 'social impact' indicator in the document, but the way to measure it is 'value added' to the organisation. E.g. if we produce a report – the value added would be the cost of buying that report at a going market rate from a consultancy. If the students raise money (fundraising) – that would be the value added. Facilities provided for community events – we will show how much that would cost if they had to hire the venue, etc. So actually we can start measuring impact in money terms, but that way we can measure all output, not just fundraising.

I'd be happy to hear your thoughts about it.

In my experience executives do not like to be presented with problems without solutions. So by presenting my suggestion as a 'solution', I was hoping to put him in a receptive mood. Stewart was glad to adopt my suggestion. He needed some indicators. I wanted the hard work of the previous year to be acknowledged. This seemed like a win-win compromise, or in the words of a Russian proverb, 'the wolves were fed, and the sheep were intact'. I realise now that I was adopting the very logic I was criticising – I was not just creating measures, but had also made them narrow and specific, rather than open and flexible.

This method was utilised in the first year of the Unit's operation. The figures were very impressive, so I was not worried about the nature of the method, its limitations and implications of using it. In the following year there was a brief discussion about what figures should be presented to the Board and the wording of the report. My alarm bells went off again when I saw the following sentence:

I would be able to tell the Board that you will calculate the figure for last year's work and will then use that as a baseline for setting targets.

Targets? It seemed that we were forgetting that I was promoting volunteering, trying to find module leaders who would be happy to use one of the projects in their module, encouraging students to undertake research into the Third Sector. How can these be set targets? But again, I said nothing: I did not know what to say. Arguing against setting targets is not the quickest way to promotion. I was hoping that ignoring this suggestion would buy me another year of very loose supervision and getting on with my work. I put the whole indicator business to the back

of my mind, hoping that this might be somehow avoided in the future. But in May (2011) the request came, with this addition:

> Many apologies for the short notice, but could you possibly send me a brief update on what the Social Enterprise Unit has achieved over the past academic year. If you already have a report which you've produced for other purposes that would be great – I can easily extract what I need. **Ideally** [emphasis in original] a few figures such as number of projects supported, number of students involved, number of client organisations, and total commercial value of the work the Unit has done (as a measure of impact).

I had forgotten about the report, and in my haste I could not – and did not want to – spend too much time on this reporting, so my reply was brief:

> SEU supported at least 45 projects/40 client organisations
>
> Over 250 students involved
>
> I really struggle to estimate the commercial value of our support to the community, but I guesstimate that it is similar to last year's, so if you are pressed for a figure, I'd say £80,000.

To which Stewart replied

> That's just right for this level of report.

Great! I had bought myself another year to think about how to produce a report that reflected not just the quantity but the quality of work as well. In my haste I had not recognised that I was playing the exact game which I was so determined to avoid.

And when the request arrived the following year (May 2012)

> We could probably make the report a bit shorter this year, but the Governors always like to see numerical data, so please don't be afraid to bore them with such information!

I felt indignant and gloating at the same time. They actually want a shorter report with just numerical data?! But I actually was very happy with myself for predicting such a request. I could not stop smiling to myself. The stories that accompanied indicators were no longer

needed. From now on, just the numbers, please. What I ignored was that it was I who kept responding to these requests with what could be interpreted as enthusiasm. I had never openly objected to the requests, never suggested a different way of discussing the contribution of the Unit to the local community. It was easier to play the victim (at least thinking I was a victim), than to take responsibility for my role in the emerging discourse.

So I looked at the activities of the previous year, applied the original method, adjusted for inflation and arrived at very respectable figures, again. I was somewhat concerned, as the figures were lower than the previous year. I was worried about the reduced contribution and about blatantly disregarding the request for a shorter report. When I saw Stewart's name in my 'Inbox' a few days later my heart sank. To my surprise he congratulated all contributors to this year's excellent report, of which the Board 'was highly complimentary'. The e-mail went on praising us and our teams. I was almost lulled into complacence, when my eye caught the name of the Unit:

> The Board liked the way in which the financial impact of the Social Enterprise Unit had been calculated, and were impressed by the resulting figures. Perhaps we should see if this approach could be applied in other areas of activity. One Board member asked if we knew how much our community engagement costs, and I said that there would be figures for each area of activity, but they hadn't been drawn together. I think we all agreed that this wouldn't be an exact exercise, given the problems of attaching costs to things like voluntary work, or staff who do a range of activities; but I think it would be interesting to get a 'ball park' figure for next year.

Did I finally shoot myself in the foot? I was trying to play by the rules, and by doing so I actually contributed to the tightening of the rules. The transformation of the indicators from 'we need some way of measuring what we do' to 'let's use this approach in other areas of activities' was smooth and inconspicuous. I am partially responsible for transforming what I saw as the

> 'Unit contributing not only to the charity sector, but to the experience of our students, to the community, and creating synergies that will enable us, the UHBS staff, to give back to society more than any of us, as individuals, can ever hope to' (from my application for the role)

into the reductionist management tool it had become. Once the method was established, it was easier to apply it to each year's activities, thus reducing the human stories to a set of figures.

My brief and concise reports brought me praise and recognition, and allowed me to continue doing my job without having management frequently checking up on me. I have been a willing participant in the standardised reporting of my work, and thus to the standardisation of the work itself. But I no longer want to play by these rules. I do not know what I will do when the request for a report arrives next year. I might resist the temptation of quick and easy enumeration of the activities and write a story of what I do. I might be short of time and submit what is requested. Whatever I end up doing, I will try doing it with more awareness of my contribution to the conversation.

****

The above part of my narrative was written in August 2012. I had become more aware of my contribution to the reporting format, and as a result my report in the following year (May 2013) had a small addition to the previous year's format – a 'Highlights' section. This was my attempt, albeit minor, to address my collusion with the managerial(ist) approach to CSR at the university. The section itself did not offer a coherent story, nor did it provide a context to the dry report. But I could not un-realise what I had realised the previous year – I had been contributing to the university's CSR narrative, and I could no longer play the victim of the requests, and at the same time continue doing nothing to change what I thought was wrong. Writing my story in the previous year contributed to the awareness of my participation in creating that narrative, and my inclusion of the new section was an attempt to change it, in a slight way.

I had hoped that this small gesture of defiance would provoke further questions, thus opening the discussion on what should be reported in the following year. The 'following year' is when I am writing this narrative. Two weeks ago the anticipated e-mail arrived

> The report will be in a new format, at the request of the Chairman of the Governors, so won't need much text. It will relate everything to the 2012 update of the UH Strategic Plan and, in particular, the KPIs on page 55 of that plan. I am hoping that you can give me updated figures and/or brief information about the following (covering the most recent 12 months for which you have data):
>
> 'Providing support for third sector organisations equivalent to at least £60k per year.' Because of the new format I won't have room for much text, so will just need to have your estimate of the overall value of the work of the Social Enterprise Unit and

> perhaps a couple of 'highlights' to illustrate its impact on the community – I know it
> will be hard to choose from all the good examples!

My initial reaction after reading this e-mail was 'I failed'. I felt that my attempt at rebelling against reducing the activities of the SEU to a few figures had gone unnoticed. But then I saw it was staring me in the face – 'perhaps a couple of "highlights" to illustrate…'. He even used the language I introduced in my report. I managed to modify, albeit slightly, the tone of the reporting. So not all is lost.

I am cautiously optimistic about the chances of expanding the format in the future. Stewart is retiring at the end of summer. So I am even more uncertain than usual regarding the future of the SEU in general, and the reporting in particular. By paying close attention to my interaction in this process, I have come to recognise that I have a role in co-creating the format of reporting, and I no longer feel oppressed by it. Whatever report I might produce in the future, I will do with the understanding that I am an active party in that process, not a passive victim.

My understanding of the events

This narrative condenses five years of practising CSR at the UH. Although the e-mail exchange as presented in the narrative seems to create a continuous story, I would like to emphasise that each exchange between Stewart and me was one year apart from the previous one. The reporting was quite a minor activity for me, and I only paid attention to it when the e-mail arrived in my

inbox. I would become annoyed for a few days, but other activities demanded my attention, and I did not dwell on my irritation with the reporting. I became really alarmed with the standardisation of my work when in 2012 Stewart mentioned that my reporting was singled out by the Board. That e-mail, as flattering as I found it, was a watershed point for me. It disturbed me to realise that my actions could potentially contribute to the same phenomenon I had been objecting to - 'instrumentalisation' of CSR. After rereading the chain of e-mails related to SEU reporting, I became even more disturbed, as I had come to recognise that this was not just a potential development, it had been happening since my first reply to the initial request for reporting. Exploring my participation in this particular case of standardisation of CSR activities can shed some light on how processes of CSR rationalisation (and rationalisation of other areas) are sustained and propagated in an organisation.

Being part of the events very early on, without a previously established practice of reporting, or indeed without prior inclusion of CSR-related goals in the university's strategic plan, provides me with the unique opportunity to be able to reflect on the early stages of the reporting process. When contacted first to provide my views about the university's community engagement strategy I was excited that the Unit's activities were included. At the time I was aiming for a promotion, and wanted to present the work we had been doing in the best possible way. To achieve the desired promotion, compliance with the request for reporting seemed necessary. Stewart's suggestion did not seem to do justice to all that work, and my proposal seemed to present my work in a better light. As reflected in the narrative, some of my principles were forgotten, overtaken by other needs. As much as I hate writing reports, the annual ritual of providing a concise summary of the activities has been a valuable exercise. I was forced to think back a year and to remember what had been done throughout that year. Producing a report was also an opportunity to showcase my work to the dean, to justify the workload allocated to my role. My active participation in and contribution to the shaping of the reporting is undeniable. What is also undeniable is that the development, from the suggestion of how to measure the activities, to the decision about which narratives to include in the reports, has been highly social.

In the literature CSR is addressed as a system that is manipulated by managers. Following the same logic, CSR reporting is also seen as a system that is designed and implemented independently of the people who design and implement the reporting. Gjølberg (2009: 14) provides an extensive list of most-known CSR indexes. I draw attention to the way the author arrived at the final list. Gjølberg's methodology presents criteria for inclusion in the final list.

Those are not divinely prescribed - they were set by the author - and chosen based on the author's preferences and understandings. I am not criticising Gjølberg's methodology, but emphasise the social nature of creating the list. By social I mean that the ideas are not created in a vacuum. The author is a member of social circles and the ideas arise in interaction with people in those circles. But this social nature of CSR metrics is largely ignored in the mainstream CSR discourse. The authors do not acknowledge their biases, interests and preferences in constructing those measurement frameworks (e.g O'Connor & Spangenberg, 2008).

Czarniawska and Joerges (1996) discuss the inevitability of a social context for any idea to emerge. They criticise reification of ideas, the way ideas are being framed as independent of the processes of interaction. However, they focus on how the ideas become 'embedded' in organisations, rather than on the emergence of 'the idea of CSR'.

Elias (1956) rejected the notion of *homo clausus* (the closed man), the understanding of the person as an isolated thinker creating knowledge, so prevalent in Western thought. He proposed a different way of thinking about the evolution of knowledge - by *homines aperti* (open people) individuals that are linked together. '*[N]o person's knowledge has its beginning in him or herself*. Each of us, with all our reflections, perceptions, intuitions and experiences, stands on the shoulders of others' (Mennell, 1992: 192-193 emphasis in original). The theorising of the development of CSR and CSR reporting tend to take the *homo clausus* approach. My experience, as reflected in the narrative, clearly points out the interconnectedness of the players – the Chairman and the members of the board of Governors, Stewart, myself, but also our interconnectedness with others - our learnings from previous interactions and expectations of future ones, as manifested in our attitudes. My attitude was strongly influenced by the perception of what I was expected to demonstrate as evidence of my achievement, a perception stemming from inability to shed my own managerialist inclinations developed through years of working and learning in this tradition. My reluctance to 'rock the boat', i.e. resist the request to provide figures, fearing the possible negative outcomes, but also the lack of time and energy to do so; my desire for promotion and the expectation of what needs to be done to achieve it – all these, and many other factors, were intertwined and all had an influence on my contribution to the development of the current ways of measuring the activities of the Unit. The idea did not 'spring' in my head; rather, it evolved through processes of interaction and interdependence. The narrative highlights how I (a reflective individual) was caught in these processes of mutual interdependence:

more and more individuals, tend to become dependent on each other for their security and the satisfaction of their needs in ways which, for the greater part, surpass the comprehension of those involved (Elias, 1956: 232) .

This quote highlights the inevitability and ubiquity of social constraints. We are always dependent on others and they depend on us. But, as Elias points out, we 'cannot help being preoccupied with the urgent, narrow and parochial problems' (ibid). Being deeply involved in the process of standardising and measuring my practice, I was surprised by Stewart's requests, and annoyed with 'them' - the Board and Stewart - for being so narrowly oriented. I was also annoyed with myself for accepting and accommodating their request. Being preoccupied with the annoyance and irritation, I was unable to appreciate my contribution to these processes. It is through iterations of and discussions about the narrative that I have come to understand that I was not the victim of external forces. Neither was I a villain. I was caught in the game, influencing and being influenced by the rules of the game at the same time.

The standardisation and evaluation of practice have been well documented in the management literature. Bond and O'Byrne, in a chapter entitled 'If It Moves, Measure It: Taylor's Impact on UK Higher Education' (2013), critically appraise the application of scientific management principles to HE practices. They propose that 'massification' of HE in the UK is the main driver for this 'Re-Tayloring'. Although I agree that 'massification' of HE is a major problem, I find the claim that it is the 'main driver', an attempt to isolate a single cause of the problem, highly problematic. This ignores the intertwining of many other factors, as reflected in my narrative, in which the 'Re-Tayloring' of UK HE is emerging.

