CSR Appropriation Process in Six Member Companies of the Global Compact Network Tunisia

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Abstract

There is currently no work dealing with CSR appropriation through a sensemaking perspective. The purpose of this research is to understand the CSR appropriation process of companies registered in a network through a sensemaking perspective. Anchored in pragmatic constructivism, this research mobilizes an intervention research method in the study of six cases of companies belonging to the Global Compact network for which we have been the coordinator. The data collection method consists of semi-structured and collective interviews as well as observation. The content analysis allowed for an interpretation of the results by applying a "case-oriented strategy", a "replication strategy" and "inter-case" analysis. The results show three stages of sensemaking in which the network intervenes (enactement) according to the stage of practice of CSR in the firm: (1) an intersubjective construction corresponding to pragmatic sensemaking (2) the passage from an intersubjective construction to generic construction characterised by an "organised anarchy" (3) generic construction where the sensemaking is political and procedural as influenced by strategy and corporate culture. The network interferes favourably in the process of sensemaking (enactment) by acting on the strategic technical and the cognitive levels.

Keywords: CSR; Network; Appropriation; Sensemaking.

Introduction

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is emerging as a strong theme in our era. This concept dominates the world of business as well as the academic field in management studies (Igalens and Joras, 2002; Margolis and Walsh, 2003; Capron and Quairel Lanoizelée, 2004; Porter and Kramer, 2006; Lockett and al., 2006 ; Crane and al., 2009). However, "CSR has at least three levels of ambiguity, which result directly from its historical construction: semantic ambiguities to think and understand the phenomenon, theoretical ambiguities related to the lack of theoretical consensus and finally, ideological ambiguities related to the CSR's authors goals " (Gond and Mullenbach Servayre, 2004: 101). It is, in particular, this established problem which motivated

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this research. The ambiguity of the concept could hinder the acquiring of responsible behaviours by companies. Nonetheless, CSR is still treated with enthusiasm, both internationally and on a more local scale in Tunisia.

On an international scale, in 1999, Koffi Annan, the seventh SecretaryGeneral of the United Nations, gave, a strong message concerning the interest of the international community in CSR when launching the Global Compact and its ten principles concerning social responsibility at the Davos Conference. The Global Compact is the largest voluntary initiative in the world with more than 80 local networks. This has had repercussions in Tunisia.

Following the events of January 14, 2011, the date of the outbreak of the Tunisian revolution, the country went through a phase of reconfiguration concerning power and socio-economic issues (Hibou and al., 2011). These changes have shifted the balance of power among the relevant actors (Koleva and Gherib, 2012). Several national and international agencies and organisations have been actively raising awareness of the notion of social responsibility, by supporting companies to adopt a citizenship orientated culture. These organisations include: the Institute of Corporate Social Responsibility in Tunisia (IRSET) [1] , the International Centre for Environmental Technologies of Tunis (CITET), the Confederation of Tunisian Citizen Enterprises (CONECT), as well as other government institutions, associations and some international cooperation and/or support organisations giving technical assistance. They represent a constellation of stakeholders revolving around a company, and are likely to form a network. These initiatives show a politically and socio-economically weakened state and a civil society that has had to strengthen itself in the post-revolution context. Building on these specific elements of the Tunisian context, we advance the following research proposition: the integration of the company in a network is likely to be a vector for the acquisition of values adovating responsible values. This proposition is the starting point of our research.

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[1] The United Nations Global Compact was launched in Tunisia in September 2005 with the support of the government. It forms part of a series of state-led initiatives such as an upgrading programme and certification of compliance with international standards. The commitment of Tunisian companies to social responsibility is an example of political commitment to the stimulation and promotion of competitiveness company, particularly following the accession of Tunisia to the World Trade Organization. Member companies of the Global Compact network encountered many challenges due to the lack of a support structure and it was only in 2015 that the Global Compact network was officially represented by the IRSET. This functioned as a CSR dissemination organization and oversawsupporting these companies on their journey toward citizenship. We were the coordinators of this network during the research intervention which lasted for 18 months.

Theoretical Background

Three concepts are mobilised in this study: CSR; network; and CSR appropriation. We will treat the concept of CSR from a constructivist persepctive whereby our observation of the actors, their ideas and their actions is taken to provide knowledge of reality (Pasquero, 2005). Above we noted that CSR is an ambiguous concept. Studying the appropriation of CSR requires a theoretical framework that serves to reduce its equivocalities and ambiguities. For this work we adopt a sociocognitive approach that leads us to understand the appropriation of responsible values using an exploratory managerial logic (Grimand and Vandangeon Derumez, 2010). The employment of Weick's (1995) sensemaking theory responds to these imperatives by offering us an alternative paradigm (Koenig, 2004).

We have chosen the theory of sensemaking because this theoretical anchoring aims to reduce ambiguity. Weick's (1995) concepts allow the construction of meaning and the reduction of ideological and theoretical ambiguity of the CSR concept we noted earlier.

This theory of sensemaking corresponds to our goal of understanding how corporate actors reduce ambiguities around the CSR concept as they seek to appropriate responsible values and put them into action as responsible behaviours.

The purpose of this research is to highlight the sensemaking process around CSR of companies registered in a network drawing on an extensive literature (See Bensebaa and Béji-Bécheur, 2005; Nijhof and Jeurissen, 2006 ; Cramer and al., 2006 ; Basu and Palazzo, 2008 ; Heijden and al., 2010 ; Auguinis and Glavas, 2017). Our study takes an exploratory perspective and has the goal of addressing the following research question: How does inclusion in a network facilitate the company's appropriation of CSR?

