The freedom to be sustainable, from the past to the future

Matteo Ferioli*, Mónica Freitas, Diana Spulber*****
** Department of Economics [DiECO], University of Insubria, Italy.*
email: matteo.ferioli@uninsubria.it
*** Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Nova University of Lisbon, Portugal*
email:mfreitas@fcsh.unl.pt
**** People's Friendship University of Russia – email: spulber-d@rudn.ru*

Doi: 10.2478/gssfj-2021-0012

Abstract

This study aims to investigate the historical evolution of the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR), with a particular focus on the main theories and events that led it to no longer be a voluntary choice but a necessity for the company's long-term survival. The article will first analyze the main definitions in the literature to determine the aspects that characterize it. Subsequently, using a theoretical approach, a literature review will be performed to describe its historical evolution, starting from its birth during the Industrial Revolution period (1760-1840) up to the present day. The analysis results show that, in the scientific debate, the CSR concept was initially focused on the workers' well-being and, subsequently, it expanded its scope and significance to include all stakeholders' categories. Furthermore, it emerged that CSR become a necessity for the companies' long-term survival, especially in the post-pandemic period. For this reason, companies must develop new business models to face sustainability issues and meet social needs.

Keywords: **corporate social responsibility, CSR, definition, historical evolution, literature review.**

1. Introduction

The concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) was born during the Industrial Revolution (1760-1840) and was formalized in the literature in the 1930s (Carroll, 1999). Since then, the slow economic development, numerous environmental and financial scandals, and multiple stock market failures led to its evolution (Gazzola, 2012c), assuming different interpretations depending on the culture in which it is applied (Mazurkiewicz, 2004; Romolini, Fissi, & Gori, 2014; Feng & Ngai, 2020). Since then, CSR has been an increasingly discussed topic in the literature, and many authors and institutions provided their interpretations. This led to not having a single definition (Carroll, 1999). The article aims to investigate the CSR historical evolution by focusing on the main theories and events that led it to be a necessity for the companies' long-term survival (Gazzola, 2012c), especially in the post-pandemic period.

The paper is structured as follows. First, it will focus on the main definitions present in the literature to determine the main aspects that characterize it. Subsequently, using a theoretical approach, a literature review will be performed to describe the CSR historical evolution and highlight how the concept has expanded its meaning and scope by considering all categories of stakeholders. Finally, the paper will illustrate the impacts of Covid-19 and show the essential requirements for surviving in the post-pandemic period.

2. Literature review

2.1 Definitions of corporate social responsibility (CSR)

The literature on corporate social responsibility is extensive and, over the years, the interest in this topic increased both in the literature and in practice (Meuer et al., 2020). Financial and stock market failures, environmental scandals, and slow economic development led to the evolution of this concept (Gazzola, 2012c). Since its birth, many authors and institutions provided their definitions (Carroll, 1999); therefore, it assumes different interpretations depending on the culture in which it applies (Mazurkiewicz, 2004; Romolini, Fissi, & Gori, 2014; Feng & Ngai, 2020). This led to a lack of clarity between practitioners and researchers, making it impossible to distinguish sustainable practices. It means that, potentially, every company's activity can be labeled as sustainable even if it is not, thus generating the phenomenon of greenwashing (Meuer et al., 2020). For this reason, most governments introduced minimum standards in their legal codes (Mazurkiewicz, 2004). The lack of a unique definition was already recognized in the literature by Carroll (1999) in his article entitled *Corporate Social Responsibility: evolution of a definitional construct* (Carroll, 1999; Nave & Ferreira, 2019). Among the most cited definitions in the literature, it is possible to find (Gazzola, 2012c):

- Carroll (1979) which declared that "*the social responsibility of business encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time*" (Carroll, 1979, p.500). With this definition the author wanted to highlight that social and economic concerns are linked.
- The World Business Council for Sustainable Development defined CSR as "*the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the local community and society at large*" (WBCSD, 1998). The WBCSD wanted to consider the environmental dimension of CSR (Gazzola, 2012c).
- European Union (EU) defined it as "*a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis*" (Commission of the European Communities, 2001, p. 8). According to the EU, companies should voluntarily plan both social and economic objectives. In this way, to be considered socially responsible, companies must make environmental and human capital investments, consider legal expectations, and maintain positive relationships with stakeholders. In 2011, this definition was simplified and became: "*the responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society*" (European Commission, 2011, p.6). The new definition considers sustainability in a wider sense, contemplating all the impacts produced by companies on the society. It means that, to be sustainable, companies must collaborate with all stakeholders by integrating social, ethical, environmental, human rights, and consumer concerns into their strategies (European Commission, 2011). In this way, the objectives of

companies should both maximize the shared value for their shareholders and society and identify and avoid possible negative impacts (European Commission, 2011).

- According to the Business for Social Responsibility's definition, CSR means running a business "*to meet or exceed the ethical, legal, commercial and public expectations that the company has towards business. CSR is seen by leadership companies as more than a collection of discrete practices or occasional gestures or initiatives motivated by marketing, public relations, or other business benefits. Rather, it is viewed as a comprehensive set of policies, practices, and programs that are integrated throughout business operations, and decision-making processes that are supported and rewarded by top management*" (Mazurkiewicz, 2004, p.4).
- The World Bank defined it as "*the commitment of business to contribute to sustainable economic development - working with employees, their families, the local community and society at large to improve the quality of life, in ways that are both good for business and good for development*" (Ward, 2004, p.3).

These definitions focus on the companies' actions and on the need to operate respecting society and the environment. Therefore, it is possible to state that the CSR concept refers to the need to take sustainable actions by integrating environmental and social aspects into the companies' financial and economic activities (Gazzola, 2012c). The adoption of CSR activities and practices, in addition to financial investment, represents a competitive strategy that involves ethical, social, and environmental concerns, thus allowing companies to improve their processes and resources (Arru & Ruggieri, 2016). The concept is in line with the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) approach (Crane & Matten, 2021), which is based on three pillars: economic prosperity, environmental quality, and social justice (Gazzola, 2012a; Gazzola & Mella, 2012). CSR embraces five dimensions (Dahlsrud, 2008; Nave & Ferreira, 2019):

- social dimension, i.e., the relationship between business and society;
- environmental dimension, i.e., responsibility for the natural environment;
- stakeholder dimension, i.e., responsibility towards the different groups of stakeholders;
- economic dimension, i.e., financial aspects, socio-economic aspects, and those related to the companies' operations;
- voluntariness dimension, i.e., all activities not required by law.

Since companies can be considered social-economic actors, CSR requires them to produce shared value for the business and society (Gazzola & Mella, 2012), a concept introduced by Porter and Kramer that will be analyzed later (paragraph 2.2.7).