Drawing on complex responsive processes, I understand the processes reflected upon in my narrative, as a way of making sense of the purpose and the possible evolution of the Unit. It is not hard to imagine that similar pressures to the ones I felt were experienced in some form by others too as procedures to demonstrate efficiency were being developed. As argued previously these processes are social and political. They are social, because no single individual was acting independently of the contemporary, future and historical others. Emirbayer and Mische (1998: 963) argue that the action of the individual can only be understood in the social and temporal contexts, as a

temporally embedded process of social engagement, informed by the past (in its habitual aspect), but also oriented toward the future (as a capacity to imagine

alternative possibilities) and toward the present (as a capacity to contextualize past habits and future projects with the contingencies of the moment).

These processes are political, in the sense of being concerned with power relations, because power 'is a characteristic of human relationships – of *all* human relationships' (Elias, 1978: 74, emphasis in original). My experiences of creating the Unit's 'Key Performance Indicators' is congruent with Sethi's (1972) insight into the social auditing process that acknowledges the political nature of any such endeavour.

Having been a school governor, I can also understand these processes from a board member's perspective. I served as a community governor (similar to non-executive director, having no prior vested interest in the school) in a local primary school, and in that role I participated in discussions related to the setting of goals and objectives for the school, and setting policies and targets for achieving those goals and objectives (nga, 2014). Although it was only a small school (fewer than 200 pupils), our discussion could not focus on each student and every activity – it was not our role, and we had no time. We had to take a 'global perspective'. In his book *Seeing Like a State* the anthropologist James C. Scott describes how taking such perspective requires simplifications, and those simplifications 'are observations of only those aspects of social life that are of official interest' (Scott, 1998: 80). He identifies five main characteristics of those simplifications, which are represented as facts. Those facts are utilitarian, documentary, static, aggregate and standardised. When I read Scott's description, I felt he was talking about my experience:

> The process by which standardized facts susceptible to aggregation are manufactured seems to require at least three steps. The first… is the creation of common units of measurement or coding … In the next step, each item or instance falling within a category is counted and classified according to the new unit of assessment. Each fact must be recuperated and brought back on stage, as it were, dressed in a new uniform…One arrives, finally, at synoptic facts that are useful to officials (ibid: 80).

The farther the 'official' is removed from the 'field', the more the details are getting blurred, until they are finally dispensed with. As an 'official', I was a party to 'inflicting' standardisation. In this process the pupils were classified according to their achievements, their belonging to a demographic group, and other impersonal categories. As the goals and objectives were aggregated, we were interested in the aggregated reporting. I should not have been

surprised, then, when, as the Unit director, I was at the receiving end of such standardization. But, as already stated, I was too involved in the immediate actions, to reflect on the parallels between the two roles.

Reflecting on my experience of requesting enumerated reporting, and drawing on the ideas of James C. Scott, I have gained insight into how the demand for counting and measuring of social activities is arising. Globally renowned indexes I mentioned earlier in a chapter, similarly to the more local measurements of social activities, are always created locally, in micro-interactions. These measurements, which can be understood as themes and patterns of relating that have emerged, they too are likely to constrain and enable people who are acting locally. As the measurements arise in processes of cooperation and completion, the players constrain and enable each other through power relations, and make arguments to persuade each other to take one course of action or another. The course (or courses, in case of CSR indexes) of action that emerge, may be experiences by individual practitioners as externally imposed, but it can only exist if we, in our local interactions, continue to sustain it.

Summary

In this chapter I drew attention to my contributing to the patterns of interaction I have been so vehemently criticising. I have been an ardent objector to the managerialisation of CSR, expressing this view in my teaching and my research; however, when faced with the reporting requirements, I ended up sustaining those patterns. Although I profess to hold a much-romanticised notion of CSR, my actions have exposed me as a pragmatist. Indeed, I wanted to improve the CSR reporting practice, but ended up with 'the usual'.

Chapter 9 – Struggle for CSR, struggle for recognition

They say you are not you except in terms of relation to other people. If there weren't any other people there wouldn't be any you because what you do, which is what you are, only has meaning in relation to other people (Robert Penn Warren, *All the King's Men*)

Introduction

The latest HBS strategy update event was announced just as I was about to start writing this chapter. Having been asked to contribute to the process just before the appointment of the new dean, and having heard during the presentation of the strategy document draft the SEU mentioned by name as an important supporting activity, I expected to see the role of the unit mentioned in the final strategic plan. Although this latest round of planning was conducted only by the Senior Executive Group, I felt I could rely on the new head of our department to promote community engagement, as immediately upon accepting the role she said 'We must make sure the SEU will play a central role in the school'. So walking into the large hall where the strategy update was to be held, I was apprehensive, not knowing what that role would be, but felt confident community engagement would be part of the HBS strategy.

When I entered into the room I immediately noticed a number of boards that were surrounding many rows of chairs. Each board had a chair next to it, a desk in front of it and a big poster mounted on it. As I got closer to one of the posters I realised each of them represented a strand of strategy in the business school. I skimmed the texts on each poster searching for 'SEU' or 'community engagement'. Nothing! Not a mention of anything remotely related to my role. I could not speak. The visceral reaction registered before I could make sense of my emotional response. 'Disappointment' does not begin to describe my feeling. Seven years of work – organising events, promoting the school, ensuring that community engagement had remained on the senior managers' agenda, convincing colleagues and students that CSR is important – all seemed to have disappear.

I wanted to scream 'You are so wrong!' at one of the senior managers, who in the meantime took the stage, but I just sat there. As he opened the floor to questions, I decided to ask about this lack of community engagement in our strategic plan. His answer was 'Of course we'll keep working closely with our community'. When I probed further, asking which strand would be most appropriate for this, he suggested that I 'put myself in front of' the heads of the PG and UG strands. Remembering his earlier e-mail that hinted at his intolerance of being challenged

in public, I thanked the manager and sat down. But I could not let go. Later I approached him and suggested that community engagement has been and will continue contributing to other strands as well – employability, commercial, research. I was amazed at the answer that 'We already had 11 strands'. When I said 'We could have 12', the answer was a simple 'No'.

I could not leave it at that and proposed we had a meeting so I could have an opportunity to explain what exactly the SEU does, and how it contributes to the HBS strategy. We parted, but I was indignant. All the work of the last seven years, everything I deemed important, was dismissed. Or was it just important to me? Am I one of the very few colleagues who thinks that engaging with the community is relevant to our work? This offhand dismissal of what I believe to be an integral part of our *raison d'être,* reminded me of other times I had to fight this corner – trying to get the managers to sign for PRME, the previous dean's comments about him being bored with hearing about CSR, the difficulty of engaging colleagues with the topic. I've had my share of disappointments in this role. But I have also achieved recognition of this work. The Unit's annual report – my annual report! – was always commended by the Board of Governors and presenting our case studies at conferences attracted great interest from colleagues from other universities at home and abroad. On numerous occasions I had been asked to present the work of the Unit as a distinctive feature of the business school.

It is ironic that the managerial actions that I dislike and criticise – commending the annual report, praising the Unit for a set of 'innovative acts' – were so unquestionably accepted by me as acts of approval and recognition.

Had I convinced myself this was a manifestation of the genuine interest in working with the community and missed the signs that CSR was just a managerial fad? There has been no replacement for the Pro-Vice Chancellor Regional Engagement since Stewart's retirement. Last year I was not asked to submit the report to the Board. Were these some of the early signs of declining interest in community engagement? It still appears in the official documents, the words 'social responsibility' are still stenciled on our walls, but am I witnessing the beginning of the decline?

This perceived indifference reminds me of my scepticism about CSR when I was initially introduced to the topic. But through my involvement with the Unit, through interpreting and reinterpreting the amorphous notion of 'community engagement' in my daily practice, my scepticism subsided and I began seeing the benefits, both to us – our students, our teaching, our

research, our reputation – and to the community groups with whom we were involved. Yet, mentioning the benefits brings my attention back to my initial scepticism about the need to demonstrate the benefits of doing what I believe is right.

After years of engaging with the community, of practising CSR in a business school, I seem to be back at the beginning – the need to assert the importance of CSR.

I recognise that it was not just the exclusion of community engagement that affected me so much. Being the director of the Unit, 'the expert on CSR' as some colleagues introduced me, the one to turn to about anything community related, had become part of my identity. If the work of the Unit became insignificant in the School, what significance would I personally have? I began to realise that being identified with this role may no longer bring a sense of pride and security, but rather become a detriment to my advancement at HBS. This understanding is significant for recognising that our personal identity is intertwined with our work, and that my promoting CSR may be seen as a challenge to some of my colleagues. Is it possible that I perceive lack of interest in community engagement as a threat to my identity? Is it feasible that my questioning the dean about the lack of CSR in our strategy is perceived as a challenge to his authority, and therefore to his identity as a leader?

Having reflected on my narratives, I recognise a common thread running through this dissertation: struggle. In practising CSR I have grappled with making sense of practising CSR and with the need to assert its importance in HBS. I have struggled with reconciling my habitual thinking about CSR with an increasing understanding of complexity, and relating this to the topic. I have been, and still am, struggling with the need to continue playing the game of CSR and the wish to change the rules of that game. This dissertation is not just about practising CSR – it is about the challenges of practising CSR. And as I identify with my role and with CSR, this dissertation is also about struggle for my identity.

In this chapter I will explore the struggles of practising CSR, and the way it is addressed in the CSR and wider literature. The next part of this chapter will focus on making sense of my identifying with CSR and how this impacts practice.

Facing CSR challenges

Struggling with thinking about CSR

Being exposed to the topic of CSR early in my academic career, I was both excited and sceptical about it. The excitement stemmed from my earlier experiences. Raised in the former Soviet Union, I've grown to develop a very strong sense of responsibility and belonging to the community. My experiences of working in the West were of disconnect from the community, of emphasis on the bottom line, rather than contribution to society. After 10 years of working in advertising agencies, I became disillusioned with the advertising industry, feeling I was contributing to unrestrained consumerism, cynically exploiting human weaknesses to sell our clients' products. Early exposure to CSR literature resonated with my belief that there must be more to business than just chasing the profit. Yet, after the initial elation at finding business-related writings that seemingly focused on issues other than the bottom line, and upon more critical reading on the topic, I'd become more sceptical about CSR. As Garriga and Mele (2004) noted over 10 years ago, CSR theories could be classified into four groups – instrumental, political, integrative and ethical. I believe this classification is still relevant. My scepticism related to the first group, the instrumental theories, which to me seemed to be 'more of the same' – an attempt to come up with a device that would contribute to the business case. That scepticism was reinforced by the fact that empirical researchers seemed to focus on the CSR – profitability[23] link. Disappointment with instrumental CSR is evident in my confessing to agreeing with Friedman's position (Chapter 6). It is the belief that CSR can be divorced from instrumental reasons that led me to wish to explore CSR in more depth, empirically, to understand practitioners' motives for adopting and the ways of practising CSR.

This interest in an understanding of practising CSR led me to take advantage of an opportunity to study CSR in Ukraine. Devising a pilot study to explore the motive for adopting CSR in a former Soviet Republic, I was hoping to be able to advance my pursuit of making sense of CSR from a practitioner's perspective. While interviewing and then reading the transcripts with the practitioners, I had a very uneasy feeling of hearing what those interviewees thought I wanted to hear. In several cases, the wording of the interviewees' answers was nearly identical to the web pages of their organisations (see Chapter 3). Admittedly, there were also some surprises, leading to interesting discoveries, which even resulted in several conference papers (Filosof

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[23] Here, under the 'profitability' umbrella, I include any contribution to profitability, e.g. corporate image, attracting better employees, improved productivity, and publicity.

and Hollinshead, 2011, Filosof et al., 2012). I felt that even the more self-critical interviews were limited in their usefulness for uncovering the intricacies of what practising CSR entailed. Later, the experience of being interviewed confirmed that (see Chapter 6). Although I tried to be as honest as possible, I realized that the answers did not and could not reflect the full extent of my experiencing CSR.

An additional challenge when reflecting on the understanding of CSR in the mainstream literature, is the way the CSR concept is presented in abstract terms. Early seminal works suggest what CSR is (e.g. Carroll, 1979) or should be (e.g. Votaw and Sethi, 1969) in general terms. These highly generalised discussions of CSR have been an enabling constraint. The advantage of such openness and looseness of definitions is in their potential for multiple understandings and interpretations. This also enables new ideas to emerge. In the early days of the Unit I progressed very hesitantly. Yet, I felt that, to a great degree, I could influence both the emergence of the Unit and the rules. The early CSR works were tentative; they were not rule-bound. The game of CSR, in Elias's terms (see Chapter 2), being in its early stage, allowed the players to feel that they could influence it. This parallel between my understanding of the emergence of CSR locally, in my own practice, and the emergence of the global idea of CSR is just one example of self-similarity I discussed in Chapter 2.

The vagueness of the CSR concept was enabling and constraining at the same time. Thinking about specific practices, it was very difficult for me to grasp what can and cannot be considered CSR. In the early stages of my research I attempted to find out what the 'social responsibilities' of organsiations were. I found that both 'social' and 'responsibility' are not widely addressed by the literature. It was suggested that a stakeholder concept could be used to address the question of the 'social' (Carroll, 1999), but 'stakeholder' means different things to different people (Stoney and Winstanley, 2001, Orts and Strudler, 2009). Moreover, stakeholders' expectations are highly context-dependent, so the question to whom the organisations are responsible, remains moot. As to the question of what 'responsibility' is, the authors implicitly take a deontological approach (Goodin, 1986) to the meaning of responsibility, i.e. what organisation ought to do or refrain from doing.

