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Distribution of responsibilities for sustainability in the economic system: the insufficiency of conceptual contenders

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Abstract

This paper examines the expected as well as necessary solutions to the sustainability problems in terms of distribution of responsibilities in the economic system. We depart from two major contending theories of market orientation (MO) and corporate responsibility (CR) as regards how solutions for sustainability are conceptualised, and focus on how corporate strategies for sustainability can be deduced and what the implications are in terms of distribution of responsibilities.

We infer from the literature that MO and CR hold conceptual similarities, and as an emerging in-practice combination together they form a strategy for solving sustainability problems that can be referred to as *market oriented CR*. The approach prescribes decision making based on expectations by customers and other, primarily market-relevant, stakeholders. Hence, it leaves responsibility ultimately to those actors, and the approach to CR is contained within weak sustainability discourse. As we propose that strategy based on economic rationale and assumptions within weak-sustainability are inappropriate for today's sustainability challenges, a market oriented CR approach cannot solve the problems of sustainability. Therefore an alternative approach was outlined, namely *sustainability oriented CR*, which prescribes decision making based on strong sustainability. The limits of the natural and human resources are considered in the decision making and the focal actor's responsibility is emphasised. This approach can be viewed as a new, alternative, theoretical lens to examining the expected and necessary solution to the problem of sustainability.

Introduction

There is a growing consensus in society on that we face various sustainability problems. Many would now say that ecosystem degradation, resource scarcity, climate change and poor labour conditions threaten the modern welfare society and eventually life on Earth. Altogether, these undesired consequences derive from organised human action, in which the prominent role of consumption and production − in type as well as scale − is well illuminated through data and research (e.g. MA, 2005; UNEP, 2007; Jackson, 2009). Equally important, however, is how we organise these economic activities. The choice of institutional arrangements (e.g. market mechanisms vs. centralized control) not only influences the rate of innovation and efficiency of economic processes, and hence extraction and pollution (cf. Dietz *et al*., 2003; Ostrom *et al.*, 1999); it also has impact in the two fundamental sustainability dimensions that follow from the Brundtland definition of sustainable development (WCED, 1987:24): sustainability over space (e.g. through arrangements concerning trade and redistribution) and time (e.g. through use of discount rates). This, we argue, means that sustainability must be addressed in terms of how we organise the economic system.

Common in such considerations are the issues of whether to regulate against environmental harm or to internalise estimated external costs, and, such as when deciding on how to internalise the social costs of emissions, how they should be distributed between functions and actors. This distribution could be based on pure power relations or on criteria of financial or environmental efficiency. However, in the perspective of the human actors, this type of problem can also be seen from the side of rights; e.g. the right of property (that benefit from, or is harmed by, pollution) or the right to have basic needs satisfied (from polluting production or from non-polluted ecosystems) and from the side of responsibilities. Who is responsible to take action or to change his or her activities in order to protect the environment and to promote development?

The importance of this question largely depends on the existence of externalities and the uneven satisfaction of basic needs, both which are impacting on the space and time dimensions of sustainability. Moreover, while many of the sustainability problems are of collective character, our social organisations largely rely on individual initiatives and market coordination. According to conventional economic discourse, actors are expected to focus on economic interests near in space and time (Bonnedahl and Eriksson, 2011; DesJardins, 2007). In order to take responsibility outside of this narrow temporal and spatial frame, the individual decision maker would thus need information about incentives, or obstacles to refrain to act irresponsibly.

Being so, the purpose of this paper is to examine expected as well as necessary solutions to the sustainability problems in terms of distribution of responsibilities in the economic system. The power of states and governments in organising economic activity has been diminishing, and the subsequent shifting of power to the corporate sector (Banerjee 2008) has in turn increased the role of corporate strategies as means to achieve sustainability. Therefore, departing from two major contending theories as regards how solutions for sustainability are conceptualised, we focus on how corporate strategies for sustainability can be deduced and what the implications are in terms of distribution of responsibilities.

