# Corporate Social Responsibility and Marketing: An Integrative Framework

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*This article introduces a conceptualization of corporate social responsibility (CSR) that emphasizes the role and potential contribution of the marketing discipline. The proposed framework first depicts CSR initiatives as the actions undertaken to display conformity to both organizational and stakeholder norms. Then, the article discusses the managerial processes needed to monitor, meet, and even exceed, stakeholder norms. Finally, the analysis explains how CSR initiatives can generate increased stakeholder support.*

**Keywords:** *stakeholder theory; corporate social responsibility; market orientation; ethics; community*

The past few years have witnessed the simultaneous development of the antiglobalization movement, of shareholder activism, and of corporate governance reform. This trend has cultivated a climate of defiance toward businesses, a climate that has only been exemplified by recent accounting scandals. Perhaps in response to this growing suspicion, some leading companies have openly profiled themselves as socially responsible. For instance, British Petroleum underlined its commitment to natural environment by changing its name to Beyond Petroleum. Similarly, Nike advertises its commitment to adopting " responsible business practices that contribute to profitable and sustainable growth" (www.nike.com), and Coca-Cola has moved to expense stock options for top management as a part of its commitment to responsible governance.

This enthusiasm for corporate social responsibility (CSR) has been echoed in the marketing literature. In particular, scholars have examined consumer responses to CSR initiatives (e.g., Brown and Dacin 1997; Sen and Bhattacharya 2001), the perceived importance of ethics and social responsibility among marketing practitioners (e.g., Singhapakdi, Vitell, Rallapalli, and Kraft 1996), along with the marketing benefits resulting from corporate actions with a social dimension (e.g., Maignan, Ferrell, and Hult 1999). Studies have also focused on specific dimensions of CSR such as the support of charitable causes (e.g., Barone, Miyazaki, and Taylor 2000) or the protection of the environment (e.g., Drumwright 1994; Menon and Menon 1997). The differentiated terminology and focuses chosen across past studies render difficult their integration into a consistent body of marketing knowledge about CSR. In an attempt to unite this developing body of research, the present article introduces a conceptual framework that provides an encompassing view of CSR along with its antecedents and outcomes. The proposed framework suggests that marketers can contribute to the successful management of CSR by expanding their focus beyond consumers to include other stakeholders and by bundling together various social responsibility initiatives. The proposed framework accounts for the main depictions of CSR found in the literature, which are presented below.

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## STUDY BACKGROUND

### Past Conceptualizations of CSR: A Brief Overview

Since the 1950s, CSR (e.g., Bowen 1953) along with the related notions of corporate social responsiveness, corporate social responses (e.g., Strand 1983), and corporate social performance (e.g., Carroll 1979; Wood 1991), have been the subject of many conceptualizations originating mainly from the management literature. This section outlines the main conceptual viewpoints that emerge out of this profuse literature.

*CSR as social obligation.* This first perspective was launched by Bowen (1953), who defined CSR as the obligation "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" (p. 6). The view of CSR as a social obligation has been advocated in later conceptualizations (e.g., Carroll 1979) and contemporary marketing studies (e.g., Brown and Dacin 1997; Sen and Bhattacharya 2001). As emphasized by Carroll (1979), different types of social obligations can be distinguished: (a) economic obligations (be productive and economically viable), (b) legal and ethical obligations (follow the law and acknowledged values and norms), and (c) philanthropic obligations (proactively give back to society).

*CSR as stakeholder obligation.* Starting in the mid-1990s, a number of scholars have contended that the notion of social obligation is too broad to facilitate the effective management of CSR. In particular, as stated by Clarkson (1995), society is at "a level of analysis that is both more inclusive, more ambiguous and further the ladder of abstraction than a corporation itself" (p. 102). Clarkson (1995) and other scholars (e.g., Donaldson and Preston 1995; Jones 1995; Wood and Jones 1995) argue that businesses are not responsible toward society as a whole but only toward those who directly or indirectly affect or are affected by the firm's activities. These different actors are called *stakeholders* and can be regrouped in four main categories (Henriques and Sadorsky 1999): (a) organizational (e.g., employees, customers, shareholders, suppliers), (b) community (e.g., local residents, special interest groups), (c) regulatory (e.g., municipalities, regulatory systems), and (d) media stakeholders.

*CSR as ethics driven.* The views of CSR as either a social or a stakeholder obligation imply that CSR practices are motivated by self-interest: they enable businesses to gain legitimacy among their constituents. Swanson (1995) regrets that such approaches fail to account for a "positive commitment to society that disregards self-interest and consequences" (p. 48). In addition, the view of CSR as an obligation fails to provide normative criteria to evaluate the extent to which actual business practices can or cannot be considered as socially responsible (Jones 1995). With philanthropic donations or employee-friendly policies, a firm may just conform to social norms; yet, these initiatives may also be "a paternalistic expression of corporate power" (Swanson 1995:50). Based on these criticisms, some scholars advocate an ethics-driven view of CSR that asserts the rightness or wrongness of specific corporate activities independently of any social or stakeholder obligation (e.g., Donaldson and Preston 1995; Swanson 1995). For example, following justice-based ethics, a company could attempt to systematically favor decisions and procedures that stimulate equality, liberty, and fairness of opportunity for its various partners and associates.

*CSR as managerial processes.* The three perspectives introduced thus far essentially characterize the factors inducing businesses to commit to CSR. In contrast, a number of authors have depicted CSR in terms of concrete organizational processes often analyzed under the label of corporate social responsiveness. For example, Ackerman (1975) outlined three main activities representative of corporate social responsiveness: (a) monitoring and assessing environmental conditions, (b) attending to stakeholder demands, and (c) designing plans and policies aimed at enhancing the firm's positive impacts. Similarly, Wartick and Cochran (1985), along with Wood (1991), suggested that issues management and environmental assessment constitute two sets of managerial processes useful to achieve a proactive social responsibility stance.

Given the variety of the viewpoints outlined above, it is evident that no single conceptualization of CSR has dominated past research. The comparison and integration of past definitions is especially difficult because scholars have considered the social responsibilities of different conceptual entities, including (a) businesses in general, (b) the individual firm, and (c) the decision maker (Wood 1991). In addition, while some researchers have examined CSR from a normative standpoint (with a concern for the duties of businesses in general toward society as a whole), others have favored a more managerial approach (how can an individual firm successfully manage CSR?) or an instrumental perspective (how can CSR generate organizational benefits?).

### CSR in the Marketing Literature

Within the marketing literature, much fragmentation can be observed in terms of the unit of analysis considered and the dimensions of social responsibility investigated. When marketing scholars started expressing concern for corporate social responsibilities in the 1960s and 1970s, they focused on the social duties attached to the marketing function and not on the overall social role of the firm (e.g.,

Kotler and Levy 1969; Lazer 1969). As a result, the field of social marketing has emerged and has specialized in the contribution of marketing activities to socially desirable behaviors and goals (Andreasen 1994). Similarly, the marketing literature has developed much knowledge on the ethical perceptions, reasoning, and decision-making process of marketing managers (e.g., Blodgett, Lu, Rose, and Vitell 2001; Ferrell and Gresham 1985; Goolsby and Hunt 1992) and has allocated little attention to the ethical responsibilities of the firm as a whole. Overall, past studies have rarely considered how marketing thinking and practices can contribute to the development of socially responsible practices throughout the organization.

