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# CSR in globalized world from a cross-sector partnership perspective

Case study: Danish Partnership for Responsible  
Garments and Textiles Production in  
Bangladesh

**Master Thesis**

**Desislava Kavaldzhieva**

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## Abstract

This thesis focuses on cross-sector partnerships (CSPs) for corporate social responsibility (CSR) and their role in addressing and dealing with complex global challenges. One such challenge are the created social and environmental problems in Bangladesh textiles industry, where within the recent years, CSPs have started to be widely used towards improving the working and human rights in the production factories, by involving actors from different social sectors. In this master thesis, CSPs are defined as a key element for accomplishing CSR nationally and globally and as part of the textile sector, due to involvement of three important actors – government, multinationals (MNs) and civil society. Based on their active participation and contribution in terms of CSR, they preserve valuable knowledge and experience, which is overlooked, due to their lack of sharing of responsibilities and developing new roles for better communication.

Hence, this thesis concentrates on answering the research question: *How can partnership among government, civil society and multinationals be developed in order to support and implement CSR strategies within the textile sector in Bangladesh?* In addition, in order to understand better the roles of the actors in a partnership and how CSR partnerships as a new socio-economic model in globalized world function, different set of literature and theories were researched, which helped towards answering four sub-questions:

- What do the actors need to change as part of engaging in partnership relations?
- What are the challenges and benefits, established by the partnerships for government, MNs and civil society?
- What are the existing partnership initiatives and how do they influence the development of CSR within the G&TI?
- How do government, multinationals and civil society develop CSR strategies as part of a partnership relation?

Based on the analysis and answers to the research questions, partnership as a sustainability approach is neglected by the actors, due to their lack of clear understanding of its benefits and contributions to CSR. Most of the partnerships within the Bangladesh textile sector are dysfunctional and stifle CSR strategies, due to lack of inclusion of all relevant actors as part of the decision-making processes.

**Key words:** CSPs, partnerships, CSR, government, MNs, civil society, garments and textiles industry (G&TI)

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# Abbreviations

BGMEA – Bangladesh Garment Manufacture and Export Association

CCC – Clean Clothes Campaign

CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility

CSP/CSPs – Cross-sector partnership/Cross-sector partnerships

DBA – Danish Business Authority

DIEH – Danish ethical trading initiative

DMFA – Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs

EU – European Union

G&Ts – Garments and Textile

G&TI – Garments and Textiles Industry

ILO – International Labour Organization

MNs – Multinationals

MoU – Memorandum of Understanding

MFA Forum – Multi Fiber Arrangement Forum

NGO/NGOs – Non-governmental organization/Non-governmental organizations

OECD – Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

PRG&TP – Partnership for Responsible Garments and Textiles Production

UNGC – United Nations Global Compact

US – United States

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# I. Introduction

“...the Rana Plaza factory complex had collapsed in Dhaka, Bangladesh, killing more than 1,100 workers and injured approximately 2,515 people. The cause: a cocktail of safety infringements including an illegal two-story extension built atop marshy foundations...” (The DiA blog 2013)

The quote describes in short the Rana Plaza incident, which happened on 24 April 2013, when the factory collapsed and became one more tragic incident in the history of G&TI. While, different decision-makers, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) representatives and garments and textiles (G&Ts) MNs began discussions on how to improve the working conditions in third world countries, I was wondering how this could happen in the first place. Most of the G&Ts MNs, which cooperate with suppliers in developing countries and particularly Bangladesh, have as well code of conducts in relation to responsible sourcing, human and working rights. They follow different voluntary standards and most importantly, they are European and United States (US) MNs, which governments have been involved in developing and implementing sustainability strategies for more than 20 years. I started to ask myself: Is this tragedy part of the learning process of how to operate and implement CSR behaviour within the developing countries? And how many people must die until we start to realize that we are global citizens and should start thinking and acting as such?

Bangladesh G&TI has influence and importance for the world economy, by being the second largest G&Ts producer in the world and engaging different business actors, which supports more than 80 % of the country's economy. In addition, based on this, it involves as well variety of international governmental and non-governmental institutions. However, the rise of the G&TI occurred in a time of inappropriate government policy and weak economy. Together with the quick rates of globalization and industrialization in the country, it led to variety of CSR problems e.g. corruption, poverty, abusing of human and working rights, where Rana Plaza is not the first accident in the Bangladesh's G&TI, but a part of more than 200 tragedies. (Clean Clothes Campaign 2012) (Rashid 2006)

As a response, during its only four decades as an independent country, Bangladesh has turned into a testing ground for development of ideas and approaches towards improving its CSR problems by internal (Bangladesh NGOs) and external actors (international civil society groups and governments). Since 2005, International Labour Organization (ILO), together with other international actors, has started to implement different strategies, in order to raise the awareness and improve the safety conditions within the Bangladesh G&TI. (Lewis 2011) (Clean Clothes Campaign 2012) However, none of them was able to prevent Rana Plaza.

Moreover, in globalized world, there are three types of mechanisms for regulation of the society: hierarchical (by the government), economic (by the private sector) and heterarchical (by self-organized associations) (Hurty 2009). These types have predominance role in understanding, shaping and implementing the CSR strategies. They have always co-existed in different variety of configurations e.g. cross-sector partnerships. However, so far in Bangladesh G&TI, their efforts have not been able to create the needed tangible CSR actions, which question their understanding of partnership as a generator of CSR benefits and willingness to from one. Cross-sector partnership is a new socio-economic model, a disparate solution, which play central role in filling the gaps within the CSR polemic. However, in order to be successful, it requires the engaged parties to create trusting mutually dependent and beneficial interaction, which is difficult to obtain by the individual institutions. (Googins and Rochlin 2000)

Dealing with environmental and social challenges on national and global level; cooperation is needed, involving civil society (NGOs, multi-national initiatives), MNs and political systems. Hence, this thesis will tend to prove the usefulness of CSPs in supporting and implementing CSR strategies in Bangladesh G&TI, due to the engagement of actors with valuable CSR knowledge and expertise. It will as well research the preparedness of the Bangladesh and international civil society, MNs and governments to engage, where in order these partnerships to be successful, they have to develop new roles, supplementary to their traditional

ones, towards better communication and share the commitment of resources for achieving the set CSR goals. (Googins and Rochlin 2000)

In addition, CSPs are perceived as networks of actors, which combine “the moral authority of civil society, the market principles of businesses and the public authority of the state”, formed a distinct triangular relationship and are supposed to have the potential to solve at the same time national and global societal and environmental problems (figure 1). (Glasbergen 2007)

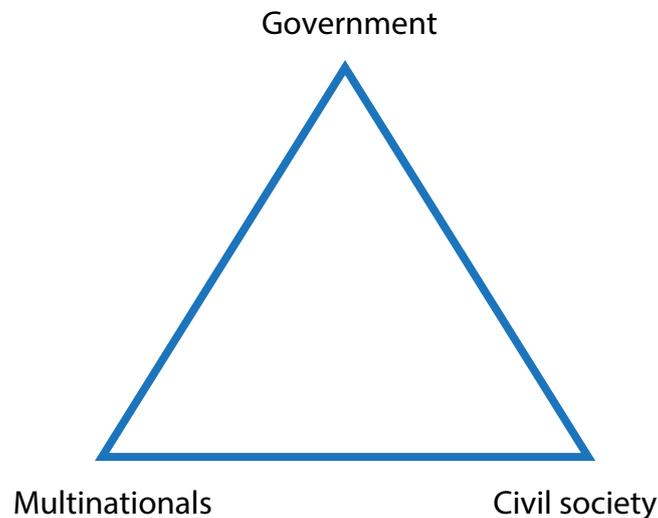


Figure 1: The triangular relationship among Government-Multinationals-Civil society in CSPs

During approximately ten years, within Bangladesh G&TI, varieties of partnership initiatives were undertaken both by Bangladesh NGOs and international organizations, as a result to the safety accidents in the sector. By, researching and comparing the created partnerships for improving the working safety in the sector, based on the engaged actors, their relationships and achieved results, this thesis will be as well able to evaluate the created challenges and benefits of the Bangladesh G&TI and CSPs and provide recommendations.

Furthermore, in order to have more in-depth and narrow view of partnerships and their CSR contributions, the report will have a special focus on Denmark and its formed Partnership for Responsible Garments and Textiles Production (PRG&TP) in Bangladesh among the Danish government, MNs and civil society, due to Rana Plaza tragedy.

Denmark is an example of a well-functioning, sustainable country, where the government tries to endorse and promote CSR policies, resulting in 87% adoption of different voluntary codes by the large MNs and developing of CSR corporate policies. (Laursen and Torben 2011) (Danish Government 2011) Danish government leads a partnership policy between sectors for meeting socio-employment challenges (Albareda, Lozano and Ysa 2007). However, globally governments and other social institutions find problematic to collaborate, support and implement CSR strategies. Thus, by having a critical reflection on the Danish created partnership relation and engaged actors, the research will try to find out how a sustainable country forms partnerships nationally and globally and if this initiative is a successful approach, which can provide important recommendations to both - the already existing CSR partnerships within Bangladesh G&TI and future ones.

Together with the outlined above, the work will seek to answer to the following research question and sub questions:

**How can partnership among government, civil society and multinationals be developed in order to support and implement CSR strategies within the textile sector in Bangladesh?**

1. What do the actors need to change as part of engaging in partnership relations?
2. What are the challenges and benefits, established by the partnerships for government, MNs and civil society?

3. What are the existing partnership initiatives and how do they influence the development of CSR within the G&TI?
4. How do government, multinationals and civil society develop CSR strategies as part of a partnership relation?

The research question will provide a contribution to the theoretical field of CSPs for CSR and will try to achieve the following goals:

- Understand the triangular government-MNs-civil society relationships in defining and implementing CSR towards achieving responsible behaviour and partnerships;
- To gain knowledge in the research theme and add new insights to the existing debate about the role of government, MNs and civil society in achieving sustainability as part of partnerships;

Next is the *Methodology* chapter, which will elaborate on the chosen topic and problem of the thesis. It will outline the data gathering methods and provide the research design model of the report.

The chapter *CSR in globalized world and cross-sector partnerships* presents the literature review of the report in relation to CSR and partnerships.

The *Theoretical framework* of the thesis will reflect on the partnership theory, thus creating the framework of a successful partnership.

Chapter five reflects on the *Bangladesh G&TI*, its CSR related problems and importance for Danish textile industry.

The *Analysis* presents the data, gathered through desktop research and interviews. It will begin with an analysis of the existing partnerships and evaluate their specification, based on the theoretical framework. Later the chapter will have special attention to the created Danish partnership.

Prior to *Discussions* is chapter *Research question and recommendations for further development of CSR partnerships*, outlining the answer to the main research question. In the end, the thesis ends with *Conclusion and recommendations for further research*.

## II. Methodology

The Methodology chapter will start with elaboration on the reasons for the case study. Next, the research design model of the thesis will be outlined, followed by the data gathering methods, their reliability and credibility and the contribution with new knowledge. The chapter concludes with delimitation and questionable points of the research.

### 1. Selection of the case study

The Nordic model of policy conducting is characterized by the use of partnership as a tool, which determines sharing of responsibilities between government, MNCs and civil society. Thus, partnership as an approach has a fruitful base within Denmark, where the national government considers themselves as an important political actor in achieving CSR. (Hasselbalch 2013) (Albareda, Lozano and Ysa 2007). However, as businesses operate in an interconnected world, creating the global “good” evokes many different actors, which leads to weakening the nation-states policies and nevertheless interferes with supporting and implementing the proper CSR strategies (Parker 2005).

