

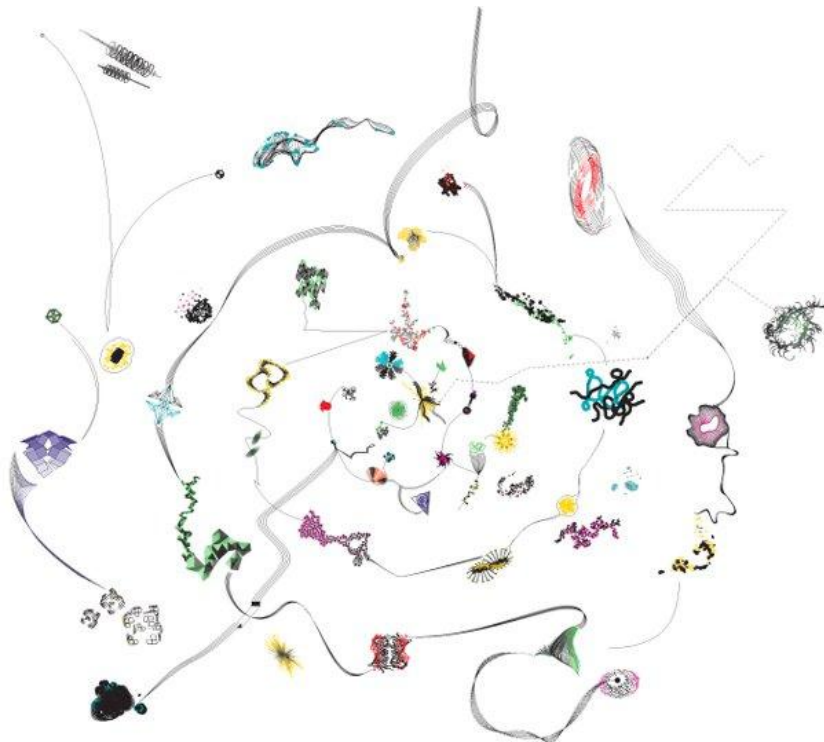
MASTER THESIS

Characteristics of companies' decision-making to support social organizations

Does the provisioning of an innovative impact assessment method potentially increase selection likelihood?

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Management Summary

Due to tense public budgets and other societal developments like ageing populations, alternative providers of social services like social entrepreneurs are increasingly dependent on new external sources of (financial) support. Simultaneously, corporate social responsibility and “Corporate Social Action” (CSA) are becoming important issues for differentiation and therewith, competitive advantage of companies nowadays. This thesis analyzes characteristics of motivation factors and selection criteria of companies to support social organizations. Further, the innovative impact assessment method “Social Return on Investment” (SROI) is enlightened on its potential to serve as a selection criterion. The literature findings are refined and extended through qualitative research with an elite sample consisting of five managers from medium to large German enterprises. In addition, two expert interviews enrich the discussion on SROI. The characteristics of the decision-making process are interpreted applying “Rational Choice Theory” (RCT) and “Social Exchange Theory” (SET). Eventually, the concept of “emotional rationality” is introduced which neatly captures the interplay of rational considerations and interpersonal aspects in decision-making.

Whereas the reported motivation factors are mostly confirming literature findings, a discrepancy could be observed in selection criteria of companies. Here, transparency is desired by companies from social organizations but not provided comparatively by themselves. Also, SROI - based on the RCT and SET analysis – obviously contains the potential to be a selection criterion in the future. Essentially, CSA decision-making characteristics – influenced by manifold variables ranging from customer pressure over managerial preferences and shareholder considerations to altruistic intentions – is a mixture of rationally assessing the added value a social investment can deliver to the company while at the same time emotionally processing the personal, individual satisfaction a project or social organization support might give to the person in charge.

Practical recommendations can be derived from the analysis’ findings. First, the SROI community should increase awareness within companies on this particular assessment tool, enforce standardization and promote its application. Second, companies are encouraged to disclose generic selection criteria for social support, therewith increasing internal and external efficiency. Third, social organizations should more strongly emphasize in their fundraising campaigns the economic advantages of CSA and allow more widely the practical approach of corporate volunteering. In addition, social organizations can increase the likelihood to be supported if they focus on a high company-organization thematic fit in advance when addressing potential donors. Finally, they can increase transparency and professional behavior – which are important selection criteria, too – through the application of e.g. a SROI analysis.

Theoretically, this thesis provides a request for a more integrated and complementary approach to RCT and SET to analyze human decision-making. Rationality and emotionality should not any longer be conceived of as different strands for diverse decision-making researches. Even findings from neuroscience support this thesis' conclusions that human decision-making continuously represents a straightforward interplay of RCT and SET aspects.

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List of abbreviations

B2B	Business-to-Business
B2C	Business-to-Consumer
CC	Corporate Citizenship
CIT	Critical Incident Technique
CSA	Corporate Social Action
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
EU	European Union
RCT	Rational Choice Theory
ROI	Return on Investment
RQ	Research Question
SE	Social Entrepreneurship
SET	Social Exchange Theory
SME	Small- and Medium Enterprise
SRCB	Social Responsible Consumer Behavior
SRI	Social Responsible Investment
SROI	Social Return on Investment
UK	United Kingdom
U.S.	United States of America

1. Introduction

The question of when successful venture level outcomes are and are not associated with successful outcomes on the societal level, and vice versa, is highly relevant but seldom asked. It is conceivable that under certain circumstances the successful pursuit of ideas for new ventures does not benefit society [...]. It is also possible to conceive of a situation where entrepreneurial efforts on the whole benefit society while at the same time the most likely outcome on the micro-level is a loss- and that therefore the rational decision is to refrain from entrepreneurship.

(Olson in Davidsson, 2008, p. 41)

The dilemma of social entrepreneurial activities, especially in the start-up stage, is exemplarily characterized by the quote from Davidsson: Most social businesses have to deal with the problem that their undertakings provide non-monetary benefits for others (positive externalities) which are difficult to measure. Also, they are not earning adequate revenue out of their activities. Furthermore, in our contemporary society, the public sector as the initial principal actor in the field of social systems can and will no longer hold this position. Due to changes in society like demographic alterations (a problem present especially in Western economies) or increasing constraints on public spending budgets, alternative ways of dealing with societal problems have come into existence. This holds especially true for countries like Germany where the traditional high state-financed involvement in the social sector is facing increasing constraints (cf. Janes & Schneider, 2010). Additionally, within the last approximately 15 years, the consciousness of society with regard to the social responsibility and actions of private companies has been growing constantly¹. Besides other factors, these are developments that trigger people to engage in what is called today social entrepreneurship, i.e. the entrepreneurial engagement for the sake of society based on moral beliefs and convictions (cf. Nicholls, 2006). Other scholars frame the definition of a social entrepreneur slightly differently: the goal of “exploiting entrepreneurial opportunities for social change and improvement, rather than profit maximization” is what they share in common (Zahra et al., 2008, p. 521). Moreover, although a conventional entrepreneur might be active in the same field as a social entrepreneur, it is their motives to do so which distinguish them from each other (Harbrecht, 2010, p. 26). Interestingly, there is a growing debate and no consensus so far to be seen on the issue of the characteristic of social entrepreneurs.

Nevertheless, as the intrinsic motivation of an individual can bring this person to engage as a social entrepreneur, the person must also be able to pay his bills and therewith, needs to gain adequate financial returns for his profession. So, financial security is a central point in social entrepreneurship, even more important compared to classical entrepreneurs since the former often

¹ See e.g. the rise in numbers of publications/google search hits on the term “CSR”: Whereas between 1.1.1999-1.1.2000 there were ≈135.000 hits, it were already ≈2,060.000 between 1.1.2009-1.1.2010 and finally, the biggest amount between 1.1.2011-1.1.2012 with ≈9,840.000 hits.

has to deal with non-existing returns or income from his primary activities (Seelos & Mair, 2005, p. 35). Here lies the point of departure where the general framework of this thesis centers around: social organizations that create a value for society but may not be able to survive according to market economic principles are supported by private companies, be it through altruistic, philanthropic action (without direct claims by the company to use the relationship for its own purpose in the future, e.g. for advertisement campaigns) or through sponsoring (where the focal company is *per definitionem* allowed to use aspects of the relationship for e.g. marketing purposes) or similar investments.² These activities are usually grouped together under the headings of “Corporate Social Responsibility” (CSR) and “Corporate Citizenship” (CC). In the following, they will be called “Corporate Social Actions” (CSA) which shall denote every kind of corporate social activity in the societal and socio-economic context.³ Since the acquisition of financial means from companies depends first and foremost on the respective company’s decision, it is of interest to find out about the motivation, i.e. the participation decision factors that guide such a step, besides the general mentioning of ‘doing something good’. In the following, motivation is understood as the process that influences behavior to reach for certain goals (cf. Fernandez-Huerta, 2008).

When one goes one step deeper in the multi-layered topic of CSA, it is obvious that a company has to select the organization it wants to support after the general willingness and motivation to engage for any reason has been “accepted”. Selection is seen as the process of reasoning which leads to decision-making through the assessment of certain criteria. This selection process is relevant since social organizations increasingly have to apply for support, hence becoming potential rivals with other organizations aiming for the same support. Also, social organizations growingly need to make use of tools to convince the potential donor of the value they can deliver through their work. Here is the place where the concrete decision-making takes place, i.e. where the advantages and disadvantages of one social investment opportunity is evaluated against the other. Some companies deal with this issue of selection criteria proactively through disclosure of their CSA guidelines whereas others remain silent on this. Mainly, the latter is the case with German companies. Hence, it appears useful to research the selection criteria which are actually accessible and look for further opportunities to increase the knowledge in this field.

Generally speaking, in order to acquire financial resources, social entrepreneurs need to be able to show their investors e.g. where their strategy is heading to and how much leverage effect

² The altruistic giving of money and other resources from companies to social organizations will be called interchangeably spending/investment/support since this thesis shall not discuss the peculiarities of discourse possibilities on the philanthropic activities of companies. Instead, the aim is to make clear that even though using the term e.g. investment might trigger the connotation of profit-making, the profit might also be non-monetary like satisfaction or social security (which as some might argue can, too, be depicted in monetary terms. But this is another storyline).

³ The steps leading to this designation are extensively described in chapter 2.1.

their activities can create. On the other hand, established companies have identified the need stemming from political and public pressure to communicate their social spending and activities in terms of their CSA. This is the reason why most established companies today publish e.g. CSR-reports in which their goals and targets as well as the already achieved milestones through CSA are presented. Hence, the question on the leverage effect, these actions might create, is present and needs to be approached through impact assessment methods like for instance the innovative social return on investment SROI. This method is attributed as “innovative” following the third edition of the Oslo Manual where, based on Schumpeter (cf. 1911), an innovation is defined as the implementation of a new or significantly improved process or organizational method (cf. OECD, 2005).⁴ In the case of SROI, it is discussed in a broader public starting around 2002 and the concept combines traditional financial metrics with the peculiarities of the social sector⁵ in an innovative way (cf. REDF 1, 2012). More specifically, SROI allows social organizations to depict the value of their work in monetary terms and therewith, making the formerly hidden aspects of their work visible, although the calculation process and method itself can be quite time- and therewith resource-consuming (REDF 1, 2012). Interestingly, the SROI community is referring to this impact assessment method as a good tool to acquire new donations or support (cf. The SROI Network, 2012; Can-online, 2012). However, the question remains whether this is a self-fulfilling prophecy claim or if such an impact assessment method like SROI is indeed potentially facilitating the acquisition of financial means for social organizations through e.g. being a selection criterion.

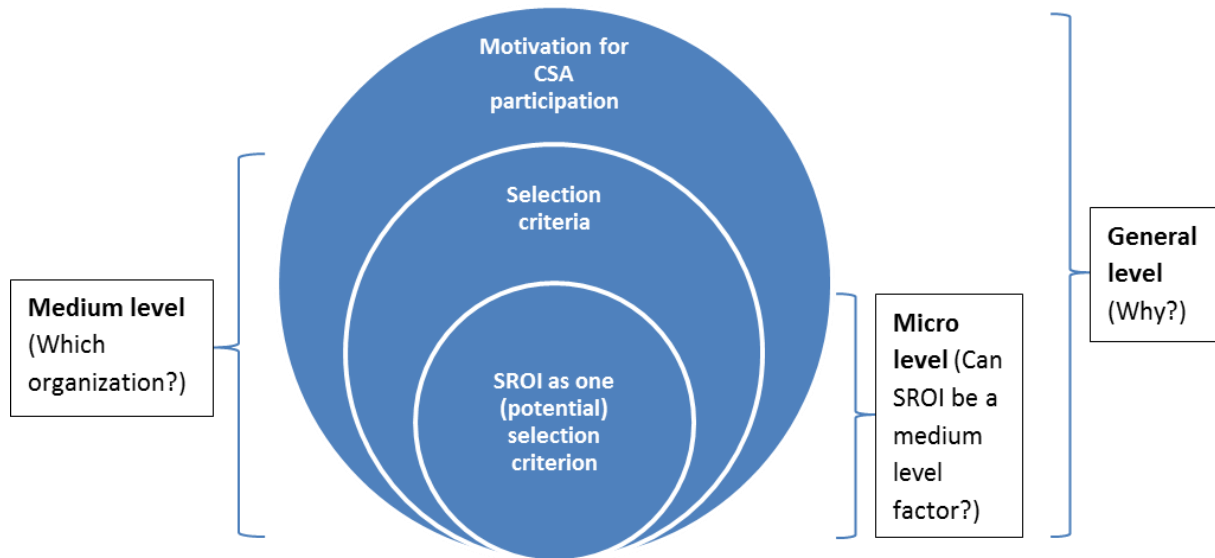
1.1. Research goal and research questions

Summarizing, this research master thesis has as its research goal to analyze and develop a conceptual approach on the characteristics of a company’s CSA decision-making, i.e. the participation and selection decision to support a social organization as well as SROI assessment as a potential selection criterion in Germany. Seen numerically, the whole topic of CSA in this thesis translates then into a three-dimensional approach. This is illustrated in the following figure 1.

⁴ Although the manual does not explicitly speak of innovations in the social sector, the discussions for the fourth manual are heading into this direction (cf. Blind, 2011).

⁵ I.e. the existence of many unknown or inaccurate variables that characterize the work with human beings

Figure 1) Illustration of thematic demarcation



Altogether, this leads to the following main research question:

How can the decision(-making) of companies to conduct CSA be characterized?

To concisely tackle this research question, it is split up into three attainable sub-questions:

RQ 1) What are companies' motivational factors for their engagement in terms of CSA?

RQ 2) What are companies' selection criteria on which organization or project to support?

RQ 3) How are aspects of selection criteria related to motivation factors in the decision on which organization/project to support?

RQ 4) Does the application of an innovative impact assessment like SROI potentially influence firms' decision-making in their selection for CSA?

As can be seen by the type of questions asked, this research will be explanatory (regarding RQ 1, 2 and 3) and partly descriptive (RQ 3) in its nature. The central research philosophy this thesis will follow is that of interpretivism: only subjective meanings and social phenomena can be seen as constituting basis for knowledge (i.e. the epistemology). Also, it underlines the axiological aspect that the researcher himself is always value-bound and subjective since he or she is part of what is being studied (cf. Saunders et al., 2009).

After having stated this, some assumptions this research is following must be stated. This thesis will neglect the aspect of (micro-/macro-) economic conditions which means that it is assumed in every case that companies will only conduct CSA if their direct as well as the general economic

condition allows for such action. In other words, it should be clear that only with the attainment of a monetary profit, a company can grow sustainably and act in a market place and hence, support e.g. social organizations besides their daily business (cf. Grichnik et al., 2010). Additionally, the definition of “social” in this thesis shall be guided according to the following pragmatic understanding which is derived from a theoretical delineation of social value: Every activity that aims to improve social or humanitarian problems in a society, hence contributing to welfare or well-being in a given community (cf. Peredo & McLean, 2006). Finally, this thesis aims to take a neutral position in between companies conducting CSA and social organizations benefiting from it. This is especially important since this issue of social activities by private companies often gets troubled up in a normative way which is sometimes even the case, in the view of this thesis’ author, with some researchers’ written works.

1.2. Theoretical framework

“It is the theory that decides what can be observed” (Albert Einstein in Hackey, 1995)

Based on an understanding of human behavior following the model by Fernandez-Huerta (cf. 2008), this thesis sees human behavior and ultimately decision-making as divided into motivation, cognition and reasoning. Motivation in this context is the “search to satisfy the various needs and wants” an individual possesses (Fernandez-Huerta, 2008, p. 711). As has already been discussed by Maslow (1954), motivation can be a conscious or unconscious process, probably in most of the cases a mixture of both. However, only conscious motivations can be observed well and they represent one of the foci in this thesis. Further, cognition concerns the aspect that human beings “have limited cognitive capacities” which lead them to creatively make sense of the data they encounter (ibid.). This aspect will be of particular value for the interpretation of the interview data in chapter 4 since here, the cognition in the selection process for instance is of interest, too. Finally, reasoning is seen as the way how individuals make use of their mental abilities to “choose the course of action with which they hope to achieve the objective determining their motivation” (ibid., p. 719). This can also be translated into the selection of alternatives, hence selection criteria.

Taking a more concrete stance, this thesis will work with the decision-making theoretical approaches of “Rational Choice Theory” (RCT) and “Social Exchange Theory” (SET) simultaneously. They seem useful and fitting to the goal of this study, namely to find out about the decision-making characteristics of a company to support a social organization/project. RCT has been very popular as the basic principle of human behavior especially in economics, though it neglects some aspects in interpersonal behavior and decision-making in particular which can be grouped under the headings

of emotion and sympathy. This is the place where SET makes sense to be applied additionally as a theoretical basis for the interpretation of the findings. Also, SROI as a multidimensional concept is well approachable with these two theories due to the combination of the two strands of decision-making influences which lay at the conceptual core of this impact assessment method. More specifically, SROI contains rational aspects (financial metrics) and more emotional or social aspects (e.g. increase of life quality), hence combining them and making it as one selection criterion accessible for interpretation through RCT and SET.

For instance, some authors claim that already the decision by a company to conduct CSA today can be seen as a rational choice since the current societal developments are demanding social responsible behavior of companies in manifold ways (Werther & Chandler, 2011, p. 135). Also, these two theoretical approaches might help to explain the ways how managers' decision-making is influenced by various aspects, especially in the field of CSA. It has been for a long time put forward by economists that rationality is the ultimate and always best decision-making manner in the business world. However, recent findings from e.g. neurosciences have shown that the emotional aspect (which is better approached via SET) should not be underestimated as well (cf. Damasio, 1994). The author of this thesis is convinced as well that the particular case of CSA decisions can be a good example demonstrating the interplay of the two theories since the actual choices that have to be made are about e.g. "helping (less-advantaged) people" and not about simple cost-benefits of an investment. Finally, SROI as a potential selection criterion is integrating aspects which are important for both theories: the rational based on the pure financial metrics and the social/emotional which is expressed through the social/socio-economic aspects that are all part of the calculation. More specific information on SROI and its calculation is presented in chapter 2.3.

RCT in general is assuming that every sort of "social phenomena can be explained in terms of the elementary individual actions of which they are composed" (cf. Scott, 2000). It is concentrating on the individual's assessment of costs and benefits of a certain decision, hence helping immensely to explain and understand motivation factors and even better, the selection criteria (ibid., 2007). Human beings - also prescribed as *homo oeconomicus* or profit-seeking individuals by rational choice theorists - always aim for a "maximum realization of their goals", be it individually or acting as a representative of an organization (Hofferberth et al., 2007, p. 3; cf. Coleman, 1990). To achieve this, they have to judge on the opportunity costs of their action and the respective benefits (e.g. access to resources) they could gain out of it.

Concerning SET, it is important to stress its consequent emphasis on the interpersonal relations, i.e. that the social world (and therewith the business world as well) is governed by the rewards social interactions create (Blau, 1964, p. 91). This can be happening on the personal as well as on the organizational level (cf. Scott, 2000). It was developed out of the insight that economic

undertakings are also governed by social behavior of individuals. A fact that is nicely illustrated by Lawler & Thye in the following quote: “Self-interest and interdependence are central properties of social exchange. Whether it is two lovers who share a warm and mutual affection, or two corporations who pool resources to generate a new product, the basic form of interaction remains the same” (1999, p. 217). These interactions create exchange relationships between people and organizations, contingent on the depth of the particular relation (Blau, 1964, p. 197). The exchanged goods can be material but also non-material like e.g. status or reputation. Social exchange theory therefore widens the focus of transactions to a broad social field, which includes aspects like maintenance of tradition, conformity to group norms and emotional aspects but also simple self-esteem (cf. Lavrakas, 2008). Finally, Muthasamy & White have convincingly presented aspects of SET in their work which are e.g. reciprocal/mutual commitment and dependencies, trust on various levels, and mutual power or influence i.e. power-sharing (2005, p. 419).

Finally, social constructionism is the central approach the author of this thesis bases his interpretations of the interviews on: it denotes that every form of statement a person gives is a form of reality construction through language. Hence, the interpretations, in line with interpretivism as the epistemological foundation as mentioned beforehand, must always be seen with caution and can never reflect “reality”.

1.3. Academic and practical relevance

Theoretically, this thesis might provide a ground for future research in this field of selection criteria of companies to invest in social organizations in Germany, e.g. of quantitative nature. Although the aspect of motivational factors has been researched extensively in the past, the second level of decision-making (selection criteria) seems to be underrepresented and underdeveloped in quantitative and qualitative dimensions. Hence, this master thesis will provide an integrated view on both supported by qualitative research. As mentioned beforehand, this thesis’ work shall ultimately lead to a conceptual approach of CSA decision-making characteristics in Germany. Additionally, the research on motivational aspects existing so far in management science and economics is concentrating mainly on the Anglo-American countries. Therefore, this thesis aims to take a look at these aspects in another, culturally different area such as central Europe or, more narrowly, in Germany (cf. Hofstede, 2010; Williams & Zinkin, 2008).

The interviews conducted with CSR managers and experts will disclose certain criteria to answer the question on why one organization has been supported and not another. Furthermore, the influence of the innovative construct SROI will be taken as an example and investigated whether its application by social organizations can potentially make a difference for the financing party.

Hence, the SROI research community will ultimately better be able to evaluate where the strengths and weaknesses of this approach lies in order to identify areas for improvement of the approach.

Practically, the characteristics of CSA decision-making will provide important learnings for corporate executives and social organizations or projects that benefit. First and foremost, it is the latter group that will gain knowledge which can improve their activities to acquire financial resources to secure their survival, mainly applicable to the ones that do not generate revenue/profit out of their activities. Moreover, companies active with CSA can improve their operations through the distilled motivation factors and selection criteria as will be presented in the thesis.

1.4. Outline of the thesis

This thesis will be structured as follows: after having established the introduction, context, research problem and need to discuss the topic, the research goal and the respective research questions give the reader a glimpse of the “itinerary” of this thesis. Thereafter, the theoretical background will first provide the working definition of the concept of CSA as it will be understood in the thesis, decision-making theory (i.e. in this case rational choice and social exchange theory) and a digression to the impact assessment method SROI. Second, this section shall deliver a profound analysis of identified motivational factors in companies’ decision-making to support social endeavors (chapter 2.4.1.-2.4.4.). This will represent an extensive literature discussion part since one central goal of this work is on bringing together various findings on the topic at stake into one comprehensive paper. In addition, literature on selection criteria (the medium level as depicted in figure 1) will be discussed, paving the way for the empirical part of the thesis (chapter 2.5.). Already in this chapter, RCT and SET will be used in an interim summary to interpret the presented factors (chapter 2.6.).

Subsequently in the methodology section (chapter 3), the qualitative research design and the way the findings will be interpreted will be introduced. This section will also contain the concrete steps of the qualitative research taken; i.e. the selection of the sample, the characteristics thereof, data collection issues and the way the respective data will be analyzed.

The results from the qualitative research and the particular findings and interpretation thereof will be presented in chapter 4. Also, the fit of the presented factors from the interviews compared to the findings from the literature review will be assessed. The findings, emerging themes and peculiarities will be merged, cross-compared and evaluated. Again, the developed interpretations will further be validated through the usage of triangulation, i.e. the incorporation of results from press releases, field notes taken by the author and archival data of companies as well as the interviews. If other influencing aspects which have not been discussed in the theoretical framework part come up in the course of the interviews, they will be included in the chapter on the

interpretation of results as well. Here, the theoretical contributions of RCT and SET in particular will be applied to explain and interpret the reported phenomena. This chapter is divided into five sections: First, the findings from the interviews with CSR managers and the interpretation thereof will be delivered (chapter 4.1.). Second, the analysis of the expert interview with an integration of the findings from the former interview group will be presented in chapter 4.2. Third, RQ 1-3 shall be answered in chapter 4.3. Thereafter, RQ 4 will be answered (chapter 4.4.). Finally, a summary of findings will be given where the results shall be merged and eventually, a theoretical approach on the decision-making characteristics will be presented (chapter 4.5.). This then embodies the contextual bridge to the discussion and conclusion chapter (chapter 5).

Keeping in mind the overview on motivation and selection factors from the literature review and the subsequent analysis, the results will be summarized (chapter 5). Of course, the limitations and drawbacks of the chosen approach of this thesis will be discussed in that section as well. Ultimately, they will be named and weighted against the advantages this genuine thesis approach can deliver (5.1.). The outcome chapter also aims to translate the findings into recommendations for future research action (5.2.). In this final chapter, an embedding of the developed theoretical explanations into the existing literature, i.e. this thesis's contribution to the research field will be presented. In this chapter, adaptations of the applied theories will be presented labeled as theoretical implications (5.3.). Finally, reasoning on the potential areas for improvement and practical implications for e.g. social organizations or companies will be delivered and discussed (5.4.). Naturally, an appendix with the anonymized interview transcripts will precede the list of references (chapter 6) and bibliography (chapter 7) in order to allow other researchers to read them *en detail* (chapter 8).

