Stakeholder Expectations, CSR & Legitimacy

A Case Study on BP

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Corporate Social Responsiblity, eller CSR, er blevet et populært koncept i dagens samfund for virksomheder, på grund af stakeholders præference har ændret sig, og man ser nu, at stakeholders er mere tilbøjelige til at støtte virksomheder, som engagerer sig i CSR. Når virksomheder engagerer sig i CSR, medfølger der også diverse fordele, men det er blevet sværere og sværere for virksomheder at navigere rundt i. Ifølge et studie, hvor man undersøger, hvor mange af de deltagende CEOs ser CSR som et vigtigt aspekt i forbindelse med virksomhedens overleves i dagens samfund, så svarerede 93% af de deltagende, at de opfatter som vigtigt.

CSR er mere besværligt for nogle virksomheder end andre. En af de virksomheder som har vanskeligheder med CSR er British Petroleum. BP befinder sig inde for en industri, som folk opfatter som miljøødelæggende, og det har haft en negativ effekt på virksomheden omdømme.

Dette speciale forsøger at undersøge, hvordan en virksomhed BP kan imødekomme stakeholders forventninger til bæredygtighed, når den befinder sig i en industri, der ødelægger miljøet? Dette bliver undersøgt ved hjælp Kritisk Diskurs Analyse, The Stakeholder Salience Model, Morsing og Schultz' tre CSR kommunikationsstrategier, og ved hjælp af Suchmans legitimitets strategier.

Den kritiske diskurs analyse belyste stakeholdernes forventninger til BP på begrund af en kulturel kontekst. The Stakeholder Salience model viste hvilke stakeholder BP så som værende magtfulde og i stand til at give legitimation. Dette viste sig at være aktionærer og virksomhedens medarbejdere. Ved hjælp af Morsing og Schultz' CSR kommunikationsstrategi, var det tydeligt at virksomheden brugte forskellige strategier for at fremstå som bæredygtig i stakeholdernes øjne. Suchmans legitimitet strategier afdækkede, hvordan BP brugte forskellige strategier for at fremstå bæredygtig og for at opnå legitimitet fra samfundet.

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1. Introduction

Corporate Social Responsibility has become a rather popular concept in current society. The concept of Corporate Social Responsibility, also referred to as CSR, is especially a trend for corporations to engage in due to stakeholders' preference to support socially and environmentally responsible corporations (Miller 2019). The definition and concept of CSR is in constant development which essentially means that CSR does not have one official definition (Coombs & Holladay 2012, 5-6). However, Coombs and Holladay offer this definition: "*CSR is the voluntary actions that a corporation implements as it pursues its mission and fulfils its perceived obligations to stakeholders, including employees, communities, the environment, and society as a whole.*" (Coombs & Holladay 2012, 8). This definition clarifies that CSR is expressed through different actions that a corporation performs in order to comply with different obligations from stakeholders. Stakeholders have changed their preferences because of a rise in awareness in terms of the environmental impact of products which results in stakeholders being more informed and enlightened on the matter (Butler 2018). This stakeholder preference not only increases the pressure for corporations regarding their engagement in CSR, but it also presents an increasing focus on how corporations communicate CSR (Schmeltz 2017, 47-48). When a corporation communicates its CSR activities, it includes different beneficial aspects, however it also includes challenges which complicate the communication assignment for the corporation (Coombs & Holladay 2012, 111). Some of the benefits which a corporation can achieve are reduction of business cost and enhancing of reputation, and challenges can be stakeholders which are sceptical of the corporation's CSR activities and communication (Coombs & Holladay 2012, 111). Sustainability is a frequently used word by corporations when they are communicating their CSR. According to a study regarding CEOs and sustainability, 93% of the participating CEOs stated that sustainability is important in terms of future success for their businesses (Kell & Berthon 2013, 11). Corporate sustainability can be defined as: "meeting the needs of the present generation without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their needs." (Duttagupta et al. 2021, 24).

It is for some corporations more challenging than for others, especially if the corporation is considered to be within an industry which is responsible for the global environment (Duttagupta et al. 2021, 22). One corporation which has experienced challenges and difficulties with this matter is

British Petroleum (BP), and this has resulted in a negative loaded perception of the corporation (Perino 2019). British Petroleum is categorised as an oil and gas corporation as well as one of the major players within the industry (Forbes n.d.). Moreover, British Petroleum has been accused of greenwashing regarding the corporation's ongoing contribution and impact on climate change (Carrington 2021). A corporation can be accused of greenwashing, when it claims to be considerate of the environment and attempting to create a green impression of the corporation while continuously harming the environment (Coombs & Holladay 74, 2012). In 2020, BP announced that it was going to "reimagine energy for people and the planet" (WBCSD 2021).

This thesis will investigate how a corporation such as British Petroleum utilises and communicates its CSR in order to appear as a sustainable corporation while being within an industry which is perceived as harming the environment. This leads to the following problem statement:

2. Problem Statement

How can a corporation appear sustainable in order to accommodate stakeholders' expectations regarding sustainability when it operates within an industry which is considered harmful to the environment?

3. Research Design

In the following section, I will elaborate upon this thesis research design. The research design is a form of foundation for this thesis' method of data collection and conduction of analysis. Essentially, the purpose of this section is to elaborate upon the different decisions I made regarding this thesis (Creswell & Creswell 2017, 3).

All components of this thesis are interconnected, and they thereby affect each other. This means that my position of researcher essentially affects my research method, and my research method affects my method for analysis and so on. I will elaborate upon my position as researcher in section 4. As my position of researcher is in alignment with social constructivism, this thesis' research method is in alignment with the qualitative research method. This thesis will apply the qualitative research approach not only because it is in alignment with my position as researcher, but because it investigates feelings and attitudes which will assist me in answering my problem statement. The chosen theories within this thesis are also in accordance with my position as researcher, and they

are chosen in order to serve this thesis and its research approach the best outcome. This thesis is a form of case study, which is a qualitative research strategy that this thesis will apply in order to investigate and create understanding of the socially constructed concept of CSR. My methodological considerations are elaborated upon in section 9. My empirical data consist of a CEO letter from Bernard Looney, EVP letter from Guilia Chierchia, and an Interview with Bernard Looney conducted by Bloomberg News, and this means that this thesis has made use of desk research. In addition, this thesis will apply Fairclough's framework regarding Critical Discourse Analysis as this will reveal attitudes, feelings, and underlying meanings which is in accordance with the qualitative research method. This thesis will not use all aspects of Fairclough's framework as it is not all aspects which are relevant. Fairclough's framework will mainly be applied in order to investigate the social practice as this will allow this thesis to investigate the socially constructed discourses in society. I will account for which aspects I have chosen to include in section 10.1.1. The analysis of this thesis is divided into two sections, the first part of my analysis consists of my findings regarding The Critical Discourse Analysis, and it includes my investigation of BPs stakeholders by the means of The Stakeholder Salience Model. I have chosen to divide my analysis into two sections in order to separate my use of models and analysis method from my use of theories. This thesis will apply Mitchell, Agle, and Wood's Stakeholder Salience Model in order to investigate which stakeholders BP perceives as important as well as create an understanding of the relation between BP and its stakeholders. This thesis will also apply Morsing and Schultz's Three CSR Communication strategies in order to determine how BP strategically communicates its CSR. Lastly, this thesis will apply Suchman's strategies regarding legitimacy to investigate how BP accommodates its stakeholders' expectations in order to achieve, maintain, or repair its legitimacy. All theories applied in this thesis are in alignment with my position as researcher.

Within this section of my thesis, I attempted to briefly outline the course my thesis. Some of the aspects mentioned in this research design will be elaborated upon later in this thesis.

4. Theory of Science

This section will elaborate upon social constructivism and how this approach has influenced this thesis as well as reflections regarding my position as a researcher.

Within the approach of social constructivism, the assumption is that individuals are searching for an understanding of the world in which they live and operate in. This includes the construction of

different subjective meanings based on individuals' experiences with objects or aspects (Creswell & Creswell 2017, 8). These subjective meanings are often negotiated socially which means that they are not forced or imprinted, they are created by interaction between individuals and through both cultural and historical rules within individuals' lives. Thus, communication between individuals plays a significant role within this approach as it is typically within interaction that individuals make sense of a situation (Creswell & Creswell 2017, 8). When we interact, we are not only exchanging information, but we are also constructing and legitimating the perspective of the world (Jackson 2010, 171). Furthermore, the specific contexts in which individuals live and interact are also important in order to understand the cultural settings of the individuals (Creswell & Creswell 2017, 8).

An aspect which is socially constructed is knowledge. This also includes knowledge regarding reality as reality is a social construction in itself and is created through interaction and negotiation between individuals (Holm 2011, 122). This essentially means that knowledge is developed, maintained, and transferred through social situations in which society creates a common understanding of what is perceived as valid knowledge and what is not perceived as valid knowledge (Collin 2012, 67). Furthermore, this is an indication of how social constructivism perceives knowledge differently than other approaches. For instance, empiricism believes that we see the world almost exactly as it is. This is in contrast with social constructivism as it emphasises that we construct knowledge in order to create an understanding of the world and the reality (Jackson 2010, 168). However, the construction of knowledge is a complex process due to the world's diversity which creates various subsets of understandings of how different people make sense of the world. For instance, something might be considered as real for a religious individual, but it is not considered to be real for a non-religious individual (Jackson 2010, 168). This can also be translated to the concept of CSR, since the concept is understood according to one's own background and culture. (Coombs & Holladay 2012, 6). This is also a significant and valid point to articulate, as I have obtained knowledge regarding CSR and sustainability from society in which I interact and communicate with different social groups. This essentially means that my knowledge and perception of CSR are a product of the social environment in which I operate.

As I previously mentioned, this thesis will use a definition by Coombs and Holladay as this definition articulates CSR as a method used by corporations in order to fulfil perceived obligations from society. Coombs and Holladay define CSR as:" *CSR is the voluntary actions that a corporation implements as it pursues its mission and fulfils its perceived obligations to*

stakeholders, including employees, communities, the environment, and society as a whole." (Coombs & Holladay 2012, 8). As previously mentioned, CSR is in today's society perceived as important for corporations to engage in due to stakeholder's preferences and expectations. Therefore, this thesis argues that CSR is perceived as important because we in society have made a common understanding and social agreement thereof. My decision regarding the CSR definition will be further elaborate upon in section 7.1.

My position as researcher is further illustrated by the theories which will be applied in this thesis. This thesis' theories are Morsing and Schultz' three CSR communication strategies and Suchman's strategies for managing legitimacy. However, this thesis will also apply The Stakeholder Salience Model and Fairclough's three-dimensional framework of Critical Discourse Analysis. Morsing and Schultz's CSR communication strategies are in accordance with social constructivism as they state that we make sense in the world by communicating with others, reading communication from others, and exchanging ideas with others (Morsing & Schultz 2006, 323-324). Suchman also argues that the concept of legitimacy is socially constructed because it is a product of society's shared beliefs and value. In order for a corporation to achieve legitimacy, its actions must be accepted by society (Suchman 1995, 574). Legitimacy's connection to social constructivism is further illustrated in Suchman's definition of the concept, as he defined legitimacy as: "[…] *a generalised perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions.*" (Suchman 1995, 574). Mitchell, Agle, and Wood's Stakeholder Salience Model is also connected to social constructivism, as the assumption that stakeholders can influence a corporation is socially constructed. They believe that: "Stakeholder attributes are socially constructed, not objective, reality." (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997, 868). Thus, they are stating that the potential stakeholder attributes: power, urgency, and legitimacy are socially constructed, and this means that stakeholders are able to influence corporations because society believes that they possess power, legitimacy, and urgency to do so.

As a researcher within the approach of social constructivism, I am not able exclude my own interpretations as they are constructed and influenced by my background in a personal, cultural, and historical manner (Creswell 2009, 8). This essentially means that the knowledge and potential results which I obtained from this thesis will be somewhat subjective since I am not able to exclude my interpretations from the used data. Furthermore, the impact of social constructivism will be elaborated continuously throughout this thesis.

5. Case background

The following section will provide information regarding the case which this thesis will take it's point of departure in. This includes a brief description of British Petroleum as a corporation as well as a description of the field in which the corporation operates within. Additionally, the purpose of this section is to clarify the reasoning behind the chosen corporation and industry.

5.1 Description of British Petroleum

The story of British Petroleum begins back in 1908, when there was discovered oil in Persia. This resulted in British Petroleum being founded in 1909 under the name Anglo-Persian Oil Company. The corporation has since changed its name various times, but since 2001 the corporation has been known as British Petroleum and also referred to as BP (BP, A, n.d.). The corporation was founded in London and Glasgow, and it still has its headquarters in London (BP, B, n.d.). Today, BP operates in more than 70 countries and the corporation is considered to be one of the major players within the oil and gas industry (Forbes, n.d.).

In terms of sustainability and CSR, British Petroleum was one of the first within its industry to focus on and explore different energy sources than traditional fossil fuels, and the corporation invested $8 billion dollars in renewable energy such as solar power and wind power (Bousso 2017). In the beginning of 2020, British Petroleum introduced 20 claims in relation to sustainability as the corporation is striving to be net zero by 2050 (WBCSD 2021). These sustainability claims include for instance using and developing more clean energy, building sustainable livelihoods, and becoming water positive (BP, C, n.d.). These sustainability claims are a part of a larger change in the corporation, as the corporation are taking steps in a greener direction in order to minimise its carbon footprint (Ambrose 2020). BP is referring to this change as new purpose to reimagine energy for people and the planet, and this new purpose is supposed to transform BP from an international oil corporation to an integrated energy corporation which focuses on solar and wind energy (Appendix 1, ll. 13-16). CSR has proven to be a challenge for the corporation, and according to The Reputation Institute, BP has achieved a rather negative reputation, and the corporation has lost the trust of the public (Perino 2019). According to an article from Business Insider, BP has pledged to become more transparent due to a pressure from shareholders (Perino 2019).

5.2 The Oil and Gas Industry

As this thesis's purpose is to investigate a corporation's CSR within an industry which is considered to have a negative impact on the environment, it is important to clarify the reasoning behind my choices regarding British Petroleum and the oil and gas industry. In general, CSR and sustainability within the oil and gas industry have been popular concepts for a large period of time due to the industry's negative environmental impact such as oil spills and natural gas emissions (Frynas 2009, 6-7). Oil and gas drills are perceived as dangerous activities, and these activities are typically not environmentally friendly. The gas and oil industry has been involved in a lot of different incidents due to a lack of environmental, health, and safety efforts. These incidents are for instance the Santa Barbara oil in spill in 1969 and the Deep-Water Horizon disaster in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010 (Duttagupta et. al. 2021, 24).

6. Empirical Data

The purpose of this section is to introduce the empirical data which will be used in this thesis. The empirical data of this thesis consist of BP's sustainability report from 2020, a CEO letter, an EVP letter, and an interview with the CEO, Bernard Looney.

6.1 BP's Sustainability Report from 2020: Reimagining Energy

This thesis will include BP's Sustainability Report from 2020 as a part of its empirical data. The sustainability report includes different sustainability initiatives which the corporation either already has implemented or will implement in the future (BP 2020, 2). According to BP, this report is an illustration of the corporation's new strategy and sustainability aims, and the report are accordingly influenced by this (BP 2020, 2). The report consists of facts and information regarding the corporation's various focus areas and values as well as a retrospect of 2020. A major part of this reports focuses on the different sustainable aims and the corporation's new purpose of "reimaging energy for people and our planet" (BP 2020, 2). In addition, the sustainability report from 2020 includes a CEO letter from Bernard Looney as well as a letter from BP's executive vice president, Giulia Chierchia (BP 2020, 3-4). The two letters will be further elaborated upon in section 6.2 and section 6.3. I will account for this thesis' selection of empirical data in section 9.2 in my methodological considerations.

6.2 Letter from CEO Bernard Looney

As a part of its sustainability report, BP includes a CEO letter from Bernard Looney. The headline of the CEO letter is "We have to take action…." which reflects the content of the letter (BP 2020, 3). The CEO letter is placed in the beginning of the report, as it is placed after the tables of content, and it is therefore one of the first pages of the report to be read (BP 2020, 3). The letter is divided into sections depending on its content, and these sub-sections are named "connecting strategy and purpose" and "progress through the pandemic" (BP 2020, 3). In his letter, he touches upon topics such as the concerns of COVID-19 as well as the corporation's new sustainability aims. The CEO letter is enclosed as Appendix 1.

6.3 Letter from EVP Guilia Chierchia

The empirical data of this thesis also consist of a letter by BP's EVP, Guilia Chierchia. The letters EVP is an abbreviation for the position executive vice president. Furthermore, as it is stated in her letter, Giulia Chierchia's focus is within strategy and sustainability (BP 2020, 4). Within her letter, Guilia Chierchia elaborate upon BP's new strategy, which is supposed to guide its work, focus it activities, and propel the corporation forward (BP 2020, 4). This letter is also divided into sections, and this letter consists of the sections: building for the future and building together (BP 2020, 4). The letter from the EVP, Giulia Chierchia is enclosed as Appendix 2.

6.4 Bloomberg Interview with Bernard Looney: "BP CEO on Clean Energy Transition, Natural Gas, and Trading

The last part of this thesis empirical data consists of an interview with Bernard Looney conducted by Bloomberg News. The interview is retrieved from YouTube.com on, and it was published on the 5 August 2020, and it is 10 minutes and 10 seconds long. In this interview, they touch upon topics related to the BP's new transformational shift from an international oil corporation to an integrated energy corporation (Appendix 3, ll. 5-6). This entails how BP intends to manage the shift, and what the shift essentially means for the future. For instance, he states thar corporation will reduce its oil production by 40% within the next decade (Appendix 3, l. 98). The interview has been transcribed, and it is enclosed as Appendix 3.

7. Literature Review

The following section will attempt to outline the theoretical fields of CSR and Legitimacy in order to provide this thesis with a substantial overview of both fields. The literature review is divided into two sections which separate the fields as this will allow this thesis to investigate both fields individually. Furthermore, I find it important to mention that I will not investigate both fields in the same manner as this will not result in the best outcome. I will investigate the fields in a manner which I find most relevant for the purpose of this thesis. Firstly, this thesis will elaborate upon the field of CSR in section 7.1. Secondly, it will elaborate upon the field of legitimacy in section 7.2.

7.1 CSR

The first part of this literature review will attempt to conceptualise the concept that is CSR as well as investigate the history and development of CSR. In addition, this section will provide knowledge regarding the field of CSR as it will introduce different theories within the field. Lastly, I will account for my choice of theory.