Evidently, one expected response to sustainability would be based on the present state of affairs. Hence, one of the main views we assess is a conventional strategy that emphasises the importance of the market in allocating resources, defining value, and organising activity within the economic system. The theory of *market orientation* (MO) represents this position (Houston, 1986; Shapiro, 1988; Grönroos, 1989; Kohli and Jaworski, 1990; Narver and Slater, 1990). When it is exposed to issues of societal change, MO implies transforming economic practice around the *customer* (e.g. Lindgreen *et al*., 2010) − perceived as "the king" also in issues related to sustainability. In parallel to this, a major contender for how business would be expected to respond to sustainability problems is emerging. From this position, sustainability problems are explicitly in focus, and a wider responsibility, in comparison to conventional economic responsibilities, is recognized. Further, a broader set of individuals and groups that are affected and can affect the achievement of organisational goals must be taken into consideration (Rhenman, 1968; Freeman, 1984). Consequently, the activities to answer to the sustainability problem are geared towards transforming business around the so called *stakeholders* (e.g. Freeman *et al*., 2010). In this view, the firm aims at simultaneously meeting its sociocultural, environmental and economic goals. A theoretical home for this thinking can be found in the social responsibility literature (Bowen, 1953; Davis, 1960) and in an inchoate theory of *corporate responsibility* (CR) (Garriga and Melé, 2004; Maignan and Ferrell, 2004; Windsor, 2006; Secchi, 2007; Ketola, 2008).

The paper is structured in the following manner. First, the theoretical arenas are introduced by reviewing the relevant literature, which is followed by a comparison of the two competing theories. Thirdly, based on this analysis, findings are presented and the suitability of the strategies for sustainability is discussed. In the last part of the paper, conclusions are drawn to outline an alternative strategy to distribute responsibilities for sustainability.

Market orientation and customers

In this study, market orientation (MO) is representing a contemporary business strategy, in which the consumer is placed in the centre of attention and strategic thinking (Houston, 1986). Kohli and Jaworski (1990, 6) defined MO as "the organization wide generation of market intelligence pertaining to current and future customer needs, dissemination of the intelligence across departments, and organization wide responsiveness to it." Another focal definition is a synthesis of several authors collected by Narver and Slater (1990, 21) that put forward that MO "is the organization culture […] that most effectively and efficiently creates the necessary behaviors for the creation of superior value for buyers and, thus, continuous superior performance for the business […]." Hence, among the underlying assumptions are that relevant values are defined by individual economic actors and can be expressed in terms of preferences on the markets. This basically implies that fair trade, environmental protection, and other sustainability issues, can appear in product and service offerings as quality features through customer valuation (or, of course, through political measures).

A more recent literature[1] has adduced two alternative approaches to being market oriented, namely *market driven* approach and *market driving* approach (Kumar, 1997; Kumar *et al*., 2000, Jaworski *et al*., 2000; Tuominen, 2004). The market driving approach can be seen as an extension to the (even more classical) market driven approach as it emerged years later and was developed on the preceding conceptualisation of MO. Through a case study, Kumar (1997) found that leading retailers – through consolidation, global expansion, technology push and innovative formats – were in fact more market driving than market driven. This 'driving markets' implied influencing market structure and/or behaviour in a direction that enhanced the competitive position of the business, whereas market driven referred to a business orientation that was based on understanding and reacting to the preferences and behaviours of players within a given market structure (Jaworski *et al*., 2000). As the consumer response to sustainability issues such as global warming have proven to be much too slow, a market driving approach may thus be more promising.

Market driven strategies are not however treated as "only reactive" (Day, 1992, 12) but also proactive – since reactive act and anticipated act are both concerned on 'what's outside the firm'.

[1] Studies also focused on testing quantitatively the link between economic performance and MO (Rodriguez Cano et al. 2004; Shoham et al. 2005; Kirca et al. 2005; Ellis 2006) and hence contributed to developing more accurate measures for MO (Kohli et al. 1993; Deshpandé and Farley 1998; Gray et al. 1998).

Both reactive and proactive firms function within the existing market structures as their strategies are based on adapting to changes in the marketplace. For example, the increased customer demand for products that consider animal welfare is driving firms to change their production towards sustainable farming. To be market driving is being able to react to and forecast the market (e.g. rises in sales volumes), which necessitates sophisticated translations of business functions to economic cost-benefit calculations.