For this, we define CSR as a responsibility that goes beyond economic, contractual or legal responsibility (Hay and al., 1976). In his vocabulary relating to sensemaking, Weick (1995) distinguishes six basic concepts: ideology, premises, histories, paradigms, theories of action and tradition.

Ideology is defined by Weick (1995: 111) as a collection of relatively coherent, interdependent and emotionally charged shared beliefs, values and norms. This set of shar link people and help them to make sense of their world.

Premises, according to Weick (1995: 113), refer to the set of hypotheses and taken for granted (postulates) which make it possible to diagnose a situation and make a decision.

Regarding histories Weick (1995: 127) defines these as sequences of actions and experiences. In sum, ideologies, premises and stories are resources used to make sense of a situation and, in this current case, CSR. this set of resources is mobilised when the actors do not have precise rules and procedures to call upon in order to interpret situations. This is termed the intersubjective construction of sense by Weick, thus emphasising the interactions between actors, the phenomena of influence and the negotiation of meaning, when situations are equivocal. This intersubjective contruction of sense could be activated in cases where the equivocality and ambiguity surrounding CSR are strong, specifically when the company is at an early stage of CSR development. In this situation, the fact that the company belongs to a network, could stimulate the intersubjective process comprising interactions between the relevant actors, which could allow for the collective construction of meaning.

In Weick's vocabulary, the following concepts related to generic construction of sense are found. The term paradigm refers to standard operating procedures, common definitions of the environment, and agreement regarding the system of power and authority (Weick, 1995: 118). In our case, the focal paradigm consists of CSR norms and standards, the principles of sustainable development, the principles of the Global Compact (GC), including CSR charters and labels.

Theories of action filter and interpret environmental signals and help to link stimuli to responses (Weick, 1995). The stimuli, in our study, are taken to be be activities carried out by the GC network Tunisia, such as: awareness raising, training and networking around CSR.

Weick (1995: 124-125) defines tradition as the set of images, objects and beliefs that are transmitted over at least two generations. These can take the form of symbolic rituals within a company.

Paradigms, theories of action and tradition constitute resources that support action undertaken through the existing rules and procedures in the company. These resources represent the founding principles of generic construction (Weick, 1995), that are developed through experience and transfered from one actor to another through the routines and actions within the organisation. Generic construction takes place when equivocality and ambiguity are weak.

We can argue that the construction of meaning according to Weick (1979, 1995) occurs differently according to the degree of ambiguity or equivocality in a context. When equivocality is weak and the resources of rules and procedures are clear, then the construction of sense is generic in which the actors draw from resources such as: paradigms (norms and standards for CSR, principles of sustainable

development, the principles of the GC, charters and CSR labels), theories of action as well as tradition (symbolic rituals). When equivocality is strong and the sets of rules and procedures are nonexistent, the construction of sense is likely to be an intersubjective construction. In these circumstances the actors interact with and contradict each other, confront the meaning they attach to CSR, and finally, reach a stabilisation of sense. To achieve this, they will draw from resources such as: ideologies (organisational culture), premises and histories. Weick (1995) points out that intersubjective construction and generic construction are related, without clearly stating how these two interact.

Figure 1: Theoretical model of sensemaking in companies registered with the GC network
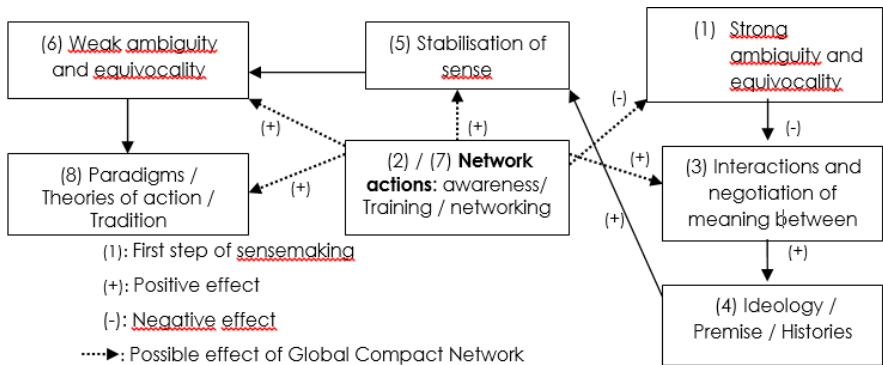
Source: Adapted from Weick (1995).

We define the network as a bundle of relationships between a set of actors. These relationships include collaboration, support, counseling or control and influence (Lazéga, 1994). The term network usually connotes the ideas of connection, flow, exchange, interaction, links, alliances and collective situations (Bassand and Galland, 1993 ; Coenen-Huther, 1993 ; La Porte, 1995 ; May, 1993, Bakis, 1993). A network structure is often considered as a means to bring about the diffusion of norms and values (Meyer and Rowan, 1977; Galaskiewicz and Wasserman, 1989; Oliver, 1991). As shown by our initial research proposition, the actions of the GC network of which we serve as coordinator, are likely to intervene in the CSR appropriation process undertaken by a company. In what follows, we explain our methodological approach. In figure 1 we summarise our theoretical approach.

Design and Methodology
At the methodological level, we study CSR as an object that must be approached as a combination of structural, processual and

interpretative elements (Pasquero, 2005). CSR is treated as the processual element of this research. The appropriation of the concept is taken to be the interpretative element of CSR. This stance enables us to understand it according to whichever process the actors deem appropriate, reflecting the view of the concept as being ambiguous.The structural element is represented by the Tunisian GC Network, which we contend, can explain the CSR appropriation.

