

# **Corporate Social Responsibility and Gender**

Author: Christina Nørgaard Jensen

Study No.: 20192858

Semester: 10<sup>th</sup> Semester Master Thesis

Culture, Communication, and Globalization (CCG)

Supervisor: Laura Bang

Date: 31<sup>st</sup> of May 21, 2024.

Number of pages/characters: (excluding front page, abstract, Table of content, and bibliography).

## **Abstract:**

This study explores if differences can be found in perceptions and practices of CSR between men and women. The data consists of answers to a questionnaire and conducted semi-structured interviews. The study aims to answer the research question “Can gendered differences be found in the perception and practices of CSR?”. For this purpose, an interpretivist-constructivist research paradigm is applied as it allows for an emphasis of meaning and reality as socially constructed. The theoretical framework consists of Fairclough’s three-dimensional model to discourse analysis to examine how written language gives meaning and constructs discourses of CSR, how they can be understood, and what can they tell about the society it is produced in and for. Fairclough’s model describes, interprets, and explains the perceived discourses of CSR. This study found similarities and differences between the constructed meanings assigned to CSR between the male and female participant. The differences are discussed and compared to gender stereotypes that exist in society. This study concludes the data did prompt perceptions of CSR that aligns with socially constructed expectation of men and women.

## Table of contents:

<b>1. Abbreviations</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Introduction</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>2.1. Research question and purpose of this study</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>2.2 Thesis structure</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>3. Literature review</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>3.1. Defining CSR</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>3.2. CSR as a global phenomenon</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>3.3. Gender and CSR</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>4. Theoretical framework</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>4.1. Social constructivism</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>4.1.1. Discourse and Fairclough’s three-dimensional model</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>4.1.2. Gender</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>5. Methodology</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>5.1. Interpretivist-Constructivist approach</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>5.2. Methods of data collection</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>5.2.1. Questionnaire</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>5.2.2 Outline of the questionnaire</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>5.2.3. Qualitative interviews</b> .....	<b>23</b>
<b>5.2.4. Interview guide</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>5.3. Analysis framework: Fairclough Three-dimensional model</b> .....	<b>27</b>
<b>6. Limitations</b> .....	<b>30</b>
<b>7. Results of the questionnaire</b> .....	<b>31</b>
<b>8. Analysis: Fairclough’s Three-dimensional model</b> .....	<b>51</b>
<b>8.1. First dimension – Text analysis of questionnaire</b> .....	<b>52</b>
<b>8.2. First dimension – Text analysis of semi-structured interviews</b> .....	<b>62</b>
<b>8.2.1. Interview March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024.</b> .....	<b>62</b>
<b>8.2.2. Interview April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024</b> .....	<b>64</b>
<b>8.2.3. Interview April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024</b> .....	<b>67</b>
<b>8.2.4. Interview April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024</b> .....	<b>68</b>
<b>8.2.5. Interview April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024</b> .....	<b>70</b>

<b>8.3. Second dimension – Discourse practice .....</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>8.3.1. The questionnaire .....</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>8.3.2. The interviews .....</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>8.4. The third dimension – Discourse practice .....</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>8.4.1. Discourse of CSR .....</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>8.4.2. Social identity and gender stereotypes .....</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>9. Conclusion .....</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>10. Bibliography .....</b>	<b>81</b>

## 1. Abbreviations

Corporate Social Responsibility	CSR
Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive	CSRD
Critical Discourse Analysis	CDA
Discourse Analysis	DA
Environmental Social Governance	ESG
European Union	EU
Non-governmental organizations	NGOs
Personal Social Responsibility	PSR
United Nations	UN

## **2. Introduction**

With increased globalization, international recognition of human rights, and escalating environmental challenges, there is an expanding interest in solving global environmental and social problems. This interest has led to the development of efforts of companies and individuals, to be more socially responsible by taking upon social, environmental, and economic responsibility to contribute to the broader society. Commonly, there exist two perceptions about social responsibility: individual, also called personal social responsibility (PSR), and corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Galaskiewicz 1991; McGee 1998, in Hatch & Stephen, 2015, p. 63). PSR focuses on the individual's perceptions of what he or she should be doing to help society, whereas CSR focuses on the individual's perceptions of the role corporations should play in society (Hatch & Stephen, 2015, p. 63). Commonly, the meaning assigned in the language and perception of CSR is about the behavior of corporations to act "properly, fairly and responsible" regarding their management of economic, social, and environmental impact on society (Jarboui & Hamza, 2020, p. 3). However, despite efforts to define CSR, it is a contested concept, and no universal definition exists as its meaning is contextually based. Thus, CSR identification depends on the context. CSR has been applied in several contexts and studied widely. Some studies shows that a factor of identity, such as gender, can influence the meaning we assign CSR, as men and women allocate different meanings in their perceptions of CSR and its practices (see, for example, Kareh et al., 2014; Hur et al., 2015; Hatch & Stephen, 2015). The literature on CSR is continuously growing, and the emergence of literature concerning CSR and gender has increased (Kahreh et al., 2014, p. 666). For example, some researchers found evidence of gender-related differences, such as a tendency for women to be more ethical than men. In contrast, other research found no ethical difference between men and women (Atakan et al., 2008, in Kahreh et al., 2014, p. 666). This study analyzes gender effects on perceptions of CSR between men and women.

### **2.1. Research question and purpose of this study:**

The evidence of differences in the perceptions of CSR between men and women has interested the author in acquiring knowledge about the following research question: "Can gendered differences be found in the perception and practices of CSR?" As social responsibility is not just an interest of corporations, I also ask this research to examine if men and women perceive CSR as a responsibility of corporations or if it also includes the responsibility of individuals outside the corporate sphere? As indicated in the language, the term 'corporate social responsibility' is applied in business.

Nonetheless, CSR is exercised at the corporate level, public sector, and civil society organizations. Therefore, this study also utilized CSR as a part of an individual's private sphere in terms of how an individual can be CSR-minded outside of their place of work. As part of an individual's private sphere outside of their place of work, the term is understood and utilized about the same areas and the same initiative/strategies as applied in and by a company. An example is sorting waste, which, for many countries, is required by companies and individual households. In other words, CSR is applied and understood in alliance with ethical values about sustainability across three aspects: social, environmental, and economic responsibility. However, it is essential to emphasize that the aspects do not eliminate one another as they are all part of CSR and are interconnected.

For this study, the term 'gendered differences' is understood and applied as gender stereotypes, because society often have expected social norms, they assign men and women. The approach to gender and gender stereotypes are elaborated below. Perception refers to how something is regarded, understood, or interpreted. In other words, it refers to an individual's belief or opinion.

By attempting to answer this research question, this research aims to analyze if there exist differences in the perception of CSR between men and women. This research contributes to existing literature and provides the knowledge base and awareness about attitudes toward CSR and the relationship between CSR and gender. This thesis will be relevant for academia as it offers more or different data on CSR and gender. Furthermore, the research could be helpful to corporations in terms of their CSR strategies, as research (see, for example, Barbock, 2012; Bernardi & Threadgill, 2010; and Seto-Pamies, 2013) has also shown that gender can have a tangible effect on an organization's decision-making regarding CSR (Vilke et al., 2014, p. 198). Some researchers have shown a tendency for women to influence a company's socially responsible behavior as women increase responsible actions (Landry et al., 2016, p. 34; Setó-Pamies, 2015, p. 340, in Zalesna, 2017, p. 37). Other research (Marshall, 2007) suggests that gender can be an important role in determining the level of engagement in CSR efforts and which specific types of CSR efforts the company engages in.

## **2.2. Thesis structure**

The study proceeds as follows. The next section introduces existing literature about the history of CSR with a focus on its origin, how the perception and practices of CSR have developed, and gender. Furthermore, this literature review aims to emphasize the relevance of the research question by

emphasizing some of the scholarly literature that engages with the relationship between CSR and gender. This is done to better understand conceptions of CSR and its relationship with gender. Afterwards, the *Theoretical framework* defines the applied theories and concepts that encompass the theoretical framework for this study. The methodology illustrates how the theories and concepts are applied and their relevance to this study. This section elaborates on the research paradigm, the data used for analysis, and the chosen data collection methods, a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The limitation section mentions the possible limitations when conducting this study through the choice of data, data collection methods, and research paradigm. The section also illustrates how this study attempts to remedy the limitations. The *data* section includes the empirical data of the answers from the questionnaire from female and male respondents. The *analysis* includes Fairclough's three-dimensional approach to DA, which consists of his Three-dimensional model: *text*, *Discourse practice*, and *Social Practice*. Here, I analyze the empirical data, the questionnaire, and the interviews, following Fairclough's model and his emphasis on language as constructing social identities. Afterwards, in the Conclusion, I conclude by discussing the analysis's findings and how they answer the research question. Lastly, the bibliography shows the used scholarly literature.

### **3. Literature review**

To better understand the origin and history of CSR, the existing definitions of gender, and gender stereotypes, this section introduces some of the literature about the history of CSR with a focus on its origin, how the perception and practices of CSR have developed, and gender. Furthermore, this literature review aims to emphasize the relevance of the research question by emphasizing some of the scholarly literature that engages with the relationship between CSR and gender.

#### **3.1. Defining CSR**

Bowen (1953), who is said to be "the father of the idea of CSR" (in Rodriguez-Gomez, 2020, p. 2), defines the term as "the group of obligations of employers related to the adoption of policies and the development of lines of action that respond to the values and desires of society" (Carroll, 1999, in Rodriguez-Gomez, 2020, p. 2). Nowadays, definitions of CSR are plentiful, and despite debate, the term remains open to various explanations and understandings. As Votaw (1993) states, "The term [CSR] is a brilliant one; it means something, but not always the same thing, to everybody" (p. 11, in

Grosser & Moon, 2017, p. 5). According to Moon (2014), the term's variance exists because its meanings, assumptions, and implications for business and society are dynamic. Therefore, the definition of CSR emerges concerning these dynamics (Rai et al., 2021, p. 9). The term commonly describes the relationships between business and society (Kahreh et al., 2014, p. 664). CSR refers to the responsibility/obligation of a company to society in terms of its responsibility to interact ethically in society (Kahreh et al., 2014, pp. 664-665). Thus, CSR contributes to the well-being of society and the belief that a business is held accountable for more than its legal responsibilities. CSR covers many aspects within a company, such as the ethical, legal, commercial, and public expectations of society (Kahreh et al., 2014, p. 664). Moreover, three areas of CSR are recurring in most definitions. The three areas are economic, social, and environmental (Rodriguez-Gomez, 2020, p. 4). The economic area is concerned with analyzing the impact of actions on financial performance, the capacity to create jobs, innovation, and the promotion of technological progress (p. 4). The social area is often related to human resources regarding employees and the company's environment (p. 4). According to Jamali (2008) and Shnayder and Van Rijnsoever (2018), the social area consists of the general responsibility towards employees and society (Rodriguez-Gomez, 2020, p. 4). The environmental area refers to caring for the environment (p. 4). This includes "understanding the fundamental role it plays in obtaining sustainable development and taking into account the effects that it may have on climate change" (Lu et al., 2019; Mari-Farinós, 2017; Taliento et al., 2019, in Rodriguez-Gomez, 2020, p. 4). According to studies (Brogi & Lagasio, 2019; Chowdhury et al., 2019; Taliento et al., 2019) carried out on CSR, they found relationships between the three areas of CSR, settling that they are interconnected (in Rodriguez-Gomez, 2020, p. 4).