In addition, when marketing scholars investigate CSR, they have a tendency to focus on very limited dimensions of this construct. For example, marketing has developed expertise on cause-related marketing (e.g., Barone et al. 2000) and environmental marketing (e.g., Drumwright 1994; Menon and Menon 1997) but has established little connection between these two research areas. When marketing scholars have examined consumers' responses to CSR (e.g., Brown and Dacin 1997; Handelman and Arnold 1999; Sen and Bhattacharya 2001), they have relied on simplified indicators of CSR and have considered only limited dimensions of this construct. This fragmented view is certainly linked to the scarcity of comprehensive conceptual frameworks originating from the marketing discipline.

In sharp contrast with the abundant management literature, theoretical investigations of CSR in marketing have been scarce (for an exception see Robin and Reidenbach 1987) and focused on limited dimensions of CSR such as environmental marketing (e.g., Menon and Menon 1997) or cause-related marketing (Varadarajan and Menon 1988). As a result, past studies have not yielded an encompassing view of CSR that enables the coordination of various social responsibility initiatives. It is noteworthy that marketing scholars have focused on corporate responsibilities toward two main groups of stakeholders: customers and channel members. As suggested by management scholars themselves (Griffin 2000; McWilliams and Siegel 2001), this knowledge can certainly help understand the nature of responsible corporate behaviors toward other stakeholders.

Building on this suggestion, the discussion below introduces a conceptualization of CSR that emphasizes the potential contribution of marketing expertise to the study of CSR. This conceptualization establishes bridges between different silos of knowledge that have emerged in the management and marketing literature, respectively. In particular, the conceptualization considers (a) different types of social responsibility initiatives (e.g., environmental practices, support of charities, ethics management); (b) various stakeholder groups; and (c) the normative, managerial, and instrumental dimensions of CSR. In accordance with contemporary descriptions of CSR (e.g., Maignan and Ralston 2002; McWilliams and Siegel 2001), we embed our conceptualization within the stakeholder view of the firm.

## A STAKEHOLDER VIEW OF CSR

### Depicting the Firm

According to stakeholder theory, the firm can be viewed as a nexus of actors—or stakeholders—who are motivated to participate in organizational activities by various and sometimes incongruent interests (Donaldson and Preston 1995). Some of these stakeholders (e.g., employees, managers) are involved directly in coordinating and performing productive activities. Some other stakeholders (e.g., investors, strategic partners) provide only indirect or partial support for organizational activities. A third type of stakeholders operates at the boundaries of the abstract entity that makes up the firm and includes a variety of actors who encounter the organization for a variety of reasons. These other stakeholders include customers, regulators, pressure groups, and local residents. Overall, stakeholder theory describes a business as an open and flexible system made up of diverse actors and active in a network of relationships with various other actors.

### Depicting CSR

Stakeholder theory posits that the behavior of an organization can be understood and predicted based on (a) the nature of its diverse stakeholders, (b) the norms defining right or wrong adopted by these stakeholders, and (c) stakeholders' relative influence on organizational decisions. These premises have received empirical support (Agle, Mitchell, and Sonnenfeld 1999; Berman, Wicks, Kotha, and Jones 1999) and are motivated by two main justifications. The first one is instrumental: since the organization depends on stakeholders for the supply of needed resources, it has to gain their continued support, for example, by conforming to their norms defining appropriate behavior. The second justification is moral: as advocated by Donaldson and Preston (1995), "*All* persons or groups with legitimate interests participating in an enterprise do so to obtain benefits and [ . . . ] there is no prima facie priority of one set of interests or benefits over another" (p. 68). The stakeholder perspective implies that a business acts in a socially responsible manner when its decisions and actions account for, and balance, diverse stakeholder interests. Subsequently, we suggest that *CSR designates the duty (motivated by both instrumental and moral arguments) to meet or exceed stakeholder norms dictating desirable organizational behaviors.*

### Depicting the Role of Managers

Managers are in a unique position: they are both a stakeholder group and in charge of coordinating organizational relationships with all other stakeholders. Scholars have identified two main roles played by managers. The first one consists of safeguarding the welfare of the abstract entity that is the corporation, which requires the balancing of conflicting stakeholder claims (Hill and Jones 1992). The second role is mainly moral: "Managers *should* acknowledge the validity of diverse stakeholder interests and *should* attempt to respond to them within a mutually supportive framework" (Donaldson and Preston 1995:87). However, the capacity of managers to enact these two assigned roles successfully is likely to be compromised by their propensity to practice opportunism and self-aggrandizing behavior (Williamson 1985). Like all other stakeholders, managers hold, and are likely to advocate, their own specific norms defining what is responsible or irresponsible business behavior. The only barrier to managers' self-serving tendencies is the board of directors that is responsible for the oversight of all corporate decisions.

On the basis of this description of the firm and its managers, we argue that *organizations act in a socially responsible manner when they align their behaviors with the norms and demands embraced by their main stakeholders* (including their managers). The conceptual framework we propose investigates the factors conducive to socially responsible corporate behaviors (see Figure 1). This framework is meaningful at the level of the strategic business unit: the nature of relevant stakeholders and of business activities may vary greatly from one business unit to the next. In a first step, our conceptual framework considers the normative underpinnings of CSR and examines how stakeholder norms emerge and influence corporate behaviors (Propositions 1 to 4 and 7 to 8c in Figure 1). In a second step, adopting a managerial perspective, the framework outlines some organizational practices conducive to socially responsible corporate behaviors (Propositions 5 and 6). Finally, in accordance with the instrumental view of CSR, the framework surveys some of the benefits that may result from socially responsible business behaviors (Propositions 9 to 11c).

## CSR: NORMATIVE UNDERPINNINGS

As previously mentioned, CSR represents the duty to meet or exceed stakeholder norms defining desirable business behaviors. This section explores the nature of stakeholder norms along with the conditions that favor their integration into business practices.