I have struggled teaching CSR, as the traditional CSR textbooks (e.g. Crane et al., 2014, Griseri and Seppala, 2010) present CSR as an issue that should and can be managed, following systems understanding of organisation. On this understanding, a manager can devise a number of processes and execute the action plans, and the organisation will achieve the 'appropriate' level

of CSR. An example of this approach is a paper I came across early in my research (Maon et al., 2009), in which the authors propose a framework for designing and implementing CSR. This multi-stage framework, based on Lewin's change model (Lewin, 1951) proposes distinct action for managers at each level of an organisation (managerial, organisational and corporate). The model provides 'an initial road map for managers seeking to implement CSR-related change' (Maon et al., 2009: 85). This assumes that the responsibility for CSR-related activities is vested with the managers, that those activities are separate and discrete, and that the subordinates' behaviour at every level can be manipulated by the managers. So for example, 'getting key people's commitment' is the remit of the corporate-level management, while 'creating enthusiasm and credibility around CSR' is left to the managerial level.

This thinking is contradictory to my understanding of organisations, which is informed by complexity. It is also contradictory to my experience of CSR emergence in my organisation. CSR enthusiasts could be found among managers and non-managers (Chapter 4). It could be argued that idea of the SEU had been a HBS managers' response to the Strategic Plan, which included community engagement. But the Unit has been emerging in the interactions of many players, managers and non-managers (Chapter 7). Managers have had greater power chances, so, for example, they issued an edict that all module guides must include a statement of how graduate attributes, including social responsibility, are addressed in the module. This did not ensure, however, the 'creation' of enthusiasm and credibility. Rather than different actions at different 'levels', the global, in this case UH, understanding of and enthusiasm for CSR have been emerging simultaneously, in many local interactions of inclusion and exclusion, competition and cooperation. My experience is echoed by Stacey and Mowles' (2016) understanding of organisations as recognisable global patterns of behaviours arising in local interactions. This understanding of organisation demystifies the role of the manager as the single individual in charge of CSR, and emphasises the emergent and interdependent nature of responsibility.

The greatest struggle I have encountered in trying to make sense of CSR is the tension between my initial need to define CSR in clear and specific terms, and my growing understanding of complexity. In chapter 3 I describe this tension as the conflict between positivist thinking and interpretivist approaches. Embarking upon this dissertation I felt comfortable not being able to define CSR, but expected to be able to provide a sensible definition by the time this work was finished. Being unable to provide a clear and concise definition is disappointing. The fact that 'we still lack an agreed-upon definition of C(S)R, with the result that the concept often remains

"vague and ambiguous" or even "tortured"' (Rivoli and Waddock, 2011: 87), does not diminish the feeling of unease when I am unable to answer the question: 'how do you define CSR'? This discomfort reminds me that I would like to be able to provide such definition. On the other hand, studying complexity I have come to understand CSR as a social object, and as such there cannot be a clear definition. From a complexity perspective existence of numerous definitions is not understood as 'a weakness of the concept' (Argandona and Hoivik, 2009) nor that are the definitions competing, but are arising as many authors interpret and make sense of the 'tortured' concept. Global patterns of interaction that we recognise as CSR arise in local interactions. Those patterns are both predictable and novel at the same time, because in each local interaction we reinterpret anew the generalised meaning of CSR.

The patterns that we've come to recognise as CSR are predictable. Despite CSR definitions being 'vague and ambiguous', we've come to expect CSR to be manifested as a voluntary activity on behalf of an organisation that has some benefit to society, regardless of the organisation's formal purpose (e.g. retail chain, manufacturer, financial institution or university). Those patterns are both predictable and unpredictable at the same time, as the general understanding of CSR is continuously reinterpreted by each practitioner in local interactions. HBS' setting up of a Social Enterprise Unit has been recognised by colleagues, academics from other universities and local community representatives as CSR. This particularisation of the generalised term CSR was both predictable, as it was recognised as falling within the general understanding of CSR. But it was also unpredictable, as it had been a context-specific attempt to interpret the meaning of CSR.

Therefore, CSR is context- and history-dependent. But this explanation is applicable to all social objects, and I felt it did not absolve me from the need to address the particular social object of CSR. My insistence on defining CSR led me to thinking about potential inconsistencies emerging when we rush into defining a highly generalised idea. As mentioned above, I understood CSR as voluntary acts on behalf of the university that are undertaken with the intention of benefitting others and are beyond the core activities of the university. This does not mean simply volunteering, but includes all activities that are not required by law or regulation. This working definition allowed me to proceed with my role, to take actions, to join or start conversations, with some aim. This definition was my response to the vague and changing rules of the game in which I was caught up.

This working definition was my response to the 'logical trap' discussed by Rivoli and Waddock (2011: 89), who argue that:

> If CSR activities are a profitable activity, then they are best described as 'intelligent operation of the business' rather than as 'responsible' behavior. If CSR activities are not profitable, then they cannot be undertaken voluntarily in a competitive market, and so must be imposed on all competitors using laws or regulations, in which case such activities are no longer 'CSR'.

This 'trap' was set by Friedman (1962, 1970), who stated that any activity that makes financial sense should not be considered CSR. But why not? Friedman was writing in the early stages of development of the CSR construct and his voice was one of many contributing to the emerging understanding of CSR. In subsequent decades the attempt to define CSR resulted in myriad definitions. Each definition can be seen as a way of interpreting the general idea in a particular context. My interpretation differs from that of Friedman in the understanding of what can and cannot be considered CSR. I believe that the decision on what to include and what to exclude from the broad church of CSR should be based not on the results of the action, but on the intentions of the actors.

Friedman's interpretation of CSR, based on intentions not outcomes, highlights a potential 'trap' that may arise in dismissing outcomes. My interpretation is based on the understanding that we cannot pre-determine the outcome of any action before we take it. It rejects the assumption that the meaning (social value) of the act (responsibility, ethics, benefit to society) is enfolded within the act itself (CSR activity). Another way of conceptualising meaning is by turning to Mead's conversation of gestures (Mead, 1934). The meaning arises in the ongoing interaction of gestures and responses. On this thinking we cannot know before the action the meaning our action will take. We can only know what we intend by our action, and even the intention itself evolves as it is responded to by others. Following this, any activity we consider responsible at the outset may result in being responsible or not, beneficial or harmful – the results are not predetermined, and whatever they are should not determine whether the action is responsible or not. But if the results are harmful, can we still consider the action responsible because we intended it to be beneficial? This defies common sense and my instincts. To avoid this 'trap', I propose that the interpretation of CSR includes intentions and outcomes. The way the practitioner addresses the arising situation is what determines the responsibility.

The final 'trap' in the attempt to define CSR is the persistent reifying of organisation in the mainstream CSR literature. The question 'what is considered to be responsible behaviour by corporations' (Rivoli and Waddock, 2011: 87) ignores the fact that corporations [24] are legal entities, but not human actors. They are not natural but social objects. To paraphrase Friedman (1970), organisations do not act, people do. So when we speak of 'corporate responsibility', we need to specify whose responsibility we are referring to. Defining CSR as 'acts on behalf of organisations', it is clear that anyone acting on behalf of an organisation can be considered as contributing to CSR. This recognises the legal viability of organisations, but does not assign organisations moral personhood.

My role is one of the many areas that contribute to the university's responsibility. The remit of the directorship of the SEU has evolved to positively contribute to community engagement. My working definition of CSR and the role's remit, have been informed by my practice, as I have been trying to make sense of what I was supposed to do in my role; at the same time my practice has been informed by my evolving thinking about CSR. My thinking has been pragmatic, I have negotiated with others what can and cannot be achieved. This interdependence with others resulted in enabling constraints that allowed me to define my role.

Having arrived at a working definition of CSR – voluntary acts on behalf of the organisation, which are undertaken with the intention to benefit others, and are beyond the core activities of the organisation – which spells out my interpretation of CSR does not mean I have reached conflict-free thinking about the concept. In my daily practice I am required to reinterpret this definition and to assess whether the actions I am taking make sense from a practical point of view. Currently, I am content that there is a consistency between practice and definition. However, as future conflicts arise, I will have to re-examine both the definition and practice.

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[24] I have addressed the meaning of corporation in the Introduction.

Struggling with practising CSR

I found it challenging to make sense of CSR through reading and through the experience of others, so I embraced the opportunity to reflect on my own experience of practising CSR. Encountering resistance that I had not anticipated before starting my role as a director of the SEU (Chapter 7), I wanted to know how the challenges of practising CSR are addressed in the literature. I did not think I was the only one facing such difficulties in trying to implement responsible practices in our curricula and our praxis. Embedding CSR in business schools curricula involves changing practices, and 'transforming management practice will be a constant struggle' (King and Learmonth, 2015: 353). Yet, references to struggling in adopting CSR were even more difficult to find than references to specific CSR practices (see Bondy, 2008, Joutsenvirta and Vaara, 2015). At the same time, as a PRME champion, I began attending events at which numerous challenges of practising CSR, especially challenges of engaging staff, were discussed, but usually in less formal settings. My practising of CSR was fraught with challenges, difficulties, daily setbacks and a continuous need to be vigilant of maintaining community engagement as an integral part of our practice at HBS. Yet, while my experience was echoed by many colleagues from other HEs, this experience was absent from the mainstream CSR literature. In my interview with Jonathan Louw I described my practice as 'Sisyphean'. When Jonathan presented his research at a conference, the findings moved me to such an extent that I could not stop the tears rolling. His work suggests that 'working on PRME can be an isolating and demanding experience, requiring resilience' (Louw, 2015: 112). Such a strong emotion had arisen because until his presentation I had not realised that I was not alone in experiencing the role as isolated, emotionally challenging and fraught with self-criticism. 'In the face of self-doubt, isolation, indifference, sometimes hostility, many PRME advocates … also voiced or through depictions of their work demonstrated the need for resilience and opportunism' (ibid: 117). But there was no resonance with those experiences in the mainstream CSR literature.

The mainstream CSR literature does not provide insights into the reasons for difficulties in practising CSR. Titles like 'The Practical Guide to Corporate Social Responsibility: Do the Right Thing' (Asbury and Ball, 2016) suggest that there is 'the right' thing to be done, so why would anyone reject doing that right thing? I have discussed the challenges of getting colleagues to engage with the SEU and the difficulties in implementing PRME in previous chapters. I have suggested the reasons for my colleagues' reluctance to cooperate. I have been unable to ask directly, in case my questioning their unwillingness to engage with CSR might be

misinterpreted as a challenge to them. I drew some insights into this question when I was faced with a new initiative introduced by the senior managers.

A new unit was created, with a remit to assist us (academics) with specific aspects of our job. The unit manager contacted me to discuss how I may benefit from their involvement with the SEU and to explore possible cooperation. My initial enthusiastic reaction was soon replaced with suspicion and mistrust. During our first conversation, it quickly became apparent that we have divergent agendas – I was pushing for more community engagement that required some resourcing, which I was hoping to get through her; and Leena had income goals, and was hoping to enlist the SEU to deliver more commercial activity. She promised to inquire with the Pro-VC about some funding that was supposed to be ring-fenced for the SEU, and I promised to cooperate whenever any suitable project became available. In the following weeks she replied to my request for funds with the news that they were no longer available. She proceeded to inquire about the commercially valuable projects I had been involved with (which to me seemed like an attempt to appropriate them for her unit). During our conversation I felt she was insisting on her ideas about the way the Unit should be run. I resented being given suggestions by someone I perceived as less knowledgeable about the topic than I was. I expected further engagement with her would not be useful to me. She had no management authority over me and she was not located in the same building, so I found it easy to simply avoid any further contact.

There seem to be similarities between the conflict between Leena and me and the conflict between me and my colleagues. Thinking about this situation, I wonder whether I was my colleagues' 'Leena'. I was asking them to engage with something that they might have had no interest in. I was also surprised when colleagues I knew to be interested in CSR-related topics did not respond to my attempts to engage them in conversations about SEU and PRME. I felt Leena was challenging my authority and my identity as the CSR person in the business school. She was encroaching on my territory and I defended it by disengaging with her. Is it possible my colleagues were defending their territories by disengaging with me? Was I challenging their authority as experts and their values in the way I was suggesting we work together?

Reflecting on the challenges that arose in my interactions with Leena and the way I responded to them, allows me to understand the reluctance of colleagues and senior management to

'engage in CSR' in the way I expected them to[25]. Although the setting up of the SEU and the signing for and embedding of PRME have been supported by the senior managers, their interpretation has inevitably been different from mine. My colleagues were also understanding CSR differently from me. I experienced those differences as conflict. Although I understand that conflict is integral to human interaction, the experience was raw and bruising. This difference in interpretations has resulted in frustration and disagreement. But continuous conversations about the purpose and possible activities of the Unit with others have also resulted in novel and creative interpretations and actions.

The reluctance of the new dean to 'elevate' community engagement to the level of strategic importance has had a significant impact on me. It is also important to understand that it evokes such strong feelings because my identity has been strongly linked to CSR and community engagement, and indifference to those values is easily interpreted as a challenge to my identity.