2.2 The historical evolution of the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

The birth of corporate social responsibility can be traced back to the Industrial Revolution period (1760-1840); in those years, the increase of the number of large organizations made it possible to recognize for the first time that companies have some responsibilities towards employees and the labor force (Evans et al., 2013). Robert Owen was an example of an entrepreneur who acknowledged the need to improve the companies' policies for the employees' well-being, assuring them decent working conditions, provisions for children's education, and decent housing (Evans et al., 2013). However, many companies did not

follow his example (Evans et al., 2013). The public policies and the governamental strategies have being an important tool to mobilizing companies in whole world. (Freitas, 2016)
In the 1910s, Frederick Winslow Taylor, the father of scientific management, recognized that companies and workers must collaborate as there is a mutual interest between them; furthermore, Taylor acknowledged the equality of responsibility between these two parties (Evans et al., 2013). This thought was followed by Henry Gantt, who argued that businesses should behave responsibly towards society, otherwise the community will take over (Evans et al., 2013).
In the 1920s, the concept of corporate social responsibility was influenced by the characteristics of society and the emergence of large modern corporations (Hoffman, 2007). During those years, in American society, the idea that social ethics was necessary for the harmony of the industry began to take the place of individual ethics (Hoffman, 2007). Managers of large publicly held companies began to acknowledge that social responsibility could be a tool to legitimize their positions in society (Hoffman, 2007). Robert Hay and Ed Gray defined the period after the 1920s as the "trusteeship management phase" because corporate executives began to be considered as trustees of those stakeholders in a relationship with the company (Carroll, 2008). Due to the increasingly pluralistic society and the growing diffusion of share ownership, managers began to maintain a fair balance between demands coming from different parties (such as customers, employees, and the community) and the need to maximize shareholders' wealth (Carroll, 2008). In those years, Henry Ford recognized the importance of social responsibility and realized that companies do not operate isolated from society (Lee, 2008; Evans et al., 2013). He supported the idea that providing services to society comes first than profits and greed (Lee, 2008; Evans et al., 2013).

2.2.1 The 1930s, 1940s and 1950s: first publications and the beginning of modern literature

In the 1930s, there were the first publications in the literature related to the corporate social responsibility topic (Carroll, 1999). Specifically, in 1938 Chester Barnard published *The Functions of the Executive*, and, in 1939, JM Clark published *Social Control of Business* (Carroll, 1999).
In the 1940s, the concept of trusteeship grew among business leaders, and companies started thinking they were socially responsible by simply configuring themselves as an anti-Communist institution (Carroll, 2008). Theodore Kreps published *Measurement of the Social Performance of Business* (Carroll, 1999), in which he declared that the Great Depression increased the concerns about corporate social benefits (Kreps, 1962). Thanks to his statement, social responsibility was recognized as a fundamental part of the companies' social performance. Patrick Murphy defined the period up to the 1950s as the Philanthropic era because companies donated more than anything else (Carroll, 2008).
In the 1950s began the Awareness era (Carroll, 2008). There was a greater recognition of corporates' responsibility and their involvement in the community (Carroll, 2008). However, businesswomen were not acknowledged in the literature yet (Carroll, 2008). CSR became more recognized thanks to Howard Rothmann Bowen (1953) and his publication entitled *Social Responsibilities of the businessman*, which marked the beginning of the modern period of literature (Lee, 2008; Carroll, 2008; Evans et al., 2013; Agudelo et al., 2019). Bowen recognized the companies' duty to consider all the affected parts of the society (Lee, 2008;

Evans et al., 2013). He acknowledged that CSR was positive and needed to be encouraged and supported to achieve sustainable development, even if it would not solve all society's problems. (Lee, 2008). Bowen developed some organizational and management changes for improving the firms' social concerns. Some of them were the social education of business managers, the introduction of a code of conduct, changes in the composition of boards of directors, a higher social representation in management, introduction of social audit, and research in the social sciences (Carroll, 2008). Although in the 1950s CSR became a more discussed topic, there cannot be found any evidence that Bowen's recommended social practices were applied by companies (Carroll, 2008). In those years, the Californian school introduced Corporate Social Responsibility, interpreted as the activity of companies to pursue both a financial advantage for capitalists and a benefit, even indirectly, for society (Gazzola, 2012c). Social responsibilities were at the head of the entrepreneur, whose actions had to be aligned with the society's values and objectives (Gazzola, 2012c). The focus was not on the companies' actions and externalities generated by an increasingly competitive environment but on the work of managers. In 1957, in *Leadership in Administration*, Selznick affirmed that organizations must adapt to external forces in society because they must restrain organizational flexibility. For this reason, managers should account for such pressures without allowing any single point of view to dominate the decisions that affect the company as a whole (Selznick, 1957; Evans et al., 2013).

2.2.2 The 1960s: the recognition of duties towards society

Since the 1960s, in addition to legal and economic obligations, society concerns acquired importance, and managers started to satisfy both the shareholders' expectations and societal ones (Gazzola, 2012c). Murphy defined the period between 1968 and 1973 as the Issue era because companies began focusing on specific environmental concerns (Carroll, 2008). Carroll (2008) recognized Keith Davis as the most relevant author in those years. Davis defined CSR as: "*businessmen's decisions and actions taken for reasons at least partially beyond the firm's direct economic or technical interest*" (Davis, 1960, p.70). He became famous also thanks to the *Iron law of responsibility* with which he asserted that "*social responsibilities of businessmen need to be commensurate with their social power*" (Davis, 1960, p. 71; Carroll, 1999). According to Davis (1960), there was a link between power and social responsibility. Therefore, these two elements coexisted, and, consequently, companies had to act with a socially responsible perspective (Davis, 1960). In 1966, Davis and Bloomstorm published *Business and its environment* textbook in which they asserted there was a link between business activities and social systems (Carroll, 1999). According to the authors, the CSR concept implied considering the management decisions' effects on the whole social system (Carroll, 1999). The following year, Davis expanded his CSR definition to embrace the institutional actions and the impact produced on the entire social system (Carroll, 1999). Subsequently, several definitions were published. In 1967, Clarence C. Walton, in his book entitled *Corporate Social Responsibilities* acknowledged that socially responsible actions were voluntary, even though economic returns could not be directly measured (Carroll, 1999).