Furthermore, the G&Ts sector as one of the oldest in the history of industrialization has great economic significance globally (Olsen, Ibsen and Westergaard-Nielsen 2005). Even though, it has been through dramatic organizational and technological changes towards achieving more sustainable and ethical attitude, tragedies as the one in Rana Plaza factory in Bangladesh, still happen, which stress the urgency of the matter. Despite that, the major part of the blame falls upon the private sector, government and civil society cannot be excluded. Thus, in 2013, a partnership among governmental, non-governmental and private actors was created in Denmark, which aims at improving the working conditions in the Bangladesh G&TI (Ministry of foreign affairs, Denmark 2013). This partnership was chosen as a case study, due to several reasons:

- It engages governmental, private and civil society actors, which usually is considered difficult to achieve. Thus, by researching its partnerships specifications, it can serve as a recommendation for the improving of the existing partnerships within Bangladesh G&TI;
- It will trace how the three social institutions collaborate and create CSR strategies as part of the partnership nationally and globally;
- Denmark as a country differs based on the undertaken partnership approach, by the national government. Hence, the analysis of this partnership will trace if government manage to overcome globalization as a challenge and continue its unique approach;

### 2. Research design model

In order to understand the research design model and the principles it implies a set of study eligible criteria is needed to be presented beforehand. They determine the inclusion of certain literature by keeping objectivity, reflect the analytical framework and its key questions, and provide tools for widening or narrowing the research scope (McPheeters 2010). Thus, the study eligible criteria are connected with the main objectives of the thesis: [researching the governmental, non-governmental and private institutions as key actors in understanding CSR nationally and globally and building CSR partnerships among them as an approach to address global challenges within Bangladesh textile sector](#). Hence, the thesis concentrates on the importance of each actor rather than their relationship and the components; they can bring to the table as part of partnerships. Based on that, several study eligibility criteria can be defined, which include aspects of each step of the below research design model and are main approaches for analysing the gathered data and answering the research questions. All of the criteria are framed within the different chapters of the thesis:

1. Chapter CSR in globalized world and cross-sector partnerships:
  - Understanding CSR in a globalized world, which predisposes the creation of a new socio-economic model as a response to political, social and economic challenges;
  - Partnership as a concept and its contribution within the CSR polemic, by combining the unique capabilities of each party;
  - Partnership disposes developing of new modes of communication, overcoming traditional social roles, active involvement and sharing of responsibilities, in order to enhance its CSR efficiency;
  - Researching the actors from the triangular relationship as separate and collaborative entities, which assist towards understanding their motives, benefits, challenges and reasons for engaging in partnerships;
2. Chapter Theoretical framework:
  - Cross-sector partnerships descriptive and qualitative theoretical assumptions, which shape the analytical framework of existing partnerships and contribution to the CSR polemic;
3. Chapter Garments and textiles industry in Bangladesh:
  - Overview of the Bangladesh G&TI as a separate chapter, in order to frame the social, financial and political set-up and related CSR problems. Rana Plaza accident can be considered a consequence of both internal within the country and external factors, involving different international actors. Hence, by portraying the governmental, civil society and economic sides of Bangladesh and their influence over the textile sector, the chapter will shape the current situation of the sector and creates a base for the next chapter Analysis;
  - This helps towards the better understanding of the analysis in terms of created partnership initiatives, by showing connectivity and integrity;
4. Chapter Analysis:
  - Presentation of the existing partnerships in Bangladesh G&TI, which shapes the current situation of the picture and is a base to test the proposed theoretical assumptions and recommendations;
  - Analysis of the existing partnerships through a mixture of descriptive and qualitative methods, from the actors point of view and how they contribute to the partnership effectiveness in terms of CSR;
  - Having an in-depth research of the created Danish Partnership for Responsible garments and textiles production in Bangladesh, to explore the actors' relationships and their added values to CSR, based on the formed partnership;
  - Identify challenges and benefits in front of partnership and how the actors develop CSR strategies within such a relation;
5. Chapter Research question and recommendations for further development of CSR partnerships:
  - Answer to the research question and framing a list of recommendations for further development of CSR partnerships, in order to bring new cognition;

The following figure presents the research design model of the thesis. It frames the important aspects of the work, their relationships within each other and in the construction of the analytical framework (figure 2).

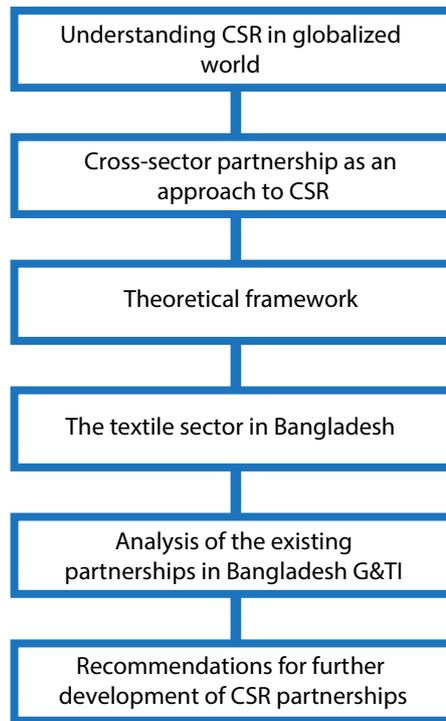


Figure 2: Research design model

The model is structured into several steps, which incorporates information from different chapters e.g. CSR in globalized world and cross-sector partnerships, theoretical framework and analysis. Hence, the research design model is a combination of descriptive and analysis methods, which aim towards several issues:

- To define the main goals and problems of the research;
- To present the research methods, where every method is interrelated with the made assumptions and the research questions;
- To provide recommendations and starting point of discussions;

In addition, each step of the model has as well inputs of data, based on the specific modes of data gathering and certain outcomes, which are presented as answers to the sub-questions. In that relation, the first two steps are framed within the CSR in globalized and cross-sector partnerships chapter and have the goal to shape the foundation of the thesis, in terms of both concepts. These steps as well outline answers to the first two sub-questions: *What do the actors need to change before engaging in partnership relations?* and later *What are the challenges and benefits, established by the partnerships for government, MNs and civil society?*, by looking into the various positives and negative effects of partnerships, defined in the literature.

The theoretical framework as a third step has the goal to frame the analytical framework for analysing the existing partnership initiatives, which are presented in chapter Analysis. To perform this task, it uses both **descriptive** and **analytical** approaches as classifying the type of relationship and analysing the embarked roles and contribution to the CSR objectives. These methods are further explained in the chapter Theoretical framework.

Next, after framing the foundation of the thesis in relation to definitions and theories, an overview of Bangladesh G&TI is presented. The chapter has a focus on the CSR problems, Bangladesh political, economic and civil society setups, which can contribute for understanding the results of the analysis.

The fifth step outlines the analysis of the existing partnership, by using the theoretical foundation, built in the previous four steps. Its outcomes are connected with answering the third sub-question: *What are the existing partnership initiatives and how do they influence the development of CSR within the G&TI?*

Within this step, a special attention is given to the Danish partnership initiative, as a case study, where the gathered by interviews information will help to understand better the partnership concept, its implementation

and use nationally and globally. It supplements as well a follow up to the second sub-question, based on the gathered from interviews data: *What are the challenges and benefits, established by the partnerships for government, MNs and civil society?* During the gathering of data, the interviewees defined different challenges and benefits for creating partnerships. Having in mind their better interpretation and use for creating successful partnerships, a column chart is developed to evaluate the challenges and benefits for every of the actors. The chart is built upon a defined categorization – one point is given to a challenge or a benefit, which is mentioned only once; two – if it is mentioned by two actors etc.

As a sum-up of the case study, an answer to the fourth sub-question is outlined, which together with the rest of the analysis provides the basis for the final step: *How do government, multinationals and civil society develop CSR strategies as part of a partnership relation?*

The last step of the model is presented as a separate chapter, where an answer to the main research question is outlined, together with a list of recommendations: **How can partnership among government, civil society and multinationals be developed in order to support and implement CSR strategies within the textile sector in Bangladesh?**

### 3. Data gathering

Different methods were chosen to provide the empirical component of the thesis. Firstly, as a typical start of every report, an in-depth desktop research was made into diverse academic works. This had the goal to clarify and understand the role of the government, civil and MNs as separate actors and to study the development of their relationship and its influence over CSR. Thus, it provided the necessary foundations to formulate the problem statement and aims of the thesis. In addition, theories and theoretical assumptions were used to support the outlined hypothesis of CSPs and their contribution to the CSR field, based on the mutual engagement of governmental, non-governmental and private institutions.

Moreover, another aspect of the desktop research, which has importance for shaping the field of partnership, is mapping the existing partnerships within the Bangladesh G&TI and studying the involved actors and their relationships, where a report from Clean Clothes Campaign (2012) was used. The main points within the report are firstly presenting the current situation in the Bangladesh G&TI and what needs to be improve and secondly, an overview of the formed partnership initiatives, based on the safety accidents since 2005. The report uses descriptive and analysing methods to evaluate the usefulness of the undertaken initiatives. (Clean Clothes Campaign 2012) Both of these methods and corresponding results was found useful for building the analytical framework of the thesis by structuring the state and level of the existing partnerships. Thus, the report was used with two main purposes as part of the Analysis chapter:

- Creating a timeline with the safety accidents and existing partnerships, based on the descriptive information;
- Evaluating their setting and conditions in relation to the chosen theory and methods of analysis and providing recommendations;

In addition, series of interviews were conducted in October and November 2013, with follow-up contacts via e-mails, with representatives from governmental, civil society and MNs institutions from Denmark. Semi-structured interview was chosen as the most appropriate method for data gathering, due to its openness and possibility for unexpected insights, during the interview.

The interviewees' positions have direct link to sustainability and/or CSR departments. This includes:

- Private sector - one MNs, which has suppliers in third world countries and particularly Bangladesh. Its name will not be mentioned, due to confidentially issues;
- Civil society - an international NGO (Clean clothes campaign, CCC), which deals with the social problems, evoking when a multinational out-sources its production facilities to third world

countries; a multi-stakeholder initiative (Danish ethical trading initiative – with Danish acronym DIEH), which aims at bringing different actor together, thus facilitating dialogue and knowledge exchange for improving the working conditions;

- Governmental representatives - the secretariat of the Danish National contact point - Danish Business authority, which is involved into helping companies to implement CSR strategies, based on The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Guidelines and Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DMFA);

All of these actors have built relationships among each other on national level and collaborate on global. In addition, all of them are involved into the Danish PRG&TP in Bangladesh, hence their participation helped towards building a thorough understanding of their roles in relation to CSR and the various aspects of their partnering alliances. In addition, six Danish textile MNs have joined the PRG&TP and as well have signed in the Fire and Safety Accord. All of them have developed different CSR policies and code of conducts, which made them valuable for this thesis, based on their knowledge and experience. Unfortunately, only one of these MNs agreed on an interview.

### 3.1. Preparation of data gathering and data collection

The research started preparation for data collection by contacting different institutions, which had relevance for the formulated problem statement. The purpose of the study was explained to the potential interviewees and a draft of the interview questions was sent for a preview. The final version of the interview questions can be found in Annex 1.

Two of the interviews were held online via skype (CCC and DIEH), whereas the other were conducted via phone. The interview timing varied from one institution to another, though it was anticipated an average 40 minutes per interview. All the interviews were conducted in English and they were also recorded on an audio recorder and transcribe afterwards (Annex 2). A follow-up for clarifying certain issues was done via e-mail.

The used methods for data gathering imply the question of reliability and credibility of the report. The main focus of this thesis, the G&TI, was constructed through literature review. Moreover, the economic and social situation in Bangladesh was presented by using different academic works (Clean Clothes Campaign 2012) (Lewis 2011) (Ministry of foreign affairs of Denmark 2013), without researcher to conduct a study on its own. In addition, the interviewees presented the Danish overview of Bangladesh, through their experience and knowledge as governmental, non-governmental or business representatives. Hence, the received information can trigger questions about its objectivity.