2. Theoretical background

When researching the existing literature on companies' decision-making factors to support social organizations, it soon becomes clear that the vast majority of published literature is coming from the US or the UK. This can be explained by the, compared to the geographical focus region in this thesis (Germany), relatively lower involvement of the government in social issues. Therefore, other instruments and societal developments have come into existence in these countries where the act of donating has become something much more routine, be it from companies or private actors, than it is the case in traditional welfare-oriented states like France or Germany (Lang & Dresewski, 2010, p. 403). Some author argue that through the development of such social security systems and other "safety nets" in legal form, the whole spectrum of CSA in these countries like Germany can only be holistically assessed when these historically grown, institutionalized aspects are taken into account as well (Backhaus-Maul et al., 2010, p. 308). Of course, they shall not be neglected but still, they do not prohibit a transfer of the arguments to this area. At least two arguments support in my point of view the application of the findings from the Anglo-American countries to Europe or Germany as well: First, the economic systems in all these are based on the same principle of free market economies. Second, the characteristics of businesses are becoming more similar between the two - as has already been demonstrated in the 1990s by Bennett (cf. 1998) and hence, the reasons (motivation/selection) for companies to sponsor social organizations can sensitively be applied across the countries.

This following chapter starts with an overview on how the concrete literature review has been conducted (2.1.). Afterwards, the concept of CSA will be elaborated on (2.2.) which is followed by a digression on the innovative impact assessment method SROI (2.3.). Thereafter, a concise overview on identified motivation aspects and selection criteria as found in the literature review will be presented (2.4.). An interim summary will close the chapter containing, too, an interpretation of the aspects from chapter using RCT and SET (2.5.) In this last section, propositions will be put forward based on the discussed findings.

2.1. Literature review method

Since the literature review is the starting point of this thesis, the methodology and process thereof will now be presented. First, literature reviews contain the profound advantage that they give the researcher the chance to better fine-tune his project and goals whereas the reader can get an indication of the already existing research within the scientific community. Boote & Beile even argue that "a researcher cannot perform significant research without first understanding the literature in

the field” (Boote & Beile, 2005, p. 6). For this concrete review, academic articles, books and other written contributions have been used. In order to find the existing literature, a first step was to brainstorm on possible keywords. These were further refined iteratively in the course of the thesis work, enriched or enhanced based on insights gained in other papers. In the concrete example of this work, the following table 1) provides the databases, academic journals and respective keywords that were used for the literature research. Additionally, most of the articles and book chapters used in this thesis have been identified through cross-reference listings. Note: all the keywords were used as search terms in German language as well in order to increase the possible amount of literature.

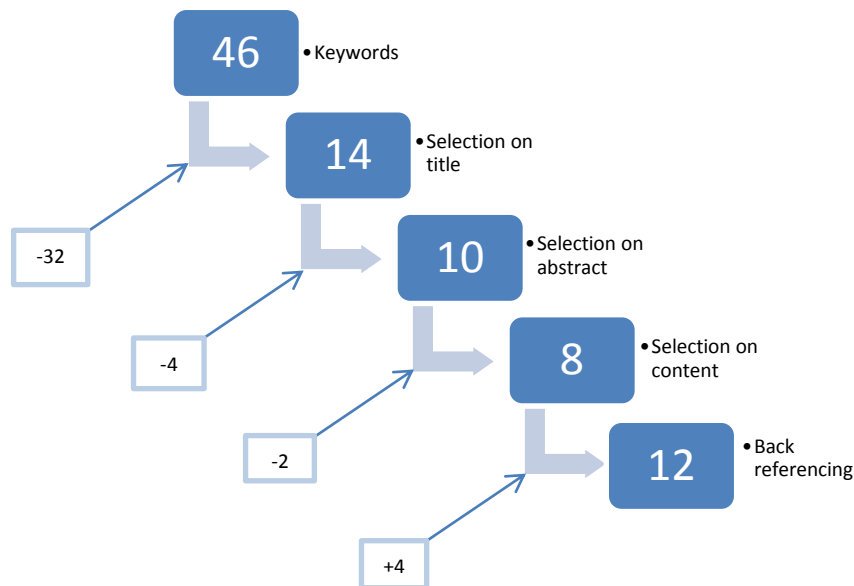
Table 1) Overview on databases, academic journals and applied keywords

Database	Academic Journals	Keywords
UTwente library	Academy of Management Review/Journal	“Corporate social responsibility”
TU Berlin library	European Business Review	“Decision-making CSR”
KOBV (Kooperativer Bibliotheksverbund Berlin-Brandenburg)	Administrative Science Quarterly	“Selection criteria CSR”
KVK (Karlsruher Virtueller Katalog)	Journal of Business Ethics	“Motivation for CSR/CC”
SpringerLink	Research in Organizational Behavior	“Corporate citizenship”
Web of Science	Journal of Marketing	“Social sponsoring”
SAGE Journals Online	Harvard Business Review	“Social sponsoring criteria”
Business Source Complete (EBSCO Host)	European Management Journal	“Decision-making social sponsoring”
EconBiz	Accounting Review	“Corporate giving”
Emerald Full Text Archive Database	Journal of Economics & Management Strategy	“Decision-making corporate giving”
JSTOR	Journal of Business Venturing	“Social responsiveness”
Wiley Online Library		“Social investment”
Oxford Journals		“Social responsible investment”
Google Scholar		“Financing social entrepreneurship”
		“Motivation for social activities”
		“Decision-making”
		“Social Exchange Theory”
		“Rational Choice Theory”

Regarding the process of finding and identifying the right academic publications itself, it soon became clear that the best way to achieve the desired amount and content was through repetitive tasks. This is due to the fact that only looking for the keywords in the title of the papers (and this is what most search engines are designed for), is not the best option to find good papers. Hence, abstracts have been scanned in a second step in order to further identify the suitable works. Thereafter, the resulting papers needed to be read which is what took retrospectively speaking the largest amount of time. However, the immense advantage thereof was that the reference lists of

these papers could be checked and other interesting papers (judged from the title obviously) came up that were then included in another round of the just described review process. To give an example, the following figure 3) shows this process for the keywords “Motivation for CSR” in the database “Web of Science”:

Figure 2) Illustration of literature search



2.2. Corporate Social Responsibility and Corporate Citizenship

In this thesis, contributions by authors applying the CSR concept for social actions by companies will be included in the part on finding reasons that influence the social decision as well as contributions by authors using the CC concept. This is explained by the fact that a clear-cut differentiation is difficult or almost impossible to draw between the two. Also, such a provoking and controversially-discussed issue like social actions of companies is in general likely to increase the amount of different interpretations and definitions. One first and very brief attempt to differentiate the two concepts could be the following: CSR is more or less the overall framework within which various sub-issues like CC are grouped together that all belong to the topic of a company’s responsibility in society, towards its stakeholders (Maignan & Ferrell, 2003, p. 56; Bassen et al., 2005, p. 235; Pirsch et al., 2007, p. 127).

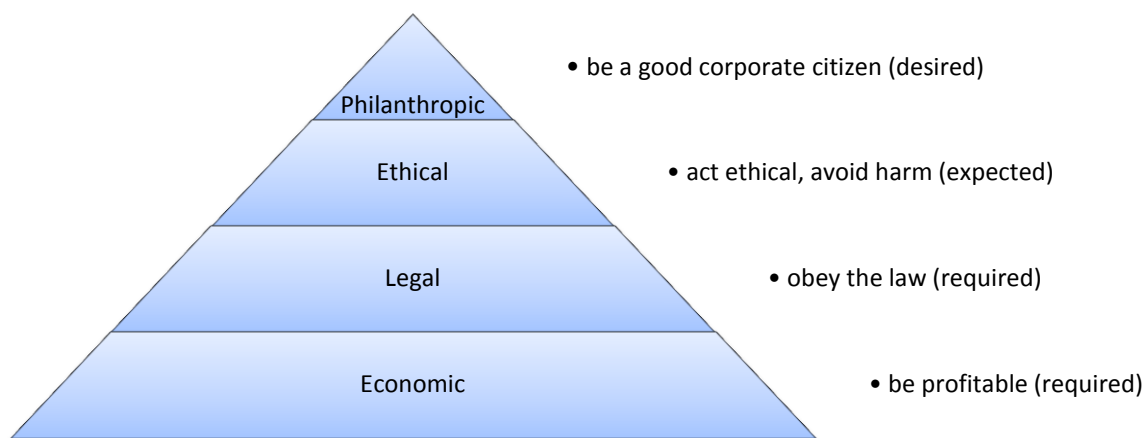
However, various academics have worked their scientific contributions out on the basis of a CSR definition which others would more or less see as a CC definition (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001, p. 226; Docherty & Hibbert, 2003, p. 380). For instance and to draw a richer picture on the blurriness of definitions: Dahlsrud has attempted to categorize and find the different definitions on corporate social responsibility through a content analysis and coding procedure. His research led him to present

37 definitions of CSR, ranging from merely minimalistic definitions like e.g. CSR as being simply a phenomenon to more profound and extensive ones like “managing the social, environmental and economic impacts from business” (Dahlsrud, 2006, p. 6). More specifically, CSR entails five levels (stakeholder, environmental, social, economic, voluntariness) according to Dahlsrud, but most of the analyzed papers in his research did only include one (ibid., p. 5).

A general and often cited definition of CSR is given by the European Commission: CSR is a “concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interactions with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis” (cf. European Commission 1, 2010). CSR is hence seen as an “add-on” to the normal day-to-day business of companies. Consequently, CSR represents the umbrella for steps taken within a company with regard to the development and compliance of corporate standards due to global challenges.

Whatsoever, the most profound and commonly accepted CSR definition attempt has been published by Archie Carroll in the early 1990s: He defined four spheres of CSR which are quite commonly accepted as the basis on which CSR is constructed. This model is known as the CSR pyramid and can be seen in the following figure 4:

Figure 3) CSR pyramid



Source: Own depiction, based on Carroll (1991)

As can be seen in this pyramid, Carroll chose for an emphasis showing different weightings in terms of the relative importance of these responsibility dimensions, at least according to neoclassical economic theory, through the respective size of the pyramid’s blocks⁶. Also, Carroll sees CSR as the “expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time” (1979, p. 500). In this model, the first and foremost responsibility is the economic one (ensuring the pure economic survival of a

⁶ And in line with Friedman who simply focused on the lowest layer and provoked with his article titled “The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits” (1970). This perspective is based on Adam Smith’s concept of the “invisible hand” which predicts that free markets organize themselves through effective resource allocation without a need for external control or guidance (cf. 1993).

company; providing goods and services to the customers etc.), followed by the responsibility to adhere to legal rules and regulations (Crane, et al., 2008, p. 62). After this sphere, the ethical component shall describe that a company should act morally, going further than the mere adherence to legal rules and regulations. Whatsoever, according to Carroll, the voluntary commitment of a firm's resources to a social cause, named by him as "philanthropic responsibility", is of less importance which is the reason for this sphere to be situated in the smallest piece of the pyramid. Often, ethical and philanthropic responsibility is seen as residing on the same level, though if a company wants to reduce its philanthropic commitment, public opinion would be less likely to judge it non-ethical as it would be the case the other way around (cf. Carroll, 1991).

However, more recent academic publications on this subject see the last aspect of philanthropic activity as the core CSR dimension (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001, p. 117). Moreover, it is necessary to note that the cultural dependence should not be neglected in this discussion: whereas consumers in the U.S. evaluated in a study the four dimensions of Carroll in the same vein as he did and eventually stress the economic sphere as most important, consumers in e.g. Germany see the legal and ethical responsibilities as even more important, followed by the philanthropic dimension (Maignan & Ferrell, 2003, p. 60). Also, the cultural aspect and societal expectations in the adoption of CSR by SMEs are highly important: a study by the European Commission in 2003 has shown that 83% of Finnish SMEs is involved in CSR actions compared to only 46% of Spanish SMEs (cf. European Commission 2, 2003).

Corporate citizenship on the other side describes the voluntary societal commitment of companies in a society on the basis of business-management, rational decisions in the context of operations side principles (Braun, 2009, p. 64). CC is, in other words, an effort to positively connect a firm in manifold ways to the society within which it is operating. Hence, the 'business case' (e.g. profit maximization) is intertwined and balanced with the 'social case' (e.g. employees as ambassadors in social organizations through volunteering work) as the most desirable state of civic commitment in the sense of CC (ibid., p. 61). The most central point here is that CC represents the charitable, continuous and unsolicited engagement of private companies which stays in the context of the company's core business objects and fields (ibid., p. 62). Essentially, it is the emphasis on the self-interest which distinguishes CC: a company is engaging socially not only because it wants to be seen as "good" or due to societal pressure, but to connect the benefits of various actions in order to reach "win-win situations" (cf. Loew et al., 2004). Therefore, CC is in this sense not a societal obligation but a business strategy which is targeting beneficent actions (cf. Porter & Kramer, 2003). Also indicated by the name CC, it is the expectation that a firm might act the same way like a good citizen in order to reach a valuable, and "good" functioning society (Crane & Matten, 2004, p. 67; Habisch, 2003, p. 50; Backhaus-Maul et al., 2010, p. 306). Eventually, one can see a link to the

concept of organizational citizenship: Herewith, the added extra work a person conducts in his/her daily working life is described with. More specifically, it refers to non-contractually fixed extra work acts which do, in sum, make a successful working situation possible in any organization. Hence, it is not something which is expected but necessary for a successful functioning (Organ, 1988, p. 4). Applied back to the discussion on CC, almost the same applies here as well: CC is not anymore unexpected but neither clearly requested, though it is a necessity – at least in the view of the author – for the well-functioning of society and mankind as a whole.

Table 2) Idealized differentiation of CSR and CC

	CSR	CC
Points of reference	Internal business decisions	Societal change
Program formulation	Corporate bargaining and decision-making between state and company associations	Exchange and possible bargaining with stakeholders
Possible forms of institutionalization	Binding legal obligations (e.g. working place security/environmental safety)	Voluntary agreements between cooperation partners
Instruments	Extended business tools	Financial and non-financial means (products, working time)

Source: Own depiction based on Backhaus-Maul et al. (2010)

Nonetheless, as this has been an attempt for a definition of CC, it must be said that academics tremendously differ on the meanings associated with this term. Whereas for some CC only concerns the fourth and last dimension “philanthropic responsibility” of Carroll (limited view), others describe it as being similar to the whole CSR concept (equivalent view). Also, some authors add the task for CC that companies would have to be responsible for the fulfillment of citizen rights in the societies they are acting in (extended view) (cf. Crane & Matten, 2005). This is especially important according to Matten et al. since the state is failing to fulfill its duties in the course of globalization more and more, so corporations need to take over some of these responsibilities as corporate citizens (cf. 2003; see also Schneider, 2004, p. 31).

Growingly, companies understand CC as an elementary aspect of their corporate identity, i.e. to stay an actor in the global market while simultaneously being a member of the local community within which the company sells and manufactures its products and services (Mecking in Backhaus-Maul et al., 2010, p. 384). Therefore, the nature, i.e. focus and form of companies’ social actions are of interest here as well (cf. Marquis et al., 2007). The focus in this thesis obviously lies on the domain of social organizations in its simplest sense, i.e. activities that aim to contribute to better e.g. societal living conditions, help disadvantaged people. With regard to forms of social activities, Marquis et al. list a typology as developed by the Committee on Corporate Grant Making: (1) cash, (2)

volunteerism, (3) in-kind donations⁷, and (4) non-commercial sponsorship (ibid., p. 931). This thesis will add to this very general list a more extensive overview on different forms of corporate citizenship actions. Based on the work by Dresewski (cf. 2004), the following table shows identified CC measures for a better understanding of the issue. Note: One aspect (matching grants) has been added as a form of CC activity which is not mentioned by Dresewski in his listing.

Table 3) CC measures

Corporate Giving	Transfer of money or products, be it from the company's own production set or simply buying and handing over needed e.g. materials
Corporate Volunteering	Unconditional providing of e.g. a firm's know-how to a social organization, offering working time of employees for social causes (e.g. consulting), also: general support by company for employees social volunteering
Corporate Foundations	Type of institutionalized engagement of a company due to the possibility to provide a long-term financial basis for social actions etc. Often, they are named after the founders of the respective company ⁸
Social Sponsoring	Application of marketing tool sponsoring into the social sector. Company can gain new communication channels and target group contacts
Cause Related Marketing	Marketing strategy which connects the buying of a product with the support of a social cause or organization ⁹
Social Commissioning	Business partnership between a firm and a non-commercial organization where the former orders e.g. supply material at the respective organization which employs e.g. handicapped people
Community Joint Venture	Partnering up of a company with a charitable/social organization in a venture which none of each would have been able to do so alone
Social Lobbying	Usage of a company's interest representation channels to influence certain decisions in favour of a social organization or groups of society. Similar to corporate volunteering since a company's resources/channels are used for a non-commercial purpose
Matching Grants	Raising a collected amount of money within an e.g. company. I.e. employees' collected money for charity gets for instance doubled by the company.
Venture Philanthropy	Application of entrepreneurial venture capital principles to the social sector, i.e. social organizations in the start-up phase can obtain seed financing and coaching by companies or venture capitalists

Source: Own depiction based on Dresewski (cf. 2004)

⁷ I.e. the spending of non-financial but material resources like furniture or computer systems or services.

⁸ e.g. Robert Bosch Foundation, one of the biggest German foundations in terms of financial background (estimated €5,1 billion of capital).

⁹ E.g. "buying a crate of beer=1m² of rain forest saved". I.e. the company supports a rain forest reforestation project with a certain amount of money (cf. Weihrauch, 2002).

All these as CC measures declared aspects would fit as dedicated CSR actions as well. To avoid confusion and achieve consistency, this thesis will follow another term: all these activities, be it under the auspices of CC or CSR, shall equivalently be named as *Corporate Social Actions* CSA. This term is stemming from the work by Christopher Marquis to “understand the mechanisms that contribute to a type of corporate practice—those oriented toward social benefits outside the firm” and not on the value-laden responsibility discussion (HBS Working Knowledge, 2012). This definition entails the advantage that CSA can simply be translated as actions a company takes in order to fulfill their responsibility and it leaves enough space for the multidimensional construct CSR (van den Brink et al., 2006, p. 16).

Finally, what unites these definitions is that company managers seem to have understood the value of CSA for their business well-being. According to an IBM Institute for Business Value study, most of the leadership personalities that were asked in the survey understand CSR as a tool to increase their returns and to gain new target customers and markets (cf. IBM, 2008). Even 54% of respondents see CSR as a competitive advantage with regard to their strongest competitors.

After this clarification of the CSR and CC concepts as well as having introduced the term Corporate Social Action CSA, it is now time to present a digression to the example of the SROI impact assessment.

2.3. Social impact assessment method – the innovative SROI construct

The impact assessment method SROI denotes an attempt to monetize the value of social activities in order to allow for better comparability on e.g. organizational efficiency as well as to develop improved justifiable arguments for the legitimacy of social organizations. Whereas the investment evaluation of “Return on Investment” (ROI) represents a common tool in the business world, it is not possible to transfer this approach to the social world one by one. The actions of organizations in this sphere have as their main goal to improve the conditions of society in general or societal groups in particular, therewith increasing life quality or other commonly called “soft” aspects.

The SROI approach has originally been developed by the Robert Enterprise Development Foundation (REDF) and aims to connect the economic success of an organization with the generated social output (cf. Lingane & Olsen, 2004). In other words, a differentiation on the economic (e.g. ROI), socio-economic (e.g. potential tax increase after successful project or cost reductions in public social services due to the project) and social benefit (e.g. improvement of life conditions) is created in order to find out about the impact a particular project or organization has. Most importantly, theories of change need to be developed in the process in order to define a starting- and ending point of the analysis, otherwise making it impossible to show an impact. Evidently, some creativity is needed in

the process of the calculation and data-gathering (Kehl et al., 2012). Practically, this translates after a successful long-term calculation into values such as “organization X has a SROI of three” which means that one Euro donated to the organization “pays back” three Euro to society (or *saves* three Euro of public social spending). This can be the case in e.g. projects dealing with (young) unemployed people where e.g. the net savings for the social system often are immense if the person is reintegrated into the working life and therewith, pays taxes without a need any more for social financial assistance (cf. Arvidson et al., 2010).

Obviously, the development of the method SROI represents a mile stone for social organizations since they are now able to depict their work in monetary terms, a language which especially the business world understands best. Additionally, the process of defining theories of change leads to organizational development attributes, i.e. organizations applying it have to clarify goals and targets for them, therewith evaluating their processes and habits. Possibly, this can lead to improved processes and organizational designs since the organization conducting it also might re-evaluate its structure due to observed misconceptions or ill-designed processes which are discovered in the SROI calculation and the preparation thereof. Also, SROI in general can help to improve the transparency of a social organization through all the steps that are taken in its application.

2.4. Literature review on motivational and selection criteria

The following four sections are devoted to the identified motivational aspects from the literature. They are structured under the headings “commercial motivations”, “altruistic managerial motivations”, “local community support” and “(prospective) employee commitment”. These four non-exclusive proposed categories were identified in the course of the literature research (cf. Meijer et al., 2006). Of course, some aspects would fit in other categories as well, or even other categories could be thought of. Though, the classification bears the immense advantage that a systematic division of the literature research results can be presented. For better navigation through these aspects, a concept-author matrix (table 4) is given in the beginning. This shall give the reader the possibility to easily identify the main contributions. Nevertheless, not all academic works that are mentioned in the subsequent chapter are included in this matrix, only the ones which included clear references to motivational factors. Afterwards, a digression to selection criteria of companies for their social engagement decision-making will be given in chapter 2.4.

Since the category of “commercial motivations” is encompassing four different concepts (“Consumer preference”, “Trust, legitimacy and reputation”, “Financial performance” and “Risk reduction”), they have been included in separate columns in the same order as they are discussed in the subsequent text.

Table 4) Category-author matrix

Commercial motivations

Authors \ Concepts	Consumer preferences	Building up of trust, legitimacy and reputation	CSA and corporate financial performance	Risk reduction	Altruistic managerial motivation	Local community support	(Prospective) employee commitment
Amato & Amato (2007)	X						
Becker-Ohlsen et al. (2006)	X	X		X			
Campbell et al. (1999)					X		
Cox et al. (2001)			X	X			
Del Bosco & Misani (2011)		X		X			
Duncan (2004)					X		
Galaskiewicz (1985)					X	X	
Gardberg & Fombrun (2006)	X		X	X			X
Groza et al. (2011)		X		X			
Hansen (2004)		X	X				
Habisch (2010)							X
Hemingway & MacLagan (2004)	X	X		X	X		X

Commercial motivations

Concepts Authors	Consumer preferences	Trust, legitimacy and reputation	Financial performance	Risk reduction	Altruistic managerial motivation	Local community support	(Prospective) employee commitment
Ho et al. (2011)			X				
Luo & Bhattacharya		X		X			
Mackey et al. (2007)	X	X	X	X		X	
Martin et al. (2011)		X					
Marquis et al. (2007)	X	X		X		X	
Mohr et al. (2001)	X						
Navarro (1988)				X			
Orlitzky et al. (2003)			X				
Petersen & Vredenburg (2009)		X	X	X			X
Quazi & O'Brien (2000)	X	X	X	X			
Ruf et al. (2001)			X	X			
Skudiene & Auruskeviciene (2012)		X					X
Sotorrio & Sanchez (2008)						X	
Turban & Greening (1996)		X					X
Vlachos et al. (2009)	X	X					

2.4.1. Commercial motivations

This category is the most exhaustive since it comprises motivations targeting at enhancing simple economic competitive advantages. According to Hlavacek & Hlavacek, to go into CSR activities, companies need to see the economic motivation internally (cf. 2008). An example which is often named in this context of social actions by companies is that the decision to go into social spending by companies is led by the thought that it is “akin to advertising” (Burt, 1983, p. 419). Although this diminishes the subjective value of CSA, it underlines one strong decision factor for companies: the effect of supporting a social cause for the brand and therewith, corporate identity of the respective company. Other scholars frame CSA more specifically as a “response to the competitive environment and the demands on managers from various stakeholder groups” (Hemingway & MacLagan, 2004, p. 34). Another important aspect here as well is the structural mimicry effect that is present in company’s actions: If one company starts to conduct social actions, others in the same sector will follow soon in order to gain the same level of legitimacy and reputation and therewith, assumed competitive advantage (cf. DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

Consumer Preferences

First, the group of consumers: They can in this respect be understood as B2B but also B2C customers, i.e. not only the purchaser of another company is a customer (B2B) but the person going into a shop to buy products as well (B2C).¹⁰ Unfortunately, only little research is available on the influence of CSA on buyer-supplier relationships. Nevertheless, one specific attempt shall be mentioned here: Baden et al. (2009) has shown that especially for small and medium sized enterprises (SME), the pressure by sourcing firms on companies to implement CSR aspects is in fact for the majority of examined companies a proper incentive to implement social activities. Though the B2C sector is much more advanced in this respect and provides more academic publications. According to a study by Mohr et al., it is the fact that cause-related marketing is so popular which shows how important the “consumer who takes into account the public consequences of his or her private consumption [...] to bring about social change” has become (2001, p. 47). According to this work, there is a general willingness observable that consumers are likely to appreciate firms that make altruistic contributions to society or that sell ethical products (ibid., p. 49).

Conducted in the early 2000s, the study already speaks of social responsible consuming behavior (SRCB) as a differentiation aspect to underline the existence of a group of people that is

¹⁰ B2B denotes any company-to-company relationships; B2C on the other hand describes company-to-(end)customer relationships.

profoundly interested in the life-cycle of products and their effects on e.g. the environment¹¹. This group in the sample can be assumed to have become bigger in the past years due to the development of e.g. the Internet which makes it immensely easier to acquire information on companies and their behavior. However, there appears to be a need for further studies in the context of customer-related effects of CSA: “despite the popularity of these initiatives, little is known about their effects on consumers” (David et al., 2005, p. 292). Nevertheless, first attempts to explore this aspect of consumer preference change have been published and the results are convincingly putting the argument further that there is a general willingness of the respondents in their survey (76%) to switch e.g. brands in favor of socially responsible firms (Amato & Amato, 2007, p. 229). In general, one must in particular be aware of the ‘social desirability bias’ which is present in these studies on consumer interest: When consumers are asked/surveyed, they tend to stress their attention on the respective company’s CSA in their personal buying-decision, though in reality most of them indeed do not (cf. Öberseder et al., 2011). More in detail, everyone seems to have a glimpse on how a good society might look like, although only a few start actions to change the situation if it is not like they desire, e.g. social entrepreneurs. Since this gap is tremendous and people- when directly asked- are likely not to acknowledge that they do not engage themselves although they wish a situation would be different, it is a common problem in surveys especially when the issue is on e.g. social justice.

