



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Scandinavian Journal of Management

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/scajman

Sensemaking of environmental commitment: a socio-historical contextualization of post-Soviet managers' views

Maria Ivanova-Gongne^{a,*}, Tamara Galkina^b, Maria Uzhegova^c, Lasse Torkkeli^{d,e}

^a Åbo Akademi University, School of Business and Economics, Vänrikinkatu 3B, 20500 Turku, Finland

^b Aalto University School of Business, Ekonominaukio 1, 02150 Espoo, Finland

^c LUT University, School of Business and Management, P.O.Box 20, FI-53851 Lappeenranta, Finland

^d LAB University of Applied Sciences, Yliopistonkatu 36, 53850 Lappeenranta, Finland

^e Turku School of Economics, University of Turku, FI-20014 Turku, Finland

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Sensemaking
Environmental commitment
Corporate social responsibility
Microfoundations
Soviet Union
Socio-historical context
Russia

ABSTRACT

The different social contexts and historical backgrounds of countries in which companies operate may influence how their managers understand and apply the concept of environmental commitment. Thus, the understanding of environmental commitment in the post-communist societies of Central and Eastern Europe can be expected to be different from the Western markets. This study sheds light on these issues by analyzing managerial stories about environmental commitment in Russia. It explains how managers' sensemaking is shaped by the Soviet socio-historical context. This study contributes to the limited literature on environmental commitment in post-communist societies and provides a link between environmental commitment and sensemaking research, thus responding to recent calls for a clarification of the microfoundations of corporate social responsibility.

1. Introduction

In light of increasing concerns about humankind's ecological footprint and its impact on environmental prosperity, businesses across the globe are recognizing the importance of their environmental commitment. Environmental commitment is a very individual-centric concept as it is based on environmental concerns, experiences, values, awareness about ecological problems, and a perceived obligation to resolve them (Keogh & Polonsky, 1998; Kuckertz & Wagner, 2010). Cantor et al. (2013) argue that the extent to which managers act and lead as environmental champions depends on their personal psychological identification with environmental issues. This, in turn, is subject to the ethical standards of a particular social context (Meek et al., 2010). Indeed, Francoeur et al. (2017) find that some managers accept less financial compensation from environmentally friendly companies. Thus, how individual managers make sense of and value their own environmental commitment and that of their partners may determine their companies' business operations.

For these reasons, establishing a link between how managers make sense of environmental commitment and the context in which this sensemaking is performed is particularly useful for understanding the

phenomenon of environmental commitment at the microfoundational level. Since making sense of environmental commitment varies depending on individuals' contexts and past experiences (Henriques & Sadosky, 1999), it can be identified from the cues that these individuals include in their stories. This stance implies that, from a sensemaking perspective, a manager's environmental commitment can depend on their historical background and the context of their country of origin—an aspect that extant research has not accounted for.

This study aims to respond to these omissions in the literature by exploring managerial sensemaking of environmental commitment through analyzing stories from Russian managers of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) about environmental commitment through the prism of Soviet socio-historical context. Through such analysis, we seek to address the following research question: How does socio-historical context impact managerial sensemaking of environmental commitment? Russia today still bears some traces of Soviet managerial culture and is affected by the uneven economic development in post-Soviet societies (Hardy, 2014) and the heritage of socialist and communist ideologies (Runst, 2013; Puffer & Braithwaite, 2016). While Russian managers undoubtedly learned from Western countries during the early post-Soviet period of the 1990 s (Astakhova et al., 2010), Russia's

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: mivanova@abo.fi (M. Ivanova-Gongne), tamara.galkina@aalto.fi (T. Galkina), maria.uzhegova@lut.fi (M. Uzhegova), lasse.torkkeli@utu.fi (L. Torkkeli).

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scajman.2022.101233>

Received 8 January 2021; Received in revised form 9 July 2022; Accepted 21 August 2022

Available online 3 September 2022

0956-5221/© 2022 The Author(s). Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

current state-managed capitalism (Villo et al., 2020) and society are still largely influenced by its Soviet past (Graziosi, 2021; Outila & Fey, 2021). In particular, managers' attitudes towards corporate social responsibility (CSR) are partly shaped by the Soviet socio-historical context as the emphasis on the social dimension of CSR in Russia can be manifested as a consequence of Soviet history (Fifka & Pobizhan, 2014). Therefore, the understanding of environmental commitment in Russia can be different from the predominant Western-European one, partly due to the remaining effect of Soviet socio-historical context on business.

This study contributes to the literature in two main ways. Firstly, it adds to the limited literature on environmental commitment, which has predominantly been studied as an individual-level concept (Keogh & Polonsky, 1998). While we acknowledge individuals' sensemaking of environmental commitment, we take it a step further as our focus on the contextual environment allows for an understanding of the antecedents that enact environmental commitment. The concept of environmental commitment has mainly been studied in the context of developed countries (e.g., Raineri & Paillé, 2015; Francoeur et al., 2017) and has only recently been studied in emerging market research (Chen et al., 2015; Jamali et al., 2015). The need to understand environmental commitment in the context of emerging markets and transition economies is stipulated by the different business environments and respective variations in business ethics, which should be considered when operating in these markets (Moreira Caetano Pinto et al., 2018). Secondly, this study incorporates the environmental commitment and sensemaking streams of research, thus facilitating the understanding of the ways in which individual managers comprehend, process, and assimilate environmental commitment through their values, beliefs, and norms. In doing so, we respond to recent calls to examine the microfoundations of CSR (Hahn & Aragón-Correa, 2015; Hafenbrädl & Waeger, 2017) while adding to the discussion on the role of sensemaking in CSR (Angus-Leppan et al., 2010; Onkila & Siltaoja, 2017; Richter & Arndt, 2018).

The following theoretical section covers the existing research on environmental commitment and its cognitive underpinnings, after which the literature on sensemaking is detailed. Furthermore, we describe the methodology for the empirical part of our study. Following that, we present our findings and analyze them vis-à-vis our theoretical underpinnings and country-specific historical background. Finally, we present our conclusions and the resulting theoretical and practical contributions, after which the study concludes with a consideration of its limitations and the implications for future research.

2. Environmental commitment as a micro-level concept

Today, environmental managerial practices are becoming increasingly accepted in business as part of companies' CSR. Companies engage in production efficiency, energy reduction initiatives, and recycling due to their ecology-based activities (Chen et al., 2015; Boiral et al., 2014). This aggregate of environmental considerations and their associated practices, eco-friendly experiences, green values, awareness of ecological problems, and the perceived obligation to resolve them has attracted research attention for several decades (Henriques & Sadorsky, 1999; Buysse & Verbeke, 2003; Suasana & Ekawati, 2018). Kuckertz and Wagner (2010) call this combination of concerns and practices *sustainability orientation* and argue that it determines what managers will perceive as market imperfections and what opportunities they will detect. Likewise, Schick et al. (2002) suggest a similar term, *ecological orientation*, to describe this high level of environmental consciousness, and they show that it influences every aspect of the establishment of eco-dedicated companies.

Moreover, this orientation can be so strong that it remains an integral part of the business, even when founders and managers know it may impose additional costs and limit the company's growth. Antolin-Lopez et al. (2014) conclude that environmental orientation is a driver and antecedent of green ventures and that it explains the tension that results

from working towards both economic and environmental goals, which constitutes the core dilemma for environmentally responsible business founders.

Finding explanations for the distinctiveness of environmentally responsible businesses, Keogh and Polonsky (1998) build on studies about organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Positing that organizations can be committed to various moral philosophies, including environmental values, Keogh and Polonsky (1998) introduce the concept of *environmental commitment*, which is a rational or emotional attachment to the environment and an obligation to consider the environment's best interests when conducting business. Environmental commitment may arise internally, from the founders' personal aspirations and strategic managerial considerations, but can also arise externally as a result of regulatory and market pressures. Similar to the conceptualization of organizational commitment offered by Meyer and Allen (1991), Keogh and Polonsky (1998) detail three components of environmental commitment:

1. *Affective environmental commitment*: This is one's "deep personal desires, efforts, underlying beliefs, emotional attachments, and identification with the importance of the natural environment to society and business" (Keogh & Polonsky, 1998, p. 43). Managers driven by this internal environmental commitment tend to develop any and all environmental opportunities and spend as much energy as possible achieving their environmental goals.
2. *Continuance environmental commitment*: This commitment is based on one's "desires, efforts, and beliefs predicated almost exclusively on the economic and social costs associated with disregarding the environment" (Keogh & Polonsky, 1998, p. 43). This type of environmental commitment is expressed through establishing an organizational policy for the environment that guides opportunity identification. The dominant motivation behind this environmental commitment is external stakeholder pressure and the "need" to be green.
3. *Normative environmental commitment*: This is one's "desires, efforts, and beliefs limited to a sense of obligation—doing only what one is obliged to do for the environment" (Keogh & Polonsky, 1998, p. 43). Managers and business founders with this type of environmental commitment define opportunities according to the satisfaction of the obligation of "debt." Their "greenness" is defined by the mandatory eco-regulations and industry standards that they must follow.

Emphasizing the difference between these types of environmental commitment, Nair and Ndubisi (2015) argue that affective environmental commitment is engendered by desire, continuance by necessity, and normative by obligation. A sense of obligation is more powerful than a necessity and is oftentimes fulfilled under certain formal or legal preconditions. According to Nair and Ndubisi (2015) and Jansson et al. (2017), having environmentally committed managers influences the environmental orientation of an entire company, resulting in pro-environmental strategies, green leadership, and green innovations. Interestingly, the continuance and normative types influence an organization's environmental practices more than the affective type (Nair & Menon, 2008; Morales-Raya et al., 2019). These environmental practices, in turn, lead to increased performance and product competitiveness because they help to increase revenues or reduce costs through, for example, better access to certain markets, paying less due to the use of pollution control technology, decreasing the cost of materials and energy, and more (Ambec & Lanoie, 2008; Tarasova et al., 2014).