7.1.1 The History and Development of CSR

CSR might be referred to as a modern and newer concept, but CSR has a deep and varied history which is said to be traced all the way back to the 1800s. However, it is argued that the concept first achieved its impetus in the 1950-1960s where corporations first began assuming responsibility for their actions due to the public gaining interest in the matter (Carroll & Brown 2018, 40). It was also within these years that researchers began defining and addressing social responsibility in academic research and literature which provided the concept with practical implications (Agudelo, Jóhannsdóttir & Davídsdóttir 2019, 2). This created a change in how people perceived corporate behaviour and obligation which is also illustrated by Howard Bowen, an economist and president at Grinnell College, in his book *"Social Responsibility of the Businessman"* from 1953. His work within the field is defined as some of the most evident evidence of the change in the perception of how corporations have a significant impact on society (Agudelo et al. 2019, 3) In addition, due to his early and fundamental work within the field, Bowen has been tilted the "Father of Corporate Social Responsibility" (Carroll 1999, 270). Bowen believes that corporations have a moral obligation to not disregard socially accepted values as well as not to position corporate values above society's values (Bowen 1953, 6). After Bowen's work was published, other authors followed, and it constructed an increasing interest in defining and conceptualising CSR. This interest in CSR was

highly connected to and influenced by the state of society during that time as there was a growing awareness regarding social problems (Agudelo et al. 2019, 4). In the 1970-1980s, more empirical research on CSR emerged, and the concept was being connected to stakeholder theory and business ethics. Due to this, the definitions of CSR developed, and the concept adopted definitions with similar aspects to the before mentioned fields (Carroll & Brown 2018, 45). During and since the 1990s, the concept of CSR has had a great emphasis on the social impact of corporate operations, and this further includes practises which is not the corporation's own operations (Moon 2014, 9). This includes labour conditions in developing countries, health and safety, and diversity and equal opportunities policies. In additional, it includes how the corporation's products and services are used and disposed of (Moon 2014, 9). There were also an increasing number of corporations which began to select and market their products and services in accordance with social responsibility criteria such as fair trade and ethically sourced products. It is argued that corporations began doing this in order to accommodate to stakeholder preferences (Moon 2014, 9). In his book from 2014, Jeremy Moon, professor of corporate sustainability at Copenhagen Business School, provides three different definitions of CSR which he believes captured how CSR developed through the years (Moon 2014, 4). The first definition he refers to is by Keith Davis from 1973, Davis' early contribution to the field of CSR is considered just as important as Bowen's (Carroll 1999, 271). Davis defines CSR as: "[…] *the firm's consideration of, and response to, issues beyond the narrow economic, technical, and legal requirements of the firm.*" (Davis 1973, 312). This definition illustrates how the focus is on aspects which are not typically considered as business elements. This essentially means that a corporation ought to include CSR and aspects related to the aspect, but only in issues beyond its normal business operations. Moon then refers to a second definition by Archie Carroll from 1979. Carroll's work within the field of CSR is perceived as some of the most well-known and his pyramid of CSR is defined as a fundamental factor in which modern CSR has its roots. I will elaborate upon Carroll's pyramid of CSR in section 7.1.4.1. Carroll defined CSR in 1979 as: *"The social responsibility of business encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time."* (Carroll 1979, 500). This definition by Carroll differs from the definition by Davis, as it illustrates how CSR is to be included in all aspects of a corporation. The third and last definition is by Moon himself and Dirk Matten from 2008, and they defined CSR as: *"[…] policies and practices of corporations that reflect business responsibility for some of the wider societal good."* (Matten & Moon 2008, 405). This definition emphasises that the purpose of CSR is to do good for society as well as the

importance of incorporating society's concerns into the corporation's policies. These three definitions illustrate how the definition of CSR has changed throughout the years and how the concept of what it entails has developed.

The purpose of this section of the literature review is to illustrate how the concept of CSR has developed through history and time, and how it will continue to develop in the future. As previously mentioned, this thesis will apply this definition of Coombs and Holladay: "*CSR is the voluntary actions that a corporation implements as it pursues its mission and fulfils its perceived obligations to stakeholders, including employees, communities, the environment, and society as a whole."* (Coombs & Holladay 2012, 8) As this definition provides a contemporary perspective of CSR in society today. Additionally, this definition includes the perceived obligations from society which are socially constructed because society has mutually agreed and accepted that corporations are obligated to assume responsibility. Thus, this definition is in alignment with my position as researcher which I previously mentioned in section 4 is within social constructivism.

7.1.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of CSR for Corporations

Since the initiation of CSR, there has been an ongoing discussion of the different advantages and disadvantages of the concept. As previously mentioned in section 7.1, Bowen was one of the first to articulate how corporations have responsibility and obligations towards society. In contrast to Bowen's belief, Milton Friedman, a Nobel prize winning economist, believes that a corporation does not have a social responsibility, a corporation is solely supposed to generate as much profit as possible (Friedman 1970, 173). Friedman argues that the corporation is using a significant amount of its resources on CSR, it is neglecting its purpose of generating profit. This essentially makes the concept of CSR a financial burden (Coombs & Holladay 2012, 10). Another argument against CSR is that social issues outside the corporation's expertise are not the corporation's responsibility. As corporations are not constructed to address social issues, they do not possess the required skills to confront the issues (Coombs & Holladay 2012, 12). Additionally, incorporating CSR can result in the corporation potentially losing power and control to its stakeholders. This is described as a rather dangerous aspect for corporations as it might provide stakeholders with the assumption that they are able to make demands. This is a disadvantage as corporations must be able to pursue their business operations without the interference of stakeholders (Coombs & Holladay 2012, 12). Even though, there are various disadvantages of CSR, there are also multiple advantages for a corporation to consider. An advantage of CSR is the potential of reducing business cost (Coombs & Holladay

2012, 13). A corporation can reduce its business cost by the means of CSR, and the concept can enhance social legitimacy. If the initiatives within a corporation's CSR focus on sustainability, energy efficiency, and renewable resources, they can reduce costs for the corporation (Coombs & Holladay 2012, 13). Additionally, CSR can result in a favourable image, and it may attract potential investors, employees, consumers, and positive media attention. If a corporation has a strong CSR identity, it will increase interest from investors as well as employees who are socially responsible (Coombs & Holladay 2012, 13). If the corporation is accommodating to its stakeholder's corporate interest, stakeholders are more willing to support it. This support is typically illustrated through purchases from the corporation or positive online communication. Additionally, the media might broadcast the corporation's CSR initiatives which ultimately contribute to a favourable image (Coombs & Holladay 2012, 13). Thus, there are both advantages and disadvantages of doing CSR, and these further illustrate the different nuances of CSR.

7.1.3 Mapping the Theory of CSR According to Melé and Garriga

As it has been established and accounted for in section 7.1, CSR has developed significantly since it was first introduced. As the concept of CSR has developed, the field has also developed and today it contains various theories, approaches, and terminologies. This has resulted in CSR being defined as a concept with numerous definitions and approaches which have been combined in various different combinations. This is transmitted to the field of CSR, as it is defined as having loose boundaries and including a wide range of literature. This makes it difficult to achieve a clear outline of the field (Garriga & Melé 2004, 52). I have chosen to incorporate Melé and Garriga's map in order to illustrate that there exist various perspectives on CSR, and how the concept is embedded within numerous approaches and fields. I will in section 7.4 account for different CSR theories within the specific field of CSR which are relevant for the purpose of this thesis.

In order to clarify the field of CSR, Garriga and Melé introduced a map which illustrates the territory of the field in 2004. This classification took its point of origin in the assumption that the theories and approaches of CSR are impacted by economic, political, social integrational, and ethical aspects (Garriga & Melé 2004, 52). This further leads to the map of theories to be categorised into four different groups: instrumental theories, political theories, integrative theories, and ethical theories (Garriga & Melé 2004, 52-53). These four categories will be elaborated upon in the following below. It is important to mention that this thesis will not do an in-depth elaboration of

each category within Melé and Garriga's map and content thereof as it will not serve a purpose for this thesis.

The Instrumental Theories

Within this category of theories, CSR is perceived as a strategic method in order to achieve economic objectives which essentially means to create wealth. This way of thinking is connected to Friedman's perspective of CSR, which was presented in section 7.2 According to Friedman, corporations' responsibility is to maximise profits to shareholders while being within the legal framework and ethical customs of the country in which they operate. However, if a corporation is solely focused on profits, it is not considering all of its stakeholders (Garriga & Melé 2004, 53). It is both relevant and important to mention that this does not mean that a corporation cannot contribute to its society. It is perceived as acceptable, when a corporation invests an appropriate number of resources to social activities for the purpose of making profits (Garriga & Melé 2004, 53). Garriga and Melé has identified three primary classifications of instrumental theories which depend on the proposed economic objective, and these are defined as: maximising the shareholder value, strategies for achieving competitive advantages, and cause-related marketing (Garriga & Melé 2004, 53). Maximising the shareholder value concerns social activities which solely contribute to maximising the shareholder value. I f society demands any social activities which will increase shareholder value, the corporation are obligated to invest in them without deception and fraud (Garriga & Melé 2004, 53). Regarding Strategies for Achieving Competitive Advantages, this classification focuses on how a corporation can use CSR as a method to create competitive advantage. The last classification of the instrumental theories is cause-related marketing, and the aim of cause-related marketing is to enhance company revenues and the relations between sales or customers by constructing a brand with ethical and socially responsible aspects (Garriga & Melé 2004, 55).

The Political Theories

When approaches and theories have a focus on connections and interactions between society and corporations as well as the potential power and responsibility of a corporation, they are including political considerations into the debate of CSR (Garriga & Melé 2004, 55). Within the political theories, there are two categories to consider. These are corporate constitutionalism and corporate citizenship (Garriga & Melé 2004, 55). Corporate Constitutionalism refers to the position of power a corporation possesses as well as how it socially affects society. Corporations are perceived as social institutions which is why they obligated to use their potential power responsibly (Garriga &

Melé 2004, 55-56). Corporate citizenship illustrates how a corporation is a part of society, and it is therefore required that the corporation considers the society in which it operates. (Garriga & Melé 2004, 56-57).

The Integrative Theories

This category of theories argue that corporations need society in order to exist, and therefore it is crucial for corporations to integrate social demands into its operations. Social demands are defined as society's method of interacting with corporations and provide a form of prestige and legitimacy. A corporation needs to consider that its values are in alignment with the values of society (Garriga & Melé 2004, 57). The integrative theories can be divided into four different categories: issues management, the principle of public responsibility, stakeholder management, and corporate social performance Issues management is defined as a method to minimise potential surprises in relation to social and political change by serving as a warning system for potential environmental opportunities and threats (Garriga & Melé 2004, 58). The Principle of Public Responsibility includes approaches which assist corporations in guiding their responsibility by limiting the scope of it. According to this approach, corporations are perceived as acceptable by society if their performances are in accordance with law and the generic public (Garriga & Melé 2004, 58-59). Stakeholder management focuses stakeholders, and it aims to achieve an overall connection between all stakeholders and the corporation's objectives. This essentially means integrating and considering stakeholder groups into the corporation's decision-making (Garriga & Melé 2004, 59). The last category is corporate social performance, and it focuses on how corporations search for social legitimacy by the process of providing responses which are appropriate (Garriga & Melé 2004, 60).

The Ethical Theories

This is the last and fourth group theories, and it concerns the ethical requirements which exist within the relations of corporations and society. The ethical theories can be divided into three additional categories which are based on the principle of doing the right thing (Garriga & Melé 2004, 60). These are normative stakeholder theory, universal rights, and sustainable development. The ethical theories include normative stakeholder theory because it expresses how corporations do not only have a relationship with shareholders, but they also have obligations towards other stakeholder groups. Normative stakeholder theory takes a step further than traditional stakeholder theory as it introduces ethical principles as a requirement (Garriga & Melé 2004, 60). Universal

rights are the inclusion of human rights within a corporation's CSR, and it has been a significant factor since the beginning, as approaches which are based on human rights are aiming to support economic, social, and political justice in areas which corporations operate (Garriga & Melé 2004, 61). The sustainable development is concept which demands a corporate contribution, as it attempts to accommodate the needs of the present generation without compromising the future generation's ability to accommodate their needs (Garriga & Melé 2004, 61).

7.1.4 Theoretical Field of CSR

The following section will provide an overview of relevant theories within the field of CSR. The purpose of this section is to investigate various theories within the field, and this will assist this thesis in determining which theory to apply. This section will elaborate upon Carroll's Pyramid of CSR, Schwartz and Carroll's Three-Domain Model, Paine's Paths to Values, and Morsing and Schultz three CSR Communication Strategies.

7.1.4.1 Carroll's Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility

In 1991, Carroll introduced the pyramid of corporate responsibility in order to illustrate how CSR should be included within all ranges of corporate responsibility. Carroll suggested that there are four different components of CSR, and these are defined as the economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic components. The four different components can be depicted as a pyramid which is illustrated below in figure 1 (Carroll 1991, 40).
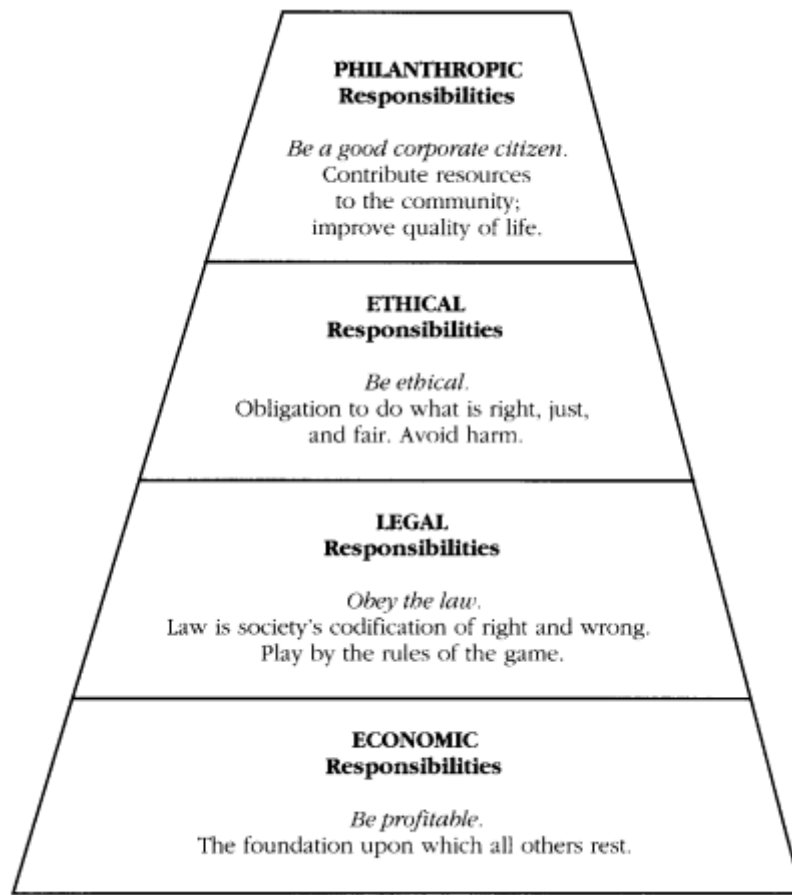
Figure 1 (Carroll 1991, 42)

Economic Responsibilities

Placed in the bottom of the pyramid is the economic responsibilities. This component of the pyramid represents the corporation's economic responsibility which is to provide goods and services to society in order to make profit (Carroll 1991, 40). This entails a corporation's responsibility to maximise profits and maintaining a strong competitive position as well as having a high level of efficiency (Carroll 1991, 40-41).

Legal Responsibilities

Corporations do not only have a responsibility to make profits, but it also expected that they are complying with regulations and laws made by the federal, state, and local government. This essentially means that corporations are expected to pursue their economic objectives within the framework of the law (Carroll 1991, 41).

Ethical Responsibilities

The ethical responsibilities include the corporate activities which society expects the corporation to engage in, even though these corporate activities are not established by any law or regulation. Essentially, the ethical responsibilities represent the varies standards, norms, and expectations of consumers, employees, shareholders, and community (Carroll 1991, 41).

Philanthropic Responsibilities

At the top of the pyramid is the corporation's philanthropic responsibility which represents society's expectation of corporations being good corporate citizens. This component includes corporate activities which actively engage in programs that promote and improve human welfare or goodwill (Carroll 1991, 42).

7.1.4.2 Schwartz and Carroll's Three-Domain Model of Corporate Social Responsibility

The Three-Domain Model of CSR is constructed by three different domains which represents three different areas of responsibility. Schwartz and Carroll refer to these as the economic, legal, and ethical domains (Carroll & Schwartz 2003, 508). The Three-Domain Model and the aspects within are similar to the previously introduced Pyramid of CSR by Carroll in section 7.4.1, but the Three-Domain Model is more developed (Carroll & Schwartz 2003, 508). The Three-Domain Model is illustrated as a Venn diagram in order to illustrate that none of the domains are superior to another domain. The Three-Domain Model is illustrated below in figure 2. The economic, legal, and ethical domain and their overlapping nature will be elaborated in the following sections.
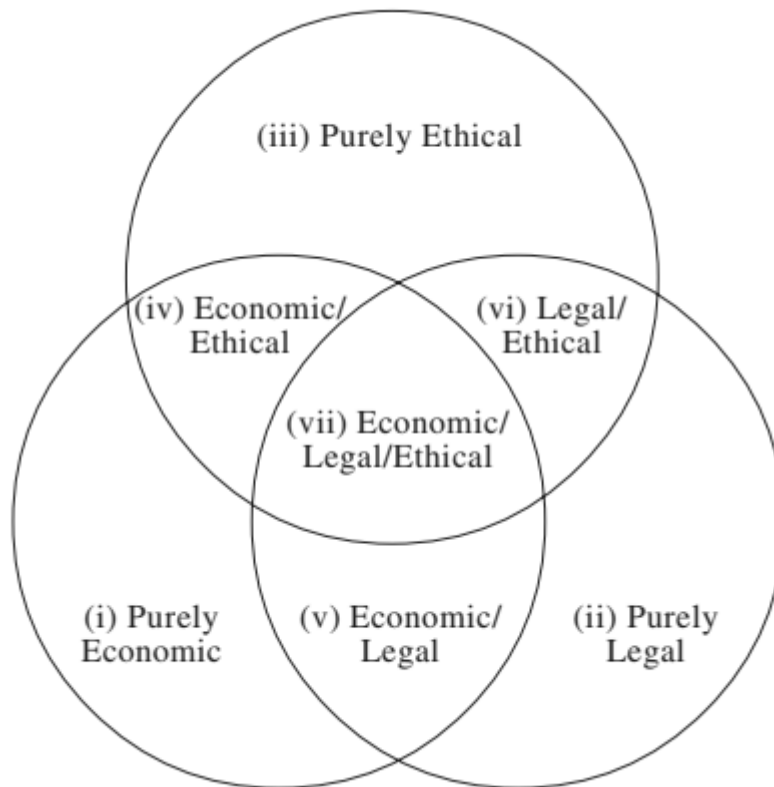
Figure 2 (Carroll & Schwartz 2003, 509)

The Economic Domain

The economic domain includes activities which have direct or indirect positive economic impact on the corporation. The positive economic impact relies on two criteria: maximisation of profits or the maximation of share value (Carroll & Schwartz 2003, 508). Direct positive economic activities are corporate activities which increase sales or avoid litigation. Indirect positive economic are activities which are constructed in order to improve employee morale or the corporation's image (Carroll & Schwartz 2003, 508).