### **3.2. CSR as a global phenomenon:**

CSR is not new and has been around and debated for over half a century (Bowen, 1953; Davis, 1973, in Kahreh, Babania, Tive & Mirmehdi, 2014, p. 665). CSR is essentially "a US idea" (Crane et al., 2013, p. 13). However, it has become a global concept exercised in companies worldwide. Some researchers propose that it originated at the end of the 19th century due to labor conflicts during the Industrial Revolution (Jenkins, 2009; Rodriguez-Gomez et al., 2020, p. 1; Crane et al., 2013, p. 2). Labor conflicts resulted in the revelation of social problems, which forced companies to make and take measures considered as the origin of practices of CSR (Jenkins, 2009, in Rodriguez-Gomez et al., 2020, p. 1). Van der Laan Smith et al. (2015) make the compelling statement that "As long as business has existed, we have also had expectations from governments, stakeholders, NGOs, and

individuals concerning voluntary obligation to society” (Popowska & Ratkowska, 2018, p. 290). The idea that economic, legal, moral, social, and physical elements should be combined and considered in the decision-making process of companies first appeared in the late 1930s (Barnard, 1938, in Rodriguez-Gomez, 2020, p. 2). However, despite the earlier inputs in the literature, Carroll (1999) argues that it was not until the mid-1950s that CSR as we know it today originated (Rodriguez-Gomez et al., 2020, p. 2). In the 50s, companies began committing to their employees, customers, and the public (Abrams, 1951, in Rodriguez-Gomez et al., 2020, p. 2). From here on, companies began making commitments that extended beyond obtaining profits. In the 1970s, the emergence of social movements introduced environmental, civil rights, and women’s rights into companies (Rodriguez-Gomez, 2020, p. 1). It was in the 1970s that the term CSR gained attention (p. 2). In the 80s and ‘90s, concerns about the impact of human actions, including those caused by companies, on the environment (Rodriguez-Gomez, 2020, p. 2). According to Carroll (2008), companies used CSR and CSR policies as a means/strategy to improve their image and reputation (Rodriguez-Gomez, 2020, p. 2). However, business ethics became a subject of study during this period (Rodriguez-Gomez, 2020, p. 3). In this period, the term achieved global status because several international businesses began reporting their activities, which affected the environment, economy, and society (Dashwood, 2020, p. 167).

By the 2000s, CSR had become an essential strategy for many companies, regardless of size, as a “fundamental element in companies’ response to various social requirements” (Jamali, 2008, in Rodriguez-Gomez, 2020, p. 2). At this time, companies understood and used CSR to show social commitments and responsibilities to their stakeholders (Jamali, 2008; Panait et al., 2014; Tello and Rodríguez, 2014, in Rodriguez-Gomez, 2020, p. 2). During the 2000s, at the institutional level, CSR went from being a voluntary requirement to becoming a part of the core business (Rodriguez-Gomez, 2020, p. 2). Moreover, it became a “reference point for promoting policies in a company,” but mainly regarding environmental elements (García-Sánchez & Araújo-Bernardo 2020, in Rodriguez-Gomez, 2020, p. 2). Another development was the spread of CSR, making it an international means for “the proposal of codes of good practice for corporate governance” due to the encouragement of utilizing CSR in various countries (Rodriguez-Gomez et al., 2020, p. 2).

In the context of the rise of CSR as a global phenomenon that has become a core of businesses, the literature on the subject, including both academic and non-academic, has exploded. Thousands of reports, articles, books, journals, and magazines exist from academics, corporations, consultancies, the media, NGOs, and government departments (Crane et al., 2013, p. 3). Also, CSR

is exercised at more than just the corporate level in the public sector and civil society organizations. Public organizations, such as schools, hospitals, and universities, all have social aims/responsibilities at the core of their operation (p. 10). Seitanidi (2004) makes the compelling claim: “In some ways, these demands for CSR in the public sector could be even considered as more pronounced” (Crane et al., 2013, p. 10).

To sum up, the demand for responsible behavior and greater accountability has grown and is an aspect of both the private and the public sectors and CSOs worldwide. Furthermore, CSR has become an essential part of international politics. The term has been called a “global policy norm...” (Dashwood, 2020, p. 167). Dashwood (2020) further explains that referring to CSR as a ‘norm’ means “not only that other actors, such as governments, employees, and communities, expect companies to act responsibly, but that companies themselves have accepted CSR as a norm informing their business practices” (p. 168). In recent years, the growing literature, including dedicated magazines, newsletters, email lists, and websites (amongst others), contributes to the identity of CSR as a worldwide concept that entails a global network of practitioners, academics, and activists (Crane et al., 2013, p. 3). Today, one might even say that CSR has become a norm in international business because of its wide application.

### **3.3 Gender and CSR**

In various ways, the practice of CSR has begun to engage with gender, for example, through specific initiatives and programs (Grosser & Moon, 2017, p. 2). In 1991, Arlow conducted a study looking at perceptions of social responsibility and gender. His study found that women are “... more ethical and socially responsible than males” (in Hatch & Stephen, 2015, p. 66). Thus, there was evidence of gender effect. Another study by Marshall (2007) found that gender plays an important role in determining how corporations engage in CSR efforts and which specific types of CSR efforts the company chooses to engage in. More recent research, such as, Hatch and Stephen (2015), suggest differences between the perceptions of CSR can be found between men and women. Moreover, studies have shown that companies with more women on their boards and management teams tend to have higher corporate social responsibility practices (Reig-Aleixandre et al., 2023, p. 1). In other words, the presence of women may contribute to the company being considered socially and environmentally sustainable compared to a lower percentage of women. The previous research shows a gender effect on social responsibility.

## **4. Theoretical framework**

Based on the research question I am attempting to answer, this section provides the theoretical framework for the study.

### **4.1 Social constructivism**

In 1989, Nicholas Onuf coined the term ‘constructivism’ (Agius, 2016, p. 71). Social constructivism has become an internationally recognized and influential approach that has reshaped debates and challenged the dominance of rationalist theories (pp. 70-71). Many of the core ideas in social constructivism are inspired by sociological theory (p. 71). The epistemological claim to social constructivism is the thesis of epistemic relativism, meaning that no absolute reality exists, as reality is only relative to a culture, an individual, or a paradigm (Kukla, 2000, p. 4). In other words, no true or false sense of reality exists as it is constructed. Onuf (2013) states that “only as we give meaning to the world and thereby reality, only then does it have meaning (p. xv). The inquiry of social constructivism is explaining “the processes through which people describe, explain or interpret the world they live in (including themselves) (Gergen, 1985: 266, in Cojocaru, Bragaru, & Ciuchi, 2012, p. 32). In other words, fundamental to constructivism is the belief that human beings are social beings and “social relations make or construct people – ourselves– into the kind of beings that we are” (Onuf, 2013, p. 4). To say that reality is ‘constructed’ means that humans make the world what it is. Social constructivism emphasizes the importance of identity, ideas, and interaction (Agius, 2016, p. 70). Furthermore, it argues that ideational and material factors are constructed and construct the world around us and give it meaning (p. 70). Thus, the human world is not simply given or natural; conversely, it is constructed through “the actions of the actors themselves” (Kratochwil, 2001: 17, in Agius, 2016, p. 71). So, social constructivism focuses on the communication and relations between individuals and the production of meaning-making in social interaction(s). Means of interaction include language and discourse, viewed as constructing realities (Cojocaru et al., 2012, p. 32). Thus, individuals create realities and, thereby, meanings by communication through language.

Agius (2016) provides an overview of three basic ontological positions of social constructivism (p. 71). One is that normative or ideational structures are important (p. 71)—the second concerns social identities. Here, identities give meaning to individuals and are not believed to be given but “... constructed/constituted through interactions” (Agius, 2016, p. 71). Lastly, social constructivism believes that “... actors shape the world and the world shapes actors” (Agius, 2016, p. 71). It refers to the belief that individuals create and influence the world, which also influences us (p. 71). In social constructivism, language plays a vital part in constructing reality as it is how we

interact with one another. In other words, social constructivism believes that language serves a constitutive function, as by speaking, we make the world what it is (Onuf, 2013, p. 29). Onuf (2013) refers to language as being "... the media of social construction. People become agents by living in a world of language" (p. 29). In other words, for social constructivism, language is the foundation that creates realities. Thus, social constructivism starts from the assumption that language is a social artifact used to construct and understand the world. Consequently, from a social constructivist point of departure, reality, including characteristics such as gender, class, and sex, are all products of human interpretation through interaction shaped by cultural and historical contexts.

#### **4.1.1. Discourse and Fairclough's three-dimensional model**

This section outlines the utilized understanding of discourse and DA. Before analyzing and interpreting the data from the questionnaire and interviews about the presence of discourses of CSR perceptions and practices, I explain my understanding of discourse and DA.

Discourse and discourse analysis are based on social constructivism. DA is one of several social constructivist approaches but is one of the most widely used (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2011, p. 4). DA is a part of the linguistic turn in the social sciences and the humanities that emphasizes the role of language in constructing social reality (Talja, 1999, p. 460). According to Johnstone and Andrus (2024), discourse analysts usually refer to discourse as "actual instances of communicative action in the medium of language" (p. 2). However, there exists no agreed-upon definition of 'discourse.' In many cases, it is the idea that discourse is "... language that is structured according to different patterns that people's utterances follow..." (Foucault, 2002, in Roseberry, 2007, p. 2). DA is thus the analysis of these patterns (p. 2). Jørgensen and Phillips (2011) state that despite the existence of various discourse analytical approaches, the collective starting point is "... that our access to reality is always through language. With language, we create representations of reality that are never mere reflections of a pre-existing reality but contribute to constructing reality" (p. 8). DA is more than a linguistic analysis of texts; it examines the social structuring of language, which is a social practice.

An interdisciplinary approach to DA is CDA. CDA is often associated with various discourse analyses, such as Norman Fairclough. According to Fairclough (1989), what is meant by 'critical' in CDA is the aim to "... show connections which may be hidden to people - such as the connections between language, power, and ideology [...] Critical language study analyse social

interaction in a way which focuses upon their linguistic elements, and which sets out to show their generally hidden determinants in the system of social relationships, as well as hidden effects they may have upon that system” (in Simpson et al., 2019, p. 60). Thus, by taking a critical approach to DA, Fairclough analyzes the “hidden ideologies” in the language (Risidaneva, 2018, p. 128).

An element of Fairclough’s approach is the idea that texts and discourses are socially constitutive: “Language use is always simultaneously constitutive of (i) social identities, (ii) social relations and (iii) systems of knowledge and beliefs” (Fairclough, 1995, p.134). In other words, Fairclough believes language to be functional in the sense that it constitutes a system of knowledge and identity, which creates discourse (Wang, 2006, p. 66). Fairclough (2001) believes social life to be interconnected networks of social practices (p. 122). The social practice includes elements that are related, such as productive activity, means of production, social relations, social identities, and cultural values (p. 122). The concept of identity is of interest to DA for various reasons, for example, it links an individual with society as language can show how individuals “... affiliate with or distances themselves from particular communities, what kind of information they aim to convey about themselves and how this information in turn resonates with the ideas others hold about them” (Zotzmann and O’Regan, 2016, p. 1). Moreover, Zotzmann and O’Regan (2016) claim “The idea that identities are socially construed, discursively mediated, dynamic, context dependent and relational is generally embraced by CDA” (p. 25). Thus, identity ties with a social constructivist belief that language is socially constitutive and construct meanings about yourself, others, phenomena, and how other perceives us. Thus, the construction of identity is part of a social practice (p. 25).