Despite that, several benefits can be drawn from doing such type of research. Within the academic world, there is a lack of framing the cross-sector partnership as a contributor to CSR within the textile sector. In these terms, this thesis tries to generate knowledge in that specific matter, in order for the social actors to understand, embrace and gain practical knowledge, which consequently can deal with some of the urgent CSR problems within Bangladesh G&TI.

On the other hand, this thesis researches into two different worlds, which drive CSR in distinct directions – a political and NGO one. Their collaboration, partnership and willingness to change are investigated in this study. By referring to the “stick and carrot”, assumptions are made into, which one is better equipped to deal with global challenges and formed successful partnerships.

Hence, the thesis makes an important reflection – it will not try to diminish the value of the created partnerships within the Bangladesh G&TI, if they haven’t engaged all the actors from the triangular relationship. Even though, it was stressed that public, private and civil society institutions possess useful knowledge in the sphere of CSR, collaboration among two of them can as well contribute towards the objectives of this report.

### 3.2. Delimitation of the data

Due to the broad focus of the project, desktop research was the major source of information, which helped in presenting the Bangladesh G&TI, along with the existing partnership initiatives. Hence, this information could not be considered entirely objective. In addition, only English written literature was used, because of the personal delimitations of the researcher. Another delimitation of the project is the participation of only one Danish textile company; hence a broad notion of the Danish government-private-civil society relationships could not be framed. Finally, due to the thesis requirements, in terms of its length, the Annex chapter is recorded on compact disk.

The next chapter frames the first two steps of the research design model.

# III. CSR in globalized world and cross-sector partnerships

The chapter frames the literature review of the thesis, based on the study eligible criteria. By presenting different theoretical assumptions for understanding the CSR, CSPs and the individual roles of government, MNs and civil society, answers to the first two sub-questions will be outlined.

## 1. Understanding CSR in globalized world

Globalization has a controversial and versatile definition. From one side it is defined as “increasing worldwide interconnections in virtually every sphere of activity. Some of these interconnections lead to integration/unity world-wide; others do not” (Parker 2005). On the other, it is considered a new form of colonialism, which leads to over-consumption, environmental decline, cultural poverty etc. by the overly powered multinationals, which pursue interests odd with the human ones that are prerogative to governmental and non-governmental organizations (Zerk 2006). In that sense, when it comes to research the CSR in globalized world, all of these aspects and assumptions come into play, in creating a mixture of combine policies, regulations, codes and visions. This further complicates the understanding and modes of CSR operation.

In addition, Scherer and Palazzo (2010) expressed the idea that globalization as a cross-border social interaction implies on weakening of the states’ governments and authorities to regulate corporations, and implication of both international laws, constructed on treaties and customary laws and voluntary NGOs standards. (Scherer and Palazzo 2010) In that relation, due to the created government shortcomings, corporations challenge the ability of governments to regulate them and act autonomously and self-regulatory (Brown and Knudsen 2012). This trend hints the concerns about the “good” intentions of the MNs, mainly because of their traditional social roles in society and the absence of strong government involvement.

Moreover, Moon and Vogel (2008) wrote that developing countries dealing with poverty, health problems, corruption in all levels of public policies, have the need of foreign investments by corporations. The last can use this in their advantage to lower the quality of their work and violate different environmental and social rights. The situation complicates more when even the national governments of the MNs are unwilling to set regulation on global firms, due to fear that such regulations can lead to creating of less competitive domestic economies and discourage investments (Moon and Vogel 2008).

## 2. CSPs as an approach to CSR

Even though, the notion of partnership for achieving sustainability is relatively new, the idea behind it dates back to the mid-1980s. It was connected with the inability of nation-states to provide collective goods, thus non-state actors involvement turned out to be a key element in environmental and social governance. Later, different innovative strategies within the European Union (EU) and US as labelling schemes, voluntary agreements contributed to the development of partnerships. (Mol 2007) Generally, the 20th century gave rise to partnership society, based on some fundamental changes as: the failure of communism and state economies, the rise of global capitalism, the decreased role of government and the weakened status of civil society (Googins and Rochlin 2000).

In the 1990s new theories and ideas started to form, connected with the international cooperation for addressing the environmental responsibilities by different actors (Walters and Anagnostopoulos 2012). These ideas were mainly triggered at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environmental and Development and later at the Rio+20 conferences. Mainly after the second, the CSPs were accepted as a disparate sustainable solution to the global challenges. (Mol 2007)

In 2000, Googins and Rochlin defined social partnerships or CSPs as partnerships between the two or more primary institutional sector of society – government, business and/or civil society. Later, Mol (2007) and Austin (2007) presented the fundamental goal of partnership as creating value, which none of the actors could create alone, where democracy and equality are the essential elements of a successful partnership (Mol 2007) (Austin 2007). As expressing the assumption, that no one sector can dominate or is capable to deal with social issues, CSPs come up as a new sustainable development model, which combine the capabilities of each actor and have a main role to achieve sustainability. (Googins and Rochlin 2000) This combined definition, as well characterized the understanding of CSPs within this thesis. It will be used in the analysis of the existing partnerships in the Bangladesh G&TI and provide recommendations for further development.

In addition, in 2011 Warhurst presented four types of CSPs, where the engaged actors create a proactive response to environmental and social challenges and most importantly contribute to supporting and implementing CSR strategies (figure 3) (Warhurst 2011):

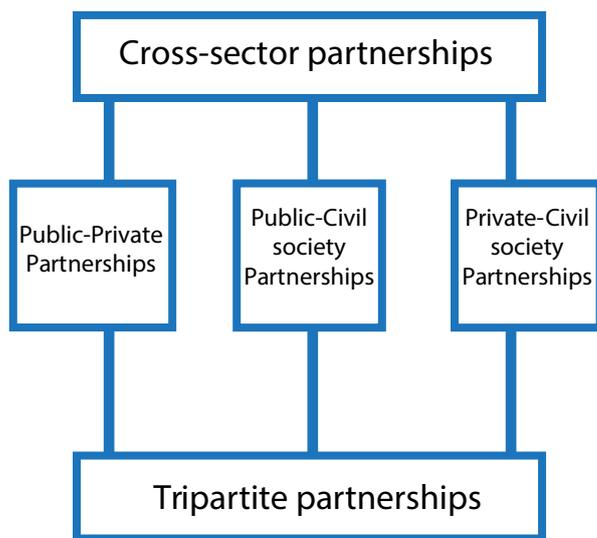


Figure 3: Cross-sector partnerships types (Seitanidi and Crane 2009)

According to Selsky and Parker (2005), the Public-Private partnerships tend to concentrate on issues, which have important social implications rather than direct social issues. The Public-Civil society partnerships are mainly formed around developing “third way” of public policy approaches. The private-civil society partnerships address both environmental, social and economic issues, as well as health, equity and education concerns. Last, but not least the Tripartite partnerships have large arena of focus both on national level and globally. They tend to engage in economic and community development issues, which have social, environmental and health concerns. This type of partnership expresses as well, the will of all sectors to contribute to solving global challenges and by having variety of partners and their relevant values could bring the most tangible CSR benefits. (Selsky and Parker 2005) In addition, all of the created CSPs in the Bangladesh G&TI present some of the four types of CSRs. Thus, the focus within this thesis is on all four types of CSPs.

Moreover, in 2012, Walters and Anagnostopoulos proposed two theoretical perspectives that have motivated the development of CSPs in terms of sustainability and particularly CSR. The first is perceived to have instrumental, business manner, where the partners maintain their relationship, based on **self-interests** and to address social concerns. In this approach, the engagement of MNs is related with their goal for long-term CSR strategies and creation of competitiveness. On the other hand, civil society and government aim at demonstrating efficiency and this is their main driver. The second perspective shapes partnerships as a way to address a particular social concern. In these terms, civil society and other non-profit organizations try to **raise awareness** in CSR-related issues, where the government has the role of funding provider. (Walters and Anagnostopoulos 2012) Self-interests or raising the awareness as theoretical assumptions and main motives for creating partnerships are combined and shaped the set ideas of CSR within the existing partnership initiatives in Bangladesh G&TI.

In addition, various benefits can be drawn from partnerships' arrangements in general:

- CSPs transfer knowledge and expertise that the actors could not acquire by themselves and which are important when dealing with complex social and environmental issues;
- They can expand the scope of the problem, thus including a broader specs of issues and developing integrated solutions;
- Globalization as an opportunity creator and facilitator of innovation;
- CSPs facilitate innovation, due to the involvement of different actors with specific set of skills and knowledge;
- Reduces the costs to projects' implementations, due to innovation. It reduces also the time for implementation, incorporating incentives into the project and taken up on project concurrently;
- By CSPs, the actors access new skills, competences and experience;
- Creation of mutual trust and collaborative behaviour; (Walters and Anagnostopoulos 2012)
- Partnerships evoke new form of governance, better adapter to the new network society and global challenges, only if the governments can adjust to “joint inter-organizational policy-making” (Mol 2007)

(Li and Akintoye 2003)

However, together with the benefits there are as well several challenges:

- Inability of the actors to overcome their traditional social roles and engage equally in partnerships;
- Globalization triggers weakening of nation-states governance, where MNs are more tempt to abuse social and environmental rights rather than to seek collaboration;
- The lack of information in terms of CSR and the benefits of partnerships is another obstacle, which could lead to communication dysfunctionality among the actors and interfere with the creation of new solutions to global problems;
- Communication problems are triggered as well by lack of trust among the partners; (Zerk 2006)
- CSR partnerships are as well framed as challenging and high risky, mainly because their development can take a long period, where maintaining the level of engagement is questionable (Walters and Anagnostopoulos 2012);

### **3. Role of government, MNs and civil society as part of CSR partnerships**

By framing the partnership parameters, this section outlines the three social actors as partners, which will help towards the research of the existing partnerships within the G&TI and shape an answer to the first sub-question.

#### **3.1. Government**

Before, proceeding with elaboration about government as a partner, a definition of it should be given. Within this thesis, government is considered as a system by which a state or community is governed (Hurty 2009). Thus, it incorporates internal as Danish business authority and external authorities as Danish Ministry of Foreign affairs.

In addition, the image and social role of the government in political science has always been associated with obligatory regulations, laws and “defining rules of the game”, where its main tasks are to secure the well-being of the society and sanction all actors, which interfere with it. Government is the one supposed to maintain the principles of justice and equality and correct business-cycle instabilities (Parker 2005). On the other hand, their

traditional relationship with the civil society is mainly based on providing additional funding, for projects (Tulder and Zwart 2006). However, within the recent years together with the expanding interests around CSR and its growing field of responsibilities, government started to incorporate practices and turn corporate social responsibilities into business of government, by seeking collaboration with private and civil society institutions in order to benefit from their knowledge and improve their CSR policies. Despite that, some governments still prefer to be reactive and not involve themselves into CSR, which in current level of globalization becomes more and more difficult to do. (Vallentin and Murillo 2012)

In 2002, Fox, Ward and Howard defined four distinctive roles of the government in relation to CSR. These roles help towards understanding the position of government within a partnership:

- Partnership role – creating strategic CSPs by implementing inputs from different sectors to deal with social and environmental challenges;
- Mandating role – government defines within different levels, the minimum standards of MNs to comply with;
- Facilitating role – government incentivizes businesses to engage with CSR, where the first has secondary and/or supporting role;
- Endorsing role – endorsing of policies and regulations to support civil society and private sector initiatives;

(Fox, Ward and Howard 2002)

The roles are pro-active, where the government collaborates with other sectors, supports different soft law guidelines and encourages companies to be more responsible. Within the chapter Analysis, the report will shape the Danish government engagement, based on the created PRG&TP.