At the operational level, this research is situated in a pragmatic constructivist paradigm (Von Glaserfel 1988, 2001, Le Moigne, 1995, 2001, 2007). Regarding this we were a research actor, involved as the coordinators of the Tunisian GC Network during the18 month intervention for research. Our methodology is a qualitative strategy through which we sought to construct reality through our research intervention (Giordano, 2003, Duchesne and Leurebourg, 2012). We could access this reality through six case studies (Yin, 1994; Hlady Rispal, 2002; De La Ville, 2000). Yin (1994: 7) advocates this method when the research question begins with "how" or "why", and our enquiry fits this as we seek to know how membership of a network impacts upon the appropriation of CSR by the company. The use of the case study approach is deemed appropriate as we can discover the singularities across time and space of CSR appropriation processes. The purpose through deploying this research strategy is the generation of new theoretical concepts and propositions (Yin, 1994).

Einsehardt (1989) recommends a sample of four cases to make a convincing theoretical model so we opted for six cases for this reason. We have chosen six companies according to two conditions, as shown in table 1.

A requirement was that t the studied companies belonged to the Tunisian GC Network. We were involved with them through our implementation of an action plan for network member companies. This focused on three areas: awareness raising, training and networking around CSR. A further requirement was that they were at different stages of the development of their practice of CSR: some were at a less advanced stage and others were at a primary stage of just learning about CSR. For the selection criteria regarding the CSR level of practice, we relied on our own perceptions, as we supported and followed these companies for the 18 month period. We also consulted the CSR report issued by the company which we term documentary study. This method of reasoned choice approach to sampling is defined as the use of informed judgment to select very precisely the elements of a small sample. This guarantees the criteria required to comply with the design of the research are satisfied (Royer and Zarlowski, 1999: 196).

Table 1: Sample of companies used as case studies

Company/ Case	Business sector	Size	CSR status
A	Private: Food and Beverages	Large	Advanced stage in CSR practice
B	Private: Telecommunications	Large	Advanced stage in CSR practice
C	Private: Quarrying	Large	Advanced stage in CSR practice
D	Private: Textiles	Medium	Less advanced stage but practising CSR
E	Private: Group operating in many sectors: finance / industry / real estate / service / tourism	Large	Less advanced stage but practising CSR
F	Public: Scientific Research Organization	Small	Primary stage of CSR learning

During data collection we carried out triangulation both temporal and spatial and focused on different levels (Cohen and Manion, 1985, Pourtois and Desmet, 1988). We applied a range of techniques: observation (Peretz, 1998), semi-structured interviews (Wacheux, 1996, Romelaer, 2006) and collective interviews (Morgan, 1997, Wacheux, 1996, Hlady Rispal 2002), as well as the aforementioned documentary research.

Direct observation was facilitated through our role as coordinators of the GC Tunisia Network which allowed us access, a form of social interaction within the environment studied (Peretz, 1998).

The recording of data consisted of updating the devices, describing situations, giving an idea of the extent of the interactions in the GC Network and the collective action that was taking place. Our data gathering took place once or twice a week (depending on events) during the 18 months. This information was annotated with conceptual or theoretical references akin to microanalyses(Igalens and Roussel, 1998). The logbook (Igalens and Roussel 1998, Baribeau 2005, Savoie-Zajc 2009) was the tool we used to record our observations and notes (Peretz, 1998) . By the end of this intervention research, we had recorded nearly 150 pages of observations and notes. In addition, we had gathered minutes, reports of meetings, mission statments and seminar documentation.

For semi-structured interviews within companies, sampling was achieved through "reasoned choice" (Royer and Zarlowski, 1999: 196).

We selected CSR managers as our typical cases and the interview guide used with these managers was based on the literature (Weick, 1995).

For the collective interviews, we only had the opportunity to carry out these twice, in companies A and B.[2]

We applied qualitative content analysis to the collected materials including transcripts of the semi-structured and collective interviews, observation notes, CSR reports produced by our case companies and minutes of meetings. This approach served two functions: the heuristic function which favours "exploratory grouping and increases the propensity to discover", and also "the function of the administration of the proof", which allows researchers to develop propositions or hypotheses (Bardin, 1977: 33). The content analysis started with the choice of thematic units. A theme is considered to be: "a unit of meaning that emerges naturally from the text analyzed according to criteria relating to the theory that guides reading" (Bardin, 1977: 136).

For the purposes of categorisation, we used open coding (Andreani and Conchon, 2005), which is also known as heap coding (Bardin, 1977). This involves line-by-line reading and looking for similar sets of meaning. This achieved a first level of ranking according to sub-themes, then we carried out a second ranking of our sub-themes under a general theme, which, in turn was placed under a thematic category. Each thematic category was obtained through abstraction and conceptualisation which allowed us to group the themes emerging from the data according to our theoretical framework. This process is termed axial coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

The work of conceptualisation through thematic categories brought forward concepts from our theoretical framework, and others from literature (Cramer and al., 2006; Asif and al., 2013). that we did not employ at the outset of the study. This open coding was conducted according to an inductive procedure leading to a "conceptualisation and progressive linking of the data" (Paillé, 1996: 184).

The analysis of the cases was achieved through following a case-oriented strategy (Miles and Huberman, 2003). We applied the theoretical framework to study the first case in depth (case company A), and subsequently the others in order to verify whether the initial outcomes discovered in the first case corresponded with those in the other cases. This is termed a replicative strategy (Yin, 1994). This phase

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[2] All stages of the research were conducted in French. Data were later translated later for this publication, with the support of a translator.

was followed with inter-case analysis (Miles and Huberman, 2003). The results are presented in the following section.

Findings and Discussion

The results consist of theoretical propositions that we have developed from theanalysis. They can only be considered in terms of their potential for analytical generalisation (Yin, 2012). The results show three different stages of sensemaking around CSR. We summarise them as follows.

An intersubjective construction of sense:Case F.