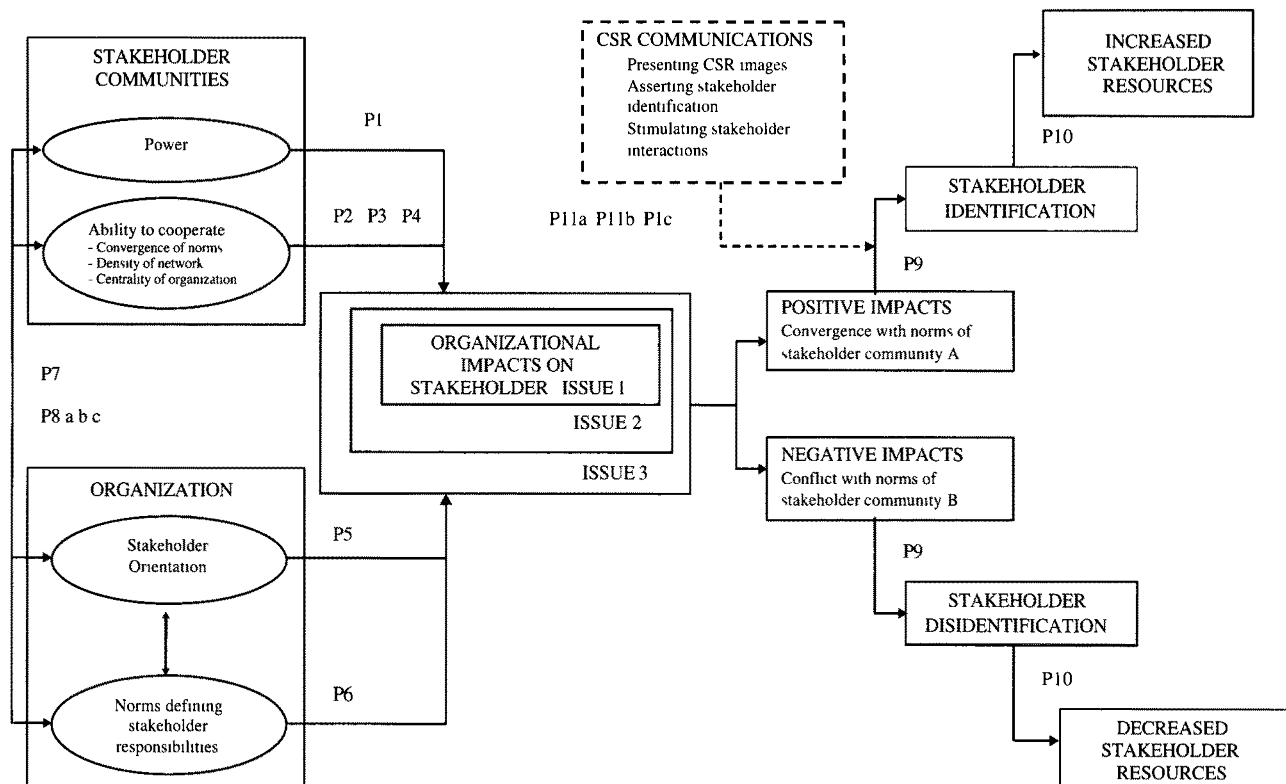
### Stakeholder Norms

We depict stakeholder norms based on integrative social contract theory (ISCT) (Donaldson and Dunfee 1994), a framework previously employed in the marketing literature (e.g., Dunfee, Smith, and Ross 1999) and particularly appropriate to analyze conflicting norms among different groups. ISCT posits the existence of two types of social contracts and associated norms that dictate the nature of appropriate business behaviors. The first is a hypothetical macro social contract among all economic participants. This general contract entails broad norms called *hypernorms* that outline a small set of universal principles defining which behaviors are morally right or wrong (Dunfee et al. 1999). Frederick (1991) identified a series of normative corporate principles that could be regarded as hypernorms based on the analysis of six intergovernmental guidelines (e.g., the "OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises"). One of these principles states that businesses "should adopt adequate health and safety standards for employees and grant them the right to know about job-related health hazards" (Frederick 1991:166).

According to ISCT, this first macro social contract provides the normative ground rules for a second type of implicit contract that occurs among members of specific communities (Donaldson and Dunfee 1994, cf. p. 254). A community is a web of intertwined relationships among a group of individuals, which are based on shared beliefs, history, and identity (Etzioni 2000, cf. pp. 222-223). Strategic business units, professional associations, or nations are examples of communities that are likely to embrace a given set of norms defining appropriate behaviors (Donaldson and Dunfee 1994). These different communities may hold highly diverging norms. Yet, according to ISCT, to be viable, community norms must be in agreement with broad hypernorms (Dunfee et al. 1999).

*Stakeholder communities*. We suggest that individual stakeholders may also be regrouped around communities. Following Etzioni (1996, 2000), a stakeholder community is defined as a group of individual stakeholders who (a) interact with one another and (b) share common norms and goals with respect to a given issue. For example, some investors choose to become members of activist groups such as "Equality Project," a shareholder association battling against gender discrimination in businesses. Active communities can also be found among employees (e.g., the International Textile Garment and Leather Workers' Federation), consumers (e.g., the Council on Size and Weight Discrimination), suppliers (e.g., Aviation Suppliers Association), competitors (e.g., American Apparel and Footwear Association), local residents (e.g., the Nature Funds), and the media (e.g., Television Directors Association). These various groups have established their own

**FIGURE 1**
**Likely Antecedents and Outcomes of Socially Responsible Corporate Behaviors**




NOTE: CSR = corporate social responsibility.

guidelines defining responsible business behaviors on issues such as working conditions, consumer rights, environmental protection, product safety, or proper information disclosure.

*Stakeholder norms.* Therefore, in accordance with ISCT's notion of community norms, we introduce stakeholder norms as the common set of rules and behavioral expectations shared by the majority of the members of a stakeholder community. Noticeably, individual stakeholders may share and abide by common norms even when they are not regrouped in a formal organization. For instance, customers do not need to be members of any specific environmental defense group to show concern for the environmental impact of business activities, to discuss this issue among themselves, and to enact their concerns in their purchasing decisions.

*Organizational norms.* ISCT also views an individual firm as a community embracing its own set of norms. These organizational norms certainly overlap with, are influenced by, and influence, the norms of the stakeholder communities that interact with the firm. In particular, much overlap can be expected between the norms of the organization and those of employees, managers, and founders, respectively. However, given that these three groups may hold conflicting expectations, organizations define their own norms dictating which behaviors are desirable or not. As suggested by the literature on organizational identity (e.g., Whetten and Godfrey 1998), these organizational norms are often a heritage of strong founders (e.g., Milton Hershey, Robert Wood Johnson) and are carefully cultivated by their followers. They are usually formalized in official documents such as mission statements, corporate autobiographies, and codes of conduct.

## Stakeholder Issues

Stakeholders show concern not only for issues that affect their own welfare (e.g., consumers calling for improved product safety) but also for issues that do not affect them directly (e.g., consumers condemning child labor). Accordingly, we define stakeholder issues broadly,

as the corporate activities and effects thereof that are of concern to one or more stakeholder communities. Examples of stakeholder issues include occupational health and safety, the transparency of financial information, and industrial pollution. The evaluation of an organization's impact on these respective issues could include injury and absentee rates, transparency ratings provided by institutional investors, and data on annual waste produced.

We suggest that an organization's commitment to social responsibility can be assessed by scrutinizing its impact on the issues of concern to its stakeholders. As illustrated in Figure 1, this evaluation is issue specific: while a given business may have a positive impact on one stakeholder issue, it may concurrently have a negative impact on another stakeholder issue. For example, while Levi Strauss has been applauded for its leadership in addressing the child labor issue, it has been blamed for its inability to offer job security. The evaluation of an organization's commitment to CSR is all the more difficult because different stakeholder communities favor conflicting norms. One specific corporate decision can both positively affect an issue advocated by one stakeholder community and negatively affect an issue dear to another stakeholder community. For instance, when Disney Inc. extended benefits to employees' gay partners, the company satisfied a major demand of some communities advocating gay rights. However, this decision angered some religious communities who believe that businesses should not support homosexuality. Accordingly, the evaluation of businesses' commitment to CSR is dependent both on the stakeholder issues and the stakeholder communities considered.

### Stakeholder Power as an Antecedent of Corporate Impacts

According to ISCT, diverging community norms may coexist as long as they conform to hypernorms. In addition, given that businesses have their own norms defining appropriate business behaviors, one may wonder why they would worry about stakeholder norms and issues. As indicated by Frooman (1999), along with Jawahar and McLaughlin (2001), resource-dependence theory (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978) suggests an answer to this question. Resource-dependence theory states that "an organization must attend to the demands of those in its environment that provide resources necessary and important for its continued survival" (Pfeffer 1982:193). Each stakeholder community provides material or immaterial resources that are more or less critical to the firm's long-term success (Hill and Jones 1992, cf. p. 133). For example, stockholders can bring in capital; suppliers can give access to material resources or immaterial knowledge; local communities can offer infrastructure and a location; employees and managers can grant expertise, leadership, and loyalty; customers can provide loyalty and positive word of mouth; and the media can help spread positive corporate images.