Another difficulty in practising CSR is negotiating what should be included and excluded in our practice. In Chapter 3 I reflected on the difficulty in deciding what is and what is not CSR. These decisions are not permanent and are negotiated in every day working with others. One of the main reasons for the difficulty in deciding what interactions can be considered CSR is the way CSR is conceptualised in mainstream literature – as a reified object that exists independently outside of human interactions, or as a system (Chapter 3). As such CSR, like other objects or systems, must have a boundary. Yet I have experienced CSR as continuous reinterpretation about what can and should be done to help communities. Limitations, including what is meant by 'community', have been negotiated and renegotiated in many interactions with many others in order to be able to go on working together. But those limitations are not boundaries. System boundaries are created in order to separate the system from its environment. The purpose of deciding what to exclude and what to include in our activities is to focus our discussions and to introduce some restrictions, or rules for interacting. Those restrictions, arising in our interactions, are paradoxically constraining and enabling. Without them, if anything was possible, we would be unable to make decisions. Those rules of engagement are simultaneously limiting and protecting the possibilities of actions we can engage in. Having a

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[25] I begin using quotation marks to signify I no longer perceive this to accurately reflect my emerging understanding of what it means to practice CSR. Nevertheless, I have not found a different way to express this activity and will continue using 'engage in CSR'.

job description allowed us to start conversations about how to develop the work of the Unit, while also allowing new interpretations to arise.

In computer simulations the programmer decides on the boundaries of the system. If an organisation is understood as a system, then the manager is the one who sets its boundaries. But organisations are not systems, nor is CSR. As we interact with numerous others, we enable and constrain each other. What we do and do not do arise in continuously negotiating these enabling constraints, and this is not programmed by any of the actors. Our interactions do not produce boundaries, only further interactions.

The initial decision to include only the activities that contributed to students was later revised to include other activities that were 'contributing to the community and not detrimental to students' (Chapter 6). At the start the purpose of the Unit was described as 'developing its range of activities with the charity sector' (UHBS, 2009). I suggested that the remit should be expanded to the wider third sector. The title of 'Social Enterprise' always made me uneasy. I believed that social enterprises should be a part, but not the focus of the Unit, as might be inferred from the title. I also thought this title may give the impression that the Unit provides funding for social enterprises, or is focused on developing social entrepreneurs. Yet, having Social Enterprise in the title, provided opportunities to engage in projects that would have probably not been forwarded to me otherwise. The SEE change programme, for example, is a project that has been going on in different guises for several years[26]. I was asked to attend the first meeting related to this programme, since I was the only one in the university whose official title included Social Enterprise. Upon my return from the meeting, I met with the relevant (in my opinion) manager and recommended that he should apply to participate in it. Several days later I received an e-mail asking me to lead the bid for that funding, as that manager was busy with other projects. I did, we bid, we won and the project is in its fourth year now. I have been involved in it ever since. Since it is about developing social entrepreneurs among the university students, staff and alumni, to me this 'fit' the remit of the Unit. It also had the benefit of contributing nicely to my annual reporting.

The decisions about what to promote and what to downplay have always been fluid and changing. There was no manager (programmer) or group of managers in control of what is included and what is excluded in the work we undertook under the title of the SEU. We have

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[26]The SEE change programme is a programme funded by HEFCE to encourage social entrepreneurs in HE. The project is delivered by an UnLtd – a social enterprise – and often is referred to as UnLtd.

been responding to each other, and to many others, in understanding what it was that we were supposed to do. That is not to say that some people were not more influential than others. The emphasis is that even the most influential people in the organisation (e.g. senior managers) are dependent on others to interpret their decisions in everyday interactions.

Understanding CSR as a social object, a way of interacting with a certain purpose, allows us to recognise that a clear definition and delineation of what constitutes CSR is impossible. There can be no boundaries around CSR, only evolving ideas, arising in many interactions, in working together, about what to promote and what to set aside. As any other social object, CSR is a generalisation which needs to be particularised in daily interactions. Those interactions interweave multiple histories and intentions. Therefore, the meaning of each interaction will be continuously renegotiated with others, and not exclusively assigned by a manager, or a group of managers, however influential they may be.

Social understanding of struggle

Earlier in the chapter I discussed the difficulty of reconciling my experience of struggling with the depiction of CSR in the mainstream literature. The discussion with practitioners provided a glimpse into similar experiences. As alluded to in the previous section, the discrepancy is based mainly on different conceptualisations of CSR. Understanding CSR as a social object or a cult value can shed light on the experience of struggle. To reiterate, a social object is a generalised tendency to act in similar ways in similar situations (Stacey and Mowles, 2016). Cult values are idealised social objects that are not yet achieved but could be achieved in an obstacle-free future (if such a future existed).

Based on this social understanding of CSR, I propose two explanations for experiencing practising CSR as a struggle. The first is based on the analysis of struggle offered by Kaptein (2015). He proposes four characteristics of struggle: importance of an object of struggle, object of struggle being unachieved, opposition and great effort. A struggle for CSR arises in an attempt to particularise a generalised social object. This particularising involves working with others and reinterpreting the generalisation anew in every interaction. As a cult value, CSR cannot be fully achieved, but it always remains of great importance in our public and private interactions. Working with others always involves cooperation and competition, it is never obstacle free, and we must always negotiate going on together. Working together to

particularise CSR is no different and involves conflict and a great effort. From this perspective particularising any social object is a struggle and not conflict free.

This framework does not explain, however, why the subject of struggle is important to some and less important to others. I suggest that the second reason for my experiencing struggle is because CSR has become part of my identity and the struggle I experience is struggle for recognition. My identity is unique, not better than others', but unique to me and incommensurable with others. And others experience their identities similarly. So when we come together in order to have a shared experience we must find common ground, i.e. downplay some ambitions and facets and bring forward others. However, we cannot separate the entanglement of those ambitions, which leads to conflict, sometimes overt and explicit, sometime covert and sometimes both.

Struggle for recognition – my identity intertwined with my role, with CSR

My identity has become interlinked with practising CSR, and the impact of my identity on practice and at the same time being influenced by practice becomes evident in the way I discuss my practice. In this section I reflect on the processes of emergence and change of identity in local interactions with others.

The term 'identity' for me encompasses all the answers to the questions 'who am I?', 'how am I being?' and 'how do I perceive myself?' (see Cerulo, 1997). For every individual there are numerous answers to these questions, the answers will vary according to circumstances. Following Hegel's dialectics (Williams, 1989), I understand that the answer to these questions is always in relation to others. I will discuss what I mean by this in the next section.

My identity is enduring yet dynamic and changing at the same time. By this I mean not just professional affiliations or political beliefs, but the evolving significance of certain aspects and the diminishing importance of others. My career ambition is continuous, yet I hope my anxiety is diminishing. The importance of CSR to my identity has evolved with my practice. The changes have occurred due to my increased involvement, and also due to the ways others responded to my involvement. Those changes in identity have impacted my practice, while my practice has been impacting my identity.

One of the features of complexity is sensitivity to initial conditions (see Chapter 2). This means that no event can be precisely replicated. We cannot trace the beginnings of a specific pattern

of interaction to any single event, as each event arises in multiple interactions of multiple players. My identifying with CSR did not happen in a single moment; rather it has been evolving in many interactions, even prior to my joining the university.

In Chapter 2 I alluded to my excitement upon seeing the role of director of the SEU advertised. I felt the role was perfect for me. There were practical issues of workload that made the role attractive. But there was more to it; it felt like a role that I could make my own, that fit well with how I wanted to be as a university employee. While writing the expression of interest statement (Appendix 3), I was able to articulate why this role seemed right for me. Rereading that statement now I am reminded that I had been involved with what I later classified as CSR at UH long before taking up this role. So the aspiration to be involved with the community was not the only reason for applying for the role.

Getting this job meant being able to have a formal CSR role, which had become central to my research. I also saw the role as an opportunity to be recognised, to be seen as an important player in the business school. I was hoping that a role that was unique, the role that was supposed to lead to promotion, would contribute to my status. This aspect of my identity – the need to be recognised, to be seen as important by my peers, my colleagues and by those in a position of influence – has been evident in this dissertation. The need for advancement, for promotion – my ambition – has impacted my choices. In Chapter 1 I discuss how I perceived speaking up about allegedly illegal practices would have affected my status at work. Ambition has been a major influence on how I have been practising CSR. Increasing the prominence of CSR at HBS was inseparable from my sense of my own prominence.

Throughout this dissertation my need to be recognised has been apparent, but not always acknowledged.

My evolving understanding of identity

Pratt (2012) distinguishes between identity and self, drawing on the work of Mead (1934). I too base my understanding of identity on the Meadian 'self'; however, I understand Mead's work differently, and I use the terms 'identity' and 'self' interchangeably.

Mead's work is cited as fundamental for 'identity studies' (Cerulo, 1997, Stryker and Burke, 2000). Mead's idea of identity is inherently social. The self arises in social acts, in conversations of gestures between 'I' and 'me', in which we take the attitude of the generalised other (Mead, 1934, Mead, 1925). For infants the attitude of the carer represents the generalised other. So when a child cries and a mother attends to him, he perceives that every time he cries he will be attended to. Growing up, we learn to recognise different and sometimes contradictory responses to similar gestures. So crying may be responded to with compassion from the mother, but with scorn from friends. We learn to take the attitudes of many generalised others, that are at times incompatible and even conflicting. Not crying in public becomes 'second nature' (Elias, 1939 [2000] : 127), and we no longer recognise this behaviour as imposed on us; we perceive it as our own, innate feature.

We learn to take the attitude of generalised others by picking up clues that indicate to us what might be acceptable in certain social acts and social objects. Talking to other researchers about my role, I did not discuss my practice in depth. I felt this would be disloyal to my colleagues. This feeling was perhaps misguided, but I 'knew' this is how a loyal employee and colleague behaved. Talking about my practice in the PhD group, I feel comfortable discussing the difficulties of my work, the uncooperative colleagues, 'knowing' that such behaviour would not be considered disloyal. This 'knowledge' arose in many interactions and is based on perceptions and beliefs, not on written rules and codes of behaviour. It is fundamentally social as we learn through social acts of interaction with others. It is different from learning about natural objects, as objects in nature do not respond in a social way to our gestures. Forgetting to water a plant will not make it sad. Neglecting to send a birthday card to a child may cause disappointment, crying, withholding affection or a fight. We know this might happen because we might react similarly in a similar situation, and because we might have experienced this before. We avoid such behaviour by anticipating it, by taking the attitude of the child. We do not take the attitude of the flora. Rather than understanding identity as involving 'how I see myself and how others see me' (Woodward, 2010: 20), which represents a split between individual and society, following Mead (1934), my understanding of identity is how I respond to the attitudes of the generalised others.

For every individual there are numerous answers to the questions 'who am I?' and 'how am I being?' that will vary according to circumstances. We can think of ourselves in relational terms. Remembering recent occasions I was asked to introduce myself, I gave different answers – 'Jan, Avi's wife' at a dinner party, 'Jana Filosof, principal lecturer, and director of the Social Enterprise Unit' at a subject group meeting, 'Jana Filosof, University of Hertfordshire' at an academic conference. I am a wife because of my husband, I am a lecturer because I teach at a University, and this is a recognised profession; because Principal Lecturer has a meaning for that group of people.

We can also answer the questions posed above by describing ourselves using some feature of our character. This too can only be understood in relation to others. I tend to describe myself as ambitious, strong-willed, impatient and extrovert. Those qualities can only be recognised because of others. My identity evolves in my interaction with generalised others. For example, I had not thought of myself as ambitious until one of my co-workers asked me 'How does it feel to be ambitious?'. Only then did I realise that not everyone working in the same place and in a similar role is ambitious, and there is a certain attitude towards a certain set of behaviours that is recognised by others as 'ambitious'. Until that conversation I presumed that all my colleagues were ambitious. Growing up I did not think I was impatient; I only recognised this quality when it was pointed out to me. I am not suggesting we need to be told by others what our characteristics are. I am pointing to the possibility of a certain characteristic as becoming integral to one's identity only if it is recognised by others, and by oneself in that moment, and in relation to them.

We also perceive ourselves in what I call 'census terms'. I am a middle-class, middle-aged, British citizen. But all those 'features' are only meaningful in certain social contexts. I am middle class only in a society that recognises social classes. I am middle-aged because I am of certain age[27], I live in a society in which such a definition is recognised, because we attribute certain behaviours and attitudes to 'middle-agedness'.

Even biometric terms are relevant to our identity because they are socially relevant. Being female, 165 cm tall and weighing 67 kg, I am of average height and am slim by British standards (Martinson, 2013), but the NHS would classify me as 'borderline overweight' (NHS, 2015). Each generalised other – 'average woman' and 'NHS' – affect my identity, yet at different times

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[27] There is no clear definition of 'middle age', which in itself is an example of social object. Our society only began recognising 'middle-age' in the beginning of 20th century (Siegelman and Rider, 2012).

their prominence is shifting. I have always identified myself as white. Being white has social consequences because there are social consequences to being non-white. As stated earlier a feature affects our identity if it is socially relevant, that is to say if it is recognised by others. I also suggest that in order to be relevant to our identity it has to have a recognised otherness. Having lymphocytes did not affect my identity, but when my lymphocytes stopped working properly, I became identified as a lymphoma patient. Our identity is always in relation to others, 'we become ourselves because there are other selves' (Mowles, 2015b: 33).

According to Mead (1925, 1934) identity arises in the enacting of choices 'I' make in response to the generalised others, or 'me', in the ongoing 'I-me' conversation of gestures. Identity is a social act of emergence, and is ongoing, continuous and evolving, always emerging, never constant. On this view, identity is in continuous flux, as the particular answer to the questions posted at the beginning of this section is contingent on a specific situation at a specific time and conflict and cooperation are inseparable in evolving identities.