This organisation joined the GC Network in May 2013 before our research intervention started and when the network was without a robust structure. We gave this company the CSR status of learning, but even after joining, it failed to return the Communication On Progress (COP): its report on CSR required by the GC Network. Moreover, it did not carryout its CSR actions. Aware of this gap, this organisation's leaders contacted us with a view to benefiting from training sessions aimed at raising staff awareness of CSR, in particular, training for the general management. This organisation did not have a CSR strategy applicable at either the environmental or societal levels, and never issued a CSR report. For these reasons, we assign it the CSR status of primary stage of CSR learning

This case is the archetype of an intersubjective construction characterised by strong ambiguity and equivocality.

In this organisation, we noticed identity struggles, especially between the researchers and the administrative staff of this research centre.

The rooting in identity construction (Weick, 1995: 20) is the first property of sensemaking, showing how this beginning of sensemaking is rooted in identity. It makes the identity of the actors an important component of the perception of CSR and thus of the meaning they will negotiate with each other.

The director of the centre, himself a researcher, said:

> *"We are a research centre and the researcher is selfish by definition ... Since these voluntary CSR actions are not recognised, he will never get involved. ... .I am not as motivated as you (addressing the CSR manager). The researchers will not be interested in this kind of initiative, because the work of a researcher is a solitary work. "*

These words and the climate, which appeared somewhat tense during the collective interview, show the fixed ideas that researchers have regarding CSR. That is, that they were confined to seeing CSR as

comprising voluntary action. Above all, the tensions that existed between the CSR officer and the resistance displayed by the director, himself a researcher. It is from this context that explicit ambiguity feeds into this intersubjective process of sensemaking.

The CSR officer, aware of this situation, started a process of building meaning to reduce the ambiguities surrounding CSR. He acted as an agent of change, "a translator" (Callon, 1986: 204), "a pioneer and mediator with keys to reading complexity" (Louart, 2012: 152). He also regulated the tensions between these two identity profiles: the administrative staff and the researchers.

In the case of this organisation, ambiguity appears on two levels: one political and emotional and the other more practical through multiple and conflicting interpretations [characterization of ambiguity McCaskey's (1982) in Weick, 1995: 93].

During an interview, the CSR manager told us that the researchers underestimated the administrative staff, that there were constant tensions between them and management did nothing to change things. He questioned the bureaucracy that stagnated things as well as the attitudes of the officials who, being of the older generation, appeared overwhelmed by events.

We noted the words of the director during the collective interview.

> "As long as we are locked in the shackles of the administration, initiative is very limited. It is necessary that this CSR culture emanates from the highest levels so that we can be imbued with CSR principles. But this is not the case. We are in a blur that does not allow us to get involved. "

These remarks allude to the bureaucracy that slowed the construction of meaning and the inertia (Friedberg, 1997, Zghal, 2008) of the central administration. The researchers were indifferent to CSR and resisted the motivations of the CSR manager. They appeared to maintain this vagueness as a "denial of centralized power" (Zghal, 1994: 191).

The ambiguity apparent in this centre works on a practical level where CSR is not understood or is actually misunderstood.

The literature confirms that CSR is an elastic concept, is highly malleable, and can be open and multifaceted (Gond and Mullenbach Servayre, 2004; Aggeri and al., 2005; Gond, 2006). It is an umbrella concept (Gond, 2011) which groups different definitions. These properties of CSR tend to contribute to this equivocality around the concept.

Beyond these conceptual considerations, what seemed to confuse the CSR manager is a certain manipulation of meaning (Weick, 1995) in order to resist the establishment of a CSR process.

The deployment of a particular meaning depends in part on the particular interests at stake (Venard, 2006), Here we refer to those of the director who did not wish to engage in a CSR process. He maintained this equivocal meaning of CSR as he apparently thought that it required a request for funds from the Ministry of Supervision. The director resisted this CSR approach by defending the interests of researchers in terms of the allocation of funds for research. In this case, the exercise of power was based on a fundamental asymmetry of resources, the fruit of domination (Friedberg, 1997).

It is in this context of identity struggles, conflicts of values, the exercise of power and manipulation of meaning around CSR, that there has been a split between the researchers and the administrative staff.

Faced with this situation, the CSR manager joined the GC Network to engage in a CSR process, where he immersed himself in success stories and premises to realise his project of change through attending seminars organised by the coordinator of the GC Network. By engaging with this Network (e,g, training and networking), he was able to make a senseforcing and a sensegiving that aims to change the aprioris of resistant actors in the centre, including researchers and more particularly the director.

The CSR manger acted as the focal point (Kleine and Hauff, 2009) of this sensemaking between network resources and centre members. There appeared to be intersubjective construction where these actors interacted and , contradicted each other, confronted the meaning that they gave to CSR and finally arrived at a possible stabilisation of meaning.

In this case, the CSR manager, supported by the GC Network, acted as a manager of meaning (Smircich and Morgan, 1982). He helped dispel these ambiguities and identity struggles that resulted from a rigid bureaucratic structure that was not appropriate for the successful implementation of CSR.

> "*When I joined the network, I had to work with other companies and I kept reminding myself of what I experienced in the centre. One day I was in my office and I put pen on paper in black and white, what I had to do, step by step. I talked about my action plan with some colleagues and I convinced them. A meeting was planned with management to establish a dialogue. I know*

> *it's hard, but I feel that change is taking place and attitudes can change. " (CSR manager)*

This CSR manager used simple words in his oral communication with the workers. He initiated a dialogue with the researchers. He organized a meeting with the members of the administration to decide to reduce paperwork through the purchase of an integrated management computer software package. By so doing, the administrative and financial management burden was put online.