Trust, legitimacy and reputation

Additionally, conducting CSA can contribute to building legitimacy, trust and reputation in the local market (cf. Del Bosco & Misani, 2011). Furthermore, a company may improve their brand image in particular through their attempts to help solve social problems (Menon & Menon, 1997 in Quazi, O’Brien, 2000, p. 34). CSA can even act as a safety net in times when a company has to struggle with e.g. a corporate scandal: The reputation build up once is making it possible to find understanding in the respective stakeholder group, even though this credit of legitimacy is limited. However, if the consumer perceives such a corporate action as aimed to rebuild legitimacy or if this intention is too obvious, it is likely that the customers are reacting negatively to such a reactive action (cf. Groza et al., 2011; Wagner et al., 2009). Predominantly, it is proactive CSA which results in a ‘good’ corporate image and perception by the consumer “due to its altruistic nature” (Groza et al., 2011, p. 641). Furthermore, the perceptions of consumers on company’s driving motives for CSA are primarily mixed: It is seen as positive if the company is credited as being value-driven as opposed to egoistically-driven since the former is likely to create e.g. trust on the consumer side (cf. Vlachos et al., 2009; Becker-Ohlsen et al., 2006). Nevertheless, various large corporations still practice a

¹¹ According to Mohr et al. This group of SRCB people represented one fifth of the sample group (p. 61).

reactive, egoistically-driven CSA approach which is even claimed to spur “public cynicism and suspicion” (cf. Luo & Bhattacharya, 2006)¹².

Additionally, the development of the world wide web increased the influence of the group of consumers on companies: through the convenient realization of individuals’ support for a social topic via so-called *dotcauses*¹³, the building up of pressure on an e.g. corporation has become more popular and common (cf. van den Broek et al., 2012). Companies therefore need to be more cautious on their conduct, the related external media coverage and public opinion since “bad behavior” news spread around the globe more quickly and uncontrolled than ever before, causing protest campaigns and watchdog groups’ activism quickly (cf. Ambec & Lanoie, 2008; Bhattacharya, 2008). Also, it has been demonstrated in studies that a reduced probability for being the target of consumer and activist boycotts can be stated for companies with viable and convincing CSA (cf. Luo & Bhattacharya, 2009; Vogel, 2005).

Financial performance

Obviously, since most of the corporations today are listed on the stock markets, the group of shareholders does have an influence on the development of corporate social action as well. Studies have shown that a good CSR performance has a neutral or positive effect on the value of the respective company’s stock share (Hansen, 2004, p. 71).¹⁴ A meta-study by Orlitzky et al. (cf. 2003) has demonstrated a positive, significant relationship between CSA (he terms it corporate social performance) and general corporate financial performance. Altogether, there is a tendency observable that growing evidence is present on a positive correlation between CSA and corporate financial performance (cf. Ho et al., 2011). In recent years, the idea of social responsible investment SRI has spread around in the investors’ world and even led to the building-up of some specialized consulting agencies which assess the sustainability and other ethical factors of investment opportunities like e.g. funds¹⁵. Interestingly, private investors- as tested by a survey in 2012- see social aspects for their financial investment decision as more important than environmental aspects (cf. Focus, 2012). Although not yet highly demanded, different investment companies expect it to grow further. Nonetheless, especially with regards to private investors, the recent financial crisis and its impact on economic systems in the world have reduced the interest in such investment forms according to analysts (cf. FTD, 2012). Again, a social desirability bias might be at work here as well.

¹² E.g. BPs actions to become an environmentally-caring corporation despite massive fines it faced due to illegal pollution (cf. DailyFinance, 2012).

¹³ *Dotcauses* can be defined as being informal networks that mobilize support for their (social) cause by means of the Internet (cf. Clark & Themudo, 2006).

¹⁴ Critique on these findings usually centers on the aspect that the comparability of studies is problematic due to different conceptual methods and definitions which were used in these studies (Hansen, 2004, p. 72).

¹⁵ IMUG (2012); Domini (2012).

However, some authors argue that SRI is already on the verge of becoming an investment philosophy which is adopted by even the large investment institutions (cf. Spakes & Cowton, 2004). However, it is mainly the institutional investors such as pension funds who own the long-term persistency to accept short-term losses due to social spending but long-term gains due to various firm attributes CSA can enhance. Too, pension funds have the possibility to place more emphasis on social and political considerations (Cox et al., 2001, p. 215).

Risk reduction

According to a study by Mackey et al. there are indirect effects of corporate social action on shareholder behavior like e.g. the fact that social action can “enable a firm to differentiate its products in its products markets”, it can “enable a firm to avoid costly government-imposed fines [...] and can act to reduce a firm’s exposure to risk” (2007, p. 818; cf. Petersen & Vredenburg, 2009; Cox et al., 2007). Hence, the present value of a firm’s future cash flows can increase when social action is present which makes it more attractive to be invested in by other investor (groups) due to the wealth-maximizing character of this action. Evidently from various researches, CSA is creating intangible assets, hence equalizing social investments with investments in a company’s R&D or advertising (Gardberg & Fombrun, 2006, p. 329). Also, since managers will tend to decide for options which can potentially increase the value of their company; today it is likely that companies which do not target social actions in the long run will face a diminishing value (Mackey et al., 2007, p. 830). As an advice, Mackey et al. stress that managers will have to assess the demand for social responsible investment by investors as they are assessing the market situation with other products or services in their supply and demand business (ibid., p. 832). Consequently, when campaigns will increase their coverage of e.g. companies that are badly-behaving in social terms, the demand for such alternative investment opportunities will rise. As long as the demand for corporate social action and responsible behavior is not present, managers will tend to act further in their “market-enforced responsibility to maximize the market value of a firm” (ibid., p. 832). This aspect is also a drawback of corporate social action, especially in the United States, not only since the case of Dodge Brothers vs. Ford in 1919 where the court ruled that a “business organization is organized and carried on primarily for the profit of the stockholders”. However, currently it is a paradigm change that this group is no longer the only target of approval for managers’ decisions but instead that the group of stakeholders and shareholders must *both* be taken increasingly into account (Margolis & Walsh, 2003, p. 271).

Essentially, companies that are active in supporting social causes are increasingly seen by investors as improving their economic value not only due to the above-mentioned corporate risk reduction, but also due to lower transaction costs (cf. Ruf et al., 2001) through “enhanced access to resource markets” (Petersen & Vredenburg, 2009, p. 13; cf. Gardberg & Fombrun, 2006). Too,

institutional investors and corporate executives report a reduction in the volatility of a company's stock in that particular study (Petersen & Vredenburg, 2009, p. 11). However, the social engagement must be communicated to investors as part of a strategy rather than solely philanthropy in order to be trustworthy and successful (ibid., p. 12). With regard to firm size, it was shown in a study that there is a u-shaped relationship between size and level of CSA: Medium-sized firms are the least motivated to engage in CSR activities according to Udayasankar (cf. 2008).

Obviously, state regulation also influences companies' behavior to act e.g. in a socially responsible way as for example does environmental legislation (Campbell, 2004, p. 131). This is especially relevant for e.g. tax laws that are aimed to positively influence company's social supporting conduct through financial advantages generated as incentives. In Germany, donations to charities reduce the total amount of tax-deductible income (§9(1,2) *Körperschaftsteuergesetz*) as well as the operating profits (§9(5) *Gewerbsteuergesetz*), but only up to a limit of 20% of total income of the respective corporation (Mecking in Backhaus-Maul et al., 2010, p. 374). Hence, the donator is awarded a special expenditure deduction and can incorporate the money invested as operating expenditures (ibid., p. 373). Finally, action of companies in the social sphere might, too, help in preventing additional legislation which can lead to "higher costs of compliance" (Quazi & O'Brien, 2000, p. 35).

2.4.2. Altruistic managerial motivations

As demonstrated by Campbell et al. (cf. 1999), altruistic reasons were mentioned by managers as their main motives for corporate giving the most. This can be explained by psychological reasoning: managers might push CSA in order to maintain their e.g. status or gain prestige (cf. Galaskiewicz, 1985). Also, it has been demonstrated that managers' personal moral convictions has a significant influence on corporate values. It even makes a difference what the educational or heritage background of the manager is (cf. ibid.). Religion might play a role here as well since the "importance of helping other people less fortunate than oneself can be found in Buddhism, Judaism and Islam" as well as in Christianity (Hemingway & MacLagan, 2004, p. 37). However, there is also the fear by managers of an "halo effect": This denotes the aspect that if managers would do the opposite of what has been described beforehand, i.e. questioning any CSA, they could be seen as being misanthropic which is also not in most managers' interest and, too, concerns the status and prestige issue (cf. Tonello, 2011).

Another interesting motivational explanation has been proposed by Duncan which he terms "impact philanthropy". According to him, the term denotes the philanthropic activity in which "donors contribute because they enjoy personally increasing the output of the good" (2004, p. 2160).

In return, managers responsible for the engagement will earn recognition and appreciation in e.g. the local community. Here, one could also argue that managers' constructed motivation for CSA "is always driven by some kind of self-interest" (Hemingway & MacLagan, 2004, p. 34). Finally, the connection of a social organization and a company might be the result of a personal liaison/contact between the manager and the responsible person in the organization or even be initiated by the company's manager based on his own, very personal interest: This is also denoted as the "Chairman's pet project (cf. Whitehouse, 2006).

Indeed, such generous conduct would be a very attractive reason to justify the engagement of a company for something which might even have nothing to do with the core business of the relevant firm. However, one must again be very clear about the aspect of the so-called 'social desirability bias' which can be assumed to be present here (cf. Öberseder et al., 2011).

Additionally, there is the problem that if a manager would argue that their motivation for CSA is altruistic in nature, they would obviously neglect the issue of the profit-maximizing nature of corporations (cf. Neiheisel, 1994). Whether a company would spend excess profits for social causes instead of paying additional premiums is doubtful. However, times have changed and as mentioned beforehand, the consciousness of managers on their own (and their company's) social responsibility as well. In addition, social businesses and entrepreneurs are changing the picture since the lines between not for profit organizations and for-profit organizations with a social business aim are increasingly vanishing. In addition, the definition of what is ethically a positive achievement or not is heavily reliant on the point of view: Even a statement like "an action is morally right if it results in the greatest amount of good for the greatest amount of people affected by the actions" depends on the judgment on e.g. what is good or not (cf. Crane & Matten, 2004).

2.4.3. Local community support

Obviously, a lot of CSA happens solely in the direct surrounding of a company's headquarter. A study by Sotorrio & Sanchez has shown that the local surrounding influences the degree, content and the motivation of CSA (cf. 2008). This is an ordinary case, as managers who decide on engaging in social activities or spending are living in these very areas, get in touch with projects and organizations more conveniently and have another feeling of connectedness and relationship to the local area. According to a study by Mackey et al., it is the community on a regional level where companies are headquartered that influences the degree of CSA (2007, p. 925). The reason why the geographic communities are as influential as they proclaim is that they serve as "touchstones for legitimizing corporate social action" and that these actions are mostly "oriented toward the locales in which a corporation's executives reside" (ibid., p. 927).

Additionally, and this aspect might fit into the next category section as well, employees of a company might be motivated and spurred by their company's local engagement. This stimulus translates in feelings of proudness on the organization within which one is as an employee member of etc. (cf. Skudiene & Auruskeviciene, 2012). Hence, increased motivation might result in a competitive advantage over other companies, not only from the notion that human resources are in social highly active firms generally managed differently but also from the simple motivation caused by these activities (cf. Huselid, 1995).

Joseph Galaskiewicz (cf. 1991) on the other hand has demonstrated that firms, when normative or cultural organizations in place, tend to act socially responsible. They can motivate firms through e.g. campaigns to engage in a certain field. Such organizations can be for instance a business association which e.g. conducts charity events and creates a set of incentives for a socially responsible behavior by the companies at stake. Furthermore, Marquis found in his study that "firms serve as templates for appropriate board behavior for community newcomers", linking his argument to the headquarters local surroundings (2003, p. 665). In addition, companies might increase the economic conditions in a specific region through active involvement and improving indirectly of life conditions which can in the long run even increase its customer base (Tonello, 2011).

Some authors even argue that a firm's CSR activities reduce the risk of being a target for criminal activities due to an increased "firm legitimacy, stakeholder satisfaction, and perception of fairness that can be useful in reducing crimes" (cf. del Bosco & Misani, 2011). Navarro has laid the basis for this argument through his statement, that CSA can also minimize the risk of vandalism and theft (1988, p. 68). Further, it has been shown in another study that social responsible activities by companies are useful to mitigate terrorism. Especially for companies active in e.g. emerging markets or less developed countries, this aspect might be of interest. A reason for this is for instance the better integration of a firm within the local community which results in local inhabitants taking a "greater interest in that firm's well-being" (Petersen & Vredenburg, 2009, p. 5). Hence, CSR activities can also be seen as a tool to hedge risks – be it from e.g. criminal activities or as a result of a negative reputation in case of companies active in e.g. natural resources processing (ibid., p. 6). Nevertheless, this aspect practically seems to be less relevant within the focus region Germany.

2.4.4. (Prospective) employee commitment

Evidently, future employees will be attracted by a positive corporate image created partly through CSA which is in times of skills shortage and the famous "war for talents" etc. a relevant factor, too (Habisch in Backhaus-Maul et al., 2010, p. 165; cf. Bhattacharya et al., 2008; Hemmingway & MacLagan, 2004). Hence, the aspect of strategically conducting CSA as a company becomes a

competitive advantage when it comes to the “organizational attractiveness to future employees” (Turban & Greening, 1996, p. 658; Petersen & Vredenburg, 2009, p. 6). This is due to the fact that a future prospective employee might get information representing values and norms like trustworthiness of the respective company which lets him interpret it as resembling the working conditions in this company according to signaling theory (Petersen & Vredenburg, 2009, p. 660). The results of the study by Turban & Greening underline the positive effect of corporate social action on organizational attractiveness: companies high in corporate social performance were given higher reputation ratings and therewith, evaluated as more attractive to prospective employees (1996, p. 666). Additionally, lower employee turnover has been reported due to higher levels of employee satisfaction in companies with strong CSA activities (Petersen & Vredenburg, 2009, p. 6).

On the other hand, the already existing employees might be influenced and attracted by a good organizational climate as well. They can be motivated by having the feeling to work for a company which not only provides them with a working place but one which also cares for issues happening outside the firm’s direct areas of concern (cf. Skudiene & Auruskeviciene, 2012). Having not only a secure working place but being able to provide his family a good, attractive surrounding becomes increasingly important. It has been shown that CSA triggers the same level of organizational commitment as is the case with job satisfaction according to a study by Brammer et al. (cf. 2007). This is playing a role for organizational identity and the reputation thereof, another important competitive advantage factor in contemporary times (cf. Martin et al., 2011). Various important recommendations are mentioned in this respect like e.g. to achieve an effective CSR policy, it is important that high-management commitment is present, that the CSR measure or policy is not just ‘window-dressing’ but is being rewarded etc. (cf. Collier & Esteban, 2007). Finally, through the social engagement a company conducts, employee soft skills can improve when they e.g. volunteer in a social project or if a more ‘social’ climate is reigning within the respective organization due to its CSA.

2.5. Selection criteria for CSA

As has been pointed out in the theoretical framework in chapter 1.2., reasoning on the course of action and therewith selection of a social organization is of interest in this thesis as well. The literature review on selection criteria unfortunately has not produced the expected results - especially compared to the massive amount of work existing on motivational aspects. However, since the literature existing is limited, the following table has been developed based on two sources: A quantitative study by the consulting company PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) where German companies were asked for their attitude and emphases with regard to CSA and the concrete selection criteria. The second source is a review by Walliser (cf. 2003) on international sponsorship,

though his work is not solely focusing on social sponsorships but sponsorship in general, hence referring to sports and art sponsorship, too. Nevertheless, since companies tend to include sponsorships of various directions into their CSA, the author decided to include them as well. Not surprisingly, it is clear that these generic selection criteria are strongly company-dependent and cause-related.

Table 5) Selection criteria for CSA

PwC study (2007) ¹⁶	Walliser (2003)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional embeddedness (76%) • Transparency (70%) • Company-social organization fit (61%) • Size and prominence of organization (10%) • First come, first serve (5%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived affinity between sponsor product and sponsored activity • Affinity between targets of sponsor and sponsored • Popularity and image of the potential sponsored party and its willingness to cooperate • Geographical reach • Contact frequency • Contact quality • Expected sponsorship costs/benefits • Type of rights received • Possibility to integrate the sponsorship into the communication/marketing strategy

Source: Own depiction based on PwC (2007); Walliser (2003)

Already at this stage, it is possible to see the relationship between selection criteria and factors for the participation decision of a company to conduct CSA. This will further be elaborated in chapter 4. However, the two main aspects for selection as deduced from the existing literature are: company-organizational fit (i.e. geographical closeness and the general fit between the supporting company and the social organization/project) as well as the quality of the relationship which can be translated into transparency. In the next step, these aspects will be merged with the decision-making theory applied in this thesis.

2.6. Interim summary with interpretation

Again, it must be emphasized that no single motivational aspect can be understood isolated and that these proposed four categories are not mutually exclusive (cf. Campbell et al., 2002). The participation decision of a company must be seen as a conglomerate of different aspects where the

¹⁶ In brackets are the percentages of the survey respondents confirming this criterion as relevant and important.

central point of reference is that “a commercial motivation does not rule out altruistic motives” (Meijer et al., 2006, p. 23). However, it is obvious that the economic motivation is the most striking and exhaustive category. This can be explained by the fact that CSA is first and foremost an “extra” spending of a company’s resources which must also be justified in economic terms, possibly triggering the research community to analyze this aspect the most which naturally leads to a surplus in terms of publications (and possibly findings, too). Nevertheless, the category on (prospective) employee motivation is very close to the economic category since attracting the “best” people helps a company to differentiate and to attain competitive advantages (cf. Bhattacharya et al., 2008). The same goes for local community support which is a tool to hedge risks and at the same time, an approach to increase employees’ motivation and local embeddedness. Finally, the category of altruistic managerial motivations is the most controversial: The different aspects playing a role here should probably be more concisely observed and researched especially from the psychology academic community.

Interpreting the decision-making factors of companies to support social causes from decision-making theories’ view, it is vital to see that the exchange in general and the bond between persons in particular is always a determinant of the way a connection works out. Hence, the specific social exchange between people can even sometimes lead to actions of a company which would otherwise not have happened due to institutional constraints etc. This helps interpreting the “altruistic managerial motivation” category: executives in charge want to possibly reward organizations that they value – in exchange for e.g. positive reputation in their local communities. This can be seen as a rational choice in itself as well – the respective manager aims to achieve a subjectively better position in his personal self-belief as well as in the way he/she thinks is seen by others in the community. However, SET might explain this exchange as involving reputation and status as a gain out of such an exchange by the manager in charge who possibly sympathizes with the respective social organization. Additionally, institutional pressure from the community or other like-minded individual organizations (e.g. a charity club like Lion’s Club) can play a role here as well. Also, mutual dependencies or tradition can play a vital role here, too, which are also part of SET reasoning.

Interestingly, “local community support” motivation can again nicely be illuminated from both theoretical lines of decision-making reasoning: On the one hand, firms strive for risk reduction in terms of local crimes which can in itself be seen as a rational choice. Here, the costs of non-engagement might outweigh the costs of CSA. Additionally, human resources which a company can attract through CSA is becoming more important in the war for talents, the opportunity cost to conduct CSA will probably less in the long-run. In the same sense, the status and therewith the brand identity of the respective company can be increased which is from an economic, rational point of view a good choice as well. On the other hand, companies aim to increase trust and mutual

commitment of their employees as well as of the local population based on this social exchange that CSA contains (cf. Muthasamy & White, 2005). Also, the emotional relationship between the company and its surrounding might be improved and hence, desirable.

With regard to the category of “economic motivation”, SET might not provide the best approach as interpretation foundation. However, it can principally help to advance the understanding of the concept of “trust, legitimacy and reputation”: all three are non-material goods which are “exchanged” based on the mutual relationship and dependence which CSA contains. They obviously are quite fragile, meaning that if the company in question is behaving badly in other areas except CSA, the e.g. reputation is probably vanishing in shorter time than it has taken to be created. However, managers in charge of CSA decisions are guided by experience at least or policy guidelines at best. Hence, they base their decisions on rational choices aiming to maximize the e.g. competitive advantage of their company. In other words, this phenomenon can be approached with cost-benefit analysis, concentrating on how CSA can improve e.g. the image of the company or the access to alternative forms of financial capital markets (→SRI). CSA is hence also “brand insurance policy, minimizing or offsetting stakeholder disillusionment” on gaps in the specific social actions a company pursues and similarly, maximizing the brand value in contemporary societal understanding (cf. Werther & Chandler, 2011).

The fourth category “(prospective) employee commitment” provides various interpretation possibilities, too. On the one hand, the incorporation of CSA might increase a situation of mutual dependency of the company with its employees, especially when they themselves can choose or propose a project/organization which is supported. Therewith, the social bond between these two entities might become stronger. On the other hand, it is a matter of fact that only companies with strong and best human capital are able to create and sustain competitive advantages (cf. Huselid, 1995). Since more highly educated people e.g. university graduates increasingly focus their application and workplace choice on the conviction to work for a social responsible employer instead of solely striving for high salaries, the motivation to become active in CSA is rational in its purest sense as well.

Selection criteria

Turning attention to the identified selection criterion of “company-organization fit”, one can interpret this as being predominantly an exchange of attractiveness i.e. a social organization’s goals need to fit to the supporting company and optimally, vice versa. Although this appears rational on the first sight, the emotional aspects of assessing this degree of fit should not be underestimated

(mainly in terms of the respective persons who work out the assessment).¹⁷ Whereas the selection of a company's e.g. supply chain partner can be evaluated on parameters like innovative output of the potential partner, the selection of a social organization or project appears much more to be a matter of feeling and sympathy of the responsible individuals. Although a potentially supported social organization can be active in the field of e.g. education and one of the company goals is to improve education, this fit might be overruled by other, 'soft' aspects like sympathy. The opposite direction would be an example where a company which is active in e.g. the energy producing sector supports an exhibition of paintings – assumed the case that no corporate guideline exists which explicitly targets such actions. Again, it can also be the reason that one of the executive managers is realizing his personal goals through the company vehicle as has in the past already been the case (cf. Tonello, 2011) and hence, circumventing any selection criteria besides the ones by him- or herself. Therewith, he/she is for instance aiming to maximize his own benefit in terms of personal goals. Nevertheless, as this thesis is also striving to illuminate the aspect of more scientific (or rational) assessment methods like SROI, it will be interesting how companies react to the introduction of such a measurement, especially for e.g. firms dealing with economic assessments like financial institutions since they work closely with assessment methods in their daily working life.

As selection criteria, the geographic proximity of a social organization to the donating company seems to act as an important factor, too. This can be seen as a part of company-social organization fit category, though the rationale behind is a little different. Here, also employee motivation is part of the argumentation since these are the ones living in the surrounding and experiencing e.g. social needs directly. This can be rationally approached as being part of an acceptance and company/brand identity strategy, with clear benefits also for the acceptance of the company. On the other side, the reputation and status of a company and its employees respectively is an aspect of SET reasoning.

With regard to the "transparency" criterion, it is the motive of trust that seems to prominently act as a goal which requires transparency. In other words, a firm naturally wants to see and be able to understand how the social organization is structured, what its conceptual foundation is etc. and hence, where the support goes to. Controversially, as has been mentioned beforehand, German companies are less active in disclosing their CSA procedures or criteria for support like sponsoring compared to their e.g. U.S. counterparts, though they probably want to see transparency disclosure from the organization/project they support following the mentioned literature findings. This can become a drawback of CSA viewed through SET since it is important to keep a reciprocal level of commitment in an exchange relationship. However, taken a rational point of view, an

¹⁷ However, one problem remains with measuring emotions: They can "in a decision context [...] create feelings that can operate both in an open, conscious way as well as in a covert sub-conscious way that we call intuition" (Wenstøp, 2005, p. 170).

exchange relationship does not have to be equivocal, i.e. the stronger part might also just dictate the rules of the game.

Obviously, SROI as an impact measurement tool to clarify social organizations' goals is in particular targeting at the aspect of transparency. Therewith, organizations are better able to assess and evaluate their own goals and targets as well as the way how these want to be achieved through the direct and indirect effects the calculation of a SROI can produce.

Propositions

Summarizing, the findings from the literature review and the preceding discussion lead to the following propositions for the empirical work of this thesis:

P1: Motivational factors of companies CSAs are in majority based on aspects of RCT than on sympathy and emotions, i.e. SET aspects.

P2: Selection criteria of companies CSAs are rather based on a mixture of RCT and SET aspects than on one of them taken singularly.

P3: Based on a RCT point of view, SROI is rather improving the potential probability of social organizations to be selected by companies for support than it is yet seen as a mean for better comparison between social organization performances.