One of the well-known features of Fairclough’s approach is his development of a three-dimensional approach to discourse analysis that includes dimensions of description, interpretation, and explanation. The dimensions approach DA as the analysis of language and discourse as embedded in a socio-cultural context. The first dimension is the descriptive Text dimension. It is concerned with the linguistic description of the language in terms of linguistic devices of texts (Qiu, 2013, p. 1879). The linguistic devices include pronouns, metaphors, interdiscursivity, active or passive voice, and modality. Thus, in the Text dimension, the focus is on sentences and linguistics. The second dimension, Discourse practice, interprets the relationship between the Text dimension and discursive practices of text production, distribution, and consumption with attention to the context of the production, distribution, and consumption (Qiu, 2013, p. 1879). The third dimension, Social practice, explains the relationship between the discursive and the social processes (Qiu, 2013, p. 1879). This dimension examines the discourses within a broader social practice. According to Fairclough (1989),

Social practice involves an analysis “whose objective ... is to portray a discourse as part of a social process, as a social practice, showing how it is determined by social structures...” (p. 163). Fairclough’s model shows the interconnection between the text, discourse, and social practices.

#### **4.1.2 Gender**

This section introduces and outlines this research’s theoretical approach to the concept of gender and gendered stereotypes, that being the used theorists and definitions of the concepts. I have implemented this section as it is essential to understand gender before answering the research question involving gender and CSR. To clarify the research question and why I have chosen to examine ‘gendered differences,’ this section outlines the understanding used for this research of gender and gender stereotypes. This research approaches gender from a social constructivist thought.

Traditionally and historically, the terms ‘sex’ and ‘gender’ have been used as synonyms. However, linguists and gender theorists distinguish between the two: sex is biological. It refers to anatomical differences between men and women, whereas gender is a social category and a social construct (Simpson et al., 2019, p. 16). Gender can be an ambiguous term. A Social Constructivist line of thought proposes that there exists no inherent truth to gender, as it is constructed by social expectations and gender performance (Butler, 1990; Holt, 2020, p. 34). Social constructivism believes that reality is socially situated. One of the well-known theorists of social constructivism dealing with gender and gender norms is Judith Butler. Following the social constructivist thought, Butler (1990), argues:

“Whether gender or sex is fixed or free is a function of a discourse [...] ... The limits of the discursive analysis of gender presuppose and preempt the possibilities of imaginable and realizable gender configurations within culture... [...] These limits are always set within the terms of a hegemonic cultural discourse predicated on binary structures that appear as the language of universal rationality. Constraint is thus built into what that language constitutes as the imaginable domain of gender” (p. 8).

This belief links the influence of language, discourse on gender, and gender stereotypes together. Butler’s notion of gender as a social category can be distinguished from ‘sex’ as a socially constructed construction because its meaning becomes attached to the language used. Thus, gender is understood as constructed by social expectations and gender performance. In other words, gender stereotypes refer to the assumptions about what is deemed appropriate in discourse for men and

women. Butler (1990) defines gender as socially constructed: “a shifting and contextual phenomenon” that is a “convergence among culturally and historically specific sets of relations” (p. 10). She believes gender to be constructed by culture (p. 6) and that one’s body consists of “... certain determinism of gender meanings...” (p. 11). Butler (1990) argues that gender cannot be used as a stable descriptor of an individual as an individual is always ‘doing’ gender, meaning that an individual performs or deviates from socially accepted doings of gender stereotypes (p. 6). ‘Doing’ gender reinforces beliefs about these normative requirements and practices. Furthermore, by ‘doing’ gender, individuals reinforce notions of gender categories/stereotypes (Butler, 1990, p. 9). These stereotypes vary from class, society, and culture (p. 16). In general, in written and spoken language, we tend to compare men to women and women to men, “anchoring any differences in terms of a contrast between them” (Ellemers, 2018, p. 277). They are referring to what traditionally categorized a man as a man and a woman as a woman, which is known as gender stereotypes. *Gender stereotypes* are the characteristics of a man or a woman (Simpson et al., 2019, p. 16). Furthermore, Holt (2020) makes the compelling argument that “The internalized belief that men and women are essentially different is what makes men and women behave in ways that appear essentially different” (p. 37). In many life domains, gender stereotypes implicitly impact our expectations about the “qualities, priorities, and needs of men and women, as well as the standards to which we hold them” (Ellemers, 2018, p. 280). Sakalli-Ugurlu et al. (2018) divide gendered stereotypes into three perspectives: they can be “descriptive (i.e., what women and men are), prescriptive (i.e., what women and men ought to be), and proscriptive (i.e., what women and men ought not to be)” (p. 311). Furthermore, the concept of gender is broad because of the diversity of gender identities within the LBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning, intersex, asexual/aromantic/agender) community. Even though there exist a variety of gender identities, gender is often still thought of as a binary categorization (Ellemers, 2018, p. 277; Bates, Chin & Beckers, 2022, p. vii). To limit the scope of this research, I focus on a binary approach to gender.

Gender stereotypes can be both positive and negative, for example, “women are nurturing” or “women are weak” (OHCHR, 2014, p. 1). The act of gender stereotyping refers to the practice of ascribing specific “attributes, characteristics, or roles” to a man or a woman because of their gender (OHCHR, 2014, p. 1). However, it is essential to emphasize that even if there is a difference, not all individuals would necessarily differ from each other (Ellemers, 2018, p. 276). However, as Ellemers (2018) states, “the stereotypical perception that a particular feature characterizes membership of a specific group typically leads people to overemphasize differences between groups and underestimate

variations within groups” (p. 276-277). Research indicates that stereotypes such as being assertive and performing are examples of agency, which is typically assigned to men, which can be traced back to the traditional thought of men as ‘breadwinners’ and ‘providers,’ whereas warmth and caring for others are attributes often allotted to women (Kite et al., 2008, in Ellemers, 2018, p. 277; Simpson et al., 2019, p. 16).

## **5. Methodology**

This section clarifies the research design and methodological choices for collecting data. In other words, it provides the reader with an overview of how I will answer the research question. This study is question-based research in the sense that this study aims to answer the research question, “Can gendered differences be found in the perception and practices of CSR?”

### **5.1. Interpretivist-Constructivist approach**

Research is about making choices. To answer the research question, I adopt the interpretive theoretical position that interpretations of our world create meanings accustomed to the dominant discourse(s) at the time. In other words, for this research, I have chosen to utilize an interpretive research paradigm, as the study is concerned with understanding social phenomena (CSR) from those involved in the questionnaire and the interview. Thus, this study believes that knowledge is how individuals interpret and understand their lives and interactions (Edwards & Holland, 2013, p. 17). The interpretive research paradigm is viewed in the theoretical and methodological framework and the applied concepts as co-constructive.

Interpretivism covers a broad range of approaches “loosely concerned with understanding social phenomena from the perspective of those involved” (Edwards & Holland, 2013, p. 16). This research applies the interpretive framework of social constructivism. Yanow and Schwartz-Shea (2006) believe that from an interpretive approach, the explanations of how individuals interpret and make sense of their daily lives and interactions form knowledge (Edward & Holland, 2013, p. 16). Thus, in interpretive approaches, human interaction is the basis for creating and understanding social life (p. 17). Interpretivists seek to understand identities, ideas, norms, and culture in the international realm (p. 19). Thus, interpretive research aims to illuminate social representations, discourses, and meanings that underlie events (p. 37).

## **5.2. Methods of data collection**

For this research, I have chosen to use a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews as data collection methods. These methods allow me to collect data directly from the source: the participants.

### **5.2.1 Questionnaire**

I chose to create a questionnaire, as it is both a simple and fast means of collecting data as it reaches the participants instantly, and SurveyXact registers the responses immediately. Furthermore, a questionnaire offers both the researcher and the participants flexibility as it can be accessed anywhere and at any time. Moreover, an online questionnaire ensures the anonymity of the respondents, keeping their identities private, and may further the chances of the participants feel more comfortable answering the questions more honestly. A questionnaire can contain questions that generate data suitable for qualitative data and vis-à-vis quantitative data collection. Quantitative questions can be as yes/no or a rating scale. A textbox can prompt qualitative data as the respondents can write in their own words. Another critical aspect of questionnaires is the wording and the language. The questionnaire produced for this study prompt both quantitative and qualitative data, as several of the questions are 'yes' or 'no' and a rating scale complemented with text boxes for the purpose of getting the participants to elaborate on their answer. The questionnaire outline is elaborated below about the intention behind each question and how it contributes to answering the research question.

One of the advantages of a questionnaire is that it is a cost-effective way to collect data, as it costs nothing but time to create (if done online). Moreover, despite a geographical spread, it is suitable for collecting data from many respondents. I created a questionnaire through the online platform SurveyXact. SurveyXact allows students and Aalborg University employees to create online questionnaires, distribute them, and analyze the responses (SurveyXact på AAU, n.d.). I contacted various companies by mail or phone to find participants to answer the questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed by email through a link that the respondents and their coworkers could access. The questionnaire collects information about an individual's beliefs, behavior, and perceptions. Furthermore, the questionnaire was also used as a sampling method to find participants who would be participants for a telephonic interview.

### 5.2.2 Outline of the questionnaire

The questionnaire offers Danish and English. The multiple-choice option achieves an inclusive and international aspect of the perception of CSR. I have selected two languages to make the questionnaire more inclusive to non-native Danish people. This is relevant as some of the companies are international, and therefore, it can be expected that all of the employees at the companies are native Danes. The options of English and Danish minimize the chances of a language barrier for those who do not speak and read the Danish language.

<b>Language:</b>
Danish
English

*Introduction:* Before asking questions, I have written a short introduction about myself, my study, and the questionnaire. This introduces the respondents to the purpose of the questionnaire, why I am conducting this questionnaire, and my research question. Furthermore, I introduce a used perception of CSR. For the questionnaire, CSR is also a part of an individual, as a person can be CSR-minded outside of the workplace through company strategies. The personal dimension is included as CSR is often only thought of in terms of strategies utilized by companies and not in terms of the sphere outside of work. After that, I emphasize that for some of the questions, the respondents answer them based on their experiences in their spare time outside of work.

In contrast, other questions are based on the respondents' experiences from their place of work. Furthermore, I emphasize that overall, the respondents should answer the questions as individuals and not on their company's behalf, as this study aims to examine tendencies between men and women and not between companies. Lastly, to increase the trustworthiness of the respondents, I emphasize that the questionnaire is 100% anonymous, the purpose is not to display the respondents or a company, and that the questionnaire follows the General Data Protection Regulation.

<b>Introduction:</b>
My name is Christina Nørgaard Jensen. I am writing my Master thesis at Aalborg University about gender and corporate social responsibility (CSR).

For this purpose, I have created this questionnaire with questions about knowledge and perceptions about CSR.

This questionnaire is available in both Danish and in English by clicking at the icon DA or EN.

The answers from this questionnaire will be used as data in answering my research question "Can gendered difference be found in the practices and perceptions of CSR?" In other words, the questionnaire will function as part of my data regarding my thesis about CSR with a gender perspective, that is created with the purpose of examining if there is a tendency that men and women perceive and act differently about CSR.

CSR is often defined according to companies and a part of their strategy. However, in this questionnaire, CSR is also perceived as being a part of an individual's private sphere regarding how an individual can be CSR minded outside of your place of work.

The questionnaire is divided in the sense that some of the questions are addressing you regarding your private life outside of work, whereas other questions are created with the intent of you answering them as an employee in a company. This division is made clear in the questionnaire.

Overall, as a respondent, please answer the questions as an individual and not on behalf of your company, as the purpose is to examine individual answers.

This questionnaire is 100% anonymous and data will be collected, stored and processed in compliance with Aalborg University's rules of data protection and general data protection regulation. The answers will in no way put any companies or employees on display. The questionnaire and my thesis are solely about confirming or denying the hypothesis and assumptions, which already exists in the research of gender and CSR.

In advance thank you for your time and corporation.

Kind regards

Christina Nørgaard Jensen

*Background information about the respondents:* The first question in the questionnaire revolves around the respondents themselves. In addition to their gender, I ask them to state their age and which department they work in in the company. I can consider this information in my observations and analysis of the questionnaire answers. In other words, with this information, I can examine whether age and work department are reflected in the answers.