A meeting was organised to discuss the administrative procedures for setting up CSR projects. A board of directors was established to empower the companye in terms of decision-making so it did not have to depend on the parent ministry. This meeting made it possible to draw up a charter signed by all the staff showing their commitment and that of the company regarding CSR.

Communication is the essence of organisations because it creates structures that then affect what is said or done, and by whom (Weick, 1987: 97). These structures form the basis of organizing (Giordano, 2006).

The GC Network supported the CSR manager in his efforts and guided him towards the realisation of an action plan that he proposed to the board of directors. The GC Network as a collective structure served as a framework for the change being initiated by the CSR manager. It allowed him to acquire resources in terms of information and training, but also in the motivation of staff and leaders that was necessary for the establishment of the CSR process.

In the following case, the passage from the intersubjective construction of sense to the generic construction is illustrated.

A transition from an intersubjective to a generic construction of sense:Case E.

Company E belongs to a diverse group of companies operating in several sectors: finance, industry, real estate, services and tourism. Its group employs 1,500 people. In terms of CSR, this company obtained the ISO 14001 and OHSAS 18001 certifications in 2012 and joined the GC Network in November 2009. It was among the first Tunisian companies to sign up.

Following the first informal interview and analysis of the Communication On Progress (CSR report)(COP), we assigned this case the CSR status "less advanced stage but practising CSR" to place it in our sample of companies. The commitment to standardisation (ISO standards) was not a sufficient level of assurance for us to let it be classified as "advanced in CSR practice".

However, this ranking proved temporary because following our immersion in the everyday experience of this company through carrying out observations and the formal interviewing. We were pleasantly surprised by its configuration of sensemaking that we explain here.

On close examination, it emerged that, from joining GC Network in 2009 to 2017, this company appeared to exhibit a situation of transition from the intersubjective construction of sense where CSR standards are absent and ambiguity is strong, to the generic construction which corresponds to the most advanced stage regarding the appropriation of CSR.

CSR manger said:

> *"I think that the error of some companies when they engage in CSR is to want to quickly go through some steps. It's been 8 years since we decided to start a CSR approach: We had moments of doubt and uncertainty where we did not know how to do it. We did not have a department dedicated to CSR. It was disorderly and everyone was trying to do his best. Today we benefit from the GC Network that helps us to institutionalise our CSR practice, which are still informal."*

This transition took place across a period of eightyears thanks to organisational learning about CSR. In 2009 when this company became involved in the GC Network, and therefore also in a CSR process, it faced a period of uncertainty and disorder especially because at that time, the companies adhering to the GC were without accompanying structures (before our intervention research).

This type of uncertainty reported in company case E about their experience eight years ago, is related to an ambiguity about roles. When these are vague and responsibilities are unclear actors do not have a clearly defined set of activities (McCaskey's 1982 in Weick 1995: 93). When equivocality or ambiguity is strong and the repertoires of rules and procedures are non-existent, the construction of meaning takes the form ofan intersubjective construction (Weick, 1995).

This period corresponded to a time of "organised anarchy" which is described by Weick (1995: 160) as being unique because it is guided by continuous choices rather than historical precedents. The sensemaking of organised anarchies is continuous because it is not overloaded by routines. It is because members generate commitment and justification that anarchy makes sense to them (Weick, 1995: 161).

The strong equivocality and organised anarchy, experienced by this company eight years ago, was overcome due ton organisational learning about CSR which all employees aligned with. This learning took place owing to their reluctance to satisfy equivocation (Weick, 1979: 189). It was an act of updating and punctuating a continuous experience (Weick and Westley, 1996: 456) whereby the learning occured in the interstices between different experiences of order and disorder (Clegg and al., 2005: 155). It is in this sense that organisational learning and sensemaking are intimately linked (Garreau, 2006).

The sensemaking perspective includes learning as a process that is part of both organisation and meaning. This is more than a simple interpretation because it concerns a materialized sensemaking (Colville and al., 2016).

This process in the case of company E can be described as a transversal and integrated CSR approach. It is this incremental process that allowed for the transition from an intersubjective to a generic construction of sense. Currently, CSR is practised in this company, according to an informal process where it is not limited to one centralised department. This is the transversal management of CSR. The principles of the GC Network are shared according to an integrated approach that involves the various functions of the company departments. CSR is currently an integral part of the business.

The HR department ensures that human rights are respected while the quality department ensures the implementation of principles regarding standardisation of health and safety at work. The Research and Development department is responsible for creating innovative products that are recyclable and environmentally sound. In addition, the maintenance department deals with the recycling of waste material, its management and recovery and the information system service handles waste paper.

This incremental integration of CSR principles into the management system has taken place through the adoption of a set of values including reliability, innovation and commitment. All staff and partnering stakeholders were included in this.

This transversal CSR approach is supported by the company's policy, the strategic vision of which is based on the ten principles of the GC Network. The company implemented its vision by providing staff with its paradigms (using policy and strategy documentation) through a transversal management of CSR. These made it possible to unify the employees around the CSR agenda and reduce ambiguity and disorder which reigned in the early years. The meaning that this

company eventually settled upon was catalysed by a set of values and beliefs that matched with its ideology (culture).

Corporate strategy and policy when viewed as paradigms and the corporate culture viewed as ideology, contributed to reducing the equivocality around CSR and the stabilisation of meaning. These are factors that supported the appropriation of CSR. This was the passage from the intersubjective construction where the CSR referentials are absent to the generic construction where the actors could draw on the paradigms and the ideology to make sense of the notion of CSR.

This CSR process is stable and scalable because it relies on what Weick (1979) calls assembly rules or rules used to assemble around a process, for example: procedures, instructions or standards applied in the organisation.