2.2.3 The 1970s: first managerial actions and the debate between Stakeholder and Shareholder Theory

From 1974 the so-called Responsiveness era began (Carroll, 2008). In those years, companies started to take organizational and managerial actions to address CSR concerns, and the Neoclassical Theory and the first concepts on Stakeholder Theory began to develop (Carroll, 2008). According to the Neoclassical Theory, efficiency was considered an unnecessary cost, and the only companies' concern was profit maximization (Gazzola, 2012c). The most relevant supporter of this theory was Milton Friedman. In the article entitled *The social responsibility of business is to increase its profits,* he argued that social problems were borne by the state and companies didn't have the responsibility to improve social well-being (Friedman, 1970). Moreover, he asserted that companies and managers had to meet only shareholder expectations. Therefore, achieving socially responsible goals was considered an illegitimate activity accomplished at the expense of other shareholders' money. However, Friedman expressed this theory eight years earlier (1962), in his book entitled *Capitalism and Freedom*, in which he declared that "*there is one and only one social responsibility of business - to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits so long as it stays within the rules of the game, which is to say, engages in open and free competition without deception fraud*" (Friedman, 1962, p.133). On the other hand, according to the Stakeholder Theory, social and ethical impacts represent an opportunity for firms to create value for both the company and the environment (Gazzola, 2012c). Proponents of this theory argued that there is a relationship of mutual influence between companies and their stakeholders (Gazzola, 2012b; Gazzola, 2012c). Thus, companies had to envision specific management strategies and objectives for each homogeneous shareholders' category, identifying those affecting the company the most and the groups able to mobilize other stakeholders (Gazzola, 2012c). Although both the Stakeholder and Shareholder Theories seem to be conflicting, they share the purpose of managers' actions, i.e., long-term profitability. Thanks to the numerous publications made by many exponents of the economic field, these two theories evolved. In 1971, Harold Johnson, in his book entitled *Business in contemporary society: framework and issues*, was the first to introduce some concepts related to the Stakeholder theory (Carroll, 2008). He recognized that executives were tasked with balancing the interests of many social partners (Carroll, 2008). In that year, the Committee for Economic Development (CED) published the book entitled *Social responsibilities of business corporations* which introduced the notion of three concentric circles of social responsibility and acknowledged that companies had broader social duties than ever before (Carroll, 2008). According to this model (Figure 1), CSR is composed of three groups of responsibilities (Carroll, 2008). The innermost circle encompasses the basic economic responsibilities or those related to the companies' economic functions (Carroll, 2008). The middle circle comprises the social values and priorities, i.e., the duties related to environmental conservation and customers' expectations (Carroll, 2008). Finally, the external circle groups all the responsibilities which cannot be clearly defined and associated with social and environmental development (Carroll, 2008).

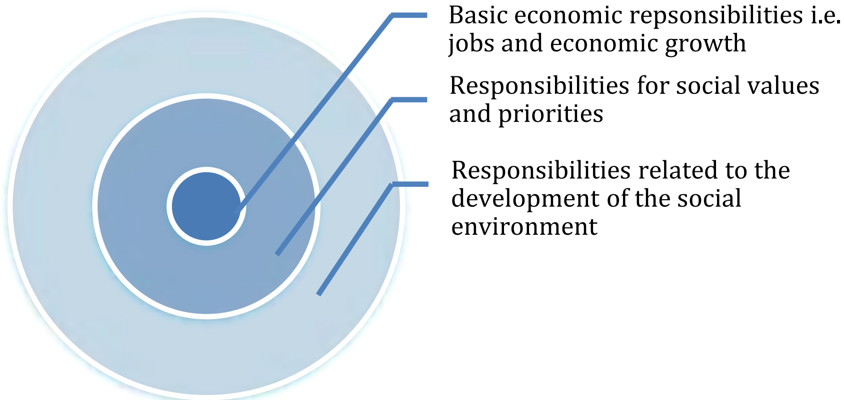

Figure 1: Three concentric circles of Social Responsibility according to CED (Source: personal elaboration based on Carroll, 2008).

In 1971, George Steiner published the book *Business and Society*, in which he illustrated some models and methods for determining the circumstances in which CSR should be applied (Carroll, 2008). From 1975, many publications aimed at distinguishing the concepts of corporate social responsibility, corporate social responsiveness, and corporate social performance (CSP). William Frederick, in his article entitled *From CSR$_1$ to CSR$_2$: the maturing of Business and Society thought*, explained that corporate social responsiveness (CSR$_2$) concerned the companies' ability to face social pressures and fulfill the community's needs by establishing dedicated mechanisms, procedures, and behavior models (Frederick, 1978). This idea can be considered as an evolution of the CSR concept as the author discussed, for the first time, the modality to reflect the CSR theory in practice. Carroll (2008) considered S. Prakash Sethi as one of the greatest writers of the 1970s (Carroll, 2008). Sethi published many articles related to the differences between the concepts of corporate social responsiveness, corporate social responsibility, and corporate social performance (CSP) (Carroll, 2008). In 1975, in his article entitled *Dimensions of Corporate Social Performance: an analytical framework*, the author discerned social responsiveness, social obligations, and social responsibility (Sethi, 1975; Carroll, 2008). According to Sethi, the term "social obligation" was linked to the companies' economic and legal responsibilities, while "social responsibility" concerned the responsibilities related to the social norms, values, and performance expectations (Sethi, 1975; Carroll, 2008). Finally, "social responsiveness" was linked to the need to adapt to social needs (Sethi, 1975; Carroll, 2008). In the same year, Lee Preston and James Post studied the companies' responsibility on public policies (Carroll, 2008). In 1978 Sandra Holmes identified community affairs, pollution control, charities, recruitment, development of minorities, and education support as the leading social problems companies should have faced with their CSR activities (Carroll, 2008). In 1979, Archie B. Carroll provided a new definition of the CSR concept. He defined it as "*the social responsibility of business encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time*" (Carroll, 1979, p.500). Moreover, the author argued that to improve the social quality of life, companies had to provide benefits for the community, even without this making an explicit request (Carroll, 1979). In this way, they had to create economic value and comply with laws without ignoring social values and ethics (Carroll, 1979).