<b>Information about you:</b>
Man
Woman
Other

<b>Age:</b>
(insert age in number)

<b>Department of work:</b>
Sales
Marketing
HR
Economy
Sustainability/CSR/ ESG
Leader
CEO
Other

Before asking the next questions, I wrote a bit of text explaining the purpose of the question, which is to determine the respondent's knowledge and perception of CSR and CSR strategies. Therefore, I asked them to consider that they should answer the questions from their own opinions rather than in terms of their workplace.

<b>Explanation of the purpose for the following questions:</b>
--

The following questions are created from the point of view, that CSR also concerns how an individual is socially responsible outside of work.

The following questions are created to establish your knowledge and perception to CSR and CSR-strategies as an individual in your spare time.

With this in mind, I would like you to answer the question from your own experiences with CSR in your spare time.

Thank you 😊

*Knowledge and attitude of CSR:* The question examines the respondent's familiarity with CSR. This question is a 'yes' or 'no' question.

<b>Are you familiar with the concept of CSR?</b>
--

Yes
-----

No
----

Afterward, I define CSR for the respondents in case they are unfamiliar with it. I have also included this definition of CSR to show a possible perception of it as a strategy used by companies and applied by individuals who are socially responsible in their spare time using strategies utilized by companies, such as sorting waste.

<b>Definition of CSR for this questionnaire:</b>
--

The concept 'Corporate Social Responsibility' can be defined as:
--

"A company's social responsibility covers everything from the environmental responsibility til generally being responsible towards the society"
---

In other words:
-----------------

Everything that revolves around a social responsibility to the world and society around us, can be defined as CSR"
--

For this questionnaire, CSR is also perceived as being a part of an individual's privacy in the sense that you can be socially responsible as an individual through the same CSR method that companies use (sorting waste, i.e.).

The purpose of this next question is to examine what CSR strategies the respondents connect the most with CSR to give an insight into which CSR strategies are ranked 'highest' by men and women. The purpose of the question is to examine the respondent and how he/she perceives CSR in terms of their work life and private life.

**Which elements do you connect with CSR (please arrange after order):**

Social responsibility (gender equality, volunteer work, charity, i.e.).

Environmental responsibility (reduction of Co2 and power consumption, waste sorting, recycling, and maximum use of resources, i.e.).

Economic responsibility (initiatives to secure earnings (creating jobs, i.e.).

This question examines which environmental CSR strategies individuals engage in in their spare time. Some examples are voluntary, such as recycling, ecology, and green energy, whereas waste sorting is somewhat mandatory in all of Denmark.

**Which environmental CSR-strategies are a part of your spare time? In other words, which of the following environmental initiatives are a part of your spare time? (arrange after order):**

If none of the below examples are a part of your spare time, you may place the "none" box at the top:

Waste sorting

Recycling (sales/buying)

Reusable packaging

Ecology

Green energy (solar power, ground power, ground heat, i.e).

Transportation (electrical car/ bicycle, i.e.).

None
------

The next question is revolves around socially responsible CSR-strategies.

<b>Which socially focused CSR-intiatives are part of your spare time? (arrange after order):</b>
--

If none of the below examples are a part of your spare time, you may place the “none” box at the top:
---

Donating to charity
---------------------

Volunteer work
----------------

Activism
----------

None
------

The purpose of this question is to examine individuals' perceptions of CSR. This question examines their overall perception of CSR, regardless of whether they use CSR strategies at work or in their spare time. This question is a 'yes' or 'no' question with the possibility to elaborate in textboxes if the respondents wish to do so. I presented the respondents with three questions about their perception of CSR to examine if they also perceive the concept and its practices as something that influences their private and work spheres or only the working sphere.

<b>How do you perceive CSR?</b>
---------------------------------

Are you personally interested in CSR? In other words, do you consider yourself to be socially responsible in your spare time? (please elaborate):	(Textbox)
---	-----------

Do you perceive CSR as irrelevant for you as an individual? (please elaborate):	(Textbox)
---	-----------

Do you perceive CSR as a business strategy in a company rather than a part of your private life? (please elaborate):	(Textbox)
--	-----------

The next part of the questionnaire concerns the respondents' CSR and their work(place). However, I wanted to emphasize that this does not mean the respondent should respond on behalf of their work but rather answer the questions as an individual at work.

The following questions revolve around your perception of CSR as an employee at your place of work.

Therefore, you are asked to answer these as an individual employee at your place of work and not on behalf of the company.

Thank you.

This question examines the importance of a CSR-strategy at his/hers work.

<b>As an employee, how important is it for you that your place of work has a CSR-strategy?</b>		
Essential/necessary	Important	Not important

This question examines how the respondents place CSR compared to other aspects of their work life. The examples serve as the respondents' personal attractions.

<b>How would you place CSR in contrast to other work-related elements? (arrange after order):</b>
CSR
Salary
Flexible hours
Paid lunch break
Food
Extra vacation
A car for work
Transportations time

This question examines the personal value of the CSR initiatives at work.

<b>Which CSR initiatives do you value the most at your place of work as an employee? (arrange after order):</b>
Social responsibility (gender equality, volunteer work, donating to charity, i.e.)
Environmental responsibility (reduction of Co2 and power consumption, waste sorting, i.e.)

Economic responsibility (initiatives to secure earnings (creating jobs, i.e.)).

This text introduces the next question about personal assessment of the CSR-strategies at work.

The following questions are asked with the purpose of examining your assessment of the CSR-strategies at your place of work.

The following examples are mixed in terms of 'economical', 'social', or 'environmental' responsibility.

This question examines the respondents' assessment of the various CSR strategies at their place of work. The respondents have four possible answers in which the colors of a smiley each indicating the level of commitment to a CSR strategy:

- Green: high level of commitment to a CSR-strategy
- Yellow: medium level of commitment to a CSR-strategy
- Red: low level of commitment to a CSR-strategy
- Grey: do not know

**How would you rank the following CSR-strategies at your place of work?**

Gender equality.

Waste sorting.

Reusable packaging.

Green energy.

Reduction of power consumption and resource consumption.

Creating jobs.

Donating to charity.

Activism.

Economical contributions to society.

This text and question acquire an answer regarding participating in an interview. I emphasize that the interview should be short and over the phone, as it will increase the chance of a respondent agreeing to an interview.

For my last question, I am going to ask if you want to participate in a short interview by telephone?

If yes, please write your email in the textbox and we will be in contact regarding data and time that fits the both of us.

**Do you want to participate in a short interview over the phone? If yes, please state your email in the textbox below:**

Yes.

No.

### 5.2.3 Qualitative interviews

Kvale and Brinkmann (2014) define an interview as a structured conversation with a purpose (p. 22). Interviews can have many different purposes; for example, an interview with a journalist seeks to register and report on events, whereas a therapeutic interview seeks to "improve invalidated situations in an individual's life" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014, p. 20). In a research interview, the purpose is to produce knowledge (p. 20). Kvale and Brinkmann (2014) make the compelling statement that professional conversation is the basis of a professional conversation, and "it is an interview in which knowledge is constructed in collaboration or interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee" (p. 20). For this study, I will conduct research interviews, as the purpose is to produce knowledge about individuals' perception(s) towards CSR.

As Steinar Kvale and Svend Brinkmann (2014) state, "If you want to know how people understand their world and life, why not talk to them about it? [translated]" (2014, p. 17). Kvale and Brinkmann (2014) emphasize the value of conversation for understanding other people's experiences, thoughts, emotions, attitudes, and perceptions (p. 17). An interview is an active process where the interviewer and the interviewee produce knowledge through their relationship, which occurs through conversation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014, p. 39). Qualitative research interviews aim to understand the world from the participants being interviewed (p. 19). By doing so, the research interviews attempt to understand the meaning of the participants' experiences (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014, p. 19).

Interviews range from structured to semi-structured to unstructured. The difference between the types of interviews is their characterizations of flexibility and lack of structure (Edwards & Holland, 2013, p. 3). The structured interview is "... based on a questionnaire with a sequence of questions, asked in the same order and the same way of all research subjects, with little flexibility available to the researcher" (Edwards & Holland, 2013, p. 3). A semi-structured interview is close to everyday conversation, except it has a purpose, a unique approach, and a technique. A semi-structured interview is "neither an open everyday conversation nor a closed questionnaire" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014, p. 49). The semi-structured interviews differ in a variation of style and traditions (p. 3). However, Jennifer Mason (2002) argues that all semi-structured interviews have certain standard features such as an exchange of dialogue happening between two participants; the aim is to cover themes, topics, or issues; a flexible structure; perception of knowledge, meanings, and understandings as created through interaction that can be co-productive in constructing or reconstructing knowledge (Adapted from Mason 2002: 62, in Edwards & Holland, 2013, p. 3).

Conducting interviews from an interpretive perspective, the researcher and the interviewee create the knowledge (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2013, p. 17). In other words, in an interview, the talk between the researcher and the interviewee is the data and compromises that the interview is co-construction (p. 17). Kvale and Brinkmann (2013) refer to this as inter-view (in Edwards & Holland, 2013, p. 17). I choose interviews as interview data can be a rich resource for providing new insights into aspects of research. I have conducted semi-structured interviews to obtain in-depth information about men's and women's perceptions of CSR. In other words, the interviews obtain the opinions/perspectives of an interview participant. Interviews gain knowledge in the form of factual data. The format of the interviews is semi-structured. This format entails both structure and flexibility. The structure and flexibility allow me to conduct the interview using prepared questions in whatever order seems fit, depending on the answers. Moreover, I did not exploit my participation in the interview, as I attempted to minimize my influence, which is not the aim of this research. In other words, the analysis focuses on the answers to the questions.

For this study, I chose qualitative semi-structured research interviews for data collection. Qualitative interviews aim to seek knowledge expressed through everyday language and examine words, not numbers (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014, p. 51). The purpose of this produced knowledge is not to quantify. Qualitative interviews aim "to understand themes in daily life from the subject's own perspectives" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014, p. 45). To find participants to interview, I asked the participants in the questionnaire if they would participate in a short interview over the

phone. Those who wrote 'yes' have been interviewed and appear as part of the data regarding interviews. The interview's premise is for their answers to the questionnaire to elaborate on their knowledge and perception of CSR in their private sphere and at their place of work. In other words, I chose interviews to gain information about their experiences and perceptions of CSR. By doing an interview, the participants can articulate their experiences and reasons for perceiving CSR according to their worldview.

As Kvale and Brinkmann (2014) state, a semi-structured interview seeks to collect descriptions of the interviewee's world with the intent of interpreting the meaning of the asked phenomena (p. 49). I conducted semi-structured interviews to learn about the interviewee's knowledge and experiences with CSR by asking chosen questions. However, the phrasing and the order of the questions are not set. Instead, the interviews are conducted based on an interview guide consisting of questions, which I aim to cover in the interview. In other words, the interviews follow an interview guide focusing on CSR. Depending on the answers from the interviewee, there is room for adding questions. Thus, the structure is also flexible. Furthermore, some open-ended questions encourage a complete answer rather than a 'yes' or a 'no,' as in closed-ended questions. This is an attempt to further a dialogue and a discussion. Thus, a semi-structured interview is more flexible than a structured interview. As Edwards and Holland (2013) state, "Basically, these [semi-structured] interviews allow much more space for interviewees to answer on their terms than structured interviews but do provide some structure for comparison across interviewees in a study by covering the same topics, even in some instances using the same questions" (p. 29). When the interview is finished, I transcribe them.