The Legal Domain

The legal domain refers to the corporation's responsibility regarding legal expectations as society expects that the corporation is complying with the laws of federal, state, and local jurisdictions. Carroll and Schwartz define legality as three general categories: compliance, avoidance of civil litigation, and anticipation of the law (Carroll & Schwartz 2003, 509).

The Ethical Domain

The ethical domain refers to the ethical corporate responsibility which is expected by the general public and relevant stakeholders. Carroll and Schwartz include three general ethical standards within the ethical domain, and these are defined as the conventional, consequentialist, and deontological standard (Carroll & Schwartz 2003, 511).

Overlapping Domains

As it was previously mentioned, the Three-Domain Model is illustrated in a Veen diagram as this illustrates the overlapping nature of the domains. This results in seven categories defined as purely economic, purely legal, purely ethical, economic/ethical, economic/legal, legal/ethical, and economic/legal/ethical (Carroll & Schwartz 2003, 513-518). The ideal overlap is defined as a combination of the economic, legal, and ethical domains which is also that domain is located in the centre of the model (Carroll & Schwartz 2003, 513).

7.1.4.3 Paine's Paths to Values

In 2003, Paine introduced a theory in order to investigate why corporations began to be more attentive of their stakeholders and why they began taking an interest in corporate ethics and values (Paine 2003, 4). This resulted in four different clusters which individually contains different factors that might explain why a corporation decides to engage in CSR. Paine defines these as risk management, organisational functioning, market positioning, and civic positioning. In addition, Paine also provided a fifth cluster, which she refers to a "the better way" (Paine 2003, 7). In the following section, the main four clusters and the fifth cluster "the better way" will be elaborated upon.

Risk Management

The first cluster is risk management, and according to this cluster, corporations engage in CSR in order to minimise or even eliminate certain risk related to misconduct such as carelessness, neglect, and insensitivity (Paine 2003, 8). Corporate misconduct can lead to a bad reputation, destroyed important corporate relations, and it can result in fines and penalties (Paine 2003, 8-9).

Organisational Functioning

The second cluster is organisational functioning which focuses on organisational building. In contrast to the risk management cluster, organisational functioning is not a defensive strategy, it is rather a positive method to construct a well-functioning corporation (Paine 2003, 12).

Market Positioning

This cluster focuses on how corporations engage in CSR as a method to position themselves in a certain position within a market. This entails a focus on corporate values which shape the corporation's reputation and identity in order to construct a trustworthy brand in the eyes of customer, suppliers, and business partners (Paine 2003, 16).

Civic Positioning

The fourth cluster is civic positioning which focuses on how corporations attempt to establish its corporation as a progressive force which fights for social betterment (Paine 2003, 20). Additionally, a corporation might create favourable relations with non-market constituencies such as governments, nongovernmental organisations, and local communities (Paine 2003, 20).

The Better Way

The last and fifth cluster is "the better way", and this cluster differs from the other clusters as "the better way" perceives CSR values as fundamental principles without commercial advantage. Corporations might find that CSR has commercial advantages, but the motivation behind it has broader and more comprehensive roots (Paine 2003, 23).

7.1.4.4 Morsing and Schultz's Three CSR Communication Strategies

In 2006, Morsing and Schultz introduced three CSR communication strategies in order to illustrate how corporations strategically communicate their CSR depending on their stakeholders. These strategies are defined as the stakeholder information strategy, the stakeholder response strategy, and the stakeholder involvement strategy (Morsing & Schultz 2006, 325).

The Stakeholder Information Strategy

Within the stakeholder information strategy, the communication is always one-way, and the communication is always from the corporation towards the stakeholders. The purpose of this strategy is to distribute information, and the corporation does not necessarily have persuasive intent, it is merely attempting to inform about its CSR (Morsing & Schultz 2006, 326-327).

The Stakeholder Response Strategy

In contrast to the stakeholder information strategy, the stakeholder response strategy is based on two-way asymmetric communication which means that the communication is coming from both the

corporation and the stakeholders (Morsing & Schultz 2006, 327). However, the two-way asymmetric communication creates an imbalance in the relation between the corporation and its stakeholders (Morsing & Schultz 2006, 327).

The Stakeholder Involvement Strategy

The stakeholder involvement strategy differs from the two other strategies as it focuses on involving stakeholders by seeking a dialogue with them. Morsing and Schultz state that the persuasion does not only come from the corporation, but it also comes from the stakeholders as they both attempt to persuade each other to change (Morsing & Schultz 2006, 328).

7.1.5 Choice of Theory

After having investigated the theoretical field of CSR, this thesis is able to conclude that it will apply Morsing and Schultz's three CSR Communication Strategies. This means that this thesis will not apply Carroll's Pyramid of CSR, Carroll and Schwartz's Three-Domain Model of CSR, or Paine's Paths to Value. The reasoning behind the decision to not apply Carroll's Pyramid of CSR and Carroll and Schwartz's Three-Domain l Model of CSR are quite similar. The two before mentioned theories are obvious to use, if this thesis was to investigate the content of BP's CSR. However, this thesis's purpose is to investigate how a corporation uses methods to appear as sustainable. Thus, if The Pyramid of CSR and The Three-Dimensional Model of CSR were to be applied, it will not result in a sufficient outcome as it will not provide knowledge regarding how BP attempts to appear sustainable. In terms of Paine's Paths to Value, this thesis will not apply this theory as this would entail an investigation of BP's motive for CSR, and this is not the focus of this thesis. This might have provided relevant information, but this thesis argues that it will be more beneficial to investigate the communicative strategic aspects which Morsing and Schultz's CSR Communication Strategies provides. In addition, this thesis's empirical data consists of extractions of BP's CSR communication, and therefore it is relevant to investigate the empirical data by the means of Morsing and Schultz's CRS Communication Strategies. In addition, by investigation how BP strategically communicates its CSR will allow this thesis to obtain knowledge regarding the communicative aspect which none of the other theories prepare the ground for.

7.2 Legitimacy

The second section of this literature review will elaborate upon the field of legitimacy theory. This section will investigate the concept of legitimacy in order to achieve a nuanced view of its history

and development. Then I will elaborate upon various theories which have relevance regarding this thesis. Lastly, I will account for my choice of theory within the field of legitimacy.

7.2.1 History and Development of Legitimacy Theory

Corporations were once perceived as individual units which were separated from their surrounding environment. However, this perception of corporations changed in the late 1960's as corporation's boundaries began to be perceived as porous and more complicated. A corporation's dynamic began to be perceived as a product of cultural norms, symbols, beliefs, and rituals (Suchman 1995, 571). In the centre of this change in perception is organisational legitimacy as it addresses the normative and cognitive forces which construct and empower organisational actors (Suchman 1995, 571). One of the most popular and used definitions of legitimacy within the field is the definition of Mark Suchman which is as follows:" *Legitimacy is a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions.*" (Suchman 1995, 574). Suchman is mostly known for his work within the field of legitimacy as it has strengthened the conceptual foundation of legitimacy. Although, his definition is perceived as broad, it still represents and recognises the evaluative, cognitive, and socially constructed aspect of legitimacy (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood 1997, 866). Legitimacy is referred and related to the concept of a social contract which exist between corporations and society (Deegan 2002, 292-293). If the corporation breaches the social contract, the survival of the corporation is considered to be threatened. If society is unsatisfied by a corporation's operations, it might reduce the demand for corporation's products or eliminate the supply of labour and financial capital to the corporation (Deegan 2002, 293). The theory of legitimacy theory consists of layers which have different perspectives. There is the layer of institutional legitimacy theory, and this layer focuses on how organisations are structured as an entity and have achieved society's acceptance (Tilling & Tilt, 2010, 57). Researchers within this layer of legitimacy theory perceive the concept as a set of constitutive beliefs (Suchman 1995, 576). Another layer of legitimacy theory is defined as organisational legitimacy. It is also referred to as strategic legitimacy theory or instrumental legitimacy theory. This layer focuses on how an organisation wants approval from society (Tilling & Tilt 2010, 57). Studies within this layer of legitimacy theory perceive the concept as operational resources which corporations draw from their cultural environments, and they use these resources to consequently reach their goals (Suchman 1995, 576). Although, there might be two perspectives to legitimacy theory, Suchman argues that

corporations have to face challenges which is related to both the strategical operational perspective as well as the institutional perspective (Suchman 1995, 577).

7.2.2 Theoretical Field of Legitimacy Theory

In the following section of this literature review, this thesis will provide elaborations regarding various theories in order to determine which theory to apply in this thesis. The theories which will be elaborated upon are Ashforth and Gibbs' concepts of Symbolic and Substantive Management, Elsbach and Sutton's Process Model, and Suchman's Strategies for legitimacy.

7.2.2.1 Ashforth and Gibbs' Concepts of Symbolic and Substantive Management

In 1990, Ashforth and Gibbs published a paper in which they attempted to enlighten the problematic aspects of legitimacy theory. In relation to this, they introduced two general means by which corporations seek legitimacy. Ashforth and Gibbs define these as substantive management and symbolic management (Ashforth & Gibbs 1990, 177-178). In the following section, I will briefly elaborate upon these two concepts.

Substantive Management

This approach includes real, material change in the organisation's goals, processes, and/or socially institutionalised practices. This could e.g., include the concept of role performance. Ashforth and Gibbs refer to typically examples of role performance as providing a good return to shareholders' equity, reliable and fair priced products for customers, and job security and fair wages for employees (Ashforth & Gibbs 1990, 178). The corporation can also seek legitimacy through coercive isomorphism which is when a corporation is conforming to the values, norms, and expectations of constituents (Ashforth & Gibbs 1990, 178). Another option within the concept of substantive management is altering resource dependencies, this is an alternative option as the organisation attempts to alter the degree of resource dependence, its constituents, and the expectations to which the organisation must respond (Ashforth & Gibbs 1990, 178). The last and final method an organisation can use to seek legitimation is altering socially institutionalised practices such as laws and practices (Ashforth & Gibbs 1990, 178).

Symbolic Management

If the organisation does not want to change its ways, it can simply choose to portray symbolic management in order to appear as a consistent organisation with social values and expectations

(Ashforth & Gibbs 1990, 180). The first method within symbolic management is to espouse socially acceptable goals. This essentially means that the organisation might espouse socially acceptable goals, but it is still pursuing less acceptable ones (Ashforth & Gibbs 1990, 180). The second method focuses on denial and concealment. The organisation might simply suppress information in relation to outcomes or activities which undermine legitimacy (Ashforth & Gibs 1990, 180). The organisation can attempt to redefine its means and ends. The organisation might frame an issue in order for it to appear as in accordance with values which are perceived as legitimate (Ashforth & Gibbs 1990, 180-181). The next method to seek legitimacy by symbolic management is offering accounts. Ashforth and Gibbs defines accounts as explanations which organisations use to be removed from a bad situation that might damage the organisation's reputation or claims to legitimacy (Ashforth & Gibbs 1990, 181). The organisation can also choose to offer apologies as a method to seek legitimacy. When an organisation is apologising, it is acknowledging that it has some responsibility for a negative event, and it also illustrates remorse (Ashforth & Gibbs 1990, 180). The final method with this category is ceremonial conformity. Ceremonial conformity entails that the organisation adopts specific highly, visible, and salient practices and these are in accordance with society's expectations, but the organisation's essential machinery is still intact. (Ashforth & Gibbs 1990, 181).

7.2.2.2 Elsbach and Sutton's Process Model of How Illegitimate Actions by Members of Organisations Can Ultimately Lead to Acquired Organisational Legitimacy

In 1992, Elsbach and Sutton introduced a model which illustrates how illegitimate actions can result in the acquisition of organisational legitimacy (Elsbach & Sutton 1992, 709). The process model consists of five steps in total, and I will in the following sections briefly elaborate upon the steps.

The first step of the model reflects that an organisation or a member of the organisation have performed an illegitimate act which attracts media attention. Elsbach and Sutton state that media reports more often than not contain critique regarding the organisation's role in an event (Elsbach & Sutton 1992, 708).

The second step focuses on institutional conformity and decoupling. Institutional conformity is when the organisation conforms to institutionally defined norms in order to achieve legitimacy (Elsbach & Sutton 1992, 714). Decoupling is about creating distance between the organisation and the illegitimate actions in question by the method of decoupling strategies (Elsbach & Sutton 1992, 715-716).

The third step concerns justifications and defence of the organisation's innocence as an attempt to reduce the negative impact by the illegitimate act or event. In order to do so, organisation typically include spokespersons who can provide interpretations which illustrate the illegitimate event and organisation in a positive light (Elsbach & Sutton 1992, 717). In terms of defences of innocence, it includes defences of noncausation such as "it was not my fault" and it includes defences of non-occurrence such as "it really did not happen" (Elsbach & Sutton 1992, 718).

The fourth step of the model focuses enhancements and entitling to improve the positive aspects of the illegitimate event and the organisation. Enhancements is used as an attempt to enhance the illegitimate actions by claiming that these actions will ultimately be beneficial for larger society (Elsbach & Sutton 1992, 721). Elsbach and Sutton define entitlings as efforts to increase the attributed responsibility attributed to an organisation for an event (Elsbach & Sutton 1992, 720).

The fifth and last step of the model is the acquisition of legitimacy. Legitimacy is achieved when the organisation has endorsement and support from audiences. When the organisation has endorsement and support which are connected to culturally acceptable and legitimate goals, the focus is on that and not on the specific illegitimate events (Elsbach & Sutton 1992, 722-723).

7.2.2.3 Suchman's Strategies for Legitimisation

In 1995, Suchman introduced different strategies for the purpose of gaining, maintaining, and repairing legitimacy (Suchman 1995, 586). I will briefly elaborate upon the strategies in the following sections below.

In terms of gaining legitimacy, organisation typically have difficulties with being accepted in society. Suchman states that strategies regrading gaining legitimacy include organisational change and persuasive communication (Suchman 1995, 587). Such strategies include conforming to environments, selecting among environments, and manipulation of environment (Suchman 1995, 587).

When an organisation has established legitimacy, it tends to take it for granted. However, Suchman argues that organisation can rarely afford to perceive legitimation as a completed task. Thus, he includes strategies for maintaining legitimacy such as perceiving change and protect accomplishments (Suchman 1995, 593-594). The perceive change strategy revolves around the future changes of society, and that organisation should monitor its audience in order to perceive

change (Suchman 1995, 595). The strategy of protecting accomplishments is about protecting the organisation's already existing legitimacy (Suchman 1995, 595).

The last category of Suchman strategies consists of the strategies regarding repairing legitimacy. Suchman states that repairing of legitimacy is in general reactive responses to a crisis. Strategies within this category is normalising accounts, strategic restructuring, and not to panic (Suchman 1995, 597). In terms of accounts, Suchman presents four types: denial, excuse, justify, and explaining. The strategy of strategic restructuring suggests that organisation can repair legitimacy by structural shifts (Suchman 1995, 598). In terms of the last strategy not to panic, the purpose is to avoid panicking as this can damage the organisation's chance of repairing legitimacy (Suchman 1995, 599).

7.2.3 Choice of Theory

After having investigated the field of legitimacy, this thesis is able to conclude that it will apply Suchman's legitimation strategies. I have chosen to apply Suchman's legitimation strategies as this will allow this thesis to investigate which strategies BP have used. Furthermore, Suchman strategies provide a more nuanced view of legitimacy, as it will entail investigating three different challenges of legitimacy. Ashforth and Gibbs and Elsbach and Sutton's theories focus mostly on how corporations can gain legitimacy. Elsbach and Sutton's Process Model is operation from a media and spokesperson perspective. If this thesis was to apply another theory than Suchman's legitimation strategies, it will limit the analysis. Suchman's strategies and Ashforth and Gibbs' two means of substantive and symbolic management do share some similarities. However, this thesis argues that Suchman's strategies regarding legitimacy will serve the best outcome, as this theory is more developed.

8. Theory

The following section will introduce the theories which will be applied in this thesis, and they will be introduced in the order in which they will be applied. Firstly, I will introduce The Stakeholder Salience Model. Secondly, I will introduce Morsing and Schultz' Three CSR Communication Strategies. Lastly, I will introduce Suchman's strategies regarding gaining, maintaining, and repairing legitimacy.

8.1 The Stakeholder Salience Model

In 1997, The Stakeholder Salience Model was introduced by Mitchell, Agle, and Wood as an attempt to further develop stakeholder theory as well as introduce a theory which can separate stakeholders from non-stakeholders (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood 1997, 854). This essentially means that the model, and theory behind it, can assist corporations in identifying its stakeholders. Mitchell, Agle, and Wood emphasise that there exist numerous definitions which attempt to define what a stakeholder is, but they refer to the definition by Freeman and he defines stakeholders as:" […] *any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives*." (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood 1997, 854). This definition is broad in the sense it includes all forms of stakeholders, actual and potential, and it articulates the relationship between a corporation and stakeholders as somewhat in balance because they both affect each other.

The Stakeholder Salience Model is defined as a dynamic model as it illustrates the situational aspect of prioritising and identifying stakeholders. The model allows predictions to be made in relation to stakeholders' position as their position can change depending on a given situation or context (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood 1997, 854-855). Moreover, it introduces three attributes which stakeholders can possess. These are defined as power, legitimacy, and urgency and stakeholders can possess one, two, or all three attributes (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood 1997, 854). The Stakeholder Salience Model is illustrated below as figure 3. I will elaborate upon the three attributes in the following sections.

FIGURE 2
Stakeholder Typology:
One, Two, or Three Attributes Present

POWER

1
Dormant
Stakeholder

LEGITIMACY

4
Dominant
Stakeholder

5
Dangerous
Stakeholder

7
Definitive
Stakeholder

2
Discretionary
Stakeholder

6
Dependent
Stakeholder

3
Demanding
Stakeholder

8
Nonstakeholder

URGENCY
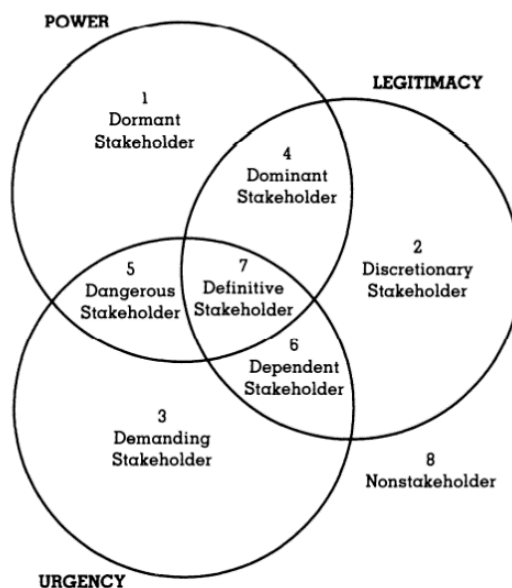
Figure 3 (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood 1997, 874)

8.1.1 Power

The term power is a fairly difficult term to define, and it can be expressed differently depending on the context and situation. Mitchell, Agle, and Wood define the term as the ability to achieve outcomes which are desired (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood 1997, 865). As the term power is difficult to define and therefore is difficult to categorise, Mitchell, Agle, and Wood refer to the categorisation of power based on the type of used resource to display power (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood 1997, 865). Firstly, there is coercive power which is based on the physical resources of force related to violence or restraint. For instance, the use of a gun is perceived as a physical resource as it threatens the human body. The use of physical sanctions is also perceived as coercive power as it impacts the subject similarly just not as intensely (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood 1997, 865). Secondly, there is utilitarian power which is based on financial or material resources. The use of utilitarian power can be expressed through granting of goods, services, and money if it is granted for the purpose of gaining control (Mitchell, Agle, and Wood 1997, 865). Thirdly and lastly, there is normative power which is based on symbolic resources such as prestige or acceptance. (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood 1997, 865). Mitchell, Agle, and Wood argue that someone possess power if they are able to access

coercive, utilitarian, or normative resources. However, the possession of power is not a steady state as it can be acquired and lost (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood 1997 865-866).