Despite this, a lot of researchers as Zerk (2006) and Valentin and Murillo (2012) consider its involvement in CSR will stifle innovation and damage competitiveness, due to the inability of governance to overcome its command and control nature. (Zerk 2006) (Vallentin and Murillo 2012) Thus, when it comes to partnership and defining the new set of governance for dealing with global challenges, CSPs are considered governance anomaly. They do not have formal political power and are hard to interpret in a legal framework. Having government engaged in a partnership is found almost impossible, due to their inability to share the political mandate, vested in them. (Glasbergen 2007)

## 3.2. Multinationals

The role of MNs, according to economic paradigm advocates division between political and economic domains; or between securing the public well-being and making profits. (Scherer and Palazzo 2010) MNs have only one social responsibility to increase the profits; this is their main role and task (Friedman 1962). The pure economic assumption of MNs is into a contradiction with social and environmental interests, which are obligation of the government. On the other hand, due to external pressure, MNs have to assume new roles, roles as incorporating CSR strategies. However, these new roles need support by different groups, which are better equipped to deal with social issues. Relations with civil society and government are important to identify the key areas of CSR issues and to corporate self-determination (Vallentin and Murillo 2012). This does not mean that the initial role of MNs is diminished. They preserve their profit-making responsibilities, while trying to incorporate some of the social responsibilities of the government (Scherer and Palazzo 2010). The last triggers a self-regulatory mode in terms of CSR operations.

In CSPs, businesses are expected to incorporate their direct economic interests together with the development of responsible behaviour i.e. having traditional roles, but be open to develop new ones (Glasbergen 2007).

### 3.3. Civil society

Last, but not least, the civil society role can be described as the “watchdog”, expressing and defending interests beyond policy and profit, trying to trigger dialogue and communication, usually encouraged by the governments’ CSR policies. Civil society and most specifically NGOs involvement into CSR is connected with evoking MNs’ compliances with policies and driving the private sector to go even further in their compliance and invest “more” in environmental protection and human capital (Zerk 2006). The involvement of civil society into corporate operations is usually opportunistic, project-based initiatives, which could or not result in fundamental changes of business model (Dahan, et al. 2010). Usually, the government plays a supporting role through a mix of voluntary and complementary regulations (European Commission 2011). In that sense, within a partnership relation, civil society can have a beneficial role in identifying the urgent social and environmental problems, but as well can have a constant need to identify themselves as loyal to the society, which could stifle the collaboration with the other actors, due to their lack of openness for other CSR aspects and suggestion. (Glasbergen 2007)

Moreover, Hamann (2004) expressed the idea that all of the actors have started to understand and work towards a better society and cleaner environment. However, as one of the central aspects in CSR is communication with stakeholders thus in order to achieve win-win solutions these three separate actors need to work together, improve their communication and combine their strengths. The last summarizes the concept of partnership, where the engagement among MNs, government and civil society can accomplish better results than the alternatives approaches. (Hamann 2004)

Based on the provided so far information, an answer to the first sub-question can be outlined:

**What do the actors need to change as part of engaging in partnership relations?**

The social actors/institutions are built and followed defined roles, which different individuals assume and perform throughout their life. Social roles provide cohesive and stability, where each individual possess qualities to fulfil the demanded role and is obligated to achieve certain tasks, inherited by this role. (Mahatman Gandhi university of Kottayam 2010) The last consolidates their unchanging nature, but also their importance in the knowledge and experience they can bring in different social setups.

One such set up is the creation of CSR partnership initiatives in Bangladesh G&TI, where based on the traditional roles of government, civil society and private sector, contribution with valuable knowledge for supporting and implementing CSR can be made. However, such CSPs are dysfunctional, due to lack of clear understanding about the benefits of mutual collaboration and unwillingness by the actors to change. In order to create mutual beneficial relationships, the partners need to develop new set of roles and responsibilities, additional to their conventional ones and most importantly understand each other usefulness as part of a partnership. In these terms, the government should find a way to design and carry out pro-active public policy, which will trigger partnership-based innovation and will be applicable on a global scale (Lozano, et al. 2008).

One of the most important changes, NGOs should perform is to try to open and embrace other points of views in relation CSR. This will help them to establish ways to collaborate and engage without being so restricted by their moral obligations to society. The biggest obstacle for MNs is to vanquish the urge of competitiveness, lack of trust within the other sectors and develop and implement CSR within the entire profile of their business. (Jensen 2013) (Glasbergen 2007)

Taking all into consideration and based purely on the literature review, an answer to the second sub-question can be provided. It will have a follow-up in chapter Analysis, where the challenges and benefits of the existing partnerships in the Bangladesh G&TI will be assayed:

What are the challenges and benefits, established by the partnerships for government, civil society and MNs?

The most well-known benefits of partnerships within the literature are connected with their role for **expanding the scope of the problems** and **developing new knowledge and skills**, due to inclusion of different actors. In addition, they trigger **creation of mutual trust**, which consequently inflict other benefits as **facilitation of innovation** and **reducing of costs**, due to innovation. Last, but not least, **globalization** is considered as an opportunity creator, where the formed CSPs can bring public goods to the third world countries and supports **development of a new governance approach**, better prepared to deal with complex global challenges. (Li and Akintoye 2003)

On the other hand, one of the main challenges for the three actors to collaborate and work together is the **lack of trust** among them and the prejudice, evoking from their **traditional roles** e.g. MNs are perceived as having only economic interests, which need government and civil society pressure and guidance to have valuable CSR contribution. In addition, globalization is considered as a creator of environmental and social degradation, which as well triggers weakening of nation states regulation and formation of partnerships. All of these challenges are driven by the **lack of information about partnership benefits** and understanding the importance of the actors. Another issue is connected with the **high risk for partnership engagement**, where keeping clear goals and constant partners' involvement is difficult. (Walters and Anagnostopoulos 2012) (Zerk 2006)

Next, the theoretical framework of the thesis is presented.

## IV. Theoretical framework

Different theories in relation to CSPs were considered suitable to build up the theoretical and analytical framework. Hence, based on the study eligible criteria, cross-sector partnerships' descriptive and qualitative methods were chosen as a base for the analysis.

### 1. Cross-sector partnerships descriptive and qualitative aspects

CSPs as defined within chapter three by itself implies on involvement of public (government, civil society) and private institutions for creating long-term CSR strategies for mutual benefits. It is characterized with several **descriptive** features, used for analysing the existing partnerships in Bangladesh G&TI:

- Involves two or more actors – this criterion presents the type of relationship, based on the engaged actors and their social status e.g. public or private institution;
- The partners have established stable relationships – there are numerous of simple transactions among the different sectors, whereas a stable relationship is continuing relationship, the parameters of which are negotiated and accepted by all the partners;
- Every partner brings something to the partnership – in order for a partnership to be genuine, each partner should transfer some material (money) or immaterial resources (knowledge);
- The partnership by definition assumes shared responsibility – this feature emphasizes mainly on decision-making process, which should not be in control by only the public sector, but shared among all the partners. Hence, shared responsibility is in the core of CSPs, mainly because is the most difficult to perform;

(Li and Akintoye 2003)

All of the **descriptive** criteria stress the type of partners' relationships. However, in order to evaluate the content and success of the CSPs in terms of CSR, a set of **qualitative** features is needed, which will assay, based on the created type of relationship, how the actors will support and implement CSR strategies.

In addition, a challenge in front of partnerships is to progress in a state, where its **descriptive** and **qualitative** characteristics are highly uneven and distinctive. This requires active involvement and resource commitment from all parties. The creation of win-win CSR strategies evokes first understanding by the partners how this relationships will generate value for them and later use their own strengths to help others in that relation. (Googins and Rochlin 2000) Thus, in order to have a better prospect of the partnerships' content, their resource flows or level of engagement will be researched as part of the **qualitative** aspects. In these terms, the following presents three stages of dependence among the actors in order to generates CSR benefits, where the goals of the partnerships beforehand should be considered, which will ensure the level of engagement and corresponding values:

- Reciprocal exchange – traditional transaction of resources, where for example private sector and civil society enter into a joint-marketing arrangements;
- Developmental value creation – this stage evokes a greater effort from the parties in order to generate value. It requires collaboration rather than simple exchange as within the first stage;
- Symbiotic value creation – creates dependent of the relationships between the partners, where the value will be created only through mutual exchange of ideas, resources and etc.

(Googins and Rochlin 2000)

It is obvious that within the third stage, the CSPs will generate the greatest CSR values i.e. achieve the set strategies within the partnerships, due to the development of mutual collaborative relationships and sharing of responsibilities among the partners. (Googins and Rochlin 2000)

The framed CSPs **descriptive** and **qualitative** characteristics will contribute in shaping the analytical framework of the master thesis. By defying them as the theoretical basis of the CSPs an assay of the existing partnerships and providing recommendations for further development of CSR partnerships can be performed.

The next chapter presents G&TI in Bangladesh and its related CSR problems.

# V. Garments and textiles industry in Bangladesh

The chapter presents the textile sector in Bangladesh based on the framed study eligibility criteria.

## 1. Bangladesh textile sector and related CSR problems

As a developing country, Bangladesh is characterized with series of CSR related problems and challenges in the G&TI, evoking mostly from the inadequate governmental power, where the policy-making process is marked by uncertainty, lack of transparency and taking of concrete actions. Thus, some of its CSR problems are mostly part of the social line as poverty, corruption and violation of human and working rights, where the political instability and weak economy in the country are inadequate to handle. (Lewis 2011)

Moreover, the country relies on foreign investments, which could stimulate its economy and deal with some of its problems. A special attention and a major share of the Bangladesh governmental policies are focused on the attraction of foreign investments in the garment industry, which has the majority of the export. The investments, made by the sector in Bangladesh for 2007 have been more than 1 billion USD, where only the EU imports has more than half of the Bangladesh garments exports (Ministry of foreign affairs of Denmark 2013) (Lewis 2011) One of the main objectives, which makes Bangladesh attractive place for foreign investments is the elimination of import permits and replacing the import taxes with value added tax. In addition, the country offers very low production costs, a large and growing domestic market with 160 million consumers; from whom 60% is under 25 years old, which creates a lot of labour force. (Ministry of foreign affairs of Denmark 2013)

Furthermore, a large number of textile factory owners are part of the Bangladesh parliament, where the owner of Rana Plaza is a leading member in Awami League political party in Bangladesh (Bangladesh independent news network 2013). Thus they are considered to be more concern about the factories rather than the workers in them (Jensen 2013). Hence, this could be one of the main reasons for the Bangladesh government not to have proper regulation and inspection systems, as well as ratifying important conventions as ILO 150 convention for Occupational Health and Safety and ILO conventions for Employment injuries schemes. (Clean Clothes Campaign 2012) All of these factors have their input for the environmental and social degradation of the country. They as well create opportunities for international MNCs and give them a certain level of freedom, which could lead to abusing of power and variety of CSR related problems, due to the invested personal interests and unwillingness by the Bangladesh government to collaborate for improving the garment workers' rights (Jensen 2013).

In addition, due to the inadequate governmental role, Bangladesh as most developing countries with such problems, has high number of NGOs groups, more than 206 000, which in case of poor governance and mass poverty in the country, have become source of creativity and hope. Furthermore, globalization as a process has created tension among the private and public interests, where NGOs have become important mediator in facilitating the relationship between the state and business sectors. (Lewis 2011)

Moreover, the NGO sector has indigenous character, formed by diverse groups from small and voluntaristic organizations, where effective communication and organization can be difficult to obtain. Thus, together with the political and created economic weakness, local NGOs high subjectivity and lack of organization can be one of the main reasons for first, the failure in reaching results within the G&TI by the CSPs formed in Bangladesh and second, the external actors to restrict themselves into collaborating with the country for improving its social and environmental status. (Lewis 2011) However, more in-depth research is needed into the existing partnership initiatives towards understanding the roles of Bangladesh government and civil society, which is presented in the next chapter Analysis.

# VI. Analyses

This chapter presents the analyses of the thesis, based on the theoretical framework, outlined study eligible criteria and research design model. Successively, this part provides answers to the sub-questions of the thesis. Before proceeding with the results, an overview of the Bangladesh safety accidents and created CSPs is framed. This serves as base for the rest of the chapter.