The ability of stakeholder communities to withdraw needed organizational resources gives them power over the organization. In accordance with the resource-dependence framework, power is defined in relative terms: a stakeholder community has power over a focal organization if the organization is more dependent on the stakeholder community relative to the community's dependence on the organization (Frooman 1999; Pfeffer and Salancik 1978). When corporate impacts on specific issues violate stakeholder norms with respect to these issues, stakeholder communities might make use of their power to bring about changes in corporate behavior. Hill and Jones (1992) outlined three main strategies that are commonly used by stakeholder communities to advocate an issue:

1. With *legalistic approaches*, stakeholders antagonize corporate practices with the letter of the law. For example, on several occasions during the 1990s, minority customers filed lawsuits against Waffle House because they were refused service.
2. With *exit strategies*, stakeholders withhold or threaten to withhold resources if the firm fails to address a specific issue. For instance, Franklin Research (ethical investments fund) has threatened to withdraw its investments from firms that do not include human rights in their corporate ethics practices ("Saints and Sinners" 1995).
3. With *voice strategies*, a stakeholder community attempts to stimulate awareness and action among other powerful stakeholder communities. For instance, environmental defense groups organized protests outside of Staples stores, which allowed them to gain the interest and support of the media, consumer advocates, and the broad customer base of the retailer (Truini 2001).

With such actions, stakeholder communities show that they have the resources to influence corporate activities. As the ability of stakeholder communities to withhold vital organizational resources increases, so does the propensity of the firm to conform to the community norms defining appropriate behaviors. Therefore, businesses can be expected to show diligence to the issues of concern to powerful stakeholder communities in order to ascertain their continued cooperation. The relationship between stakeholder power and responsible corporate behavior is illustrated in Figure 1 and summarized in the following proposition:

*Proposition 1:* The more powerful a stakeholder community, the more positive the impact of the focal organization on the issue(s) of concern to that community.

### Stakeholders' Ability to Cooperate as an Antecedent of Corporate Impacts

Stakeholder communities can use their own power to advocate responsible corporate behaviors. They can also join forces with other stakeholder communities that are able to withhold resources away from the firm. For example, in their fight against Nike's child labor practices in the 1990s, student activists relied on the media to voice their concerns and to earn the crucial support of consumers. Therefore, businesses' likelihood to act on a given stakeholder issue increases when different stakeholder communities can cooperate to advocate that issue. We suggest that stakeholders' ability to cooperate can be evaluated by considering (a) the degree of convergence of stakeholder norms, (b) the density of the network of stakeholders, and (c) the centrality of the organization in the network of stakeholders.

*Convergence of stakeholder norms.* Stakeholder actions against a certain set of corporate behaviors often fail because of conflicting stakeholder norms. For instance, a number of environmental defense groups have advocated stricter standards for pesticides such as those produced by BASF. Nevertheless, their advocacy has remained fruitless mainly because other groups concerned about economic development view enhanced environmental standards as a way to exclude poor countries from substantial markets. As illustrated in this example, the collaboration between stakeholder communities requires normative convergence: these communities must share common norms defining desirable corporate behaviors and impacts. Accordingly, the following proposition is advanced:

> *Proposition 2:* The greater the convergence of norms with respect to an issue across different stakeholder communities, the more positive the impact of the focal organization on this issue.

*Density of the network of stakeholders.* Different stakeholder communities are more likely to collaborate if they can easily access one another, exchange viewpoints, and interact. Rowley (1997) captured this idea with the concept of density of a stakeholder's network. On the basis of network theory (Wasserman and Galaskiewicz 1994), Rowley (1997) defined density as the relative number of ties in a network that link stakeholders together. As the density of the stakeholder network increases, so does the ability of stakeholders to exchange information about corporate impacts and to coordinate actions against socially irresponsible businesses. As a result, the focal business becomes less and less capable of hiding information or denying the relevance of the stakeholder issue(s). The importance of the density of a stakeholder's network can be illustrated with Shell's Brent Spar crisis. While the oil manufacturer was preparing to blast an old rig in the North Sea in 1995, Greenpeace established close ties with a variety of powerful stakeholders including environmental groups, churches, consumers defense groups, political circles, and journalists. The coordinated actions of these different actors led to the widespread criticism of Shell, to consumer boycotts, and to Shell's capitulation (Barbone 1996). This example illustrates the following proposition:

> *Proposition 3:* The greater the density of a network of stakeholder communities concerned about an issue, the more positive the impact of the focal organization on this issue.

*Centrality of the organization.* In contrast, when a business has the means to limit the level of interactions taking place between stakeholders, it is able to hold back or manipulate information about the issue, to antagonize stakeholders' interests, and to avoid addressing the issue. This ability is referred to as centrality by Rowley (1997). Network centrality designates the extent to which an actor has control over other actors' access to various regions of the network. This concept can be illustrated with the example of Qwest Communications International, Inc., a phone company charged with a variety of unethical and illegal practices ranging from the inflation of sales figures to improper accounting (Martin 2002; "Qwest Officials" 2003). Hiding behind a complex set of regulations and technologies, Qwest was able to keep information from its main stakeholders—including customers, regulators, and shareholders—for many years. There is also evidence that top managers have tried to antagonize stakeholders, for example, by suggesting to employees that collaborating with regulators could threaten the firm's survival along with many jobs. Similarly to Qwest, firms holding a central position in a network of stakeholders are able to restrain information flows between stakeholders and can ignore stakeholder issues. The link between network centrality and corporate impacts can be summarized as follows:

> *Proposition 4:* The greater the centrality of the focal organization in a network of stakeholder communities, the less positive the impact of the focal organization on issues of concern to these communities.

### Is Stakeholder Power Necessary to Obtain Positive Organizational Impacts?

The discussion above could imply that businesses will engage in socially responsible behaviors only in the presence of stakeholder power and cooperation. Businesses would then limit their responsibility initiatives to those issues of concern to the most powerful and visible stakeholder communities. This view has some merit especially since managers and employees form stakeholder

communities that actively defend specific norms and issues within the firm. However, the organization's own norms may stimulate a commitment to a specific cause independently of any stakeholder pressure. These organizational norms may also exceed stakeholder norms with respect to particular issues. Nevertheless, to meet or even exceed stakeholder norms defining appropriate business behaviors, firms must first be able to identify relevant stakeholder communities along with their norms and issues. In addition, businesses must have processes in place to examine how their own norms and practices fit with stakeholder norms. The next section introduces some organizational behaviors that help the firm systematically act in a socially responsible manner.

## CSR: MANAGERIAL PRACTICES

### Stakeholder Orientation as an Antecedent of Organizational Impacts

Keeping aware of stakeholder communities, norms, and issues demands an openness of the firm to its external environment. As pinpointed by Zeithaml and Zeithaml (1984), marketing is concerned with the management of the exchange relationships that tie organizations to their environment. Accordingly, the marketing discipline suggests organizational processes useful to keep abreast of, and manage, stakeholder relationships (Kimery and Rinehart 1998). In particular, with the concept of market orientation, scholars have characterized the organizational behaviors adopted by businesses to understand "customers' expressed and latent needs and develop superior solutions to these needs" (Slater and Narver 1999:1165). As noted by Matsuno and Mentzer (2000), most conceptualizations recognize that market-oriented firms do not focus solely on customer requirements but also on the demands of two market actors: competitors and regulators (e.g., Day 1994; Kohli and Jaworski 1990; Narver and Slater 1990).