Furthermore, according to Kumar *et al*., (2000) these market driven firms are excellent in generating incremental innovation but rarely produce the type of radical innovation that is typical for market driving firms. A market driving firm is more concerned on its resources and capabilities, or 'what's inside the firm'. These firms reconfigure their value chains and use their power to demand changes from powerful manufacturers and drive product development, pricing, promotion and sales strategies of manufacturers (Kumar, 1997). For example, an innovation such as an extremely low carbon and water footprint of a product could necessitate reconfiguration of existing processes and organisations involved in the supplies. According to Jaworski *et al*., (2000) these market driving firms are able to change the structure of a market by eliminating players in a market; building a new or modified set of players in a market; and changing the functions performed by players. This may not be only a matter of choice but dependent on the firm's size, power and position in the supply chain. But when dynamics emerge, the successful firm changes the mind-set of other actors (e.g., customers, competitors, and other stakeholders) either directly or indirectly (Jaworski *et al*., 2000). Even though this strategy approach entails higher risk, market driving firms tend to deliver a leap in customer value through a unique business system, revolutionize the industry and reap vast rewards (Kumar, 2000). In spite of this, on the question how market oriented a firm then should be, Henderson (1998) suggested that MO is a continuum rather than a posture.

Corporate responsibility and stakeholders

From the perspective of corporate responsibility (CR), strategies that acknowledge a wider heterogenity among actors, interests and values are advocated. Sustainability as well as responsibility are explicitly targeted and a wide array of CR issues range from concern for the planet and people to profit. Besides actions over the legal compliance on the tripod of P's, a more explicit definition for CR has proved to be challenging to pinpoint (Cramer, 2004, Dahlsrud, 2008). In addition to 'social', 'environmental', 'economic' and 'beyond compliance', the definitions consistently refer to 'stakeholders' (Dahlsrud, 2008). For example, Van Marrewijk (2008, 102) defined CR as "refer[ing] to company activities […] demonstrating the inclusion of social and environmental concerns in business operations and in interactions with stakeholders". Another highly-cited definition also stresses the role of stakeholders: "Ethical responsibilities embody those standards, norms, or expectations that reflect a concern for what consumers, employees, shareholders, and the community regard as fair, just, or in keeping with the respect or protection of stakeholders' moral rights." (Carroll, 1991, 41).

The notion of 'stakeholder' originates from strategic management literature (Rhenman, 1968) that later developed into stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984). It is a strong breeze in CR literature and it posits that in strategic decision making, firms should consider the groups and individuals who are affected by or can affect the achievement of an organisation's objectives. The impetus behind the theory was to build a framework that is more responsive to management concerns caused by unprecedented levels of business turbulence and change (Freeman and McVea, 2005). Hence, the focus has been on a stakeholder's ability to affect a business, which evidently also has implications for how "stake" is defined. Nevertheless, an increasing number of non-governmental organisations is working as the mouthpiece for sustainability and has created sustainability-related turmoil around businesses. Stakeholder theory has emerged as a tool to respond to these demands.

Despite the stakeholder theory's rather dominant position in CR, Secchi (2007) argues that there is also a great heterogeneity of theories and approaches, mainly due to the multi-disciplinary type of research within the field. Subsequently, several theoretical syntheses and different classifications can be found (see Garriga and Melé, 2004; Windsor, 2006; Secchi, 2007; Ketola, 2008; Heikkurinen, 2011), but they also demonstrate that CR belongs as an intrinsic part of today's corporate strategies. In other words, CR is not only for to do "good" or to meet "social" causes (Friedman, 1970), but also for profits (e.g. Orlitzky *et al.*, 2003). Further, Schaltegger and Figge (2000) suggested that the economic success of CR depends on the manner in which it is practiced. And a wide range of studies have addressed these different ways to practise CR, inter alia: passive, philanthropic, introverted, following, defending, reactive, conservative, indecisive, accommodative, integrative, anticipatory, proactive, extroverted, entrepreneurial, leading edge, performing, creative, visionary (Carroll, 1979; Ketola, 1992; Roome, 1992; Piacentini *et al.*, 2000; Gago and Antolín, 2004; Clemens *et al.*, 2008; Kourula and Halme, 2008; Baumgartner, 2010, Belz and Schmidt-Riediger, 2010; Heikkurinen, 2010).

A recent typology – also discussing the role of stakeholders – synthesized two alternative strategies to being responsible, namely a *responsive* and a *beyond responsive* approach (Heikkurinen and Forsman-Hugg, 2011). The preceding refers to having organisational capabilities to react to current stakeholder demands and to anticipate upcoming changes in the market, whereas the latter type describes actions that go beyond external expectations. The responsive type basically implies that renewable energy or high labour standards will be adopted in case there is, or can be expected to be, such expectations by stakeholders that can also affect the achievement of the organisational goals. An example of a beyond responsive strategy would then be adopting renewable energy sources without market expectations, but to create the demand for cleaner products and hence transform the market. Kourula and Halme (2008) also stated that firms can emphasise the development of new business models for solving social and environmental problems, not only conduct existing business operations more responsibly. Similarly, a beyond responsive firm seeks new business opportunities from CR and finds novel ways to take responsibility, whereas responsive firm in more driven by the expectations on it.