The environmental commitment of managers and, consequently, companies is strongly rooted in individuals' cognitive predispositions and structures. For example, the strength and nature of the environmental commitment of individual managers may depend on very personal characteristics, such as their religious beliefs (Abdelzaher & Abdelzaher, 2015) or value systems (Stead & Stead, 2000). For example, a study by Cui et al. (2015) shows that strong Christian religiosity among

top managers decreases managers' environmental commitment. Thus, it is not surprising that an individual manager's knowledge and skills in implementing environmental practices also play an important role in companies' involvement in such practices (Kim et al., 2015).

As it is subject to individuals' norms, beliefs, and attitudes, environmental commitment is a highly contextually embedded concept contingent upon social and institutional environments. Thus, managers' environmental commitments and eco-initiatives are often triggered by varying institutional pressures, such as regulatory changes (Delmas & Toffel, 2004; Rivera, 2004). Moreover, companies can be forced to participate in different environmental programs and increase their environmental disclosures (Albertini, 2014). In a similar vein, a study on the Russian renewable-energy sector shows that ineffective state support and institutional uncertainties can increase the risks associated with environmental projects and can undermine managers' willingness to implement them (Chebotareva et al., 2020). This reluctance can be also explained by chief executive officers (CEOs) of environmentally friendly companies receiving less compensation for their environmental activities than in environmentally careless companies. This negative relation is stronger in institutional contexts where national environmental regulations are weaker (Francoeur et al., 2017).

Neumayer (2002) also connects environmental commitment to political regimes, indicating that democratic countries sign and ratify more environmental agreements, participate in more environmental inter-governmental organizations, have better compliance in terms of environmental reporting requirements, have more territories with protected status, and produce and disclose more environmentally relevant information than non-democracies. This, in turn, affects environmental practices of companies and their managers. In Russia, companies generally lack motivation to follow best practice environmental standards (Shvarts et al., 2016), and reporting on environmental performance and soil and water pollution remains largely voluntary, resulting in inaccurate reporting (Makarova et al., 2019). Environmental practices manifest through the individual sensemaking of managers, a domain of literature which we will assess next.

3. Individual sensemaking and its embeddedness in macro-contexts

Sensemaking, at the literal level, means to make sense (Weick, 1995) and has been widely used in organization and management studies, mainly for understanding collective decision making and the processes of group and organizational change (Brown et al., 2015). Thus, sensemaking has been often analyzed as a dialogical, discursive, and intersubjective process (e.g., Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). This study considers sensemaking as an individual process that is embedded in a macro-context. Therefore, we do not simply analyze how managers make sense of environmental commitment, but we examine the embeddedness of their sensemaking in their particular social context.

Our focus is post-Soviet Russia, where the Soviet legacy is still strongly present in how CSR is understood and operationalized (Crotty, 2016). During Soviet times organizations had an important social function, apart from the economic one, by "providing individuals not only with guaranteed employment but also subsidized housing, health clinics, childcare, and so on" (Crotty, 2016, p. 832). Thereby, as a consequence of Soviet history, social responsibility is still highly emphasized and expected from various organizations in Russia (Ivanova-Gongne et al., 2022; Fifka & Pobizhan, 2014). This includes the popularity of charitable donations, which is both a result of the Soviet past (Fifka & Pobizhan, 2014) and the "scarce attempts by the government to promote CSR" (Ivanova-Gongne et al., 2022, p. 155). Russia has, however, weak institutions (Puffer & McCarthy, 2011), which do not properly support proactive implementation of CSR by companies (Ivanova-Gongne et al., 2022). As a result of Soviet history, traits as state control, power hierarchy, collectivism and "blat" (exchange of favors) are still widely practiced in Russia (Ivanova-Gongne & Koporcic,

Dziubaniuk, et al., 2018).

In terms of environmental responsibility, Russia is lagging in various rankings (Uzhegova et al., 2020) and has weak environmental regulations (Söderholm et al., 2015). Mirovitskaya and Soroos (1995, p. 78) state that the region of the former Soviet Union was in an "advanced state of environmental devastation" during the 1990 s, which may lie in the ineffectiveness of the Soviet system in terms of environmental preservation. In particular, Soviet system's "emphasis on rapid heavy industrialization and militarization and its reliance on measures of physical output rather than value—was a primary driver of environmental degradation" (Wernstedt, 2002, p. 495).

The afore-mentioned socio-historical context may contribute to how post-Soviet managers in Russia make sense of environmental commitment. In his seminal work, Weick (1995) outlines seven properties of sensemaking, namely identity construction, retrospection, focused on extracted cues, driven by plausibility, enactive of the environment, social, and ongoing. Generally, sensemaking offers an "explanation for how individuals make sense of their environment" (Helms Mills et al., 2010, p. 183). Sensemaking is largely enactive of its context as meaning is given to an experience within a certain context and the cues managers extract in their sensemaking focus on certain elements of that context (Helms Mills et al., 2010). Therefore, depending on the context, the sensemaking of certain concepts and phenomena can vary, which, in turn, is reflected in how individuals enact the concepts of, for example, environmental commitment.

A sensemaking perspective on CSR issues is a rather "recent but promising development" (Richter & Arndt, 2018, p. 587). Most research on CSR has predominantly focused on organizational sensemaking and on large multinational corporations (e.g., Clark & Geppert, 2011; Hong et al., 2016; Richter & Arndt, 2018), with the focus on individual sensemaking being a rather recent trend (Aguinis & Glavas, 2018). Individual sensemaking of CSR is particularly crucial when studying SMEs since they are often reluctant to apply CSR (Johnson & Schaltegger, 2016). In SMEs, the CEOs of the companies are oftentimes the sole decision-makers (Ivanova-Gongne & Torkkeli, 2018) and, thus, the predisposition towards environmental commitment derives from the individuals' backgrounds (cf. Jamali et al., 2015). Therefore, the predominant organizational stance on sensemaking should be complemented by an individual one when studying SMEs.

Moreover, there has been a call to understand sensemaking beyond the context of organizations (Aguinis & Glavas, 2018). For instance, socio-historical and cultural contexts play a large role in how sensemaking is shaped and enacted (Cardon et al., 2011; Ivanova-Gongne, 2015; Osland & Bird, 2000). While the cognitive and linguistic components of sensemaking have been relatively well-studied, the influence of larger contexts (e.g., institutional discourses, culture, politics, historical background) has been underresearched (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2015; Brown et al., 2015).

To delimit our focus, only the following properties of sensemaking are considered fruitful in our goal of connecting context and individual sensemaking:

1. *Retrospection*: Individuals largely rely on past experience to interpret a given event or phenomenon (Helms Mills et al., 2010). Due to our focus on the Soviet socio-historical context in this study, we treat retrospection as synonymous to history and do not consider retrospection in more recent events;
2. *Enactive of the environment*: Making sense of experiences occurs and is influenced by the environment or context within which the individual acts and makes sense of the world (Helms Mills et al., 2010). Enacting the environment and the retrospection elements of sensemaking help us understand the historical and contextual embeddedness of individual sensemaking; and
3. *Identity construction*: "Who we are and what factors have shaped our lives influence how we see the world" (Helms Mills et al., 2010, p. 184). In this study, we treat identity construction as individual and

not collective or organizational, resulting in this element embracing a more micro and cognitive perspective on sensemaking.

We focus only on these three elements of sensemaking as we argue that these are the most relevant in terms of understanding environmental commitment from the perspective of Russian SME middle-aged managers who have been engaged in business activities since the collapse of the Soviet Union. This argument is based on three main lines of thought: Firstly, Russian managers' sensemaking of environmental commitment may be, to some extent, based on their past experiences of conducting business in Russia, including during the Soviet era 1980 s and the turbulent 1990 s and early 2000 s (i.e., 'retrospection') (Crotty, 2016); secondly, the business environment may play a role in managers' understandings of the phenomenon (i.e., 'enactive of the environment') (Ivanova-Gongne et al., 2022); and thirdly, past and present experiences have shaped their identities as managers, and these identities play a role in their perceptions (i.e., 'identity construction') (Ivanova-Gongne et al., 2021). Focusing on these three properties allows the connection of the contextual factors (i.e., retrospection, enactive of the environment) with the cognitive elements (i.e., identity construction) in individual sensemaking. While we acknowledge that the other elements of sensemaking (e.g., ongoing, social) are also important, we purposefully avoided them since they pertain more to the longitudinal and collective nature of sensemaking, which is not the focus of this study.

Finally, extracted cues and plausibility are basic elements in the sensemaking process and describe its very nature. Thus, while we do not focus on them per se, they are present in any sensemaking process. Therefore, "by exploring the factors and events that shape who we are, we can see how they influence what cues we extract to make sense of issues" (Thurlow & Mills, 2015, p. 247). Weick (1995, p. 50) regards cues as "simple, familiar structures that are seeds from which people" develop meaning from the surrounding world and events that they experience. Therefore, individuals oftentimes "extract cues that are consistent with their assumptions about organizational life" (Dougherty & Drumheller, 2006, p. 217 citing Weick, 1995). These assumptions are ingrained in the managerial mindset and are formed by the prevailing discourses (e.g., those on CSR) within a certain social context or environment (ibid.) in the past or present.

4. Methodology

Given the explorative nature of the present research, a qualitative methodology was deemed the most suitable approach since it allows us to obtain in-depth knowledge of the issues in focus (Yin, 2009). Thus, we conducted seven in-depth, face-to-face interviews with top managers in seven local SMEs based in Northwest Russia between June and August 2017. The importance of individual sensemaking is even more pronounced in SMEs due to the direct dependency of the decisions on the individual backgrounds of the top management (see Jamali et al., 2015). Therefore, SMEs present a particularly fitting research context in which to study individual sensemaking related to CSR due to decision-making being centralized to the individual manager (e.g., Stoian & Gilman, 2017). The main criterion for selecting the respondents was their personal experience of conducting business in the Soviet or early post-Soviet eras (i.e., 1980–1990 s). Recent literature on talent and human resource management in Russia suggests that the legacy of the Soviet past is still largely persistent in Russian society today (Holden & Vaiman, 2013; Outila et al., 2018; Outila & Fey, 2021). Furthermore, we concur with Holden and Vaiman (2013, p. 139), who state that "most Russian companies are still headed by their owners and creators, who are unlikely to leave their positions and make way for the new generation outside of the owner's 'inner circle.'" Therefore, understanding middle-aged top managers' perspectives on environmental commitment is still vital for understanding the current and future Russian business environment.