Going beyond a concern for the market to a broader consideration of stakeholder demands, we propose the notion of stakeholder orientation as a useful concept to grasp the degree to which a firm understands and addresses stakeholder demands. Following Kohli and Jaworski's (1990) conceptualization of market orientation, we propose that a stakeholder orientation is composed of three sets of behaviors: (a) the organization-wide generation of intelligence pertaining to the nature of stakeholder communities, norms, and issues, along with the evaluation of the firm's impacts on these issues; (b) the dissemination of this intelligence throughout the organization; and (c) the organization-wide responsiveness to this intelligence. Table 1 introduces organizational activities representative of these three types of behaviors.

*Generation of stakeholder intelligence.* The generation of stakeholder intelligence starts with the identification of the stakeholder communities relevant to the firm. As earlier mentioned, these communities can be formally organized but can also encompass individuals who share common beliefs and who interact only loosely with one another. The selection of relevant stakeholders must be based on an analysis of the power enjoyed by each stakeholder community and on an evaluation of the aggregated power of several communities with ties to one another. Since the nature and relative power of stakeholder communities may evolve over time, it is essential that the organization revise its set of relevant stakeholders on a regular basis.

In a second step, intelligence generation focuses on characterizing the norms and issues about organizational activities that are shared among each relevant stakeholder community. As with market orientation, this stakeholder information can be gathered through formal research, including surveys, focus groups, or press reviews. For instance, the British retailer B&Q organizes biannual meetings on social and environmental responsibility with company representatives, suppliers, customers, and community leaders. Stakeholder intelligence can also be generated informally by a variety of organizational members as they carry out their daily activities. For example, purchasing managers may know about suppliers' demands, public relations executives about the media, legal advisers about regulators, financial executives about investors, sales representatives about customers, and human resources advisers about employees. Therefore, intelligence about stakeholder norms and issues is generated collectively by a variety of agents spread throughout the organization. A third aspect of intelligence generation consists of evaluating the firm's impact on various stakeholder issues. For some issues, objective indicators such as the following are employed: the annual employee time spent in community service, the number of customer complaints, the average hours of training received per employee per year, or the number of shareholder resolutions proposed per year. Subjective measures of stakeholders' evaluation of the firm can also be used.

*Dissemination of stakeholder intelligence.* Given the variety of the organizational members involved in the generation of stakeholder information, it is essential that this intelligence be disseminated within the firm. The dissemination of stakeholder information consists of facilitating flows of information among organizational actors about the nature of relevant stakeholder communities and norms, stakeholder issues, and the current impact of the firm on

**TABLE 1**
**Examples of Activities Significant of a Stakeholder Orientation**

| | *All Stakeholders* | *Employees* | *Customers* | *Communities Where the Firm Operates* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Information generation | 1. Selection of relevant stakeholder communities (through a press review, for example).<br>2. Inquiry into the nature of stakeholder issues (with panels, focus groups).<br>3. Evaluation of the firm's impact on stakeholder issues.<br>4. Evaluation of the corporate reputation among stakeholders. | 1. Regular discussions with representatives of different categories of personnel.<br>2. Forums of information/discussion on employee issues (health, stress management, etc.).<br>3. Regular evaluation of employee satisfaction.<br>4. Data about employee injuries, absenteeism. | 1. Identification of, and contact with, customer advocates.<br>2. Discussion forums with customers to understand their needs and concerns.<br>3. Data on customer complaints. | 1. Identification of community leaders.<br>2. Consultation with community leaders to know about emerging issues.<br>3. Analysis of impact of corporate activities on environment (e.g., electricity use, use of recycled materials).<br>4. Survey of the firm's reputation in the community. |
| Information dissemination | 1. Regular interdepartmental meetings about trends in the firm's environment.<br>2. Circulation of documents (reports, newsletters) about the impact of corporate activities on stakeholder issues.<br>3. Facilitating the contacts of all departments with stakeholders. | 1. Internal communications about employee-related issues.<br>2. Open-door policy to superiors.<br>3. Facilitation of informal meetings between employees at all levels. | 1. Communicating the nature of customer complaints across all departments.<br>2. Including results of customer research in product policies.<br>3. Circulation of information on emerging consumer trends. | 1. Discussion forums about community issues, for example, on Intranet.<br>2. Facilitating the participation of employees into community affairs (giving lectures, attending seminars).<br>3. Granting a prize for the best community initiative. |
| Responsiveness | 1. Programs to address stakeholder issues. | 1. Employee health and safety programs.<br>2. Provision of day care.<br>3. Facilitating employee education | 1. Product quality and safety improvement programs.<br>2. Programs to respond to customer complaints.<br>3. Facilities for handicapped customers. | 1. Philanthropic and volunteerism programs.<br>2. Environmental protection programs.<br>3. Economic development programs. |

these issues. As is the case for market orientation, the dissemination of stakeholder intelligence can be organized formally through activities such as newsletters, the Intranet, and internal information forums. But information can also be exchanged informally during routine interactions between organizational members. Following Kohli, Jaworski, and Kumar (1993), stakeholder intelligence dissemination takes place both horizontally (across various departments) and vertically (across lines of authority).

*Responsiveness to stakeholder intelligence.* A stakeholder orientation is not complete unless it includes the activities adopted by the organization to actually meet stakeholder demands. The organization-wide responsiveness to stakeholder intelligence consists of the initiatives adopted in order to ensure that the firm abides by, or exceeds, stakeholder norms on a number of issues. Such responsiveness activities are likely to be specific to a stakeholder community (e.g., family-friendly work schedules) or to a stakeholder issue (e.g., emissions reduction programs).

## Organizational Norms as an Antecedent of Organizational Impacts

Even though a high stakeholder orientation stimulates socially responsible corporate behaviors, it is not sufficient to ensure that the organization will systematically behave responsibly. Even when an organization generates intelligence over stakeholder norms and issues, it may choose to adopt initiatives that, unlike those presented in Table 1, are not aimed at affecting positively those issues. Businesses may choose to avoid complying with stakeholder norms, for example, by masking nonconformity, by changing the nature of their relations to stakeholder communities, or by influencing stakeholders' evaluation of the firm's impact (Oliver 1991; Zeithaml and Zeithaml 1984).

In addition, in the presence of stakeholders with similar power levels and conflicting norms, a stakeholder orientation does not provide any guidance as to which norms to favor. Similarly, limited organizational resources require that the firm select specific issues among those advocated by equally powerful stakeholder communities. A stake-

holder orientation does not establish priorities between stakeholder issues. Accordingly, in supplement to a stakeholder orientation, organizational norms are required to define what constitutes desirable behaviors toward stakeholders and to select among stakeholder communities and issues. In particular, organizational norms may stipulate the nature of

1. the *most relevant stakeholder communities* (e.g., "We demonstrate our responsibility as a corporate citizen when we interact with our customers, associates, and the community at large." www.prudential.com)
2. the *stakeholder issues viewed as priorities* (e.g., "ConAgra is committed to finding solutions and working with organizations to help feed America's hungry children." www.conagra.com)
3. *appropriate behaviors toward stakeholders* (e.g., "We are proud of our efforts to maintain a workforce that represents many backgrounds, and are deeply committed to cultivating an environment where the contributions of every employee, customer, and vendor are respected." www.nordstrom.com)

Whether they are expressed formally or informally, organizational norms help clarify the nature of the stakeholder issues to be tackled along with the standards defining appropriate behaviors. Therefore, they favor corporate decisions and practices that have a positive impact on stakeholder issues. However, organizational norms dictating the nature of stakeholder responsibilities are not sufficient to systematically obtain responsible corporate behaviors: organizational norms may conflict with the norms of powerful stakeholder communities. Accordingly, it is the combination of a stakeholder orientation and of organizational norms that is most conducive of positive corporate impacts on stakeholder issues. Hence, the following two propositions are advanced:

*Proposition 5:* A greater stakeholder orientation is associated with more positive impacts on stakeholder issues when more organizational norms defining responsibilities toward stakeholders are in place.