Conceptual comparison

In relation to the quest for sustainable development, it is clear that the two contending perspectives propose routes of action that hold an important difference: customer expectation versus stakeholder expectations. Depending on the conventional view on business (here represented by MO), the economic system would mainly depend on a build-up of customer awareness that would be sufficiently rapid and radical to meet large scale challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss and global poverty. In the market driven MO, the corporation's role would merely be as a responsive actor to market pull, whereas a market driving firm would instead be 'pushing' the change to the market, e.g. in terms of sustainable consumption patterns through their potential customers.

However, due to the collective and non-linear nature of major environmental problems and the fact that the needs of the poor and unborn are not visible as "preferences" on the markets, sustainability can not be met just by processes initiated within the seller-buyer dyad. Together with political measures, including regulation, internalisation of external costs and redistribution of resources and income, the broader inclusion of actor groups and thus interests within CR would seem more potent than the conventional market solution to meet the issues of sustainability. Heterogeneity of actors involved potentially also implies that a broader set of values are acknowledged in the strategic decisions. Such an example could be when industry "negotiates" with environmental NGOs, governmental bodies, indigenous peoples' groups and workers' associations under schemes of sustainable forestry or water management (e.g. Driscoll, 1996; Falkenmark *et al*., 2004; Gulbrandsen, 2005). Nevertheless, both sets of theories (MO and CR) accept "the rules of the game"; that is, basically the present market regime, where issues such as private property, established economic interests, the autonomy of consumers and economic growth are not discussed.

But we also infer from the literature, that the conceptualization of MO and its typology into market driven and market driving strategies share theoretical similarities with the conceptualization of CR in its typology into responsive and beyond responsive strategies. For example, if MO is extended to cover a broader set of stakeholders than only the customer, as Maignan and Ferrell (2004) suggested, MO seems particularly compatible with contemporary CR. This is because in responsive CR, firms respond to the rising stakeholder demand for responsibility, as well as they do in market driven MO. Market driving MO and beyond responsive CR, on the other hand, supply certain goods and services in innovative ways to arouse the customer demand, either rather directly (e.g. cost savings, product differentiation) or more indirectly (e.g. reputation, legitimacy). Stakeholder theory to MO and CR (Maignan and Ferrell, 2004) enables shift from customer kingdom to stakeholder kingdom. In specific sustainability issues (such as implementation of chemical free manufacturing) the new hail for stakeholders would mean that the stakeholders' role in, and responsibility for, defining and initiating problem solving is promoted.

We assume that whether solely the customers, or broader grouping of stakeholders, are considered in the decision making, similar dynamics between the focal firm (inside) and others (outside) will evolve. This is with an exception that if a stakeholder or customer could be anything from unborn babies to future generations, from natural environment and species to cultures and outer space, then stakeholder consideration would have different outcomes on sustainability. However, it is doubtful that any conventional approach would be capable of implementing this set of stakeholders to the strategy analysis. The shift to considering anything above mentioned as a stakeholder would need a radical change in the ways firms organise their CR because demand becomes something that cannot be surveyed or forecasted, and all values do not translate to market demand in any relevant way. In addition, new demand in quantity (of products, land, energy) conflicts with the interest of the "stakeholders" such as future generations or endangered species. Whereas contemporary MO and CR tend to disagree with whose expectations matter, the customers' or the stakeholders', they tend to agree that the actors that can affect the firm's economic success are salient. The stakeholders that are only affected have a minor role, if a role at all, in the strategic direction of a firm. Neither MO, nor CR assumes that trees, bees and the Seven Seas should have a managerial standing, and in practice, this is also the case for present-generation people with low purchasing or negotiating power.