## 1. Bangladesh safety accident in G&TI

Between the years 2006 and 2009, 414 garment workers were killed in 213 factory fires. By including the recent years and Rana Plaza accident, that number goes up to almost 2000 killed workers. The next presents a timeline of Bangladesh safety accidents from 2005 and the initiatives, started based on them:

- **April 11, 2005 Spectrum factory collapsed** – 63 dead and at least 74 injured. The accident happened shortly after 1 am, when at least 400 workers were inside the factory. Before the accident, several of them tried to report about crack in the walls. The factory was occupied by Spanish, French, Belgium, German, Dutch and Swedish buyers. This accident led to Bangladesh Garment Manufacture and Export Association (BGMEA) to seek collaboration with the Bangladesh government for improving the safety working conditions;
- **February 23, 2006 Fire at KTS Textile industries, Chittagong** – 61 dead, 100 injured. The fire was caused by electrical short circuit, while approximately 500 workers were inside the factory. The buyers were mostly American MNs;
- **February 25, 2006 Phoenix Building, Dhaka** – 22 victims and 50 injured. The fire-storey building collapsed, based on unauthorized renovations. The building was occupied by German, Swiss, Norwegian, Finish and Danish MNs;
- **February 25, 2006 Imam Group, Chittagong** – 57 injured. A transformer explosion caused workers to rush for the exits, which were too narrow for them to get out. American buyers were situated in the factory;
- **March 6, 2006 Sayem Fashions, Gazipur** – 3 victims and approximately 50 injured. The cause electric short circuit. In addition, the factory workers were forced to work long hours, seven days a week. Buyers were Italian, Spanish and American MNs;
- **February 25, 2010 Garib and Garib** – 21 killed and app. 50 injured. A fire caused by electric short circuit, spread quickly among the floors and caused deprivation of the oxygen, due to poor ventilation. Spanish, German, Swedish, Italian and American were some of the buyers. Tripartite partnership among government, MNs and industry trade unions was initiated, based on the accident;
- **December 14, 2010 That's It Sportswear (Hameem Group)** – 29 dead and 11 injured seriously. Like most of the buildings, electric short circuit caused the fire. There was an inability of the fire fighters to research some of the floors and the helicopters to land on the roof, due to illegally built canteen. American manufacturer were occupying the building;
- **December 3, 2011 Eurotex (Continental)** – 2 dead and 64 injured. The cause – boiler explosion. American, Spanish, Belgium and Canadian buyers were occupying the building;
- **November 24, 2012, Tazreen Fashions Limited** – 112 dead. Based on it the National Tripartite of Action on Fire Safety was established by government, employers and workers;
- **April 24, 2013 Rana Plaza building collapsed**, killing 1,100 workers. European and American MNs were having production facilities in the factory. Based on it, three main initiatives from international, regional and national scope were created – The Accord on Fire and Safety, the European Union Sustainability Compact and the Danish PRG&TP;

(Clean Clothes Campaign 2012)

During the last almost ten years, different initiatives were taken towards improving the workers safety in Bangladesh garment factories, which are characterized with national range i.e. only participants from Bangladesh and international one, involving international NGOs, trade unions etc.

After the Spectrum accident, BGMEA started an initiative, together with the representatives of the Bangladesh government for performing unannounced inspections to the factories. However, it was inefficient in terms of resources and a year later, another accident happened. The last led to establishment of a Multi-Fibre Arrangement Forum Bangladesh (MFA Forum), together with industries, Bangladesh government and trade unions, but ultimately failed to reach agreement. In 2010, different parties again tried to form a multi-stakeholder approach for improving the working conditions. This idea resulted into a meeting among industries, labor associations and trade unions, which did not reach any concrete solution. A year later, Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was established and it failed to materialize, but negotiations continued. In order for it, to be implemented at least four brands have to agree to sign up. So far, only two did. (Clean Clothes Campaign 2012)

Up to Rana Plaza, most of the CSPs initiatives had national range, formed in Bangladesh, except for the MoU, which has partners from International Textile Garment and Leather Workers Federation. After Rana Plaza, more different international actors engaged and contributed for the creation of three partnerships - the Fire and Safety Accord, EU Sustainability Compact and the Danish Partnership for Responsible Garments and Textiles production in Bangladesh.

The next section elaborates on and compares more the existing initiatives and their partnership specification, as shaped within the study eligibility criteria and research design model. By having this information, a recommendation can be made towards their improvements.

## 2. Existing cross-sector partnership initiatives in the Bangladesh G&TI

The **descriptive** and **qualitative** analysis of the formed partnership initiatives is framed based on the theoretical framework. Table 1 presents the **descriptive** features, where the first two columns shape the number of actors and their social status. The next two frame the created relationships and the last column gives an overview of the CSR focus of the partnerships, which helps structuring the **qualitative** analysis. In the end, the sub-chapter provides an answer to: *What are the existing partnership initiatives and how do they influence the development of CSR within the G&TI?* (table 1)

<b>CSP initiatives</b>	<b>Type of CSPs</b>	<b>Engaged actors</b>	<b>Each partner brings something to the partnership</b>	<b>Stable relationships and shared responsibility</b>	<b>CSR focus of the partnerships</b>
<b>BGMEA</b>	Public-Civil society	Bangladesh government and BGMEA	Collaboration among the parties and forming of task forces to perform factories' checks	Lack of collaboration, communication, organization and resources	To investigate and monitor building safety issues
<b>MFM Forum</b>	Tripartite partnership	Bangladesh government, industry, MNs, trade unions	No practical work was performed	Lack of collaboration among the parties in order to reach a solution	Building safety issues
<b>February 2010 meeting</b>	Tripartite partnership	Government, MNs, industry trade unions	Lack of clarification about individual partners roles	Without concrete proposals for action, lack of collaboration, no participation by the Bangladesh government	The focus was limited to electrical inspections, which were never conducted
<b>MoU</b>	Private-Civil society	BGMEA, trade unions and MNs	Still in planning phase to be evaluated on its performance	Lack of collaboration, which resulted in no concrete results	Creation of safe and sustainable work environment
<b>National Tripartite Plan of Action on Fire Safety</b>	Tripartite partnership	Bangladesh Government, BGMEA, trade unions, labour associations	The partnership is built upon the labour associations and trade unions without clear indication of the other actors roles	Lack of clear goals and defying the responsibilities of the partners	Undertaking actions towards preventive future loss of life within the sector
<b>Fire and Safety</b>	Private-Civil society	ILO, MNs, NGOs, trade	Appointment of advisory	Collaboration among the	Establishing a fire and

<b>Accord</b>		unions	board with representatives from each of the partners	actors, without shared responsibilities	building safety program in Bangladesh for 5 years period
<b>Sustainability Compact, EU</b>	Public-Civil society	Bangladesh Government , EU, ILO	Collaboration and developing of a data base of fire and safety buildings inspections	Still in planning phase, EU supporting role of ILO efforts	To promote labour rights standards and responsible business conduct
<b>PRG&amp;TP</b>	Tripartite partnership	DMFA, DIEH, MNs, labour associations , trade unions, NGOs, Ethical trading initiatives	Still in planning phase	Development of collaborative relationship under the guidance of DIEH; DMFA – separate actor	Workers’ rights and safety, greener production, increased transparency in supply chains

Table 1: Cross-sector partnership initiatives in Bangladesh G&TI (Clean Clothes Campaign 2012)

## 2.1. Descriptive analysis

The first five initiatives have mostly national scope in terms of actors, where the Bangladesh government is involved into three of them, classified as Tripartite partnerships. However, as outlined within the previous chapter, Bangladesh government has failed to perform its initial role as a protector of human rights and as a partner is considered unreliable and unfeasible in implementing robust and credible labour changes, due to its personal and financial interests invested into Bangladesh G&TI. In addition, even though the public official has opened things on paper and joined different partnership initiatives, the government continues to be depicted as an antiforeign and unaccountable (Lewis 2011). This could be the reason why all of the three CSPs failed in their planning phase. (Clean Clothes Campaign 2012) Furthermore, as formed explicitly in Bangladesh and lacking involvement of international social institutions, could be a reason for all initiatives in general to have limitations in their influence and potential success. Of course, the international actors, by themselves could not have as well the motivation to join, due to the political and social situation in the country. The engaged MNs do not feel responsible to fill the gaps in the governmental regulations and as partners they do not contribute for the partnerships. Thus, the CSR focus of the CSPs is restricted to short-terms goals as performing safety inspections of buildings and decreasing the number of accident, without applying international recognized guidelines or standards in relation to working or human rights, for creating long-term goals and tangible results. (Hasselbalch 2013) (Clean Clothes Campaign 2012)

Moreover, most of the initiatives lack clarifying the partners’ roles, which interferes with their involvement and contribution with material or immaterial resources. As a result of all, the actors have not developed stable relationships within the initiatives, mainly due to first unwillingness of the Bangladesh government to enter into dialogue and collaborate with the local NGOs and second, based on lack of resources and support, the Bangladesh civil society cannot create the necessary means to motivate and engage the actors. (Clean Clothes Campaign 2012)

However, after Rana Plaza, the world started to pay more attention and consider the need of improving the working conditions in the Bangladesh G&TI. This led to involvement of more actors, within international range and broadening the focus of CSR goals for raising the awareness i.e. promoting labour standards, responsible business conduct, worker rights, greener production and transparency in the supply chains. (European Commission 2013) (Ministry of foreign affairs, Denmark 2013) (IndustriALL Global Union 2013)

Three partnership initiatives were formed, involving public, international, private and civil society institutions. All of them are constructed on ILO guidelines and United Nations Guiding principles on Business and Human Rights. Thus, these CSPs are led by civil society, which defines and supports CSR through soft law regulations. In addition, even though labelled as partnerships, the initiatives are structured on clear differentiation among the roles of the actors, where each of them has a certain contribution to the initiatives and lack of sharing the responsibility in improving the working conditions. (European Commission 2013) (Ministry of foreign affairs, Denmark 2013) (IndustriALL Global Union 2013)

Hence, within the Sustainability Compact for continuous improvements in labour rights and factory safety in the Ready-Made Garment and Knitwear industry in Bangladesh, ILO has accepted traditional role of NGO in terms of issuing guidelines for MNs compliances and developing database of MNs and keeping track with their operations. In order to preserve their reputation and stay competitive, MNs are forced to engage. On the other hand, the role of EU is explicitly stated as a funds provider and support of ILO standards. ILO and EU “welcome the support of representatives from industry...as well as their continued commitment to improved labour standards...” (European Commission 2013) This statement distinctly indicates the engagement of MNs, as purely economic actors, which have to comply to the created labour rights framework. Within this partnership the actors do not have equal inputs in terms of defying the needed CSR actions, mutual collaboration or bringing their competences and knowledge to enrich the partnership. (European Commission 2013)

This trend is presented as well in the Accord, which is built upon the National Action Plan on Fire Safety, created on January 15, 2013, after Tazreen accident in Bangladesh. On the other hand, the Accord undertakes a top-down approach in terms of CSR along with the Sustainability Compact, whereas a bottom-up approach could be the better equivalent, due to its more democratic orientation for inclusion of all relevant actors and sharing of CSR responsibilities (Jensen 2013) (deLeon and deLeon 2001) (IndustriALL Global Union 2013).

Danish PRG&TP distinguishes from the Accord and Sustainability Compact, based on its Tripartite type, by the involvement of private, civil society and public actors (Ministry of foreign affairs, Denmark 2013). Thus, later in the chapter, it will be presented more in-depth.