*Proposition 6:* More organizational norms defining responsibilities toward stakeholders are associated with more positive impacts on stakeholder issues when a high stakeholder orientation is in place.

As indicated in Figure 1, reciprocal influences between an organization's stakeholder orientation and its stakeholder norms are likely to emerge. The generation of intelligence about stakeholder communities helps identify new stakeholder issues and may therefore lead to an adjustment of organizational norms. Reciprocally, when organizational norms give priority to specific stakeholder communities, the generation, dissemination, and responsiveness processes are likely to focus more on these preferred stakeholders.

### Organizational and Stakeholder Characteristics Are Both Antecedents of Organizational Impacts

Noticeably, as shown in Figure 1, we suggest that stakeholder characteristics (power, ability to cooperate) and organizational features (stakeholder orientation, norms) respectively influence organizational impacts on specific issues. Even in the absence of organizational norms defining stakeholder responses, and when the stakeholder orientation is low, powerful stakeholder communities may still be able to influence corporate behaviors because they can withdraw resources away from the firm. For example, probably due to its dominant position in the diamonds market, De Beers had not worried until the late 1900s about developing norms or practices to account for stakeholders' concerns and expectations. However, when several human rights defense groups launched a successful boycott against De Beers to condemn its collaboration with Angolan rebel groups, the diamond company had little choice but to stop its dealings in Angola. Similarly, as previously mentioned, even when powerful stakeholder communities do not exercise pressures, an organization can choose to favor socially responsible behaviors. A case in point is Hershey's, a company that adopted clear guidelines dictating appropriate behaviors during its founding years in the early 1890s. These guidelines were based on Milton Hershey's personal values, and not on specific requirements imposed by stakeholder communities. Therefore, stakeholder and organizational factors, respectively, are expected to directly influence the impact of businesses on various stakeholder issues.

This does not mean that organizational norms and the degree of stakeholder orientation emerge completely independently of pressures from stakeholder communities. On the contrary, as illustrated in Figure 1, an organization's stakeholder orientation and norms defining stakeholder responsibilities are likely to be influenced by stakeholders' power and ability to cooperate. In particular, faced with powerful and closely connected stakeholder communities, a focal organization is likely to develop norms defining desirable behaviors and to encourage stakeholder-oriented behaviors. Otherwise, the organization may soon become incapable of keeping aware of, and choosing among, stakeholder demands. Accordingly, we advance the following propositions:

*Proposition 7:* The greater the power of stakeholder communities, the greater the stakeholder orientation of the focal organization and the more organizational norms defining responsibilities toward stakeholders.

*Proposition 8:* The greater stakeholders' ability to cooperate, the greater the stakeholder orientation of the focal organization and the more organizational norms defining responsibilities toward stakeholders.

*Proposition 8a:* The greater the convergence of stakeholder norms with respect to an issue across stakeholder communities, the greater the stakeholder orientation of the focal organization and the more organizational norms defining responsibilities toward stakeholders.

*Proposition 8b:* The greater the density of the network of stakeholders concerned about an issue, the greater the stakeholder orientation of the focal organization and the more organizational norms defining responsibilities toward stakeholders.

*Proposition 8c:* The lower the centrality of the focal organization in the network of stakeholder communities, the greater the stakeholder orientation of the focal organization and the more organizational norms defining responsibilities toward stakeholders.

A high-level stakeholder orientation and the implementation of organizational norms clarifying stakeholder responsibilities help the organization ensure that stakeholders continue to provide necessary organizational resources. However, the successful management of CSR is not limited to securing the undisrupted flow of stakeholder resources; instead, it may also aim at generating increased stakeholder resources. The next section examines how CSR can help market the organization to its stakeholders and stimulate their active support.

## CSR: INSTRUMENTAL PRACTICES

Past research investigating stakeholders' reactions to socially responsible corporate behaviors remains embryonic. Nevertheless, a few marketing studies suggest that perceptions of CSR may generate increased resources from one specific category of stakeholders: consumers. For instance, Handelman and Arnold (1999) observed that consumers engage in positive word of mouth about firms committed to actions that demonstrate adherence to institutional norms. Maignan et al. (1999) established a positive relationship between CSR and customer loyalty in a managerial survey. Other studies have also demonstrated that consumers are willing to actively support companies committed to cause-related marketing, environmentally friendly practices, or ethics (Barone et al. 2000; Berger and Kanetkar 1995; Creyer and Ross 1997). Furthermore, there is evidence that some consumers are ready to sanction socially irresponsible companies, for example, by boycotting their products and services (Garrett 1987; Sen, Gürhan-Canli, and Morwitz 2001). Consequently, negative corporate impacts on issues valued by stakeholders may lead to decreased stakeholder resources.

Some preliminary research evidence suggests that socially responsible corporate behaviors may also lead to increased employee resources. For example, Turban and Greening (1996), along with Luce, Barber, and Hillman (2001), observed that firms rating high on CSR are perceived as more attractive by job applicants. In addition, Maignan et al. (1999) highlighted a positive relationship between CSR and employee commitment. These observations imply that employees may also be willing to provide more resources—in terms of time, energy, and dedication—to the companies that have positive impacts on stakeholder issues.

Research on stakeholders' reactions to socially responsible or irresponsible business practices remains scarce. In particular, investigations have been limited in terms of the stakeholder categories considered (consumers and employees) and the stakeholder resources examined. In addition, the studies mentioned above have not explained the process through which positive and negative corporate impacts on stakeholder issues affect the availability of stakeholder resources. However, several authors (Drumwright 1996; Maignan and Ferrell 2001; Sen and Bhattacharya 2001) have suggested that organizational identification theory may provide a solid basis to understand how positive CSR impacts generate the active support of consumers. Building on this suggestion, we argue that socially responsible corporate behaviors may trigger stakeholder identification and increased stakeholder resources. Conversely, as illustrated in Figure 1, corporate behaviors that fall short of stakeholder norms may lead to stakeholder disidentification and decreased stakeholder resources. Our conceptual framework considers solely the consequences of CSR impacts in terms of dis/identification. This focus is admittedly limited and ignores other paths through which organizational impacts could translate into varying levels of stakeholder resources.