8.1.2 Legitimacy

The term legitimacy is referring to the expected behaviours or structures which are socially accepted by society. Mitchell, Agle, and Wood refer to Suchman's definition of legitimacy which is in accordance with this thesis. As previously mentioned, Suchman defines legitimacy as:" […] *a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions.*" (Suchman 1995, 574). Mitchell, Agle, and Wood accept this definition as it implies that legitimacy is a desirable social good which is shared in society (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood 1997, 867). The term legitimacy is often implicitly connected to the above-mentioned term power when investigating relations in society. The two terms are often connected due to the assumption that if someone in the position of power is not utilising the power in a manner which society perceives as responsible, that someone will probably lose the power (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood 1997, 866).

8.1.3 Urgency

The last attribute is urgency. Mitchell, Agle, and Wood argue that this attribute is significant as this attribute's contribution makes the model dynamic instead of static. It captures the dynamic aspects between a corporation and its stakeholder which the attributes of legitimacy and power do not (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood 1997, 867). In terms of defining urgency, Mitchell, Agle, and Wood refer to a definition provided by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary which defines it as "calling for immediate attention" and "pressing" (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood 1997, 867). Furthermore, there are two conditions which are required to be met in order for the urgency attribute to exist. The relation or the stakeholder claim need to be time-sensitive, and it needs to be of critical importance (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood 1997, 867).

Based on the three stakeholder attributes, Mitchell, Agle, and Wood introduce seven different types of stakeholders. As it was previously mentioned, each stakeholder type will possess one, two, or all three attributes. The seven types of stakeholders are defined as dormant stakeholders, discretionary stakeholders, demanding stakeholders, dominant stakeholders, dependent stakeholders, dangerous stakeholders, and definitive stakeholders. The seven stakeholder types are divided into three categories: latent stakeholders, expectant stakeholders, and definitive stakeholders (Mitchell, Agle

& Wood 1997, 873-874). I will briefly elaborate upon the different types of stakeholders in the following.

8.1.4 Latent Stakeholders

Latent stakeholders are defined as possessing low salience, as these stakeholders only possess one of the three attributes. Stakeholders within this category are not typically of importance, and corporations might not even recognise their existence. This is also valid from the stakeholder perspective, as they are typically not paying attention towards the corporation (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood 1997, 874).

Dormant Stakeholders

Stakeholders within this type possess the attribute of power. This essentially means that dormant stakeholders possess power to achieve their will, but they do not have a legitimate relation or an urgent claim which mean their power are often unused (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood 1997, 874-875). Examples of dormant stakeholders are a group or individual who can spend a lot of money, or someone who can attract a lot of attention. Dormant stakeholders have the ability to acquire a second attribute, and they are therefore not be totally excluded (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood 1997, 875).

Discretionary Stakeholders

Discretionary stakeholders possess the attribute of legitimacy, but they do not possess power or any urgent claims. Due to the absence of the attributes power and urgency, there are not any pressure on the corporation to engage with discretionary stakeholders. Discretionary stakeholders are typically non-profit organisations (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood 1997, 875).

Demanding Stakeholders

The last type of latent stakeholders are demanding stakeholders. They are defined as demanding stakeholders due to their possession of the attribute urgency. They have urgent claims but neither power nor legitimacy. A demanding stakeholder could be a lone protester standing outside the headquarter with a sign (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood 1997, 875-876).

8.1.5 Expectant Stakeholders

Expectant stakeholders possess two of the tree attributes which mean they have more salience than the latent stakeholders. They are defined as expectant stakeholders because the combination of two

attributes means that they are in a more active position in which corporations are more responsive to their interest and claims (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood 1997, 876).

Dominant stakeholders

Dominant stakeholders possess both the power and legitimacy attribute. This type of stakeholder is expected to have a formal mechanism in place in order to acknowledge their relationship with the corporation. Examples of dominant stakeholders could be significant creditors or community leaders (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood 1997, 876-877).

Dependent stakeholders

If a stakeholder possesses the attributes of urgency and legitimacy, they are defined as dependent stakeholders. They are defined as dependent stakeholders because they are dependent on other more powerful stakeholders to carry out their will. Claims from dependent stakeholders can be adopted by dominant stakeholders which will provide the dependent stakeholders with more salience. This is an example in which the model illustrates its dynamic aspects (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood 1997, 877).

Dangerous stakeholders

Mitchell, Agle, and Wood refer stakeholders as dangerous if they possess the attributes of urgency and power because they believe that a combination of those two attributes results in coercive or possibly violent stakeholders. Examples entail employee sabotage and terrorism (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood 1997, 877).

8.1.6 Definitive Stakeholders

If a type of stakeholders possesses all three attributes, they are defined as definitive stakeholders. It is fairly common that expectant stakeholders become definitive stakeholders in some way or another as they already possess two of the three attributes (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood 1997, 878). It is especially the dominant stakeholders who have the tendency to move from the dominant category into the definitive category if the urgency attribute is triggered (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood 1997, 878).

8.1.7 Critique of The Stakeholder Salience Model

The Stakeholder Salience Model is a well-known model within the field of stakeholder theory. Researchers have used the model in order to investigate stakeholder prioritisation, dynamics of stakeholder attributes, and CSR (Myllykangas, Kujala, & Lethimäki 2010, 66). However, the

stakeholder model has also been criticised by researchers in the sense it might lack attention to the dynamics within stakeholder relationships. This is especially in relation to the assumption that stakeholders have individual networks in which the interact with each other (Myllykangas, Kujala, Lethimäki 2010, 66). However, the critique of The Stakeholder Model will not affect this thesis, as this thesis does not intend to investigate how BP's different stakeholders interact with each other. This thesis will elaborate upon how The Stakeholder Salience Model will be used in section 9.3.2.

8.2 Morsing and Schultz's Three CSR Communication Strategies

CSR communication does typically produce strong and positive reactions from stakeholders as it attempts to illustrate a corporation's status and activities regarding its societal obligations (Morsing & Schultz 2006, 323). However, CSR communication has also been proven to attract critical stakeholder attention as studies show that if a corporation is focusing too much on CSR communication, stakeholders tend to believe that the corporation is attempting to hide something (Morsing & Schultz 2006, 323).Thus, it can be argued that the matter of communicating CSR is a rather complex process, and it requires ongoing stakeholder awareness as well as more sophisticated CSR communication strategies than previously (Morsing & Schultz 2006, 323). Due to this, Morsing and Schultz introduced three different types of CSR communication strategies in 2006. These three CSR communication strategies are referred to as the stakeholder information strategy, the stakeholder response strategy, and the stakeholder involvement strategy (Morsing & Schultz 2006, 325). The strategies will be further elaborated upon the following sections.

8.2.1 The Stakeholder Information Strategy

The first CSR communication strategy is the stakeholder information strategy, and this strategy is influenced by one-way communication. This essentially means that the communication only flows from the corporation towards the stakeholders (Morsing & Schultz 2006, 326). Communication within this strategy is perceived as "telling, not listening" and corporations utilise this communication strategy when they merely wish to inform the public as objectively as possible (Morsing & Schultz 2006, 326-327). This strategy entails that the corporation engages actively in press relations programmes while continuously producing information and news for the media. Moreover, it is expected that corporations also produce a variety of brochures, pamphlets, magazines, facts, numbers, and figures as a method to inform the general public (Morsing & Schultz 2006, 327). According to Morsing and Schultz, this strategy is mostly used by governments, non-profit organisations as well as many businesses. If a corporation utilise the

stakeholder information strategy, it perceives stakeholders as being of influence as stakeholders can illustrate support in terms of purchasing habits, being loyal, and praising the corporation. However, stakeholders also have the ability to illustrate opposition in terms of demonstrating or boycotting the corporation (Morsing & Schultz 2006, 327). Thus, it is crucial that corporations inform its stakeholders regarding its good intentions, actions, and decisions in order to achieve positive support from stakeholders (Morsing & Schultz 2006, 327). Morsing and Schultz argue that quite a few corporations engage in CSR activities because they believe it is the right thing to do and that they have a sincere desire to improve the local or global community. However, corporations typically assume that they are merely required to efficiently inform stakeholders regarding their operations in order to achieve and maintain positive support from stakeholders (Morsing & Schultz 2006, 327). In order to efficiently inform its stakeholders, corporations need to ensure that their CSR communication is coherent and conveyed in an appealing manner. Moreover, the CSR activities need to demonstrate a generally shared concern which are connected to the core business as well as illustrate organisational support (Morsing & Schultz 2006, 327).

8.2.2 The Stakeholder Response Strategy

The second strategy is the stakeholder response strategy, and this strategy is based on two-way asymmetric communication. This essentially means that the communication flows both from and to the stakeholders. However, as the communication is defined as asymmetric, it implies a form of imbalance which is in favour of corporation as the corporation does not change due to communication (Morsing & Schultz 2006, 327). The corporation attempts to change public attitudes and behaviour by engaging stakeholders. The corporation engages stakeholders by doing actions and making decisions which stakeholders find relevant (Morsing & Schultz 2006, 327). Within this strategy, corporation will typically conduct opinion polls or market surveys in order to achieve knowledge of the corporation's CSR efforts. The corporation relies on feedback which will provide information regarding what the stakeholders will accept or tolerate (Morsing & Schultz 2006, 327). Although, the corporation might engage with stakeholders, Morsing and Schultz emphasise that the stakeholder response strategy is still rather sender oriented. This strategy has a one-sided approach in which the corporation solely intends to convince stakeholders that it is an attractive corporation with good intentions (Morsing & Schultz 2006, 327). If a corporation utilise this strategy, it perceives stakeholders as having influence, but it also perceives stakeholders as passive responders to the corporation's activities (Morsing & Schultz 2006, 327). The risk with this strategy is that the corporation might only hear its own voice being reflected back, as it asks questions to stakeholders

within a framework which only produces the answers the corporation wants to hear. This is why the stakeholder response strategy is somewhat perceived as a one-way approach as it supports and reinforces the corporation's actions and identity (Morsing & Schultz 2006, 327-328).

8.2.3 The Stakeholder Involvement Strategy

The last and third strategy is the stakeholder involvement strategy. This strategy differs from the two other strategies, as it assumes dialogue between the corporation and its stakeholders. Furthermore, persuasion might be present within this strategy, but it is a mutual persuasion which influences both the stakeholders as well as the corporation. This is mostly due to the stakeholder involvement strategy's extreme perspective on stakeholder relations (Morsing & Schultz 2006, 328). This strategy prepares the ground for a concurrent negation in which the corporation and the stakeholders explore different concerns as well accept necessary changes. Morsing and Schultz state that when corporations engage in dialogue with its stakeholders, the corporations are continuously being informed regarding different stakeholder expectations, and this includes the corporation being aware if those expectations change (Morsing & Schultz 2006, 328). Although, there are obvious differences between the stakeholder involvement strategy and the two other strategies, there are also similarities. The stakeholder involvement strategy shares the same stakeholder perspective as the stakeholder information strategy as it perceives stakeholders as influential regarding showing support and opposition (Morsing & Schultz 2006, 328). The stakeholder involvement strategy agrees with the stakeholder response strategy in terms of investigating stakeholder expectations by the means of opinion polls and market surveys (Morsing & Schultz 2006, 328). However, the involvement strategy does not perceive informing and surveying as sufficient. Corporations need to involve its stakeholders, if they want to achieve development and promotion of positive support. Involvement of stakeholders further provides the corporation with an understanding of the stakeholders' expectations and concerns as well as the opportunity to adapt to them (Morsing & Schultz 2006, 328). Morsing and Schultz argue that the if the corporation engages in dialogue with its stakeholders frequently and systematically, this will result in the best outcome for both parties. The primary objective of this strategy is to achieve a mutual understanding or rational agreement between the corporation and its stakeholders (Morsing & Schultz 2006, 328).

  After having presented the three different communications regarding CSR, it is important to mention that different stakeholders have different expectations of how a corporation communicates its CSR. Some might prefer that a corporation communicates its CSR very proactively and open,

and others might prefer that CSR is communicated in a more minimal manner (Morsing & Schultz 2006, 329).

8.2.4 Critique of the Three CSR Communication Strategies

As it was just established, Morsing and Schultz argue that it will result in the best outcome, when corporations engage with its stakeholders in terms of dialogue and decision-making of CSR efforts. However, the three CSR communication strategies have been criticised for not emphasising enough regarding how careful a corporation should really be, when it is choosing a CSR communication strategy (Kim 2019, 3). Morsing and Schultz Three CSR Communication strategies are not taking the corporation's reputation into consideration. It might not be beneficial for some corporation to engage in highly dialogic and active CSR communication strategy as it might backfire. It could potentially damage the corporation's reputation even further (Kim 2019, 3). Thus, this is something this thesis needs to be aware of when applying Morsing and Schultz's Three Communication Strategies. However, as it was established in section 5 of this thesis, I am aware of BP's rather bad reputation.

8.3 Suchman's Theory of Legitimacy

In 1995, Suchman published a paper in which he introduced several legitimations strategies which a corporation can decide to use in order to gain, maintain, and repair its legitimacy. Suchman was previously introduced in section 7.2.1 of this thesis' literature review regarding legitimacy. As previously mentioned in the same section, legitimacy is defined as: "[…] *a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions.*" (Suchman 1995, 574).

Based on the existing literature within the field of legitimacy, Suchman discerns three broad types of legitimacy. These are termed pragmatic legitimacy, moral legitimacy, and cognitive legitimacy. Suchman emphasises that all three types of legitimacy include the generalised assumption that corporate operations are desirable, proper, or appropriate within socially constructed norms, beliefs, and definitions (Suchman 1995, 577).

Suchman has detected three general challenges regarding legitimacy. He refers to these three challenges as gaining legitimacy, maintaining legitimacy, and repairing legitimacy. In relation to these challenges, he provides a selection of strategies depending on the legitimacy type (Suchman 1995, 586). I will firstly introduce the different types of legitimacy presented by Suchman. Then, I

will introduce and elaborate upon the different strategies regarding gaining, maintaining, and repairing legitimacy.

8.3.1 Pragmatic Legitimacy

Pragmatic legitimacy depends on the self-interested concerns of a corporation's most immediate audiences. This immediacy typically entails direct exchanges between the audience and the corporation. However, it might also entail broader interdependencies which are related to political, economic, and social aspects and these might impact the audience's well-being (Suchman 1995, 578). Due to this, audiences have the tendency to become constituencies who investigate corporate activities in order to determine if these activities have any practical consequences for them. Within the type of pragmatic legitimacy, Suchman introduces three other types. These are exchange legitimacy, influence legitimacy, and dispositional legitimacy (Suchman 1995, 578-579).

8.3.2 Moral Legitimacy

The second type of legitimacy is moral legitimacy. This type reflects the positive evaluation of the corporation and its activities. In contrast to pragmatic legitimacy, moral legitimacy is sociotropic. This means that it does not rely on judgements regarding whether a corporate activity is beneficial for the audience. Instead, it relies on judgements regarding whether a corporation's activity is perceived as "the right thing to do" (Suchman 1995, 579). The audience judges if the corporation's activities are effectively promoting societal welfare in accordance with their socially constructed values. This does not mean that moral legitimacy is entirely interest-free. According to Suchman, corporations often produce self-serving claims with aspects connected to moral propriety and support these claims with hollow symbolic gestures (Suchman 1995, 579). Within The moral legitimacy type, four other types can be detected. These are consequential legitimacy, procedural legitimacy, structural legitimacy, and personal legitimacy (Suchman 1995, 580-581).

8.3.3 Cognitive Legitimacy

The final broad type of legitimacy is cognitive legitimacy. Cognitive legitimacy suggests that legitimacy dynamics are based on cognition and not on evaluation and interest. Within this type, there are two other types to introduce. These are legitimacy based on comprehensibility and legitimacy based on taken-for-grantedness (Suchman 1995, 582).

Although, the types of legitimacy and their sub-types are different and operate in different perspectives, one type does not exclude another type as they typically co-exist (Suchman 1995,

584). Moreover, the different types of legitimacy have the ability to reinforce each other, but they can also collide with each other which occasionally result in conflict (Suchman 1995, 585).

As previously mentioned, Suchman introduces three challenges regarding legitimacy, and these are challenges regarding gaining, maintaining, and repairing. I will elaborate upon these challenges in the following section in order to elaborate upon the different included strategies.

8.3.4 The Challenges of Gaining, Maintaining, and Repairing Legitimacy

When a corporation is attempting to introduce new activities, the corporation typically has to achieve acceptance. This process includes two aspects. The first aspect focuses on when new activities are technically perceived as problematic, the corporation must be willing to spend a lot of energy on sector building (Suchman 1995, 586). The second aspect is focusing on the task of creating new and allegiant supporters as well as convincing already existing entities to give support (Suchman 1995, 587). The challenge of maintaining legitimacy is often overlooked as corporations tend to think that once the legitimacy has been achieved, the task is completed. Suchman states that anomalies, miscues, imitation failures, innovations, and external shocks are constant threats of corporation's legitimacy (Suchman 1995, 593-594). The challenge of repairing legitimacy has similarities to gaining legitimacy. However, a corporation often have to repair its legitimacy due to an unforeseen crisis of meaning. Therefore, repairing of legitimacy often reflects reactive response to said crisis (Suchman 1995, 597).

8.3.5 Strategies for Gaining Legitimacy

Achieving legitimacy is described as a proactive process as corporations have advance knowledge regarding its plan and need of legitimation. Suchman states the achievement of legitimacy can be divided into three clusters. The first cluster focuses on the corporation's efforts to conform to the already existing audience's requirements (Suchman 1995, 587). The second cluster reflects the corporation's efforts to select an audience among various audiences with the purpose of finding an audience which will support its corporate activities (Suchman 1995, 587). The last and third cluster focuses on the corporation's efforts to manipulate its environment by constructing new audiences and new beliefs of legitimation (Suchman 1995, 587). All strategy clusters entail concrete organisational change as well as persuasive organisational communication (Suchman 1995, 587). In the following section, I will introduce the three different strategies of achieving legitimacy which

are as follows: conform to environments, select among environments, and manipulate environments.