The role of CEO is an assembly rule. In this company, the CSR approach was supported by the CEO, who was aware that sustainability was key to the group's future. Therefore, we can confirm the key role of the leader in legitimising this change and the stabilisation of meaning around CSR.

CSR tools also constitute assembly rules for the sensemaking process and CSR appropriation process as they can assist in rationalising the meanings of the CSR actors. These rules of assembly through CSR tools are: first and foremost, the transversal management of CSR (Delhaye and al., 2006). Following this, the CSR indicators, the charter of values and internal regulations, the ISO14001 standards, the antipollution standard Euro6, the Environmental Performance Plan (EPP), the resource consumption audit and the ECOTECH programme.

It emerged that in this company CSR was undertaken from a pragmatic stance where "the tools of CSR are not promoted for themselves, but as elements, stages, of a process of more complex and long-lasting change which influences the organization as a whole"(Delhaye and al., 2006: 16). That is, management according to the values of CSR was not delegated to particular CSR departments or limited to sustainable development. Rather it had become connected and embedded in the operations of the entire company.

The CSR manager said concerning the development of responsible behaviour among employees:

> *"I can give you the example of carpooling that has developed in the company. Employees were not obliged to do it, but I think this shows how much CSR has been assimilated by all staff. You see! We do not have a CSR department, but we have opted for a CSR rooted in the company's day-to-day business, a CSR that*

is part of our day-to-day management system. That is to be responsible; it is to develop citizen's acts. "

These remarks from the CSR manager highlight the result of this learning of CSR spread over eight years. Employees, drawing on paradigms (politics and strategy), ideology (culture) and assembly rules of the sensemaking process (CSR tools), have developed reflexes for organisational citizenship (Organ, 1988; Smith and al., 1983; Bateman and Organ, 1983). These are not obligations demanded according to the role or attributions prescribed by the job held. Rather than being part of the specific terms of the contract between the employee and the organisation, these behaviours are a matter of personal choice (Organ, 1988: 4).

In this company, we were able to attend the annual CSR indicators communication and collective drafting of the CSR report.Through this we observed the importance of one-to-one communication and social dialogue.

Therichness of face-to-face interaction facilitated the understanding by staff of complex events and the creation of innovations to manage complexity (Weick, 1995).

The measurement and evaluation of CSR is based on the axiom that "what is measured is managed" (Asif and al., 2013). It is clear that in this company, employees stabilise their sense around CSR, by realising the effects of their responsible behaviour through the annual CSR indicators.

Concerning the enactment, the word "enact" implies network stimuli, these network stimuli in case E are represented by the training and awareness actions, which have generated an alignment on SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) at the level of the 2015 CSR approach and a formalization and institutionalisation of the CSR approach. The CSR officer speaking about these interactions with the network:

"The network helped us materialise our CSR commitment, which was so rooted in the management of the company that we did not realize it. Through the formalisation of our CSR commitment, thanks to the actions of the network, we are today aware that we must orient our actions and align them with the SDG (Sustainable Development Goals of Global Compact)."

The GC Network is a framework within which the resources and capacities of the actors come together. It is, through its material and immaterial means, a source of value creation and synergy (Bonneveux and Saulquin, 2009). Among the intangible means of

value creation of GC Network, is the institutionalisation of CSR. The leverage effect of the GC Network occurs through the alignment of the CSR approach with the SDG established by the GC Network. The training and awareness raising activities are likely to produce positive spin-offs in terms of image and legitimacy for the company.

Overall, we can say that the practice of CSR in company E is through a balanced approach which consists of integrating CSR into the traditional management of the company (Asif and al., 2013). Sensemaking is pragmatic and driven by values (Cramer and al., 2006) and the resulting CSR commitment is aimed at reducing costs and risks (Asif and al., 2013). This sensemaking is pragmatic because the CSR principles are dictated by operational objectives directly related to the operation of the company and are tangible (Cramer and al., 2006).

We see in the next section how the generic construction of sense around CSR is characterised.

A Generic Construction of sense:Cases A, B, C and D

The year 2005, when company D joined the GC Network coincided with a critical period in the textiles sector. Between 2003 and 2004 14 companies closed down without prior notice, contrary to the legislative provisions listed in the labour code. These closures would have resulted in the loss of more than 1,000 jobs (Bettaieb, 2007) and the decline of Tunisia from fifth to seventh place behind China, Turkey, Bangladesh, India, Romania and Hong Kong in terms of European imports (Amara and Bensebaa, 2009).

It is in this context of resilience (Weick, 1993, 2003; Weick and Sutcliffe, 2007) that the process of sensemaking of enterprise D was engaged. The CSR manager made the following comments.

> *"We decided to adopt a CSR strategy based on the GC principles when we were in a critical phase, when the textile sector was in crisis".*

Resilience is one way of understanding how some businesses have the ability to rebuild while others collapse and disappear in response to unexpected crises and events (Weick and Suncliffe, 2007).

It combines three types of capabilities: the absorptive capacity, allowing the company not to break up in the face of adversity; the ability to bounce back by which it can reinvent for itself a future and learning ability so it can strengthen itself and grow through its experiences (Weick and Sutcliffe, 2007: 71).

Company D combined these three types of skills, through taking a proactive attitude to engaging in a process of sensemaking. The company understood that CSR was an issue of sustainability and that its anchoring in the company could not take place without the mobilisation of factors of resilience.

Company D adopted a new strategic vision and a CSR policy (paradigms) that it operationalised through a strategic roadmap and alignment with the universal standards and the principles of the GC Network. Renewing or even abandoning the strategies of the past is a factor of resilience (Bégin and Chabaud, 2010).

In a second step, the actors of the company go through "an organizing by creating the responses to deal with new situations. The quality and intensity of organizing help to build the resilience of a company " (Vandangeon-Derumez and Autissier, 2006: 173).