The potentiality of multiple responses to multiple perceived attitudes of multiple generalised others gives rise to the responsively acting self.

> If, as a consequence, sociality is in the words of Mead (1932 p.49) 'the capacity of being several things at once,' then the subject is necessarily multiply positioned. Mead would thus see relations of difference as … giving structure to the self. But Mead would understand these relations of difference as *constituting* identity rather than *fragmenting* it (Dunn, 1991: 701 emphasis in original).

There are no multiple identities or a different identity at a different time, but an identity that is fluid and responsive. I understand 'being several things at once' as the ability to take the attitude of many generalised others and to respond differently in different situations.

I started this dissertation with a narrative of sustaining irresponsible behaviour, I was aware of the ethical challenges posed by those involved in setting the prices. The decision not to report it affected my understanding of myself. Prior to this incident, having never faced a similar situation before, I thought of myself as a very conscientious ethical person. Had I been presented with this situation as a case study, I would have argued for exposing the alleged cartel. Having made a choice that was perhaps inconsistent with my previous notions of what was ethical, I did not stop considering myself moral. At the time my understanding of what was moral had been competing with my understanding of what was important for me. In this conflict I made a decision that privileged one aspect of my identity. All human interactions are

inevitably ethical, as they involve making evaluative choices about how we interact with the other. Often different aspects of identity – attitudes of different generalised others – are conflicting, and we make decisions that highlight some and downplay others. In a different context I might have responded differently.

What I emphasise here is that my identity had impacted and had been impacted by that incident, but there was no fragmented self. I responded both similarly and differently to the situation that had arisen. My behaviour had been consistent in addressing my need to be recognised. It was also inconsistent with my proclaimed highly-ethical stance.

Understanding identity as a tendency to act similarly in response to similar situations means there is always the potentiality for simultaneous consistency and change in identity. The ability to reflexively recognise that we actually choose how the 'I' responds to 'me' is what constitutes both continuous and at the same time changing self.

This understanding of self is radically different from the assumption of independent agency and stability in the traditional management literature (Waldrop, 1992). Organisational writers, including critical management scholars, tend to focus on the 'construction' of identity as an individual enterprise (Brown, 2015, Kodeih and Greenwood, 2014, Alvesson, 2011, Alvesson et al., 2008). My experience of identity is inherently social, arising in interactions with others and with my self. There is never one single incident that is the root of specific behaviours. Certain needs and behaviours are so deep-rooted that they became 'second nature' (Elias [1939] 2000), or habitus (Bourdieu, 1984). We experience those aspects as an external, permanent, uncontrollable force. Reflecting on our interactions we are able to recognise those behaviours as certain types of responses to certain types of gestures.

One enduring aspect of my identity has been the need to be recognised as important. It is manifested in the tasks I undertake both in and out of work, in posts I choose, in the way I practice. Honneth (1996) perceived struggle for recognition as a basic human quality. I understand this to mean that we are born with the capability to recognise ourselves only through the recognition of others. Our responses to various gestures of recognition are continuously evolving in complex responsive processes of interaction with others and with ourselves.

Reflecting on my practice, I have come to realise that by addressing what I understood as CSR, I have chosen roles that were new at HBS: I asked to develop and lead a CSR module, I insisted on signing for PRME, I was the first to apply for the role of director of the SEU. I believed that

I could develop those roles, putting my mark on them, which in turn had the potential for me to demonstrate diligence, creativity, initiative and industriousness – attributes that I believed were valued by both colleagues and managers. When I first started working at the university, I did not perceive CSR as critical to my sense of self, to my status. Identifying with CSR emerged in responsive interactions with others. I have often complained that the managers used the Unit as a way to promote themselves, for example, demonstrating to a distinguished guest that we at UH or HBS take social responsibility seriously. And since I was best placed to discuss what we did, I was asked to talk to the visiting dignitary. I used to complain that I was brought out as a dancing bear for the entertainment of visitors. Yet, the managers' need to exhibit the Unit could be understood as signalling its importance to the organisation's reputation. Being associated with the Unit addressed my need for recognition. Over time, the subject of CSR has become tremendously important to me. Teaching, researching and practising CSR, I have grown to perceive CSR-related issues as integral to who I am.

I perceive positive mentioning of CSR-related achievements as personal acknowledgements; disparaging comments about CSR and exclusion of community-related activities from strategic levels are taken as an affront to me. My struggle for CSR is a struggle for recognition, a struggle for visibility (Waldrop, 1992). Following Honneth (Honneth and Margalit, 2001, Honneth, 2002, Honneth, 1996) I mean recognition or visibility in a figurative sense. In this sense recognition is a social act, through 'an expression of specific ways of reacting that are a sign – an expression – of taking notice … of someone in a positive sense' (Honneth and Margalit, 2001: 114). Recognition, according to Honneth (ibid), requires public acknowledgement. It is not enough that the dean knows the importance of the SEU: I, and others, must be aware of his acknowledgement. Not being publicly acknowledged, by not having the subject with which I identify valued, is a source of angst. As a human, I am constantly becoming myself in interaction with others, anticipating and responding to their judgements, thus responsively evolving in mutual recognition (Stacey and Mowles, 2016: 306). Therefore, understanding the struggle for CSR at HBS as a struggle for recognition, allows me to make better sense of the anxiety I have experienced when facing unfavorable reactions to CSR.

Life in organisations is unpredictable and continuously evolving. CSR as a management concept is unique, as its purpose is not just to improve productivity or contribute to efficiency, and not 'focusing purely on the external good or profit' (Blackman et al., 2013: 240). Additionally, CSR activities often are not necessarily part of the organisational mainstream activities. Moreover, unlike other management ideas (e.g. total quality management, business

process reengineering, lean production), there are no rules for implementing it, as den Hond et al (2007: 4) argue:

> at the more concrete level of implementing CSR in a specific context, many different interpretations of CSR seem to be around. Once it is put into practice, the seemingly single-faced concept of CSR breaks down into a concept that is variegated, sundry, and fragmented.

An attempt to introduce and implement CSR is bound to add to organizational unpredictability and uncertainty. Practising CSR involves change in perceptions and behaviours (Higgs, 2006). This continuous change, and the uncertainty that is an inevitable aspect of change, is anxiety-provoking. Making the general idea of CSR practical, adds to this anxiety. Our identities arise in relationship with others, in our interdependent responses to change. It is inevitable that people will perceive change as a challenge to their identity. Elias (1991: 93) recognised that

> If [our identity] ... is called into question, our own security is threatened. What was certain becomes uncertain.

At times, the challenge is so great that it is experienced as a threat to one's identity and when threatened some may respond with resistance. Paradoxically, my need for being recognised is also the need to be subversive. By subversive I do not mean insubordinate, but rather challenging authority, the mainstream, the 'business as usual'. Often I respond to gestures I understand as opposition by seeking actions that challenge that opposition, rather than avoiding confrontation. Dissatisfied with the Unit's initially stated purpose, I insisted on expanding the activities beyond working with charities. To Lisa's scepticism about my effectiveness (Chapter 6), I responded with increased enthusiasm to prove her wrong. Reflective narratives as a research method in this dissertation can be seen as challenging the methodological mainstream. Elias (1991:93) continues his insight into identity

> But without throwing oneself for a time into the sea of uncertainty one cannot escape the contradictions and inadequacies of deceptive certainty.

I understand Elias's statement not as suggesting that we can choose to promote or shun uncertainty, but as a call to recognise that 'throwing oneself into the sea of uncertainty' is unavoidable. Throughout my studies I have experienced continuous challenges to my identity, especially dealing with anxiety related to perception of not being recognised. Those challenges

have arisen in my interactions with others and with myself. I've come to understand them as enabling constraints – constraints that enable me to recognise my self, become aware of my responses to those gestures. By recognising and reflecting on responses I would like to avoid, I attempt to respond differently in the future. I have also come to recognise uncertainty not just as challenge, but as central in the emergence of identity.

Summary

In this chapter I reflected on struggle and identity, two major themes in my PhD studies, which are evident in all my narratives. Reinterpreting CSR in many local interactions is inevitably anxiety provoking and thus involves continual emergence of identity, our own and that of others, as well as conflict and struggle. I believe that my struggle felt particularly surprising because of the context of CSR. Implied claims to moral high ground in academic and practitioner literature left me exasperated when I realised that such a noble practice can be ignored, contested and even rejected.

The neoliberalist approach that underpins the mainstream organisational literature depicts an organisation as a collection of discrete autonomous individuals, who make their choices independently of others and can predict the outcomes of those choices (Rustin, 2013). On this understanding, conflict and struggle are results of poor choices and must be resolved (e.g. De Clercq and Belausteguigoitia, 2017, Rao, 2017, Davis, 2016, Buur and Larsen, 2010).

Understanding organisations as patterns of interaction among many interdependent people, who are enabled and constrained by each other, allows understanding conflict differently, as being an inevitable aspect of interdependence. In this chapter I have highlighted how our identity arises those interactions, in the processes of recognition and challenge. Being interdependent with others, the struggle for our identity is inevitable.

Understanding that conflict, struggle and power relating are aspects of all human relationship, we can begin to depathologise conflict, and reconceptualise struggle as an inevitable characteristic of every relationship.

Chapter 10 - Summary and contribution

Introduction

In 'The Wonderful Wizard of Oz' by L. Frank Baum, a girl named Dorothy, accompanied by her dog Toto, embarks on a journey to Emerald City to ask the Wizard to fulfil her wish of returning home to Kansas. Along the way she meets the Scarecrow who wants to get a brain, the Tin Woodman who wants a heart, and the Cowardly Lion who wants courage. On their adventures the Scarecrow demonstrates impressive intellect to save them from the attack of bees, the Tin Woodman proves to have the biggest heart, and the Cowardly Lion fights off the entire army of Winkie soldiers to defend his friends. Yet the friends fail to see what is obvious to the reader and insist that only the Wizard of Oz can grant them their wishes. Even when they realise that the Wizard is an ordinary man, they still seek his help to achieve what they want. At the end Dorothy learns that for her even the Wizard cannot provide her with a 'placebo' remedy that satisfied her friends. The Wizard cannot bring her home. At the end she realises that all she had to do to return to Kansas was to click the heels of the shoes she wore the entire time.

This children's story is very nuanced; it can be read as a tale of friendship, of growing up, of deceptive appearances. I find this tale analogous to my exploration of CSR. I started this dissertation as a quest for CSR. I was looking for the meaning of CSR in academic literature, in professional literature, in the press, in reports, conferences and workshops. And while searching for CSR in the experience of others, I was working, interpreting the generalised idea of CSR in daily practice with myself and others.

In this research I demonstrate how CSR emerges in many interactions, in everyday experiences, arising in the context of the moment. It is impossible to pinpoint specific interaction that might lead to what becomes recognised as CSR. Reflecting on these everyday experiences, I explore various aspects of my practice of CSR in an HE institution. My research has been informed by the pragmatism of Dewey and Mead, by the process sociology of Elias, and by contemporary organisational researchers – colleagues from the Complexity and Management Centre at UH (Stacey et al., 2000, Griffin, 2002, Shaw, 2002, Noble, 2004, Mowles, 2015b, Norman et al., 2015, Crewe, 2015), and researchers from other institutions (Zhu, 2007, Taylor, 2005, Larsen and Bogers, 2014, Bates, 2016) – who have engaged with complexity. In doing so, I have

explored CSR as a social object, and demonstrated that particularising this often idealised social object always involves power relations, communicative interaction, and ethical choices.

In the following sections I draw together the main themes arising from my research and highlight the main contributions of my work. Taking a complexity-informed approach to researching, I recognise that knowledge and practice arise in the same processes of interaction. This research contributes to knowledge and practice at the same time, although at times the contribution to one might be more relevant than to the other. I highlight my contributions in general, emphasising the more relevant impact where appropriate.

CSR as practice

A key contribution of this dissertation is in the insight I have gained through reflecting on my own practice – the meaning of Corporate Social Responsibility arises in practising corporate social responsibility. For example I started this research with the aim of 'uncovering' the meaning in what others have to say about it. But I did not find the meaning there, waiting to be 'uncovered'. I began to focus on my own day-to-day activity, taking what I was doing seriously. Iterating reflexive narratives of my practice, I have demonstrated how in my local interactions with others and with myself, we are creating an understanding that emerges as meaning and identity for the SEU and contributes to CSR for the whole institution. Directly relating the subject of research to the work we do has been recognised in other practices in HEA. For example Ahmed (2012: 9) reflects on her research 'diversity work often involves "working out" what works giving the workplace'. This reflection resonates with my experience of CSR. In choosing our activities and in interpreting them, we define and redefine what we include in, and exclude from CSR, particularising locally, and simultaneously influencing a generalised understanding of CSR.

My initial experience of corporate social responsibility was puzzling, anxiety-provoking and exciting at the same time. Copious definitions and theoretical perspectives on the topic confused me rather than provided clarity. My early objections to certain lines of enquiry (see Chapter 1) made my teaching uncomfortable, as I believed I had the responsibility to present perspectives with which I disagreed, yet I had no alternatives to suggest. As uncomfortable as I felt about the mainstream CSR literature, I kept teaching the subject. Despite my uneasiness about what I read, I continued discussing the meaning of responsibility with students.