#### **5.2.4. Interview guide:**

As the questionnaire was anonymous, the basis for the interview was many of the same questions:

<b>Question 1:</b>
--------------------

<i>"Do you identify as a man, woman, or other?"</i>
---

<b>Question 2:</b>
--------------------

<i>"What is your age?"</i>
----------------------------

<b>Question 3:</b>
--------------------

*“Do you know the concept CSR?”*

**Question 4:**

*“How did you learn about CSR?”*

- *Was it a personal interest to be socially responsible? Or through work?”*

**Question 5:**

*“Which of the following aspects do you connect the most with CSR?”*

- *Socially responsibility,*
- *environmental responsibility,*
- *economic responsibility?”*

**Question 6:**

*“How do you perceive CSR?”*

- *Do you feel a personal interest for CSR? In other words, is being socially responsible an interest in your spare time?*
- *or do you perceive CSR as irrelevant for you as a private person and more in terms of a strategy in a company rather than a part of your private life?”*

**Question 7:**

*“Can you give some examples of CSR-initiatives that are a part of your personal life outside of work? This is both in terms of economically, socially, and environmentally focused initiatives?”*

**Question 8:**

*“Do you think that any of these CSR-initiatives that you mentioned are forced down upon you (by society)?”*

The following questions are about CSR and the interviewee’s work.

**Question 9:**

*“What is your department of work?”*

**Question 10:**

*“What are your work assignments?”*

*“Do you use CSR in your work?”*

*“How do you use CSR in your work tasks?”*

**Question 11:**

*“How important is it for you as an employee that your place of work has a CSR-strategy, and why?”*

**Question 12:**

*“In contrast to other elements of your work such as salary, a car for work, and flexible hours, how would you place CSR?”*

**Question 13:**

*“Which of the following CSR-initiatives do you value the most at your place of work as an employee?”*

**Question 14:**

*“How would you rate the CSR-strategies at your place of work?”*

The interview guide shows the utilization of several ‘yes’ or ‘no’ closed-ended questions. To overcome a lack of conducting interviews that consists of ‘yes’ or ‘no’, I ask follow-up questions, depending on the answers, to further the conversation with the interviewee.

### **5.3. Analysis framework: Fairclough’s three-dimensional analysis**

As part of the interpretive research paradigm, I employ a discursive framework for the data analysis. Jones (2019) makes the compelling argument that examining discourses helps us understand what people mean by what they communicate and the meaning we assign to it (p. 4). As Lamont (2015)

states, "Interpretive researchers turn to language, and not empirical observation, to provide answers to their questions; we do not encounter datasets or testable hypotheses within the toolbox for interpretive research" (p. 37). Given that the focus is on the interpretations of the language used about CSR, thus the perception(s) of the concept, I have chosen to analyze the data through discourse analysis. Discourse analysis examines the language and is used to understand how the language in the questionnaire and interviews "... constitutes or produces the social world..." (Lamont, 2015, p. 89).

Furthermore, discourse analysis is not only a technique for understanding the context of forms of communication, but it also enlightens us about assumptions about the world and how language constructs it (p. 91). Woolgar (1988: 73) makes a compelling argument for examining discourses as he emphasizes that "there is no sense in which we can claim that the phenomenon...has an existence independent of its means of expression...There is no object beyond discourse...the organization of discourse is the object. Facts and objects in the world are inescapably textual constructions" (in Kluka, 2000, p. 18).

From a discursive perspective, the starting point of the analysis of the perception of CSR is "the notion that meanings of responsibility about social, environmental, and specific discourses create ethical demands (Iivonen & Moisander, 2015 in García-Rosell, 2019, p. 1020). Discourses provide the frames for forming and articulating ideas concerning our relationship to nature and other members of society in a particular space at a particular time (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000; Phillips & Jorgensen, 2002, in García-Rosell, 2019, p. 1020). Moreover, several scholars have argued that "... discourses play a central role in the construction of CSR meaning and the relationship between business and society (e.g., Banerjee, 2007; Burchell & Cook, 2006; Kallio, 2007; Iivonen and Moisander, 2015, in García-Rosell, 2019, p. 1019–1020). This line of thought follows the premise that "the words we choose to talk about social responsibility and how we use them in speech and text shape our thoughts, feelings, and experiences of CSR" (García-Rosell, 2019, p. 1020). Discourse analysis pays attention to the way discourses produce and transform social reality and makes it possible to evaluate the different ways language approaches a phenomenon. By applying discourse analysis to illustrate the discourse around CSR based on the respondent's answers to the questionnaire and the interviews, I can examine how language produces and legitimates certain perceptions and meanings given to CSR by women and men. Thus, a discursive perspective emphasizes the central role of discourses in creating perceptions about CSR between genders.

The chosen analytical approach is the discourse analysis by Norman Fairclough. Specifically, I apply his three-dimensional model as the framework for the analysis. Fairclough's approach is relevant for this research as it examines the linguistics in the language and the dimension of how language shapes and is shaped by society (Simpson et al., 2019, p. 59). Fairclough utilizes a critical approach to discourse analysis that attempts to "unmask the use of ideologically charged language" (p. 129). For this project, Fairclough's approach unmasks and reveals the ideologies hidden within the language used in the answers from the questionnaire and the interviews about perceptions and practices of CSR. In other words, I use Fairclough's method to examine and unmask perceptions about CSR and its practices discursively constructed in the language from the questionnaire and the interviews. Moreover, Fairclough's approach helps emphasize a connection between the language, the social context, and the discursive processes. As Fairclough (1992) states, his three-dimensional model helps depict "the link between socio-cultural practice and text is mediated by discursive practice (p.9). Applying Fairclough's approach functions to explain the relationship between language, discourse, and social practice. Another element is Fairclough's belief that language is socially constitutive as it constructs social identities. Fairclough's socially constitutive belief of language and the interconnectedness of the dimensions contribute to understanding the construction of the social identity of CSR in the text and what the constructions say about CSR and the society it was constructed in and for. As part of the third dimension, *Social practice*, I compare the answers from the men's to the women's. The discussion focuses on whether the answers correspond to ideas about gender and gendered expectations in the form of gendered stereotypes about men and women. I have chosen to include this as my topic of discussion because I find it interesting to examine if the discourses interpreted from the empirical data correspond with social constructions of gender and gendered expectations about perceptions of CSR.

It is essential to mention that I focus and utilizes Fairclough's critical approach to discourse analysis regarding how language constructs gender identities, and I am not critical in the sense that this study does not aim at uncovering structures of power, but rather uncover how language construct social identities around CSR. Thus, I am not critical, but I apply his approach and its focus on constructions of social identities.

With the various questions that can prompt qualitative and quantitative data, and a interpretivist-Constructivist discursive analytical framework, this study encompasses elements of both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative and qualitative research are complementary, as a combination of the data from the questionnaire, the interviews, and the discourse analysis can provide

a deeper understanding of perceptions around CSR and reasons for why gendered differences might exist, in contrast to simply counting those who answered what in the questionnaire.

## **6. Limitations**

Several limitations have affected the outcome of this thesis. While document-based research is a commonly used method for qualitative data collection, it has limitations. One limitation is that many aspects of social interaction and information remain invisible to the researcher. However, interviews are a valuable tool for expanding knowledge about perceptions of CSR.

Furthermore, there is the limitation that when contacting companies regarding a questionnaire, it is hard to know when enough companies have been contacted to ensure someone will reply. As Edwards and Holland (2013) state, “The issue of ‘how many’ interviews, people or cases should be in a qualitative sample is a common question among students hoping to undertake research” (p. 7).

Regarding both the respondents of the questionnaire and the interviewees, there is the possibility that they can withhold information or mislead the researcher. In other words, the respondents and the interviewees may only sometimes be utterly truthful with their answers. For example, some may answer based on how society would deem most acceptable. However, as argued by Silverman (1985), “The reliability of research results does not depend on the trustworthiness of participants’ answers, because even a speaker who lies applies cultural forms and interpretative resources that, in themselves, are neither true nor false, but simply exist” (in Talja, 1999, p. 472). All talk and texts represent situated speech and specimens of interpretative practices, as the texts and talks are the object of study (p. 472).

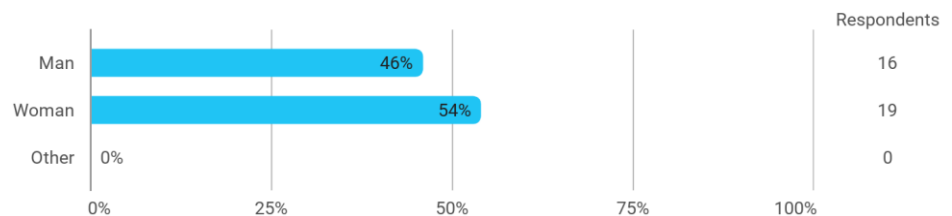
As with other data collection methods, a questionnaire has disadvantages. One is the uncertainty of whether it was filled out by the respondents for whom it was meant. Also, if confusion occurs due to the questions in the questionnaire, the researcher cannot clarify them. Therefore, I introduce some of the questions. Moreover, questionnaires tend to have a poor response rate. To avoid this, I contacted many corporations.

Qualitative and quantitative methods can generally compensate for each other’s weaknesses. The combination of semi-structured interviews, data from the questionnaire, and discourse analysis determines both points of consistency and inconsistency that would have been obscured if I had used only one method. A limitation of a quantitative questionnaire is that the

responses are pre-selected and, therefore, cannot “elicit ideas or insight that the researcher was not expecting to find” (Lamont, 2015, p. 118). In other words, the questionnaire would not procreate data I did not expect to find. Moreover, the respondents could have more information relevant to this research. However, they did not have an opportunity to present this information because it was not in the questionnaire. I attempt to overcome these limitations by including questions in which the respondents can elaborate on their answers, generating data that was not pre-selected. However, several limitations, such as more structure and consistency, are present when conducting qualitative methods. In this case, interviews. I have chosen to employ semi-structured interviews to overcome this limitation, as this form of interview entails some flexibility while following an interview guide consisting of prepared questions. Moreover, discourse analysis aims to “produce interpretations” (Talja, 1999, p. 472), making it almost impossible to generalize because it is an interpretative approach, meaning that the data consists of possible interpretations. However, there is no reason that the theoretical and methodological framework, as well as the argumentation, cannot be used by other researchers.

## 7. Results of the questionnaire

**Figure 1: Gender**



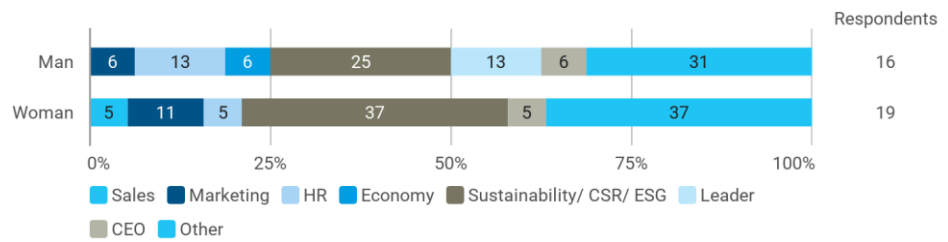
**Text box 1: Age**

Women:	Men:
M	60 år
48	54
59	54

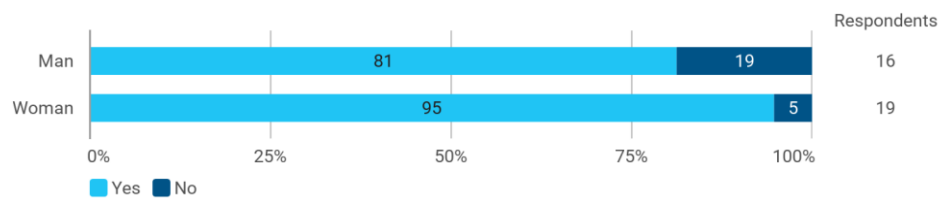
<b>Women:</b>	<b>Men:</b>
36	54
31	54
61	54
52	52
33	52
28	47
45	31
30	31
33	30
27	28
60	28
25	27 26
33	
26	
26	
27	

The textbox illustrates the ages of female and male respondents.