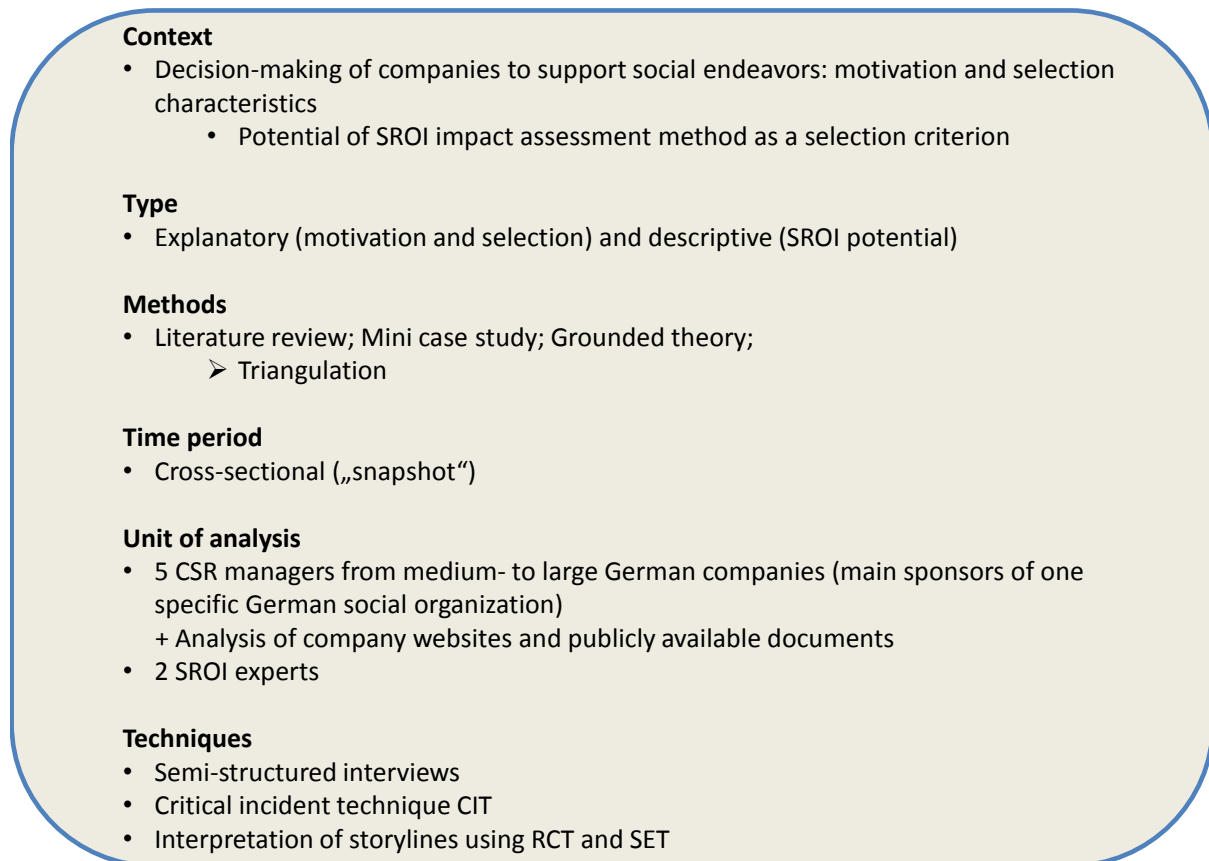
P4: The characteristics of companies CSA decision-making can rather be described with a combination of RCT and SET aspects than with one single theory.

In order to investigate these propositions which have been developed based on the already achieved insights, this research thesis will conduct different data collection methods and approaches. They will be described and explained in the subsequent chapter.

3. Methodology

In the following, the methodological approach of the thesis is presented. To give time-scarce readers a brief overview, figure 4 provides the research design at a glance.

Figure 4) Research design at a glance

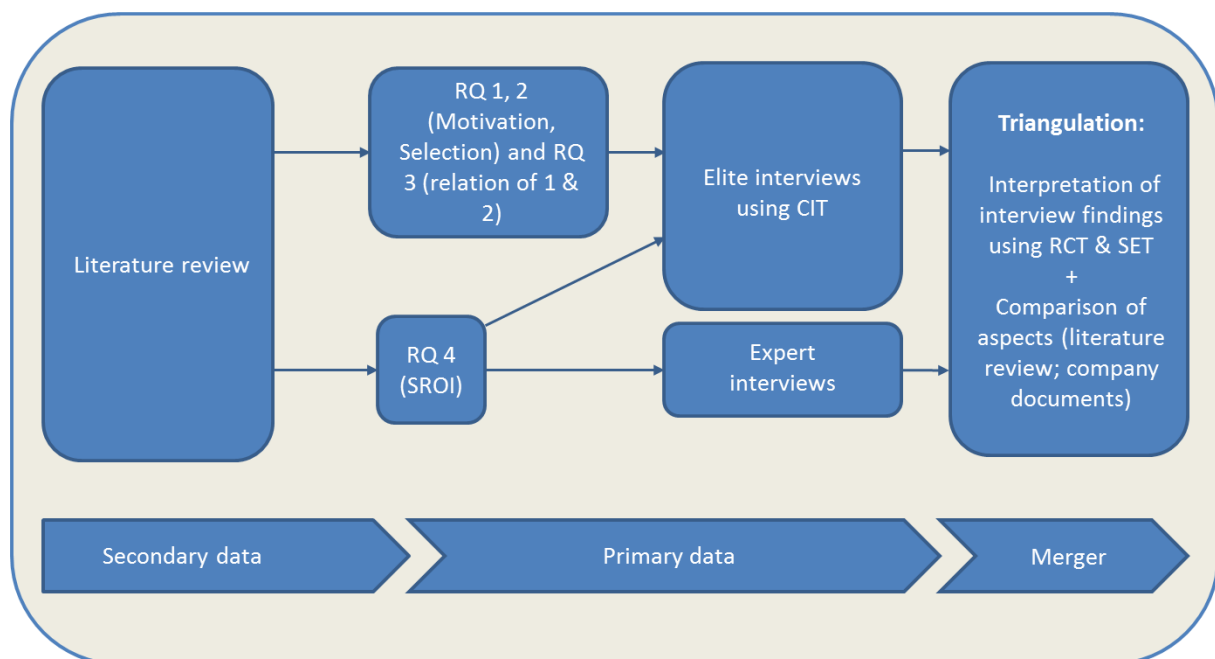


First, the principle approach of this thesis is a comparative (mini) case study on the motivational and selection aspects of companies CSA decision. The case is defined as: The motivation and decision factors of the main sponsoring companies of one particular German social organization active in the field of street children. In this field, impact assessment tools such as SROI seem to be quite useful since it represents a clear-cut example of social work where an individual person is aided to transform from a recipient of governmental/societal help to a tax-paying person through (re-)integration into the working population. Hence, although different companies are included in this, the advantage is that a commonality (same supported social organization) between them makes the case more accessible and manageable.

Theoretically, a case study entails the genuine advantage that one can conduct an in-depth investigation into a certain issue: It offers the advantage to gain a rather holistic view of a complex social problem and its contextual conditions (cf. Yin, 1994). Through the application, researchers can dive more profoundly into a topic and find out about phenomena at a deep layer of analysis which

would not have been possible to discover when using statistical methods (cf. Stake, 1995). Eventually, a case study approach is especially useful when the goal is to understand the context (“why” i.e. “what are reasons for...”) of the issue and the way processes are carried out (“how”) (cf. Morris & Wood, 1991). In order to increase richness of the created knowledge and validity, the author of this thesis decided to conduct an applied case of triangulation: Different sources of data (i.e. academic literature, press releases of companies, interviews) represent the basis for analysis and theoretical reasoning. Generally, triangulation is increasingly important, besides its ability to increase validity, if a method lacks a sufficient sample size and to confirm the acquired data from various sources (cf. Tellis, 1997). Hence, a structured literature review delivered important definitions (i.e. the secondary data) in the beginning. In addition, company websites and publicly available documents were analyzed for information on the decision-making by companies in CSA. This step was done after the interviews were conducted. In particular, this analysis was used for a confirmation of the storylines the interviewees presented and further, to increase the basis for the interpretation through the applied theories RCT and SET. Figure 5 provides an overview on the general research methodology in a graphical illustrative way.

Figure 5) Research methodology



3.1. Primary data: selection of sample, data collection and analysis

As empirical basis for this thesis, semi-structured elite interviews have been conducted via telephone with a purposeful, non-probability sample to mainly facilitate answering and discussing the research

questions as well as to refine the propositions.¹⁸ To explore specifically events, knowledge, details and experiences as well as points of views on issues, it is highly valuable to conduct interviews with subjects (cf. Patton, 2002). In addition, semi-structured interviews bear the immense advantage that they allow the respondents to answer more in their own words and leave the interviewer still the freedom to act situation-dependent, possibly adapting to the respective interview partner. Hence, such a type of interview allows for greater flexibility than standardized interviews which “is important in elite interviews” (cf. Whitehouse, 2006). Also, two expert interviews were conducted in order to enrich the discussion on the findings for RQ 4, one via telephone and one in a direct meeting.¹⁹ These two interviews will methodologically be described after the description of the elite interviews below.

Selection of Sample

Initially 13 companies active in CSA in the field of street children were contacted, though only a fraction even answered to the request for an interview. This can be explained by the relative anonymous and felt distant approach to contact them via Email, though it can also be assumed that due to the sheer mass of publications and graduation theses that are currently being produced in the field of e.g. social business or entrepreneurship, companies might be more likely to refuse to such requests. To solve this problem, the author decided to define a sample group that consisted of a purposive, non-probability sample of five German CSR managers from medium-sized to large enterprises who are active and responsible in/for their respective company’s CSA efforts. These are the five main sponsors of the sample social organization. It must be mentioned here that the successful contacts and interviews would not have been the case if there were no personal connection between the author of this thesis and the head of the respective social organization. The industry sectors of these companies ranges from finance (private equity) over telecommunications to transport. The interviewees were selected on the criteria whether the person has a say in the company’s decision-making when it comes to supporting a social organization or project and their experience in the field. This has been identified through an initial contact email where the request was explicitly targeted on interviewing persons with CSR responsibility. These individuals are classified as representing their company; hence the unit of analysis is the individual decision-maker representing his/her firm.

For the analysis of the SROI hypothetical aspect, the goal is to especially refine whether the initially developed proposition P3 on SROI and companies’ selection-making can be supported and/or

¹⁸ Marshall & Rossman define people belonging to an elite sample as “the influential, the prominent, and the well-informed people in an organization or community” (1989, p. 94).

¹⁹ These experts might of course be called ‘elite’ too, though for the differentiation of these two datasets, the author chose to refer to them simply as ‘experts’.

refined. After the first three elite interviews with managers responsible for CSA decision-making, it became clear that in order to acquire more information on the potential of SROI, it will better be approached via expert knowledge since the interviews with the elite group did not produce satisfying results so far. Hence, one interview partner was selected and approached based on the information from e.g. the SROI network community: It is an executive of a (social) consulting company which has been identified as the leading organization in Germany when it comes to SROI assessments. The other interview partner is working for a Belgian foundation and was identified through a comment in one of the elite interviews, i.e. the foundation was mentioned as being active in the field of e.g. due diligence assessments of social organizations where it was said that they possess practical experience on SROI, too. Hence, this foundation was contacted in order to gain more information on their assessment and screening processes as well as SROI experiences.

Although this is a very pragmatic approach to sampling, the time and resource constraints this thesis work entailed did not allow for more sophisticated designs. Also, this work's added value focus is more on the merging of research in the field of company's decision-making in CSA decisions with an exploration of SROI as potential aspect in the selection. The refinement of the identified aspects from the interviews can better be seen as a starting point for further, e.g. quantitative research.

Data Collection

In this thesis, the already mentioned semi-structured interviews with the elite sample have been conducted applying Critical Incident Technique CIT. The critical incident technique approach was originally developed by Flanagan: Here, through the asking for a concrete event in the respondent's life, it is possible to "permit inferences and predictions to be made about the person performing the act" (1954, p. 327). In this thesis' empirical research, the interviewees were first asked introducing questions in the beginning to get the respondents in a "speaking mood" (cf. Cassel & Symon, 2004). Thereafter, they were asked to report from a situation in the past where they had to decide on a form of CSA for a social organization.²⁰ More specifically, one question targeted at the concrete motivation to engage in the example's situation.²¹ The subsequent question targeted at decision-criteria for this specific organization/project.²² Additionally, a hypothetical question was asked which targeted at bringing the respondents into a situation where they should imagine whether the provision of a SROI by the social organization would have triggered a different selection decision in

²⁰ Which project/organization they reported on was left open to the interviewee, but in most cases the respective street children organization through which they were identified and contacted was chosen by the interviewees.

²¹ I.e. a "direct/key question" (Kvale, 1996).

²² I.e. a "follow-up question" (cf. *ibid.*).

this particular example.²³ Beforehand, the question was posed whether they know what SROI is. In case the interviewees did not possess knowledge about this impact assessment method, a brief description was provided by the interviewer. However, this hypothetical example was, to increase the imagination, further extended with the situation description that “if there were two organizations to decide on with the same goals and geographical focus, would the decision have been the same if their SROI were different?”

The interview style applied in these expert interviews was also semi-structured though with a tremendously larger variety of questions and therewith, content. These interviews can also be found in this thesis' appendix, too (chapter 8.2.). The data retrieved from these interviews will be used to enrich the findings on SROI as a selection criterion and also for the discussion on this method in general.

Analysis

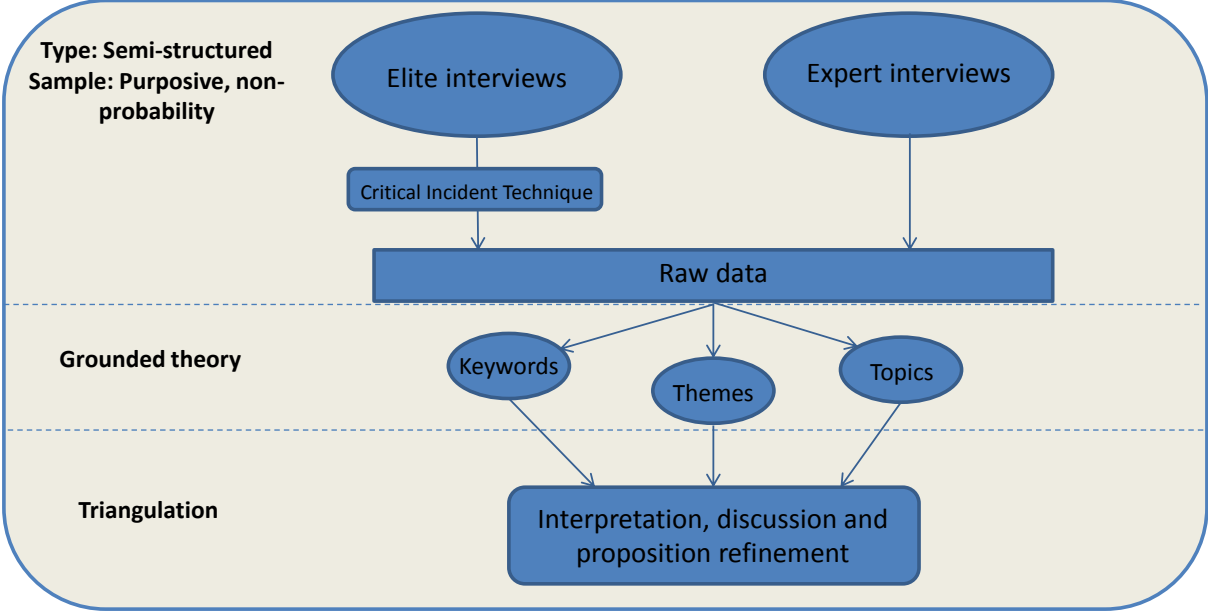
The collected information from the interviews was interpreted holistically, i.e. from the dataset as a whole, and through a coding approach where isolatable characteristics, i.e. re-emerging themes and keywords/-phrases were searched. Hence, an adapted grounded theory approach was used for answering the research questions on motivation and selection aspects and for the refinement of the developed propositions. The grounded theory framework has originally been developed by Glaser & Strauss (cf. 1967) and represents a sophisticated tool that takes into account various perspectives and leaves the researcher still the freedom to be able to react to unforeseen situations. More specifically, through the help of codes, conceptual categories and properties, this analytical tool aims at supporting the development of a theory or the further refinement of it (Symon & Cassell, 1998, p. 242-255; cf. Lämsä et al., 2004). Also: grounded theory is an interpretive process by which the researcher makes sense of the data he obtained through his creativity and imagination, and therefore, it is derogatorily called by some scholars as “messy” (Suddaby, 2006, p. 640).

As this whole approach calls for detailed data collection, all interviews were recorded, transcribed and anonymized. In order to give other researchers the possibility to check the interpretation of the data, the interview transcripts are attached to the master thesis in the appendix (chapter 8). Another advantage of anonymized interviews, besides its ethical importance, is that they increase the likelihood for openness of interview partners. Additionally, as mentioned beforehand, there is a tendency in German companies not to disclose their selection criteria. Here, companies might get unintended results out of such a research when their brand's name was mentioned with explicit mentioning of their social investment criteria. This was in particular mentioned by one interview partner. Also, this thesis shall not act as a mean to promote certain companies' approaches

²³ I.e. an “indirect/transfer question” (cf. *ibid.*).

to CSA which could be the case if the names and identities of the companies were given. The analysis approach is exemplified in the following figure 6.

Figure 6) Analysis framework



The interviews’ interpretation philosophy is, in line with the interpretivism approach this thesis follows, that of social constructionism, i.e. the assumption that every answer which is given by the interviewees does not fully reflect or cannot be seen as the ‘real’ experience but rather as a form of reality construction through language. The same applies to the author of this thesis who is also doomed to act in his personal construction of reality and give it meaning through his interpretation of it. The main advantage of this epistemological position is to accept the multitude of possible interpretations of data and to be able to professionally work with it. Hence, this approach focuses on the use of language and its context in the construction of social interaction (cf. Berger & Luckmann, 1991).

4. Results

In the following, the results of the empirical research will be presented and put into context of the theoretical background presented in chapter 2. The analysis thereof will be thematically divided: First, the findings regarding motivation and selection criteria from the elite interview sample will be worked out – with an explanation of the methodological process which led to the presented topics and themes – and of course, interpreted (4.1.). In addition, the results from the hypothetical question on the potential of SROI as a selection criterion will be shown. Second, the expert interview results will be analyzed thereafter, combined with the findings on SROI from the elite interviews (4.2.). RCT and SET will be used to interpret the outcomes in order to connect these practical perspectives with the theoretical ones. Based on the interpretations from both sections (4.1 and 4.2.), the answering of the research questions as well as the refinement of propositions will be approached (4.3.-4.5.). In the end, a summary will be presented with a discussion that paves the way for the final conclusion chapter.

4.1. Findings and interpretations from elite interviews

To give the reader an overview on the extracted themes, table 6 provides the key findings from the elite interviews and the central topic of the questions. These findings were clustered into topics which can be seen therein. From these topics, themes were developed and identified that are presented in tables 7 and 8.

Table 6) Elite interview key point(s) matrix

	Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3	Interview 4	Interview 5
Question 1: Motivation factors/aspects?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moral responsibility towards society • Company culture • Employee motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate responsibility • Social responsibility • Reputation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moral responsibility • Internal problem solved by social organization • Credibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reputation • Attractiveness for prospective employees • Employee identification • Search for national instead of regional initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal emotional link of manager with social organization • Internal company offer to support local organizations
Question 2: Selection factors?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability (goals & task coping ability) • Competence of social organization • Proven added value of activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact creation • Competence of social organization • Sustainability • Must fit to own goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authenticity of social organization • Sustainability • Thematic closeness • Continuity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thematic and organizational closeness • Transparency • Competence of social organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals of social organization • Company fit (thematically) • Transparency (through due diligence) • Sustainability • Proven added value of social activities
Question 3: SROI as potential selection criterion?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • yes since sustainability and profitability can be ensured 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not yet, if method gets more saturated and more “best practices” available then maybe. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not yet, is expected to possibly change in future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, but general acceptance of SROI needs to be increased 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, although not yet applied specifically

Table 7) Clustered themes and respective topics on motivation aspects

Theme	<i>(prospective) Employee commitment (n=7)</i>	<i>Commercial motivation (n=3)</i>	<i>Ethical/Moral reasoning (n=6)</i>
Recurring "topic": Number of appearance (n)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Motivation": 2 • "Identification": 1 • "Internal offer": 1 • "Attractiveness": 1 • "Company culture": 1 • "Personal link": 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Reputation": 2 • "Problem solving": 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Moral responsibility" (corporate, social): 5 • "Credibility": 1

Table 8) Clustered themes and respective topics on selection criteria

Theme	<i>Company-Organization fit (n=7)</i>	<i>Professionalism of social organization (n=11)</i>	<i>Organizational characteristics (n=3)</i>
Recurring "topic": Number of appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Closeness to company goals": 4 • "Value creation": 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Sustainability": 4 • "Competence": 3 • "Impact creation": 3 • "Continuity": 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Transparency": 2 • "Authenticity": 1

The coding and clustering into topics and consequently themes was an iterative process of three steps. First, the interview transcripts were analyzed and key points were marked. Afterwards, these key points were incorporated into a table (table 6). This opened up the way for the development of topics and themes - the third step - which targeted at the facilitation to identify similarities, differences and accumulations of topics (table 7 and 8). As can be seen, the coded topics mostly are not so much different to the extracted key points, explained by the fact that these key points often were in a state close to a topic. Also, the themes that have been identified were close to the motivational categories and the selection criteria as discussed in the literature review. Sometimes, the identified topics were fitting in two themes, though the author decided to stick to the one that were assumed to fit best.²⁴

When developing these codes and themes, the social construction of the authors' interpretations must tremendously be emphasized. Although a distant and neutral position was tried to be incorporated when developing these codes and themes, it is precluded that the authors' personal construction concerning the interpretation of the underlying meanings of the interviewees' statements did not play a role.

²⁴ Example: "Credibility" would fit into the theme "ethical/moral reasoning" but also into "employee commitment" or even "commercial motivation". The author of this thesis opted for the first choice since it is an important factor of moral reasoning to see its own actions as being credible.

Motivation aspects

However, keeping this limitation in mind, the following interesting findings could be identified for motivational aspects for CSA. First, commercial motivations were mostly neglected by the respondents as being driving forces in their engagement (n=3). This can be explained by e.g. the already discussed “social desirability bias” which can provoke respondents to be less likely to report that CSA is done for simple commercial reasons. Also, people in personal interviews often tend to develop their answers in expectation of what the interviewer is expecting them to say. Hence, since the public discussion on “social washing” is present²⁵, it can be assumed that the respondents did not want their reasoning to appear as too economically oriented which could lead to the interpretation that their companies’ CSA efforts are first and foremost out of economic reasoning (“social or moderator acceptance bias”). However, another possible explanation could be that the questioning on a concrete example of their companies’ CSA did not lead in majority to cognitive inferences on the motivations in general of the respective company. Compared to their company’s public documents on websites, it is obvious that the aspect of economic motivation has been generally underrepresented by the interviewees. For instance, from the five subject companies, three explicitly state on their websites that their CSA is part of business strategy and ultimately, improvement of e.g. brand identity.²⁶

This theme delighted from a RCT viewpoint advances the understanding since the theory is explicitly based on the assumption that human beings act in a pure economic sense, i.e. rationally seeking profit-maximization. Hence, as the previous argumentation has shown on economic motivation factors for companies to become active in CSA, there is a clear strategic business aspect in such actions since it leads to e.g. differentiation, higher customer loyalty and improved brand identity. Therefore, the motivations put forward by the interviewees have been neglecting this, though a bias as described beforehand might have influenced this aspect as well. On the other hand, SET can give another interpretation of this fact: the interviewees might be consciously willing to share this motivational aspect though in the interview setting, it is also their personal reputation which they construct out of their statements. Hence, it might be possible that the mentioning of a simple economic motivation is seen as too much emphasizing a non-emotional impression of their personality and their respective company’s strategy. This is exemplified with the following quote from one interview: *“Es gibt ja zum Beispiel auch den Ansatz dass CR Engagement darauf einzahlt, dass man einen stärkeren Marktzugang bekommt oder besser Zugang zu Kapital erhält oder so.*

²⁵ This term is followed from the more famous idea of “greenwashing” which is associated with campaigns by companies that aim to create an environmental-friendly image. In this context, it shall describe the pretending of acting socially responsible/conducting CSA simply to create the image of a caring company while on other ends of the company’s action area, social responsible behaviour is not present at all.

²⁶ An overview table on the findings from the analysis of the sample’s websites, which is of course anonymized, too, can be found in the appendix chapter 8.3.

Solche Punkte spielen für uns keine Rolle“ (Elite interview 4). Here, one response later the interviewee answered that their company’s engagement of course is seen as a tool to increase brand identity through reputation and prospective employee attractiveness and identification: *“Aspekte die für uns wirklich maßgeblich waren: natürlich positive Wirkung auf Reputation [...] außerdem eine höhere Bewerberattraktivität und natürlich auch eine verbesserte Mitarbeiteridentifikation“* (ibid.). Therewith, the interviewee supported the notion of a dichotomy since the mentioning of such an economic aspect in terms of brand identity/reputation only was mentioned after a probing question to test the initial, “non-economic” response.

It becomes obvious that the motivational theme of “ethical/moral reasoning” was mentioned the most and very equal across the interviews (n=6). This shows for example that the surveyed company representatives seem to have understood the core principle of social responsibility as a central “toolkit of reasoning” for CSA. Compared to the publicly available information online, this theme is not deviating heavily from what the interviewees have delivered. Here, SET can advance the understanding of the emphasis on a “responsibility” by the firm: A responsibility can also be understood as the result of a power-imbalance i.e. where in a relationship one party is e.g. weaker than the other. Hence, the stronger part might take over responsibility towards the other. Further, large companies are often seen as immensely powerful²⁷ and so, exploiting public goods more heavily as private actors would be able to do. Therefore, in order to get the relationship on a reciprocal i.e. outbalanced level, companies and their respective managers can be assumed to “feel responsible” to do something for society and to “give something back”. Quoting from one interview, it becomes clearer how this aspect is developed: *“Uns ist klar, dass wir als so großes Unternehmen eine gewisse Verantwortung haben was das Allgemeinwohl bzw. die Gesellschaft angeht“* (Elite interview 2). Eventually, it is the individual actors in a company that might push it into such a direction due to the existence of such feelings as described, therewith shaping the course of action and influencing the motivation for CSA.

However, the emphasis of the general responsibility a company has towards e.g. society is in its purest sense also a rational aspect since the question on access to resources vs. opportunity costs is striking here. Companies probably are conscious on the issue of public goods they use sometimes more, sometimes less heavily but in general, stronger than a person or a group of persons individually is able to use them (e.g. infrastructure, natural goods). This is also known as the problem of negative externalities, where social costs are higher than private costs of a company (cf. Pigou in Grant, Brue, 2007). Seen from this aspect, the description of a social responsibility as a motivational driver seems heavily rational in its purest sense: the company basically would just not have access to some resources any more if society would not “allow” it to exploit them. Hence, the opportunity

²⁷ which most probably they are, too, but this is another topic for a different research.

costs of conducting CSA is less than the access to resources is worth and hence, rationality overrules somehow emotional aspects.