The initial excitement about heading the SEU, which was partly rooted in my hoping for a practical understanding of CSR, was quickly replaced by panic: what to do now? (see Chapter 7). Seeking answers in the CSR literature produced more confusion. Despite growing academic interest in researching CSR, there was very little about the actual practice of CSR that I could identify with, or draw on, that would assist me in interpreting CSR. Limited discussion of the operationalisation of CSR (Pedersen, 2006) left me wondering about what could and what could not be considered CSR. But, despite the mounting panic and confusion, I was trying different approaches to explore what can be done in the role. I kept on trying various ways of engaging with others, and together we kept on engaging with the community.

Influenced by pragmatism I began paying closer attention to my practice. Pausing to recognise my frustration with what I thought to be lack of significant engagement with CSR, I traced the development of CSR discourse and its evolution into the overwhelmingly positive and idealised construct as it is currently presented in the mainstream literature (Chapter 4). I realised that despite being disapproving of some aspects of CSR literature (e.g. theorising organisations as moral agents), I uncritically accepted the heroic narrative of CSR and found myself propagating it further in my teaching. I had begun engaging with the literature more critically. I introduced critical perspectives into the CSR module, and later I introduced the ideas of responsibility and critical evaluation of practice into other modules. Together with students and colleagues, we continued thinking about what responsibility meant to us in our practice.

I also realised that despite criticising the managerialist approach to CSR, in my eagerness to establish the significance of my role as director of the SEU (Chapter 8), I contributed to establishing managerialist standards for community engagement at UH. Reflecting on my anxiety about the significance of my work had a great impact on developing a more critical reading of the mainstream CSR literature and a more critical reflection on my practice. Paying attention to the ways I had been caught in the processes of maintaining the managerialist discourse of community engagement in the UH, I began trying various ways to influence that discourse, keeping in mind the need to stay in the game.

Reflecting on my practising of and thinking about CSR, I have come to realise that I had been searching for the meaning of CSR in episteme or 'scientific knowledge' that

concerns universals and the production of knowledge which is invariable in time and space, and which is achieved with the aid of analytical rationality (Flyvbjerg, 2001: 55-56).

The initial desire to come up with a definition of CSR and the search for a set of practices that could be considered as 'legitimate' CSR arose from my long-held beliefs of what constitutes the 'correct' knowledge. According to those beliefs the only knowledge that had value was the knowledge created by scientific methods, that is to say following the tradition of natural sciences (Gigerenzer and Marewski, 2015). That type of knowledge (episteme) is generalizable and context- and time-independent. I was seeking a rational explanation of CSR as if it were a natural phenomenon. I was seeking to provide an explanation for the 'correct' CSR.

I became aware of the limitations of generalised CSR definitions (Carroll, 1991, McWilliams and Siegel, 2001, EC, 2011, UK, 2014) for explaining what was going on in my practice. Yet, giving up those ideas was not easy, because they provided some sense of control and certainty. Throughout this dissertation I have discussed the need to hold on to that certainty, although very early on I became aware that what I was holding onto was the *appearance* of certainty. Not having a clear plan of work, not knowing what the end result was going to be, was disconcerting. This was also pertinent to my research. Not having a clear picture of what my dissertation would look like was anxiety-provoking.

Nevertheless, following the pragmatist commitment to research that is informed by practice (Simpson, 2009), I knew I had to let go of the expectation of finding in the literature definitive answers to how to practice CSR. I had to take the proverbial plunge into the uncertainty of researching my own practice, to recognise 'the contradictions and inadequacies of a deceptive certainty' (Elias, 1991: 93). It was not a straightforward nor a quick decision. It arose in many conversations with others and with myself. But reflecting on my practice allowed me to pay greater attention to my participation in the emergence of various patterns of interactions that we came to recognise as 'community engagement' and accepted as CSR. In doing so, I relied on practical, context-specific wisdom, or phronesis:

> Where rational humans for Plato are moved by the cosmic order, for Aristotle they are moved by a sense of a proper order amongst the ends we pursue. This sense cannot be articulated in terms of theoretical axioms , but rather, is grasped by *phronesis* (Flyvbjerg, 2001: 57).

Making everyday decisions about right and wrong in my particularising with others the generalised idea of CSR, we have been relying on our experience and been making decisions about how to behave in local interactions. These decisions cannot be reduced to general truths. Reflecting on my experience, it became clear that there could not be prescriptions or formulae for implementing CSR. Practising CSR involves making decisions about what is ethical in each particular situation. It requires phronesis not just episteme.

In approaching the research of CSR in Ukraine (Chapter 3), my colleagues and I decided not to tell the participants what we meant by CSR, but leave it to them to discuss what they understood as CSR in their organisations (Filosof et al., 2012). The rationale was to allow the meaning of CSR in Ukraine to emerge in the interviews. I was surprised that not even one participant asked what we meant by CSR, what definition we employed. They interpreted the meaning of CSR in their working with others and came up with varying, often surprising to us, practices. Similarly, while I clung to the idea of finding a specific definition of CSR, I kept working with others on community engagement, not dwelling on the need to define CSR, always reinterpreting the general idea of CSR in practice. Particularizing CSR has involved making evaluative choices about what can and cannot be done. In our practice we have been enabled and constrained by our interdependence. It is in this interdependence, in working with others, which involves cooperation and resistance, that we keep on re-interpreting and re-negotiating the meaning of CSR.

Changing the focus

A further contribution of this dissertation to CSR discourse is in its focus. A recent study by Wang and Gao (2016) identified five major current themes in CSR research: defining CSR, CSR context, CSR-related strategy, corporate reputation, and CSR-CFP relationship. In this dissertation I have explained the limitation of focusing on the last two themes. I have also arguing that CSR-related strategy can be added to these two, as this theme focuses on the type of CSR-related strategies that can potentially enhance organisations' performance. I can summarise my critique of this utilitarian approach to CSR, by stating that our interdependence means unpredictability of outcomes and that there might be no direct relationship between CSR and any outcomes, be they reputational, operational or financial.

The aim of this dissertation has been to explore how CSR is understood and implemented by a practitioner. As the research developed I became aware of the futility of searching for a specific

definition of CSR. Rather than trying to define what I have been practising, I focused on aspects of my practice that are usually not discussed in the mainstream CSR literature – daily local interactions that may or may not emerge as CSR.

In my research I have explored a practitioner's perspective on practising CSR. In doing so I identified several aspects of CSR that remain under-theorised (van Aaken et al., 2013) in CSR literature – power relating, struggle, and identity (see Chapter 9). As stated previously, in the mainstream CSR literature the focus tends to be on the exploration of global patterns of interaction, which became recognised as CSR, as a thing that exists outside of the researchers' experience. The writers in this tradition tend to discuss CSR as a set of actions that exist at different levels, e.g. organisational, national or regional, of CSR (see Gond et al., 2017). Several authors pointed to the limited research on the individual practising CSR (see Frynas and Yamahaki, 2016); and even when such research is undertaken, the individual is seen as the level of analysis (e.g. Athanasopoulou and Selsky, 2015, Hengst and Muethel, 2015). Informed by complexity sciences, I understand national, organisational and local CSR not as being conducted at different levels, but as self-similar patterns of interaction arising at different scales and in different contexts.

Reflecting on my own narratives also contributes to research methodologies that focus on the lived experience of the practitioner. In Chapter 3 I alluded to the growing strand of literature in which authors explore their own experience through reflective narratives. These authors tend to reflect on their experience of researching, 'locating the researcher in the research' (du Preez, 2008).

Many management writers (Corlett, 2013, Haynes, 2012, Maclean et al., 2012, Cunliffe and Jun, 2005) recognise the need for reflection and reflexivity in organisational research. Reflection has been gaining momentum as a research method within management studies in recent years (Holton and Grandy, 2016, Stokes and Harris, 2012, Duijn et al., 2010). It has been suggested that by engaging reflexively with one's own practice, the practitioner may develop more meaningful insights into his/her area of expertise (Matsuo, 2012, Haynes, 2006a, 2006b). However, reflective or reflexive narrative accounts of individual practice in management are still rare (Yanow, 2009).

I extend this approach to reflecting on both research and practice. I argue that the two are intertwined, and reflecting on one aspect I inevitably reflect on the other. Reflecting on my

experience of practising CSR in communicative interaction with others, I have highlighted the paradox of how my subjective experience of CSR is formed objectively. Writing from within experience, paying attention to nuances that feel significant and recognising one's own feelings as inseparable from decision-making and acting, has been a method used in the Doctor of Management programme at UH. Other doctoral candidates reflected on their own work (e.g. Hicks, 2010). My work extends the growing body of research, which focuses on reflective narrative, in extending the reflective narrative to a new context.

Changing the focus of research offers an additional contribution to practitioners and researchers. In this dissertation, I have highlighted experiencing a dissonance between highly idealised concepts of CSR (e.g. Chapters 4 and 5), strategy and vision (Chapters 6 and 7), and between my lived experience of practising CSR. In Chapter 8 I allude to the parallels between my research method and CMS approach. Critically reflecting on the disparity between the mainstream literature approach to CSR and my own experience, and problematising and de-naturalising the idealisation of CSR, I have gained and demonstrated a better understanding of the complexity in which idealisations arise. CMS scholars also problematise and challenge idealisations. One criticism of CMS is that its proponents tend to be more articulate about 'what they are against [rather] than what they are for' and provide no 'immediately actionable prescriptions'(Adler et al., 2007: 41). I too critique the heroic narrative of CSR in the mainstream literature, and offer no prescriptions for practice. However, in this dissertation I demonstrate that the alternative to mainstream idealisations is not CMS negativity, but pragmatic reflection on one's own practice.

The dissonance I refer to, initially resulted in heightened anxiety and scepticism. Disparity between the idealised claims and perceived reality may also lead to cynicism (Bussey, 1992, Robinson et al., 1995, Mills and Keil, 2005). I distinguish between scepticism and cynicism. I understand scepticism as avoiding making statements about absolute truths and 'a specific ability to give opposed accounts of things', and cynicism as disbelief in the sincerity of human actions and intentions (Dean et al., 1998). On this understanding, scepticism helps developing critical understanding of CSR, while cynicism contributes to pessimism, disbelief and indiscriminate rejection of the concept, or to branding it as yet another management fad. I recognise that while working on this dissertation my anxiety has diminished. Critically reflecting on my own practice, I remain sceptical, challenging both the literature and my own assumptions and beliefs, without embracing cynical negativity towards the idea of CSR. And

although this work is not an instruction manual for managing CSR, it offers practical to CSR practitioners and researchers.

Taking a practitioner's perspective is a major, but not the only contribution of my research. By changing the focus, I was able to demonstrate the links between local interaction and the global patterns we have come to recognise as CSR. It also contributed to a different understanding of CSR, an understanding that is resonant with CSR practice.

Local and global CSR: similar processes, different scales

A further contribution of my research is in exploring how global patterns we have come to recognise as CSR, arise in local interaction. Changing the focus of research, taking a practitioner's perspective, and being informed by the ideas of complexity, I began recognising the self-similarities between patterns arising in my local interacting with others and global patterns that we understand as CSR.

By discussing CSR in systems terms, many authors refer to 'external pressures' (e.g. Herremans and Nazari, 2016), 'societal pressures' (e.g. Hofman et al., 2017), and 'organisational culture' (e.g. Puplampu and Dashwood, 2011) as if they exist as independent entities, outside of our experience. Although we may experience them as such, they are not external forces, like the forces of nature, but, as we are reminded by Elias (1956), are arising in our interdependence. Understanding CSR as an emerging pattern of interaction, means that exploring daily practice through my narrative accounts may provide insight into how those patterns emerge. Discussing CSR as if being practiced differently at different levels, the researchers focus on the manifestation of what is experienced as national, corporate or organisational behaviours at the time of specific studies, ignoring historical processes in which those patterns of behaviour arise. I am arguing that what has been missing in the CSR literature is the understanding of how those patterns of interaction have emerged as CSR.

In Chapter 4 I began making sense of what can and cannot be considered CSR. A similar consideration regarding what to be included in the SEU is also reflected upon in Chapter 7. I found it difficult to reconcile my daily undertakings with the idea of CSR I had formed based on my readings on the topic. In these chapters I highlight internal conversations with myself regarding the appropriateness of referring to some of those interactions as CSR. These deliberations bear similarity to the tentative discussion in the early literature on what is included

in the CSR concept, in which authors seem to be cautious about the nature of CSR, as demonstrated in Chapter 5.

In Chapter 5 I also criticise the overwhelmingly positive image of CSR that has emerged over time, and in Chapter 8 I object to the quantification of CSR that is being articulated in various forms of reporting. In both chapters I reflect on the processes in which the patterns of CSR idealisation and quantification have been arising. In Chapter 6 I examine my own contribution to the same processes of CSR glorification I was critiquing. Reflecting on my e-mail exchanges with a senior manager regarding reporting on the activity of the SEU (Chapter 8), provided insight into the emergence of CSR reporting. These three chapters raise awareness of how acting locally, often unreflectedly, in the moment, may contribute to sustaining the same global patterns of interaction we so vehemently denounce.