## 2.2. Qualitative analysis

In brief, most of the initiatives have failed within their planning or implementation phase, or are still in planning phase. Thus, it is difficult to evaluate their influence over CSR or categorized the partnerships, based on the generated CSR objectives in **reciprocal exchange**, **developmental value creation** or **symbiotic value creation level**, as presented in the theoretical framework. Although, all of the initiatives engaged actors with direct influence over the problems, the last were not able to define clear goals for action, create stable relationships and overcome their traditional social roles in order to communicate better and achieve the set CSR objectives. (Clean Clothes Campaign 2012) (European Commission 2013) (Ministry of foreign affairs, Denmark 2013) (IndustriALL Global Union 2013)

Based purely on their progress so far, the still active initiatives as the MoU, the National Tripartite Plan of Action of Fire safety, the Accord, the EU Sustainability Compact and The Danish Partnership are part of the **reciprocal exchange**. The reason for classifying all of them under one stage is a result on the **descriptive** analysis, where it became clear that all of the CSPs limit their partners' relationship to traditional transactional relationships i.e. civil society will initiate set of guidelines, based on which the MNs will have to comply and collaborate. The actors engage and preserve their individuality within the partnerships and lack generating

greater efforts in terms of CSR, due to mainly lack of sharing of responsibilities. (Googins and Rochlin 2000) (European Commission 2013) (Ministry of foreign affairs, Denmark 2013) (IndustriALL Global Union 2013) However, further research is needed, when the initiatives start implementing its CSR goals and the actors develop further their relationships.

Based on these analytical reflections, an answer to the third sub-question can be made:

**What are the existing partnership initiatives and how do they influence the development of CSR within the G&TI?**

The existing partnership initiatives have both national and international range of formation with main focus on raising the awareness in terms of needed CSR actions. In addition, mainly after the involvement of broad spectrum of international actors; more CSR objectives were framed with clear strategic actions. As most of the initiatives are still in planning phase, it is difficult to predict their success and influence over the development of CSR within the G&TI.

However, based simply on actors' perspective, their shaped roles, shared responsibilities and partnership as an approach towards CSR, defined within the thesis, the mutual collaboration is overlooked, in order to serve interests, resulting from the assumed social roles. The invested CSR objectives and goals are formed unilaterally, based on NGOs guidelines, without having the equal inputs of all interested parties, due to lack of understanding of the CSPs for generating CSR benefits. The contributions of government and MNs are neglected and limited to their traditional roles. This hints a chance of stifling innovation in terms of CSR actions, which in the sphere of sustainability is crucial. (European Commission 2013) (IndustriALL Global Union 2013) (Ministry of foreign affairs, Denmark 2013)

In addition, guidelines, initiated unilaterally are considered insufficient to deal with the complexity of the global challenges, which are result, based on the interaction of variety of actors. Thus, in order to achieve tangible CSR outcomes, different actors should be involved into the decision-making process as part of partnerships, where they can enrich the partnerships and CSR goals with their knowledge and expertise. Thus, CSPs could be able to handle some of the urgent CSR problems in the Bangladesh G&TI, by engaging equally internal and external actors. So far, the presented partnerships have not achieved it. (European Commission 2013) (IndustriALL Global Union 2013) (Ministry of foreign affairs, Denmark 2013)

### **3. Case study – Danish Partnership for Responsible Garments and Textiles production in Bangladesh**

This sub-chapter frames the triangular relationship in Danish context and it is again a combination of descriptive and qualitative analysis e.g. what the actors' strengths are in forming partnerships and trace if they have changed their traditional roles in order to collaborate more effectively. In addition, it will outline how MNs create and implement CSR, by collaborating with civil society and government. In the end, answers to: What are the challenges and benefits, established by the partnerships for government, MNs and civil society? and How do government, multinationals and civil society develop CSR strategies as part of a partnership relation? will be outlined.

#### **3.1. Case study background**

On 17th of May, 2013, different Danish social institutions formed PRG&TP, built upon United Nations Guiding Principles on Businesses and Human Rights. The partnership has focus on raising the awareness in terms of different CSR issues as improving the workers' rights and safety, greener production and increased

transparency in buyers' supply chains. However, this CSP is just in the implementation phase, so actual results from the commitments will be presented in spring 2014. Hence, this thesis will not look into its achievements, but as within the above presented initiatives, will research the engagement of actors, their relationships and their roles within the PRG&TP. This perspective could be a base of future studies, which could embrace the CSR partnership outcomes in the next phases of its implementation. (Ministry of foreign affairs, Denmark 2013)

The PRG&TP engages diverse set of governmental, economic and civil society actors. In these terms, the DMFA, 4 Danish trade associations, 17 Danish industries, including the ones, signed the Accord, Danish NGOs and trade unions, Danish embassy in Dhaka and the Environmental protection Agency. The involvement of all the actors from the triangular-relationship along with the undertaken partnership approach by the Danish government, create a certain uniqueness of the initiative. It is not the first Tripartite partnership within the Bangladesh G&TI, but the first created in a country, where government has distinct policy approach and continuing dialogue with private and civil society institutions. (Ministry of foreign affairs, Denmark 2013)

However, based on the preliminary PRG&TP document, DIEH is the one facilitating the agreement, where the other actors have in-direct and/or supporting roles. In that sense, the DMFA will support all initiatives, undertaken towards achieving different CSR objectives, as they consider the partnership "political-action oriented document", but will not have direct influence or participation. On the other side, MNs role is limited to compliances and follow the set goals by the political and civil society institutions. Furthermore, the PRG&TP is Danish governed initiative, which involves only Danish actors. Bangladesh government and national NGOs have not been engaged, although within the agreement, the undertaken actions evoke their participation. The reason for that can be found again within the controversial political set up of the country. (Ministry of foreign affairs, Denmark 2013)

In addition, the CSP has its benefits and challenges. Within the first, it is clear that they are all institutions with specific knowledge and expertise that could bring to the table. On the other hand, mainly these differences can lead to additional complications for the partnership collaboration. (Ministry of foreign affairs, Denmark 2013) Hence, more in-depth research is needed within the three actors' roles as part of the partnership, the created challenges and benefits and how their address CSR as part of it. This is presented in the following.

### **3.2. Danish government as a partner**

As already outlined within the previous chapters, together with the Nordic countries, Denmark has certain approach towards CSR, where the government takes care of mandatory social commodities and acknowledges the importance of economic actors in addressing and resolving social problems. The Danish government shares its responsibilities and the cross-sector partnerships are considered to incorporate the CSR concept (Albareda, Lozano and Ysa 2007). Even so, the Danish government leads two completely different modes of CSR policies. The CSP strategy has solid national foundations, due to the extended and comprehensive welfare state, where the government is able to control and use its power. In these terms, the partnerships are considered democratically driven and balance. It is actively involved into collaboration with private and NGOs institutions to gain knowledge and shape the appropriate CSR policies, since it considers such involvement productive in terms of boarding the focus and shaping the best strategies. (Hasselbalch 2013)

Whereas in its global CSR policies, there is no direct governmental participation and the monitoring of MNs is performed only by their request. Thus, the involvement into MNs operations is in-direct through embassies and civil society guidelines and standards e.g. OECD, UNGC. Hence, the government restricts itself into creating collaboration with MNs. Its global role could be categorized as mandating and facilitating engagements. In addition, another benefit nationally, triggered by the partnership involvement is reporting, due to it both the MNs and government can give feedback and improve their strategies. Globally, this is carried out by MNs and often there is a lack of third party reviews. (Hasselbalch 2013)

Two governmental institutions were interviewed in order to understand better the role of Danish government. The national prospect was presented by the DBA, which as a secretariat for the National contact point are responsible for following the implementations of the OECD guidelines into private organizations and keeping track with their performance, as well as dealing with complaining from MNs that have breached the guidelines. In these terms, they have developed relationships with the civil society, which help towards improving their work. On the other hand, there is also a lack of coordination among them, where NGOs prefer to work separately and deal with complaining, as they feel it is their responsibility to sanction the MNs. (Villadsen 2013)

On the other hand, as it will be later specified in the DMFA, the DBA assumes CSR as their main obligation and have accepted the role of defying the CSR agenda and making sure that everybody is complying. This was again confirmed by their relationship with the private sector. DBA informs the businesses about Danish government, OECD, EU and United Nations expectations in terms of CSR, which should comply. (Villadsen 2013) Nationally, Danish government tries to create partnerships with private and civil society institutions, but the task and responsibilities are shared unequal. In addition, it is still questionable the effectiveness of nation-state system, which builds its CSR agenda together with others such systems, if it can create the necessary CSR actions to control MNs, without seeking their mutual collaboration.

The global perspective of the Danish government was constructed, based on the interview with the DMFA. As with the DBA, the DMFA understands CSR as part of its important political role, without their active participation and push, nothing will happen. For the government, CSR is about compliance (Hasselbalch 2013). This understanding of concept is rooted into the long traditions of Denmark as a democratic country, where the government has the main role in securing the well-being of society. Mainly, due to it, the engagement and creation of partnerships with the government can seem impossible.

Through the perspective of DMFA, MNs are considered very cost-minded and most of the MNs lack of acknowledging themselves as a part of the problems and comply globally with certain standards and/or guidelines. (Hasselbalch 2013) On the other hand, MNs perceive the Danish government as institution, built on regulations and their collaboration is restricted to finding the bottom line, to know that they are performing well. Until, just prejudices exist within these two social actors, a step towards developing partnership is hard to be done. (Villadsen 2013)

Danish government as a partner can bring to the table knowledge and expertise in providing the public good in democratic matter. Its main strengths within this context are to facilitate transition of EU and OECD guidelines in the Danish private sector, mediate among different social institutions and more or least tackle risky projects for creating better sustainable strategies. These modes shape its facilitating and endorsing role, when engaged in CSR partnerships, rather than partnering one, due to its restriction of full involvement. (Villadsen 2013) (Hasselbalch 2013)

### **3.3. Danish private sector as a partner**

As it was already outlined in the Methodology chapter, only one company was interviewed. Despite that, it differentiates from the rest of the Danish textile MNs with a long history of performing CSR actions and engaging with different actors. This information was useful in framing their relationship with government and civil society. Nationally, the company seeks and is engaged with different NGOs, which help them in shaping more precisely their CSR policies. In addition, they have active involvement with government, which help towards implementing the different EU regulations. (Riber 2013)

However, globally, the company does not engage with Bangladesh government and national NGOs, but prefer to use the umbrella of multi-stakeholder initiatives as Business Social Compliance Initiative. The reason

for that are lack of trust among the Bangladesh NGOs and the high level of corruption within the government. With the help of the initiative, the MN is able to conduct and be informed about their appropriate CSR actions. (Riber 2013) However, this again leads to the top-down approach problem, where important stakeholders as Bangladesh government and NGOs are not included, despite their problems. (Clean Clothes Campaign 2012)

In addition, MNs, based on the interviewed one, differentiates from the other private actors by its closeness to the society in its everyday operations. In these terms, they are able to perform customers' inquiries weekly and gather information in terms of CSR (Riber 2013). In addition, their resources allow them to innovate and research different CSR initiatives for improving their operations. All of these capacities can be valuable, when MNs are engaged into CSPs.

### **3.4. Danish civil society as a partner**

The civil society perspective was structured, based on two interviews with CCC and DIEH. As it was expected, CCC as a NGO tries to preserve its independence by performing its traditional roles as organizing campaigns against MNs and restricting itself into joining mutual projects with the private sector and government. Their collaboration is limited to round-table meetings and conferences, however based on their influence, even though as not actual collaboration, there are strategic shifts by MNs towards improving the working rights. CCC as a NGO partner contains the moral integrity of society, its most urgent issues and the ability to trigger collaboration among different actors. All of these matters are important and can contribute in forming successful CSR partnerships, if they are able to develop new roles. (Jensen 2013)

DIEH as a multi-stakeholder initiative has a valuable contribution in facilitating partnerships. Some of the interviewees expressed its important role as a creator of safe place, where different social institutions can gather and work towards creating sustainable solutions. Based on DIEH lack of trust as a main challenge, especially for the private sector, is partly overcome. Actors, however, preserve their traditional roles, where the Danish government has in-direct supporting role and NGOs tend to swerve their attention for finding common solutions, to stay independent and keep their goals intact. Thus, there is a genuine lack of full commitment and collaboration. In addition, even though, the engaged actors possess valuable knowledge, mainly their differences without clear understating of the benefits of partnership can be challenging and lead to unproductive solutions. Moreover, DIEH as an initiative is responsible only for bringing actors together, without monitoring their activity and providing feedback, which is another reason for not to be considered as a partnership. DIEH qualities as a partner are in creating dialogue among different social institutions, steer their attention towards a common goal and overcoming the lack of trust among the partners. (Lassen 2013)

Due to the interview data and formed overview of the Danish triangular relationship, several challenges and benefits can be drawn and a follow-up of the second sub-question can be made (table 2):

What are the challenges and benefits, established by the partnerships for government, civil society and MNs?