The interviews lasted for approximately one to two hours each and

were conducted in Russian, which is the native language of several authors of this article. We avoided the use of the term "environmental commitment" as the aim was to examine the respondents' unintentional sensemaking of the concept in which they construct their own interpretation of the phenomenon and avoid using the terms introduced by the researchers. We used a semi-structured interview guide during the conversations, but this guide acted as a trigger for storytelling rather than a strict protocol. Thus, the interview guide was used solely to ensure that the same topics were discussed during all the interviews. The questions were open-ended in order to stimulate the discussion, for instance: What is understood by CSR in Russia? How would you describe your attitude or moral philosophy towards the environment? How do you think the social context, traditions, and values in your country influenced these views? How do you act or what do you do in order to be environmentally friendly in your business operations? What activities do you consider the most important? The interviews were conducted in a location that was convenient for the respondents in order to ensure their comfort and an initial rapport. In general, collecting primary data from Russian companies is a complex endeavor that oftentimes requires establishing trust through common contacts (see more in Ivanova-Gongne & Kaporcic, Dziubaniuk, et al., 2018). In our case, access to companies was facilitated by an international chamber of commerce operating in Saint Petersburg, who sent an interview invitation letter on our behalf and thereby heightened the respondents' trust in us. We also supported the interviews with secondary data, such as the company documents (e.g., reports and brochures) that were available to us as well as information provided on the websites of the companies examined.

All the respondents were, at the time of the interviews, middle-aged (45–65 years old), and all of them were involved in the Russian business environment in some manner between the 1980 s and 1990 s. Therefore, the respondents represent post-Soviet managers whose sensemaking may be influenced in a certain manner by the Soviet socio-historical context (see e.g. Ivanova-Gongne & Kaporcic, Dziubaniuk, et al., 2018; Outila & Fey, 2021). Despite the collapse of the Soviet Union occurring in 1991, we still treated the two respondents who started their business in the early 1990 s as post-Soviet as their personal identities were largely influenced by these transitional times. The companies represent different industries, which allows us to obtain a holistic picture on sensemaking of environmental commitment in Russia and to understand the influence of Soviet historical context on this sensemaking. Interviewing companies from different industries creates qualitative diversity, which is beneficial when following an interpretive, constructivist approach (see Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The respondents' interviews were used to complement each other. Therefore, the aim of this article is not to compare the interviews in an etic fashion but to rather obtain a holistic description by applying an emic approach (Morris et al., 1999). The number of interviews was deemed suitable since the aim is not to compare but to explore, meaning that even one interview could suffice (Saunders & Townsend, 2016). Table 1 summarizes the respondents' characteristics. The names of respondents and companies are fictionalized for the purposes of confidentiality.

We employed narrative analysis in the interpretation of the collected data. Lieblich et al. (1998) describe four approaches to narrative analysis, namely holistic-content, holistic-form, categorical-content, and categorical-form. A holistic approach focuses on the story as a whole, with the meaning of separate sections being interpreted in light of "the context of the story in its entirety," while a categorical approach applies pre-defined categories in order to dissect the text and collect several extracts from different respondents (ibid., pp. 12–13). The content approaches focus on the explicit content of the stories told from the respondents' point of view, while the form approaches focus on the structure of interview texts (Lieblich et al., 1998). Our interpretation of the interview data followed both holistic-content and categorical-content approaches to narrative analysis by having certain initial categories (i.e., categorical) and interpreting the meaning of parts of the interviews (i.e., content) in relation to the whole (i.e., holistic)

Table 1
Characteristics of the respondents.

Name	Company	Age	Gender	Business Experience	Position	Industry
Stanislav	A	62	Male	Since the early 1980 s	CEO	Energy and nuclear engineering
Maria	B	57	Female	Since the early 1980 s	CEO	Construction
Daria	C	55	Female	Since the mid-1980 s	CEO	Mechanical engineering
Boris	D	54	Male	Since the early 1990 s	Deputy Director	Logistics
Pavel	E	57	Male	Since the early 1980 s	CEO	Mechanical engineering
Ivan	F	54	Male	Since the mid-1980 s	CEO	Construction
Mikhail	G	Approximately 45	Male	Since the early 1990 s	CEO	Production automation

and to the context (i.e., the Russian business environment and Soviet socio-historical context). We acknowledge that our research uses certain pre-defined categories; however, our goal is not to quantify or categorize but to contextualize by understanding the meaning of different types of commitment in relation to the context and the whole story. Therefore, while the categorical approach is more deductive and the holistic is more inductive, our approach is abductive and employs a primarily holistic approach while, at the same time, building on certain initial theoretical categories. Combining the different approaches is, as Liebllich et al. (1998) state, typical for narrative analysis since the described perspectives are often difficult to separate and the perspectives may feed into each other.

The standard steps in holistic-content narrative analysis include: 1) reading the whole transcript and developing the overall impression; 2) deciding on the “special foci of content and themes” that are to be analyzed in-depth and noticing the number of details provided by the respondents in terms of the themes; and 3) marking and repeatedly reading parts of the text related to selected themes and interpreting the content and the respondents’ evaluations (Liebllich et al., 1998, p. 63). Our analysis process consisted of the following steps:

1. The full interviews with the respondents were read several times in order to immerse ourselves in the respondents’ perspectives and to obtain a general understanding of the interviews’ content. In order to conduct a holistic-content reading of the narratives, a researcher should familiarize themselves with the data by reading the transcripts several times and immersing themselves in the data, which allows for an understanding of how the respondents contextualize their experiences (Nasheeda et al., 2019)
2. We focused on the specific parts of the interviews in which the respondents’ focus was on making sense of certain topics related to their concern for the environment. The topics included, for example, attitudes towards and understanding of waste utilization, “green offices,” and emissions. These parts were then selected for further analysis.
3. We then divided the extracted parts into the type of commitment highlighted in those specific parts. For example, if the sensemaking clearly showed that certain environmental actions were undertaken by the respondents due to pressure from the government and various regulations, we categorized that part as normative environmental commitment. Examples of expressions that indicated normative environmental commitment included the notion of rules, obligations, requirements, and standard check-ups, such as “authorities come and check,” “sign papers that we acknowledge the obligation,” “working within the framework of...,” and the like (see Table 2 in Section 6). In turn, when the need to act environmentally friendly was driven by financial or social costs, loss of reputation (i.e., organizational level), or was related to stakeholders, it was categorized as continuance environmental commitment. Affective environmental commitment was identified by the participants’ talking about emotions or personal desires.
4. When analyzing the selected parts of the interviews, expressions pertinent to Soviet socio-historical context were pinpointed in order to understand the meaning of the stories and contextualize them. These included straightforward expressions as “*subbotniks*” or

“surveillance” or expressions and talk that indirectly indicated attitudes that partly derived from the participants’ Soviet pasts. For instance, the notion of performing favors in return for other favors is related to “*blat*,” which is a practice that has its roots in the Soviet era (see more in Section 6.1). This knowledge of the Soviet historical context is supported by academic literature.

Throughout the analysis, we used two sets of analytical lenses: a) the three types of environmental commitment; and b) the selected properties of individuals’ sensemaking. The findings are categorized and discussed accordingly (see Section 5 and Table 2).

The data were interpreted by all the authors who speak Russian as their native language, which provides additional credibility to the findings. While the researchers agreed on the analysis steps in advance, the analysis itself was conducted separately by each researcher, after which the commonalities and discrepancies in the interpretations were discussed. These discussions occurred after each step of the analysis. We did not find any discrepancies that would have required additional discussions in order to reach a resolution. The researchers who analyzed the data are deeply familiar with the Russian business environment and Soviet history, which ensures the credibility of the interpretations. The researchers also have extensive theoretical knowledge of Russian culture, the Russian business environment, and CSR issues in Russia (e.g. Ivanova & Torkkeli, 2013; Ivanova-Gongne & Torkkeli, 2018; Uzhegova et al., 2020; Ivanova-Gongne et al., 2022). In order to further strengthen the credibility of our interpretations, we also consulted previous literature on the Russian business environment and the Soviet historical context (e.g. Crotty, 2016; Fifka & Pobizhan, 2014; Ledeneva, 2009). This, together with our own theoretical knowledge, ensured a theoretically reflexive reading of the interviews, which Brinkmann and Kvale (2018) regard as a viable technique for interpretative interview analysis. The analysis was conducted in the interviews’ original language of Russian due to the higher emotional intensity that resulted from the participants’ telling stories in their native language (Pavlenko, 2007). However, for the purpose of presenting the results, select quotes were translated to English.

5. Discussion of findings: environmental commitment in the light of the socio-historical context

Consistent with the structure of the theoretical section of our article, we will present our empirical findings with respect to the three types of environmental commitment and discuss them against the background of the socio-historical context.

5.1. Continuance environmental commitment

Firstly, we describe the findings related to continuance environmental commitment that link to several highly culture-specific concepts in Soviet history (e.g., opportunism, collectivism, *blat*) and emphasize the role of external stakeholders. Within the framework of continuance environmental commitment, the respondents mostly discussed the various social and financial costs of disregarding the environment. Community work, which was frequently undertaken during the Soviet era (Ziegler, 1983), is still practiced today and is one way to fulfill social

Table 2
Summary of the quotes used in the study.