Interestingly, one respondent reported that the social organization has been a personal issue over years and that after an internal company offer was announced where employees could propose social sponsoring candidates, it was possible to support the organization finally also through her company's assets. This fits to the "altruistic managerial motivation" category discussed in chapter 2.4.2., although the respective person did not finally decide on the support – so it is not possible to speak of a "pet's project". This aspect of an internal offer as motivation has been included in the "(prospective) employee commitment" theme since it is increasing motivation among staff when they can see that the company is supporting a cause which they personally see as ethically right or important. In this theme, various aspects were mentioned (n=7) and the topics are mostly congruent with the identified factors from the literature. This is supported further by the identical emphasis on employee motivational aspects on most of the companies' websites. For instance, identification with the own company and attractiveness for prospective employees are central themes mentioned by the interviewees as well, demonstrated practically with the quote: *"Für uns ist das auch eine emotionale Komponente hier eben dabei sein zu können, das Unternehmen [=soziale Organisation] zu unterstützen und damit fördert man die Kultur im eigenen Unternehmen, so zum Beispiel die Bindung der Angestellten an das Unternehmen"* (Elite interview 1).

As mentioned in this last quote, company culture as an employee motivational aspect is providing ground for another application of SET. Culture, as being one of the most debated and difficult to grasp concepts, is based on tradition. In other words, culture is not something that can be bought and installed; it needs to evolve over time and contains therefore a strong time-axis dependency. So, actions motivated by culture are in majority part of SET reasoning. Nonetheless, the ultimate goal of employee motivation can be assumed to be the increase of loyalty and willingness to do an "extra" for the job, therewith potentially increasing productivity which improves competitive advantages. This would, in its purest sense, be an interpretation facilitated through RCT argumentation where the maximization of own interest – and competitive advantage is in the most basic interest of a company – represents a strong force of decision-making.

Selection criteria

In regard to the selection aspects, the reoccurring themes from the interviews were only partially existent in the present literature. These categories are "company-organization fit" and "transparency" (cf. chapter 2.5.). Obviously, the former is an aspect of general authenticity of a company as mentioned by one interview partner: *"Und letztlich muss es natürlich immer auch zu uns passen, zu unserem Kerngeschäft und zu unserer Marke. Sonst wäre die Glaubwürdigkeit eines*

solchen Engagements natürlich schnell in Frage gestellt“ (Elite interview 2). So, when CSA targets projects that are simply too distant from the core business, companies face the risk of, again, being quickly blamed to conduct “social washing”. Also, possible exploitations of the relationship in terms of using e.g. media material for advertising purposes would also be limited if the distance between donating company and recipient organization were too far. This latter point is an aspect of rational decision where the own goals of an entity are the main drivers of decision-making which in this case translates to the fact that companies aim to hedge their risks of becoming a target of consumer activism or simply blamed as not being authentic. However, SET emphasizes the aspect of mutual commitment and trust, two points which can only be created and enhanced through authenticity and trustworthiness. Therefore, it is possible to see this selection criterion of “company-organization fit” as an excellent example of – again – the interplay of SET and RCT.

“Transparency” as an organizational characteristic (n=3) appears alternatively to be a very special selection aspect, at least in the context of German companies CSAs. Although understandable on the first sight as a rational issue that a company wants to know about e.g. the goals and processes of a social organization it wants to support in order to reduce opportunity costs (*“Hier wollen wir ganz klar sehen, ob die Organisationen klar aufzeigen können was sie machen und wohin sie wollen, also nur wenn sie transparent sind geht das natürlich auch.”* Elite interview 5), a disparity can still be observed. When comparing it to the own conduct of firms regarding their disclosure or own degree of transparency, it is a matter of fact that four of the five companies in the sample are not publishing useful i.e. relatively specific selection criteria (cf. chapter 8.3., table 10). Even though this aspect has already been mentioned in the introduction as a general tendency observable within Germany, the rationality behind this behavior remains ambiguous. One imaginable reasoning therefore could be that the power-asymmetry between donor and recipient does allow for such a situation: Most social organizations are not free to choose their sponsors in the sense that they can exert only little but mostly no pressure on the donating side of the dyad to disclose their information on selection criteria. They could of course refrain from going into a sponsorship relation with the company, though the tense situation in the market for social sponsoring will probably hinder such drastic actions. RCT further supports the interpretation with its emphasis on the fact that no balance is needed in exchange relationships.

Taking SET as an explanatory help, “transparency” can be also seen as a mean for increasing trust. Nonetheless, a central point of SET is reciprocity and mutual commitment. In the context of the selection criterion “transparency”, another theory needs to briefly be introduced in order to underline the potential threat of such a situation: according to equity theory, “there is distress when one is either giving too much or getting too much” (Burnett & Wood, 1988, p. 9). Hence, the particular relationship might be seen in this specific aspect of transparency as being not in a state of

equilibrium, although the advantages of getting donations might outweigh this particular distress for a social organization. Obviously, an impact measurement like SROI is aimed to increase transparency of a social organization which will be taken up in the next section.

Finally, the novel theme “professionalism of social organization” has attracted various attributions by the interviewees (n=11).²⁸ In this particular case, the mentioning of this criterion can be explained by the fact that the respondents were asked to report on the selection criteria in the specific example of the German street children organization. Since this organization is active and successful – based on various honors and similar awards of external legitimization – in the field since almost 20 years, the professionalism can be assumed to be given. Additionally, the topic of “competence” which referred in all appearances to the head of the social organization can be attributed to the explanation beforehand as well. Interestingly, “sustainability” was mentioned the most (n=4) as an aspect of the professionalism of the social organization, also playing into the aspect of reputation which can be mirrored by the company when the social endeavor is successful. Here, SROI is appearing as a useful tool since it can demonstrate in business terms what the social impact and how sustainable a social organization is. Equally, the topic of “impact creation” dramatically leads to the direction of SROI as a proper measurement tool (n=3).

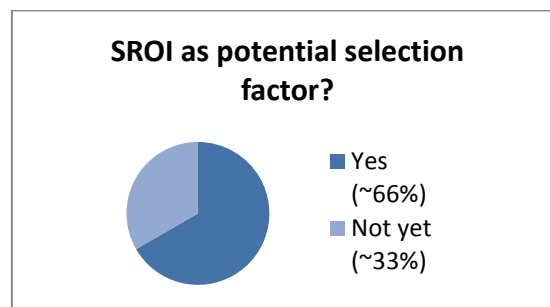
On the first sight, rationality as a stronger motive for choosing this criterion seems logical when recalling the aspect of hedging possible risks since the possible failure of the focal/supported social organization due to non-professional behavior might affect the donating company negatively as well. Nevertheless, mutual dependencies as part of SET reasoning is suited to deliver a further interpretation aspect for this theme: whereas the hedging of risks as described above seems rational, the donating company might also want to see an adequate level of professionalism since they themselves also aim to appear professional. In addition, the emotional connotation which company managers have towards an organization that is supported might be increased if the impression prevails that this organization is not acting amateur-like but aiming for delivering the best possible outcome, hence following in contemporary understanding a professional approach. Again, this is a fine example of the interplay between rationality and social exchange aspects. Further, the following quote shows how “professionalism of the social organization” is put on a higher emphasis level than a simple approach to aim for doing something good: “[...]die durchschlagendsten Argumente waren wirklich die Professionalität, wir wollten nichts primär Mildtätiges machen, wir wollten eine Einrichtung fördern die auch was bewirkt” (Elite Interview 4).

²⁸ Put into context with the previous selection criterion of transparency, an interesting side-aspect can be observed. An organization can be transparent but still remain unprofessional, i.e. it could simply make everything transparent but therewith, show that it is drastically speaking “unprofessional”. However, without transparency it is difficult to assess the level of professionalism.

SROI aspects

With regard to the final question from the elite interviews, the respondents were giving the impression that they are relatively open to SROI as a potential selection criterion. In total, three of five respondents clearly stated that it is a potential factor for them; the final two remarked that it could be in the future, given that the method itself becomes more saturated, known and standardized. Interestingly, one respondent expressed the belief that their decision for the focal social organization which is supported would not be different with the provision of a SROI, the conviction was even claimed that the social organization in question would have gained additional justification arguments for support: *“Wir glauben eher, dass so eine Berechnungsmethode unsere Entscheidung für [Name der sozialen Organisation] noch zusätzlich unterlegt hätte”* (Elite interview 3).

Figure 7) Tendency from elite interviews on SROI potential



A strong bias might influence the results as well. Here, it can be assumed that interviewees were expecting that this research's aim is to show the usefulness of SROI, since the initial contact email contained a clear reference to one of this thesis' aims: exploring whether impact assessment methods might become a selection criterion. Hence, they might have adapted their position on this question due to the "moderator acceptance bias". Besides this, SROI is especially for people working in their professional life with indicators, profitability assessment methods etc. a closer aspect to their mindset, an aspect that can be assumed to be in particular true with managers working for a private company. The key word of "sustainability" is brought here into a connotation to SROI in order to increase the level of acceptance and value of this impact assessment: *“wenn man da eine rigorosere Brille anlegt wie wir als Finanzinvestoren das ja jeden Tag machen, dann hilft das auch dem Unternehmen nachhaltiger zu wirtschaften”* (Elite interview 1). Also, the respondents' emphasis on having a more rigour focus on issues as people working in the finance sector (like the respondent) are possessing shows how this person constructs and aims for a stronger standing of his opinion compared to others. Finally, an indirect support for SROI as a potential selection criterion delivered the mentioning by respondents of the aspect that a social organization has to create an impact.

Although these findings can basically support proposition P3 that SROI improves the probability of a social organization to be selected by companies for supporting measures, theory needs to be applied for the interpretation thereof. From a rational point of view, it seems that SROI is useful to play a role in e.g. the selection criterion “transparency”, “value creation” or “impact creation”. SROI can show the costs and benefits of investing into a certain social organization, hence being close to rational decision-making. Strictly speaking, as RCT is focusing on profit seeking individuals, one could also put forward the argument that SROI is a well-suited tool to demonstrate such (social) profits. However, all this can also be approached with SET, too. SROI is increasing trust on the side of the donor due to the closeness to e.g. the language which is in everyday use in companies. Moreover, the social exchange aspect of trust might also be increased since the openness and demonstrated efficiency of a social organization through SROI is leading to a stronger and improved level for mutual trust, especially from the donor side. Additionally, reputation can also be an issue: when the focal social organization shows that it possesses a high SROI, the donating company might better be able to benefit from the image transfer to their side as well through marketing and other, public opinion influencing means.

Having analyzed the elite interviews, the two expert interviews shall now be discussed in order to present further findings on SROI as an impact assessment method and its selection criterion potential.

4.2. Findings of expert interviews (& cross comparison)

For the analysis and interpretation of the expert interviews, keywords were extracted and summarized in the following table 9.

Table 9) Keywords and topics from expert interviews

	Interview 1 (consulting company)	Interview 2 (foundation)
Keywords and topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application of SROI requires some creativity and is not time-consuming • Requires acceptance of subjectivity • The calculation process of SROI leads to transparency/clarity on goals etc. • SROI calculation=organizational development • Demand by private business for SROI is rising (CSA as “investment” instead of altruistic giving) • Foundations increasingly interested; Example of Dutch foundation that depend their investment modalities on SROI analysis • Every form of social activity can be assessed with SROI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due diligence for assessments of social investments. Emphasis on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Leadership skills ○ Transparency ○ Regular re-assessment of key indicators • SROI is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Time-consuming ○ Very assumptive ○ Very subjective ○ Only for very specific investments

It is very interesting to see the two positions which both are constructed within their respective social construction. One expert interview has been done with a consultant working for a company which offers e.g. SROI assessments for social organizations. Hence, it is understandable that his position might be in favor of or at least supportive to the application of SROI based on pure economic interest. It was clearly stated by him that the process which leads to the development of a SROI value is containing subjective elements, requires creativity, too and is not time consuming. However, the main advantage mentioned here is that the process itself is some sort of organization development and ultimately leads to a higher degree of transparency since goals and targets as well as the structure of the organization need to be illuminated. As a consequence, it was reasoned that the demand is rising and that there are even social organization supporting entities (e.g. foundation) which explicitly require the usage of this assessment method prior to any investment decision.

The second interview, from the perspective of a donating foundation, led to some similar but also contradictory positions. This organization seems to have a leading position in conducting what they call “due diligence” assessments of the social organizations they (plan to) support. Here, three aspects are important that are checked in such a process according to the interviewee: Leadership skills, transparency and assessment of key indicators. Namely, transparency is achieved through the concrete evaluation of goals and steps achieved. The same goes for assessment of key indicators. Interestingly, this method seems to very much resemble what SROI is also described to deliver. Only different expressions are applied but content-wise, it seems relatively equal to a SROI calculation processes. The only aspect missing in SROI calculations which is special about due diligence as applied by the respective foundation is the aspect of leadership skills. Nonetheless, this is a point that is assessed by the donating company in the final decision anyway (mostly) - and also goes hand

in hand with the already discussed authenticity selection criterion. Since the foundation in this example is donating directly, they have this step already in their standardized method. Hence, it is maybe possible for them to see the SROI method as simply being “old wine in new bottles”.

However, the respondent presented his own arguments on SROI. First, subjectivity as a feature of the SROI method was stressed - though more negatively - due to various assumptions that are required. It was further emphasized that the SROI process is very time-consuming and the method itself is only applicable to very specific cases. In the personal work experience of the interviewee, it was only one case where it successfully made sense. This is the total opposite of what the first expert said.²⁹ These differing points of view can be explained as constructionist features, too. The simple application of such a novel assessment method can develop to become a routine and hence, be seen as not time-consuming since learning effects most probably increase the speed of execution. However, it does not need to be seen like this based on the aspect that individuals are constructing their “own” reality through their very personal lenses. Also, the path dependency of decision-making should be emphasized here as well i.e. that it is always reliant on on the personal history and experience of decisions from the past how a person decides in the present.

In general, both experts are inflexibly bound in their social construction of the facets which they observed and have experienced in the SROI context. Also, both seem to act rational since e.g. the consultant aims to achieve a better position for his company through higher demand and therefore, has to promote the tool and its usefulness. On the other hand, the interviewee from the foundation is rationally weighting the arguments in favor and against the application of SROI. Since this foundation is obviously possessing an assessment method which proved its usefulness in the past, there is no need for them to switch positions in favor of a new application. It is their position that the assessment method of due diligence is better suited for their purposes and therefore, SROI as an alternative is stressed as not suitable. However, it seems as if their approach is simply better established and also standardized, eventually allowing for more internal adaptation - at least in the view of the interviewee - as a SROI assessment might do. Furthermore, it seems clear that due diligence testing is carried out to offset information asymmetries (or uncertainty) which shall improve the rational part of the decision-making. Still, it appears difficult to apply rational choice or social exchange theory to the findings from expert interview number two. A foundation for instance seems to be in its basic sense a very special construct, not really comparable with a company and neither with a social organization since foundations have the spending of (mostly financial) resources as a business imperative. Compared to social organizations, they structurally are in the fine position to simply not having to generate income while still being able to spend as a core activity. Also, since

²⁹ namely that it is not a time-consuming activity and that SROI can be applied to every kind of social activity.

the decision to support social endeavors rests on the shoulders of a foundation board, social exchange aspects of individual persons seem more negligible.

4.3. RQ 1-3 discussion and proposition P1 & P2 refinement

First, RQ 1 on motivational factors for CSA was mainly answered through the literature review and mostly confirmed from the elite interviews. Again, the motivational themes can be divided into:

- “commercial motivation” (e.g. reputation)
- “altruistic managerial motivation” (e.g. an individual’s status)
- “local community support” (e.g. regional embeddedness) and
- “(prospective) employee commitment” (e.g. internal motivation).

The arguments for the first category represent the strongest factor according to the literature. However, taking solely the elite interview results as a basis for a judgment, the commercial motivation might not be assessed as the most important driving force. Nonetheless, strong bias might be at work here (e.g. moderator acceptance bias) which leads to the conclusion that the motivational factors can also be seen in such an order as presented beforehand. Interestingly, the theme “ethical/moral reasoning” was mentioned the most in the interviews. This could be explained as an attempt to incorporate SET arguments regarding a power imbalance between society in general and the firm in particular (see chapter 4.1.) but also as simple RCT influenced.

Second, RQ 2 on selection criteria which organization to support can better be answered through the empirical research part of this thesis since the existing literature so far does not provide a satisfying amount of findings. Whatsoever, the important selection criteria themes seem to be:

- “company-organization fit” (geographically and thematically)
- “professionalism of social organization” (e.g. sustainability, competence) and
- “organizational characteristics” (e.g. transparency).

Whereas the first criterion could well be confirmed by the empirical research in terms of thematic closeness (e.g. focus on youth), it could not be applied in terms of geographical closeness. This can be explained by the fact that the social organization which these sample companies were reporting about is active nation-wide. Hence, the regional embeddedness aspect is not pertinent here. The second theme has received most attributions in the interviews and can therefore be seen as supporting the presented findings from chapter 2.5. Interestingly, sustainability and competence as core attributes very much link to the SROI debate since this tool might allow for an easier comparison of e.g. sustainability through financial metrics. The final theme of organizational characteristics triggered the most controversial results through the mentioning of “transparency” as a central need. Since it was already ranked as second most important in the PwC study in chapter 2.5., the discussion

on it was a lengthier one. This is due to the fact that in Germany, the majority of companies do not really act transparent in the field of CSA. Even the sample case in this study could only confirm this: Here only one out of five companies explicitly has published criteria for corporate social sponsoring.

With regard to RQ 3 on the relationship of motivational aspects with selection criteria, RCT has received support as an explanatory variance for the relationship's characteristic. Since the motivation itself is strongly influenced by economic considerations where clearly rational positions can be seen (e.g. improved access to human & financial capital), it seems logical to conclude that the selection itself is based on rationalistic considerations, too. This is supported by the findings from the empirical data analysis in chapter 4.1. Nevertheless what is always at a certain level influencing is the aspect of emotions and sympathy, the SET part in the decision-making. Although an investment in a social organization might be rationally comprehensible through the aforementioned aspects, it can also stem from a single executive's consideration where the personal goals and aims of that person are at the heart of the decision. Hence, if rationality were the "hard" facts, then the "soft" facts of social exchange seem to always have an interaction with the former. The same goes for the selection itself: although the "hard" facts seem dominant here (e.g. impact creation of the social organization or value creation as criteria), it is the "soft" part of the decision-making which can also lead to overrule any given criteria. For instance, selecting the organization which shall be supported is always dependent on the decisions persons in charge made in the past, although they might not be taken into consideration consciously (cf. path dependency). To conclude, since the decision-making of companies to support a social organization or project rests on various considerations and some sort of assessment in the sample companies, the emotional aspect should not be underestimated since it is, consciously and subconsciously, always an influence in decision-making. Therefore, the relatedness of motivation factors and selection criteria can best be described as being an interwoven construct of rational choice and social exchange aspects.

Proposition P1 and P2 refinement

Hence, proposition P1 could not totally be approved: Companies, according to the interpretation that the social construction allowed for, do indeed – as the interview findings have been able to support as well – follow a more rational logic for the motivational aspects to conduct CSA. However, the social exchange aspect should not and cannot be underestimated in these decision-making processes as well since in the end, it is always individual human beings that altogether represent and act in charge of a social entity like a company.³⁰ Only machines can be assumed to take rational decisions

³⁰ Besides, even the simple participation in the interviews can be explained with SET: Interviewees might simply have an interest in participating out of curiosity, or out of self-interest to find out more about the topic at stake. However, in this specific research, it can be that the personal relationship between the head of the

throughout their functioning lifespan, though they would miss the beauty of e.g. mutual commitment. Of course, such a point of view is heavily based on a humanistic view on people where emotions play a key role. Nevertheless, it shall basically demonstrate that the aspect of motivation for CSA and selection of projects is a mixture of rational and emotional aspects with possibly a slight overweight on RCT, therewith considerably supporting proposition P1.

With regard to proposition P2 on the theory-mixed nature of selection criteria, it was possible to observe a different stance in the interview findings and interpretations as has been expected initially. In general, they do not seem to be in majority based on SET aspects but instead, they seem to be slightly better approached with RCT. Obviously, selection criteria are influenced by SET aspects like sympathy as well, though the RCT interpretation of the storylines seems to represent a more plausible approach (e.g. through the strong emphasis on “competence” or “sustainability”). Hence, proposition P2 can be refined in the sense that it is possible to state that through this thesis’ analysis, selection criteria might better be described as more resting on RCT than on SET aspects. However, it still is a mixture of the two theoretical approaches, hence mainly supporting proposition P2.

4.4. RQ 4 discussion and proposition P3 refinement

Finally, discussing the findings from the expert interviews with the outcomes of the elite interviews on the potential of SROI, it is now understandable that most respondents criticized before SROI might be a selection criterion, it must be better accepted and comprehensible. Here, the comparison to general adoption behaviors of innovations seems useful. With every sort of innovation, the first phase is characterized by distrust and curiosity and human beings tend in majority to wait until the “new thing” is more common and therewith, accepted. Only the early adopters are a small group of the population that adopt the innovation, mostly because they are less risk-averse and attracted by the “newness” (cf. Rogers, 1982). Hence, the two expert interviews further demonstrated this problem: the method is still in an early phase of acceptance where it is either promoted intensely or criticized as being not adequate or useful.

Coincidentally, the defined selection criterion “transparency” would be easier achievable through SROI since the process itself obviously helps social organizations to become clear about their goals and processes etc., therewith potentially increasing subjective transparency. Hence, proposition P3 is partly supported, although the aspect of SROI for instance as a tool to allow for better comparability between social organizations could not be refined properly since the newness of

street children organization and author of this thesis led to the decision that it is a form of mutual commitment to participate, too.

this concept did not (yet) allow the respondents to draw such inferences. However, the interview with a manager from a private equity company showed that the aspect of SROI as resembling some sort of key performance indicator and therefore being more likely to be adopted as a criterion can be mentioned. Here, it was revealed that SROI is increasing comparability – in line with the arguments which are presented by the SROI community aimed at pushing this method for establishment as a useful tool. Nonetheless, this might also be grounded in the fact that this person is working in a field where the main content of daily work is about assessing risks and potential benefits which can lead this person to support any sort of assessment method. Therefore, since it was only one reference which seems biased from the social construction of the respondent, proposition P3 is still supported. Hence, when SROI becomes more established, it is likely to become an accepted selection criterion by companies. The impression from the elite interviews dominates that they can imagine taking SROI assessments as a selection tool. Hence RQ 4 can be answered in the sense that SROI has the potential to become a criterion by companies to be selected as a social organization for support as well as to increase selection probability due to its positive side-effects like increasing transparency and organization development issues, given it becomes more known and generally accepted. Though, more standardization needs to be achieved and implemented by e.g. the SROI community in order to prevent a (fictional) situation when a social organization e.g. simply takes another time frame for the calculation in order to gain a higher numerical SROI value. If not, it might possibly develop into another tool of balance make-up for social organizations and companies instead of its initial goal, to make the value created by social organizations more and better visible.

4.5. Summary and characteristic of CSA decision-making – proposition P4

The field of decision-making by companies for CSA is influenced by various different factors and aspects and definitely needs further research. This chapter has attempted to interpret the findings of the empirical research using RCT and SET as well as the gained insights from the literature review. It can be followed that the decision-making of companies to support social endeavors rests on different sets of motivations where no clear-cut alignment can be made which aspect the central driving force is. Not as differentiated but still influenced from various directions are the selection criteria of companies which organization is supported in the end. However, these discussed selection criteria can also be overruled by self-interested managers in charge or executive's support for their personal "pet project", therewith making e.g. internal CSA guidelines possibly useless. Although slight variations exist which can come from the individual interpretation of the findings, the impression prevails that RCT and SET together must be applied in order to see a coherent picture of CSA

decision-making characteristics. Therefore, proposition P4 is supported and shall now be underlined further.

An attempt for a combination of these two theories seems to be the “emotional rationality” concept (cf. Wenstøp, 2005; Fernández-Huerga, 2008). It describes the acceptance that motivation, cognition and reasoning (=decision-making) is always dependent on the emotions of individuals which not only concern e.g. the beliefs and values (that are learnable) but also a deeper aspect of physical phenomena.

Therefore, the author of this thesis sees the concept of “emotional rationality” as a well-suited merger of the two theoretical approaches. It underlines the fact that it is a mixture of rational and emotional aspects that dominates the decision-making when it comes to the supporting of a social organization by a private company. In other words, the essence of the findings can be summarized in the following approach to the characteristics of CSA decision-making (proposition P4) which can be seen as the theoretical core insight this thesis is able to deliver.

Emotional rationality in CSA decision-making

Managers’, and therewith companies’ CSA decision-making characteristics – influenced by manifold variables ranging from customer pressure over managerial preferences and shareholder considerations to altruistic intentions – is a mixture of rationally assessing the added value a social investment can deliver to the company while at the same time emotionally processing the personal, individual satisfaction a project or social organization support might give to the person in charge.

This statement shall underline the tension between the individual decision-maker (i.e. the CSR manager in this case) and the collective decision-influences. It was demonstrated in a non-experimental way in this thesis that the decision-making is dependent on diverse factors. If one takes classical economic theory on decision behavior, it could be argued that the best decisions from an economic, company-centered point of view would be the rational, unemotional ones. However, as latest findings from cognitive and psychological research have demonstrated, this seems far from being acceptable. Today – judging from brain structure and functioning – it is more acknowledged and supported that cognition (i.e. rationality) and emotions are no distinctive, clear-cut mental spheres. Furthermore, other academics claim that decision making might not be possible or only be far from optimal without emotional involvement (cf. Pfister & Böhm, 2008). For them, it is emotions which help the manager take good decisions due to its function as a filter where, based on their personal experiences and history, they can better judge which aspects for a decision are important (to them) and which not (ibid.). There is even interesting evidence from medical neurosciences where it was found that people who did not possess anymore the emotional part of the brain (the

“prefrontal lobe”) due to an accident for example where not able to take any decisions at all (cf. Elster, 1996; Damasio, 1994). So, the question is pending whether emotions are simply a direct and inextricable aspect of decision-making. Wenstøp (2005, p. 167) goes even further when arguing on basis of the previously mentioned neurological findings that “not only do emotions contribute to rationality, but also rationality actually requires emotions”. As can be seen, the thesis’ findings on the decision-making characteristics in companies’ social actions is even uttered by and a support of latest discoveries from other research fields. Assumed the case that the analysis of the findings in this thesis was solely focused on one particular decision-making theory (RCT or SET), the picture can be expected to have been only one-sided and inconsistent.

