

Abstract

The pressure of society to demand responsible behavior to companies is increasing and companies are striving to meet this growing demand. Companies struggle to adapt to the different and changing contexts and the researchers have tried to delve into the matter in a theoretical as well as empirical way, from diverse focus and approach. The result is an increase in the number of research works, during the last decades, related to the behavior of the companies and the relations with their environment.

Despite the proliferation of studies on the subject, especially in recent years, its complexity, both theoretical and practical as well as its many ramifications, questioning in many cases and rapid evolution, make it one of the most attractive fields for analysis.

This doctoral thesis focuses on the study and deepening of the knowledge about the role of companies in society, and in particular the altruistic or philanthropic behavior of the same and their social responsibility, with their involvement in the community as a key element of research. The thesis is structured as a compendium of articles, which have been developed from the analysis of the existing literature, which has enabled the detection of possible areas of research, as well as approaches and techniques that provide new contributions in this field.

The first paper analyzes the philanthropic behavior of companies and their community involvement through its application to companies listed on the stock market of four European countries (Spain, France, Germany and the Netherlands). The work focuses on the use of terminology related to the participation of companies in the communities where they operate, both from the literature and from the sustainability reports. As a result, we obtain terms that reflect how corporate philanthropy is expressed, the community involvement, the formulas chosen to channel aids and their beneficiaries. The analysis differentiates the use of the terms in relation to the country, the size of the company and the sector to which it belongs. The results indicate that the variables that most influence the use of the terms are the country and especially the income of the companies. On the other hand, the variables with less weight are the number of employees and the sector. In addition, the results show that the participation of the employees is related to the income of the company and not to the number of employees, from what can be inferred that these kinds of activities require significant economic

resources. The results show that the companies analyzed participate in their communities, so it can be concluded that they are aware of their role in the communities where they operate. The main contribution of this work is its approach from the connection with literature and its focus on the part of CSR that is centered on the community, whereas most previous studies grouped the information from this area into a single set variable or only included a particular philanthropic activity. The use of bibliometric analysis has proved useful for detecting terms related to the analyzed topic through an iterative process.

The two following works focus on an area of special interest such as the analysis of the behavior of companies in controversial sectors, including mining. The mining industry is a clear example of the development of corporate social responsibility (CSR) to improve its position and image, obtain a social license to operate (SLO) and minimize resistance to its implementation and operations. This sector is leading the way in the development of CSR practices and, despite this, it finds difficulties for its effective implementation.

Despite the importance of SLO in sectors such as mining, there are few studies focused on this concept, all recent, and limited in scope. In addition, the CEOs' letters, presented in the sustainability reports, are highlighted in the literature for their ability to communicate the orientation of companies in relation to social issues and community participation, but few are the works that relate and analyze them together. To cover this gap, an investigation is carried out based on the analysis of the speeches offered by the CEOs of 32 leading mining companies in their sector. The study uses the information available in the CEO's letters and in sustainability reports to analyze how this discourse influences the company's strategy in relation to obtaining SLO and participation in the communities where they operate. In addition, two different time periods, years 2011 and 2015, are used to see if there is evolution in the discourse and whether evolution affects the strategy on the SLO and the community involvement. The results show the orientation in the letters of the CEOs to gain legitimacy, credibility and trust of the community, so that to obtain the SLO. With regard to community involvement, the influence of discourse is also shown on investments. Finally, the evolution of discourse over time translates into changes in strategies and there is a commitment by companies to contribute to the communities to reduce their future dependence on mining projects.

In the same line, there is an incipient increase in the number of works on the mining sector, whose approach is based on the perspective of the stakeholders, which are those that grant SLO to companies, although their scope does not encompass several countries and hardly contrast the perceptions of companies and stakeholders. The literature itself recognizes a lack of understanding of these perceptions in this sector and, therefore, the study of the perception of stakeholders in contrast to the perception of companies is offered as an interesting area to investigate. Thus, this topic shows the last line of research of this thesis about the CSR of the mining companies. For this purpose, a large area that includes several Latin American countries is taken as a sample, through interviews, collecting and analyzing the perception of stakeholders and contrasting them with the message of the companies.

The results show different perceptions between companies and stakeholders, especially in the analysis and diagnosis of the current situation, as well as in the degree of implementation and effectiveness of CSR policies. Stakeholders are demanding more objectivity and credibility in the reports. They consider that companies tend to minimize the impacts and overestimate their benefits and the degree of stakeholder involvement. On the other hand, there are meeting points for the need to use a multi-actor model, through greater involvement of local communities, as well as the important role that other actors such as NGOs and governments can play in advocacy of the interests of local communities to avoid conflicts and rejections. The results contribute to a better understanding by all the actors of the different perceptions, as well as to understand the reasons that generate rejection and conflict and, therefore, can contribute to a greater efficiency of the CSR actions of the companies to obtain their SLO.