CSR in globalized world and cross-sector partnerships		Analysis	
<u>Benefits</u>	<u>Challenges</u>	<u>Benefits</u>	<u>Challenges</u>
Expanding the problem scope	Overcoming traditional roles	Globalization	Overcoming traditional roles
Globalizations as an opportunity creator	Globalization as a creator of environmental and social degradation	Reporting	Lack of trust
Creation of mutual of trust	Lack of trust among the actors	Broad support, into developing knowledge, skills and sustainable solutions	Lack of collaboration
Facilitate innovation	High risk for engaging in partnerships	Creation of mutual of trust	Globalization
Reduce costs, due to innovation	Lack of information about partnership benefits	Democratic, balance approach	Lack of monitoring
Developing of new knowledge and skills			Differences of opinions
Developing of new governance approach			Lack of acknowledging the problems and commitment
			Lack of information about CSR
			Lack of information about partnership benefits

Table 2: Challenges and benefits of CSPs (follow up from chapter three) (Lassen 2013) (Hasselbalch 2013) (Jensen 2013) (Riber 2013) (Villadsen 2013)

Five benefits were defined, after the analysis of the Danish triangular relationship and created Danish PRG&TP, which are similar to the ones in chapter three. Partnership within both is perceived as **developer of skills, knowledge and sustainable solutions**, as well as **creator of trust**. In addition, **globalization** is again comprehended as a facilitator of opportunities and partnerships. Last, but not least, some of the interviewees frame benefits as a **democratic and balance approach** and **reporting** by MNs to contribute to the approach. (Jensen 2013) (Lassen 2013) (Villadsen 2013) (Riber 2013) (Hasselbalch 2013)

After the analysis of the gathered data, similarities as part of the challenges with the chapter three can also be found e.g. **overcoming traditional roles, lack of information about CSR and partnership benefits.** In addition, another problem is the lack of trust among the actors. Moreover, DIEH and DBA perceived partnerships challenging, due to the **involvement of diverse set of actors and opinions**, which lead to **lack of acknowledging the problems, commitment and consequently absence of collaboration.** **Globalization** is also categorized as a challenge, which increase social and environmental tensions and decrease partnership formation, where globally the **lack of monitoring** of social institutions' performance is again an obstacle. (Jensen 2013) (Lassen 2013) (Villadsen 2013) (Riber 2013) (Hasselbalch 2013)

It is obvious that, after the analysis of the interview data, more challenges than benefits were defined. A reason for that can be found within first the lack of information about CSR as a relationship builder and second lack of information about the benefits of partnerships. This is mainly because both of these issues are researched increasingly by scholars and as parts of the theoretical knowledge, are difficult by the social actors to extract their practical usefulness. However, this thesis tries to capture this knowledge, evaluate and present its practical value, by looking into a concrete case, involving the social actors. Thus, in order to create better understanding and trigger potential use and improvement of the partnerships, the challenges and benefits, defined by the interviewed actors are outlined into a column chart below, with corresponding number evaluation as described in the Methodology chapter (figure 4).

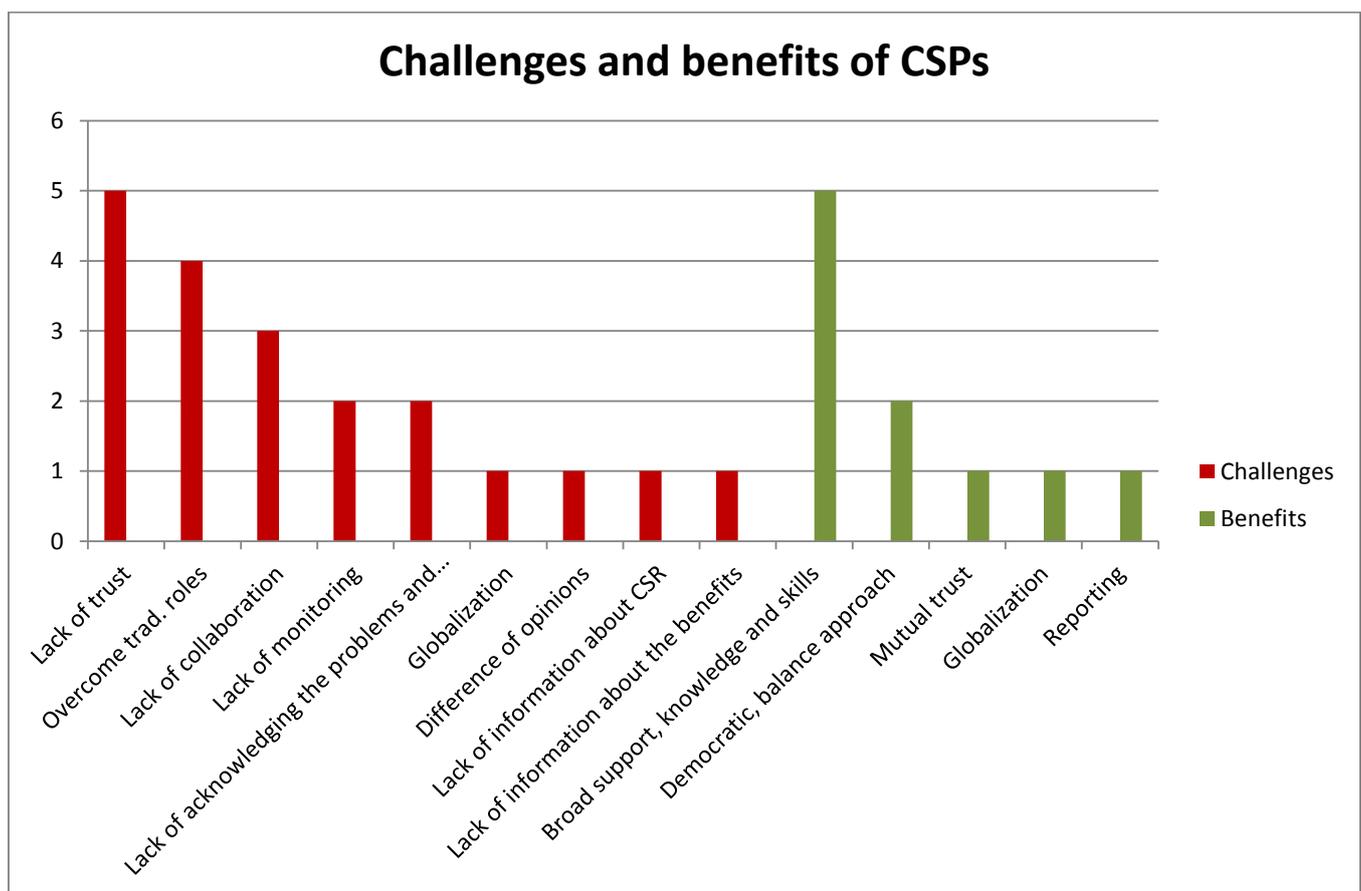


Figure 4: Challenges and benefits of CSPs (evaluation) (Jensen 2013) (Lassen 2013) (Villadsen 2013) (Riber 2013) (Hasselbalch 2013)

Based on the column chart it is clear that most of the actors recognize the value of **mutual collaboration/broad support**, which generates new knowledge and finds sustainable solutions. This benefit was mentioned during all five interviews, due to that all of the interviewees have experienced collaboration with the other sectors and evaluate its usefulness in their own work. Partnership is as well recognized as **democratic and balance approach** by two of the interviewed actors. Whereas, **mutual trust, globalization and reporting** were mentioned once. (Jensen 2013) (Lassen 2013) (Villadsen 2013) (Riber 2013) (Hasselbalch 2013)

In addition, the challenge mentioned by all the interviewees is the **lack of trust**, which is connected with the **traditional roles** of the actors, where they prefer to use their conventional modes when engaging in partnership, which has proved in this thesis inadequate to generate the needed CSR actions. Interestingly, **absence of information in terms of CSR and partnership's benefits**, are mentioned only by one of the interviewees, which is an evidence that there is broad access to information, however this does not mean that all of the actors have mutual understanding about these issues or willingness to engage into partnerships, which interferes with the creation of the CSR partnerships objectives, established within this thesis. (Jensen 2013) (Lassen 2013) (Villadsen 2013) (Riber 2013) (Hasselbalch 2013)

In addition, **lack of monitoring** is connected with both the Danish government and DIEH abstract from business operations, by providing CSR requirements, without taking the step to follow their implementation. Thus, the MNs are engaged, but still **lack to commitment and acknowledge of the problems**, since these two actors do not ensure third-party review, to point out the problematic issues. Moreover, **globalization** is seen by the interviewees as a challenge and benefit. The first is connected with the inability of the actors to communicate and deal with global social and environmental problems. The second, **globalization** as a process, is found valuable in terms of creating and improving economies of third world countries. If CSR partnerships are formed, globalization can be categorized as a builder of the triple-bottom line. (Jensen 2013) (Lassen 2013) (Villadsen 2013) (Riber 2013) (Hasselbalch 2013)

To sum up, all of these benefits as part of the PRG&TP can be beneficial for dealing the Bangladesh G&TI CSR problems, where the actors have open and collaborative relationships, based on democratic and balance setting. These issues are crucial when dealing with different actors for improving the social aspects of CSR. However, due to lack of trust, overcoming tradition roles towards better communication and lack of commitment and acknowledgement of the problems in Bangladesh G&TI can interfere with forming CSPs.

By reflecting on the role of government, MNs and civil society as part of the case study, an answer to the last sub-question can be given:

**How do government, multinationals and civil society develop CSR strategies as part of a partnership relation?**

Within the study eligibility criteria, different aspects of a partnership were outlined, based on purely the actors' perspective. In addition, the three actors are considered to form a triangular relationship, where based on democracy, equality and sharing of responsibilities, a development of CSR strategies can be performed. However, after the analysis of the case study, the framed challenges and benefits, the triangular relationship in Danish context among the actors is slightly different (figure 5).