Quotes	Socio-historical context	Sensemaking elements	Environmental commitment type
Plus, it means all sorts of subbotniks ; sometimes we take part in the cleaning of some parks or something else similar to that. Also, we arrange subbotniks , it goes without saying.	Subbotniks	Retrospective	Continuance commitment
[Concerning the environment] Well, we are involved in planting trees if there is some public action (campaign) , we take part in some of these kinds of activities. “if there is some public campaign , then we take part in it”.	Collectivism	Enactive of environment	
We work with a small company called ‘Company X’, so as sponsorship they periodically come to us and gather whatever we haven’t sent to our clients as accounting invoices. So we have a disposal process organized, we dispose it to a company X or company Y, well where we work in general and where we have certain agreements/contracts. So those companies have contracts with a disposal company and we so to say join them and dispose . – Mikhail, Company G	“Blat”, “Svyazi”		
We are switching to that [energy saving light bulbs]. There is economic motivation [for doing that], that’s it. But they are very expensive, so we’re doing it step by step. What ecology? Abroad they think about it. Here, they ruin and ruin everything while there is an opportunity. Because you need to invest money in the ecology. Whereas everyone [in Russia] wants to save money.	Opportunism, saving behavior	Identity construction	
Yes. They come [to check if the emissions comply to the rules]. They check everything and write down their comments . For instance, we’ve had a regional inspection recently. They found out that some codes had changed. And we don’t have the time to follow that either, we’re struggling to survive. So they told us. In Russia they surveil it .	Surveillance	Retrospective	Normative commitment
For instance, we have to collect and hand in scrap metal, we have to take out garbage and get the papers to prove that we hadn’t just brought it somewhere out in the woods. So the authorities come and check you for compliance... Here when it’s done automatically without asking you it’s like a tax. We don’t even think about it. For example, you could turn it this way. If there were no authorities that could punish you, would you pay for the environment, for instance, or not? We are working within the framework of business custom that has established in Russia. Well, we have an agreement with a company that deals with removal of waste. It is their task. As for me, all the waste that we have refers, basically, to torn paper and paper scraps. Because the production that we have, it is, thank God, almost non-waste.	Governmental control, complying to the rules	Enactive of the environment	
We don’t own vehicles, so. Well, we do have our own company cars, but these are mostly office-purpose passenger vehicles that we need in order to transport documents or drive people somewhere for inspections and such. So we can’t say that we lead a heroic struggle in order to reduce emissions... We sign some papers every year. Big corporations do that, and we do it with pleasure. We sign papers stating that we take the obligation to reduce carbon emissions. We have computers – what kind of carbon dioxide emissions could we have? By reducing staff? Corporate social responsibility. I don’t think it exists. Nobody is liable to anyone in any way . I think, for example, they told me in Germany that a person working for a company. That they try their hardest to work not only for their own sake, [not solely] to earn money... [But in Russia] everyone thinks about themselves, only themselves, and that’s it. The absence of private property [in Soviet times] caused absolutely. A totally indifferent attitude towards everything.	Lack of accountability and knowledge; egocentrism	Identity construction	
It somehow sits inside you , for example: to close the tap, to not throw paper. Well, it is at the level of some little ordinary life routines. They came to it themselves [to reuse paper, to save energy], we did not have to convince anyone, we have responsible employees”	Emotional attachment to the environment	Identity construction	Affective commitment

expectations in terms of taking care of the environment:

It somehow sits inside you, for example, to close the tap, to not throw paper. Well, it is at the level of some little, ordinary life routines. Plus, it means all sorts of **subbotniks**; sometimes we take part in the cleaning of some parks or something similar to that. – **Maria, Company B**

[Concerning the environment] Well, we are involved in planting trees if there is some **public action (campaign)**; we take part in some of these kinds of activities. Also, we arrange **subbotniks**, it goes without saying. – **Mikhail, Company G**

Here, the respondents’ sensemaking is rooted in the retrospective feature. The tradition of *subbotnik* comes from the Soviet era and is defined as “an occasional unpaid working Saturday” (Ashwin, 1998, p. 192), where the participants mostly undertook community work, such as cleaning outside territories like parks. Although *subbotnik* during the Soviet era was initially framed by the government as a “volunteer” action (Kaplan, 1965), it was subsequently considered more of an “induced involvement in public life” (Likhacheva et al., 2015, p. 6), where “workers had a responsibility towards the collective, which was

underlined by their (compulsory) participation in the *subbotnik*” (Ashwin, 1998, p. 192). In present times, it is also a voluntary action; however, people often attend *subbotniks* presumably due to an existing feeling of collectiveness and the social expectations of others, including coworkers. Understanding the social costs of not being involved in a *subbotnik* (e.g., reproach from the collective) leads to continuance environmental commitment. For example, not being involved in community work may negatively influence companies’ reputations to some extent. At the same time, *subbotniks* can be seen as normative environmental commitment since employees might feel obligated to attend the *subbotnik* due to indirect pressure from their company. We, however, mostly categorized *subbotniks* as continuance environmental commitment since it is officially a voluntary activity and is a choice rather than an obligation.

Moreover, both Mikhail and Maria state that their companies participate in tree planting. Maria also highlights that popular artists are also involved in such campaigns. While such an initiative may reflect affective environmental commitment to some extent, it is mostly based on continuance environmental commitment and the social costs of disregarding involvement in such actions (e.g., the negative impact on reputation). As Mikhail states, “if there is some public campaign, we take

part in it". He further elaborates that they usually do not take the initiative themselves but are highly willing to participate in external CSR activities if they are needed. Thus, Mikhail's and Maria's sensemaking here is enactive of the environment. Such an attitude toward community-based or charitable actions in Russia is based on collectivism, which was influential in the Soviet Union (Naumov & Puffer, 2000) and might be one of the reasons for why charity is the most common CSR activity in Russia today (see Fifka & Pobizhan, 2014). In collectivist societies, the individual self is interdependent and predominantly acts according to the expectations of others rather than one's own personal wishes (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

Furthermore, the respondents frequently state that being committed to the environment is reasonable if the costs are low or if the environmental actions lead to the reduction of costs:

We are switching to [energy saving light bulbs]. There is economic motivation [for doing that]. That's it. But they are very expensive, so we're doing it step by step. - **Stanislav, Company A**

Stanislav believes that, in general, if there is no profit or savings to be obtained from engaging in environmentally friendly activities, no one will be interested in pursuing them. Seeking economic benefits in all activities and opportunism is a common trait among Russian managers and companies (see Ivanova & Torkkeli, 2013; Ivanova-Gongne & Torkkeli, 2018). While opportunism was present during Soviet times, particularly among elites (Belova & Gregory, 2002), it became more widespread during the period of perestroika, when punishment for rent-seeking behavior was reduced (Nell, 2011). Opportunistic behavior may also be partly related to the saving behavior that was largely caused by shortages of consumer goods in the Soviet Union (Kim, 1997). Furthermore, while environmentally friendly activities may bring long-term benefits (Ortiz de Mandojana & Bansal, 2016), the short-term orientations of Russian managers (see Ivanova & Torkkeli, 2013; Ivanova-Gongne & Torkkeli, 2018) restrains them from making use of this opportunity and investing large sums in ecology.

What ecology? Abroad they think about it. Here, they... ruin everything while there is an opportunity. because you need to invest money in the ecology. Whereas everyone [in Russia] wants to save money. - **Ivan, Company F**

Another respondent, Boris, states that their company practices paper recycling mostly due to receiving help from a business partner. Here, it is possible to see the impact of external stakeholders on companies' responsible actions:

We work with a small company called 'Company X', so, **as the sponsors**, they periodically come to us and gather whatever we haven't sent to our clients as accounting invoices. - **Boris, Company D**

Further probing determined that the help Boris' company receives from Company X is indeed a "sponsorship" and, presumably, does not imply any costs:

[In Russia], paper is accepted for recycling if it's either pressed or uncut, or, figuratively speaking, has a weight of at least 200 kg. There are many conditions, and when the [pressing machine] comes to you, you'll get 200 rubles [approximately 3 euros] for one ton of waste, which is not profitable at all. You still have to sign a contract with the organization that takes away the waste. You still have to pay for this car to come, and, in return, you receive no more than 200 rubles in any case. - **Boris, Company D**

The sensemaking of the company's management of the paper recycling is highly enactive of the environment and, at the same time, somewhat retrospective. It indicates practices that were commonly followed during the Soviet era and are still currently applied in Russia, namely the importance of social networking, the exchange of favors, and helping each other (Ivanova-Gongne & Torkkeli, 2018). Such practices

are called *blat*—the use of personal networks for obtaining goods and services—which was widely practiced during the Soviet era due to supply shortages (Ledeneva, 2009). Nowadays, *blat* is more commonly called *svyazi*, which can be literally translated as *connections* but actually implies the same reciprocal exchange of favors as *blat* (Horak et al., 2021). Thus, Mikhail also mentions that they "join" a company, with which they normally do business, for disposal of petrol.

So we have a disposal process organized, we dispose it to a company X or company Y, well where we work in general and where we have certain agreements/contracts. So those companies have contracts with a disposal company and **we so to say join them** and dispose. - **Mikhail, Company G**

While *blat* or *svyazi* is frequently framed in the literature as a corrupt practice, it is not seen as such by Russian citizens, and it is still practiced in Russia to mainly obtain favorable treatment in healthcare, education, and employment as well as in interorganizational relationships (Ledeneva, 2009; Jansson et al., 2007; Horak et al., 2021). Thus, it can be concluded that environmental commitment in Russia is highly dependent on external stakeholders, such as the organization, its partners, other employees, and society.