### Outcomes of CSR: Stakeholder Identification and Disidentification

Scholars have demonstrated that people identify with organizations when they perceive an overlap between organizational attributes and their individual attributes (Ashforth and Mael 1989; Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquael 1994; Tajfel and Turner 1985). Scott and Lane (2000) suggested that the concept of organizational identification applies not only to organizational members but also to other stakeholders. These authors defined organizational identity as "the set of beliefs shared between top managers [ . . . ] and stakeholders about the central, enduring, and distinctive characteristics of an organization" (p. 44). As stakeholders perceive that key organizational features are in congruence with their self-identity, they are

likely to identify with the organization. Past research has highlighted some benefits of organizational identification, including employee commitment (O'Reilly and Chatman 1986), decreased turnover (O'Reilly and Chatman 1986), along with generally helpful and supportive organizational behavior (Bhattacharya, Rao, and Glynn 1985; Dutton et al. 1994; Tajfel and Turner 1985). Recent investigations also suggest that organizational disidentification may occur when individuals perceive a conflict between their defining attributes and the attributes characterizing the organization (Bhattacharya and Elsbach 2002; Elsbach and Bhattacharya 2001). Disidentification signifies a separation of the person's self-concept from that of the organization (Bhattacharya and Elsbach 2002, cf. p. 28) and translates into negative perceptions of the organization. Corporations such as WorldCom and Enron that have been confronted with scandal experience disidentification from investors, employees, and customers.

When engaging in actions aimed at addressing a specific stakeholder issue, an organization clearly acknowledges the importance of that issue. Stakeholders sharing the same concern for that issue are likely to appreciate the firm's initiative, and a feeling of bonding to the firm may then emerge. In contrast, when an organization's behaviors violate the norms embraced by a stakeholder community, the members of that community are likely to feel alienated and to disidentify from the organization. Even though past studies of consumer boycotts do not mention organizational disidentification, they do illustrate very well how this process of dissociation can take place among certain consumer groups as a result of questionable corporate actions (e.g., Garrett 1987; Sen, Gürhan-Canli, and Morwitz 2001). Similarly, there is evidence that employees disidentify from businesses that commit irresponsible actions (Dutton et al. 1994). Since stakeholder communities may not show the same level of concern for various issues, stakeholder identification and disidentification are displayed in Figure 1 as specific to an issue and to a stakeholder community.

Overall, we propose that the positive impact of a business on a stakeholder issue encourages the organizational identification of stakeholders concerned with that issue. In turn, organizational identification is likely to lead to increased stakeholder resources. Conversely, negative business impacts on a stakeholder issue may lead to the organizational disidentification of the stakeholders concerned with that issue. This disidentification process is likely to lead to decreased stakeholder resources. Therefore, the following two propositions are advanced:

*Proposition 9:* The more positive [negative] the impact of a focal organization on a stakeholder issue, the greater the organizational identification [disidentification] of the stakeholders who are concerned with that issue.

*Proposition 10:* The greater the organizational identification [disidentification] of stakeholders with an organization, the greater [lower] the stakeholder resources granted to that organization.

Past research findings suggest that positive corporate impacts on stakeholder issues do not systematically lead to increased stakeholder identification and resources. In particular, past studies have demonstrated that consumer support of CSR may be moderated by a variety of factors such as the level of support for the issue under consideration, perceived efficacy, and perceived price/quality trade-offs (Barone, Miyazaki, and Taylor 2000; Sen and Bhattacharya 2001). Similarly, several factors such as perceived costs, perceived efficacy, and personal values have been found to affect consumers' willingness to engage in a boycott (Garrett 1987; Sen et al. 2001). The scope of these various studies is very limited both in terms of the stakeholder groups considered and the organizational practices scrutinized. Nevertheless, they suggest some factors that may moderate the relationships outlined in Propositions 7 and 8. Overall, social responsibility practices emerge as a potentially useful instrument to market the organization to stakeholders and to avoid stakeholder sanctions. The next section suggests that marketing activities can help the organization further benefit from its commitment to CSR.

## CSR Communications as a Moderating Factor

Stakeholders' awareness of businesses' impacts on specific issues is a prerequisite to organizational identification. Therefore, as suggested in Figure 1, stakeholder identification depends on the extent to which the firm communicates about its CSR initiatives to different publics. Scott and Lane (2000) outlined three mechanisms used by organizations to prompt stakeholders' cognitive elaboration of an organizational identity: (a) presenting organizational images in communications, (b) making stakeholders' affiliation with the organization more public, and (c) increasing interactions with the organization and/or among stakeholders. This classification suggests three main approaches whereby marketing communications can trigger enhanced stakeholder identification: (a) including CSR images in organizational communications, (b) enhancing stakeholders' affiliation to the firm based on a shared concern for a specific issue, and (c) stimulating stakeholder interactions around CSR.

With instruments such as advertisements, promotions, public speeches, or newsletters, corporate communications can help spread the image of a good corporate citizen caring about important stakeholder issues. For example, in its advertising campaign entitled "Profits and Principles. Is there a choice?" Shell asserted its dedication to environmental protection with statements such as: "our

commitment to sustainable development, balancing economic progress with environmental care and social responsibility." Starbucks has adopted a different tactic: this company sells a so-called Fair Trade coffee; this item gives an opportunity for the firm to introduce its commitment to helping developing countries and helps present Starbucks as a responsible organization. This type of communications keep stakeholders informed about the firm's initiatives to address specific social responsibility issues.

Corporate messages can also emphasize the affiliation linking stakeholders to the firm based on a shared concern for, or commitment to, a specific issue. Such communications establish CSR as a potential bond between the firm and its stakeholders. For example, Wal-Mart advertises on store displays and on its Web site the prizes, thank-you letters, and special acknowledgments received by its employees during the working hours they spent as volunteers in the community. These messages make public the common concern for the community displayed by both the company and its employees. The publicized affiliation and commitment might be appealing to potential recruits, consumers, and community leaders. Following a similar approach, the mortgage supplier Fannie Mae advertises in the press and on its Web site its partnership with the city of Minneapolis to help rejuvenate endangered neighborhoods. Accordingly, Fannie Mae publicizes simultaneously its affiliation with community leaders and regulators along with its commitment to fighting social exclusion.

A third type of CSR communications likely to enhance stakeholder identification with the firm consists in increasing interactions between the firm and its stakeholders around an issue. For example, the services company EDS encourages stakeholder interactions during its "Global Volunteer Day," an event when employees, business partners, and clients are offered to join forces to work on a common project in the community. Shell organizes an uncensored online forum opened to all site visitors who are invited to talk about "issues and dilemmas" linked to the firm's operations. By highlighting these overlapping concerns, such initiatives stimulate the development of strong relationships between stakeholders and the focal organization. Overall, corporate communications not only create awareness for CSR initiatives but also present CSR as a bond between the firm and its stakeholders. This idea is further specified in the three following propositions:

*Proposition 11a:* The more communications include images displaying the commitment of the focal organization to an issue, the stronger the relationship between the positive impacts of the organization on that issue and the organizational identification of the stakeholders concerned with that issue.

*Proposition 11b:* The more communications underline stakeholder affiliation based on a shared concern for an issue, the stronger the relationship between the positive impacts of the organization on that issue and the organizational identification of the stakeholders concerned with that issue.

*Proposition 11c:* The more communications stimulate interactions with and between stakeholders around an issue, the stronger the relationship between the positive impacts of the organization on that issue and the organizational identification of the stakeholders concerned with that issue.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

### Operationalizing the Conceptual Framework

Given that our investigation is conceptual, the next research step would be to examine the research propositions empirically. Table 2 provides some suggestions to operationalize the main concepts introduced and highlights potentially fruitful linkages to acknowledged areas of the marketing literature. Even though most constructs discussed in this article have rarely been employed in the marketing discipline, some of their facets have been researched, usually with a focus on either of the two following stakeholder groups: consumers or channel members. For instance, marketers have not traditionally examined the notions of stakeholder community, stakeholder norms, or stakeholder power. However, they have conducted research on constructs such as consumption communities, channel members' norms, and interfirm power. Accordingly, our conceptual framework invites marketing researchers to expand the scope of existing marketing concepts to additional stakeholders besides customers and/or channel members and to adapt their operationalizations to account for this broader scope.