Conform to environments

When corporations are attempting to achieve legitimacy, they might find the easiest method to simply locate the corporation within an already existing system. This method of conformity can be achieved by manipulating the corporation's activities. According to Suchman, this can be translated into the corporation is manipulating its superficial appearances (Suchman 1995, 587). This form of conforming does not require that the corporation breaks out of its already existing frames. It provides the corporation with the ability to transform a liability into a potential asset as it might take advantage of being a cultural insider, and it can ask itself how the corporation can appear in a more desirable and appropriate manner (Suchman 1995, 587).

As it was previously mentioned, there are different variants of each strategy depending on which type of legitimacy, the corporation are attempting to achieve. If the corporation are attempting to achieve pragmatic legitimacy through conforming to environments, the corporation must accommodate to the essential concerns and needs of various audiences or/and involve them in decision-making (Suchman 1995, 587). Suchman states that this is connected to well-known challenge of marketing because the marketing needs to be in correspondence with the audience's preference. In addition to this, the corporation might have difficulties with achieving pragmatic legitimacy, if it does not have a record of consistent performance (Suchman 1995, 587-588). However, the corporation might be able to avoid these difficulties by the use of character references who can vouch for the corporation's reliability (Suchman 1995, 588).

Corporations might also use strategies regarding conformity to achieve moral legitimacy, and this entails that the corporation must conform to the audience's fundamental ideals. Suchman introduces one obvious moral legitimation strategy which is that a corporation in actuality produces honourable outcomes (Suchman 1995, 588). However, Suchman adds that it is not often that corporations choose this strategy because concrete honourable outcomes are difficult to achieve and even more difficult to document. Therefore, corporations typically choose strategies which Suchman describes as less direct (Suchman 1995, 588). For instance, a corporation can do efforts to include new structures and practices in the networks of already existing legitimate institutions. This means that corporations occasionally include co-optation as a strategy to associate the corporation with respected entities (Suchman 1995, 588). Another less direct option is that the corporation can

carefully select displays of symbolism which illustrate the corporation's significant change. According to Suchman, the corporation's outputs, procedures, structures, and employees also play a significant role as he states that they: "[…] *signal that the organization labors on the side of the angels.*" (Suchman 1995, 558). There is also an extreme approach which corporations can resort to when it wants to conform to its environment. Corporation can choose to cynically re-evaluate its core mission statements in order to give society a false image of conformity to its ideals (Suchman 1995, 558).

In terms of gaining cognitive legitimacy, Suchman states that corporations primarily gain it by conforming to already existing models or standards. This is especially the case, when a corporation is operating within an uncertain environment, and it typically pursues legitimacy through mimetic isomorphism (Suchman 1995, 589). This essentially means that the corporation mimics other corporations or organisations which are the most prominent and secure (Suchman 1995, 589).

Select Among Environments

Suchman defines the second approach to achieve legitimacy in society as: select among environments. If corporations want to avoid having to change their image in the eyes of its environment, they have to choose more proactive strategies instead of strategies related to conformity (Suchman 1995, 589). Suchman states that the simplest method to achieve this is by selecting an environment which is willing to accept the corporation as it is. This approach to achieving legitimacy also includes different variants of strategies related to pragmatic, moral, and cognitive aspects (Suchman 1995, 589).

If the corporation wants to achieve pragmatic legitimacy by selecting an environment, it is typically a matter of market research. The corporation needs to ensure that it has selected an environment in which it can provide a valuable exchange for the other constituents within the environment (Suchman 1995, 589). In addition, the corporation can recruit co-optation targets who are perceived as credible, but they will not demand the corporation to make dramatic changes in its corporate activities (Suchman 1995, 589).

In terms of achieving moral legitimacy, there are less options which corporations can choose from, because as it was previously established moral legitimacy represents the more generalised cultural concerns and interest (Suchman 1995, 589). There are higher standards of responsibility in terms of the direct consequences of corporate activities which the corporations need to accommodate to.

Suchman adds that society imposes even heavier obligations onto corporations which provides particular important or problematic goods and services (Suchman 1995, 589). If the corporation adjusts its corporate goals, it can typically select among alternative moral criteria such as efficiency, confidentiality, accountability, responsiveness, reliability to name a few (Suchman 1995, 589).

In similarity to achieving moral legitimacy, the achievement of cognitive legitimacy does not offer the corporation a lot of options. In terms of selecting an environment, it may entail strategic manipulating of the corporation's goal statements, however, many environments have formal gatekeepers which limit the corporation's access (Suchman 1995, 589). If the corporation wishes to enter such a restricted environment, it must acquire what Suchman refers to an explicit certification, and this is typically acquired by conforming to formal requirements. It might be more beneficial for the corporation if it selects a fragmented environment. Fragmented environments or sectors provide the corporation which are attempting to achieve cognitive legitimacy with the most leeway (Suchman 1995, 590).

Manipulate Environments

Most corporations choose a strategy related to conforming to or selecting an environment, but Suchman states that for some corporations these will not be sufficient. This is especially the case for innovators because of their deviation from prior practises. They must take preventive measures in order to obtain bases of support which accommodates their needs (Suchman 1995, 591). This means that corporation must actively attempt to construct new explanations of the social reality. However, this form of cultural manipulation is not very common, and it is both less controllable and understood (Suchman 1995, 591).

As it was previously mentioned in the section dedicated to pragmatic legitimacy, the type reflects direct exchange and influence relations. Suchman states that the type of pragmatic legitimacy is the easiest to manipulate (Suchman 1995, 591). This is typically done by the method of advertising in which the corporation attempts to persuade, and corporations further attempts to use strategic communication to either highlight or exaggerate. Additionally, corporations might use image advertising as an attempt to increase the speed of decision-making procedures (Suchman 1995, 591-592).

To achieve moral legitimacy by manipulating environments is defined as a challenge. Suchman states that for isolated corporations, their best hope is to simply achieve a record of technical

success. The corporation's technical performance might influence other moral dynamics as well which might provide the corporation with validation (Suchman 1995, 592). This is why collective strategies are more useful in terms of achieving moral legitimacy because when corporations collaborate with each other in order to achieve moral acceptance, it will eventually result in a collaboration of believers whose: "[…] *conceptions of socially desirable activity set the terms for subsequent moral debate.*" (Suchman 1995, 592).

If the focus is on achieving cognitive legitimacy by environmental manipulation, the corporation also needs the collective action. Isolated corporation might have the ability to achieve a form of legitimacy by simply persisting, but Suchman states that this simple strategic is still based on the fundamental collective nature of reproducible organisational action (Suchman 1995, 592). The collective action is usually defined by popularisation and standardisation. In terms of popularisation, corporations attempt to enhance a new perspective by articulating stories which illustrate their reality. Examples of this is lobbying, advertising, event sponsorship, litigation, and scientific research (Suchman 1995, 593). In terms of standardisation, corporations might enhance their legitimacy by remaking others in the image of themselves. This is typically done through success and modelling or through coercion and regulation (Suchman 1995, 593).

8.3.5 Strategies for Maintaining Legitimacy

Suchman divided strategies for maintaining legitimacy into two clusters: perceiving future changes and protecting past accomplishments. None of the two clusters are as active as the strategies for gaining legitimacy, but strategies for maintaining legitimacy require more initiative in general (Suchman 1995, 594).

Perceive Change

The first cluster of strategies a corporation can use to maintain its legitimacy focuses on the corporation's ability to see future reactions from audiences and future emerging challenges. Corporations must avoid becoming too invested in their own legitimate interests, as they can lose sight of the external developments that might influence these interests (Suchman 1995, 595). Otherwise, corporations might find themselves to be in a constant struggle of regaining their lost grounds. Thus, it is required that corporations must monitor the cultural environment and include aspects of it in their corporate decision processes (Suchman 1995, 595). By monitoring the cultural

environment, the corporation can obtain knowledge regarding its audience's values, beliefs, and reactions (Suchman 1995, 595).

In terms of pragmatic legitimacy, the corporation must monitor various interests and it must, to some extent, include its audience in its decision making. This will provide the corporation with cultural insight (Suchman 1995, 595).

If the focus is on moral legitimacy, the corporation must include various ethical aspects as well as pursue certain members from its audience to participate (Suchman 1995, 595).

Regarding cognitive legitimacy, the corporation needs to be aware of any emerging cognitive understandings. This entails that the corporation is monitoring various outlooks in order to catch if there is anyone who is doubting the corporation's legitimacy (Suchman 1995, 595).

Protect Accomplishments

As the first cluster focused on being aware of future challenges, the second cluster focuses on how the corporation can protect the legitimacy which it has already acquired (Suchman 1995, 595). Corporations can secure its legitimacy by converting it from episodic to continual. Suchman presents three steps which the corporation can use in order to secure its legitimacy. The first step is to control its internal operations in order to prevent mistakes, the second step is to develop a larger amount of defensive and supportive beliefs and attitudes (Suchman 1995, 595). Ultimately, corporations should avoid unexpected events which might result in scrutiny from its audience (Suchman 1995, 596).

In terms of pragmatic legitimacy, the corporation must ensure that the exchanges between the corporation and its audience are consistent and predictable. Additionally, the corporation must meet the audience's needs as well as exclude any uncertainties.

If the corporation wants to maintain its moral legitimacy, its activities must illustrate responsibility. This means that the activities must not only refrain from inappropriateness, but they must also downplay the purely instrumental or consequential concerns' role (Suchman 1995, 596).

Regarding cognitive legitimacy, the corporation must ensure that its operations are simple, and that they do not only explain the corporation's behaviour, but they make it appear as natural and inevitable (Suchman 1995, 596).

In addition, the corporation must in all of its activities consider the direct benefits regarding its new legitimation initiatives on the basis of the potential scrutiny that might follow. Suchman states that corporation should manage challenges by invoking its legitimate authority, by manipulating language, and by simply waiting for the for the demographic process which might replace the present critics with supports from a new generation (Suchman 1995, 96).

Suchman includes on final strategy for maintaining legitimacy, and this strategy suggests that corporations stockpile their goodwill and support. He defines these stockpiles as dispositional in character and the reflect attributions such as trust and respect (Suchman 1996, 596). Furthermore, Suchman puts emphasis on the communication links between the corporation and its social surroundings. If the corporation communicates frequently and intensely, it creates meanings which are difficult to resist and survive, and these meaning can also repair potential disruptions (Suchman 1995, 597).

8.3.6 Strategies for Repairing Legitimacy

The previously mentioned strategies can in general be used as a strategy to repair legitimacy. However, it is required that the corporation still has some form of creditability as well as a connection with its audience (Suchman 1995, 597). Suchman states that it is also typically required that the corporation has addressed the disruption before it engages in more legitimation activities. The strategies within the repairing of legitimacy are divided into three clusters: offering normalising accounts, restructuring, and don't panic (Suchman 1995, 597).

Normalising Accounts

In order to repair a disruption of legitimacy, the corporation has the task of formulating a normalising account which has the purpose of separating the threatening revelation from the corporation (Suchman 1995, 597-598). There are four different types of accounts. Firstly, the corporation can attempt to deny the problem with the hop of it might minimise the problem, at least until the corporation possibly can collect a compensation. However, if the denial is not perceived as sincere, it might cause the disruption to become even larger (Suchman 1995, 598). Secondly, the corporation can choose to excuse the problem by potentially questioning the corporation's moral responsibility. However, this will typically result in the blame being put on individual employees or external authorities. Moreover, this form of tactic suggests that the corporation is lacking managerial control (Suchman 1995, 598). Thirdly, the corporation can attempt to justify the

disruption by redefining the means and ends in order to make the disruptive events appear in accordance with prevailing moral and cognitive beliefs (Suchman 1995, 598). Lastly, the corporation can choose to simply explain the disruptive events in a manner which protects an otherwise supportive worldview (Suchman 1995, 598).

Restructure

The corporation can by strategic restructuring make it easier to repair its legitimacy. The corporation needs to make discrete structural changes which does not make the corporation appear as unstable and unreliable. If the corporation makes these structural changes while they align with the before mentioned normalising accounts, it might be an effective strategy to contain any damages (Suchman 1995, 598). There are two types of restructuring which have proven to be impactful. The first type is the creation of monitors and watchdogs. This will allow the corporation to "post a bond" against any potential recidivism such as inviting government regulation or instituting grievance procedures. This might not create legitimacy in itself, but it illustrates remorse and might assist in persuading audiences (Suchman 1995, 598). The second type of restructuring is disassociation, and this type entails that the corporation adopts changes in order to create distance between the corporation and the "bad influences". An example of this is executive replacement which signals a wish for change (Suchman 1995, 598). Additionally, corporation might also choose to create distance by excluding certain procedures, structures, or even specific geographic locations (Suchman 1995, 599).

Don't Panic

The last strategy with the cluster of repairing legitimacy focuses on avoiding panic. Suchman argues that repairing of legitimacy might reflect the creation of legitimacy which might include intense activity and dramatic displays of decisiveness, but the repairing of legitimacy also reflects the maintaining of legitimacy which need a light and sensitive touch due to environmental reactions (Suchman 1995, 599).

8.3.7 Critique of Legitimacy Theory

Legitimacy theory is a well-known theory to use, when investigating corporate disclosures such as CSR disclosures. However, the theory had been criticised of being unable to stand on its own which means that it is dependent on other theories in order to reach its full potential (Tilling 2004, 9). Furthermore, it has been questioned if the use of legitimacy strategies in actuality produces useful

insight. This is because that strategies within legitimacy theory imply that corporations are only releasing information, if it is suspicious or if it has concerns (Deegan 2002, 298). However, as this thesis does not intend to use the legitimation strategies on its own, it can be argued that this thesis will not be impacted by it. In terms of legitimation strategies implying that corporation only produces information, when it is threatened might not be problematic for thesis. However, Suchman provides strategies for gaining legitimacy which indicates that the corporation is not threatened in any shape or form.

9. Methodological considerations

The following section contains my methodological considerations regarding this thesis. This entails my considerations regarding the used research method as well as my analysis method. Lastly, I will account for my application of the chosen theories.

9.1 Research Method

This section of my methodological considerations consists of elaborations regarding my research method and how this has influenced my thesis. I will elaborate upon desk and field research and qualitative and quantitative approach.

9.1.1 Desk and Field Research

When conducting research, there are two methods which can be used: field research and desk research. Field research is defined as research which collects data first hand, and this means that you collect the data yourself. Field research is defined as a term which:" […] *covers what is colloquially known as participant observation, unstructured interviews, and documentary methods.*" (Burgess 2006, 4). The second research method is desk research which this thesis will make use of. This essentially means that this thesis will use data which already has been collected by someone else. Desk research is defined as:" *the collection of secondary data from internal sources, the internet, libraries, trade associations, government agencies, and published reports.*" (Hauge 2004, 73). Therefore, data which is retrieved by the means of desk research is data which can be collected without fieldwork (Hauge 2004, 59).

 Both desk research and field research have advantages and disadvantages. In order to clarify on my choice of research approach, I will account and explore these advantages and disadvantages. In general, field research is often used when investigating everyday life in which field research

provides researchers with first hand experiences and knowledge (Blackstone 2012, 126). This is perceived as advantage because it provides the researcher with very detailed data regarding people and processes which might be difficult to achieve with other methods. However, as field research provides very detailed data, it tends to possess a narrow perspective. This means that field research might lack the broader perspective (Blackstone 2012, 126). In terms of desk research, it is perceived as a disadvantage that it does not always represent a continuous time interval in terms of interest to the researcher, or the data might lack factual aspects which the researcher needs (Wasko 2019). Advantages of desk research it is not as affected as much by researcher bias as fieldwork is (Wasko 2019).

As the empirical data in this thesis is BP's sustainability report from 2020, a CEO letter, an EVP letter, and an interview, I have made use of desk research. This thesis' objective is to investigate BP's CSR and its communication, which means this thesis needs to integrate data which already exists and is constructed by BP. As my empirical data is constructed by BP, it is important to be critical as it can be assumed that the corporation has specific agendas regarding its produced content. Ultimately, by making use of desk research will assist me in answering my problem statement.

9.1.2 Qualitative Approach and Quantitative Approach

When investigating a topic or subject, there are several approaches which need to be considered. In general, there are three research approaches: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. These approaches are not to be perceived as adamant or distinct categories as these are not polar opposites (Creswell & Creswell 2017, 3). The qualitative and quantitative approach differ from each other due to the philosophical assumptions they provide to a study. The qualitative approach is perceived as focusing on the use of words when the quantitative approach concerns itself with numbers. The mixed methods approach is to be found the middle of the two other approaches as it integrates aspects from both the qualitative and quantitative approach (Creswell & Creswell 2017, 3). The three approaches have different research strategies which e.g., could be quantitative experiments or qualitative case studies (Creswell & Creswell 2017, 3). I will account for my research strategy later in this section. First of all, this section will elaborate upon qualitative research and quantitative research in order to account for which one is used in this thesis.

Qualitative research is often used as a method to investigate and understand individuals and social groups' different meanings regarding a human or social problem. This often entails a data analysis

which is impacted by inductive aspects as the researcher applies theories in order to achieve a better understanding of the data. Moreover, the researcher makes interpretations of the meanings from the data (Creswell & Creswell 2017, 4).

Quantitative research is typically used for testing objective theories by means of investigating the relations between variables. The variables are measurable which means that numbered data can be used as statistical procedures. In contrast to the qualitative research approach, the quantitative research approach is impacted by deductive aspects as it focuses on testing different theories (Creswell & Creswell 2017, 4).

This thesis is connected to the qualitative research approach as this approach entails investigating people's attitudes or feelings towards a given phenomenon or situation. As this thesis investigates stakeholder expectations towards BP, this thesis argues that it is in accordance with the qualitative research approach. Furthermore, this thesis is not attempting to test a theory or focusing on different variables or numbers which is in accordance with the quantitative research approach. The qualitative approach allows this thesis to be more innovative as it operates with interpretations which generate new ways of thinking (Creswell 2009, 19). If this thesis was following the quantitative research approach, it was obligated to operate within different rules and procedures as the quantitative research approach is a more traditional research method (Creswell 2009, 19). In addition, this thesis is constructed as a form of case study which is a qualitive research strategy. Case studies are defined as a method which consists of in-depth analysis of case which can be a program, event, activity, or a process (Creswell & Creswell 2017, 14). This essentially means that a case study is a study which investigate and attempts to create understanding of a phenomenon in a real-life context (Schwandt 2001, 22-23). I argue that this thesis is a case study as it judges on the basis of theoretical, analytical, and methodological grounds in order to understand CSR and how the concept can be used to accommodate stakeholder expectations and achieve legitimacy in society.

As I previously mentioned in section 4 regarding theory of science and my position as researcher, my beliefs are in accordance with social constructivism. My research approach and method are also in accordance with my position as researcher since the qualitative approach and the social constructivist approach are typically connected. They are connected due to the inductive process of the qualitative approach and social constructivism's view of meaning being constructed through social interaction between human beings (Creswell 2009, 9).

Subsequently, this thesis makes use of the qualitative research approach as this approach allows this thesis to do an in-depth analysis as well as provide a more comprehensive insight and understanding. I believe this approach will result in the best outcome in terms of answering my problem statement and it will assist this thesis in reaching the full potential of the chosen theories and data.