Particularising the generalised idea of CSR is not a heroic endeavour, it is exercised in mundane everyday practices and interactions. This dissertation contributes to CSR discourse by exploring how a social object – CSR – arises locally in ordinary interactions. I draw attention to how many of the activities we initially dismiss as trivial, are post-rationalised as related to CSR. By paying attention to my daily practice, I am able to understand that often giving a title to a social object provides a convenient umbrella term under which previously un-labelled practices can be gathered. I was gathering previously unlabelled activities in my reporting about SEU work, many of which had been enacted prior to its existence (Chapters 6 and 7). I was doing this in classifying some of our daily interactions as part of the 'Green Impact' initiative (Chapter 5). Many others in the UH have also been retrospectively absorbing certain activities under their role's umbrella. Some of those activities have been historically part of their role, but now were given a more catchy title. Ordinary recycling has become part of the Environmental Team. Different activities had been performed by others, yet seemed to fit under several other themes. The SEU has been adopted by both 'Community Engagement' and by 'Centre for Sustainable Living' (Chapter 6). Leena tried to integrate the SEU's engagements with her unit (Chapter 9). My own experience of such retroactive appropriations resonates with the gathering of different, often ancient, practices under a new umbrella of CSR in a different context, i.e. Ukraine (Chapter 3), or on a different scale, i.e. idealisation of CSR (Chapter 5).

Reflecting on the narratives of my interactions with others and with myself, I have demonstrated how practising CSR is a social act, always involving others (Mead, 1934). In this dissertation I have argued that understanding of CSR as a social object – generalised tendencies to act in

similar ways in similar situations (Stacey and Mowles, 2016) – is more congruent with my experience of practising CSR. This is another key contribution of my research.

Implications for social understanding of CSR

Understanding corporate social responsibility as patterns of interaction, rather than a 'thing' that is independent of our interaction, means that searching for an ultimate definition of CSR is counterproductive. The expectation of arriving at such a definition assumes an identical understanding of the concept by everyone addressing it. A social understanding of CSR, on the other hand, allows for diversity of approaches and interpretations, for novelty and continual evolution. This profoundly social understanding evolved over several years of thinking about and practising CSR. Recognising that the three aspects of social interaction – communication (or conversation of gestures (Mead, 1934)), power relations and ethics (Stacey and Mowles, 2016) – are inseparable features of CSR, helped me make better sense of my practice.

Practising CSR involves power relations, as no human interaction is devoid of power. We engage with each other in a way that also entails emotions and changing perceptions of the past and expectations of the future. Patterns of interactions that I came to understand as CSR are stable and changing at the same time. They are stable because there is a general understanding of what CSR means – commonly recognised as responsibilities of organisations to society (Dillard and Murray, 2013) – and changing , because that understanding is general, and we always interpret the idea in the living present (Loewen Walker, 2014). As we keep reinterpreting and particularising in daily interactions the generalised idea of CSR, power chances of the players continually shift.

Reflecting on my CSR practice also means paying attention to how I have dealt with uncertainty. Although the understanding that the future is unknowable is trite, the mainstream management theory emphasises the importance of managers being able to foresee the future and to control it (e.g. Grote, 2009). Paying more than lip service to uncertainty and unpredictability, bringing them to the fore of our thinking about working in organisations in general, and practising CSR specifically, has several implications for understanding corporate social responsibility.

Firstly, this understanding challenges the idea that we can somehow predict the outcome of our actions. CSR cannot be perceived as purely consequentialist ethical choices – as we cannot know the consequences of our behaviour *a priori*. Nor can CSR be understood in deontological

ethics terms, as ethics is not static, but continuously evolving in our interactions. As a social object, CSR has to be reinterpreted and re-evaluated in our daily interactions. Not being able to foresee the outcomes of our actions, means attributing the CSR meaning to an interaction retrospectively. This retrospective appropriation of (what is seen as positive) outcomes as something recognised by those in authority, is also closely related to our identity. By thinking about unpredictability and uncertainty as an inevitable feature of human interdependence, I demonstrate the impact the struggle for identity has on the post-factum ascribing of certain behaviours as CSR. My identity has become intertwined with my role, and the more community engagement becomes acknowledged, the more recognised I feel. Recognition of one's contributions also means separating the recognised from the unrecognised – one can only be recognised because others are not. Being interdependent with others means acting into uncertainty, and inevitably a struggle for recognition arises.

Secondly, a social understanding of CSR challenges the idea that CSR actions can be directly linked to specific outcomes. For example, understanding CSR as subject to effective causality leads to the search for direct links between CSR and CFP (see Cheng et al., 2014, Godfrey et al., 2009, Margolis et al., 2007). Drawing on complexity sciences, I have gained some insights into why research into CSR-CFP links, based on Newtonian scientific principles, is inconclusive (Orlitzky et al., 2003). This line of enquiry leaves practitioners to sift through contradictory conclusions, recommendations and practical implications resulting from such research. A complexity-informed approach emphasises the limits of thinking about CSR in terms of actions that can be analysed and predicted. There is no direct relationship between cause and effect; past and current patterns of relationships will not necessarily be replicated in the future; and any action, however insignificant it may seem, has the potential for being amplified and leading to unintended consequences, desirable or otherwise. So a CSR practitioner seeking to implement 'best practice' based on previous experience or the experience of others is likely to be disappointed. It is impossible to isolate one variable (e.g. number of individuals involved in a social project) and calculate its effect on the performance (e.g. community engagement) of the organisation. It is also impossible to replicate a successful strategy, nor will a strategy that failed once necessarily always fail. This is not to say that planning is unnecessary. The process of planning has its purposes, but with the principles of complexity in mind, the limited value of plans and forecasts as blueprints for the future is recognised. 'Acting as if the world is measurable, controllable and predictable does not make it so' (Boulton, 2012). Complexity thinking emphasises the importance of a practitioner paying

attention to context, and exercising practical judgement. Despite the difficulty of planning and the unpredictability, CSR remains important, as referring to this broad concept, to this social object, provides a starting point for discussion on how we can go on working together, keeping our responsibilities to each other and to our environment in mind.

Recognising practitioner's experience

In my research I avoid prescriptions, concentrating instead on making sense of my practice. Throughout this dissertation I have expressed my frustration with not recognising my experience in the dominant CSR discourse. Reflecting on the narratives of my experience highlights the limitations of prescriptive approaches to practising CSR (e.g. Martinuzzi and Krumay, 2013, Yuan et al., 2011). Providing a narrative exploration of my own practice, describing CSR as I have experienced it, is a further contribution of this research and which would be of particular interest to CSR practitioners. It is likely that there are other practitioners, who, like me, cannot identify with the neatly presented accounts of CSR in the orthodox literature, nor do they find the linear, formulaic prescriptions for CSR implementation useful. I suggest that a complexity-informed understanding of CSR provides those practitioners with a reflection that is more congruent with their practice.

There is great satisfaction in looking back and recognising the contribution we make to the community (Anik et al., 2009, Valentine and Fleischman, 2008). The enthusiasm about such work is palpable during conferences dedicated to practising responsibility (e.g. PRME, Enactus). Working on community engagement is rewarding, and I have experienced immense fulfilment taking part in many projects. I feel privileged to be able to have 'community engagement' as part of my job description. Yet, there are many aspects of practising CSR that are often obscured from public discourse. In paying attention to the daily interactions that constitute community engagement, I have demonstrated the nuances of the work that are usually missing from the final reports.

I also felt discouraged when things did not go to plan. The sense of exasperation was amplified by the orderly accounts of how better results could have been achieved had I only followed the necessary steps (e.g. Bakić et al., 2015). Were some initiatives disregarded because I missed one of the main ingredients for 'implementing CSR' (Ehasz and Lan, 2011)? As discussed in Chapter 2 these CSR implementation frameworks are based in systems thinking. Rejecting the understanding of CSR as a system that can be designed and implemented by managers, who act

as external programmers of the bigger system – an organisation – had a therapeutic effect on me. There was no system that was victimising me, I was part of the ongoing processes of interaction, impacting and being impacted at the same time. This changing understanding also significantly affected my practice. For example, throughout this dissertation I demonstrated how my critique of the dominant CSR discourse and my sustaining of it emerged at the same time. Only by recognising my contribution to these processes was I able to attempt to participate differently.

Exploring interdependence and the emergence of CSR meant understanding that my actions have consequences, and at the same time, neither I nor any one individually can control those consequences. What arises in our working together is at times intended and at times unintended. But the consequences are inevitably unpredictable, because they arise in complex webs of interactions. Thinking reflexively about practising CSR has had a significant impact on my thinking and practice. I believe that reading my reflections, others will recognise familiar themes from their experience.

Prior to becoming director of the SEU, I assumed that practising CSR would involve promoting practices that would be welcomed and well received by my colleagues. I assumed consensus, a shared understanding of the importance of our involvement with the community. In iterating my narratives, I reflected on CSR practice as an experience fraught with challenges, struggle and conflict.

In this dissertation I explored how a predominantly positive image of CSR presented in the academic and trade literature had left me discouraged, deflated and unable to perceive my practice as 'appropriate' CSR. This positive representation of CSR was one of the main reasons for being upset with uncooperative colleagues and managers. Having one's work openly and covertly challenged always negates the greater sense of self. It was especially difficult to understand why a noble idea would be received with a cold shoulder. Reflecting on my practice, I have come to understand that interpreting what is it that we are supposed to do together has the potential for cooperation and conflict at the same time. Understanding conflict as potential in any interaction, demystifies CSR. I no longer understand corporate social responsibility as a special type of interaction that only has potential for positive communicative interaction, and I am not surprised by the need to fight to keep conversations about community engagement going on. No longer thinking of CSR as a topic that should unify colleagues, understanding that

particularising even the most enlightened idea can potentially involve struggle, has helped me facing disagreement.

Practising CSR is often lonely, frustrating, and discouraging. CSR is usually not the core organisational purpose, and therefore is often not perceived as a 'strategic' issue. My experience is not singular; I hear about similar feelings from my colleagues at conferences and workshops; and it is even beginning to be explored by researchers (e.g. Louw, 2015). By bringing this aspect of CSR practice to the fore, I aim to provide CSR practitioners, especially those in the UK Higher Education, with a narrative in which they may recognise the themes that arise in their experiences. The details of my experience are not generalisable, but the emerging themes would be familiar, albeit with different intensity. I hope that my making sense of my experience, which involves doubts and struggles, my evolving identity and changing understanding, will help others make sense of theirs.

Summary

My interest in researching CSR stemmed from the need to expand an understanding of what it means to practise CSR. Throughout this dissertation I have been reflecting on my experience of CSR, and in doing so I have provided an understanding of what it means to practice CSR in the context of a UK HEI. I have not provided a decisive definition of CSR, as I recognise that CSR can be better understood as practice, evolving in numerous interactions of many interdependent players, rather than as a thing, defined in static terms. Reflecting on my own practice I have gained insights which contribute further to CSR discourse. In this chapter I reflected on the main contributions of my work.

Firstly, my research demonstrates how the meaning of CSR arises in practising CSR. This insight provides a significantly different perspective from the prevailing systems-based understanding of CSR found in the traditional CSR literature.

Secondly, changing the focus of research to examining my experience as a practitioner, I addressed a nascent area in the CSR literature. Although many authors argue for the need to research the personal experience of a CSR practitioner, this perspective remains underdeveloped.

This dissertation contributes to another strand of literature – research methodology. Similar to the calls for researching individual experience in CSR literature, the appeals for more reflexive approaches to management research, are not widely answered. Reflecting on narratives of my own practice, I have demonstrated how our objective experience of the world is formed subjectively, thus contributing to disposing with the subjective-objective dichotomy in management research.

A further contribution is of particular value to CSR practitioners. I have demonstrated that the understanding of CSR as emerging in our practice with others, which involves collaboration and conflict, power relations, and ethical choices, is more congruent with the experience of CSR practitioners, than what is currently presented in the dominant CSR discourse.

Finally, this research has a noticeable impact on my practice. In addition to the difference in engaging with others in my role as director of the SEU, which have been discussed throughout the dissertation, I am aware of the difference that researching has made on my teaching and other roles. I have gained the confidence to insist, at times against the advice of my colleagues,

on students including reflexive engagement with their own experience on the modules I lead. I have seen the difference in students' engagement with these modules and with their practice. I am especially gratified to have been able to articulate the importance of this engagement and to persuade more sceptical audiences of its value. A reflective approach has been recognised as one of three core principles of our MBA (HBS, 2017). I have been invited as a speaker to UG and PG student events to introduce reflection and reflexivity. Reflexivity does not provide an answer to all problems we encounter while interacting with others. For me, it is the recognition that the 'otherness' of those with whom we interact, that has the potential for new ways of working as well as for conflict. Engaging with my practice reflexively, I recognise that working with others I am inevitably enabled and constrained at the same time. This has been brought sharply into focus lately, with several new senior managers joining HBS. Reflecting on the initial sense of helplessness when facing the new edicts and seemingly arbitrary decisions, I have gradually become aware of the power relations in which we are entangled. And power relations are reciprocal. van Krieken (1998: 61) expounds on implications of the Eliasian idea of power relations:

> within [a] network of relations binding the more and the less powerful to each other, apparently less powerful groups also exercise a 'boomerang effect' back on those with greater power-chances.

This does not mean that in the current situation we are able to refuse to cooperate with the managers, because of the current type of figuration. However, I suggest that no manager has unrestricted power over our work. No one is omnipotent, and no one is totally powerless.

Reflecting on my experience has been therapeutic. The students often write about a similar effect of reflecting on their experience. I do not suggest everyone should reflect to improve his or hers emotional wellbeing. As I already mentioned, I prefer not to engage in prescriptions. Instead, I mention this because we often take actions aimed at reducing uncertainty-associated anxieties, e.g. planning, forecasting, relying on the past as a predictor for the future. For me, working on this dissertation has been anxiety-reducing, because by paying attention to my participation in present interactions, I have abandoned the need to predict the future, while inevitably working with an awareness of it.