2.2.4 The 1980s: the evolution and growth of CSR concept

In the 1980s, were developed complementary theories and models to CSR (Carroll, 2008) aimed to investigate how to adopt socially responsible policies and to measure corporate social performance (Gazzola, 2012c). According to Thomas M. Jones, it was challenging to reach a consensus on what made up socially responsible behavior. He considered corporate social responsibility as a process (Jones, 1980). In his 1980 definition, the author explained that companies had an obligation towards different social groups, which goes beyond what is prescribed by the law or the trade union contract (Jones, 1980). Moreover, the firms had to voluntarily commit to social responsibility, even though behaviors influenced by law or the union agreement are not (Carroll, 2008). In 1981, Frank Tuzzolino and Barry Armandi developed a need-hierarchy framework based on Carroll's 1979 definition and Maslow's pyramid to evaluate CSR behaviors (Carroll, 2008). Carroll's pyramid represented the four society expectations (economic, legal, ethical, discretionary) hierarchically, as Maslow's pyramid did for human priorities (Carroll, 2008). Tuzzolino and Armandi showed that companies had similar needs to people (physiological, security, affiliation, esteem, and self-fulfillment) (Carroll, 2008). In 1985, Steven Wartick and Philip Cochran published *The evolution of the corporate social performance model,* which focused on the integration of social responsibility, responsiveness, and social issues to be a measure for social performance (Carroll, 2008). They reformulated these three concepts into a framework of principles, policies, and processes, arguing that Carroll's 1979 CSR definition had to be interpreted as a set of principles, social issues management as policies, and social responsiveness as a process (Carroll, 2008). In 1987, Edwin M. Epstein defined the corporate social policy process by integrating the social responsiveness, social responsibility, and business ethics concepts (Carroll, 2008). Moreover, he developed a social responsibility agenda for the 1980s by recognizing "*business practices and the impact on environmental pollution, urban life and questionable/abusive practices of multinationals*" (Carroll, 2008, p.21) as the most important topics for the time. In 1983, R. Edward Freeman and David L. Reed, in *Stockholders and Shareholders: a new perspective on corporate governance*, provided two definitions to stakeholders, one in a broader sense and the other in a narrower sense. According to the broad-sense definition, stakeholders were "a*ny identifiable group or individual who can affect the achievement of an organization's objectives*" (Freeman, 1983, p.91). Instead, according to the narrower one, they were "*any identifiable group or individual on which the organization is dependent for its continued survival*" (Freeman, 1983, p.91). Thanks to these definitions, Freeman broadened the concept of stakeholders and stressed the importance they have in influencing the companies' activities. Specifically, the broad definition underlined the importance of the stakeholders' ability to affect the company; instead, the narrower one emphasized the legitimacy of the interests they hold. In 1984, Freeman published a book on stakeholder theory entitled *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach*, which had an enormous impact on the development of the concept of CSR as, after many ethical scandals, public interest shifted to management and illegal practices held by companies. (Carroll, 2008). In Freeman's view, executives had to manage the company by assuring the stakeholders' well-being and protecting their rights. Moreover, since management's goal is long-term corporate survival, managers should act as an agent for the company by establishing relationships of trust with stakeholders (Carroll, 2008). It would be possible through the participation of the stakeholders' representatives on the Board of Directors; in this way, they could closely monitor and influence the actions of the companies (Carroll, 2008).

2.2.5 The 1990s: globalization and the international effort towards a sustainable future

In the 1990s, the globalization process brought greater visibility and reputational risk of non-sustainable companies because the social expectations from both the host and home countries grew (Agudelo et al., 2019). Thus, the number of businesses undertaking CSR activities, such as strategic giving and cause-related marketing, increased; moreover, philanthropic donations became commonplace (Carroll, 2008). During those years, international events, such as the creation of the European Environment Agency (EEA), the foundation of the association Business for Social Responsibility (BSR), the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the adoption of the United Nations' Agenda 21 and the Framework Convention on Climate Change, influenced the development of the CSR concept and represented an international effort to improve the companies' sustainability by setting a higher standard for the global climatic issues (Agudelo et al., 2019). Initially, sustainability was considered the responsibility for the natural environment, and the concepts of business ethics, corporate social performance (CSP), and corporate citizenship continued to develop (Carroll, 2008). In 1991, Carroll developed *The Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility* (Figure 2), in which he prioritized each category of responsibility reported in his 1979 CSR definition.

Figure 2: The Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility (Source: Carroll, 1991, p.42).

Carroll illustrated the four leading companies' responsibilities (Carroll, 1991; Agudelo et al., 2019):

- philanthropic responsibilities: i.e., those aligned to the concept of corporate citizenship, according to which companies must contribute to improving the community and the society's quality of life;

- ethical responsibilities: i.e., those aimed at integrating ethic sensitivity and principles into the companies' decision making processes;
- legal responsibilities: i.e., those referred to the companies' behaviors and activities to not breach the governmental expectations and laws;
- economic responsibilities: i.e., fundamental companies' obligations that create a foundation for all the other types.

In 1994, Elkington introduced the concept of Triple Bottom Line (TBL) (Agudelo et al., 2019) based on three principles: economic prosperity, environmental quality, and social justice (Gazzola, 2012a). TBL requires companies to combine environmental and social concerns into their economic and financial activities (Gazzola, 2012a). From 1995, the European Commission (EC) played a fundamental role in fostering the adoption of CSR practices and fighting social exclusion and unemployment. It led to the adoption of the European Business Declaration against Social Exclusion by 20 businesses and, in 1996, the birth of the European Business Network for Social Cohesion (renamed CSR Europe) (Agudelo et al., 2019). The same year, Lee Burke and Jeanne M. Logsdon in *How corporate social responsibility pays off*, recognized for the first time that socially responsible behaviors and activities bring financial benefits to companies (Burke & Logsdon, 1996; Agudelo et al., 2019). Moreover, they identified five CSR strategic dimensions to efficiently achieve the companies' objectives and create economic value (Burke & Logsdon, 1996; Agudelo et al., 2019):

1) centrality: represents how much the company's mission and objectives are close to their CSR activities;
2) specificity: characterizes the company's ability to gain private benefits;
3) proactivity: the company's ability to create policies in anticipation of social trends;
4) visibility: the relevance of the recognizable and observable CSR activities by internal and external stakeholders;
5) voluntarism: represents the discretionary decision-making process not influenced by external compliance requirements.

In 1997, Ronald K. Mitchell, Bradley R. Agle, & Donna J. Wood contributed to the Stakeholder theory development by identifying three classes of stakeholders based on three concepts: power, urgency, and legitimacy. (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997).

Figure 3: Classes of stakeholders according to Mitchell, Agle & Wood (Source: Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997, p.874).

The first class consisted of latent stakeholders, i.e., those with limited time, resources, and energy. They had little power to influence management's work because they had only one requirement (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997). This class included:

- dormant shareholders: who had the power to impose their will on a company, little or no interaction with the firm and no legitimate relationship or urgent claim;
- discretionary shareholders: who possessed legitimacy, but could not influence the firm and had no urgent claims;
- demanding stakeholders: who had urgent claims but neither power nor legitimacy (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997).

The second class was composed of expectant stakeholders, who had more justified claims and therefore were more relevant to management as they owned two of the three requirements (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997). This class included:

- dominant shareholders: who captured a lot of management attention as they had the power and legitimacy;
- dependent shareholders: who had legitimacy and urgency, so they depended on the firm;
- dangerous shareholders: who had power and urgency and, thus, they represented a danger (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997).

Finally, the last stakeholders' class possessed all three requirements; therefore, it had the companies' attention and priority (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997).