9.2 Selection of Empirical Data

This section is focused on my selection of empirical data. I will account for my reasoning behind the chosen data and why the data is relevant for this thesis. My empirical data was described and elaborated upon in section 6.

9.2.1 BP's Sustainability Report from 2020: Reimagining Energy

I have chosen to integrate BP sustainability report from 2020, as this report provides this thesis will relevant knowledge regarding the corporation CSR. It is also within this report, the CEO letter and the EVP letter is published. The sustainability report from 2020 serves a different purpose than the other parts of this thesis empirical data. This report has been selected as a part of the empirical data because it has provided important information to several sections of this thesis. This essentially means that this thesis will not specifically analyse on BP's sustainability report.

9.2.2 CEO Letter from Bernard Looney

This thesis has selected the CEO letter from Bernard Looney as Bernard Looney can be interpreted as the face of the corporation. In addition, he is the face of the corporation's new transformational shift from an international oil corporation to an integrated energy corporation. This can be interpreted as Bernard Looney was the one to announce the big change, and it was announced at the same time as the announce of him being the new CEO (Meredith 2019). The CEO letter is an important narrative section of a report, as it is claimed to be section which most people read. The CEO letter is defined as a promotional text in which the function is to present a positive corporate image (Dragsted 2014, 85-86). Thus, I have selected Bernard Looney's CEO letter as a part of my empirical data.

9.2.3 EVP Letter from Giulia Chierchia

This thesis will also incorporate the letter form Giulia Chierchia as she is the executive vice president of BP (Appendix 2, l. 6.). In addition, it is stated in her letter that she focuses on strategy

and sustainability (Appendix 2, l. 6). Thus, I have selected Giulia Chierchia's letter as a part of this thesis empirical data because of her relevant position within the corporation. Furthermore, this thesis argues that because this letter is located right after the CEO letter from Bernard Looney, it has the same form of relevance and importance as it.

9.2.4 Interview with Bernard Looney by Bloomberg News

The last part of this thesis empirical data is an interview with Bernard Looney by Bloomberg News. This interview touches upon similar topics as both the CEO letter and EVP letter, it is therefore relevant in terms of investigating BP's CSR and stakeholder expectations. In addition, this interview provides this thesis with another perspective as the interviewer is being critical towards BP and its transformational shift. Furthermore, the interview is another method of how BP is communicating with its stakeholders.

9.3 Method

In the following section of my methodological considerations, I will introduce my method of analysis which is Norman Fairclough's framework regarding Critical Discourse Analysis. Lastly in this section, I will elaborate upon my application of theory.

9.3.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

The following section will introduce Critical Discourse Analysis, hereinafter referred to as CDA, and this thesis will make use of Norman Fairclough's analytical framework. This section will elaborate upon Fairclough's three-dimensional model which he refers to as Text, Discursive Practice, and Social Practice (Fairclough 1995, 57).

First of all, it is important to clarify how Fairclough defines the critical aspects of CDA and how he defines discourse. In terms discourse, Fairclough defines it as: "*[…] language viewed in a certain way, as a part of social process (part of social life) which is related to other parts."* (Fairclough 2015, 7). Essentially, this means that discourse is language and the relations with other elements in the social process (Fairclough 2015, 8). In terms of the critical aspects of CDA, Fairclough emphasises that being 'critical' entails more than merely identifying features and types of discourse. Being critical entails asking questions and searching for explanations (Fairclough 2015, 7).

As mentioned above, Fairclough's framework consists of a combination of the three dimensions. The three dimensions are all connected to each other which is illustrated in figure 4 below.
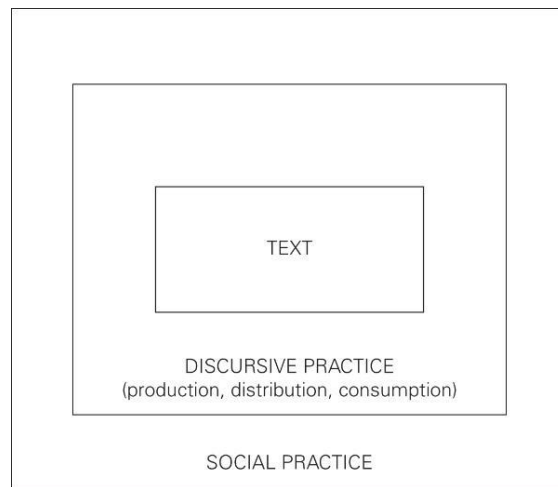
Figure 4 (Fairclough 1995, 59)

9.3.1.1 Text

The first dimension is Text, and it includes traditional methods of linguistic analysis as well as investigating the textual organisation between the lines in a text (Fairclough 1995, 57). A text is defined as both written and oral, and oral text can be just spoken such as radio or it can be both spoken and visual simultaneously such as television (Fairclough 1995, 57). The purpose of investigating the dimension of text is to uncover social identities, social relations, system of knowledge, and beliefs as these aspects contribute to shaping society and culture (Fairclough 1995, 55).

Within this dimension, Fairclough provides textual and formal features which can be investigated. These can be divided into to two separate categories: vocabulary and grammar. These two categories and the included aspects of them will be further elaborated upon in the following sections.

9.3.1.1.1 Vocabulary

The first category to be investigated within the text dimension is vocabulary, and this category mainly investigates the used words within a text (Fairclough 1992, 75). Fairclough introduces three types of values which illustrate the text producer's experience and understanding of the natural or social world. These are defined as experiential value, relational value, and expressive value (Fairclough 2015, 130). Additionally, Fairclough includes the investigation of the use of metaphors within this category as different metaphors illustrate different methods of managing situations

(Fairclough 2015, 137). The three types of values and use of metaphors will be further elaborated below.

Experiential Value

The experiential value concerns aspects such as knowledge and beliefs which illustrate a representation of the text producer's view of the world. The experiential value illustrates how the text producer uses he or she's vocabulary in order to code the ideological differences between the produced text and he or she's representation of the world (Fairclough 2015, 130-131). Fairclough argues that some words are ideologically contested which provides an understanding of the text producer's beliefs (Fairclough 2015, 132).

Relational Value

The relational value focuses on the text producer's choice of words which illustrate or even create the social relations within a text. For instance, investigating the relational value can determine the formality of a situation by the use of words. This is observed through the use of formal and informal words (Fairclough 2015, 134-135).

Expressive Value

The last type of value is the expressive value, and it concerns subjects and social identities and how these are presented in the text producer's choice of words (Fairclough 2015, 131). This is essentially the text producer's evaluation of the reality in which the text relates to. Additionally, the use of expressive value has a particular central role in terms of investigating persuasive language (Fairclough 2015, 136).

Metaphors

As a part of the investigating the vocabulary of a text, Fairclough emphasises the importance of the use of metaphors as they are able to represent one experience in relation to another. The use of metaphors illustrates how the text producer perceives the reality within the text (Fairclough 2014, 137).

9.3.1.1.2 Grammar

The second category of the text dimension is grammar, and this category focuses on the construction of sentences within a text (Fairclough 1992, 75-76). Fairclough suggests several

different aspects to investigate within the category of grammar such as active and passive sentences, modes, modality, pronouns, and cohesion which all will be elaborated upon the following sections.

Active and Passive Sentences

Passive and active sentences refer to the amount of action that is presence within a text (Fairclough 2015, 141). A sentence is referred to as an active sentence when a subject is followed by an active verb. An active sentence indicates that an action is being performed in the sense that a subject is doing an action which is confirmed by the verb. A sentence is referred to as a passive sentence when a subject is acted upon the verb (Fairclough 2015, 141). The use of active sentences illustrates transparency and willingness while the use of passive sentences indicates an attempt to hide or avoid something (Fairclough 2015, 141).

Modes

In terms of modes, Fairclough refers to three different types. These are declarative, imperative, grammatical question, and the different types of modes describe the text producer's position (Fairclough 2015, 141). The declarative mode is marked by having a subject followed by a verb. The text producer's position within the declarative mode is in the position of providing information to a receiver. In contrast to the declarative mode, the imperative mode does not possess a subject and it begins with a verb. The text producer's position within the imperative mode is also in contrast to the position in the declarative mode, as the text producer is typically asking for something from the receiver (Fairclough 2015, 141-142). The last mode is grammatical question and within this mode, the text producer has a similar position as in the imperative mode as the text producer is asking something of the receiver. However, within the grammatical question mode the receiver is the actor who provides information. Fairclough states that the grammatical question mode is rather more complicated than the two others since there are different types of grammatical questions. Firstly, there are the questions which begin with who, what, when, where, how, and which. Secondly, there are the questions which begin with a verb such as "can you pass the salt?" and these are often referred to as yes or no questions (Fairclough 1989, 125). Moreover, modes have the ability to clarify the relation between the text producer and the receiver as asking for information and providing information are both perceived as a position of power – unless it is asked for (Fairclough 1989, 126).

Modality

The concept of modality focuses on the text producer's authority, and Fairclough presents two types of modalities. The first type of modality is relational modality, and it focuses on the authority of one participant in relation to others. The second type of modality is expressive modality, and it focuses on the text producer's authority in terms of the truth or the text producer's representation of reality (Fairclough 2015, 142).

Pronouns

The text producer's choice of pronouns is an important aspect to investigate due to its connection to power and solidarity. For instance, the pronoun 'we' can be used in two ways. There is the inclusive 'we' which does not only include the text producer, but it also includes the reader. In contrast to the inclusive 'we', there is the exclusive 'we'. The exclusive 'we' only includes the text producer and not the reader. When a text producer makes use of the inclusive 'we', he or she is expressing an authority which entails the ability to speak on behalf of others (Fairclough 2015, 143). Another pronoun which is important to investigate is 'you'. This is especially valid in terms of mass communication such as advertising in which there are many potential readers with unknown identities to the text producer. Fairclough states that 'you' is frequently used as an indefinite pronoun in order to create solidarity between the text producer and reader (Fairclough 2015, 143-144).

Cohesion

The last aspect within the category of grammar is cohesion. The investigation of cohesion entails an investigation of how sentences are linked together which essentially means investigating the connective values of formal features of a text (Fairclough 1989, 129). Fairclough defines cohesion as formal connections between sentences in a text, and cohesion can be expressed throughout a text in several ways. Cohesion might be expressed through vocabulary links between sentences such as repetition of words or the use of related words. Cohesion can also be expressed through connectors which illustrate relations between sentences in a spatial, temporal, and logical manner. In addition, reference might also express cohesion by using words which refer back to prior sentences (Fairclough 2015, 145-146).

9.3.1.2 Discourse Practice

The next dimension of Fairclough's framework is the Discourse Practice. This dimension of the framework involves processes such as text production, distribution, and consumption (Fairclough

1992, 78). In connection to the Discourse Practice, Fairclough introduces several aspects such as force, coherence, and intertextuality which all will be elaborated upon in the sections below.

9.3.1.2.1 Force

This aspect of the Discourse Practice concerns how the text producer is making use of speech acts such as giving orders, making threats, asking questions, or making a promise in order to either change an attitude or achieve a certain behaviour (Fairclough 1992, 82). Furthermore, speech acts can be used both in a direct or indirect manner within a text. For instance, a simple question such as: *"Can you carry the suitcase?"* can be interpreted in several ways as it can be understood as a request, an order, or a suggestion (Fairclough 1992, 82). Furthermore, the context of the use of force plays significant role within this aspect as the context depicts the meaning behind a statement. For instance, there is a significant contextual difference in asking a question within a court room and asking a question in a more relax setting between friends (Fairclough 1992, 82).

9.3.1.2.2 Coherence

When a text producer is connecting different parts of a text such as paragraph and sentences to each other, it is referred to as coherence. Additionally, coherence is a method to relate the text to the world and the concept of reality within the world. This essentially means that coherence is creating a connection between the text and the world (Fairclough 2001, 78). Therefore, is it essential that the sentences and paragraphs of a text are related in a meaningful manner in order for the text to make sense (Fairclough 1992, 83-84)..

9.3.1.2.3 Intertextuality

The concept of intertextuality perceives a text as possessing the ability to refer to other texts, and this might be in a direct or indirect manner. Fairclough separates two types of the concept. He refers to these two types as manifest intertextuality and interdiscursivity (Fairclough 1992, 85). It is referred to as manifest intertextuality, when a text is directly referring to other specific texts (Fairclough 1992, 115). In terms of interdiscursivity, the text is referring to other discourses which are meaningful for the production of the text. A text has transformative value in the sense, it has the ability to transform a text from the past into the present, and thereby create new discourses (Fairclough 1992, 124-125).

9.3.1.3 Social Practice

The last dimension of Fairclough's three-dimensional model is the Social Practice. This dimension is more focused on the context of the communicative event of a text as well as a wider perspective

concerning society and culture (Fairclough 1995, 62). The Social Practice illustrates discourse as a part of the social process, and it shows how social structures establish discourses by either sustaining or changing them (Fairclough 2015, 172). Within the Social Practice, Fairclough introduces two aspects to investigate and refers to these as ideology and hegemony. Both of these aspects will be elaborate upon in the following section.

9.3.1.3.1 Ideology

Fairclough introduces the concept of ideology within the social practice, as the concept is often overlooked within the field of linguistic analysis. Ideology is defined as constructions of reality, and it is expressed through the physical world, social relations, and social identities. These different aspects are constructed into different dimensions of discursive practices which contribute to the production or transformation of power relations (Fairclough 1992, 87). Fairclough perceives ideology as being detectable in the structures of discourse in which ideology impacts currents events as it attempts to naturalise and denaturalise different aspects in discursive events (Fairclough 1992, 89).

9.3.1.3.2 Hegemony

Hegemony is described as sort of leadership and domination in the economic, political, cultural, and ideological domains within society. However, Hegemony concerns itself with more than achieving dominance, it is about creating alliances in order to obtain consent. (Fairclough 1992, 92). Within each society, there is a hegemonic discourse which is accepted and determined by consent from society (Fairclough 1992, 92).

9.3.2 Application of Theory

In the following section of this thesis' methodological considerations, I will elaborate upon my application of the chosen theories.

The first theory to be applied is Mitchell, Agle, and Wood's Stakeholder Salience. The Stakeholder Salience will be applied first as this model will provide knowledge which will be useful in the following sections of this thesis analysis. Furthermore, as it was established in section 8.1 regarding the theory of The Stakeholder Salience Model, this theory can be used to identify and locate a corporation's stakeholders. Thus, this thesis will make us of The Stakeholder Salience Model in order to identify which stakeholders are present in the empirical data as an attempt create an understanding of how BP perceives its stakeholders.

The next theory to be applied is Morsing and Schultz's Three CSR Communication Strategies. This theory focuses on how corporations engage with its stakeholders. This thesis will apply the communication strategies in order to find out how BP is strategically communicating with its stakeholders and what this essentially means. Furthermore, this thesis will apply Morsing and Schultz's Three CSR Communication Strategies in order to find out, if the corporation is accommodating to its stakeholders' expectations of sustainability within the included empirical data.

The last theory to be applied is Suchman's strategies regarding gaining, maintaining, and repairing legitimacy. This theory will be applied in order to see if BP has incorporated specific CSR initiatives or efforts in order to gain, maintain, or repair its legitimacy within society. Furthermore, when investigating BP's use of legitimation strategies, this thesis will be able to conclude if BP is using specific strategies in order to appear sustainable in the eyes of its stakeholders.

Ultimately, this thesis will apply all three theories in order to answer the problem statement.

10. Analysis

The following section of my thesis consists of my analysis. This includes my initial analysis in which I account for my findings regarding Fairclough's framework of Critical Discourse Analysis, and I will investigate BP's stakeholders by applying Mitchell, Agle, and Wood's Stakeholder Salience Model. Lastly, I will investigate BP's CSR communication by the use of Morsing and Schultz's three CSR communication strategies as well as Suchman's strategies in relation to gaining, maintaining, and repairing legitimacy. The analysis is divided into two sections as I will use and include my findings from the initial analysis in the analysis of BP's CSR communication.

10.1 Initial Analysis

The section of my analysis is my initial analysis. The purpose of this section is to reach findings which I will include in the next section of my analysis. Firstly, I will account for my findings from my analysis method which is Fairclough's framework of Critical Discourse Analysis. However, this analysis will not include all aspects from the framework. Secondly, I will apply The Stakeholder Salience Model.

10.1.1 Findings From CDA

As previously mentioned, the first dimension to investigated is the social practice as this allows this thesis to investigate the wider perspective in regard to society and culture. The social practice of this thesis will focus on stakeholders and their expectations towards corporations in terms of CSR and sustainability as well as provide a contextual understanding. Thereafter, I will conclude on my findings regarding the textual dimension and the discursive dimension.

10.1.1.1 Social Practice

As it was stated in my introduction to this thesis, stakeholders prefer to support and engage with corporations which are socially responsible and environmentally friendly. This is a general statement, but stakeholder preferences and expectations are also highly impacted by culture. The culture of the society essentially determines what stakeholders expect and prefer from a corporation. For instance, an American Stakeholder might have different preferences and expectations than a European stakeholder as they perceive corporations and their role in society differently (Jurgens, Berthon, Papania, & Shabbir 2010, 770). This means that if a corporation's intentions are to accommodate stakeholders' expectations, it needs to consider the cultural aspects of CSR in order to provide it in an appropriate manner. A CSR survey from 2019, revealed that 70% of American consumers are motived to purchase from a corporation which is committed to improving the world and its environment, and it also revealed that 73% of American investors find CSR efforts regarding improving the environment and society as important when they are deciding to invest (Stobierski 2021). This illustrates that the Americans, both consumers and shareholders, have a culture in which it is expected from corporations that they engage in CSR in order to improve society and the environment. If the corporation does not fulfil these expectations, it can result in stakeholders taking negative action towards the corporation such as posting negatively on social media and organising boycotts. According to the survey, 75% of the Americans stated that they would take negative action if they perceived the corporation to be irresponsible (Stobierski 2021). Due to these stakeholders' expectations, it can be argued that there is a cultural discourse in society regarding corporations' involvement in CSR. Therefore, it makes sense that BP is attempting to fulfil these cultural expectations by giving CSR a more distinct role in its business operations. This is expressed in Bernard Looney's CEO letter in which he states:" […] *we introduced our new purpose to reimagine energy for people and our planet*." (Appendix 1, l. 16). This quote illustrates that BP introduced its new purpose because of it stakeholders, and it can therefore be argued that BP is

attempting to do actions in order to accommodate to stakeholders' expectations. Similarly, Bernard Looney stated in the interview that: "[…] *our transition story is not just a renewable energy story, it is also a consumer story* […]". (Appendix 3, l. 72). This quote further illustrates that BP's transition entails more than merely becoming more sustainable, this transition is also about consumers. In her letter Guilia Chierchia, the EVP, stated: "*We believe creating value for our stakeholders more widely – including society, our employees and our shareholders* […]" (Appendix 2, ll. 7-8), and this quote is in accordance with the two other quotes as it illustrates that the new transition will create value for BP's stakeholders. As it was previously mentioned in section 5.1, BP has had difficulties with stakeholder perception due to bad reputation. BP has probably gained this reputation because it has not previously been able to accommodate to American stakeholder's expectations which essentially stem from the established cultural discourse regarding corporation's involvement in CSR.