5.2. Normative environmental commitment

The second type of environmental commitment that was analyzed, normative environmental commitment, also formed a major part of the respondents' stories on their attitude towards the environment. Overall, the findings on this commitment type suggest that the country's history, dating back to the Soviet era, had a particular effect on normative environmental commitment. More specifically, the empirical data indicates that directives from the government and the obligation to follow the rules are the main driving forces behind the respondents' CSR actions. Overall, the respondents' sensemaking reflect Rozov's (2015, p. 87) statement about government control in Russia: "those in possession of 'Russian state power' always see themselves as in the driver's seat: they decide where to go, at what speed, and whether to break the rules on the way; everyone else feels like a passenger in the back, whose welfare and safety depend wholly on external factors." In comparison to, for instance, the more liberal European Union, Russia has implemented a state-managed form of capitalism that has high levels of governmental control over businesses' activities, which is a trait that developed due to several historic instances, including the Soviet Union's communist past (Villo et al., 2020). During Soviet times both the economic and social aspects of individuals' and organizations' life was highly state-controlled (Dean, 1991; Sanyal & Samanta, 2017). Thus, the formal "debt-like" obligations, attempts to stay within the regulatory frameworks, and not undertaking any extra activities, which is consistent with normative environmental commitment (Keogh & Polonsky, 1998), were identified in the respondents' sensemaking.

Yes. They come [to check if the emissions comply to the rules]. They check everything and write down their comments. For instance, we had a regional inspection recently. They found out that some codes had changed. And we don't have the time to follow that either; we're struggling to survive. So they told us. In Russia, they surveil it. - **Stanislav, Company A**

The respondent's emphasis on the verb *sledyat*, which means to *surveil*, highlights the high level of state control over individual actions that was present in the Soviet Union and continues to be somewhat present in Russia today. "Surveillance by others was an essential part of Soviet life" (Kiaer & Naiman, 2006, p. 8), which not only implies the surveillance of individuals by the government but surveillance of individuals by each other, which was the most common form of surveillance. If it was noticed during such surveillance that an individual did not comply with the Soviet era rules, it could be reported by, for example, a neighbor to the government. It is possible that individuals, who had such

experiences in the Soviet Union, still feel pressure related to practices of surveillance and, therefore, feel obligated to act according to the environmental rules set by the government. Stanislav further elaborates on the role of the government in companies abiding by environmental norms:

For instance, we have to collect and hand in scrap metal, we have to take out garbage and get the papers to prove that we haven't just taken it to somewhere out in the woods, that we haven't just dumped it from a bridge into a river, but had delivered it somewhere. So, the authorities come and check for compliance... Here, when it's done automatically without asking you, it's like a tax. We don't even think about it. For example, you could think about it this way: If there were no authorities that could punish you, would you pay for the environment, for instance, or not? - **Stanislav, Company A**

The government's controlling nature when it comes to wide-scale ecological issues related to, for example, carbon dioxide emissions, was clearly identified in other respondents' interviews as well, with their basing their sensemaking on the feature of being enactive of the environment. The Russian government, however, has so far failed to develop and pursue proper environmental regulations and has largely neglected environmental issues (Gel'man, 2021). Furthermore, Russia's communist past and its failure to fully adopt a free market economy has led to a lack of accountability and responsibility for organizational and personal actions (May et al., 1998; Dean, 1991). In the Soviet era, "no incentive was provided for risk-taking behavior and for uncovering problems" (ibid., p. 451). This might also have largely led to businesses simply conforming to the norms and not taking the initiative to implement environmentally friendly actions that extend beyond the scope set by the government or society.

We don't own vehicles, so. Well, we do have our own company cars, but these are mostly office-purpose passenger vehicles that we need in order to transport documents or drive people somewhere for inspections and such. So, we can't say that we lead a heroic struggle in order to reduce emissions... We sign some papers every year. Big corporations do that, and we do it with pleasure. We sign papers stating that we take the obligation to reduce carbon emissions. We have computers—what kind of carbon dioxide emissions could we have? By reducing staff? - **Boris, Company D**

We have such a production that. we are not connected with [threats to the environment]. We measure emissions to some extent... But, in terms of doing something extra, no, we don't do that. We don't separate garbage. In the laboratories and in the factory, we do have energy saving light bulbs; we installed these things. - **Mikhail, Company G**

The construction of the companies' identities in relation to environmental commitment and the answer to the question of "Who are we?" was largely based on the assumption that these companies' production activities are not ecologically harmful, which, in the respondents' opinions, should be sufficient for environmental commitment. These perspectives of "We do not practice this" or "It is not set by any norms. Therefore, we do not have to think about it," were common in the respondents' answers when discussing emissions, which may somewhat relate to such characteristics as egocentrism (see Koveshnikov et al., 2016). This view is another consequence of the Russian historical background not only because of the controlling communist past, the practice of reporting supposedly unlawful citizens to the government (Kossov, 2000), and the lack of private property (Ivanova-Gongne & Kaporcic, Dziubaniuk, et al., 2018), but also because of surviving during the difficult economic conditions of the 1990s (Zhemchugov & Zhemchugov, 2012). Such an attitude was also highlighted by one of the respondents when talking about CSR in general:

Corporate social responsibility. I don't think it exists. Nobody is liable to anyone in any way. I think, for example, they told me in Germany that a person working for a company. tries their hardest to work not only for their own sake, [not solely] to earn money... [But, in Russia], everyone thinks about themselves, only themselves, and that's it. The absence of private property [in the Soviet era] caused. a totally indifferent attitude towards everything. - **Stanislav, Company A**

Furthermore, both Boris' and Stanislav's quotes indicate a lack of full understanding about how to contribute to saving the environment. For example, even less use of company-owned vehicles for routine office purposes may benefit the environment and showcase environmental commitment. Lack of knowledge about what other actions, apart from production activities, could affect the environment was identified in other respondents' interviews:

And what is our ecological component? I do not have any production that can influence the environment. - **Pavel, Company E**

When it was further explained what environmental commitment implies, the respondent offered an elaboration, stating that conforming with norms is sufficient, which was congruous with the respondents previously quoted in this section (Section 3.2):

We are working within the framework of business customs that have been established in Russia. Well, we have an agreement with a company that deals with removal of waste. It is their task. As for me, all the waste that we have refers, basically, to torn paper and paper scraps. Because of the production that we have, it is, thank God, almost non-waste. - **Pavel, Company E**

In summary, our results reveal that the sensemaking of middle-aged Russian managers is highly affected by their past experiences, where the levels of governmental control were extremely high, thereby discouraging individuals from taking initiative in any matter. It is also enactive of the current environment in Russia, which lacks incentives for enabling a more effective form of environmental commitment. It was also clearly evident in the respondents' sensemaking that they construct their environmental commitment identities according to their past and the present experiences.

5.3. Affective environmental commitment

Being theoretically driven, we looked for interview excerpts that included some description of emotional attachment to the environment. For example, we found phrases such as:

They came to it themselves [to reuse paper, to save energy], we did not have to convince anyone, we have responsible employees. - **Daria, Company C**

and

It somehow sits inside you, for example: to close the tap, to not throw paper. - **Maria, Company B.**

In general, the respondents did not provide any extensive elaboration of affective environmental commitment apart from these few phrases, which were linked to identity construction.

Hence, this data set did not show an in-depth description or rich evidence of affective environmental commitment. However, assuming the presence of the other types of environmental commitment, we can propose that the studied managers' environmental commitment was more extrinsic (because they need or are obligated to) rather than intrinsic (because they want to).

6. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to understand how the socio-historical

context influences managerial sensemaking of environmental commitment. Table 2 summarizes all the quotes used in this paper and outlines their embeddedness in the socio-historical context, as well as relation to a certain type of sensemaking and environmental commitment. A more extrinsic, contextual nature of sensemaking of environmental commitment can be seen in the heavy reliance on the features of being retrospective and enactive of the environment in the respondents' sensemaking. While the respondents' identity constructions were also strongly present, they were deeply rooted in Russia's social context as well as the Soviet past, for instance, opportunism (Ivanova & Torkkeli, 2013; Ivanova-Gongne & Torkkeli, 2018) and lack of accountability (May et al., 1998). Furthermore, almost all the contextual factors and quotes that align with the "enactive of the environment" section were consistent with Soviet legacies, for instance *blat* and strong social ties (Ledeneva, 2009; Horak et al., 2021), collectivism (Naumov & Puffer, 2000), and high levels of governmental control (Ivanova-Gongne & Koporcic, Dziubaniuk, et al., 2018; Villo et al., 2020).

Our study has shown that environmental commitment, from the perspective of middle-aged post-Soviet managers, cannot be strictly distinguished as normative, continuance, or affective, which is consistent with Keogh and Polonsky's (1998) research. Almost all of the respondents based their sensemaking on a hybrid environmental commitment that combined features of at least two types of environmental commitment. However, not knowing how the environment is affected by corporate actions other than production activities led to the respondents predominantly showcasing normative or continuance environmental commitment through following governmental norms or stakeholder and societal pressure.

As a result of the Soviet history and transition period (Wernstedt, 2002), Russia has weak environmental regulations (Söderholm et al., 2015) and the social conscience still needs to be developed in this regard. Therefore, the environmental commitment showcased in the respondents' narratives was generally minimal. On the other hand, the turbulent Russian business environment and the profit-seeking orientation of Russian managers may have also played a role in the lack of affective environmental commitment.

6.1. Theoretical contributions

Our findings offer several important theoretical contributions. Firstly, the study adds to the discussion on the different types of environmental commitment (e.g., Morales-Raya et al., 2019); specifically, we show that not all three types of environmental commitment are necessarily present in individuals. Our respondents did not show any strong evidence of affective environmental commitment, which suggests that environmental commitment may be seen without any strong emotional attachment to the environment. In this regard, further studies can examine whether continuance and normative environmental commitment hinder or enable the formation of affective environmental commitment. Also, even though our research focus does not allow for tracing the exact reasons for why Russian managers are less predisposed towards affective environmental commitment, we believe that a contextual perspective can be especially useful in the further understanding of the reasons for why predispositions to certain types of environmental commitment exist.