Company D had the status "active" from 2006 until July 2011: date of its removal from the GC, following the non publication of the COP Communication On Progress (CSR report required by the Global Compact) for the years 2009 and 2010.

This company applied for membership of the GC Network in 2012, which remained unactivated because of the lack of any structure being available. Only in 2015, as coordinators of the GC Network, we included company D in the GC.

In 2016 and following the training provided which focused on the 17 SDG, the company aligned its CSR objectives to those SDG(Sustainable Development Goals of Global Compact) in the framework of sustainable structural reinforcement.

The CSR manager said:

> "Currently we are in a phase of Sustainable Structural Reinforcement through training on the 17 sustainable development objectives achieved by the Network. We have been able to split our CSR actions according to these objectives ... We had some problems with reporting between 2012 and 2014, after which our membership was cancelled. It is thanks to the local Network that we were able to be rehabilitated in 2015."

In this case the nGC Network intervened in the process of sensemaking (enactment) and in the process of appropriation of CSR through training and information.

Concerningthe practice of CSR in this company follows a top down approach that started at the strategic level whereby it o integrated

the CSR objectives in the existing management of the company (Asif and al., 2013). The CSR commitment of the company had the aim of creating a competitive advantage (Asif and al., 2013).

The sensemaking around CSR in this company was policy-oriented (Cramer and al., 2006) because the CSR principles are embedded in company policy and in its mission (Cramer and al., 2006).

Case C emerged as a second example of a generic construction of sense configuration. Company C was the first cement plant in Tunisia and was founded by two French manufacturers in 1932 in Djebel Djelloud, two kilometers from the city centre of Tunis. This company remained the only cement factory in Tunisia for 30 years. It joined the GC Network of companies in August 2012.

CSR manager said.

> *"Our CSR strategy is guided by the local context as a polluting industry (cement sector). We aligned our CSR action plan with the principles of GC to avoid the claims of the local community, especially after the revolution".*

Whether it is at the level of the company's strategy and policy (paradigms) or at the level of culture (ideology), this sensemaking around CSR was embedded in the local context. It took the form of a cyclical process of ongoing interpretation and action. The members of the organisation interpreted their environment, in and through interactions with others, allowing them to understand the world and to act collectively (Maitlis, 2005).

The importance given to the local context assisted with building meaning around CSR. Awareness of CSR was at the heart of the process of strategic change towards a citizenship commitment of the company.

The social context is beneficial for creating meaning because it links people to the actions they must justify, affects the availability of information, and provides norms and expectations that limit explanations (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978: 233). In a certain way it reduced the equivocality.

In the post-revolution context in Tunisia, during which the country went through a phase of reconfiguration regarding power and socio-economic issues (Hibou and al, 2011), civil society gradually became increasingly demanding. Moreover, as the activity of this company (cement works) was particularly polluting, the top management could not ignore the local population which was a key stakeholder.

Several scholarson CSR have emphasized in recent years the importance of context in the development of CSR (Jamali and Karam, 2016). CSR is linked to the national business system (NBS) of each context and works in collaboration with internal and external company stakeholders, such as local communities (Ibid).

CSR is strongly enacted by the norms of the context in question and the values embedded in the implicit social contract (normative isomorphism) (Ibid).

The senior management of company C operationalized this enactment with its immediate environment by integrating the ten principles of the GC Network in its strategic roadmap. This made it possible for them to implement their CSR commitments towards all their stakeholders, in particular, the local communities.

The management I mobilised CSR tools, such as: the anti-corruption charter and the code of ethics, the Central Works Council (CWC), the trades union through social dialogue, standards (ISO 9001, API Specification Q1, ISO 14001, OHSAS 1800, ISO26000), a staff satisfaction survey and a suggestion box.

The CSR manager described one of these tools.

> "The CWC and the union have a mobilszing power, we use them to mobilise employees and communicate with them around CSR principles. But more importantly, the social dialogue that we have established makes concrete progress through decisions that address the concerns of employees. We are in a CSR process that evolves on a daily basis according to this social dialogue. "

The capacity of the union and/or the works council to enthuse staff is recognised in a large body of literature. They have a similar role to "managers of meaning" (Smircich and Morgan, 1982) because they act as "focal points" (Kleine and Hauff, 2009) in this sensemaking process.

The CSR manager reported on these as initiators of collective action in the reconfiguration of CSR, through social dialogue.

We consider social dialogue as a CSR tool and a rule of assembly in this process of sensemaking, because it is the result of the interaction of the union and the employees; the CWC and employees; the union and the CWC. It acts, therefore, as a regulator of meaning around CSR. Making sense involves reacting to others by accommodating interaction in ways that facilitate acceptance and approval (Weick, 1995).

We have highlighted the particularity of this company which paid particular attention to the local context. This policy with respect to the union and the CWC ran parallel to the national context of union power (Adam, 1991). The union adopted a proactive strategy (Sobczak and Havard, 2013), by creating organic links with the CWC (Le Crom, 2005).

The union is a key stakeholder in CSR (Descolonges and Saincy, 2004; Penalva Icher, 2008; Preuss, 2008; Tassi and al., 2009; Morin, 2012; Sobczak and Havard, 2015).

Through the social dialogue in this company, it is possible to observe a shaping of the meaning around CSR, where the CWC and the union make sense of CSR by rationalising the aspirations of employees. They influenced sensemaking by engaging in a sensegiving when mobilising employees around CSR.

The role of the GC Network in this process was to support the CSR manager in real environmental and societal citizen integration. Particular attention was paid to the relations that the company had with the local populations and the authorities with which it cooperated. This resulted in practical advice and the participation of the CSR manager in workshops on CSR issues alongside representatives from companies facing similar concerns.