2.2.6 The 2000s: CSR becomes a strategic strategies tool

In the 2000s, the research on the CSR concept was focused on studying the companies' interactions with the external environment. Moreover, many publications proved the link between CSR and CSP to other relevant variables using an empirical approach (Carroll, 2008). Bryan Husted showed how CSP derives "*from the nature of the social issue and its corresponding strategies and structures*" (Husted, 2000, p.24). The author wanted to consider issues management, stakeholder management, and corporate social responsiveness as a single concept (Carroll, 2008). In March 2000, thanks to the Lisbon European Council, CSR entered the European Union Agenda, becoming a strategic tool to create a more competitive and socially cohesive society to strengthen and modernize the European social model. In 2001, in the *Green Paper of the Commission of European Communities,* CSR was defined as "*a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis*" (Commission of the European Communities, 2001, p.8). The Commission of European Communities explained that socially responsible companies had to achieve legal expectations, and invest in the environment, human capital, and relations with their stakeholders (Commission of the European Communities, 2001). In this way, corporate strategies and policies had to embrace environmental, economic, and social objectives (Commission of the European Communities, 2001). In 2011, the EU definition was simplified to "*the responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society*" (European Commission, 2011, p.6). Although the new definition seems to be like a simplified version, actuality, it encompasses all the companies' impacts produced on society. For example, it involves compliance with applicable legislation and human rights, respect for the environment, and social and ethical concerns. In fact, it is possible to see that the National Expenditures on environment protection has increased around 22%. (Spulber 2021). Therefore, to be considered sustainable, companies had to foresee possible negative impacts and to collaborate with all stakeholders to create value both for shareholders and for society in general (European Commission, 2011). In the same year, Ray Jones and Audrey J. Murrell in *Signaling positive corporate social performance: an event study of family-friendly firms*, demonstrated, for the first time, that CSP, and the commitment of a company in social initiatives, can be used as a performance indicator by shareholders (Carroll, 2008). In 2001, N. Craig Smith in *Changes in corporate practices in response to public interest advocacy and actions* defined CSR as "*the obligations of the firm to its stakeholders – people affected by corporate policies and practices. These obligations go beyond legal requirements and the firm's duties to its shareholders. Fulfillment of these obligations is intended to minimize any harm and maximize the long-run beneficial impact of the firm on society*" (Smith, 2001, p. 142). The author wanted to stress the importance of integrating socially responsible behaviors into the companies' strategies to create long-term benefits for society. In the same year, Lantos (2001) introduced the concept of strategic corporate social responsibility, arguing that CSR is a strategic variable when it is involved in the company's management strategies (Lantos, 2001; Agudelo et al., 2019). Moreover, he asserted that companies would adopt socially responsible practices only if their actions would bring financial returns, thus placing the economic variable at the basis of socially responsible behavior (Agudelo et al., 2019). In 2002, Kristin Backhaus, Brett A. Stone, and Karl Heiner investigated the relationship between CSP and employer attractiveness, demonstrating that CSP was used as a signal by people when choosing a job (Carroll, 2008). The authors discovered that job seekers evaluate companies mainly on six drivers: environment, community relations, employee relations, diversity, and product issues

(Carroll, 2008). It was a breakthrough in the literature as, for the first time, people's concern for a sustainable and healthy workplace was recognized (Carroll, 2008). In 2003, Robert Phillips published the book *Stakeholder Theory and Organizational Ethics*, which combined the Stakeholder theory and the moral and political theory of John Rawls to develop an organizational ethics theory (Phillips, 2003). Phillips declared that, as distinct from ethics applied to human activities, organizational ethics was needed inside companies (Phillips, 2003). Moreover, he recognized the existence of moral obligations within organizations and among stakeholders (Phillips, 2003). The author supported both the principle of proportionality and stakeholders' fairness. The proportionality principle binds obligations to benefits, while the shareholders' fairness one binds companies and stakeholders with moral obligations (Phillips, 2003). Phillips classified stakeholders into two types:

- Normative stakeholders: which had the priority as they owned a normative bond with the company;
- Derivative stakeholders: who own moral legitimacy as they claim a "moral conscience".

In the book, Phillips admitted some ambiguities about the stakeholder categories priority asserting that managers should not consider social activists as Normative stakeholders, but later he declared that civil disobedience in the name of community values makes activists Normative stakeholders (Phillips, 2003). In the same year, M. S. Schwartz and Archie B. Carroll published a three-domain approach to CSR (Carroll, 2008). They showed that philanthropy could be interpreted both in ethical and discretionary terms and indicated the organizational characteristics helpful for the firms' analysis (Carroll, 2008). Marcel van Marrewijk (2003) criticized the definitions of CSR, corporate citizenship, sustainable development, sustainable entrepreneurship, triple bottom line, and business ethics. He distinguished between CSR and corporate sustainability to differentiate them according to the companies' awareness, development stages, and ambition levels (Marrewijk, 2003). In 2005, Philip Kotler and Nancy Lee published *Corporate Social Responsibility: Doing the Best for Your Company and Your Cause* (Carroll, 2008). They developed 25 socially responsible business practices and investments to support companies. The aim was to "*guide the decision making of corporate managers, executives, and their staff besieged on a daily basis with requests and proposals for the support of social causes*" (Kotler & Lee, 2005, p.1). The authors classified business practices into six social initiatives (Carroll, 2008; Kotler & Lee, 2005; Perrini, 2006):

- socially responsible business practices: i.e., discretionary activities and investment to support social problems;
- corporate philanthropy: i.e., direct contribution to causes;
- cause promotion: i.e., increasing the awareness and consideration for social issues;
- cause-related marketing: i.e., contributing to causes according to the increase in the level of sales;
- corporate social marketing: i.e., behavior change initiatives;
- community volunteering: i.e., employees contributing with their time and talents for the community.

Kotler and Lee also recommended companies prioritize social initiatives that bring the highest benefit to the company and society (Kotler & Lee, 2005; Perrini, 2006). The authors provided a definition of CSR as "*a commitment to improving community well-being through discretionary business practices and contributions of corporate resources*" (Kotler & Lee, 2005, p.3; Perrini, 2006, p.91). It is clear that they intended the CSR concept in a broad sense; thus, socially responsible actions must not be undertaken only as a marketing tool or philanthropic initiative, but their purpose is to improve society's well-being (Kotler& Lee, 2005; Perrini, 2006). This definition was followed by Michael E. Porter and Mark R. Kramer (2006), which declared that if CSR activities are used only as a marketing tool (for example to improve the company's image or to achieve the legitimacy to operate) the potential social benefits created by companies will be counterproductive and limited (Porter & Kramer, 2006).