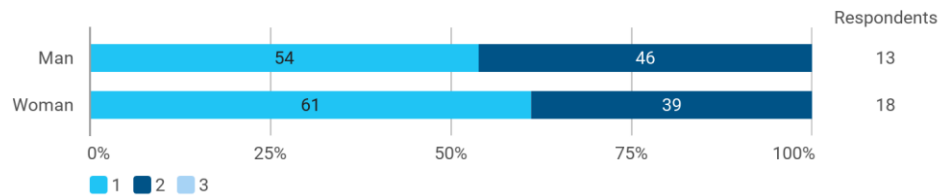
**Figure 3: Department of Work:**



**Figure 4: Are you familiar with the concept of CSR?**

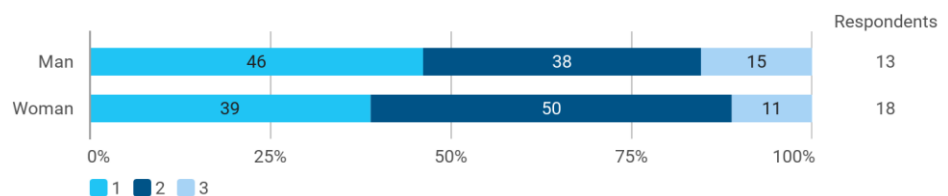


**Figure 5: Which elements do you connect with CSR (please arrange after order) – Social responsibility (gender equality, volunteer work, charity, i.e.)**



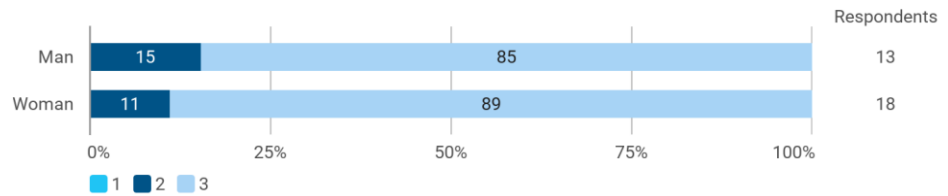
The numbers 1-3 indicate the ranking, with 1 being ranked the highest, and 3 being ranked the lowest.

**Figure 6: Which elements do you connect with CSR (please arrange after order) - Environmental responsibility (reduction of Co2 and power consumption, waste sorting, recycling, and maximum use of resources, i.e.)**



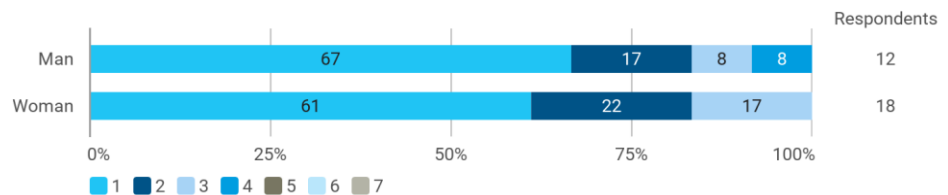
The numbers 1-3 indicate the ranking, with 1 being ranked the highest, and 3 being ranked the lowest.

**Figure 7: Which elements do you connect with CSR (please arrange after order) - Economic responsibility (initiatives to secure earnings (creating jobs, i.e.)**



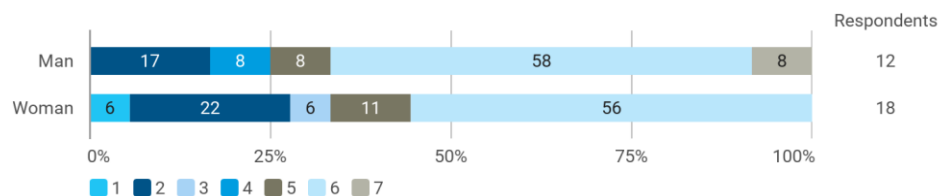
The numbers 1-3 indicate the ranking, with 1 being ranked the highest, and 3 being ranked the lowest.

**Figure 8: Which environmental CSR-strategies is a part of your spare time? In other words, which of the following environmental initiatives are part of your spare time? (arrange after order): - Waste sorting**



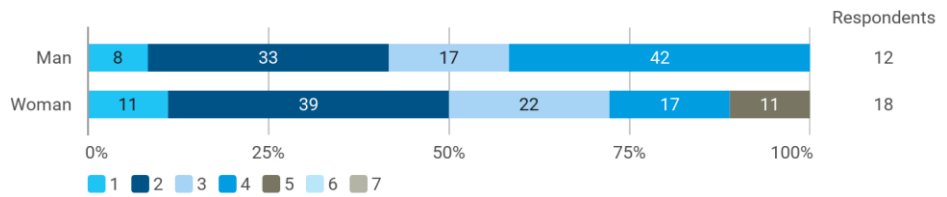
The numbers 1-7 indicate the ranking, with 1 being ranked the highest, and 7 being ranked the lowest.

**Figure 9: Which environmental CSR-strategies is a part of your spare time? In other words, which of the following environmental initiatives are part of your spare time? (arrange after order): - Recycling (sales/buying)**



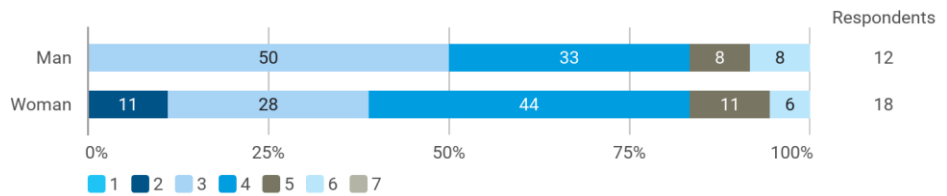
The numbers 1-7 indicate the ranking, with 1 being ranked the highest, and 7 being ranked the lowest.

**Figure 10: Which environmental CSR-strategies is a part of your spare time? In other words, which of the following environmental initiatives are part of your spare time? (arrange after order): - Reusable packaging**



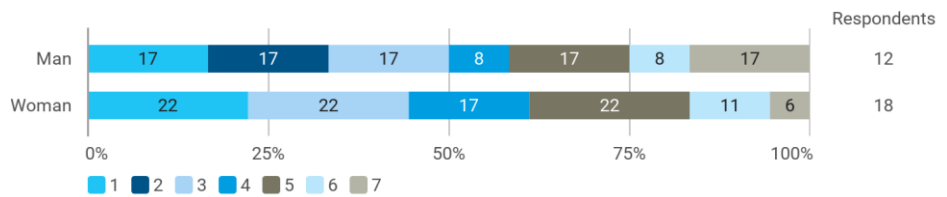
The numbers 1-7 indicate the ranking, with 1 being ranked the highest, and 7 being ranked the lowest.

**Figure 11: Which environmental CSR-strategies is a part of your spare time? In other words, which of the following environmental initiatives are part of your spare time? (arrange after order): - Ecology**



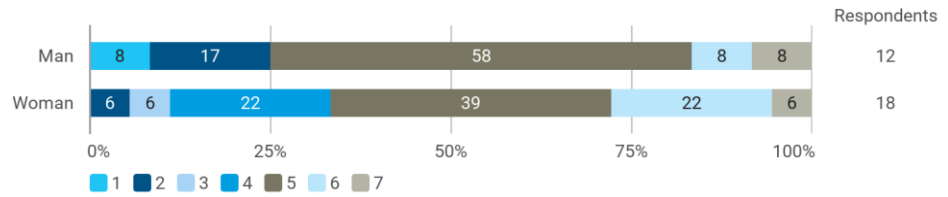
The numbers 1-7 indicate the ranking, with 1 being ranked the highest, and 7 being ranked the lowest.

**Figure 12: Which environmental CSR-strategies is a part of your spare time? In other words, which of the following environmental initiatives are part of your spare time? (arrange after order): - Green energy (solar power, ground power, ground heat, i.e.)**



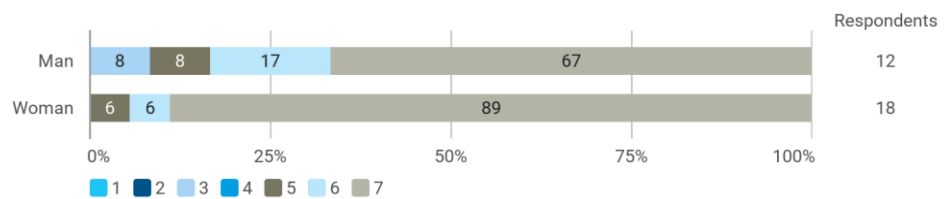
The numbers 1-7 indicate the ranking, with 1 being ranked the highest, and 7 being ranked the lowest.

**Figure 13: Which environmental CSR-strategies is a part of your spare time? In other words, which of the following environmental initiatives are part of your spare time? (arrange after order): - Transportation**



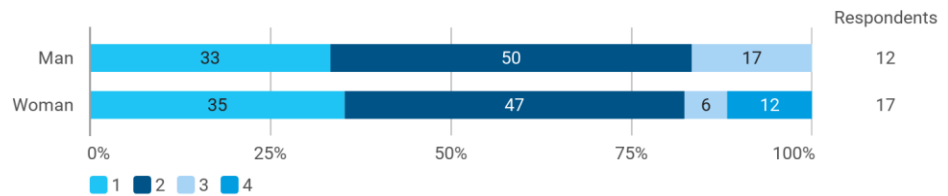
The numbers 1-7 indicate the ranking, with 1 being ranked the highest, and 7 being ranked the lowest.

**Figure 14: Which environmental CSR-strategies is a part of your spare time? In other words, which of the following environmental initiatives are part of your spare time? (arrange after order): - None**



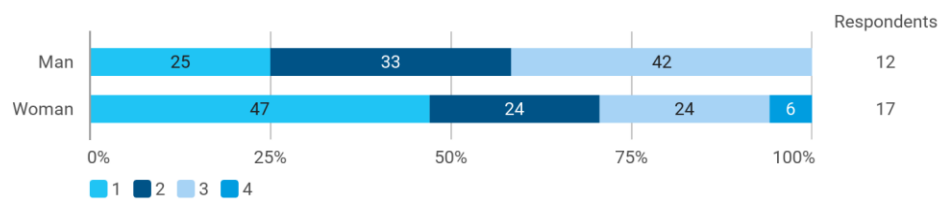
The numbers 1-7 indicate the ranking, with 1 being ranked the highest, and 7 being ranked the lowest.

**Figure 15: Which socially focused CSR-initiatives are part of your spare time? (arrange after order): - Donating to charity**



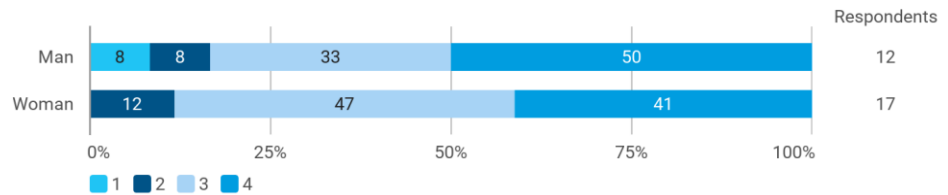
The numbers 1-4 indicate the ranking, with 1 being ranked the highest, and 4 being ranked the lowest.

**Figure 16: Which socially focused CSR-initiatives are part of your spare time? (arrange after order): - Volunteer work**



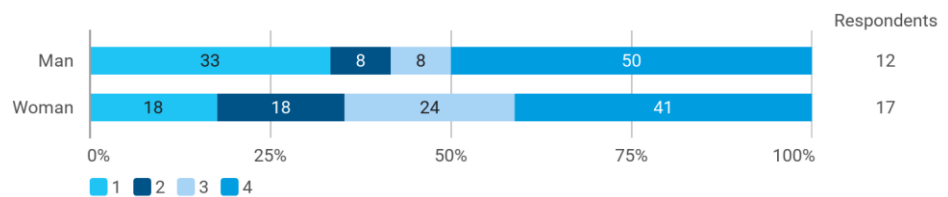
The numbers 1-4 indicate the ranking, with 1 being ranked the highest, and 4 being ranked the lowest.