In the following chapter, the findings will be summarized and classified with a discussion on the limitations this thesis’ approach could deliver. Finally, recommendations will be developed for various target groups.

5. Discussion and conclusion

This thesis provided a range of insights into the decision-making characteristics of companies to support social organizations. It therefore contributes to the existing literature through the incorporation of a focus not only on motivational aspects but concrete selection criteria as well. The latter aspect is not yet researched properly, i.e. a bulk of literature exists on motivation but only little information and research is available on selection criteria. Here, SROI as an innovative impact assessment method was analyzed whether it could potentially influence a company's decision-making, more specifically as a selection criterion. Although only in a limited way, this thesis has also been able to shed light on the organizational decision-making in companies in Germany which, as the author of this thesis would label it, temporarily still resembles a sort of "black box" due to lacking transparency from company side. This is exemplified by one initial response from a CSR manager in a company that answered to the interview request by this thesis' author: *"Das Thema Auswahlprozesse für CSR-Projekte ist eine sehr spannende Frage. Leider kann ich Ihnen über interne Prozesse keine Auskunft geben"*. It is understandable that internal processes in a company are not aiming to become public. However, in the context of CSA it seems somehow contradictory since cooperating with social organizations (i.e. external partners) needs transparency, too. Only one of the companies in the sample has published a statement of more or less concrete selection criteria on its website. Such information simply helps in increasing efficiency since social organizations, which chronically have limited resources for fundraising/sponsor search activities, can at an earlier stage decide which company to approach. On the other hand, the disclosure of such information also would help companies increasing efficiency through having less misguided and irrelevant requests that need to be processed.

First, the thesis has shown that motivational aspects and selection criteria taken from Anglo-American literature can be applied to the German context as well. Here, the way how these decisions are taken was spotlighted from a RCT and SET viewpoint, always aiming to show the interplay of the two. This approach facilitates the opening up of two disciplines that were for a long time seen by the academic community as being distinct: whereas the economic sciences were focusing on rational behavior of people, it was the sociological sector that distinguished and discussed in majority the commonly called non-rational behavior or emotional aspects. However, it has changed and the two disciplines are coming closer in their understanding of human behavior as could be demonstrated in this thesis, too (cf. Heckathorn, 1993).

Further, it could be followed that motivational factors are slightly stronger influenced by rational considerations than SET aspects like emotions or sympathy. With regard to selection criteria, it was shown that they are, too, more dominated by rational thoughts like an emphasis on company-

organization fit but still resembling a mixture of the two theories RCT and SET. Already here, the added value of a SROI application could be demonstrated since it can lead to increased transparency (through the needed clarification on e.g. goals/theories of change) and professionalism (through its organization development features).

In this non-experimental and very special research setting, the impact assessment method SROI was found to be potentially a selection criterion by decision-makers for CSA. However, all elite interviewees did not yet work with this ratio and were expressing their belief that if it gets widely accepted and more standardized, it would be likely to become a selection criterion in the future. Indirectly, the provisioning of a SROI was found to increase transparency and to help social organizations to structure their actions, therewith leading to higher professionalism. Hence, the likelihood to be selected for support might ultimately also increase when a social organization is providing and carrying out a SROI analysis. In addition, this kind of discussion on the acceptance of an impact assessment method like SROI also refers to the language debate which is present in the German third, i.e. social sector. Here, voices are becoming stronger to stop the usage of the label “non-profit organizations” and instead start calling them “social profit organizations” since the former might be e.g. too misleading and unfitting (cf. Enorm, 2012). As is known, the economization of the third sector is inevitable in terms of a wider usage of e.g. efficiency and profitability assessment tools.³¹ Therefore, the argument on acceptance and openness towards such a measurement as has been done in this thesis is practically needed, now and in the near future in order to establish a discussion which can finally lead to higher levels of establishment and acceptance through e.g. more standardization.

As an attempt for a link between selection criteria and motivational aspects, it was demonstrated that the diffusion of rational and emotional aspects leads inevitably to the labeling of “emotional rationality” to describe the characteristic of corporate decision-making in CSA. Whereas the increase in mentioning of corporate core values in recent years can of course be seen as part of image building, it also shows a “felt need for more virtuous behavior” (Wenstøp, 2005, p. 163). With this well-suited concept of emotional rationality, such phenomena might more precisely be described and understood when it comes to the decision-making on the kind of corporate social engagement.

³¹ I.e. that the large welfare organizations have to adapt to and allow a stronger economic point of view on their affairs or the newly and growing sector of social businesses and respectively social entrepreneurs that brings a new flow into the third sector.

5.1. Limitations of the research

As this thesis represents basically an attempt to theoretically approach companies' decision-making characteristic with CSA, various drawbacks and limitations of the approach itself need to be mentioned and be taken into account. First, already the initial choice of this thesis to conduct a (mini) case study entails some limitation aspects: the sheer volume of data can lead to an overload which increases the possibility to selection bias, i.e. that the researcher has picked the most suitable aspects and neglects other important ones (cf. Eisenhardt, 1989). This can be said to be the case in the context of motivational aspects where a mass of publications is existing. Further, the literature review that has been conducted potentially entails systemic problems in itself. Not only is the file-drawer problem present here, i.e. that only published work can be taken into account whereas studies that did not produce meaningful results simply are not published³². It is also that no clear rules for the selection exist which gives the researcher freedom but at the same time, reduces the coherency across studies' methodological approaches (cf. Taylor, 2012).

Second, the "classical" aspects of limitations which preponderantly refer to the concrete work and research design need to be mentioned. These are reliability, validity, generalizability, and transferability and shall also be discussed in this very order.

Reliability

The interpretation of storylines with RCT and SET can potentially lead to same results in a similar context (Germany, social organization support). However, limitations of reliability definitely need to be taken into account (e.g. social desirability, moderator acceptance bias) since the interpretation always rests on the social construction of reality by respondents and more importantly, by the researcher. Nonetheless, the author of this thesis expects a similar research design with a different sample drawn from German companies with CSA to potentially yield similar results, though with probably other emphases in the interpretation thereof.

Validity

It has been attempted to increase the validity of this thesis work through focused triangulation, i.e. with the help of additional documents (company publications, academic literature) the findings were aimed to be strengthened. However, it still only represents a fragmentary "snapshot" due to the very small sample and the observation at one particular point in time, the various biases which were admittedly in place as well as the high vulnerability to individual interpretation possibilities due to the aspect of social constructions of realities. Here, a more quantitative approach possibly could advance the issue where a higher number of companies could be approached and analyzed. This could also then be extended with some experimental decision-making game where the concrete

³² Or studies that did produce results but which were not decided to be published.

choices of individual managers responsible for CSA could potentially better be observed. Additionally, it must be clearly stated that the interviewing of persons representing a company in this context must be seen with caution. As has been mentioned beforehand as well, it is the social or reality construction of every individual which must be taken into account.

Further, possible limitation in terms of generalizability stems from the fact that this research topic is situated in a context of moral and ethical considerations where it is clear that every person has a different mindset on this. These concepts which are difficult to grasp can be assumed to be quite influential and hence, calling for other research designs which can elaborate on them more profoundly and sustainably. A possible example would be an embedded direct observation of decision behavior over a longer time period or experimental testing through a more psycho-analytical approach.

Generalizability

Based on the qualitative approach taken in this thesis, it is difficult to assume a strong generalizability of the findings. Also, it seems slightly problematic since the whole research is based on a social phenomenon with a strong emotional part and in a highly normative (ethical, moral) research field. Although the mentioned motivation and selection aspects could be transferred to other settings as it was also mentioned in the thesis, the way how individuals - as representatives of a company – make sense of the decision-making process can vary tremendously. However, RCT and SET appear suitable to enhance understanding to almost every form of decision-making, leading to the conviction that it always is a mixture of both approaches that can best explain a phenomenon such as the one which this thesis focused on. Also, generalizability of a case study as chosen here is limited due to the very specific lens through which the researcher aims to obtain information on the discussed phenomenon: Interviewees merely are influenced by the situation and hence, lack objectivity.

However, the findings on a general openness towards SROI as an impact assessment method and possible selection criterion can be tentatively assumed to be quite generalizable. Moreover, the selection criteria mentioned by the interviewees can be seen as representing a type of generic criteria which other companies with CSA would probably also support as essential, being therewith a quite generalizable aspect.

Transferability

The transfer of this research – i.e. making a case study on the motivation and selection aspects of companies' CSA decision-making – is probably possible to other companies in Germany that are active in social organization/project support, too. However, the specific discussion the neglecting of economic motivational aspects would be different when the research subjects are companies from the Anglo-American (geographical) area. Here, a culture of CSA is much more established and some

preliminary research activities by the author of this thesis on disclosed selection criteria of companies from this area has shown that a more open approach is practiced there.

Nonetheless, the research could be applied to the private social spending choices of individual human beings as well. Here, it probably would follow a much more emotional and SET based interpretation: people acting as part of an organization like a company are simply bound in power-relationships and doomed to act rationally as an old-fashioned decision-making imperative whereas private persons can be said to be more freely to choose their courses of action.

5.2. Future research

Different research options can be imagined as a consequence of this thesis. First, the role of cultural aspects in the field of CSA could be analyzed more deeply.³³ Second, another research field imaginable is the question on how the specific CSA responsible managers are possibly changing their personal, private charitable behavior under different settings (e.g. high level of social sponsoring in a company vs. low level). More specifically, when personal empathy or managerial altruistic reasons are the decision-factor for CSA, it would be interesting to test quantitatively whether these people are in private less or more engaged/willing to donate for charities. This assumption is based on findings from economic behavior studies which have shown that people who give e.g. clothing to charities donate less in money than average. In other words, such a change in behavior due to another action an individual has done can even lead to a justification of doing things that one, from a social or ethical point of view, should not do (cf. Forbes, 2011).

5.3. Theoretical implications

When it comes to the question in how far the findings and observations of this thesis might advance or request the theories used, the implications are straightforward. The theories used in this thesis (RCT & SET) should in future studies which focus on similar phenomena be applied more interrelated – as it has been done in this work. Similarly, the focus should desirably not only be on one of the two but both should be seen as two interdependent and complementary approaches. Here, the conceptual approach of emotional rationality can be applied and developed further. This can lead to an opening up of the two theories RCT and SET in order to ultimately develop a grand theory possibly labeled as “emotional rationality decision-making theory”. As it was shown in this thesis, recent

³³ Here, a cross-cultural and –country setting of a research study would possibly advance the understanding when it comes to the differences between cultural regions on a wider scale. Also, a more experimental study design could be suited here to acquire less biased results for the advancement of the knowledge basis on decision-making characteristics.

findings from neurosciences and other academic fields further support such a quest, i. e. to end the one-sided focus on either rational or emotional/social behavior. Such a theory, the author assumes, would be suitable then not only for the specific CSA decision-making but for a much wider field of decision-making research. Through such a theory, human decision-making could be better understood and even predicted, possibly leading to improved e.g. guidelines for corporate employee behavior. Furthermore, the relationships between companies' decision-makers and external persons in various settings can be analyzed more comprehensible and most importantly, be better understood by a wider, also non-academic audience.

5.4. Practical implications and recommendations

As has been announced in the outline of the thesis (chapter 1.4.), this section will present advices for social organizations, private companies active in CSA as well as the SROI community. To start with the latter, it was striking that the research brought about the finding that companies indeed are willing to accept and see SROI as a potential selection criterion under certain prerequisites.³⁴ Hence, the promoters of SROI stemming from the scientific or practical community should aim to establish a level of awareness through direct communication with CSA conducting companies most preferably. Here, they should emphasize the potential of SROI as a transparency facilitator. This can also represent the link to the social organizations – which of course must be convinced of its usefulness in order to apply it – through the showing of how SROI makes this particular selection criterion achievable.

Having regard to the implications of this thesis' findings for companies, the discussion and interpretation of the findings firstly gives a clear recommendation for them to proactively disclose generic selection criteria for e.g. social sponsoring. This can lead to an efficiency increase on the side of the company as well as on the side of the social organization. It will nevertheless stay possible for a company to deny support when other parameters are e.g. not acceptable. A disclosure would deliver the enormous advantage that an internal and external consistency could be achieved and more importantly, the company would resemble much more authentic through a demonstration of openness. In addition, companies should focus on long-term relationships to support cooperations. This leads to more credibility (especially on the customer's side) and provides the company with more influence on the respective social organization in terms of where the organization's strategy is heading to etc. Finally, It is always advisable for companies to have formulated guidelines for CSA behavior (an aspect which probably is not really new) in order to make the whole approach to CSA

³⁴ I.e. more standardization, increased acceptance and availability of application/best-practice cases as well as the provisioning of clear information on the context of such a measurement.

more concise. Such guidelines can help every employee to present corporate values and social aims, giving the possibility to push up the company image and brand to one of holistic authenticity.

Ultimately, social organizations can improve their operations based on the findings this thesis could deliver in various aspects, too. First, the marketing approach for aspects like fundraising should, when targeting private companies, strongly emphasize the economic advantages of CSA like better employee motivation or access to alternative financial capital markets etc. Therewith, more attraction can be generated and if there are supporters in a respective company, strongly rational arguments are being provided that can help these particular persons to better convince e.g. top managers that are focusing on economic considerations more strongly. Second, to increase selection success, social organizations should clearly aim for professionalism of and at their work: they could search for and adopt best practices for example. Here, as described beforehand (chapter 5) it makes sense for social organizations to conduct a SROI analysis since it was found that indirectly, such an analysis leads to more transparency and higher professionalism through the process itself. Moreover, if there is the insight that coaching or external support is needed (for e.g. accounting), this could become a prominent way of initiating a cooperation with a private company: the direct “corporate volunteering” involvement is also providing the donating company with more added value than the simple money spending.³⁵ Too, the probability to become engaged in a follow-up cooperation/support relationship increases if a company has given practical advice and therewith, had a look inside the respective social organization due to the experienced relationship. Third, social organizations should look in advance to find potential supporting companies that have the highest fit in terms of goals or business products/services etc. Therewith, they can better position themselves and it is, as identified to be an important selection criterion, already going one step further and shows of course, professionalism, too. Fourth, social organizations should increase transparency to be more likely to receive support. This can be done through information material providing results from a SROI analysis and through a direct and open contact between donor and recipient.

Ultimately, although the aspects above might be fulfilled by a social organization, the final decision rests on a couple of managers and therewith, individuals. This, as demonstrated beforehand in chapter 4.5., increases the likelihood to be chosen based on emotional preferences by the key persons. It is therefore advisable to aim for building up an emotional strategy to target these decision-makers and also show and offer possibilities how they personally can get involved through e.g. the invitation to become a foundation board member. Such an action can foster the building up of a reciprocal commitment and makes long-lasting cooperation and support more feasible.

³⁵ Here, not only can the company “give something” in terms of working time, it can additionally support a positive organizational climate in the company due to higher social awareness resulting from such actions.

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8. Appendices

8.1. Anonymized elite interview transcripts

Elite interview 1

Interviewer: Können Sie mir kurz Ihre Position in der Firma beschreiben und wie lange Sie schon in diesem Bereich tätig sind?

Interviewpartner: Ich bin hier Senior Investment Analyst, betreue also institutionelle Anleger und bewerte mögliche Investment Möglichkeiten. Außerdem bin ich verantwortlich bzw. federführend für den Bereich Unternehmerische Verantwortung oder neudeutsch: Corporate Social Responsibility.

Interviewer: Ok, gut, dann gehe ich mal schnell weiter da Sie ja schon sagten, nur sehr wenig Zeit zu haben. Dann möchte ich Sie jetzt bitten, mir von einem konkreten Beispiel zu erzählen bzw. dieses zu beschreiben, in dem Ihre Firma eine soziale Organisation/Projekt unterstützt hat, und was die (ausschlaggebenden) Beweggründe hierfür waren?

Interviewpartner: Wir bei [Name des Unternehmens] sehen das Hauptziel unseres gesellschaftlichen Engagements darin, Unternehmen oder Manager zu unterstützen welche fortschrittliche NGOs leiten. Es soll nicht nur Geld fließen nach unserem Verständnis, sondern insbesondere Projekte und Organisationen gefördert welche nach unserer Ansicht noch Entwicklungspotenzial haben und von einer Unterstützung von Private Equity Seite und bezüglich konkretem Know-How. Mit fortschrittlich meinen wir eine nachhaltige Zielsetzung und Aufgabenbewältigung. Hier haben wir mit der [Name der sozialen Organisation] eine tolle Organisation gefunden. Der Leiter der Einrichtung hat vorbildlich uns gezeigt, dass er sehr gut eine Brücke zwischen Sozialem und Wirtschaftlichem schlagen kann. Wir haben uns kennengelernt bei der Arbeit an einem Business Plan Wettbewerb und daraufhin eine Kooperation begonnen bzw. wir als [Name des Unternehmens] haben uns entschieden, diese Organisation zu unterstützen. Unser Ziel bei der konkreten Arbeit mit [Name der sozialen Organisation] war insbesondere die Strukturen der Organisation so zu verändern, dass eine nachhaltige Verwaltungsstruktur entstehen kann die den Leiter der Organisation entlasten sollte. Hier haben wir zum Beispiel eine 50% Stelle für einen professionellen Fundraiser eingeführt. Um auf die ursprüngliche Frage zurückzukommen: Wir waren sehr schnell überzeugt von der guten Konzeption der [soziale Organisation], ihrer nachhaltigen Zielsetzung und auch der ganz deutliche Mehrwert der geschaffen wird indem Straßenkindern die Möglichkeit auf eine Wiedereingliederung in die Gesellschaft gegeben wird, ohne diese einfach in ein Heim zu stecken.

Interviewer: Sie haben mir ja im Vorgespräch schon gesagt, dass Sie die Impact Assessment Methode SROI kennen, hierzu also meine folgende hypothetische Frage: Wenn in einer solchen Situation zwei Projekte/Organisationen- welche sich im Sinne der Ziele und Einsatzgebiete gleichen würden – zur Auswahl gestanden hätten, die eine aber einen SROI Wert von 2 und die andere von 3 erzielen würde: für welche Organisation hätten Sie sich entschieden?

Interviewpartner: Dann hätten wir bestimmt die Organisation genommen, welche einen höheren Mehrwert kreiert. Wir sind ja Investoren hier, schauen also schon genauer auf Kennzahlen etc. und von daher ist das außer Frage, dass so eine Berechnung und so ein Wert uns noch mehr überzeugt hätte. Meine Antwort auf diese Frage, ist ganz klar Ja. Das ist sowohl kulturfördernd für die Unternehmen, wenn sie sich engagieren. Also für uns ist das auch eine emotionale Komponente hier eben dabei sein zu können, das „Unternehmen“ [soziale Organisation] zu unterstützen und damit fördert man die Kultur

im eigenen Unternehmen, so zum Beispiel die Bindung der Angestellten an das Unternehmen. Gleichzeitig, wenn man da eine rigorosere Brille anlegt wie wir als Finanzinvestoren das ja jeden Tag machen, dann hilft das auch dem Unternehmen nachhaltiger zu wirtschaften. Weil wir natürlich sehr stark auf Zahlen achten, auf Nachhaltigkeit der Budgets etc., was ja in der Denke der NGOs nicht gang und gebe ist. Und wenn Sie den Leiter von [soziale Organisation] fragen, dann wird der bestimmt ihnen das bestätigen können, dass die Sache auch für Ihn selbst sehr viel gebracht hat.

Interviewer: Super, ich danke Ihnen herzlich für Ihre Zeit und Mühen! Ich beende jetzt hier an dieser Stelle die Aufnahme!

Elite interview 2

Interviewer: Ich möchte von Ihnen gerne wissen, in welchem Bereich CSR Aktivitäten Ihrer Firma angesiedelt sind und wie lange Sie in diesem Bereich schon tätig sind?

Interviewpartner: Ok, also CSR ist bei uns eine eigene Abteilung die direkt dem Vorstand zugeordnet ist um einen ganzheitlichen Ansatz zu ermöglichen. Soll heißen: wir möchten das nicht nur zu Kommunikationszwecken machen, sondern in alle Geschäftsbereiche integrieren. Und zu ihrer Frage zu meiner Person: Ich bin jetzt seit 9 Jahren bei [Name des Unternehmens] und seit ca. 7 Jahren Projektleiterin und auch zuständig für die Vergabe von nationalen Unterstützungsaktivitäten.

Interviewer: Gut, dann möchte ich jetzt mal ein bisschen konkreter werden. Können Sie mir bitte an einem Beispiel wo sich ihre Organisation sozial engagiert hat beschreiben, was denn die Motivation dahinter war? Also warum gerade diese Organisation unterstützt wurde.

Interviewpartner: Mmh, also es ist so, dass wir ja seit langer Zeit mit [Name der sozialen Organisation] zusammenarbeiten und daher auch schon diese Verbindung fast schon institutionalisiert ist würde ich mal sagen. Aber die Motivation ist schon damals und auch heute immer noch ganz klar gewesen: Wir wollen unseren Beitrag leisten, eine lebenswerte Gesellschaft zu fördern. Uns ist klar, dass wir als so großes Unternehmen eine gewisse Verantwortung haben was das Allgemeinwohl bzw. die Gesellschaft angeht. Und das hört eben nicht beim einzelnen Mitarbeiter dann auf, sondern geht um das ganze Umfeld in dem wir uns bewegen. Also, zum einen diese unternehmerische Verantwortung. Zum anderen eben die gesellschaftliche Verantwortung. Und letztlich ist natürlich auch klar, dass unserem Unternehmen, der Marke an sich und den Assoziationen die unsere Kunden oder potenziellen Kunden haben, solch ein Engagement positive zugutekommt.

Interviewer: Ok. Und wie sind die Auswahlkriterien bei Ihnen im Unternehmen – gibt es bestimmte Voraussetzungen die Ihre Firma verlangt von einer sozialen Organisation um gefördert oder unterstützt zu werden durch z.B. Sponsoring?

Interviewpartner: Also gerade was Sponsoring angeht haben wir da eine ganz klare Linie. Wir haben uns auch entschieden, diese nach außen zu kommunizieren, also die sind bei uns zum Beispiel auf der Homepage abrufbar. Aber um das für Sie deutlich zu machen: also es gibt zum einen die Förderbedingungen, z. B. muss nachgewiesen werden, dass ein wirklicher Impact kreiert wird. Außerdem fördern wir keine politischen Projekte oder religiöse. Wir haben unsere Schwerpunkte thematisch ausgerichtet auf Jugend, Umwelt, Wissenschaft, Kommunikation und gesellschaftlicher Wandel. Wenn also jemand in den Bereichen ein tolles Projekt oder eine Organisation aufbaut oder aufbauen will, dann kann der sich bei uns bewerben und dann wird das alles von uns überprüft. Also auch vor Ort. Das sind dann Aspekte wie zum Beispiel ob der Antragssteller oder die Organisation kompetent genug ist mit den Fördersummen umzugehen. Oder inwiefern das Ziel der Organisation langfristige und für uns wichtige gesellschaftliche Probleme aufgreift. Und letztlich muss es natürlich immer auch zu uns passen, zu unserem

Kerngeschäft und zu unserer Marke. Sonst wäre die Glaubwürdigkeit eines solchen Engagements schnell in Frage gestellt.

Interviewer: Ok, das sind wirklich schon klare Punkte die ich so bisher noch nicht gehört habe, also in den Interviews bisher noch nicht.

Interviewpartner: Echt? Das ist ja interessant.

Interviewer: Ja, aber gehen wir mal weiter zu meiner dritten Frage bezüglich des Impact Assessment Tools SROI – also social return on investment. Zuerst einmal: kennen Sie das?

Interviewpartner: Ja, ist mir bekannt. Aber nicht im Detail, nur so grob die Diskussion darum und so.

Interviewer: Ok, das ist gut. Also meine Frage hier ist: Wie schätzen Sie die Situation ein, wenn zwei Projekte oder Organisationen zur Auswahl stehen würden, beide tätig im selben Bereich und in derselben geographischen Gegend. Eins der Projekte hätte dann einen berechneten SROI von 3 und das andere von 2, also das erste Projekt bietet einen höheren gesellschaftlichen Mehrwert als das zweite. Würde das Ihre Entscheidung beeinflussen und würden Sie das von so einem Wert dann abhängig machen?

Interviewpartner: Jein. Also ich habe da ein bißchen was von mitbekommen, und finde das manchmal etwas kontrovers, als dass ich das einfach glauben und als einziges Entscheidungskriterium nehmen wollen würde. Klar schauen wir auch auf den Mehrwert, wenn Sie es so sagen wollen, den eine Organisation kreiert. Also zum Beispiel bei [Name der sozialen Organisation], da habe ich mit dem Leiter schon Gespräche gehabt und die haben auch solche Argumentationsgrundlagen dort entwickelt, also wie viel Geld wird gespart durch ihre Aktivitäten. Das ist dann schon beeindruckend. Aber es ist jetzt kein Kriterium bei uns, bisher jedenfalls nicht. Ich denke dafür muss sich diese ganze Methode noch mehr saturieren. Bisher ist das ja nach meinem Wissen eine kleine Gemeinde die sich damit befasst, da gibt es noch nicht wirklich viele Beispiele und die Akzeptanz ist dementsprechend auch nicht sonderlich groß.

Interviewer: Ok. Das wars auch schon mit meinen Fragen und ich stoppe jetzt die Aufnahme. Herzlichen Dank Ihnen auf jeden Fall an dieser Stelle!

Elite interview 3

Interviewer: Wir hatten ja schon im Vorgespräch zwar kurz drüber gesprochen, ich möchte aber trotzdem nochmal gerne von Ihnen hören, in welcher Position Sie arbeiten, wie lange Sie da schon tätig sind und wo diese Stelle im Unternehmen angesiedelt.