2.2.7 The 2010s: the shared value theory and the global expansion of CSR

In 2011, Porter and Kramer published *Creating Shared Value*, in which they acknowledged that, since business activity and society are connected, community well-being and business success are linked too (Porter & Kramer, 2011). Hence, to be competitive in the long-term, companies must create a shared value (CSV) that can be achieved by "*identifying and expanding the connections between societal and economic progress*" (Porter & Kramer, 2011, p. 6) and complying with the ethical standards and laws (Porter & Kramer, 2011). Furthermore, the authors asserted that shared value could bring long-term competitiveness based on innovation and growth (Porter & Kramer, 2011). In this way, they recommended companies to create economic and social value by exploiting environmental resources (Porter & Kramer, 2011). Porter and Kramer also stated that the shared value created by companies should not be viewed as value redistributed by the company in society but as an increase in overall social and economic value (Porter & Kramer, 2011). Moreover, "*shared value (CSV) should supersede corporate social responsibility (CSR) in guiding the investments of companies in their communities*" (Porter & Kramer, 2011, p.16) and "*CSR programs focus mostly on reputation and have only a limited connection to the business, making them hard to justify and maintain over the long run. In contrast, CSV is integral to a company's profitability and competitive position*" (Porter & Kramer, 2011, p.16). With these sentences, the authors stressed that the companies' long-term success has to be based on their socially responsible actions and ability to generate shared value for both the company and society. Therefore, as firms and society influence each other, they must cooperate to create shared value (Porter & Kramer, 2011). Indeed, negative impacts on society would inevitably affect the company because the community will act against the firm (Porter & Kramer, 2011). The authors criticized how companies use CSR, arguing that companies' strategies and activities were on a short-term perspective rather than a long-term one (Porter & Kramer, 2011). In 2012, Gazzola and Mella asserted that companies should consider social responsibility internally and externally (Gazzola & Mella, 2012). In particular, from an external point of view, they should consider the areas concerning external stakeholders, namely:

- human rights: i.e., complying with the laws related to both human rights and environmental protection and adopting codes of conduct for the employees;
- environmental concerns: they should consider the impacts produced on the environment on a global level, as their actions generate a much wider impact than the areas in which they conduct their business;
- local communities: companies and local communities influence each other. Indeed, businesses can benefit from the stability and prosperity of the community in which they operate and, at the same time, create job opportunities for the community;
- suppliers and commercial partnerships: considering the activities of their suppliers as not responsible social behavior would affect the company's image.

On the other hand, from an internal point of view, companies should consider (Gazzola & Mella, 2012):

- adapting to the changes in the corporate organization: considering the needs and expectations of all interested parties to limit the number of layoffs;
- human resource management: developing measures that meet the needs of employees (for example, flexible working hours and equal pay and career prospects);
- manage the effects on the environment and natural resources: considering the actions that create shared value for the environment and the company itself;
- health and safety in the workplace: the use of external productions leads to the responsibility in terms of health and safety towards the behaviors of subcontractors towards human resources;

The authors also stated that CSR makes it essential to adopt ethical behaviors based on respect for society, collaborators, and the environment (Gazzola & Mella, 2012). This means that it requires companies to operate respecting fundamental rights and following the fairness and transparency principles (Gazzola& Mella, 2012). In 2015, the advances in the fight against poverty, hunger, and the growing need for sustainable development led to the birth of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are seventeen global goals aimed at achieving a sustainable future worldwide by 2030 (Sachs, 2012). However, some of them have no deadline. They are part of the 2030 Agenda and were developed in the Post-2015 Development Agenda to replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Sachs, 2012). The SDGs represent the direction companies need to take to be more sustainable. Thus, they contribute to society's well-being by guiding companies in formulating sustainable strategies. The SDGs are in line with the triple bottom line approach (Sachs, 2012). Indeed, they are aimed at bringing social, economic, and environmental benefits. In recent decades, value systems evolved (Gazzola, 2012c), and CSR become a mainstream topic (Lyon et al., 2018). According to Nave and Ferreira (2019), the four aspects most addressed in the literature by contemporary theories concern (Nave & Ferreira, 2019):

- the achievement of objectives to achieve long-term profits;
- entrepreneurial power and the need to use it responsibly;
- the need to integrate social needs;
- ethically correct policies for the society well-being.

People become more and more willing to purchase sustainable services and products (Kantar, 2020) from a company adopting strategies that involve social, ethical, and environmental values (Joshi, Rahman, 2015). The European Commission (EC) in the report entitled *Special Eurobarometer 501: Attitudes of European citizens towards the environment*, presented the results of a public opinion poll on environmental issues. The document shows the results of a survey conducted from December 6th to 19th, 2019, in 28 European member states. The analysis results reveal that 94% of the participants consider environmental protection "important to them personally" and 53% "very important" (Kantar, 2020). Climate change (53%), air pollution (46%), and the growing amount of waste (46%) resulted to be the most important sources of environmental problems (Kantar, 2020). Moreover, citizens believe that environmental problems will be reduced by changing their consumption habits (33%) and altering the production and trade methodologies (31%) (Kantar, 2020). The changes in the consumers' propensity to buy, the globalization of markets, and multiple environmental disasters that occurred over the years, led CSR to be essential for the companies' long-term survival (Gazzola, 2012c). Therefore, planning socially responsible goals became a leading task for policymakers and managers in all industries (Meuer et al., 2020). It created the need to adopt strategies and activities that integrate social, ethical, and environmental issues into the companies' economic and financial activities (TBL approach) allowing them to operate as open social systems (Gazzola, 2012a; Gazzola, 2012c; Lopez, 2020). With open social systems, the authors wanted to stress that companies must create value for both shareholders and society in general by placing society's needs at the basis of the firms' economic activity. According to this idea, companies and society influence each other (Gazzola, 2012a; Gazzola, 2012c). The former affects society, for example, creating wealth, modifying the job offer, and polluting the environment; while, society affects businesses by asking for transparency standards or by boycotting if they harm the environment (Gazzola, 2012c). Therefore, to create a competitive advantage and to be successful in the long term, it became essential to understand how to be sustainable and how to implement socially responsible actions and strategies in the companies' business (Nave & Ferreira, 2019; Lopez, 2020).

2.2.8 The need for sincere sustainability activities and higher transparency standards

The growing pressures exerted by civil society made it increasingly necessary for companies to undertake sincere sustainability activities (Nave & Ferreira, 2019) and communicate to stakeholders the impacts produced on society and the environment (Gazzola, 2012a; Lyon et al., 2018). Only by disclosing the sustainability results and limits, companies can generate sustainable value, meet the stakeholders' expectations, and achieve a better reputation (Morsing & Schultz, 2006; Gazzola, 2012a). In the literature, supporters of the Stakeholder Theory argue that these factors also ensure satisfactory levels of profitability (Ağan et al., 2016). Today, social communication requires the adoption of a more conscious approach such as TBL (Pedrini, 2012; Gazzola, 2012a). Transparent social communication is a fundamental requirement for the companies' legitimacy and represents a new challenge (Gazzola 2012a). It requires higher transparency standards and sophisticated communication strategies (Morsing & Schultz, 2006; Romolini, Fissi & Gori, 2014; Gazzola et al., 2020; Tsalis et al., 2020; Threlfall et al., 2020). Moreover, corporate culture (Romolini, Fissi & Gori, 2014) and government (Gazzola et al., 2020) can influence the way companies manage their relationships with stakeholders (Romolini, Fissi & Gori, 2014; Gazzola et al., 2020). Corporate social responsibility must be viewed by companies as a long-term investment and an opportunity to be competitive and to survive (Gazzola, 2012c). Unfortunately, there is a risk that they will adopt greenwashing strategies, i.e., use CSR strategies only as a marketing tool to improve their image and to remain competitive (Gazzola, 2012c; Romolini, Fissi & Gori, 2014; Burger-Helmchen & Siegel, 2020). Indeed, companies could be motivated to publish only information related to the effects of the policies that contributed to creating a positive image (Gazzola & Mella, 2012). In this way, they will only benefit in the short term (Gazzola & Mella, 2012; Gazzola, 2012c) as consumers tend to punish insincere sustainable actions (Nave & Ferreira, 2019). Transparency is a CSR element that is linked to the concept of corporate hypocrisy (Nave & Ferreira, 2019), defined by Tillmann Wagner, Richard J. Lutz, and Barton A. Weitz as the "*belief that a company claims to be something it is not*" (Nave & Ferreira, 2019, p.887).