The appropriation of CSR in this company was based on a top down approach that started at the strategic level where CSR objectives were integrated in the existing management of the company (Asif and al., 2013). The company's CSR commitment, in this case, had the goal of creating a win-win situation in respect of stakeholders (Carroll and Shabana, 2010).

The sensemaking around CSR in this company was both procedural and policy-oriented (Cramer and al., 2006). This is procedural because the CSR values are incorporated into the procedures and management of the company. It is also policy-oriented because the CSR principles are embedded in company policy and integrated into its mission (Cramer and al., 2006).

Company B was the second private telecommunications operator to obtain a mobile phone licence in Tunisia. It is a subsidiary of a French telecommunications group.

In terms of CSR, the company is supported in its approach by its parent company, which has had nearly 15 years of experience in integrating sustainable development and CSR issues into the strategy of the whole group. This enabled this Tunisian subsidiary to gain time in terms of learning CSR. It has benefited from this for seven years by using

guidelines from the parent company in an adapted form suitable for the Tunisian context.

The deployment of CSR in this company was noted to be top down, with the approach starting at the strategic level where the CSR objectives were integrated into the existing management of the company (Asif and al., 2013). The company's CSR commitment, in this case, was aimed at generating competitive advantages from this process as well as strengthening the legitimacy and reputation of the company (Asif and al., 2013).

The CSR manager in company B reported that:"CSR is a business and we must profit from it... the GC concept sells well".

Case company A was a large Tunisian group of agribusinesses focused on marketing four main products: soft drinks, beer, mineral waters and fruit juices. This private group held a leading position in the marketing of beverages controling approximately 85% of the national beer market, 90% of that of soda and 40% to 50% of that of mineral water. The CSR manager in company A commented as follows:

> *"Our CSR commitment has imposed itself, with the evolution of society, the company, and the means of communication (internet). We are a big company; we have to be always up-to-date, so we had to react, that's why we put in place a CSR policy".*

We found the same sensemaking configuration as in case B and in both cases, the action of the GC Network was essentially in the institutionalisation of CSR practices. Case A and case B represent the archetype of a generic construction of sense.

The sensemaking around CSR in these companies was found to be both external and policy-oriented (Cramer and al., 2006) wherein the companies were concerned about public perception primarily by focusing on external communication (Cramer and al., 2006) and taking advantage of the spin-offs of institutional symbols such as the GC Network.

To summarise the appropriation of CSR in the context of a generic construction of sense where CSR standards exist, we conclude that the actors draw on the paradigms (Weick, 1995), namely, the strategy and the policy of the company. Whatever the basis of this strategy or policy (triggered by resilience, by context or otherwise), they act favorably in the development of equivalent meanings that give rise to mimetic responsible behaviour. The responsible behaviours of the employees in these companies are also driven by a corporate culture

characterized by ideology (Mintzberg 1989, Weick, 1995 and Shein 1997).

We found a base of values that united the employees in all four cases. These paradigms and bases of values guided the actors' interactions towards socially responsible behaviours rooted in their cognitive structure.

This is how CSR is appropriated as part of a generic construction.

Three steps sum up the CSR appropriation of companies that are members of GC Network. This Network intervened in this process of sensemaking through CSR awareness raising, training and networking. It acted on three levels: strategic (the CSR strategy, institutionalisation of CSR practices); technical knowledge (standardisation of CSR) and, cognitive (adherence to change, motivation of actors). As stated in our theoretical framework that theories of action filter and interpret environmental signals and link stimuli to responses (Weick, 1995). The stimuli, in our study, are those actions of the GC Network Tunisia through awareness raising, training and networking around CSR.

Conclusion

We have addressed our research question by showing how the GC Network intervened in the CSR appropriation process in line with sensemaking theory (enactment) with our empirical study and contribution to management research. Concerning our theoretical contribution, Weick (1995) emphasises that intersubjective and generic construction are linked, but without specifying, clearly, how these two levels interact. We noticed that in respect to CSR sensemaking, these two constructions are successive and not simultaneous. One is necessary for the other, but they act at different stages of CSR practice. We have also been able to correlate these two stages (intersubjective and generic constructions) with the five types of sensemaking established by Cramer and al. (2006). These authors highlight the five types of sensemaking regardless of the stage of the company's CSR commitment. Moreover, they have not specified the sequence for this construction of meaning (intersubjective and generic constructions).

From an empirical and managerial point of view, what interested us in this research which is rooted in pragmatism, was to reveal the regularities of this process of sensemaking and, consequently, to find the logical order of the CSR appropriation process. This knowledge allows companies, in general, but particularly those in a network and willing to engage in CSR, to locate themselves in this sensemaking process. These three stages highlight the elements that favour the construction of meaning (such as the Network providing: awareness

training and networking, and those that slow it down such as bureaucracy, identity struggles, multiplication of CSR tools, superficial CSR communication. This ranges from the primary stage (CSR status: learning) and triggering of sensemaking, up to the advanced stage (CSR status: advanced).

These stages allow managers to identify the sensemaking configuration (pragmatic, procedural, policy-oriented, external) that corresponds to their CSR vision and strategy.

Regarding the limits of this study, despite the methodological precautions undertaken by adopting a triangulation method in data collection and analysis, our epistemological position and methodological approach could undermine the internal validity and reliability of the study. This research has been deeply rooted in the Tunisian context, with an idiographic approach. There is a local network of companies adhering to the GC to be found in 80 countries[3]. It would be interesting, in future research, to broaden this issue and in particular, to investigate a CSR appropriation process within the framework of this network (GC) in other contexts (Maghreb, Africa, Europe or America) in order to know whether the theoretical and empirical contribution of this research is transferable to other cases.

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