**Figure 17: Which socially focused CSR-initiatives are part of your spare time? (arrange after order): - Activism**



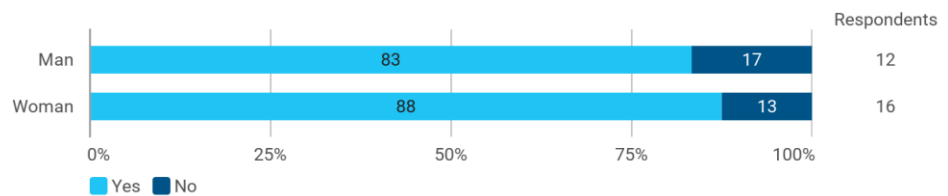
The numbers 1-4 indicate the ranking, with 1 being ranked the highest, and 4 being ranked the lowest.

**Figure 18: Which socially focused CSR-initiatives are part of your spare time? (arrange after order): - None**



The numbers 1-4 indicate the ranking, with 1 being ranked the highest, and 4 being ranked the lowest.

**Figure 19: How do you perceive CSR? - Are you personally interested in CSR? In other words, do you consider yourself to be socially responsible in your spare time? (please elaborate)**

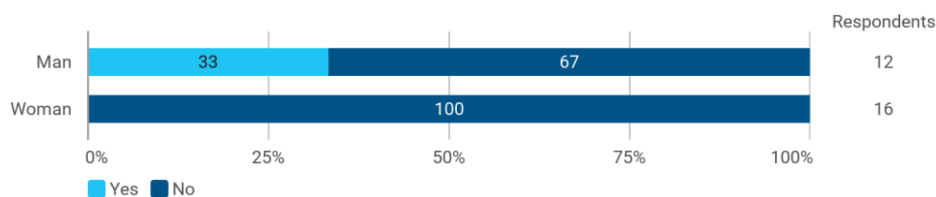


**Textbox to Figure 19:**

<p><b>How do you perceive CSR? - Are you personally interested in CSR? In other words, do you consider yourself to be socially responsible in your spare time? (please elaborate)</b></p> <p><b>Women:</b></p>	<p><b>How do you perceive CSR? - Are you personally interested in CSR? In other words, do you consider yourself to be socially responsible in your spare time? (please elaborate)</b></p> <p><b>Men:</b></p>
xx	Selvfølgelig har jeg en interesse
X	Nej
ja	Mest ift. bæredygtighed/affald/CO2
ja	Ja
Yes, by primarily volunteering in organizations and creating awareness as an individual.	JA mindset
Yes, I am personally interested, but I could do much more to be more socially responsible in my spare time.	I use public transport, recycle and sort my waste. Do not over buy
Mener alle mennesker på denne jord har et socialt ansvar, uanset om det drejer sig om miljø eller etiske overvejelser, såsom ligestilling eller menneskerettigheder	Har ikke kommentarer
Ja.	Det er ikke en interesse i min hverdag, men det er noget jeg tænker over
Ja, jeg interesserer mig nok særligt for den sociale del	Bæredygtighed og ansvarlighed er en del af min hverdag
Ja	.
I do. I have a professional interest in CSR (og more accurately in social sustainability) but also a personal one. I think that it all connects, the social, the environmental and economic aspect of fostering a more sustainable future.	.

<p><b>How do you perceive CSR? - Are you personally interested in CSR? In other words, do you consider yourself to be socially responsible in your spare time? (please elaborate)</b></p> <p><b>Women:</b></p>	<p><b>How do you perceive CSR? - Are you personally interested in CSR? In other words, do you consider yourself to be socially responsible in your spare time? (please elaborate)</b></p> <p><b>Men:</b></p>
ESG Compliance Officer	
As a consumer, I'm interested in "free from", and waste sorting and responsible use of consumption of water, electricity and heating are only basic and an obvious choice.	
xx	
x	
ja	
ja	
Yes, by primarily volunteering in organizations and creating awareness as an individual.	
Yes, I am personally interested, but I could do much more to be more socially responsible in my spare time.	
Mener alle mennesker på denne jord har et socialt ansvar, uanset om det drejer sig om miljø eller etiske overvejelser, såsom ligestilling eller menneskerettigheder	
.	
-	

**Figure 20: How do you perceive CSR? - Do you perceive CSR as irrelevant for you as an individual? (please elaborate)**



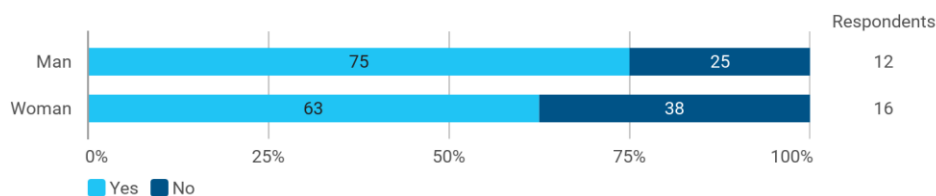
**Textbox to Figure 20:**

How do you percieve CSR? - Do you percieve CSR as irrelevant for you as an individual? (please elaboratee)	How do you percieve CSR? - Do you percieve CSR as irrelevant for you as an individual? (please elaborate)
<b>Women:</b>	<b>Men:</b>
xx	The impacts of my actions as an individual are limited
x	Ordet CSR ja, det er en virksomhedsting, men jeg tænker på det som mere som samfundsansvar
personligt er lige så relevant som for firmaer	Nej
nej	Nej
nej	Ja
Som sagt, så har alle mennesker på jorden et socialt ansvar for at løfte i folk	Har ikke kommentarer

<b>How do you percieve CSR? - Do you percieve CSR as irrelevant for you as an individual? (please elaboratee)</b> <b>Women:</b>	<b>How do you percieve CSR? - Do you percieve CSR as irrelevant for you as an individual? (please elaborate)</b> <b>Men:</b>
No, CSR aligns with some of my core values. Therefore, it cannot be considered irrelevant.	Det er da relevant
No	Både virksomheder og privatpersoner skal tage ansvar
Nej.	.
Nej, jeg tænker, at der er mange elementer af CSR, som også er relevante for privatpersoner - både i forhold til tiltag man kan gøre, men også i forhold til konsekvenserne hvis ikke man gør det (fx konsekvenser af co2-udledning, børnefattigdom og lignende)	.
Jeg vil gerne være med til at bevare jorden både privat og arbejdsmæssigt	.
Being socially responsible towards others and within society is a central part of being part of a society. It is as relevant for individuals as it is for companies and larger organizations. Though progress and action from all societal actors can be a positive push in the right direction.	
As a consumer, I'm interested in "free from", and waste sorting an responsible use of consumption of water, electricity and heating are only basic and an obvious choice.	
??	

<b>How do you perceive CSR? - Do you perceive CSR as irrelevant for you as an individual? (please elaborate)</b>	<b>How do you perceive CSR? - Do you perceive CSR as irrelevant for you as an individual? (please elaborate)</b>
<b>Women:</b>	<b>Men:</b>
.	
-	

**Figure 21: How do you perceive CSR? - Do you perceive CSR as a business strategy in a company rather than a part of your private life? (please elaborate)**



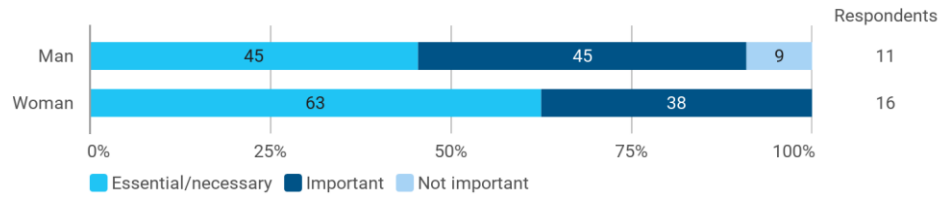
**Textbox to figure 21:**

<b>How do you perceive CSR? - Do you perceive CSR as a business strategy in a company rather than a part of your private life? (please elaborate)</b>	<b>How do you perceive CSR? - Do you perceive CSR as a business strategy in a company rather than a part of your private life? (please elaborate)</b>
<b>Women:</b>	<b>Men:</b>
xx	Som udgangspunkt ja, jeg vil ikke bruge betegnelsen CSR omkring privatlivet
nej	Nej
begge dele	Mest en del af en strategi i en virksomhed, men også som et ansvar jeg har som privatperson

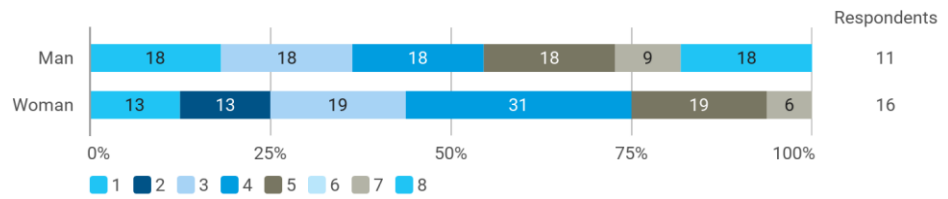
<b>How do you percieve CSR? - Do you percieve CSR as a business strategy in a company rather than a part of your private life? (please elaborate)</b> <b>Women:</b>	<b>How do you percieve CSR? - Do you percieve CSR as a business strategy in a company rather than a part of your private life? (please elaborate)</b> <b>Men:</b>
We are all responsible for a responsible approach in respect of resources, but it's not a big deal for me.	Ja
Som udgangspunkt ja, jeg vil ikke bruge betegnelsen CSR omkring privatlivet	JA/NEJ
Nej se ovenfor	Har ikke tænkt betegnelsen CSR som en del af privatlivet, så derfor ja til dette
Nej	Greater impact is achieved through corporate effort
Mest en del af en strategi i en virksomhed, men også som et ansvar jeg har som privatperson	Det er både en strategi i virksomhed men også privat
Jeg kan bedre lide ordet: bæredygtighed isf. CSR	Både privatliv og virksomhed er vigtigt
Ja	.
JA/NEJ	.
It can be both, one doesn't have to exclude the other, but rather be complimentary.	

<b>How do you percieve CSR? - Do you percieve CSR as a business strategy in a company rather than a part of your private life? (please elaborate)</b> <b>Women:</b>	<b>How do you percieve CSR? - Do you percieve CSR as a business strategy in a company rather than a part of your private life? (please elaborate)</b> <b>Men:</b>
I do consider the common notion of CSR as something that a business or and organization can enact, given that the C stands for corporate. However, speaking to my comment above, being socially responsible is something that is also part of my private life.	
Har ikke tænkt betegnelsen CSR som en del af privatlivet, så derfor ja til dette	
Greater impact is achieved through corporate effort	
CSR er relevant for både virksomheder og privatpersoner	
Både privatliv og virksomhed er vigtigt	
Both	
.	
.	
.	
-	

**Figure 22: As an employee, how important is it for you that your place of work have a CSR-strategy?**

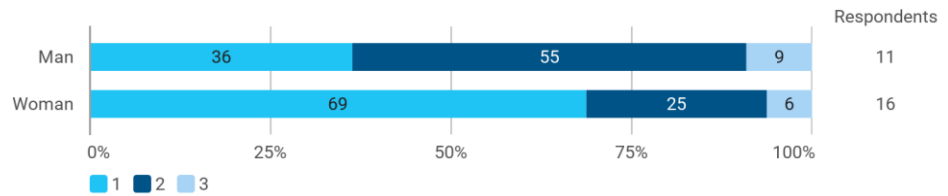


**Figure 23: How would you place CSR in contrast to other work related elements? (arrange after order):**



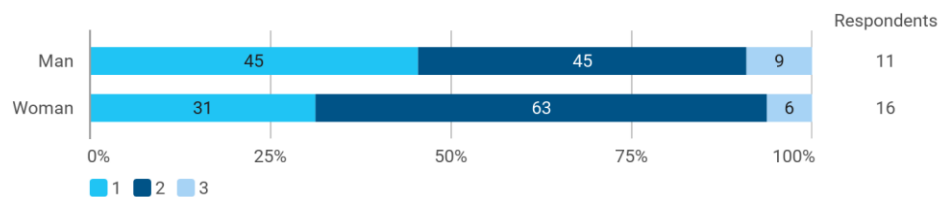
The numbers 1-7 indicate the ranking of CSR, 1 being the highest and 8 being the lowest.