2.2.9 The pandemic impacts on the CSR concept

On December 31st, 2019, the first case of SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19) was discovered (Il Sole 24 Ore, 2021). Businesses had to serve their customers with essential services, face late payments, deal with canceled orders and their freedom to fire employees was limited (Crane & Matten, 2021) because the pandemic resulted in the loss of many workers' jobs (Brown, 2021). For these reasons, the pandemic increased inequalities and had a significant impact on the CSR concept and the companies' social obligations (Pelikánová, Němečková & MacGregor, 2021; Crane & Matten, 2021). Through a study of female workers in the garment industry, Brown demonstrated that the CSR programs of companies belonging to supply chains were not designed to improve illegal and abusive conditions and, therefore, they failed to improve the employees' working conditions (Brown, 2021). According to Radka M. Pelikánova, Tereza Němečková, and Robert K. MacGregor, Covid-19 has been perceived by some companies as a threat to passively survive and as an opportunity to adopt greenwashing practices or to rebuild the production portfolio (Pelikánová, Němečková & MacGregor, 2021). During the pandemic was stressed the connection of the virus diffusion and environmental situation (Spulber 2020). The pandemic highlighted the need to produce goods and services that meet society's needs and posed challenges for companies in terms of eco-friendly and sustainability. Therefore, to survive the post-pandemic period, they need to develop new business models to meet social needs and objectives (Crane & Matten, 2021).

3. Conclusions

This paper provided an overview of the historical evolution of corporate social responsibility, illustrating the main theories and events that played a fundamental role in the concept growth. To date, CSR refers to the need to adopt sustainable strategies by integrating social and environmental aspects into financial and economic activities (Gazzola, 2012c), in line with the so-called triple bottom line approach (Crane & Matten, 2021). From the literature review, it was possible to demonstrate that the CSR concept initially was focused on the employees' well-being, and, over the years, it has evolved in its scope and meaning to include all categories of stakeholders. As described, the evolution of the value system, environmental and financial scandals, and the stakeholders' power to influence the companies' activities, made CSR a necessity for their long-term survival (Gazzola, 2012c). Furthermore, the recent pandemic generated significant negative impacts on society, highlighting the need to develop new business models to face sustainability issues and meet social needs (Crane & Matten, 2021). This made CSR an opportunity to survive the post-pandemic period.

The literature review is mainly based on scientific papers that refer directly to the CSR concept. Future studies should involve articles referred to a specific sector or aspect of CSR to verify the actual impacts on the CSR concept at the end of the pandemic. Another alternative may be to analyze the business models adopted by companies to address sustainability issues and to meet social needs.

References

Ağan Y., Kuzey C., Acar M. F., Açıkgöz A. (2016). The relationships between corporate social responsibility, environmental supplier development, and firm performance. *Journal of cleaner production*, 112, 1872-1881.
Agudelo, M. A. L., Jóhannsdóttir, L., & Davídsdóttir, B. (2019). A literature review of the history and evolution of corporate social responsibility. *International Journal of Corporate Social Responsibility*, 4(1), 1-23.
Arru, B., & Ruggieri, M. (2016). I benefici della Corporate Social Responsibility nella creazione di valore sostenibile: il ruolo delle risorse di competenza e del capitale reputazionale. *Economia Aziendale Online-*, 7(1), 17-41.
Brown, G. D. (2021). Women garment workers face huge inequities in global supply chain factories made worse by COVID-19. *NEW SOLUTIONS: a journal of environmental and occupational health policy*, 31(2), 113-124.
Burger-Helmchen, T., & Siegel, E. J. (2020). Some thoughts on CSR in relation to B Corp labels. *Entrepreneurship Research Journal*, 10(4), 1-19.
Burke, L., & Logsdon, J. M. (1996). How corporate social responsibility pays off. *Long range planning*, 29(4), 495-502.
Carroll, A. B. (1979). A three-dimensional conceptual model of corporate performance. *Academy of Management Review*, 4(4), 497-505.
Carroll, A. B. (1991). The pyramid of corporate social responsibility: Toward moral management of organizational stakeholders. *Business Horizzons*, 34(4), 39-48.
Carroll, A. B. (1999). Corporate Social Responsibility: evolution of a definitional construct. *Business & Society*, 38(3), 268-295.
Carroll, A. B. (2008). A history of corporate social responsibility: Concepts and practices. *The Oxford handbook of corporate social responsibility*, 1.
Commission of the European Communities. (2001). Green Paper: promoting a European framework for Corporate Social Responsibility. *Commission of the European Communities*.
Crane, A., & Matten, D. (2021). COVID-19 and the future of CSR research. *Journal of Management Studies*.
Dahlsrud, A. (2008). How corporate social responsibility is defined: an analysis of 37 definitions. *Corporate social responsibility and environmental management*, 15(1), 1-13.
Davis, K. (1960). Can business afford to ignore social responsibilities?. *California Management Review*, 2(3), 70-76.
European Commission. (2011). Communication from the commission to the European parliament, the council, the European economic and social committee and the committee of the regions: A renewed EU strategy 2011-14 for Corporate Social Responsibility. *European Commission*.
Evans, W. R., Haden, S. S. P., Clayton, R. W., & Novicevic, M. M. (2013). History-of-management-thought about social responsibility. *Journal of Management History*, 19(1), 8-32.