Secondly, this study contributes to the discussion on the context in which environmental commitment is embedded: This contextual perspective can potentially provide an additional understanding of the antecedents of environmental commitment, and it also responds to a long-standing call in management and organization literature for a consideration of the interplay between micro and macro levels as well as the undertaking of contextualized research (Bamberger, 2008; Rousseau, 2011). This contextualization is especially useful for integrative process-based research, which could look at triggering antecedents, dynamic developmental mechanisms, and the resulting outcomes of companies' environmental commitment in relation to their activities

and performance. Despite the process nature of environmental commitment being emphasized decades ago (Keogh & Polonsky, 1998), this kind of research on processes is still forthcoming (see Pettigrew, 2012). As stated by Pettigrew (2012, p. 1325), "A more contextualist and dynamic view of knowing will help to balance the current preoccupation with what-is knowledge and foster a new priority for how-to knowledge."

Thirdly, the timespan of retrospective sensemaking in the current study is quite large, showing that retrospective experiences are deeply embedded in individuals' personal historical backgrounds, which may play a role in managerial sensemaking. Research that accounts for the socio-historical context in understanding how individual sensemaking is shaped has been rare (see Rittella & Ligorio, 2016). Therefore, our study contributes by providing an illustrative example of how managers' sensemaking of environmental commitment draws on socio-historical context. By doing this, we also contribute to the gap in sensemaking literature by accounting for the role of wider contexts in micro-level processes of sensemaking (Brown et al., 2015). Our study also helps to clarify the challenges of importing or translating Western business practices and concepts into other socio-historical contexts, as is the case in post-communist societies. In doing so, it adds to the scarce literature that describes the importance of local managers understanding CSR (e.g., Angus-Leppan et al., 2010; Soltani et al., 2015).

Fourthly, applying individual sensemaking has recently been called a rare but promising development in the field of CSR (Richter & Arndt, 2018) due to CSR being a process by which managers think about and discuss "their roles in relation to the common good" (Basu & Palazzo, 2008, p. 124). A sensemaking perspective on environmental commitment deepens individuals' cognitive understanding of the concept (Richter & Arndt, 2018). Our study, therefore, adds to the growing discussion on the role of sensemaking in CSR in general (Angus-Leppan et al., 2010; Onkila & Siltaoja, 2017; Richter & Arndt, 2018) and the cognitive understanding of environmental commitment in particular.

To summarize, the extant research on CSR and sensemaking predominantly focuses on multinational corporations and organizational sensemaking. Research on SMEs, however, requires a different approach and a focus on individual sensemaking due to the focal role of the entrepreneur or CEO (Stoian & Gilman, 2017). Furthermore, the contextual embeddedness of sensemaking has mostly been regarded in terms of organizational context, whereas research on larger contexts, such as socio-historical contexts, has been rare (Aguinis & Glavas, 2018). While there are a few studies on sensemaking of CSR across national contexts (e.g., Golob et al., 2018; Yang & Liu, 2018), they are quantitative, which restricts a more emic view of sensemaking within different contexts. To our knowledge, our study is one of the rare studies that combines micro and macro perspectives in the analysis of CSR elements—such as environmental commitment—in SMEs. We posit that it is crucial to understand the effect of the socio-historical context when looking at individual sensemaking of CSR since such contexts have an equal impact on shaping managers' mindsets as the organizational contexts.

Finally, our study is one of the rare studies focusing on CSR issues (e.g., environmental commitment) at the individual level of analysis that has adopted a qualitative approach (see Aguinis & Glavas, 2019). CSR literature has often generalized individual responses to the organizational level, thus disregarding variance across individuals (ibid.). Our study represents a step forward in filling this gap in management literature.

6.2. Practical implications

Our study also offers several practical implications for business practitioners. While our findings show that the government and regulations play a crucial external role in encouraging Russian companies to be environmentally committed, the environmental regulations in Russia are rather underdeveloped. Therefore, companies in countries with

similar state-controlled economies need to develop their own internal appropriate incentive systems to nurture environmental commitment and direct its development into a certain type or a mixture thereof. This can be done through various environmental training programs and educational initiatives within companies. For example, these training sessions can increase the attachment to a place and the connection to nature, which, in turn, can increase the affective environmental commitment (Yu et al., 2019). Companies should orient training towards developing affective environmental commitment more effectively since this is a crucial component of CSR and may strengthen companies' overall environmental responsibility, thereby enabling better results in the increasingly environmentally conscious international markets.

Our study also provides insights into how the environmental dimension of CSR, in the form of environmental commitment, is understood differently across diverse contexts. Companies that operate in foreign markets with different socio-historical backgrounds should not take environmental commitment for granted. Even though environmental commitment can be present in a partnering company, the perceptions and manifestations of CSR practices can vary across companies. Therefore, in order to develop plausible strategies for cooperation, companies in which environmental strategies are a norm should act as role models and an example of how to be environmentally friendly by distributing knowledge about best environmental practices.

6.3. Limitations and future avenues of research

The results of this study are subject to certain limitations. Considering that the design of the study is interpretative and exploratory, we acknowledge its subjective nature and the need for further research on the discussed topics. Since the number of interviews was limited to allow for generalizations, further research should be conducted on a more extensive sample. We also acknowledge that the managers' sensemaking does not present an absolute truth but is a plausible interpretation of environmental commitment in the studied context. However, our study can be regarded as a way forward in terms of understanding the complex relationship between the macro and micro levels when discussing sensemaking of environmental commitment. We also encourage more research on SMEs in industries that cause more pollution than those interviewed. Research in these industries may potentially yield more insights on sensemaking of environmental commitment; however, this may also be a sensitive topic to approach and, therefore, requires careful research design.

Furthermore, the influence of institutional and cultural aspects was not taken into consideration, despite playing a role in the respondents' sensemaking. We encourage more qualitative, emic, cross-cultural studies to fill this gap and provide a deeper understanding of how the institutional and cultural aspects influence individuals' overall sensemaking and their environmental commitment sensemaking. In particular, comparative studies on other post-Soviet countries would allow for better generalizations on the role of the Soviet socio-historical context in managerial sensemaking of environmental commitment in the post-communist societies of Central and Eastern Europe.

We also believe that future studies could add insight into the topic of sensemaking through mixed methods approaches. Although earlier research on sensemaking tended to be mainly qualitative in nature, applying quantitative research methods has recently emerged as a potential approach in this context due to studies, for instance, on the role of cue utilization in sensemaking (Gacasan & Wiggins, 2017) and on the role of sensemaking in sustainability accounting (Al-Abrow et al., 2019). Recent studies (e.g., Cunningham & Anderson, 2018) have also showed how the sensemaking approach can be incorporated into mixed methods studies that can account for decision-making types in management and entrepreneurship. Therefore, although such approaches were not the focus of the present study, we suggest that future studies could aim to quantify sensemaking in line with, for instance, different types of environmental commitment.

In sum, the results of this study help shed light on business ethics in the post-Soviet societies of Eastern Europe in general and on the microfoundations of CSR and the sensemaking of environmental commitment in particular.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Maria Ivanova-Gongne: Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal analysis, Investigation, Resources, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing, Visualization, Project administration. **Tamara Galikina:** Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Resources, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. **Maria Uzhegova:** Formal analysis, Methodology, Investigation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. **Lasse Torkkeli:** Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing, Funding acquisition.

Acknowledgments

We would like to acknowledge the helpful feedback and comments we received from the audience and track chair, Dr. Heidi Hirsto, at the 25th Nordic Academy of Management conference at the University of Vaasa, Finland. The authors also gratefully acknowledge financial support of this research from the Finnish Foundation for Economic Education.

Appendix A. Supporting information

Supplementary data associated with this article can be found in the online version at doi:10.1016/j.scaman.2022.101233.

References

- Abdelzaher, D., & Abdelzaher, A. (2015). Beyond environmental regulations: exploring the potential of "Eco-Islam" in boosting environmental ethics within SMEs in Arab Markets. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 145(2), 357–371. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-015-2833-8>
- Aguinis, H., & Glavas, A. (2019). On corporate social responsibility, sensemaking, and the search for meaningfulness through work. *Journal of Management*, 45(3), 1057–1086. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206317691575>
- Al-Abrow, H., Ali, J., & Alnoor, A. (2019). Multilevel influence of routine redesigning, legitimacy and functional affordance on sustainability accounting: mediating role of organizational sense-making. *Global Business Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0972150919869726>
- Albertini, E. (2014). A descriptive analysis of environmental disclosure: a longitudinal study of french companies. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 121(2), 233–254. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-013-1698-y>
- Ambec, S., & Lanoie, P. (2008). Does it pay to be green? A systematic overview. *Academy of Management Executive*, 22(4), 45–62. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amp.2008.35590353>
- Angus-Leppan, T., Metcalf, L., & Benn, S. (2010). Leadership styles and CSR practice: An examination of sensemaking, institutional drivers and CSR leadership. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 93(2), 189–213. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-009-0221-y>
- Antolin-Lopez, R., Martínez-del-Río, J., & Céspedes-Lorente, J. J. (2014). Environmental entrepreneurship: A review of the current conversation after two decades of research. *Paper presented at 2014 GRONEN Conference, Helsinki, Finland*.
- Ashwin, E. (1998). Endless patience: Explaining Soviet and post-Soviet social stability. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 31(2), 187–198. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0967-067X\(98\)00006-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0967-067X(98)00006-3)
- Astakhova, M., DuBois, C. L., & Hogue, M. (2010). A typology of middle managers in modern Russia: An intracultural puzzle. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 34(5), 527–539. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2010.01.001>
- Bamberger, P. (2008). Beyond contextualization: Using context theories to narrow the micro-macro gap in management research. *Academy of Management Journal*, 51(5), 839–846. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2008.34789630>
- Basu, K., & Palazzo, G. (2008). Corporate social responsibility: A process model of sensemaking. *Academy of Management Review*, 33(1), 122–136. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2008.27745504>
- Belova, E., & Gregory, P. (2002). Dictator, loyal, and opportunistic agents: The Soviet archives on creating the Soviet economic system. *Public Choice*, 113(3), 265–286.
- Boiral, O., Baron, C., & Gunnlaugson, O. (2014). Environmental Leadership and Consciousness Development: A Case Study Among Canadian SMEs. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 123(3), 363–383. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-013-1845-5>
- Brinkmann, S., & Kvale, S. (2018). *Doing Interviews* (Vol. 2). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