10.1.1.2 The Discursive Practice

After having investigated the social practice, the next dimension to be investigated is the discursive practice. In order to investigate the discourse practice, I will make use of one aspect from the discursive practice as this is most relevant within this dimension In the following section, I will investigate the aspect of force.

Force

As it was established in section 9.3.1.2 regarding force, this aspect investigates how a text producer makes use of speech acts such as giving orders, making threats, asking questions, and making promises. As BP is in a transition to become greener and more sustainable, they are making several promises to do so. This is indicated from this quote from Bernard Looney's CEO letter:" […] *we set out 10 aims to get bp to net zero by 2050 or sooner, and to help the world get there too.*" (Appendix 1, ll. 17-18). He refers to the 10 aims which BP has introduced in order to be net zero by 2050 which can be interpreted to be an indirect promise that the corporation will be net zero by 2050. Additionally, this quote also illustrates how BP will help the world become net zero as well, and this also indicates that BP is promising to help the world become more sustainable. Bernard Looney further promises that the corporation will play its part in terms of improving the world. This is expressed in this quote from his CEO letter: "*The world will build back better, and bp, with your continued support, will play our part.*" (Appendix 1, ll. 38-39). Although, he does not directly use word "promise" this statement can still be interpreted as a promise. In the interview regarding BP's

energy transition into clean energy, Bernard Looney stated that: "[…] *we will see that business shrink, and we will see our emissions shrink with that business* […]" (Appendix 3, ll. 96-97). In this quote, he is referring to the business of oil and gas, and as the corporation will operate less within that industry, he argues that BP's emission will shrink concurrently. This is another example of how BP indirectly promises to become more sustainable and environmentally friendly. As speech acts are typically used in order to change an attitude or achieve a certain behaviour, it can be argued that BP is making these promises to its stakeholders in order to change their attitude of the corporation. BP wants its stakeholders to perceive the corporation as a corporation which takes responsibility for its impact on the world. In terms of achieving a certain behaviour, it is in the interest of BP that the corporation has stakeholders which support it. Therefore, can the use of speech acts be interpreted as an attempt to archive stakeholder support.

10.1.1.3 The Textual Dimension

The last dimension of Fairclough's three-dimensional framework is the dimension of Text. This dimension will be investigated in order to investigate linguistics aspects of the CEO letter, the EVP letter, and the interview. As previously mentioned in section 9.3.1.1, there are two separate categories to be investigated. However, this analysis will only include aspects from the category of grammar.

10.1.1.3.1 Grammar

In the following sections of analysis, this thesis will investigate active and passive sentences, modes, and pronouns.

Active and passive sentences

This aspect of grammar refers to amount of action which is presence within a text, and this is expressed by the use of active and passive sentences. The CEO letter, the EVP letter, and the interview consist mostly of active sentences. For instance, in her letter Giulia Chierchia states: "[…] *we **plan** to embed sustainability in our DNA* […]" (Appendix 2, ll. 26-27) and "[…] *we **work** purposefully to deliver our strategy and all 20 of our sustainability aims.*" (Appendix 2, ll. 35-36). When she uses active sentences in relation to the presented two quotes, she is putting action behind her words. She implies that the corporation is taking action to embed sustainability in the corporation's DNA and that the corporation is working to purposefully deliver its strategy. The use of active sentences is also illustrated both in the CEO letter and the interview, as Bernard Looney

states:" "[…] and bp, with your continued support, **will play** our part." [Appendix 1, ll. 38-39)", "[…] *we **can** continue to make it more environmentally efficient, and we were continuing do that, and we have lots of plans to do that.*" (Appendix 3, ll. 112-113), and "[…] *we **will** invest* […]" (Appendix 3, l. 114). When BP uses active sentences, it indicates that corporation is actually doing what it states. Additionally, it also illustrates transparency and willingness which is in accordance with the findings within the discursive practice in which it was discovered that the corporation was making promises in order to persuade its stakeholders that the corporation has changed.

Modes

In terms of modes, the empirical data is mostly in accordance with the declarative mode. As it was explained in the section of grammar, if a text is in accordance with the declarative mode, it means that a subject is followed by a verb. Examples of the declarative mode are illustrated in the following quotes form the CEO letter: "[…] *we **worked** extra hard* […] (Appendix 1, l. 10) and "***We are** now introducing a further 10 aims* […]" (Appendix 1, l. 18). In these quotes, the subject is followed by a verb. The declarative mode is further illustrated in these quotes from the EVP letter: "[…] *we **believe** that we can make the most difference* […]" (Appendix 2, l. 15) and "***We have** much more to do* […]" (Appendix 2, l. 31). The type of mode defines the text producers' position, and within the declarative mode, the text producer is in the position of providing information. This position is in accordance with the position of BP, more specifically the CEO and EVP, as it is providing its stakeholders with information regarding how the corporation is transitioning to become a greener corporation. The position of providing information is typically perceived as a position of power, however the amount of power this position provides will be reduced if the information is asked for or requested. This might a relevant point in terms of BP's position as the provided information was potentially requested by stakeholders.

Pronouns

This section will investigate BP's use of pronouns in the empirical data, as this will provide the analysis with an understanding of how BP perceives itself in relation to its stakeholders.

One of the most prominent pronouns in the empirical data is the pronoun "we". More specifically, it is the exclusive "we" which is the most prominent. This is illustrated in the following quotes retrieved from the CEO letter: "***We** look forward to your feedback* […]" (Appendix 1, l. 37) and "***We** reduced our operational greenhouse gas emissions* […]" (Appendix 1, ll. 31-32). These quotes

illustrate how Bernard Looney uses the exclusive "we" when he refers to the corporation which means that his statements are representative of the corporation. The exclusive "we" is further illustrated in the following quotes from Bernard Looney's interview: "[…] *we are in solar, we are in wind* […]" (Appendix 3, l. 20) and "*We are as excited about that as we are about the low carbon energy part.*" (Appendix 3, l. 76). When BP makes use of the exclusive "we", it is only referring to itself, and it therefore excludes the receiver of the texts. This is in accordance with the findings of the investigation of modes, as it was discovered that the declarative mode was the most prominent mode. This means that the corporation is coming from the position of providing information to its stakeholders, and therefore it does not include its stakeholders in its use of pronouns.

Another pronoun which is prominent is "I", and this is especially valid in terms of the EVP letter from Guilia Chierchia. The use of "I" in her letter is illustrated in the following quotes: "[…] *I am incredibly proud of what we as a team have achieved* […]" (Appendix 2, l. 30), "[…] *I believe more than ever* […]" (Appendix 2, l. 32), and "*I would like to thank our many stakeholders* […]" (Appendix 2, l. 33). When she is using the pronoun "I", she is referring to her own personal beliefs, and she represents herself. This provides her letter with a personal perspective, and she relates herself with the content of the letter. This indicates that Guilia Chierchia is coming from a place of sincerity.

10.1.2 The Stakeholder Salience Model

As a part of my initial analysis, I will investigate BP's stakeholders by the use of The Stakeholder Salience Model by Mitchell, Agle, and Wood. This will provide my analysis with findings regarding which stakeholders BP perceives as possessing power, legitimacy and/or urgency in this thesis empirical data. As previously mentioned in section 8.1, a stakeholder can be defined as: "[…] *any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives.*" (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood 1997, 854).

Before this thesis begins to investigate the different stakeholder attributes, it will make sense to investigate which stakeholders BP mentions in the empirical data. This will provide the analysis with a general understanding of which stakeholders BP perceive to be of impact. The first stakeholder which is mentioned in Bernard Looney's CEO letter is employees, as the CEO states that the corporation has over the past year worked extra hard to support its employees both mentally and physically (Appendix 1, ll. 10-11). He then briefly mentions that the corporation has also worked to support some of the most vulnerable communities surrounding the corporation

(Appendix 1, ll. 11-12). Thereafter, Bernard Looney proceeds to talk about the corporation's new purpose or green transition will combine profits and purpose in order to deliver long-term sustainable value for all stakeholders (Appendix 1, ll. 24-25). After this statement, he refers to stakeholders as investors, employees, and society (Appendix 1, l. 25). Guilia Chierchia, the EVP, mentions the same stakeholders in her letter, when she states the corporation believes it will be creating value for its stakeholders more widely, and then she refers to stakeholders as society, employees, and shareholders (Appendix 2, ll. 7-8). In his interview with Bloomberg News, Bernard Looney mentions the world's problems in relation to energy which are both local and complex, and people requires a lot from energy (Appendix 3, ll. 15-17). When he states this, it can be argued that he is referring to society, and this indicates that he perceives society as an impactful stakeholder. Additionally, he refers in the interview to the stakeholder group shareholders, when he speaks regarding the corporation's commitment to shareholders, and he states that investing in the transition makes the corporation able to provide shareholders with a fixed dividend (Appendix 3, ll. 61-62) (Appendix 3, ll. 85-86). Thus, on the basis of the empirical data, BP perceives shareholders, employees, and society as impactful stakeholders since they appear repeatedly in the corporation's communication. In the next section, I will discuss which attributes BP ascribes to the mentioned stakeholders. This will ultimately assist in locating and defining the corporation's stakeholders.

As it was previously mentioned, there are three attributes to be investigated: power, legitimacy, and urgency. As this thesis's theory section on The Stakeholder Salience Model clarified, power is defined as the ability to achieve outcomes which are desired. In terms of the aforementioned stakeholders, it indicates that BP perceives shareholders, employees, and society as possessing power. In general, it can be indicated because BP includes these specific stakeholders in its communication. However, it can also be indicated through the power resource utilitarian power which is based on financial resources, and it is expressed through the granting of goods, services, and money. This is especially valid in terms of employees and shareholders as BP is dependent on its employees as a workforce, and it is dependent on the shareholders' investments for capital. In terms of society possessing power, it is related to the resources of normative power which is based on symbolic resources such as prestige and acceptance. Thus, society possesses the power attribute because BP is dependent on society's acceptance in order to be a successful business as well as ensuring support. The second attribute is legitimacy, and as it was explained section 8.1.2, this attribute reflects society's expected behaviour. As Mitchell, Agle, and Wood argued the legitimacy attribute and power attribute are often connected. This is a valid argument in terms of BP's

stakeholders, as the stakeholders are able to provide BP with both power and legitimacy. If BP behaves in a manner which is in accordance with what stakeholders' expectations, stakeholders will support the corporation which will provide BP with a sense of power and legitimacy. On the other hand, if BP does not behave in a manner which is in accordance with stakeholders' expectations, the stakeholders will remove power and legitimacy from BP. The last attribute to be investigated is urgency, and this attribute reflects if BP is to provide a stakeholder with immediate attention. In this case, it can be discussed if BP's stakeholders possess the urgency attribute. The urgency attribute implies that the stakeholders' claim is required to call for immediate attention. This might not be the case currently in terms of BP's stakeholders, but as the urgency attribute captures the dynamic aspects in the relation between the corporation and its stakeholders, the stakeholders have the ability to gain the urgency attribute in the future, if the stakeholders feel mistreated by BP. Such mistreatment can for instance occur, when employees feel that the corporation are not treating them in a fair and proper manner, or it can occur if society believes that the corporation is not fulfilling its responsibility regarding being sustainable and environmentally friendly.

On the basis of the of investigation different stakeholder attributes, BP perceives its employees, shareholders to possess the attributes of power and legitimacy. According to theory, BP's stakeholders are within the category of dominant stakeholders. This essentially means that BP perceives the relation between the corporation and its employees and shareholders as important. This is also in accordance with theory, as it is especially dominant stakeholders which tend to gain the urgency attribute. If BP's stakeholders gain the urgency attribute, they would possess all three attributes and ultimately become definitive stakeholders.

After having accounted for the findings of the CDA and having investigated BP' stakeholders and how BP perceives its stakeholders, this thesis will move on to the next part of the analysis. The following sections consist of my analysis of the different strategies BP makes use of in the empirical data. Firstly, I will apply Morsing and Schultz's Three CSR Communication strategies. Secondly, I will apply Suchman's legitimation strategies regarding gaining, maintaining, and repairing legitimacy.

10.2 BP's Use of CSR Communication Strategies

A part of this thesis includes investigating how BP strategically has communicated its CSR to its stakeholders. I will in this analysis apply Morsing and Schultz's Three CSR Communication Strategies which I elaborated upon in section 8.3, and as it was previously mentioned the three CSR strategies are the stakeholder information strategy, the stakeholder response strategy, and the stakeholder involvement strategy.

Throughout the CEO letter, the EVP letter, and the interview, BP makes use of different communication strategies. The corporation makes use of the stakeholder information strategy, when it is merely informing its stakeholders about various favourable actions, decisions, and initiatives. For instance, in Bernard Looney's CEO letter, he mentions: "[…] *we have made strong progress reimagining energy and reinventing bp. We have moved into offshore wind, we are growing fast in solar* […]" (Appendix 1, ll. 28-30). In this quote, Bernard Looney informs the stakeholders about the corporation's progress in terms of reimagining energy as well as reinventing itself. Additionally, he is informing about the corporation's decision to move into offshore wind as well as how fast the corporation is growing within solar. Furthermore, he mentions in his CEO letter:" *We have reduced our operational greenhouse gas emissions by 16%. And we have updated our human rights policy and announced our new position on biodiversity.*" (Appendix 1, ll. 31-33). This quote further illustrates how Bernard Looney makes use of the stakeholder information strategy, as he informs about BP's reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the update of the human rights policy, and the new position on biodiversity. These can be defined as favourable initiatives, and Bernard Looney includes these in order to achieve a favourable image of the corporation. Guilia Chierchia also makes use of the stakeholder information strategy in her letter. This is illustrated in the following quotes: "*Sustainability is a foundation of our new strategy.*" (Appendix 2, l.7) and "*In addition to the 10 aims we set out a year ago to support our net zero ambition, we now have 10 more to link our actions to a broader set of societal issues – five for people and five for the planet.*" (Appendix 2, ll. 20-21). In the first quote, Guilia Chierchia informs its stakeholders that sustainability is the foundation of the corporation's new strategy. The second quote illustrates a favourable decision made by the corporation in the sense that it released 10 aims in order to become net zero, and in addition to that the corporation further released 10 aims which focuses on different societal issues. The stakeholder information strategy can also be detected in Bernard Looney's interview in which he states: "[…] *we set out an ambition to be a net zero energy company by 2050 or sooner, and help*

the world get there." (Appendix 3, ll. 9-10). This is another example of how the corporation is informing about a favourable corporate CSR action. The mentioned quotes illustrate how BP has made use of the stakeholder information strategy in order to inform its stakeholders regarding the various corporate CSR decisions, actions, and initiatives the corporation has been doing. BP includes these various CSR initiatives because it perceives its stakeholders to be influential, and the corporation hopes these favourable initiatives will generate stakeholder support. This is also further supported by the investigation of BP's stakeholders in section 10.1.2 as it revealed that BP perceived its stakeholders to possess power and legitimacy. In addition, the included content from the empirical data indicates that the communication is one-way as it flows from the corporation to its stakeholders. Consequently, this is in accordance with the stakeholder information strategy. Another aspect of the stakeholder information strategy is that BP's CSR communication needs to include an appealing message as well as be coherent in order to serve the best possible outcome. In terms of being coherent, the CEO letter, the EVP letter, and the interview all include some of the same content. For instance, they all include BP's ambition of becoming net zero. This is illustrated in the following quotes: "[…] *we set out 10 aims to get bp to net zero* […]" (Appendix 1, l. 17), "[…] *the 10 aims we set out a year ago to support our net zero ambition* […]" (Appendix 2, l. 20) and "[…] *we set an ambition to be a net zero energy company* […]" (Appendix 3, ll. 9-10).

The next CSR communication strategy is the stakeholder response strategy, and as it was described in section 8.2.2, this strategy entails engaging with stakeholders as a method to change public attitudes and behaviours. BP engages with its stakeholders in the CEO letter from Bernard Looney in which he states: "*The world will build back better, and bp, with your continued support, will play our part.*" (Appendix 1, ll. 36-37). This can be perceived as engaging with stakeholders as Bernard Looney is implying that if BP and its stakeholders work together, the world will be built back better. Bernard Looney further engages with stakeholders in this quote from his CEO letter: "*We look forward to your feedback* […]" (Appendix 1, l. 37). An important aspect of the stakeholder response strategy is that the corporation is requesting feedback from its stakeholders. Therefore, is this quote a rather clear indication that BP requests feedback from its stakeholders regarding the corporations different CSR initiatives, decisions, and actions. BP's use of the stakeholder response strategy is further illustrated in the letter from Giulia Chierchia. In her letter, she states: "*That is why, when developing our strategy last year, we underpinned it with a sustainability frame to translate our purpose* […]" (Appendix 2, ll. 10-11). Prior to stating this, she states that the corporation believes in creating value for its stakeholders (Appendix 2, l.7). Thus, she is implying

that the new strategy's focus on sustainability will create value for BP's stakeholders. This is in relation to the stakeholder response strategy because this can be interpreted as an attempt to convince stakeholders that BP is an attractive corporation. Furthermore, she implies that the corporation decided to move in a greener direction because it will create value for BP's stakeholders. As it was established in section 10.1.2, BP perceives its relationship with its employees as significant, and in her letter, Giulia Chierchia engages with the employees, when she states:" *I am incredibly proud of what we as a team have achieved* […]" (Appendix 2, l. 30) and "[…] *but having seen the talent and determination within our company* […]" (Appendix 2, ll. 30-31). In these quotes, she is engaging with the employees as well as praising them for their hard work. Additionally, Giulia Chierchia states that the corporation has been engaging with stakeholders, this is illustrated in the following quote from her letter: "*We have been listening intently and will continue to do so. This engagement will be key as we work purposefully to deliver our strategy and all 20 of our sustainability aims.*" (Appendix 2, ll. 34-36). This quote illustrates that the corporation is in engagement with its stakeholders regarding its various CSR decisions and initiatives. This quote further illustrates the BP is attempting to accommodate stakeholders' different concerns and interest, and they are engaging with them in order to do so. In addition to the CEO letter and EVP letter, Bernard Looney's interview shows the corporation use of the stakeholder response strategy. This is illustrated in the following quote: "[…] *here's an opportunity to invest in a company that is decarbonising and helping the world decarbonise.*" (Appendix 3, ll. 65-66). In this quote, Bernard Looney is engaging with shareholders, as he is stating that an investment in the corporation is essentially an investment in the world. This indicates that BP are attempting to accommodate stakeholders' expectations. As it was revealed in section 10.1.1.1 regarding the social practice, 73% of American investors perceive corporations' CSR efforts regarding the environment as a significant factor, when they are deciding if they should invest in a corporation. Thus, BP is attempting to accommodate its stakeholders' expectations by providing them with an opportunity to invest in a corporation which is attempting to improve the environment. This could be a result from BP's engagement with its stakeholders, in which the corporation found that investors are more likely to invest if the corporation is doing CSR efforts.