Interviewpartner: Also, ich arbeite im Bereich der Kommunikation, d.h. genauer gesagt in der PR und internen Kommunikation. Dort in diesem Bereich bin ich verantwortlich für die Öffentlichkeitsarbeit. Hierzu gehört im Groben der Besucherdienst, wir haben in unserem Bereich auch die Verantwortung für die Mediathek, sprich für den Fotodienst/datenbank. Wir sind auch verantwortlich für Bewegtbild in unserem Konzern, also wir haben ein großes Bewegtbildarchiv, d. h. Filmmaterial. Das ist in meinem Bereich genauso auch was Filmvorhaben angeht von Dritten oder auch von unternehmensinternen Filmaufnahmen in unseren Anlagen. Also sowohl eigene als auch fremde Produktion betreuen wir bei mir. Dazu kommt dann auch der große Bereich der Kinder- und Jugendkommunikation als Zielgruppe im Rahmen der Öffentlichkeitsarbeit. Und auch, und da kommen wir ja jetzt zum Wesentlichen hier, das CSR Engagement. Sprich wir haben zwei große Kooperation, das ist die [Name der sozialen Organisation] und auch die [Name des sozialen Projekts] mit der wir da ganz eng zusammenarbeiten seit vielen Jahren. Das ist so mein Zuständigkeitsbereich.

Interviewer: Und wie lange sind Sie schon tätig in diesem Bereich?

Interviewpartner: Jetzt im Bereich der Kommunikation seit 10-15 Jahren, ich glaube 12 Jahre. Mal in der Pressearbeit, mal in der Öffentlichkeitsarbeit und mal in der internen Kommunikation. Und das mach ich jetzt hier im Unternehmen seit zwei Jahren.

Interviewer: Ok, gut. Sie haben ja gerade eben schon zwei Beispiele für soziales Engagement genannt. Hier würde mich interessieren, was denn die Beweggründe für das Engagement waren, also woher die Motivation stammt ihres Unternehmens sich hier zu betätigen.

Interviewpartner: Mmmh. Also ich mach das jetzt am Beispiel der [Name der sozialen Organisation]. Hintergrund war, dass wir damals- und zum Teil natürlich auch noch heute – die öffentliche Diskussion hatten um das Hauptaufenthaltsrecht von Obdachlosen, jungen Menschen und Jugendlichen die sich dann in Bahnhöfen aufgehalten haben/genächtigt haben. Das Problem war ja, wie gehen wir damit um, lassen wir sie da in den Bahnhöfen in Sachen Belästigung, in Sachen Sicherheit, und auch welche moralische Verpflichtung haben wir hier als [Name des Unternehmens]. Das war also das große Problem was wir in der öffentlichen Diskussion da hatten. Sicherlich war und ist das eine virulente öffentliche Diskussion und insofern kam uns damals ganz gelegen, dass der Leiter der [Name der sozialen Organisation] mit seinem Konzept im Rahmen der Straßensozialarbeit jugendlichen Ausreißern zu helfen aus dem Obdachlosenmilieu wieder herauszukommen und den Jugendlichen auch wieder andere Perspektiven zu geben. Das passt natürlich mit unserem Problem ganz gut zusammen. Und da haben wir dann eben gesagt, dass gemeinsam den Jugendlichen Perspektiven zu bieten, die [Name der sozialen Organisation] zu unterstützen, also die Streetworker in ihrem Geschäft. Das war eigentlich der Ursprung der Zusammenarbeit. Und insofern aus den Problemen der eigenen Belange heraus aber auch aus gesellschaftlicher Belange heraus. Also ein mittelbarer Nutzen auch für [Name des Unternehmens], ganz klar, aber im Endeffekt auch gesellschaftliche Verantwortung. Und insofern hat sich das alles dann auch weiterentwickelt und als dann die Euro Umstellung kam, hat ja die [Name des Unternehmens] die Rundungsumschüsse als Stiftungskapital bewilligt hat, sind wir natürlich noch viel tiefer und größer eingestiegen in das ganze Thema der Unterstützung der Stiftung. Und seitdem sind wir auch mit dem Vorstandsvorsitzenden im Beirat der Stiftung vertreten als Schirmherr und so weiter. Im Endeffekt war diese große Stiftung der Rundungsumschüsse die Grundlage für die feste Zusammenarbeit.

Interviewer: Zu diesem Beispiel, gab es da irgendwelche Auswahlkriterien nach denen die Projekte oder Organisationen ausgewählt wurden? Also im Sinne von Maßstäben auf deren Grundlage beurteilt wurde, ob die Organisation nach gewissen Prozessen arbeitet oder anderer Kriterien?

Interviewpartner: Ich versuche das mal, da ich da damals nicht unmittelbar dabei war, zu erklären. Also das Konzept war auf jedenfall so, dass es überzeugt hat. Auch mit dem Wegweiser „Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe“, das hat gut gepasst und war nachvollziehbar für die [Name des Unternehmens]. Und diese Glaubwürdigkeit war einfach da. Ich glaube man hat sicherlich, vielleicht war es auch ein bisschen Vorschuss oder so, aber im Endeffekt war es die Überzeugung des Konzepts, und das hat sich ja auch bewahrheitet, dass es funktioniert. Mit der Hilfestellung die die [Name des Unternehmens] geleistet hat [Anmerkung: Zur Verfügungstellung von Produkten/Sachmitteln], um die Basis der Arbeit der Streetworker überhaupt zu ermöglichen. Und das hat sich ja dann auch sehr ausgeweitet. Im Endeffekt ist es ja auch nach wie vor so, dass wir sagen: wir als Unternehmen haben ja auch eine gesellschaftliche Verantwortung, da wir ein besonders großes nationales als auch internationales Unternehmen sind welches irgendwo in allen Bereichen der Gesellschaft verfügbar sind. Wir haben so ein „people business“, sind also wesentlicher Bestandteil der Gesellschaft. Aus dieser Verantwortung heraus, haben wir einfach auch eine besondere Stellung einfach. Da müssen wir auch und wollen auch langfristig Lösungsansätze sehen, die sowohl fürs Unternehmen funktionieren als auch für die Gesellschaft. Ich glaube es war damals so und es ist heute erst recht so. Irgendwo ist es ja auch für uns wegen der Struktur und der Verantwortung einmalig, von der Größe und der Vernetzung usw. In allen Bereichen quasi gibt es uns, wir machen

Ausbildung, wir machen Logistik, wir sind irgendwo in allen Strukturen da und in allen Regionen. Das ist irgendwie was Besonderes und da hat man einfach auch eine besondere Verantwortung, ganz klar. Und sicherlich hat man da gesagt in Sachen unternehmerisches Engagement: Integration und Bildung sind die Themen die besonders gut zu uns passen. Schon allein als einer der größten Arbeitgeber in Deutschland ist es eigentlich auch nur logisch, dass man da eine besondere Verantwortung hat der man nachkommen muss. Und das ist heute noch genauso.

Interviewer: In der Tat, jeder hat irgendwo einen Schnittpunkt mit ihrem Unternehmen, jeder hat und kann damit was anfangen und daher hat jeder auch eine gewisse Meinung, immer. Gut, und wie ist es denn mit dem SROI als Wirkungsanalysetool. Kennen Sie das und ist das bei Ihnen innerhalb der CSR Arbeit irgendwo Thema als z. B. Entscheidungsargument/-hilfe?

Interviewpartner: Ich sage mal noch nicht. Wir hatten ja schon im Vorgespräch drüber gesprochen, dass wir im Rahmen der Ausrichtung unseres strategischen Engagements neu ausrichten und sind da gerade mittendrin. Also wir sind gerade am Evaluieren, wo können und wollen wir uns engagieren und positionieren, wo sehen wir unsere Rolle in der Gesellschaft und so weiter. Sicherlich ist da derzeit, und das war auch in der Vergangenheit so, nicht die Situation, dass wir sagen hier machen wir jetzt eine Wirtschaftlichkeitsberechnung eines Engagement. Andererseits haben wir, ich nehme jetzt Bezug auf die [Name der sozialen Organisation], gesehen mit dem faktischen, dass es funktioniert. Also dass man schaut, ist es nachhaltig, ist es nachhaltig erfolgreich und lohnt es sich zu investieren und sich zu engagieren. Und wenn ich sehe, dass in der Stiftung seit 1994 circa 2300 Kinder von der Straße geholt werden konnten, dann ist das einfach ein riesiger Erfolg. Und das alles ohne Unterstützung vonseiten der Politik und der Behörden etc. allein gestemmt, nur mit den Partnern. Das ist schon ein eindeutiger Erfolg und braucht da nicht unbedingt eine Berechnung. Das schließt aber auch nicht aus, dass wir uns irgendwann mal entscheiden und das anders zu beleuchten. Ich denke wir wollen einfach die gesellschaftlichen Belange, mittelbar und unmittelbar fördern, wollen glaubwürdig sein und sicherlich muss sich da ein Teil unseres Engagements auch widerspiegeln. Es muss auch zu uns passen, es nimmt uns ja keiner ab, wenn das dann nicht zu uns passt oder so. In Sachen Berechnung der Wirtschaftlichkeit, also so eine Analyse: das ist im Moment bei uns eigentlich nicht das Thema gewesen, also bisher nicht.

Interviewer: Ok. Jetzt noch eine weitere Frage: gesetzt den Fall, dass eine andere Streetwork Organisation, also im Sinne der Ziele und Einsatzgebiete gleich zur jetzigen von Ihnen unterstützten Organisation, auf Sie zugehen würde um dann in Konkurrenz sich um Unterstützung bei Ihnen bewerben würde. Hätte das dann eher einen Einfluss, wenn sie wissen das ein Organisation effizienter arbeitet im Sinne von dass weniger Geld für die Administration ausgegeben wird und eine höhere Hebelwirkung existiert usw., also dass ihr Unternehmen dann bei der bisherigen Förderung bleibt. Oder eben der Fall, dass dann eine Konkurrenzorganisation zu Ihnen kommt und zeigt, hier wir haben einen viel höheren Mehrwert durch irgendwelche anderen Maßnahmen und so. Wie denken Sie, würde sich das Unternehmen in diesem Fall entscheiden?

Interviewpartner: Also ich glaube – wir sind ja ein langfristiger Partner der [Name der sozialen Organisation]- wir sind da sehr erfolgreich unterwegs zusammen. Also wir sind ja nicht die Einzigen die ebendiese Organisation unterstützen. Aber sicherlich ein wesentlicher Partner. Unser Vorstandsvorsitzender ist Schirmherr, wir sind im Beirat vertreten: Ich glaube einfach, diese erfolgreiche Zusammenarbeit steht für sich. Ich kann mir überhaupt nicht vorstellen, dass es irgendwelche Zweifel gibt, dass wir diese Kooperation in Zukunft einstellen. Es sei denn, wir brauchen keine [Name der sozialen Organisation] mehr weil es keine Straßenkinder mehr gibt in Deutschland. Aber das ist glaube ich sehr unwahrscheinlich in den nächsten Jahren. Ich denke wir haben da so

eine Verantwortung, dass wir auch nachhaltig unterstützen wollen. Das schließt ja nicht aus, dass wir gemeinsam mit der Stiftung und den Partnern die Richtung ändern oder uns anpassen in der Art und Weise. Wir wollen da gewiss nicht dem Leiter der Stiftung ins Handwerk pfuschen, aber es gibt ja einen Beirat, es gibt ja Partner und man muss ja schauen wo die Reise hingeht. Oder welche Erfordernisse die Gesellschaft mit sich bringt. Da gibt es sicherlich Anpassung, da muss man hin und wieder an den Stellschrauben drehen, aber ich kann mir überhaupt nicht vorstellen, dass wir da auf andere Organisation umschwenken würden. Wir gehen da eher in die Richtung zu fokussieren, nachhaltig glaubwürdig zu sein und natürlich der Entwicklung in der Gesellschaft uns anzupassen und Teil davon zu sein. Wie die Erfordernisse halt sind, aber sicher nicht jedes Jahr in eine andere Richtung zu laufen. Ich denke mal hier mit den bisherigen Schwerpunktthemen Bildung, Integration, Menschen zusammenzubringen, Lebensperspektiven zu eröffnen, Teilhaber zu sein. In so einem großen Konzern wie wir es sind, da spielt das alles eine Rolle. Und genauso eben auch was die [Name des sozialen Projekts] angeht: Bildung ist irgendwo so ein Grundgut, und Lesekompetenz zur Berufsvorbereitung oder so ist einfach ein wesentlicher Bestandteil für eine Gesellschaft. Ohne Bildung und Integration funktioniert das alles überhaupt nicht. Ich denke, dass sind Punkte die werden immer wieder unser Engagement sein. Wir sind ein verlässlicher Partner, wir sind langfristig orientiert – ich meine wir sind ja ca. 10-20 Jahre schon mit beiden Stiftungen unterwegs. Mit beiden Stiftungen nehmen wir Teil an der Weiterentwicklung und fühlen uns als Partner. Daher kann ich mir das nicht vorstellen. Das man vielleicht das Feld irgendwann erweitert, wo man dann sagt hier gibt es einen weißen Fleck, eine Lücke wo es sich lohnt dass wir uns als Unternehmen noch engagieren: auf jedenfall klar. Sei es jetzt Ökologie oder so. Aber ich denke hier sind wir im Großen und Ganzen super unterwegs, und da wüsste ich jetzt nicht warum wir als Konzern das verlassen sollten. Das kann ich mir nicht vorstellen, ganz klar.

Interviewpartner: Super, das war's. Dann beende ich jetzt die Aufnahme und bedanke mich recht herzlich bei Ihnen für die Zeit und Ihre Bereitschaft mich zu unterstützen. Ich werde das Interview transkribieren und anonymisieren und bei Bedarf Ihnen zur Kenntnisnahme/Überprüfung zuschicken.

Elite interview 4

Interviewer: Hallo, ich habe Ihnen ja schon beschrieben um was sich meine Arbeit so ungefähr dreht, also Entscheidungsfaktoren von Unternehmen sich in sozialen Projekten zu engagieren bzw. Mittel zur Verfügung zu stellen. Als Einstiegsfrage möchte ich nun gerne von Ihnen wissen, wie lange Sie schon im CSR Bereich tätig sind und in welchem Bereich diese CSR Geschäftstätigkeit im Unternehmen angesiedelt ist.

Interviewpartner: Also das ist eine Frage, die differenziert beantwortet werden muss. Wir sind natürlich schon seit sehr langer Zeit in unterschiedlichen Feldern im CSR Bereich tätig. Jetzt ganz konkret aktuell die Strategie seit sechs Jahren.

Interviewer: Ok, und der Bereich CSR ist bei Ihnen in der Kommunikationsabteilung angesiedelt oder in einem anderen Bereich?

Interviewpartner: Das ist eine Stabstelle, die direkt dem Vorstand zugeordnet ist.

Interviewer: D.h. Sie sind also in dem Bereich seit 6 Jahren tätig?

Interviewpartner: Ja, genau.

Interviewer: Ok, jetzt werden wir einmal konkreter. Ich möchte gerne von Ihnen wissen, ob Sie mir ein konkretes Beispiel beschreiben können, in dem Ihre Firma eine soziale Organisation oder ein Projekt wie z. B. [Name der sozialen Organisation] unterstützt hat, und was denn die ausschlaggebenden Beweggründe waren?

Interviewpartner: Ja, also die Festlegung für [Name der sozialen Organisation] lässt sich relativ einfach begründen. Wir hatten bei unseren CSR Aktivitäten bis zum Engagement bei [Name der sozialen Organisation] festgestellt, dass wir ein regionales Übergewicht haben. Wir haben zur Abrundung noch eine bundesweite Initiative gesucht. Diese bundesweite Initiative haben wir aber nicht ins Blaue hinein gesucht, sondern die sollte sich abgleichen auf unseren Förderschwerpunkt Jugend und Erziehung. Nachdem wir diese Entscheidung getroffen hatten, haben wir uns einige hundert Einrichtungen die auf Bundesebene tätig sind im Feld Jugend und Erziehung näher angeschaut und bei dieser Analyse sind drei Organisationen für uns von besonderem Interesse gewesen. Die habe ich mir dann genauer persönlich angeschaut, und nach In Augenscheinnahme fiel dann die Entscheidung für [Name der sozialen Organisation]. Warum [Name der sozialen Organisation]? Also wir waren der Meinung erstmal dass [Name der sozialen Organisation] gut zu Jugend und Erziehung passt, zum Zweiten auch zu unserem Unternehmenszweck „Menschen ein Dach über den Kopf zu verschaffen“ und zum Dritten hat uns die Professionalität der Arbeit von [Name der sozialen Organisation] überzeugt.

Interviewer: Und bei diesem Beispiel: Sie hatten gesagt, Sie hatten da drei Projekte in der finalen Auswahl – können Sie da genauer beschreiben, was da dann die Auswahlkriterien waren? Sie haben ja gerade eben schon gesagt, die Professionalität von [Name der sozialen Organisation] war überzeugend zum Beispiel. Also war das dann relativ eindeutig oder hatten Sie dann bei den Projekten, also den drei die da zur Auswahl standen, eine knappere Entscheidung aufgrund von strukturellen Eigenschaften, der Zielsetzung etc. oder waren die da alle im selben Bereich angesiedelt?

Interviewpartner: Die waren alle in dem Bereich Jugend und Erziehung angesiedelt. Für uns die durchschlagendsten Argumente waren wirklich die Professionalität, wir wollten nichts primär Mildtätiges machen, wir wollten eine Einrichtung fördern die auch was bewirkt. Das müssen wir dann auch sehen können oder die Organisation muss uns das auch demonstrieren und offenlegen. Und das nächste Argument war diese gute Passung zu unserem Unternehmenszweck, Menschen ein Heim zu verschaffen.

Interviewer: Gut. Ich hatte ja auch geschrieben, dass ich mich mit dieser Social Return on Investment Berechnungsmethode beschäftige. Kennen Sie diese Wirkungsanalyse?

Interviewpartner: Ja ich kenne es. Nicht detailliert, sondern von der Begrifflichkeit also der Definition.

Interviewer: Das ist gut, da brauche ich also nicht nochmal erklären, was das ungefähr ist. Meine Frage hierzu aber, wie würden Sie dieselbe Situation, die sie gerade geschildert haben mit den Organisationen zur Auswahl, einschätzen, wenn für diese ein Social Return on Investment Wert bekannt wäre und die dann unterschiedlich sind. Angenommen eine Organisation hat einen SROI von 2 und die andere von einer 3, d.h. die eine kann einen höheren Mehrwert für die Gesellschaft schaffen als die Andere. Meinen Sie, jetzt so im Rückblick, dass die Entscheidung dann da auch anders ausgefallen wäre, wenn so etwas zur Verfügung gestanden wäre?

Interviewpartner: Wir glauben eher nicht. Wir glauben eher, dass so eine Berechnungsmethode unsere Entscheidung für [Name der sozialen Organisation] noch zusätzlich unterlegt hätte.

Interviewer: Also das ist bei Ihnen im Bereich auch noch keine gängige Berechnungsmethode?

Interviewpartner: Wie gesagt, das Thema der Klassifizierbarkeit ist für uns bei unserem CSR Engagement, also bezogen auf unser Unternehmen im CSR Bereich, nicht im Vordergrund. Es gibt ja zum Beispiel auch den Ansatz dass CR Engagement darauf einzahlt, dass man einen stärkeren Marktzugang bekommt oder besser Zugang zu Kapital erhält oder so. Solche Punkte spielen für uns keine Rolle.

Interviewer: Ok, also das sind also dann auch nochmal Motivationsaspekte. Dass es da eben nicht um solche weichen Aspekte, die ja so direkt nicht nachweisbar sind aber doch stark diskutiert werden.

Interviewpartner: Ja, also die Aspekte die für uns wirklich maßgeblich waren: natürlich positive Wirkung auf Reputation, also zum Beispiel war eins bei der Entscheidung für das richtige Engagement wenn eine soziale Partnerschaft auf die Markenattribute von unserem Haus einzahlt, dann wird der gute Ruf unseres Hauses auch unterstützt. Das war ein wichtiger Punkt. Außerdem eine höhere Bewerberattraktivität und natürlich auch eine verbesserte Mitarbeiteridentifikation.

Interviewer: Ok, gut ich habe meine Fragen durch. Es ist ein ganz kurzes Interview gewesen, wie Sie gemerkt haben, aber die wichtigen Punkte die sie gesagt haben, sind auf jedenfall sehr hilfreich gewesen. Also gerade die Motivationsfaktoren die sie eben am Ende noch genannt haben, decken sich auch sehr gut mit den Faktoren die ich aus der wissenschaftlichen Literatur herausgearbeitet habe. Und ja, ich stoppe jetzt die Aufnahme und bedanke mich nochmal für die Zeit und Ihre Bereitschaft!

Elite interview 5

Interviewer: Also, ich hatte ja schon ein bißchen gelesen von Ihnen, u. A. dass Sie Vice President Communications sind. Trotzdem möchte ich gerne von Ihnen erfahren, weil Sie ja für CSR Maßnahmen auch verantwortlich sind, in welchem Bereich diese CSR Aktivitäten bei Ihnen im Unternehmen angesiedelt sind und wie lange Sie schon in diesem Bereich arbeiten?

Interviewpartner: Ja, also das nennt sich bei uns im Konzern Corporate Communications und ich selber bin seit 8 Jahren im Konzern und auch im Bereich Corporate Communications als Vice President tätig und leite die Öffentlichkeitsarbeit im Moment in Deutschland. Diese Öffentlichkeitsarbeit bzw. Corporate Communications beinhaltet eben auch die Corporate Social Responsibility Aktivitäten. Oder alles was wir im Zusammenhang mit nachhaltiger Unternehmensführung machen.

Interviewer: Ok, gut. Jetzt werden wir gleich mal ein bißchen konkreter. Und zwar: können Sie mir ein konkretes Beispiel beschreiben, in dem Ihre Firma eine soziale Organisation unterstützt hat und was eben hierfür die ausschlaggebenden Beweggründe waren, also Motivation dafür.

Interviewpartner: Ja, ich kann Ihnen ein konkretes Beispiel erzählen, das geht zurück auf das Jahr 2010. Da haben wir beschlossen, den Verein [Name der sozialen Organisation] zu fördern. Ich weiß nicht ob Sie diesen kennen, das ist ein überregionaler oder bundesweiter Straßenkinderhilfeverein.

Interviewer: Ja ich kenne den.

Interviewpartner: Sie kennen den? Wunderbar. Ich persönlich begleite den schon seit vielen, vielen Jahren, also seit Mitte der 90er Jahre. Sozusagen von den ganz kleinen Anfängen, und ich habe immer versucht, diesen Verein weiter zu fördern und habe natürlich auch in meiner Tätigkeit hier bei [Name des Unternehmens] immer mal wieder Überlegungen angestellt, ob es auch Möglichkeiten gibt, dass das Unternehmen hier einspringt. Und dann hat sich 2010 die Gelegenheit ergeben, weil die [Name des Unternehmens] Foundation – das ist eine Stiftung die das Unternehmen schon seit vielen Jahren innehat- sich überlegt hat, dass sie systematisch den Ländern im Konzern oder wenigsten den größeren Ländern im Konzern die Möglichkeit gibt, lokale Engagements einzugehen und das in dem Kontext der da hieß, dass wir irgendwas tun sollen was besonders in Bezug auf Bildung oder Vorankommen von Jugendlichen, Jugendlichen im Zusammenhang mit Bildung fördern würde. Und das kam natürlich wie gerufen. Und da habe ich dann sozusagen eine Bewerbung für [Name der sozialen Organisation] fertiggemacht und das ist dann auch sofort vom Kuratorium akzeptiert worden, weil die Ziele die [Name der sozialen Organisation] sich gegeben hat, sehr gut übereinstimmen

mit dem was wir uns von der [Name des Unternehmens] Foundation vorgenommen hatten.

Interviewer: Gab es dann da z. B. von der Foundation irgendwelche Auswahlkriterien außer diesem Fokus auf Bildung und was sie jetzt gerade eben schon genannt hatten? Also Auswahlkriterien im Sinne von der Art der Organisation, also ob diese schon irgendwie etwas etablierter sein musste oder ob es eben eine ganz neue soziale Organisation sein könnte?

Interviewpartner: Sagen wir mal so, die Teilnahmekriterien waren schon in die Richtung, dass es sich um Jugendliche drehen sollte, denen die Förderung direkt zuteilwird. Also dass man nicht irgendwelche größeren Bauvorhaben oder Dergleichen sponsert, sondern dass schon die Jugendlichen direkt von profitieren. Es musste für die Bewerbung eine due dilligence durchlaufen werden, also der Verein wurde schon sehr stark unter die Lupe genommen. Hier wollen wir ganz klar sehen, ob die Organisationen klar aufzeigen können was sie machen und wohin sie wollen, also nur wenn sie transparent sind geht das natürlich auch. Das ist ein aufwendiger Prozess gewesen und das ist jetzt eher meine eigene Interpretation: ganz kleine Vereine, die zum einen noch nicht wirklich unter Beweis gestellt haben, dass sie einigermaßen wirtschaften können, wären da vermutlich rausgefallen.

Interviewer: Und diese due dilligence Prüfung wurde dann auch von der Foundation durchgeführt?

Interviewpartner: Ja, beziehungsweise Jein. Also die [Name des Unternehmens] Foundation ist in den USA angesiedelt. Und die haben dann mithilfe der [Name einer anderen Foundation] aus Belgien diese due dilligence durchgeführt.

Interviewer: Ok. Gut, das ist sehr interessant und passt auch gut zur nächsten Frage. Nämlich der Social Return on Investment SROI, also dieses Impact Assessment Konstrukt was ja in den letzten 10-20 Jahren aufgekommen ist: Können Sie mir sagen oder haben Sie da Erfahrung, inwiefern das bei der due dilligence Prüfung Thema war oder Teil dieser Prüfung ist oder ob es überhaupt Thema bei Ihnen im CSR Bereich ist?