- Brown, A. D., Colville, I., & Pye, A. (2015). Making sense of sensemaking in organization studies. *Organization Studies*, 36(2), 265–277. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840614559259>
- Buyse, K., & Verbeke, A. (2003). Proactive environmental strategies: a stakeholder management perspective. *Strategic Management Journal*, 24(5), 453–470. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.299>
- Cantor, D. E., Morrow, P. C., McElroy, J. C., & Montabon, F. (2013). The role of individual and organizational factors in promoting firm environmental practices. *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management*, 43(5/6), 407–427. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPDLM-03-2012-0071>
- Cardon, M. S., Stevens, C. E., & Potter, D. R. (2011). Misfortunes or mistakes: Cultural sensemaking of entrepreneurial failure. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 26(1), 79–92. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2009.06.004>
- Chebotaeva, G., Strielkowski, W., & Streimikiene, D. (2020). Risk assessment in renewable energy projects: A case of Russia. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 269. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2020.122110>
- Chen, Y., Tang, G., Jin, J., Li, J., & Paillé, P. (2015). Linking market orientation and environmental performance: the influence of environmental strategy, employee's environmental involvement, and environmental product quality. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 127(2), 479–500. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-014-2059-1>
- Clark, E., & Geppert, M. (2011). Subsidiary integration as identity construction and institution building: A political sensemaking approach. *Journal of Management Studies*, 48(2), 395–416. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2010.00963.x>
- Crotty, J. (2016). Corporate social responsibility in the Russian federation: A contextualized approach. *Business & Society*, 55(6), 825–853.
- Cui, J., Jo, H., & Velasquez, M. G. (2015). The influence of Christian religiosity on managerial decisions concerning environment. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 132, 203–231. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-014-2306-5>
- Cunningham, J., & Anderson, A. R. (2018). Inspired or foolhardy: sensemaking, confidence and entrepreneurs' decision-making. *Group Decision and Negotiation*, 27(3), 393–415. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10726-018-9563-0>
- Dean, R. N. (1991). Considering Business Opportunities in the Soviet Union in the 1990s. *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law*, 24, 325.
- Delmas, M., & Toffel, M. (2004). Stakeholders and Environmental Management Practices: An Institutional Framework. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 13(4), 209–222. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.409>
- Dougherty, D. S., & Drumheller, K. (2006). Sensemaking and emotions in organizations: Accounting for emotions in a rational (ized) context. *Communication Studies*, 57(2), 215–238. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10510970600667030>
- Fifka, M., & Pobjizhan, M. (2014). An institutional approach to corporate social responsibility in Russia. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 82, 192–201. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2014.06.091>
- Francoeur, C., Melis, A., Gaia, S., & Aresu, S. (2017). Green or greed? An alternative look at CEO compensation and corporate environmental commitment. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 140(3), 439–453. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-015-2674-5>
- Gacasan, E. M. P., & Wiggins, M. W. (2017). Sensemaking through cue utilisation in disaster recovery project management. *International Journal of Project Management*, 35(5), 818–826. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2016.09.009>
- Gelman, V. (2021). Constitution, authoritarianism, and bad governance: the case of Russia. *Russian Politics*, 6(1), 71–90. <https://doi.org/10.30965/24518921-00601005>
- Golob, U., Turkel, S., Kronegger, L., & Uzunoglu, E. (2018). Uncovering CSR meaning networks: A cross-national comparison of Turkey and Slovenia. *Public Relations Review*, 44(4), 433–443. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2018.05.003>
- Graziosi, A. (2021). The Weight of the Soviet Past in Post-1991 Russia. *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 23(1), 89–125. https://doi.org/10.1162/jcws_a_00969
- Hafenbrädl, S., & Waeger, D. (2017). Ideology and the Micro-foundations of CSR: Why Executives Believe in the Business Case for CSR and how this Affects their CSR Engagements. *Academy of Management Journal*, 60(4), 1582–1606. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2014.0691>
- Hahn, T., & Aragón-Correa, J. A. (2015). Toward cognitive plurality on corporate sustainability in organizations: the role of organizational factors. *Organization & Environment*, 28(3), 255–263. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1086026615604446>
- Hardy, J. (2014). Transformation and crisis in Central and Eastern Europe: A combined and uneven development perspective. *Capital & Class*, 38(1), 143–155. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309816813514208>
- Helms Mills, J., Thurlow, A., & Mills, A. J. (2010). Making sense of sensemaking: the critical sensemaking approach. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 5(2), 182–195. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17465641011068857>
- Henriques, I., & Sadosky, P. (1999). The relationship between environmental commitment and managerial perceptions of stakeholder importance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 42(1), 87–99. <https://doi.org/10.5465/256876>
- Holden, N., & Vaiman, V. (2013). Talent management in Russia: not so much war for talent as wariness of talent. *Critical Perspectives on International Business*, 9(1/2), 129–146. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17422041311299987>
- Hong, J. F., Snell, R. S., & Mak, C. (2016). Knowledge assimilation at foreign subsidiaries of Japanese MNCs through political sensegiving and sensemaking. *Organization Studies*, 37(9), 1297–1321. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840616634128>
- Horak, S., Klein, A., & Svirina, A. (2021). Trust, reciprocity and reputation in informal networks in post-Soviet Russia. *European Journal of International Management*, 15(4), 657–685. <https://doi.org/10.1504/EJIM.2021.114623>
- Ivanova, M., & Torkkeli, L. (2013). Managerial sensemaking of interaction within business relationships: A cultural perspective. *European Management Journal*, 31(6), 717–727. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2013.07.007>
- Ivanova-Gongne, M. (2015). Culture in business relationship interaction: an individual perspective. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 30(5), 608–615. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JBIM-01-2013-0002>
- Ivanova-Gongne, M., Lång, S., Brännback, M., & Carsrud, A. (2021). Sensemaking by minority entrepreneurs: Role identities and linguistic embeddedness. *Journal of Small Business & Entrepreneurship*, 1–24.
- Ivanova-Gongne, M., Koporic, N., Dziubaniuk, O., & Mandják, T. (2018). Collecting rich qualitative data on business relationships and networks in CEE countries: Challenges and plausible solutions. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 70, 193–204. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2017.07.007>
- Ivanova-Gongne, M., & Torkkeli, L. (2018). No manager is an island: Culture in sensemaking of business networking. *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*, 33(5), 638–650. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JBIM-07-2016-0154>
- Ivanova-Gongne, M., Torkkeli, L., Hannibal, M., Uzhegova, M., Barner-Rasmussen, W., Dziubaniuk, O., & Kulkov, I. (2022). Cultural sensemaking of corporate social responsibility: A dyadic view of Russian–Finnish business relationships. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 101, 153–164.
- Jansson, H., Johanson, M., & Ramström, J. (2007). Institutions and business networks: A comparative analysis of the Chinese, Russian, and West European markets. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 36(7), 955–967. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2007.05.013>
- Jansson, J., Nilsson, J., Modig, F., & Hed Vall, G. (2017). Commitment to sustainability in Small and Medium Sized Enterprises: The influence of strategic orientation and management values. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 26(1), 69–83. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.1901>
- Jamali, D., Lund-Thomsen, P., & Jeppesen, S. (2015). SMEs and CSR in Developing Countries. *Business and Society*, 56(1), 11–22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0007650315571258>
- Johnson, M. P., & Schaltegger, S. (2016). Two decades of sustainability management tools for SMEs: How far have we come. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 54(2), 481–505. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jsbm.12154>
- Kaplan, F. I. (1965). The Origin and Function of the Subbotniks and Voskresniks. *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, (H. 1), 30–39.
- Keogh, P. D., & Polonsky, M. J. (1998). Environmental commitment: a basis for environmental entrepreneurship? *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 11(1), 38–49. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09534819810369563>
- Kiaer, C., & Naiman, E. (2006). *Everyday Life in early Soviet Russia: Taking the Revolution Inside*. Indiana University Press.
- Kim, B. Y. (1997). Soviet household saving function. *Economics of Planning*, 30(2–3), 181–203. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1003011825821>
- Kim, H. J., Park, J., & Wen, J. (2015). General managers' environmental commitment and environmental involvement of lodging companies. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 27(7), 1499–1519. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-01-2014-0011>
- Kossov, V. V. (2000). Egocentrism kak gubitel' Rossii [Egocentrism as destroyer of Russia]. *Mirovoj Rossii Sociologiya Etnologiya*, 9(2), 53–62.
- Koveshnikov, A., Vaara, E., & Ehrnrooth, M. (2016). Stereotype-based managerial identity work in multinational corporations. *Organization Studies*, 37(9), 1353–1379.
- Kuckertz, A., & Wagner, M. (2010). The influence of sustainability orientation on entrepreneurial intentions—Investigating the role of business experience. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 25(5), 524–539. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2009.09.001>
- Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *Interviews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Ledeneva, A. (2009). From Russia with blat: can informal networks help modernize Russia? *Social Research: An International Quarterly*, 76(1), 257–288.
- Lieblich, A., Tuval-Mashiach, R., & Zilber, T. (1998). *Narrative Research: Reading, Analysis, and Interpretation* (Vol. 47). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Likhacheva, A., Makarov, I., & Makarova, E. (2015). Post-Soviet Russian identity and its influence on European-Russian relations. *European Journal of Futures Research*, 3(1). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40309-015-0062-0>
- Maitlis, S., & Christianson, M. (2014). Sensemaking in organizations: Taking stock and moving forward. *Academy of Management Annals*, 8(1), 57–125. <https://doi.org/10.5465/19416520.2014.873177>
- Makarova, A., Jia, X., Kruchina, E., Kudryavceva, E., & Kukushkin, I. (2019). Environmental performance assessment of the chemical industries involved in the Responsible Care® Program: Case study of the Russian Federation. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 222, 971–985. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2019.02.218>
- Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (1991). Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review*, 98(2), 224–253. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.98.2.224>
- May, R., Young, C. B., & Ledgerwood, D. (1998). Lessons from Russian human resource management experience. *European Management Journal*, 16(4), 447–459. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0263-2373\(98\)00021-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0263-2373(98)00021-8)
- Meek, W. R., Pacheco, D. F., & York, J. G. (2010). The impact of social norms on entrepreneurial actions: Evidence from the environmental entrepreneurship context. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 25(5), 493–509. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2009.09.007>
- Meyer, J., & Allen, N. (1991). A three-component conceptualization of organizational commitment. *Human Resource Management Review*, 1(1), 61–89. [https://doi.org/10.1016/1053-4822\(91\)90011-Z](https://doi.org/10.1016/1053-4822(91)90011-Z)
- Mirovitskaya, N., & Soroos, M. S. (1995). Socialism and the tragedy of the commons: Reflections on environmental practice in the Soviet Union and Russia. *The Journal of Environment & Development*, 4(1), 77–110.
- Morales-Raya, M., Martín-Tapia, I., & Ortiz-de-Mandojana, N. (2019). To Be or to Seem: The Role of Environmental Practices in Corporate Environmental Reputation.