A common way to frame such positions in relation to sustainability is as "weak" sustainability – as compared to strong sustainability (cf. Beckerman 1995, Gutes 1996, Ayres 1998, Hediger 1999, Neumayer 2002). The former are based on a view on substitutability between human and natural capital and the assumption that the three dimensions planet, people and profit can be achieved simultaneously. The Brundtland report (WCED, 1987), triple Bottom Line -thinking (Elkington 1997), and hence a great majority of the CR literature can be referred as *weak sustainability*. In the other end of the sustainability discourse continuum is *strong sustainability* that considers the economy and society as subsystems of the environment, meaning that people and profit are constrained by the limits of the natural capital. In strategic decision making, the constraints of biophysical nature shall hence be prioritised. Typical for strong sustainability discourse is the argument of non-growth/de-growth necessity, whereas weak sustainability asserts sustainable growth. According to Ketola (2010: 323), “The supporters of sustainable growth are techno-optimists: they trust that we [humans] can develop technologies to solve all the problems we humans are causing for our ecosystems, including the human system.”

Findings

Due to the cleavage of weak and strong, CR in comparison to a more conventional corporate strategy has been perceived, more or less, either totally dissonant (“Do Not Fit” -arguments) or as a match made in heaven (“Win-Win-Win” -arguments). We put forward that both arguments can be found in the junction of the concepts of MO and CR: (a) the weak sustainability discourse corresponds with the current CR, and CR in turn is highly compatible with MO but (b) that the strong sustainability discourse conflicts with MO. CR that fits with MO, does not assume economy and society as subsystems to the environment, and people and profit constrained by the limits of the natural capital, nor necessitates the non-growth/de-growth economy. With this review of MO and CR, the points of contact for conflict and correspondence were identified as depicted in Table 1.

Table 1. Market orientation and corporate responsibility to weak and strong sustainability

<table>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td colspan="2">Sustainability</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>Weak sustainability</td><td>Strong sustainability</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Market orientation</td><td>Market driven</td><td rowspan="4">Corresponding</td><td rowspan="2">Conflicting</td></tr>
<tr><td>Market driving</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Corporate responsibility</td><td>Responsive</td><td rowspan="2">?</td></tr>
<tr><td>Beyond responsive</td></tr>
</table>

It was deduced that the MO and its contender CR are rooted in the weak sustainability (Table 1). Thus, in market oriented firms, sustainability can be conceptualized through weak sustainability discourse and assumptions. Based on the findings that report close conceptual similarity between MO and CR, propositions [p] than suggest the likely outcomes of firms meeting and dealing with the sustainability problem, are developed.

From customer or stakeholder driven to responsive strategies

[p1] Market driven firms are likely to adopt a responsive approach to sustainability that emphasises customer or buyer responsibility. Also [p2] stakeholder driven firms are likely to adopt a responsive strategy to sustainability but extend their focus to cover broader set of stakeholders to respond to. These strategies lead to emphasising either customer or stakeholder responsibility, which in turn enable the focal firm to conveniently distribute their responsibility for sustainability outside the firm. When market driven firms perceive that customers are the ones that should drive and push the responsibility, stakeholder driven firms perceive that stakeholder are the ones that should drive and the responsibility. This strategy releases the focal actor from the internalisation of any costs related to sustainability, as the customers or stakeholders are responsible for development, e.g. securing biodiversity or fair trade in the upstream of the supply chain. The friedmanite idea that firm should

be free of responsibility initiatives, shareholders as an exception, has found more sophisticated means through stakeholder orientation. In fact, it is questionable if market driven and responsive strategy can even be referred as *corporate* responsibility, since the market, customer and stakeholders are the ones who are given the responsibility for sustainability initiatives. As the responsibility is carried by others, outside the firm, the firm only has a supplier's or mediator's role in solving the sustainability problem.

From market driving to beyond responsive strategies

On the other side, [p3] market driving firms are likely to adopt a beyond responsive strategy to sustainability that emphasises focal firm or vendor responsibility. This means that market driving firms adopt their role as initiators responsibility and push responsible products and goods to the market. It can be that these internally motivated firms feel a stronger duty to act responsible than externally oriented firms. Yet, they are dependent on the market reaction as the basis for their responsibility initiatives. In other words, in addition to doing the right thing, a market response in terms of higher economic returns and growth is their objective. This still refers to weak sustainability, in which the environmental and sociocultural responsibilities are either subordinates or equal objectives for the actor, and growth potentials are sought.