Feng, P., & Ngai, CS-b. (2020). Doing more on the corporate sustainability front: a longitudinal analysis of CSR reporting of global fashion companies. *Sustainability*, 12(6), 2477.
Frederick, W. C. (1978). From CSR1 to CSR2: The maturing of business and society thought. *Business & Society*, 33(2), 150-164.
Freeman, R. E., Reed, D. L. (1983). Stockholders and stakeholders: A new perspective on corporate governance. *California Management Review*, 25(3), 88-106.
Freitas, Mónica. 2016. "Responsabilidade Social no Setor da Saúde: Representações, Valores, Motivações e Instrumentos". *Dissertação de doutoramento em Sociologia defendida na Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas da Universidade Nova de Lisboa*. 08 de dezembro de 2016.
Friedman, M. (1962). Capitalism and freedom. *Chicago U. P.*
Gazzola, P. (2012a). CSR e reputazione nella creazione di valore sostenibile. *Economia Aziendale Online-*, (2), 27-45.
Gazzola, P. (2012b). La comunicazione sociale nella creazione di valore sostenibile. *Economia Aziendale Online-*, (2), 11-24.
Gazzola, P. (2012c). CSR per scelta o per necessità?. *Maggioli*.
Gazzola, P., & Mella, P. (2012). Corporate performance and corporate social responsibility (CSR). A necessary choice?. *Economia Aziendale Online-*, (3), 1-22.
Hoffman, R. C. (2007). Corporate social responsibility in the 1920s: an institutional perspective. *Journal of Management History*.
Husted, B. W. (2000). A contingency theory of corporate social performance. *Business & Society*, 39(1), 24-48.
Jones, T. M. (1980). Corporate social responsibility revisited, redefined. *California Management Review*, 22(3), 59-67.
Joshi, Y., & Rahman, R. (2015). Factors affecting green purchase behaviour and future research directions. *International Strategic Management Review*, 3(1–2), 128-143.
Kantar. (2020). Special Eurobarometer 501: attitudes of European citizens towards the environment. *European Union*.
Kotler, P., & Lee, N. (2005). Corporate Social Responsibility: doing the most good for your company and your cause. *John Wiley & Sons*.
Kreps, T. J. (1962). Measurement of the Social Performance of Business. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 343, 20–31.
Lantos, G. P. (2001). The boundaries of strategic corporate social responsibility. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 18(7), 595–632.
Lee, M. D. P. (2008). A review of the theories of corporate social responsibility: Its evolutionary path and the road ahead. *International journal of management reviews*, 10(1), 53-73.
Lopez, B. (2020). Connecting business and sustainable development goals in Spain. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 38(5), 573-585.
Lyon, T. P., Delmas, M. A., Maxwell, J. W., Bansal, T. P., Chiroleu-Assouline, M., Crifo, P., Durand, R., Gond, J-P., King, A., Lenox, M., Toffel, M., Vogel, D., & Wijen, F. (2018). CSR needs CPR: corporate sustainability and politics. *California Management Review*, 60(4), 5-24.

Mazurkiewicz, P. (2004). Corporate environmental responsibility: Is a common CSR framework possible?. *World Bank*, 2, 1-18.
Meuer, J., Koelbel, J., & Hoffmann, V. H. (2020). On the nature of corporate sustainability. *Organization & Environment*, 33(3), 319-341.
Mitchell, R. K., Agle, B. R., Wood, D. J. (1997). Toward a theory of stakeholder identification and saliance: defining the principle of who and what really counts. *Academy of Management Review*, 22(4), 853-886.
Morsing, M., & Schultz, M. (2006). Corporate social responsibility communication: stakeholder information, response and involvement strategies. Business ethics: *A European review*, 15(4), 323-338.
Nave, A., & Ferreira, J. (2019) Corporate social responsibility strategies: past research and future challenge. *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*, 26(4), 885-901.
Pedrini, M. (2012). I bilanci di sostenibilità e delle risorse intangibili: il processo di integrazione nelle aziende italiane. *Economia Aziendale Online-*, (1), 117-146.
Pelikánová R. M., Němečková T., MacGregor R. K. (2021). CSR statements in international and czech luxury fashion industry at the onset and during the COVID-19 pandemic - slowing down the fast fashion business?. *Sustainability*, 13(7), 3715, 1-19.
Perrini, F. (2006). Book review of corporate social responsibility: doing the most good for your company and your cause by Philip Kotler and Nancy Lee. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 20(2), 90-93.
Phillips, R. (2003). Stakeholder theory and organizational ethics. *Berrett-Koehler publishers*.
Porter, M. E., & Kramer, M. R. (2006). Strategy and society: the link between corporate social responsibility and competitive advantage. *Harvard business review*, 84(12), 78-92.
Porter, M. E., & Kramer, M. R. (2011). The big idea: creating shared value. (Vol. 17), FSG.
Romolini, A., Fissi, S., & Gori, E. (2014). Scoring CSR reporting in listed companies - Evidence from italian best practices, *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*, 21(2), 65-81.
Sachs J. D. (2012). From millennium development goals to sustainable development goals. *The lancet*, 379(9832), 2206-2211.
Selznick, P. (1957). Leadership in administration. *Berkeley*. Cal.
Sethi, S. P. (1975). Dimensions of corporate social performance: An analytical framework. *California management review*, 17(3), 58-64.
Smith, N. C. (2001). Changes in corporate practices in response to public interest advocacy and actions. *Handbook of marketing and society*, 140-161.
Spulber D., (2020) Ecology, environment and education, the role of Erasmus+ projects in support to Life Programme, *I20th International Multidisciplinary Scientific GeoConference* SGEM 2020, ISSN 1314-2704 Vol 20 N 5.1, 2020, pp. 915-922 DOI: 10.5593/sgem2020/5.1/s23.115
Spulber D., Zamaraeva D.m (2020) Environmental questions and mass-media: the case of Italy and Russia , *20th International Multidisciplinary Scientific GeoConference* SGEM 2020, ISSN 1314-2704 Vol 20 N 5.2, 2020, pp. 135-146 DOI: 10.5593/sgem2020/5.2/s21.016,

Tsalis, T. A., Malamateniou, K. E., Koulouriotis, D., & Nikolaou, I. E. (2020). New challenges for corporate sustainability reporting: United Nations' 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and the sustainable development goals. *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*, 27(4), 1617-1629.
Van Marrewijk, M. (2003). Concepts and definitions of CSR and corporate sustainability: Between agency and communion. *Journal of business ethics*, 44(2), 95-105.
Van Marrewijk, M. (2003). Concepts and definitions of CSR and corporate sustainability: Between agency and communion. *Journal of business ethics*, 44(2), 95-105.
Ward H. (2004). *Public sector roles in strengthening corporate social responsibility: taking stock*, Washington, DC: World Bank.

Web References

Il Sole 24 Ore, (2021), Cose che noi umani. [Online] Available: https://lab24.ilsole24ore.com/storia-coronavirus/ (November 2021).
WBCSD, (1998), Stakeholder Dialogue on CSR, The Nederlands. [Online] Available: https://www.wbcsd.org (Sept 6-8, 1998).

Newspapers

Friedman, M., (1970), A Friedman doctrine: The Social Responsibility of Business Is to Increase Its Profits. [Online] Available: https://www.nytimes.com/1970/09/13/archives/a-friedman-doctrine-the-social-responsibility-of-business-is-to.html (September 13, 1970).