### Integrating Past and Future Research

Our research pinpoints four main research questions that can help structure past and future research on CSR from a marketing perspective. Each of these questions is introduced below.

*How do stakeholder norms influence business practices?* A first stream of marketing research consists of characterizing and comparing the norms embraced by different stakeholder communities. A starting point for this type of analysis is the existing research on managers' and consumers' respective views of CSR (e.g., Maignan and Ferrell 2003; Mohr, Webb, and Harris 2001; Singhapakdi et al. 1996). These inquiries have used differentiated research approaches, which prevents a direct comparison of norms across stakeholder groups. Our discussion calls for the development of a standardized methodology that could be applied to a variety of stakeholder communities. Ide-

**TABLE 2**
**Suggestions to Operationalize the Main Research Concepts**

| *Concept* | *Example of Relevant Marketing Literature* | *Potential Operationalization* |
|---|---|---|
| Stakeholder community | Consumption communities (e.g., McGrath, Sherry, and Heisley 1993); brand communities (e.g., Muniz and O'Guinn 2001) | Content analysis of the press: selecting an issue and assessing the actors that have been advocating this issue based on press articles |
| Stakeholder issues and norms | Marketing managers' norms of CSR (e.g., Singhapakdi, Vitell, Rallapalli, and Kraft 1996); norms in marketing channels (e.g., Grewal and Dharwadkar 2002) | Stakeholder interviews and surveys: evaluation of their norms and concerns with respect to the activities of an organization |
| Stakeholder power | Interfirm power (e.g., Frazier and Summers 1986); consumer resistance (e.g., Holt 2002) | Managerial surveys/interviews: managers' perceptions of different stakeholders' power |
| Density of stakeholder network | Marketing alliances in the business-to-business context (e.g., Rindfleisch and Moorman 2001; Welsch and Wilkinson 2002) | Stakeholder interviews: selecting an industry and a specific issue; inquiring about the interactions taking place between different stakeholder communities |
| Stakeholder orientation | Market orientation (e.g., Matsuno and Mentzer 2000; Narver and Slater 1990) | Managerial interviews/surveys: examining whether the organization adopts various behaviors typifying the generation of, dissemination of, and responsiveness to stakeholder intelligence |
| Organizational norms | Ethical work climate (e.g., Babin, Boles, and Robin 2000) | Content analysis of corporate documents: identification of the norms stated by the organization |
| Corporate impacts | Measures of CSR practices (e.g., Maignan, Ferrell, and Hult 1999) | Secondary data: objective indicators (e.g., injury rates, number of product recalls, number of customer complaints, donations); ratings by independent organizations (e.g., Domini 400 Social Index) |
| Stakeholder (dis)identification | Identification with social marketing (e.g., Bhattacharya and Elsbach 2002); customer identification (e.g., Bhattacharya, Rao, and Glynn 1995) | Stakeholder interviews/surveys: assessing stakeholders' degree of identification with firms that have positive (negative) impacts on specific issues |
| Stakeholder resources | Organizational citizenship (e.g., MacKenzie, Podsakoff, and Fetter 1993); reputation (e.g., Fombrun, Gardberg, and Sever 2000); customer loyalty (e.g., Parasuraman and Grewal 2000) | Customers: loyalty, positive word of mouth, brand equity measures<br>Employees: assessment of commitment and job satisfaction<br>Suppliers: measure of cooperation, investments in assets<br>Investors: amount of invested capital, shareholder loyalty<br>Media: number of positive press releases<br>All stakeholders: reputation measures |

NOTE: CSR = corporate social responsibility.

ally, this methodology would elicit stakeholders' perceptions of the main issues raised by corporate activities within a certain industry or geographic area. Such an analysis could highlight some areas of consensus deserving the attention of businesses, activists, and public policy makers.

A second and related stream of research focuses on understanding how various stakeholder communities exercise power on businesses. Marketing studies have examined some CSR advocacy initiatives employed by stakeholder groups such as consumers (e.g., Garrett 1987; Sen et al. 2001), environmental defense groups (e.g., Stafford, Polonsky, and Hartman 2000), channel members (e.g., Maignan, Hillebrand, and McAlister 2002), and internal policy entrepreneurs (Drumwright 1994). However, these investigations have focused on specific actions (e.g., boycotts) and have not developed a classification of the strategies employed across a variety of stakeholder groups. The development of such a classification in combination with an analysis of the success factors attached to different strategies could be the focus of future marketing studies. This research could be of interest to both pressure groups and regulators.

*Which organizational processes can stimulate socially responsible corporate behaviors?* Past research has said very little about the processes that can help ensure that socially responsible corporate behaviors are systematically favored by organizational members. To date, marketers have mainly discussed the importance of codes of conduct in stimulating ethical business practices (e.g., Harker and Harker 2000; Murphy 1988). Our research suggests two types of processes—a stakeholder orientation and the adoption of organizational norms—that can support socially responsible corporate practices. Marketing research is needed to depict in much greater details which behav-

iors are significant of a stakeholder orientation and which exact norms can favor a systematic concern for stakeholders. The literature streams on market orientation and marketing ethics, respectively, provide a sound basis for this type of research.

*How do different stakeholders react to CSR practices?* Our analysis emphasizes the difficulty of bringing together past marketing findings on consumers' reactions to CSR (e.g., Barone et al. 2000; Creyer and Ross 1997; Webb and Mohr 1998). Past findings remain hardly comparable because they focus on specialized facets of CSR and investigate different forms of consumer responses. We propose that future studies examining the impact of CSR initiatives consider one common outcome (e.g., organizational identification) across a variety of stakeholder communities. We also suggest that future research could evaluate the effect of irresponsible corporate behaviors by scrutinizing their relationship to stakeholder disidentification. Studies on stakeholders' reactions to CSR would help assess the business benefits and costs associated with, respectively, responsible and irresponsible corporate behaviors.

*How to communicate about CSR practices?* There is only embryonic marketing research on CSR communications. Some studies have examined the success factors of advertising with a social dimension (e.g., Drumwright 1996) and the tactics employed by organizations to convey social responsibility images (e.g., Arnold, Kozinets, and Handelman 2001). Our study calls for research that scrutinizes the communication strategies, media, and appeals most appropriate to engender awareness of CSR practices and to stimulate stakeholder identification. Our discussion further suggests that businesses cannot hope to enjoy concrete benefits from CSR unless they intelligently communicate about their initiatives to relevant stakeholders.

Overall, by outlining these four research streams, we encourage marketing scholars to (a) consider extending established concepts and research questions to a variety of stakeholders and (b) evaluate the nature, antecedents, and outcomes of CSR practices in a systematic fashion that enables the comparability of findings across CSR initiatives, stakeholder communities, and stakeholder issues. Finally, our conceptualization makes clear that the implementation of CSR does not consist of the launching of a few benevolent initiatives such as philanthropy programs, environmental protection policies, or employee-friendly practices. Instead, to enact their commitment to CSR, businesses must embrace a solid set of principles and processes that can help to systematically address stakeholder demands and secure stakeholder support.

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