Interviewpartner: Nein, ist es nicht. Jedenfalls nicht, dass es mir bekannt ist. Ich kenne zwar dieses Thema, weil ich schon oft mit dem Vorsitzenden des Vereins darüber diskutiert habe. Denn es ist dem Verein selbst, bzw. dem Vorstandssprecher ein wichtiges Anliegen, was für positive Effekte die Arbeit von [Name der sozialen Organisation] nach sich ziehen würde. Nämlich, das dadurch dass sie diese Kinder – ich hole jetzt nicht zu sehr aus, da Sie sagten Sie kennen diesen Verein- also dass in dem Moment wo Kinder von der Straße geholt werden, werden sie reintegriert in die Gesellschaft, machen ihre Ausbildung weiter oder fangen eine neue Ausbildung an, machen ihre Schule fertig etc. Da geht man mal zumindest davon aus, dass damit die Wahrscheinlichkeit, dass Arbeitslosengeld gezahlt werden muss über einen längeren Zeitraum oder Sozialhilfe und dergleichen, stark reduziert wird. Weil sie eben einfach eine vernünftige Ausbildung haben und ja auch einen Reifeprozess durchmachen durch dieses „auf die Straße gehen“ und wieder zurückkommen, sich entscheiden müssen und sich durchboxen für die Ausbildung und so weiter. Häufig geht ja auch damit einher, dass die Lebensweise natürlich eine deutlich gesündere ist. D.h. die Kosten die auf das Gesundheitssystem zukämen, wenn die Menschen auf der Straße weiter leben würden und dadurch sich diese ganzen Krankheiten die damit verbunden sind einholen und häufig dann eben im Krankenhaus auftauchen; das ist alles was man als positiven Return berechnen könnte. Ich habe selber diese Rechnung noch nicht aufgestellt, aber ich weiß, dass der Vorsitzende des Vereins das tut. Daher bin ich mir sehr sicher, dass am Ende des Tages oder eben unterm Strich wahrscheinlich ein positiver Betrag stehen würde.

Interviewer: Ok, super. Ich bin mit meinen Fragen durch und würde die Aufnahme jetzt stoppen. Herzlichen Dank nochmal!

8.2. Anonymized expert interviews

Expert interview 1

Interviewer: Hallo, also zum SROI habe ich gelesen, dass die Kreativität der Anwender bestimmt die Erhebung da z.T. komplexe Wirkungszusammenhänge konzeptionell erarbeitet werden müssen (insbesondere hinsichtlich des sozialen Mehrwerts). Was können Sie mir hierzu sagen?

Interviewpartner: Theoretisch schon. **Man muss schon eine gewisse Kreativität haben**, in dem Sinne dass man genau überlegt, welche Faktoren/Indikatoren es geben kann. Vom Prinzip ist das gar nicht so kreativ. Es gibt eigentlich zwei Standardverfahren: Das eine Verfahren arbeitet mit Vergleichsgruppen – so macht das die Wissenschaft. Das ist natürlich für soziale Organisationen nicht machbar, da es bedeuten würde die Hälfte der Kundschaft nicht zu bedienen und somit sagen würde: wir helfen dir nicht, weil du musst jetzt in die Vergleichsgruppe und wir schauen dann in einem Jahr dann mal wie es dir geht. Das geht natürlich nicht. Zudem ist das natürlich auch ein wissenschaftlicher Ansatz, der sehr viel Zeit erfordert und praktisch nicht umsetzbar ist. SROI auf der praktischen Ebene: da wird meistens über Befragungen/Evaluationen mit der entsprechenden Zielgruppe gearbeitet. Nicht nur am Ende, sondern schon am Anfang wenn Leute in den Prozess eintreten. Wenn das jetzt Dienstleistungen sind zum Thema Integration und Soziales wird dann gefragt: Warum gehst du zu uns und nicht zu jemand anderem, also staatlichen Organisationen oder irgendwas anderes. Dann am Anfang, und am Ende wird dann auch nochmal geschaut, ob denn mit einer vergleichbaren Organisation ein ähnliches Ergebnis erzielt worden wäre. Das ist natürlich auch nicht 100% wasserdicht, aber gut: was ist schon 100% wasserdicht in der Sozialwirtschaft. So haben wir das zum Beispiel gemacht, also über Kundenbefragungen und das hängt dann wieder ab, wie gut man fragt mit Plausibilitätskontrollen. Man kann natürlich auch nochmal schauen, ob es wissenschaftliche Analysen zum Thema gibt á la „wenn diese soziale Leistung nicht erbracht worden wäre, dann kann man rechnen dass die Arbeitslosigkeit so und so steigen würde“ etc. Finde ich immer schwierig, der konsequente Stakeholderansatz bedeutet auch den Kunden zu befragen. Auch den **Mut zu haben zur begründeten Subjektivität**. Es gibt keine begründete Objektivität. Andere Verfahren sind auch nie objektiv. Also hier das klare Bekenntnis zur Subjektivität gepaart mit der **Transparenz**, dass konkret offen gelegt wird wie wo was gemacht und bewertet wurde. Das ist meines Erachtens die sinnvolle Kombination. Weil auch der Investor subjektive Interessen hat.

Interviewer: Ok, also wie schätzen sie das ein, wenn eine soziale Organisation dann den SROI berechnen möchte, also ist das machbar und wie groß ist der zeitliche Aufwand?

Interviewpartner: Es hängt natürlich immer vom Umfang der Tätigkeit und der Analyse ab. Es gibt so kleinere Projekte, da ist das etwas überschaubarer. Wir hatten da letztens was von [Name eines sozialen Projekts], die machen so Konfliktintervention und Training an Schulen. Und da war das recht überschaubar. Wenn man dann aber größere Projekte mit viel mehr Stakeholdern hat, dann wird das natürlich komplex. Wenn man das dann alleine machen will, da gibt es mittlerweile so Tools, z.B. den Social Evaluator. Der ist ganz gut, weil er zwingend einen konkreten Prozess vorgibt für die Evaluierung. Man muss einen Schritt nach dem anderen gehen. Da kann man dann z.B. den Output erst eingeben wenn der Input eingegeben ist usw. Das zwingt einen dann natürlich in diese SROI Stringenz sozusagen. Also man hat da dann auch Vergleichswerte, was bei vergleichbaren Einrichtungen die Werte waren. Das Ziel ist natürlich der Aufbau einer Datenbank um dann auch besser vergleichen zu können. Die Analyse kann man im Prinzip, also die Berechnung, in so 2 Tagen erledigen. Was aber am meisten Zeit und Aufwand braucht ist die Stakeholderanalyse. Denn man muss die

befragen, die Kunden etc.. Wie man das dann eben macht, verlängert die Zeit auch wieder: ob bei einer Konferenz mündlich, oder per Brief oder sonstwie, all das dauert ja immer bis der Rücklauf dann da ist. Wie das eben bei solchen Umfragen usw. der Fall ist. Meine Einschätzung ist schon, dass man mindestens zwei Monate einplanen muss, wenn nicht das ganze Setting schon vorliegt, also Fragebögen vorliegen so wie man sie braucht. Man kann das also auch in 2-3 Monaten machen, wenn die Kunden/Stakeholder alle verfügbar sind usw.

Interviewer: Und eine andere wichtige Frage die mir dazu kommt, ist ob SROI auch für jede Art von sozialen Organisationen geeignet ist. Ich habe größtenteils nur von solchen Projekten wie Wiedereingliederung in den Arbeitsmarkt etc. gelesen. Wie ist das aber dann mit z. B. Hospizeinrichtungen oder Suchthilfe etc.?

Interviewpartner: Es gibt da schon viele Sachen zu, aber nicht in Deutschland. In Großbritannien gibt es da schon viel mehr aus verschiedensten Bereichen, sei es Hospiz oder Drogenhilfe. Das ist größtenteils einsehbar über das SROI Network. Auch zum Thema Gesundheit gibt es da auch einiges.

Interviewer: Können Sie sich an ein Beispiel erinnern, wo Sie erlebt haben, dass eine SROI Berechnung in einem Unternehmen welches die soziale Organisation fördert/unterstützt, die Spendenbereitschaft oder so verändert hat?

Interviewpartner: Ja, also so ein ganz praktisches Beispiel mit [Name eines sozialen Projekts]: da haben wir das Projekt auch gemacht, weil es eine öffentliche Förderung gab und wir wussten diese läuft aus. So, und wir wussten wir müssen uns privaten Geldgebern zuwenden und haben uns dann überlegt, wie man die am besten ansprechen kann. Und wir haben dann quasi die Analyse gemacht auch mit der Zielsetzung, uns dann als „**Braut hübsch zu machen**“. Auch in einer Sprache geschrieben, die Unternehmen verstehen. Der Erfolg war dann, dass also kein Unternehmen sondern eine private Stiftung zugesagt hat und **zwar nicht, weil dann der SROI Wert was weiß ich 3,5 oder 3,9 war, sondern weil für die Stiftung dann transparent war, welche Mehrwerte entstehen und wie wir die Wirkung sozusagen dargestellt haben**. Also das es zum ersten Mal so einen Versuch gab, die Wirkung auch greifbar zu machen. Also über die deskriptiven Ansätze hinaus, die man sonst so manchmal dann liest. Wir haben einfach die Indikatoren offengelegt, dass man nachvollziehen konnte, was das konkret heißt „Verbesserung der Lebensbedingungen“ oder was heißt es konkret: schafft Leuchttürme, *good practice* und so. Also hinsichtlich *empowerment* der Zielgruppe.

Die Kennzahl war gar nicht so entscheidend, sondern dass wir das ebenso greifbar gemacht haben war der eigentliche Mehrwert. Die haben jetzt eine ganz konkrete Vorstellung, wie was erreichbar ist und da haben wir sie unterstützt.

Interviewer: Das spiegelt auch so ein bisschen meinen Eindruck, welcher wahre Mehrwert in der Methode liegt: das Organisationen sich eben klar werden müssen, was sind unsere Ziele und wer sind unsere *Stakeholder* etc.

Interviewpartner: In der Tat, die Kennzahl ist auch nur insofern valide, insofern die Daten die zur Verfügung stehen valide sind. Ist natürlich bei allen Modellen/Rechnungsanalysen so. Ob jetzt aber 3,5 oder 3,9 bei rauskommt, ist jetzt nicht so signifikant. Erst unter wissenschaftlicher Betrachtung dann. Und deswegen ist der Prozess ein ganz zentraler Punkt. Die Erfahrung von uns ist z.B. der Prozess an sich ist das Wertvolle, weil **der Prozess an sich ein Teil von Organisationsberatung und –entwicklung darstellt**. Nämlich dass sich die sozialen Organisationen mit einem betriebswirtschaftlichen Instrumentenkoffer versuchen müssen zu organisieren. Klare Zielvorgaben, Indikatoren usw. festlegen: Das machen einfach viele Organisationen nicht, wenn nicht ein Geldgeber drauf besteht. Und sich dann zu verständigen, zu organisieren und auszurichten an dieser Zielsetzung und nicht zu machen, was man immer gemacht hat oder was man glaubt was gut ist oder sich gut anhört, das ist für viele Organisationen ein

riesen Mehrwert. Im Prinzip war das eigentlich jetzt komplett Organisationsentwicklung. Das da am Ende eine Kennzahl steht, ist ein schönes Extra aber nicht das Wichtigste.

Interviewer: Ok, Sie sind ja auch sehr viel unterwegs auf Netzwerkkonferenzen oder Ähnlichem. Wie ist ihre Erfahrung was geldgebende Unternehmen angeht: ist da ein größeres Interesse durch SROI in den letzten Jahren entstanden?

Interviewpartner: Es ist so, es gibt ein Wechsel. Während noch vor 3-4 Jahren in erster Linie soziale Unternehmen/Organisationen Interesse hatten, in dem Sinne dass sie sich selber vielleicht auch besser positionieren konnten, wechselt das mittlerweile. Wir haben inzwischen mehr Anfragen oder Interesse, die aus dem privaten Bereich also entweder **Unternehmen die im Rahmen von CSR sich gerne gesellschaftlich engagieren wollen, aber viel mehr natürlich nach ihrer betriebswirtschaftlichen Logik vorgehend**. Wenn dann natürlich irgendwo Geld zur Verfügung gestellt wird oder sonstige Ressourcen, dann wollen die natürlich das auch **als Investment betrachten**. Nicht mehr als Altruismus wie früher sondern eben als klares Investment, was bringt mir das konkret auch für mein Unternehmen usw. Das ist eine klare Tendenz. Auch Investoren wie z. B. private Stiftungen etc. orientieren sich daran auch mehr. Das hat sich schon verändert.

Interviewer: Ok, und jetzt mal eine andere Seite in dem Spiel: wie würden Sie das Interesse von staatlicher/öffentlicher Seite einschätzen?

Interviewpartner: Sehr gering. Also die öffentliche Seite hat da nicht wirklich ein Interesse. Sie sagen ja toll und so und es gibt Einzelpersonen in Verwaltungen die das auch ganz gut finden und unterstützen. Wie z.B. der Fachleiter Migration der Stadt Münster der auch der erste war, der gesagt hat auf Ebene der Kommune machen wir SROI. Der hat das dann auch durchgezogen, dass „wenn wir von öffentlicher Hand was finanzieren oder so dann nutzen wir SROI“. Das ist der Erste und Einzige der das bisher so positioniert hat. Die öffentliche Hand hat andere Instrumente. Fast jede Förderung in Deutschland in den Bereichen Integration, Soziales arbeitet mit einer Ko-finanzierung über ESF oder EFSF, also europäische Fördertöpfe. Da gibt es ganz konkrete Vorgaben, was für Kriterien zu erfüllen sind. Und das ist nicht die klassische Wirkungsmessung, sondern das ist mehr so „wie viel Teilnehmer, Qualifizierungsstunden, Workshops etc.“ und wie viel sind dann irgendwie integriert worden. Da hört es dann auch schon auf. Also da wird auch nicht mehr weiter geschaut, was heißt „integriert“. Heißt es, man ist einfach raus aus der Sozialleistung oder heißt es formal Minijob oder Existenzgründung wo trotzdem noch Kosten sind. Weil auch manchmal der Geldgeber nicht genau wissen will, also die wollen ja auch sagen, wir haben da ein super Projekt wo 100.000 Leute integriert worden sind. Aber so richtig genau, wollen die das meistens gar nicht wissen. Von daher gibt es bis auf das Beispiel in Münster wenig oder keine Beispiele wo die öffentliche Hand das wissen möchte.

Interviewer: Und wie ist das mit Social Venture Capital Gebern/Funds: Sind die ihrer Meinung auch mehr interessiert an einem SROI oder wie schätzen sie das ein?

Interviewpartner: SROI ist ja im klassischen Sinne eine ex ante Berechnung im Sinne der Investitionsrechnung. Eigentlich von der Rationale her ist es eine dynamische Rezessionsrechnung, und daher ex ante. Natürlich ist das ja problematisch, wenn man da vorher nicht genau weiß, mit welchen Zahlen man rechnen soll, also wie viel Leute hat man da usw. Unabhängig davon, wenn man weiß wie viel Leute muss man ja auch erst schauen, wie viel Indikatoren und deren Bestimmung und so man nutzt. Das ist natürlich viel schwieriger und mit Unsicherheit behaftet. Aber im Sinne der Investition ist es schon sehr interessant, da will man ja vorher wissen: was bringt das? Und in Deutschland gibt es jetzt noch nicht so viele social venture capital Funds. Keiner hat bisher SROI als Voraussetzung für die Vergabe festgelegt oder so für die Vergabe. Aber **die bewegen sich schon immer mehr in Richtung Wirkungsmessung**, da haben die dann auch immer mehr Variablen die Outcome und Impact betreffen. **In anderen Ländern, Niederlande zum Beispiel**-die uns 10 Jahre voraus sind, da gibt es andere Bedingungen.

Da gibt es eine Stiftung zum Beispiel, die macht ihre Investitionen davon abhängig, also von einer SROI Analyse. D.h. je sozial wirkungsvoller das Vorhaben ist, desto günstiger werden dann die Kreditmodalitäten (Zinsen usw.). Wenn also der *social value* für die Stiftung relativ hoch ist, dann muss der *financial return* nicht sonderlich hoch sein weil ja in der Summe unser kompletter Return ja hoch ist.

Oder die Vodafone UK foundation, die hat so ein SROI Toolkit für soziale Organisationen rausgebracht. Das ist ein sehr abgespecktes Verfahren, da sollen die Organisationen eine SROI Analyse im Vorfeld machen als Entscheidungsanalyse und –grundlage wenn die Stiftung Geld geben soll. Also es gibt Beispiele aus dem internationalen Bereich, in Deutschland kenne ich da noch keine. Trotzdem würde ich schon sagen, dass es immer mehr Bewegung gibt, Wirkung von sozialen Organisationen greifbar und sichtbar zu machen.

Interviewer: Ich hatte von Kritik gelesen, dass soziale Investitionen, als Begrifflichkeit im SROI, gemeinwohlorientierte Akteure dazu verdammen kann, ihre Aktivitäten in marktkonformer Ertragslogik zu formulieren. Aspekte der Arbeit (z.B. Protest, Gesellschaftskritik, Themenanwaltschaft) können unter verstärkten Legitimationsdruck geraten. Was halten Sie von dieser Aussage?

Interviewpartner: Kann ich schon nachvollziehen, aber wo natürlich primär Dinge gut aussehen wo man gute Indikatoren finden kann so z.B. im Integrationsbereich. Ich teile die Meinung aber natürlich nicht. Wenn man den SROI konsequent denkt, und den *Stakeholderansatz* im Kopf hat, dann heißt das doch eigentlich nur: welchen Zielansatz verfolgen die *Stakeholder* mit ihrem Engagement. Dann werden eben Wirkungen anhand dieser Zielsetzung berechnet. D.h. wenn es jetzt eine Protestbewegung gibt, also eine Kampagne z.B. –durchaus interessantes Thema übrigens denn ich bin am Samstag auf der *re:campaign* Konferenz- da kann man SROI schon benutzen. Ich denke, man muss sich entscheiden, was für eine *theory of change* da ist. Für irgendein Anliegen kann man schon schauen was investiert wurde (Geld/Engagement etc.), kann man schauen wie man sowas bewertet. Und auf der anderen Seite, was konkret erreicht wurde entsprechend der Zielsetzung. Wenn jetzt die Zielsetzung ist, Abschaffung von Hartz IV, kann man jetzt nicht erwarten dass es durch eine Kampagne komplett abgeschafft werden könnte. Aber man kann schauen, inwiefern das dann wieder auf der politischen Agenda Thema ist oder eben irgendwelche Veränderungen erreicht wurden z.B. Zuverdienstgrenzen. Natürlich hat das auch Grenzen. Da muss man manchmal sagen, da fällt uns jetzt nichts ein, dann muss man eben auch so was leer stehen lassen. **Aber im Grunde kann man auch Kampagnen bewerten. Bis auf so ganz radikale Sachen wie Ausstieg aus Atomkraft oder eben Abschaffung von Hartz IV. Da müsste man dann trotzdem schauen, bei der *theory of change*, was denn die Einzelschritte oder Zielsetzungen sind.** Wenn jetzt aber die Kampagnenteilnehmer sagen, Ziel ist es Hartz IV abzuschaffen, dann muss man wohl am Ende dann sagen, sorry, Ziel nicht erreicht. So. Es sei denn es passiert wirklich was. Wenn die *theory of change* aber ist, man möchte einfach das das Thema wieder auf die Tagesordnung kommt oder das Politik sich wieder damit beschäftigt, dann ist das schon wieder der erste Schritt.

Interviewer: Ich danke Ihnen herzlich für die Zeit und ihre Bereitschaft, mit mir dieses Interview durchzuführen!

Expert interview 2

Interviewer: Ok, so I've started the recording now. I have heard in an interview that your organization is conducting due diligence assessments of social organizations. Since I am working at the moment on social return on investment assessments in the context of my master thesis, I am very much interested in the aspects your foundation is looking at

when conducting a due diligence. Can you therefore tell me what aspects you are looking at in this respect?

Interviewer: Yes, of course. The first most important point is the **leadership skills** in the organization. So that's really the most important point. When we enter a venture philanthropy approach, we put quite a lot of pressure on the organization and also the people there in the organization must be willing to come in a change process. In nearly all organizations we invest, the key aspect is about change. Obviously, to manage the change you need strong leaders. And also the directing committee needs strong leaders in the board. So we look really at the people in the board and in the management. Both aspects are really important for us. That is the first point. The second point for the due diligence is **transparency**. So we must feel, that the organization has nothing to hide. It happens, sometimes if we hear things about organizations that we did not hear yet from the organization itself, it does not give confidence. So we must feel that the organization has nothing to hide. That is the second important point. And then, a third point is the possibility to **measure and assess every four months** the level of some **key indicators** on which we are going to evaluate the progress. With that I mean the kind of activity of the organization, so the kind of project they want us to support must be measurable in figures or in a qualitative way, both. I take one example: it is always more difficult to measure the work of an advocacy organization, because advocacy takes a lot of time, a lot of energy but the time must be right in order to be heard by the key stakeholders. Sometimes there is no direct link between your competence and the activity that you develop and the real impact. So we prefer to invest in organizations where there must be logically a direct link between the energy that you put and the impact that you have. And if there are too many external factors that you cannot control, then you don't have the project in your hands, you don't have enough control to evaluate if there is progress or not. With these three points: leadership, transparency and measurability of the results of the impact, these are the most important points.

Interviewer: Ok. So how long does such an assessment process take for your organization?

Interviewee: How long it takes? Well, we work with call for proposals. So I will give you the deadline for the next call. The next solicitation forms by the organizations must arrive here at the 20th of August. Then if I receive 150 solicitations, if I take some previous experience then it is about that. So I have 150 at the end of August. And I need about 1 month to create a short-list with the help of external consultants we go from the long list to a short list. So from 150 to something like 70 or 80 solicitations. Then I am working with an external investment committee of 12 people. So I would send these 70 solicitation forms to these 12 people and I will receive the quotations by the end of October. And then we will collectively decide which organizations we will visit. And that will be in November and December. There, with the 50 organizations, we will go on site, because that is really important. And the last round of the selection will be in January. This will be the final decision which will be an interview with the organization in front of the 12 people from the committee. And there, the system is: we give each organization 10 minutes, they have five slides and five questions they have to answer and after 10 minutes we stop the conversation and are having a Q&A session. And then at the end we decide in which organization **we are going to invest for a period of three years**. So **the whole process takes about five months**.

Interviewer: Ok, so this is really quite time- and resource-consuming it seems to me.

Interviewee: Yes indeed. It is quite intense. But that is the key point: a good due diligence is really very important.

Interviewer: Absolutely. Ok another question would be: is the social return on investment construct a topic in your foundation or is it an aspect you are looking at when it comes to for instance organizations working with unemployed people or street children?

Interviewee: Ok, we have a reporting form in the contract where **we define two or three goals we want to achieve**. And for each of the goals I have the situation now and every four months I will ask what is the situation. I take an example of an organization that works with children on the streets. For instance, the situation is they work with 70 children and the aim is to bring after three years 100 children away from the street. And we will look then at the percentage of children that are making it really away from the street. That is evident, that is the kind of indicators we are looking at. On the other hand, we accept also **some qualitative elements**. Let's take an example: we have an organization that has really bad governance. For instance the board is really weak and there must be a new chair and new reinforcement in the board. Ok, an organization which has no strategic plan and needs a plan which has to be approved. What I really need and what we want to know: what is the situation now and what will be the situation after the intervention of the fund. And **I must see a clear change**. For us, that is enough regarding the impact, to see the change after the intervention of the fund. We tried to apply the method SROI already. And I must say the method as such is really not easy. It is **time-consuming**; it is based on the assumption to monetize many elements. So we tried for a few investments to use it but not with a lot of success I must say. **It takes too much time, it is very subjective** when you try to monetize. And you need to invest really a lot of time, so this means you need to pay a lot in consultancy costs. So we put a lot of pressure to show the impact of the fund. And we tried...we believed at a certain period that SROI would be a good method. But I must say that I don't really believe any more in this method. **Except for some very specific investments**. In the cases that we tried to do it, only one was successful. And it took a lot of time.

Interviewer: Ok, can you tell me the field of organization or project where the assessment worked out and made sense for you?

Interviewee: I can speak on the project. It was a project where some big IT companies said: ok we give for free all our software to non-profit organizations just for the BeNeLux. And one non-profit came to us and said: ok I have an agreement with these companies and the agreement is: they give away the software for free and we ask for four percent of the market value of the software from the non-profit. So when they pay the four percent, they receive the software products for free. With these four percent we cover all the overhead costs of this structure, of the non-profit organization. So it means every four percent, every invoice of four percent is a small budget. Maybe 25, 30, 50 or 100 Euro. So the question of this organization was: ok look, we need seed money to start to attain a certain scale. And once we have this scale, we have enough and we can breakeven. But not for the start. So we gave 100.000 Euro and now more than 3000 organizations in Belgium benefited from this and the non-profit organization is now fully sustainable. And there, we made an analysis based on the SROI method. So we know we put 100.000 Euro and we know what the companies put because it is easy to convert the software in market value because there is a market price. So we could see easily, with an investment of 100.000 Euro, how much did it contribute to benefit the society and to the non-profit organization. But this is a very specific case where the SROI was very good, it was something about 7- so it was very good. But this is really **specific**, and this kind of cases we don't have so many. It was a very specific partnership, foundation and private company and non-profit sector. But I must say, I was the only colleague here inside the foundation who could come up with such a kind of example. And I have only one after almost three years of experience working on that and trying to apply it. And **I cannot say based on this example that SROI is really the methodology we can use for all the projects. We believed in it, but at a certain time we had to say no. That is just something to help some consultant beliefs or so.**

Interviewer: Great, very interesting. That is always not a good thing if you must say that this method only works with a belief. Well, that's it and I am very thankful for the information that

you gave me here. Especially the last example is very well and interesting. Have a nice day!

8.3. Results of analysis from company publications

Table 10) Document analysis overview of interviewed companies (press releases, website)

	Company 1	Company 2	Company 3	Company 4	Company 5
Motivations as stated on Homepage/other company documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand from employees • Giving something back to society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate responsibility • Social responsibility • Reputation of brand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand identity • Future employee attractiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social responsibility • Engagement = investment in the future; youth focus → customers of tomorrow • Economic sustainability (hedging risks) • (prospective) Employee motivation • Increasing brand value 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSR as business/management strategy • CSR=business imperative • Global changes create the need • Bringing value to the locale where the company acts in
Specific selection criteria published?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No, only general fields: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Organizations with potential for further business development ○ Organizations which can benefit from private equity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, more or less specific criteria (bundled in an accessible document) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No, only general fields: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Youth ○ Education ○ (Arts) ○ (Culture) ○ (Environment) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No, only implicitly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Youth ○ Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No, only general fields: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ youth ○ education