The third and last strategy is the stakeholder involvement strategy, and this strategy focuses on interaction between the corporation and its stakeholders which ultimately result in mutual change. The stakeholder involvement strategy is also described as a strategy which take the stakeholder relation to an extreme measure. In his CEO letter, Bernard Looney states:" *Profits or purpose need*

not to be a choice – and instead can work together in service of all stakeholders." (Appendix 1, ll. 8-9). This indicates that the corporation has involved its stakeholders in its CSR considerations because it indicates that the corporation was previously restricted to choose either purpose or profits. By stating this, the corporation is focusing on both, it is implying that it is involving different stakeholders. Additionally, he also states: "*We look forward to your feedback on our progress and how we can improve.*" (Appendix 1, l. 37). In this quote, he is implying that the corporation wants to have a dialogue with its stakeholders regarding how BP ought to carry out its CSR. This is in alignment with the stakeholder information strategy because the corporation are openly inviting its stakeholders to get involved. Giulia Chierchia states in her letter:" *I would like to thank our many stakeholders for their invaluable input so far.*" (Appendix 2, ll. 33-34). This quote illustrates how the corporation has been in dialogue with its stakeholders as they have been able to provide BP with input. However, it is important to mention that is very difficult to determine how the stakeholders provided BP with their input. If BP were to achieve the best outcome, it is required that the corporation involved its stakeholders in the constructing and decision-making regarding its CSR. In his interview, Bernard Looney states: "*a lot of people had a lot of questions they said: "nice ambition", but it lacked detail, and we said we would come back later in year* […]" (Appendix 3, ll. 11-12). In this quote, he is answering a question regarding BP's transformational shift, and it seems he is referring to perhaps multiple dialogues between the corporation and its stakeholders. This can be indicated because he is stating that after communicating with its stakeholders, BP would provide more information. This is further illustrated in this quote: "[…] *we still get the details, we laid out a new strategy which we will talk about, a new financial framework and a new distribution policy.*" (Appendix 3, ll. 13-14). Within the interview, Bernard Looney shows that BP has been in dialogue with its stakeholders and that the corporation has changed because of it. This is illustrated in the following quote: "[…] *people are looking for many things from energy, they are looking for it to be reliable, they want it to be clean, they want it to be affordable* […]" (Appendix 3, ll. 16-18). This quote illustrates that the corporation realised that its stakeholders wanted its energy to be reliable, clean, and affordable, and then it changed accordingly.

I will discuss my findings from this analysis in a more comprehensive manner in section 11 of this thesis. Furthermore, I will combine my findings and relate them to each other. After having established which CSR communication strategies BP included in the empirical data, I will in the following section investigate which legitimation strategies BP has made use of.

10.3 BP's Use of Legitimation Strategies

The following section of my analysis consists of an investigation of how BP strategically attempts to achieve, maintain, and repair its legitimacy in society and accommodate stakeholders' expectations. In order to investigate this, this thesis will apply Suchman's strategies regarding gaining, maintaining, and repairing legitimacy. To sum up, legitimacy is defined as: "[…] *a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions.*" (Suchman 1995, 574).

As it has been previously mentioned in section 5 of this thesis, BP made a transformational shift in 2020 in order to become an integrated energy corporation instead of merely being a traditional oil and gas corporation. Thus, it can be argued that the corporation is attempting to achieve legitimacy from its stakeholders on the basis of that transformation. Furthermore, this is in alignment with the knowledge provided by investigating the social practice in section 10.1.1. This section revealed that Americans are more willing to support a corporation if it is committed to improve the environment. One method to achieve legitimacy is that the corporation conforms to its environment by accommodating to its stakeholders' various needs and concerns. Within the CEO letter, Bernard Looney made several statements which can be interpreted as BP conforming to its stakeholders' needs and concerns. For instance, it is illustrated in this quote: "*Over the past year we worked extra hard to support the mental and physical health and wellbeing of our own employees, as well as some of the most vulnerable in the communities where we live and work.*" (Appendix 1, ll. 10-12). In this quote, Bernard Looney states that BP worked extra hard in order to support it employees as well as the most vulnerable in those communities where BP operates. This is related to the different challenges of Covid-19, but it is still an example of how BP is accommodating to its employees' essential concerns and needs. This is in accordance with the investigation of BP stakeholders, as it revealed that BP perceives it employees as important stakeholders. Additionally, he states in his CEO letter: "*With climate change foremost in our minds* […]". According to this quote, climate change is a serious concern for BP, and as it can be argued that it is also a concern for BP's stakeholders, this is another example of how the corporation is accommodating to stakeholders' concerns. This is also illustrated in Guilia Chierchia's letter in which she states:" *Some of these aims are more mature than others, but together they form part of a living frame, focused not just on today's needs, but preparing for tomorrow's.*" (Appendix 2, ll. 25-26). In this quote, she states that

the corporation is not only focusing on today's needs, but it is also focusing on tomorrow's needs. This is a further indication of BP accommodating to its stakeholders' concerns. In his interview, Bernard Looney comments on providing Americans with what they want and need. This is illustrated in the following quote:" *What those cities want is they want clean power; now how do you get that? You get that clearly through wind, through solar, and maybe with a blend of natural gas* […]" (Appendix 3, ll. 33-34). He is stating that BP is able to provide its stakeholders with what they need because of its intention to become an integrated energy corporation. He further states in the interview that: "[…] *we will see that business shrink and we will see our emissions shrink* […]" (Appendix 3, ll. 96-97). In this quote, he is stating that BP plans to shrink its oil and gas business as well shrink its emissions. As the oil and gas industry is considered to be harming the environment, this is also an example of how BP is conforming to its stakeholders' concerns. According to Suchman, there is an extreme approach to achieve legitimacy and that is when a corporation re-evaluate its core mission statements in order to give society a false image of conformity. It cannot be said that BP has taken such extreme measures, however, the corporation did change its mission statement when it began its green transformational shift. In terms of giving society a false image of conformity, BP is attempting to create a perspective which focuses on how BP is reimaging energy for people and the planet. However, the corporation still intends to invest in oil. This is expressed in the interview with Bloomberg News, when the interviewer asked the CEO if BP plans to continue its investments in oil, he answered: "[…] *we are looking clearly for continued investment* […]" (Appendix 3, l. 104). Another strategy which BP can use in order to achieve legitimacy is to produce honourable outcomes. However, as it was explained in the theory section, concrete honourable outcomes are very difficult to achieve. In his CEO letter, Bernard Looney states:" *We reduced our operational greenhouse gas emissions by 16%. And we updated our human rights policy and announced our new position on biodiversity* […]" (Appendix 1, ll. 31-33). These can be perceived as honourable outcomes from BP, and they indicate that the corporation is attempting to achieve legitimacy by simply producing honourable outcomes. In addition to producing honourable outcomes, a corporation can choose to associate itself with corporations which already have society's respect and trust. Bernard Looney mentions BP's partnerships with Amazon and Microsoft in the following quote: "[…] *if you put yourself in the shoes of an Amazon or a Microsoft each of whom we have, are working on deals with.*" (Appendix 3, ll. 39-40). BP entered a partnership with Microsoft in order to drive digital energy innovation and advance net zero goals in 2020, and this was the same year the corporation announced its green transformation (BP A, 2020).

This indicates that BP entered a partnership with Microsoft in order to associate itself with Microsoft favourable reputation. According to The Reputation Institute, a reputation measurement firm, Microsoft was in the top ten of tech corporations in 2019 (Bort 2019). In addition to Microsoft, Bernard Looney mentions Amazon as well. In 2020, BP released an article on its website which stated that BP and Amazon have deepen their successful relationship. The article further states that the partnership between Amazon and BP is a key part of BP's strategy to become an integrated energy corporation (BP B, 2020). Amazon has a similar reputation to Microsoft, and according to Fortune Magazine's list of "World's Most Admired Companies", Amazon is located second, and Amazon has been second on said list for six years in a row (Fortune 2022). Thus, it seems that BP is associating itself with corporations which society already perceives as respected and trustworthy entities in order to achieve legitimacy.

According to theory, there is another strategy which BP could use, and this is the strategy of selecting among environments. As it was established in section 8.3.5 regarding strategies for gaining legitimacy, corporations use this approach if they want to avoid changing its image. However, as this thesis has argued several times, BP is in the process of transforming into an integrated energy corporation, this strategy is not relevant for this case. There are several indications which argue that BP is in fact attempting to change its image. The most obvious one is that BP has introduced its new strategy in order to transform from an international oil corporation to an integrated energy corporation. This is expressed in the CEO letter by Bernard Looney in the following quote: "[…] *to fundamentally transform bp, introducing a new strategy that will see us pivoting from an International Oil Company to an Integrated Energy Company.*" (Appendix 1, ll.13-14).

As previously mentioned in theory section, Suchman presented one more strategy which corporations such a BP can utilise in order to achieve legitimacy, and this strategy focuses on how corporations manipulate its environments. This is typically done by persuasion as the corporation attempts to persuade its stakeholders by the means of highlighting or exaggeration. In terms of exaggeration, Giulia Chierchia mentions in her letter that BP can make the most difference in these aspects: "[…] *get to net zero, improve people's lives and care for our planet* […]" (Appendix 2, ll.15-16). One thing is to claim that BP wants to become net zero, another thing is to claim that BP is committed to improving people's lives. This can be interpreted as a form of exaggeration in order to persuade BP's stakeholders into perceiving the corporation as an appropriate corporation.

BP might be using various strategies connected to gaining legitimacy, but it can also be argued that BP is making use of strategies connected to maintaining legitimacy. One of the strategies which a corporation can use in order to maintain its legitimacy is to perceive change. This thesis has established several times that stakeholders have an increasing interest in CSR as well as various concerns regarding the environment. Within the CEO letter, the EVP letter, and the interview, there are various indications that BP has realised this change. For instance, in his CEO letter Bernard Looney states: "[…] *we made strong progress reimagining energy and reinventing bp.*" (Appendix 1, 28-29). Bernard Looney is stating this in order to inform BP's stakeholders regarding the corporation's change. In the EVP, Guilia Chierchia mentions sustainability in order to accommodate stakeholders' increasing interest in the environment. This is illustrated in the following quotes: "*Sustainability is a foundation of our new strategy.*" (Appendix 2, l. 7), "*That is why, when developing our strategy last year, we underpinned it with a sustainability frame to translate our purpose* […]" (Appendix 2, ll. 10-11), "*It builds on bp's values and commitment to sustainability* […]" (Appendix 2, l. 14), and "*And one through which we plan to embed sustainability in our DNA* […]" (Appendix 2, ll. 26-27). This excessive use of the word "sustainability" is probably because BP is attempting to persuade its stakeholders that it is working towards becoming a sustainable corporation. This might be proven to be a good idea since corporations which embed sustainability into their business models might benefit form a lasting competitive advantage (Rafi 2021). Furthermore, it will most likely generate stakeholder support as well. As previously mentioned in this part of the analysis, BP has on several occasions within the empirical data incorporated stakeholders' various concerns and interest. On the basis of that, it can be argued that BP is monitoring the cultural environment in order to achieve a cultural insight. It is important to mention that the fact that BP is even doing this green transformation implies that the corporation has perceived change. Another strategy which is connected to maintaining legitimacy is to protect accomplishments. However, this strategy relies on the assumption that the corporation has accomplishments to protect. This is difficult to determine in this case, as BP is in the beginning stages of its green transformation.

The last strategies which were introduced by Suchman were strategies in connection with repairing legitimacy. As it was established in the theory section, these strategies are typically a response due to a crisis. However, this thesis might not be investigating BP's crisis communication, it will still include these strategies. Investigating these strategies will provide this thesis with relevant knowledge. The strategy which is relevant to investigate is the strategy of restructure. This is

especially the second restructure approach which is disassociation. This is a relevant strategy to investigate since BP is in the middle of structural changes in more ways than one. In 2019, BP announced that Bernard Looney was to replace former CEO, Bob Dudley. In an article by CNBC, it was stated that BP published a press release on the matter which stated that Dudley was to step down from his position as CEO due to BP's full-year results (Meredith 2019). This is in alignment with the disassociation strategy as it implies that the change of CEO is signal of a change in the corporation itself. Furthermore, only a few weeks after Bernard Looney became CEO, he announced that BP will undergo a rather large transformation (Walt 2021). Thus, it can be interpreted that the step down of Dudley is an illustration of BP creating a form of distance from its former structures.

This analysis has revealed that BP has made use of various strategies in order to gain, maintain, and repair its legitimacy. It was especially the strategies regarding gaining legitimacy which were present. I will in the following section of this thesis discuss and relate my findings from the different analyses.

11. Discussion

Within this section, this thesis will attempt to discuss the different findings from the different analyses as well as relate the findings to each other. Additionally, this thesis will provide a discussion of how this thesis has contributed to the field.

11.1 Discussion of Findings

This thesis has investigated by the means of different theories. Therefore, will this section provide an insight into how the different findings corresponds to each other. When investigating BP's choice of CSR communication strategy, the first strategy to be detected was the stakeholder information strategy. This strategy illustrates how BP informs its stakeholders regarding its different CSR efforts and initiatives. This is in accordance with the findings from investigating the different modes in section 10.1.1.3.1. The analysis of the different modes revealed that the CEO letter, the EVP letter, and the interview were mostly in accordance with the declarative mode, and this implies that BP is coming for a position of providing information. Additionally, the stakeholder information strategy and the declarative mode both illustrate coming from a position of power. The stakeholder information strategy operates with one-way communication which means that it is BP who controls the communication. According to the declarative mode, BP is in the position of power

because they are providing information. This is further illustrated by the use of pronouns within the empirical data. The most used pronoun is the exclusive "we" which essentially creates a distance between BP and its stakeholders.

The social practice revealed that American consumers and investors were more willing to show support if the corporation was attempting to improve the environment. The investigation of BP's use of legitimisation strategies illustrated how the corporation is attempting to improve the environment. This was especially illustrated in the examples where BP was conforming to stakeholders' concerns and interest. BP's use of the stakeholder response strategy is also in accordance with what the social practice revealed as BP implied that an investment in the corporation is an investment in the world (Appendix 3, 65-66). This is in accordance with the findings from the social practice because it suggested that investors are more likely to invest in responsible corporations due to a socially and cultural context. Furthermore, BP made use of active sentences in the empirical data. This is connected to persuasive communication which also is an aspect from the legitimisation strategy in which BP is using persuasive language in order to manipulate its stakeholder. Thus, BP makes use of exaggeration and active sentence in order to persuasive its stakeholders.

11.2 Contribution to the Field

The following section of this discussion will focus on how this thesis might have contributed to the field of CSR in relation to accommodating stakeholder's expectations. One aspect in which this thesis might have contributed is the use of Critical Discourse Analysis in order to investigate the cultural context of CSR, and how this influences a corporation's stakeholders. Additionally, this provided the thesis with a critical perspective which is typically needed when investigating CSR. Furthermore, this thesis included analysing different linguistic means in order to reveal if BP was using any of them in order to appear sustainable. According to my research within this thesis, there is not currently any theory regarding CSR which incorporates investigating linguistics means. There might be theories or models which incorporate investigating content and communication of CSR, but there is not any theory which specifically incorporate investigating on a linguistic level. Furthermore, this thesis supports the assumption that stakeholder theory, CSR theory, and legitimacy theory are all connected with each other. This is not only illustrated by their connection to social constructivism which this thesis elaborated upon in section 4, but they also include similar aspects, and they continuously draw on each other in order to make the bigger picture. Thus, this

thesis contributes with an understanding of how stakeholder theory, CSR theory, and legitimacy theory are connected.

12. Conclusion

In the following section, I will attempt to conclude on my findings in order to answer this thesis' problem statement. To sum up, this thesis' problem statement is: "How can a corporation appear sustainable in order to accommodate stakeholders' expectations regarding sustainability when it operates within an industry which is considered harmful to the environment?"

As it has been established throughout, this thesis is conducted as a form of case study which was based on the corporation BP. This thesis wanted to investigate how a corporation appears sustainable in order to accommodate stakeholders' expectations when it operates within an industry which is considered harmful to the environment. In order to investigate this, this thesis applied theories in relation to stakeholder theory, CSR theory, and legitimacy theory.
This thesis also made use of Critical Discourse Analysis as an analysis method. The findings from the Critical Discourse Analysis revealed that there is an established cultural discourse in society regarding corporation's engagement in CSR. This discourse is product of the socially constructed values, norms, and beliefs regarding sustainability and responsibility which society has mutually agreed upon. Thus, the investigation of The Social Practice provided this thesis with an understanding of stakeholders' expectations. The Critical Discourse Analysis further revealed that BP made use of several linguistic means in order to appear as a sustainable corporation. For instance, the corporation made use of force which is within The Discursive Practice. BP made use of force by including the speech act "making a promise" several times within the empirical data in order to persuade stakeholders.

As previously mentioned, this thesis applied The Stakeholder Salience Model in order to investigate BP's stakeholders. This analysis illustrated how BP perceives it employees and shareholders as important stakeholders as the corporation perceived them to possess both the power attribute and legitimacy attribute. After having identified as well as established BP's relationships with its stakeholder, this thesis investigated how BP strategically communicates with its stakeholders by the means of Morsing and Schultz's Three CSR Communication Strategies. This analysis revealed that BP made use of the stakeholder information strategy in order to inform its stakeholders regarding its

CSR decisions, actions, and initiatives. For instance, BP informed its stakeholders about how the corporation has reduced its operational greenhouse gas emissions by 16%, it has updated our human rights policy, and it has announced its new position on biodiversity. Furthermore, BP also made use of the stakeholder response strategy in order to engage with its stakeholders. This was established by statements such as "*We look forward to your feedback* […]" (Appendix 1, l. 37) and "*We have been listening intently and will continue to do so. This engagement will be key as we work purposefully to deliver our strategy and all 20 of our sustainability aims.*" (Appendix 2, ll. 34-36). Thus, BP made us of the stakeholder response strategy in order to engage with its stakeholders and accommodate to their expectations. Additionally, BP also made use of the stakeholder involvement strategy, but this was the least prominent of the strategies.

Lastly, this thesis applied Suchman's legitimation strategies in order investigate if BP used any of these strategies in order to appear as sustainable and achieve, maintain, or repair its legitimacy within society. This analysis revealed that the corporation made use of strategies in relation to gaining legitimacy by conforming to stakeholders' concerns, interest, and needs. Furthermore, BP made use of strategies in relation to maintaining legitimacy by the strategy of perceiving. Based on the analysis, it can be argued that the BP is conducting its transformational shift from an international oil corporation to an integrated energy and corporation and focusing a lot on sustainability as an attempt to maintain its legitimacy from its stakeholders.

Based on the findings from the different analyses, this thesis is able to conclude that BP made use of several strategies in order to appear sustainable. BP made use of the stakeholder information strategy in order to inform its stakeholders that it is integrating initiatives which are in alignment with their expectations. BP also made use of the stakeholder response strategy in order to engage with its stakeholders and essentially request feedback from them in order to accommodate their expectations. Furthermore, BP made use of different legitimacy strategies in order to appear sustainable which will assist it in achieving and maintaining legitimacy in society.

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