- Organization & Environment*, 32(3), 309–330. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1086026617753154>
- Moreira Caetano Pinto, G., Pedroso, B., Moraes, J., Pilatti, L. A., & Picinin, C. T. (2018). Environmental management practices in industries of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) from 2011 to 2015. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 198, 1251–1261. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2018.07.046>
- Morris, M. W., Leung, K., Ames, D., & Lickel, B. (1999). Views from inside and outside: Integrating emic and etic insights about culture and justice judgment. *Academy of Management Review*, 24(4), 781–796. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1999.2553253>
- Nair, S. R., & Menon, C. G. (2008). An environmental marketing system – A proposed model based on Indian experience. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 17(8), 467–479. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.586>
- Nair, S. R., & Ndubisi, N. O. (2015). Evaluating management's environmental commitment and link with firm's environmental orientation. *Journal of Management Research*, 15(3), 165–178.
- Nasheeda, A., Abdullh, H. B., Krauss, S. E., & Ahmed, N. B. (2019). Transforming transcripts into stories: A multimethod approach to narrative analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 18, 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406919856797>
- Naumov, A., & Puffer, S. (2000). Measuring Russian culture using Hofstede's dimensions. *Applied Psychology*, 49(4), 709–718.
- Nell, G. L. (2011). Rent-seeking, hierarchy and centralization: why the Soviet Union collapsed so fast and what it means for market economies. *Comparative Economic Studies*, 53(4), 597–620.
- Neumayer, E. (2002). Do Democracies Exhibit Stronger International Environmental Commitment? A Cross-country Analysis. *Journal of Peace Research*, 39(2), 139–164. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343302039002001>
- Onkila, T., & Siltaoja, M. (2017). One rule to rule them all? Organisational sensemaking of corporate responsibility. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 144(1), 5–20.
- Ortiz de Mandojana, N., & Bansal, P. (2016). The long term benefits of organizational resilience through sustainable business practices. *Strategic Management Journal*, 37(8), 1615–1631. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.2410>
- Osland, J. S., & Bird, A. (2000). Beyond sophisticated stereotyping: Cultural sensemaking in context. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 14(1), 65–77. <https://doi.org/10.5465/ame.2000.2909840>
- Outila, V., & Fey, C. F. (2021). "We have performance appraisal every day and every hour": Transferring performance management to Russia. *Journal of International Management*, Article 100901. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intman.2021.100901>
- Outila, V., Vaiman, V., & Holden, N. (2018). Macro talent management in Russia: Addressing entangled challenges in managing talent on the country level. In V. Vaiman, P. Sparrow, R. Schuler, & D. G. Collings (Eds.), *Macro Talent Management in Emerging and Emergent Markets* (pp. 25–45). Routledge.
- Pavlenko, A. (2007). Autobiographic narratives as data in applied linguistics. *Applied Linguistics*, 28(2), 163–188. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amm008>
- Pettigrew, A. M. (2012). Context and action in the transformation of the firm: A reprise. *Journal of Management Studies*, 49(7), 1304–1328. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2012.01054.x>
- Puffer, S. M., & Braithwaite, K. (2016). *The Russian Management Revolution: Preparing Managers for a Market Economy: Preparing Managers for a Market Economy*. Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge.
- Puffer, S. M., & McCarthy, D. J. (2011). Two decades of Russian business and management research: An institutional theory perspective. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 25(2), 21–36.
- Raineri, N., & Paillé, P. (2015). Linking Corporate Policy and Supervisory Support with Environmental Citizenship Behaviors: The Role of Employee Environmental Beliefs and Commitment. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 137(1), 129–148. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-015-2548-x>
- Richter, U. H., & Arndt, F. F. (2018). Cognitive processes in the CSR decision-making process: a sensemaking perspective. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 148(3), 587–602. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-015-3011-8>
- Rivera, J. (2004). Institutional pressures and voluntary environmental behavior in developing countries: Evidence from the Costa Rican hotel industry. *Society and Natural Resources*, 17(9), 779–797. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08941920490493783>
- Rousseau, D. M. (2011). Reinforcing the Micro/Macro Bridge: Organizational Thinking and Pluralistic Vehicles. *Journal of Management*, 37(2), 429–442. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206310372414>
- Rozov, N. S. (2015). The Specific Nature of "Russian State Power" Its Mental Structures, Ritual Practices, and Institutions. *Russian Social Science Review*, 56(2), 79–93. <https://doi.org/10.2753/RUP1061-1940500102>
- Runst, P. (2013). Post-socialist culture and entrepreneurship. *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 72(3), 593–626. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajes.12022>
- Sandberg, J., & Tsoukas, H. (2015). Making sense of the sensemaking perspective: Its constituents, limitations, and opportunities for further development. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 36(1), 6–32. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.1937>
- Sanyal, R., & Samanta, S. (2017). Bribery in international business in post-soviet union countries. *Journal of East-West Business*, 23(4), 388–402.
- Saunders, M. N., & Townsend, K. (2016). Reporting and justifying the number of interview participants in organization and workplace research. *British Journal of Management*, 27(4), 836–852. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8551.12182>
- Schick, H., Marksen, S., & Freimann, J. (2002). Sustainability issues for start-up entrepreneurs. *Greener Management International*, 38, 59–71.
- Shvarts, E., Pakhalov, A., & Knizhnikov, A. (2016). Assessment of environmental responsibility of oil and gas companies in Russia: the rating method. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 127, 143–151. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2016.04.021>
- Soltani, E., Syed, J., Liao, Y. Y., & Iqbal, A. (2015). Managerial mindsets toward corporate social responsibility: The case of auto industry in Iran. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 129(4), 795–810. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-014-2137-4>
- Stead, J. G., & Stead, E. (2000). Eco-enterprise strategy: Standing for sustainability. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 24, 313–329. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1006188725928>
- Stoian, C., & Gilman, M. (2017). Corporate social responsibility that "pays": A strategic approach to CSR for SMEs. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 55(1), 5–31.
- Suasana, I. G. A. K. G., & Ekawati, N. W. (2018). Environmental commitment and green innovation reaching success new products of creative industry in Bali. *Journal of Business and Retail Management Research*, 12(4), 246–250.
- Söderholm, K., Söderholm, P., Helenius, H., Pettersson, M., Viklund, R., Masloboev, V., & Petrov, V. (2015). Environmental regulation and competitiveness in the mining industry: Permitting processes with special focus on Finland, Sweden and Russia. *Resources Policy*, 43, 130–142.
- Tarasova, N., Makarova, A., Varlamova, S., & Vavilov, S. (2014). The development of Green Chemistry in Russia as a tool to improve the competitiveness of chemical products [an opinion poll]. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 83, 491–496. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2014.07.043>
- Thurlow, A., & Mills, J. H. (2015). Telling tales out of school: Sensemaking and narratives of legitimacy in an organizational change process. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 31(2), 246–254. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scaman.2014.10.002>
- Uzhegova, M., Torckeli, L., & Ivanova-Gongne, M. (2020). The role of responsible business practices in international business relationships between SMEs from developed and emerging economies (European and African Perspectives). In J. A. Larimo, M. A. Marinov, S. T. Marinova, & T. Leposky (Eds.), *International Business and Emerging Economy Firms* (Volume II). London, UK: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Villo, S., Halme, M., & Ritvala, T. (2020). Theorizing MNE-NGO conflicts in state-capitalist contexts: Insights from the Greenpeace, Gazprom and the Russian state dispute in the Arctic. *Journal of World Business*, 55(3), Article 101068. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jwb.2019.101068>
- Weick, K. E. (1995). *Sensemaking in Organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Wernstedt, K. (2002). Environmental protection in the Russian Federation: Lessons and opportunities. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, 45(4), 493–516.
- Zhemchugov, A. M., & Zhemchugov, M. K. (2012). Rossiya: "sootvetstvie lyudei strukture" ili "sootvetstvie strategii lyudyam"? [Russia: "conformity of people to structure" or "conformity of strategy to people"?]. *Problemy ekonomiki i menedzhmenta*, 4(8), 13–20.
- Yang, A., & Liu, W. (2018). Corporate environmental responsibility and global online cross-sector alliance network: a cross-national study. *Environmental Communication*, 12(1), 99–114. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17524032.2016.1249900>
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Yu, T.-K., Lin, F.-Y., Kao, K.-Y., & Yu, T.-Y. (2019). Encouraging environmental commitment to sustainability: an empirical study of environmental connectedness theory to undergraduate students. *Sustainability*, 11, 342. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11020342>