Final thoughts

Writing today about the events that took place throughout the years of working on my PhD, many of the then unknowns are better known now. Also, what seemed certain in the past has become unknown. I cannot avoid projecting these later understandings and the expectations from the future onto my writing about the past. This is the nature of the living present. The present is not a point in time separating past from future. Thinking today about the events of the past, I am inevitably influenced by my expectations of the future, and other experiences, past and present. At the same time, my expectations of the future are inevitably influenced by my current interpretations of the past events. The way we experience events cannot be clearly demarcated into past present and future. Whatever we experience in the present will always be affected and at the same time affect our understanding of the past and the future.

My PhD group members often commented on the pessimistic tone of my writing. I did not intend this dissertation to be gloomy. I have reflected on experiences that initially drew my attention, stood out for me, made me want to understand them. I identify with David Sedaris (Sedaris, 2017), who recalls a conversation with his brother

> 'Why do you choose to remember the negative rather than the positive?'
>
> 'I don't. Honestly though, does choice even come into it? Is it my fault that the good times fade to nothing while bad burn forever bright?
>
> 'Memory aside, the negative just makes for a better story. Happiness is harder to put into words. It's also harder to source, much more mysterious than anger or sorrow, which come to me whenever I summon them, and remain long after I've begged them to leave'.

There is no way to finish this dissertation on a definitive note. The SEU, PRME implementation, my identity, and CSR at UH kept evolving after I put the proverbial pen down. For example, the admin support to the SEU has been cut, which made me question my place at HBS for the first time since I started working here. Maybe my role as director of the SEU in its current form is under threat. By the time you read this dissertation, there will be some answers to these questions and others will arise. The more unexpected future events are, the more interesting the conversation will be, when they are the future past. For now, in the words of Jonathan Tropper 'This is where I leave you.'

Appendix 1

Limitations of understanding organisations as complex adaptive systems

Some organisational writers (e.g. Fleming and Sorenson, 2001, Webb et al., 2006, Haynes, 2015, Scott and Davis, 2015, Miller and Page, 2007, Byrne and Callaghan, 2014) claim that organisations are complex adaptive systems. This idea is rooted in systems thinking whose origins are in Kantian logic that sees organisms in nature 'as if' systems with formative causality. Formative or efficient causality means that the process of interaction between sub-systems leads to unfolding the purpose of the system that is already enfolded in it. The autonomous rational individual was to be understood as subject to a different type of causality - rationalist causality. Because of human capacity for reason an individual is free to pursue her own rationally chosen course of actions, so there is no enfolded end in human interaction. Kant argued that formative causality cannot be applied to human beings. However, systems thinking, as developed in the mid-20th century, applied formative causality to human action (Stacey et al., 2000), disregarding Kant's caveat.

Perceiving organisations as CAS suggests that the organisation exists independently, as a whole, outside of human interaction (Griffin, 2002). Proponents of complex responsive processes argue that organisations are not things, living or otherwise, but are 'processes of communications and joint action' (Stacey and Mowles, 2016: 283). As such, human organisations are not systems, and there are limits to assuming the behaviour of computer based models can be attributed directly to human interaction (Dalal, 2002, cf Griffin, 2002, Shaw, 2002, Stacey, 2003, Larsen, 2005, Mowles, 2011, Stacey and Mowles, 2016). The authors warn against 'transparently transfer[ring]' (Webb et al., 2005: 4) insights from complex adaptive systems to organisations.

The first difficulty in understanding human interaction in terms of CAS is the question of system boundary. All systems have an 'inside' and an 'outside'. Advocates of perceiving human organisations as CAS suggest that organisations are special type of systems - open systems with permeable boundaries allowing free flow of information between the system and its environment (Schneider and Somers, 2006, Ludu, 2016). The separation between inside – the organisation, and outside – the environment still exists. This suggests it is possible to engage with the organisation by transferring information into it, yet remain on the outside of it. It also suggests that information is independent of human interaction, as if it is a physical object that

can be moved from one place to another. On this understanding an organisation is a super-entity that is above people. Yet we are never 'outside' of some organisations or 'inside' others. 'Belonging' to an organisation, formal or informal, means participating in ongoing conversations in which patterns of behaviour that define those organisations emerge. There is no programmer that can stand 'outside' the interaction without being affected by it. People cannot be perceived as agents in the system and as its programmers at the same time.

Another limitation in directly taking up insights from complexity sciences in terms of human interaction is the question of simple rules, or programme which operates the CAS. There is no external programmer in human interaction. While in computer-based simulations coherent patterns of behaviour emerge in interdependence of initially programmed agents, there is no similar initial programming in human interactions, there is no deliberate outside intervention that 'programs' detailed rules of human interaction. Later in this chapter I will discuss influences on human behaviour, norms and values that act similarly to rules. At this point I draw attention to the fact that people have the ability to choose their responses (although their choices are constrained by others, and therefore limited) to gestures of others. An agent can only interact with other agents according to the pre-programmed instructions; unlike humans, bit-strings of code have no free will[28]. While natural phenomena's or computer simulations' 'behaviour' is adaptive, human behaviour is also purposeful. We are capable of being aware of our actions and of assessing the consequence of those actions (being capable of self-awareness does not necessarily mean that we always exercise that capability. I recognise that many aspects of our going about in the world remain unreflected),

Reflecting on the narrative I recognise that by removing a specific recommendation from the report, I silently contributed to what was going on behind the scenes of a seemingly open market. I assume that I was not the only one who suspected that what was going on was wrong, but for many practical reasons no-one reported it to the authorities. There was no pre-determined plan that directed each participant to take up a specific role. It was the interactions of many people, with various motivations, some by actively making agreements, others by silently condoning them, that enabled the cartel to go on. Interacting with each other, we played into and contributed to sustaining this pattern of behaviour. There was no blueprint that dictated this. My not blowing the whistle was a choice, not a directive. I am not proud of the choice I made, and at the time I did not reflect on the morality of that decision. The consequences of

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[28] By free will I mean ability to make decisions regarding one's own actions.

acting differently were too dire. What is important to consider is that the choices I made were not made independently of others. My behaviour was consistent with the accepted behaviour in that organisation, and other organisations in that industry. This pattern of interaction was possible not because of the deliberate plan. It was only sustained and iterated because we kept playing into it.

Appendix 2 – Self-similarity and Scaling

In complexity sciences self-similarity and scaling refer to properties of the system (Holland, 2014). The exact self-similarity exists in mathematics. One example is Koch's snowflake curve in which 'the curve is constructed by repeated use of the same construction' (Holland, 2014: 14). Starting with an equilateral triangle, and applying a set of simple rules:

1. Divide each side into three equal parts.
2. Construct an equilateral triangle on each of the middle parts.
3. Erase all interior lines.
4. Repeat for each of the new straight line segment

we arrive at a complex geometrical figure (Figure 4).
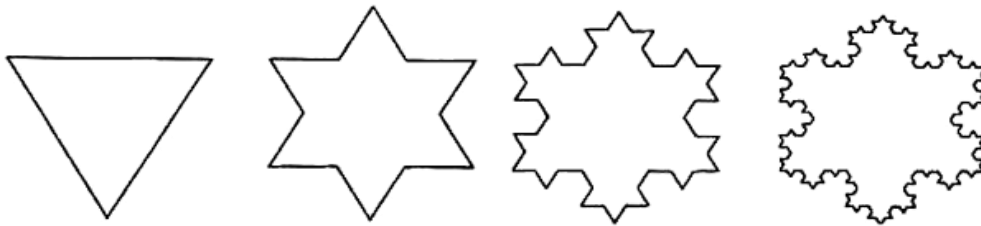
Figure 4. First four iterations of Koch's snowflake curve (Ventrella, 2012)

Regardless of scale, shape of the curve will bear exact self-similarity to the overall curve as well as to any other fragment of it (Figure 5).
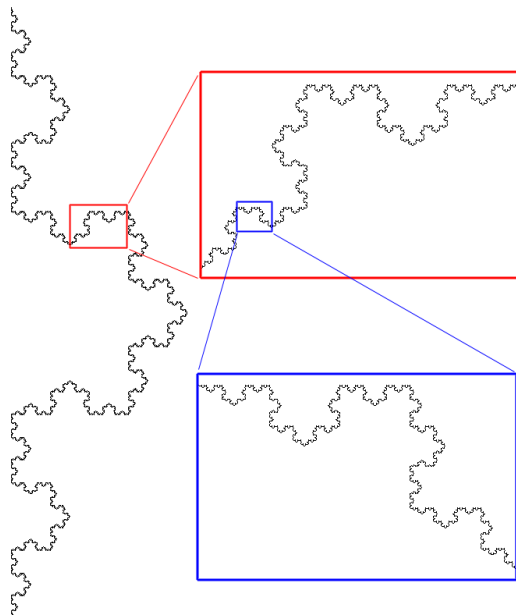
Figure 5. Koch's snowflake curve (Source: Bourke, 2007)

However exact similarity is not found in complex physical systems, such as coastlines, tree branching or Romanesco cauliflower, where we observe approximate self-similarity. It simply means that if we examine closely (e.g. through a magnifying glass) a small fragment of, let's say a natural snowflake's outline, it will look similar to its overall outline. Bourke (2007) in discussing the following picture, asks 'is it on the scale of a large piece of rugged terrain photographed from an aeroplane, or the side of a mountain, or a patch of dirt on the scale of a few meters, or a magnification of the surface of a rough rock?'

He notes that we can conceive it to be any of the above. 'So one could start at the large scale view from the air and apply successive zooms down to a microscopic scale, the surface maintains self-similarity across those scales' (ibid). While exact self-similarity is indefinite, natural self-similarity occurs only at a few scales.

Appendix 3 - Abstract for 5ᵗʰ International Conference on Global Studies (2012)

 CSR in Ukraine: cynical utilitarianism or Aristotelian 'common good'?

Short:

This paper presents results of a study of CSR in Ukraine. We demonstrate that two divergent approaches to CSR are distinct in their motivations, but share similar CSR practices.

Long:

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has been researched extensively in Western Europe (Steurer and Konrad, 2009), and to some extent in Central and Eastern Europe (e.g. Furrer et al., 2010). Empirical research in the former USSR, however, has been limited. This paper aims to address this deficiency, presenting the results of a study of CSR drivers in Ukraine. We conducted 18 semi-structured interviews with managers, NGO representatives and academics in Ukraine. Our preliminary findings suggest that CSR adopters in Ukraine tend to fall into two main categories. Following Garriga and Melé's (2004) typology, we discern a group that takes a predominantly utilitarian approach to defining its social obligations, adopting CSR practices in response to actual and perceived external demands. Such organisations tend to be newer (post-USSR era) companies, and/or those whose clients and investors are located mainly abroad. The second type consists of more locally embedded concerns, whose owners and managers adopt a predominately normative approach to CSR, adhering to practices that originated in the Soviet period, whilst striving for economic viability in a new era of market orientation. Our study casts light on the divergent paths taken by organizations in a distinctive transitional setting in order to gain social and economic legitimacy.

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Appendix 4 – Expression of interest statement for the role of Director of the SEU

Role: Director, Social Enterprise Unit

Applicant: Jana Filosof

I was raised in the spirit of giving back to the community. As a child in the former Soviet Union my friends and I collected unwanted paper products and scrap metal long before the word 'recycling' became popular. We enjoyed planting trees as river defences in the spring and performing in front of the soldiers stationed in our town. My parents volunteered in our kindergarten and school, contributing their skills and time, and providing a citizenship example for my sister and me. My mother, at the age of 75, still heads the Finance Committee of the local chapter of the Holocaust Survivors Association. Altruism, charitable work and giving are a great part of my religious and cultural background. I was brought up with a strong ethos of personal contribution as an integral part of good citizenship. I raise my children to uphold those principles. Giving back to the society is not what I do; it is a part of who I am. Therefore, I see the prospect of setting up and developing a Social Enterprise Unit as a great opportunity to combine my individual interest and skills with the vast pool of skills and knowledge existing within the Business School. I envisage this Unit contributing not only to the charity sector, but to the experience of our students, to the community, and creating synergies that will enable us, the UHBS staff, to give back to the society more than any of us, as individuals, can ever hope to.

What else I can bring to the role:

Proven record of working with and for charities and other community projects

- Community Governor for PraeWood School in St.Albans; member of the Teaching and Learning committee
- Volunteering in the 2 local village schools, as a parent helper (Shenley Primary) and as a Hebrew teaching assistant and as an assistant to a Finance Officer (Clore Shalom)
- Long term supporter of Cancer Research UK – organising a jewellery sale, providing an exposure for a local artist, who donated part of the profit to the charity; raising awareness and funds through participating with my daughters in the Race for Life;
- Supporter and fund raiser for Norwood (supporting families) and Life (supporting children with cancer) charities
- Working with Organisation for Responsible Business – assisting the ORB with creating awareness and promoting Socially Responsible activities in the SMEs.
- Bidding for the Community Engagement Funds (Dean of Students' office)
- Taking part in establishing and developing CSR@UH

Research interest in the relevant area

- Working towards PhD in Corporate Social Responsibility
- Teaching Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility on UG and PG level both in the UH and partner institutions (Helsinki)
- Supervising several dissertations on the Strategic Issues for Charities

Leadership skills

- Team building
- Development of individuals
- Task and result oriented

Personal skills

- Creativity
- Communication
- Self- motivation
- Team work
- Networking skills
- Organisation and prioritising skills
- Commitment to Personal and Professional Development (PAD 3, Core Skills for Leaders, Coaching and Mentoring Forum) and life-long learning

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