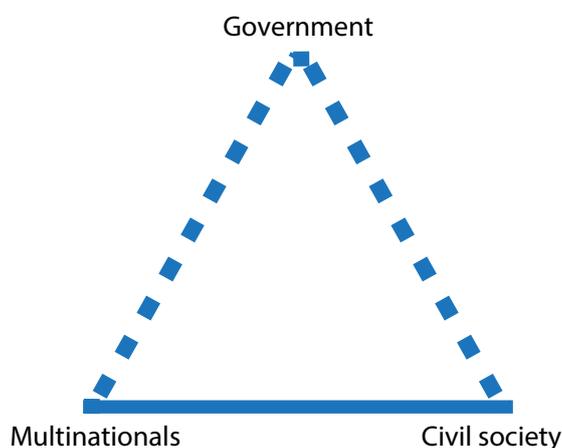


Figure 5: The triangular relationship as part of the Danish PRG&TP (Ministry of foreign affairs, Denmark 2013)

Nationally and globally, MNs have developed stable relationships with civil society, where within global level the last has the role of the stick, in order to overcome nation-state deficit and lack of governmental regulations. However, this does not mean, that they have as well developed new modes of collaboration with MNs, which interferes with fulfilling the CSR objectives. On the other hand, the Danish government engages with MNs and civil society, in order to shape its CSR policies, but restrict itself from full collaboration, since it considered the development of CSR strategies a political responsibility (Hasselbalch 2013). Due to this lack of sharing of responsibilities among government and MNs, the latter can never be in violation of human rights, since it is not their responsibility to ensure, which could be a main reason for the created social degradations by the private sector. (Villadsen 2013)

Thus, within created Danish partnership, the actors preserve their traditional roles of governmental, non-governmental and private institutions as outlined within the first sub-question and try to collaborate, by using their conventional modes for implementing CSR. Even though, the Danish government policy approach is categorized as a partnership, it has mostly endorsing and facilitating nature and relationship with the private sector and civil society. Thus, it restricts itself of full collaboration. Successful partnership needs strong state intervention rather than decentralization (Mol 2007). The partnership is between MNs and civil society on one side and government on the other, but in such terms can it be called partnership?! (Hasselbalch 2013) The needed CSR requirements are built upon civil society knowledge and experience, present the moral aspects of the problem within the G&TI and could be defined to have limited scope, since they do not embrace knowledge and expertise from the other participants. The partners have supplementary role to agree upon and follow them, where important actors as Bangladesh government and NGOs are not included. Hence, the set CSR goals have generalized and in-direct approach, due to the lack of equal involvement of all interested parties. (IndustriALL Global Union 2013)

In these terms, the main purpose of the Danish PRG&TP is to raise the awareness in terms of the urgent CSR issues within Bangladesh G&TI. As it is still in planning phase, no concrete conclusions and evaluation of its CSR impact can be made. But, based on theoretical inputs, analysis of the formed partnership relations and responsibilities among the actors within PRG&TI, it can be said, that the partnership will have limited influence towards achieving its goals and improving the working and human rights within the Bangladesh textile sector. (Ministry of foreign affairs, Denmark 2013)

The next chapter presents answer to the research question of the thesis, together with a list of recommendations, which could be useful for both improvement of the current partnerships initiatives, including the case study and taking into consideration for future formed partnerships within the G&TI.

# VII. Research question and recommendations for further development of CSR partnerships

Based on the presented analysis, this chapter frames an answer to the research question:

How can partnership among government, civil society and multinationals be developed in order to support and implement CSR strategies within the textile sector in Bangladesh?

Within the recent years partnerships have turned out to be widely used innovative mechanisms for dealing with complex collective actions and addressing common challenges (Yianni, Jamali and Abdallah 2011). They are used in different spheres, combining different social institutions. CSPs, as well, are broadly researched by the academic world. Even so, there is still lack of understanding of their objectives and benefits. When parties enter into a partnership, they overlook its importance and goals. Hence, these partnerships usually do not achieve its aims or their impact is limited. (Glasbergen 2007)

This thesis looked into different aspects in order to define the problems, which stifle the actors to create mutual beneficial relationships. Diverse set of challenges were indicated, based on the literature review and conducted interviews and the main problem is that the actors are too caught in their own worlds, using their traditional techniques to acknowledge their inefficiency. The CSR partnerships evoke government, MNs and civil society to use their own knowledge, but to develop new skills in order to collaborate better. Thus, CSR strategies could be supported and implemented successfully and not only within the textile sector. (Googins and Rochlin 2000)

Of course, the social institutions all try to cope with different demands, when entering into partnerships e.g. demands for CSR encourage businesses; demands for improved efficiency motivate civil society and demands to supply better public services encourage governments. But all of these demands aim at one goal, achieving sustainability nationally and globally. The actors need to find out how to work together in order to address the complexity of the new challenges. (Googins and Rochlin 2000)

Hence, for providing an adequate answer to the research question, a list of recommendations is outlined below, which aims to support CSR strategies within every sector and help towards creating CSR partnerships, by presenting several steps in this process for government, MNs and civil society to follow:

- Defying clear long-term CSR goals;
- Understanding how partnership will generate value for the individual actors;
- Assessing strengths and weakness of the partners, where the strengths of one can be used to overcome weakness of another as part of a partnership;
- Obtaining senior level of commitment – it is not enough to support certain actions, there is a need to contribute to the partnership relation;
- Engaging in frequent communication – keep the involved parties with up-to-day information and tracking the progress, is crucial for achieving the best results;
- Assigning professionals to lead the work – working with a certain and defined number of actors, can increase the level of collaboration;
- Sharing the commitment of resources, where democracy and equality are key to partnerships;
- Evaluating results – this is the only way to progress;

(Googins and Rochlin 2000)

In addition, especially for the Bangladesh textile sector and chosen case study, some issues should be taken into consideration:

- Finding ways to motivate and engage all the relevant parties i.e. Bangladesh government and NGOs;
- Creating safe place, where the actors can be opened and communicate freely;
- Developing new roles of action, which trigger innovation and communication, as well as equal commitment and engagement;
- Partnerships should have positive motives – creating urgent CSR actions, not negative as escaping difficult situations; (Googins and Rochlin 2000)

# VIII. Discussions

The master thesis was structured, mainly upon hypothesis and visions, in relation to CSPs. In addition, different theoretical assumptions were outlined with corresponding analysis, which could trigger number of discussions. Thus, before proceeding with the conclusive remarks of the thesis, some debatable issues need to be outlined.

## 1. CSPs vs. Multi-stakeholder initiatives

Partnerships and CSR as concepts are researched within wide range of literature and they contained variety of understandings. Having this in mind, a particular angle was chosen in this work that presents partnership as a solution towards dealing with global challenges and filling the gaps within the CSR polemic. In that sense, within this thesis, partnership was defined in a specific way as a contributor to CSR, which was used towards shaping the analysis of the thesis. By having this, the thesis predisposes certain outcomes. However, some might consider DIEH as a multi-stakeholder initiative, used in this work as a part of the triangular relationship, as a partnership on its own. Although, DIEH preserves some of the partnership's benefits – overcoming lack of trust and information gaps, within the thesis research and gathering of information, different aspects of the multi-stakeholder initiative, led the researcher into considering its unpreparedness to be classified as a partnership. However, these discussions are only based on DIEH and its specifications; they cannot be interpreted to multi-stakeholder initiatives in general.

There are several issues to support this statement, which were as well indicated during the interview with DIEH:

- DIEH engages different actors, which have diverse ideas in achieving the goals that the initiative implies. Thus, they do not try to find a better way to communicate among each other, but just to exchange ideas in achieving the set objectives;
- Another aspect that interferes with the above problems is the lack by the actors to develop new roles, which will be better equipped to deal with challenges. This triggers inability in some cases to achieve solutions, based on the attachment of the parties to their traditional roles;
- Due to the last aspect, the equal and democratic relations among the actors are limited, where the actors have different understanding of CSR and bring this in the multi-stakeholder initiative. NGOs are considered as the moral compass of the society, which has its best interests and government accepts CSR as political approach and restricts itself from fully collaboration. In these terms, MNs pondered as a creator of social and environmental degradation, which should comply with their guidelines;

(Lassen 2013)

Partnership is a democratic approach, where the actors have equal inputs into the decision-making, since they are all considered to have valuable knowledge. By engaging into partnerships, the actors understand and acknowledge their benefits and are prepared to collaborate, which allow them to develop new set of roles, to facilitate better the communication among them. Mainly due to the last, a contribution to the CSR field could be performed.

## 2. CSPs vs. network theory

Another debatable aspect is connected with the chosen theoretical framework, which reflects on cross-sector partnership's specifications and could be considered too narrow as an approach, in order to understand

the complex of actors' roles and relationships. Thus, network theory or social network theory might be better equipped to handle these issues. It is a concept that presents the connection among formal and informal structures and incorporates some of the cross-sector partnerships objectives. It is structured by mechanisms and processes that interact within certain space, to yield outcomes for individuals and groups. The social relationships are viewed as nodes and ties, whereupon the nodes are the individual actors (organizations) within the network and the ties are their relationships (transactions) in the same network. (Borgatti and Halgin 2011)

However, network theory emphasizes on the importance of the relationships rather than the significance of the individual actors. These types of relations leave less room for individual success and concentrate on the structure of the network. (Borgatti and Halgin 2011) Even though, network theory concentrates on the structure rather than individual actors, which could benefits towards overcoming traditional roles of the actors and eases communication, the actors by themselves could not be neglected. They are the important link, due to knowledge and expertise, where the exchange of transactions comes after they have evaluated their importance and strengths. This approach is framed within partnership theory and hence, this thesis researched and stressed the importance of the actors for engaging into partnership, due to their significance and knowledge contribution in relation to CSR.

# IX. Conclusion and recommendations for future research

In a globalized world, MNs inflict both environmental and social tensions (Levi and Kaplan 2007). Thus, they are encouraged by variety of actors to implement CSR strategies nationally and globally. However, they still struggle to understand the CSR language, due to the complexity of social responsibilities (Villadsen 2013). The last is mainly complicated, based on the different inputs from social institutions e.g. government, civil society, where everyone has a certain agenda and goals. In order to facilitate better communication and consequently contribution to the CSR polemic, CSP was proposed as an approach. It engages variety of actors, who through collaboration, sharing of responsibility, knowledge and clear defined goals, can bring understanding within CSR and deal with environmental and social tensions.

Within this thesis, partnership was defined in a specific way as a contributor to CSR field, which will be better equipped to deal with the problems, evoking from globalization in Bangladesh textile sector, by having an equal engagement, collaboration and exchange of cognition among governments, MNs and civil society institutions (Mol 2007). Hence, since the beginning the research predisposes certain results, which were supported by different theories. First, partnership as a sustainable concept will create a beneficial area for exchange and sharing of responsibilities, CSR knowledge and expertise from government, MNs and civil society to collaborate towards achieving a common goal. Second, the actors will be opened to collaborate and development new roles for better facilitation of communication and resources transfer, where the analysed existing partnerships will incorporate these criteria;

However, after the analysis of the gathered data in relation to the existing partnerships in the Bangladesh G&TI, the following results were outlined:

- The existing partnerships lack the inclusion of all relevant actors as part of the decision-making processes;
- There is a lack of understanding about CSR partnerships and the benefits that they can ratify for the engaged actors; hence CSR strategies are stifle, due to absence of equal support and contribution by all the partners;
- Bangladesh government restricts itself into joining partnerships, due to its invested personal interests within the textile sector; whether the Danish one was defined as a facilitator of CSR, rather than a partner, despite its overall accepted policy framework;
- There is a lack of trust and prejudice among the actors;

In order to overcome these issues and further develop the CSR partnerships in the Bangladesh G&TI, a list of recommendations was outlined with the following key points:

- Equal commitment and allocation of time and resources by all the partners;
- Building a partnership relation requires the partners to have long-term goals, where their relation play a key role in achieving them;
- Partners need to respect each other and invest in their relationship with assets and skills; hence a mutual trust can be created;
- Open and regular communication can ensure successful pursue of the set goals;

(Jamali and Keshishian 2009)

## **Recommendations for future research**

It is clear that no single institution can achieve sustainability, without interacting with others. However, the actors lack of CSR understanding and have prejudices among each other, which stifle the partnership progress. Hence, this thesis tried to capture knowledge within a particular sphere, in order to bring clarity about the value of CSPs for supporting and implementing CSR strategies in Bangladesh textile sector.

In addition, due to its focus, variety of recommendations can be outlined for further research within CSR, partnerships and both. On one hand, a specific research was undertaken in Bangladesh G&TI and Danish partnership context. However, the textile sector has a global influence and this research can be a base for expanding the scope to other developed and developing countries for creating CSR partnerships. On the other, a specific set of CSPs were chosen for this thesis. Despite that, within the G&TI, different initiatives are formed towards improving human and working rights, involving variety of international institutions. Thus, a research can be taken up towards their embracement of partnership's virtues and framing the particular actors' relations.

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