From weak to strong sustainability, also beyond responsive strategies

[p4] Contemporary MO and CR do not offer strategy options for sustainability rooted in the strong sustainability (Table 1). MO is regarded as "a major prerequisite for being able to create superior customer value, which in turn is regarded as a major determinant of competitive advantage" (Grunert et al. 2005: 429) but not to a prerequisite to create sustainable environmental, socio-cultural and economic value, which in turn can be regarded as the major determinant of sustainable development. [p5] Broadening the scope to stakeholders is not sufficient either since sustainability is not considered as a pre-competitive issue but rather a profit and growth making issue. There is a lack of theoretical constructs based on assumptions of strong sustainability that could prescribe decision making on sustainability instead on customer or stakeholder preferences. There is a need for an alternative approach to sustainability that enables firms to contribute to the sustainability solution.

Discussion

The sustainability problem in terms of distribution of responsibilities in the economic system is complex and often influenced by power relations or temporary pressure from external stakeholders, such as NGOs and media. Nonetheless, it can be argued that market oriented firms, whether market driven or market driving, leave responsibility ultimately to the customers or other stakeholders that can affect the firm, which makes the responsibility consideration dependent on the economic utility it can deliver. Market driving actors take responsibility of the initiative but ultimately demand a response from the market that contributes to traditional economic aims. Hence the market driving strategy also leads ultimately to customer responsibility, even though it can be considered more participatory. The same dynamics evolve in stakeholder driven strategy (but with a broader set of stakeholders). The orientation to MO and CR that is dependent on the economic utility function as the basic assumption behind all actions can be referred *market oriented CR*.

An alternative approach to distribute responsibilities for sustainability, would conceptualize CR and sustainability through assumptions of strong sustainability. This orientation, in which responsibility for sustainability does not have to deliver any economic utility since they hold intrinsic value, is referred *sustainability oriented CR*. The strategy is initiated by the focal firm and does not require even a mediator to a market response. Sustainability is a pre-competitive and non-growth issue. Focal firms do not distribute responsibilities outside the organisation but carry themselves the responsibility for sustainability that is needed in the economic system. This means that the focal firm is not dependent on the other actors' perceptions about sustainability but aims at becoming a sustainable actor through virtue. In sustainability oriented CR, traditional economic aims, such as expansion and profits, do not compete and dominate over issues of sustainability and responsibility, and the market itself is not considered as a source of solutions. The solution to sustainability is seen to lie in the inherent character of the focal actor. The difference in logic between the two orientations is depicted in Table 2.

Table 2. Market oriented CR and sustainability oriented CR

Orientation	**Strategy**	**Discourse**	**Prerequisite**	**Initiator**	**Mediator**	**Outcome**
Market oriented CR	Market driven	Weak sustainability	Increased economic value in responsibility initiatives	Customers	Firm	Customer responsibility
	Stakeholder driven			Stakeholders	Firm	Stakeholder responsibility
	Market / stakeholder driving			Firm	Customers / stakeholders	Customer / stakeholder responsibility
Sustainability oriented CR	Self driven and driving	Strong sustainability	Intrinsic value in responsibility initiatives	Firm	Firm	Focal firm responsibility

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to examine the expected as well as necessary solutions to the sustainability problems in terms of distribution of responsibilities in the economic system. In this quest, we departed from two major contenders of MO and CR as regards how solutions are conceptualised and also discussed assumptions behind the different strategies for sustainability that can be deduced from the two conceptual sets. We inferred from the literature that MO and CR hold conceptual similarities. We concluded that when a firm is customer or stakeholder driven, a responsive CR is adopted. And conversely, when the firm is market driving, a beyond responsive CR is adopted. Therefore, we suggest – although moving from market driven to market driving can be difficult for established companies (Kumar et al. 2000) – that firms that aim at increasing their CR from responsive to beyond responsive, adopt a more market driving approach rather than market driven.

As an emerging in-practice combination, MO and CR form a strategy for solving sustainability problems that can be referred to as *market oriented CR*. The approach prescribes decision making based on expectations by customers and other, primarily market-relevant, stakeholders. Hence, it leaves responsibility ultimately to those actors, and the approach to CR is contained within weak sustainability discourse. As we propose that strategy based on economic rationale and assumptions within weak-sustainability are inappropriate for today's sustainability challenges, a market oriented CR approach cannot solve the problems of sustainability.

Therefore an alternative approach was outlined, namely *sustainability oriented CR*, which prescribes decision making based on strong sustainability. The limits of the natural and human resources are considered in the decision making and the focal actor's responsibility is emphasised. This approach can be viewed as a new, alternative, theoretical lens to examining the expected and necessary solution to the problem of sustainability.

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