**Figure 24: Which CSR initiatives do you value the most at your place of work as an employee? (arrange after order): - Social responsibility (gender equality, volunteer work, donating to charity, i.e.)**



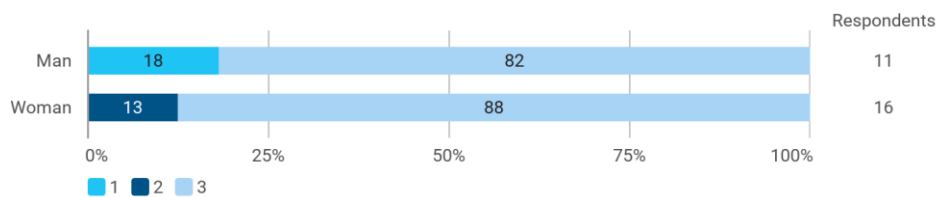
The numbers 1-3 indicate the ranking of CSR, 1 being the highest and 3 being the lowest.

**Figure 25: Which CSR initiatives do you value the most at your place of work as an employee? (arrange after order): - Environmental responsibility (reduction of Co2 and power consumption, i.e.)**



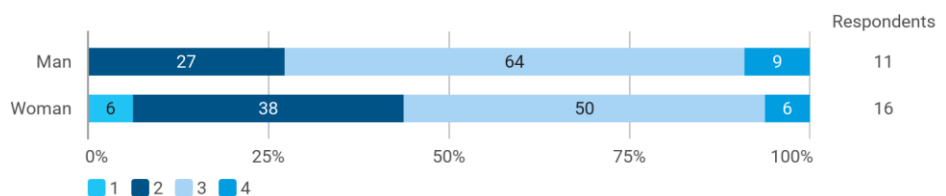
The numbers 1-3 indicate the ranking of Environmental responsibility, 1 being the highest and 3 being the lowest.

**Figure 26: Which CSR initiatives do you value the most at your place of work as an employee? (arrange after order): - Economic responsibility (initiatives to secure earnings (creating jobs, i.e.)**



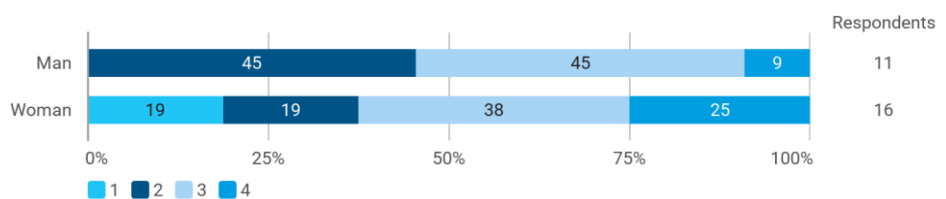
The numbers 1-3 indicate the ranking of Economic responsibility, 1 being the highest and 3 being the lowest.

**Figure 27: How would you rank the following CSR-strategies at your place of work? - Gender equality**



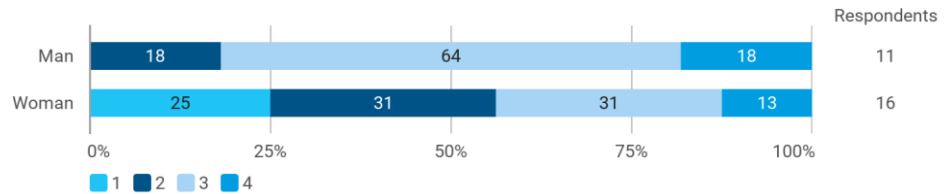
The numbers 1-3 indicate the ranking of Gender equality, 1 being the highest, 3 being the lowest, and 4 being 'I do not know.'

**Figure 28: How would you rank the following CSR-strategies at your place of work? - Waste sorting**



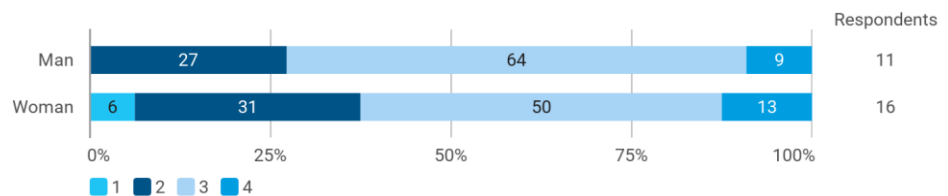
The numbers 1-3 indicate the ranking of Waste sorting, 1 being the highest, 3 being the lowest, and 4 being 'I do not know.'

**Figure 29: How would you rank the following CSR-strategies at your place of work? - Reusable packaging**



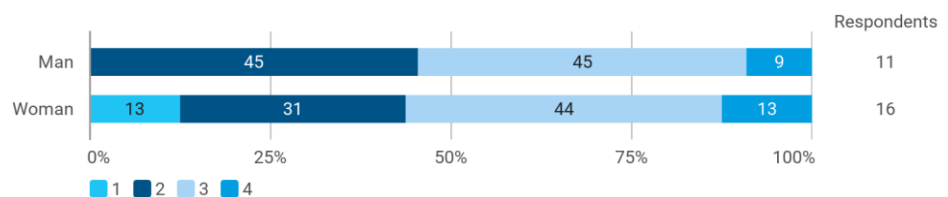
The numbers 1-3 indicate the ranking of Reusable packaging, 1 being the highest, 3 being the lowest, and 4 being 'I do not know.'

**Figure 30: How would you rank the following CSR-strategies at your place of work? - Green energy**



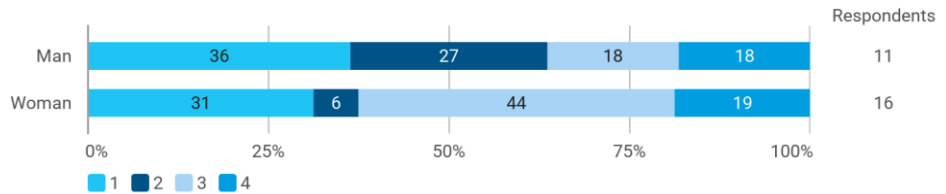
The numbers 1-3 indicate the ranking of Green energy, 1 being the highest, 3 being the lowest, and 4 being 'I do not know.'

**Figure 31: How would you rank the following CSR-strategies at your place of work? - Reduction of power consumption and resource consumption**



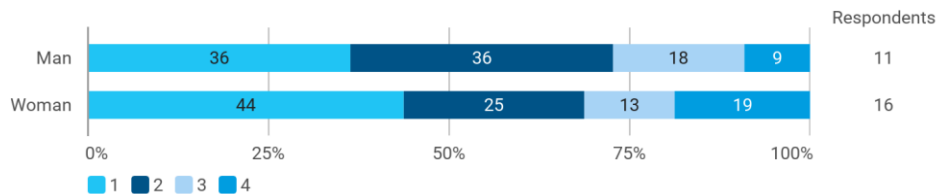
The numbers 1-3 indicate the ranking of Green energy, 1 being the highest, 3 being the lowest, and 4 being 'I do not know.'

**Figure 32: How would you rank the following CSR-strategies at your place of work? - Creating jobs**



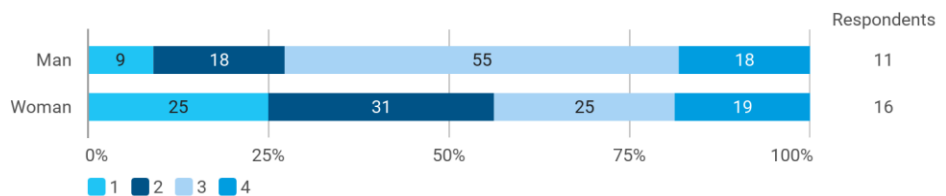
The numbers 1-3 indicate the ranking of Creating jobs, 1 being the highest, 3 being the lowest, and 4 being 'I do not know.'

**Figure 33: How would you rank the following CSR-strategies at your place of work? - Donating to charity**



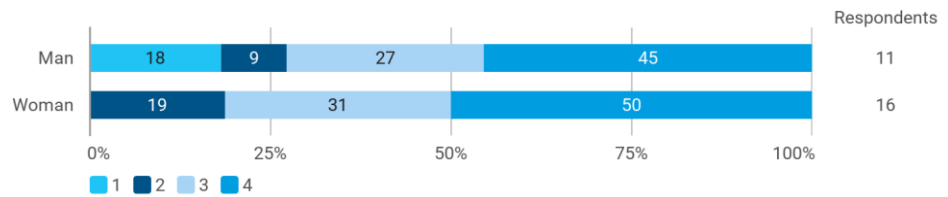
The numbers 1-3 indicate the ranking of Creating jobs, 1 being the highest, 3 being the lowest, and 4 being 'I do not know.'

**Figure 34: How would you rank the following CSR-strategies at your place of work? - Activism**



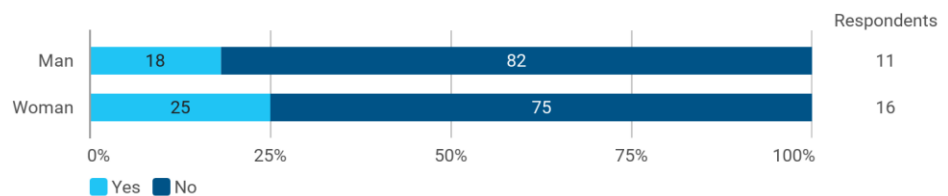
The numbers 1-3 indicate the ranking of Creating jobs, 1 being the highest, 3 being the lowest, and 4 being 'I do not know.'

**Figure 35: How would you rank the following CSR-strategies at your place of work? - Economical contributions to society**



The numbers 1-3 indicate the ranking of Economic contributions to society, 1 being the highest, 3 being the lowest, and 4 being 'I do not know.'

**Figure 36: Do you want to participate in a short interview over the phone? If yes, please state your e-mail in the textbox below - A short online Interview**



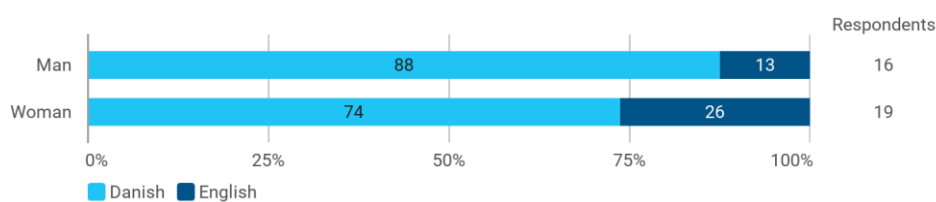
**Textbox to Figure 36:**

Do you want to participate in a short interview over the phone? If yes, please state your e-mail in the textbox below	Do you want to participate in a short interview over the phone? If yes, please state your e-mail in the textbox below
<b>Women:</b>	<b>Men:</b>
no thank you	Tid
no	Nej
nej tak	Nej

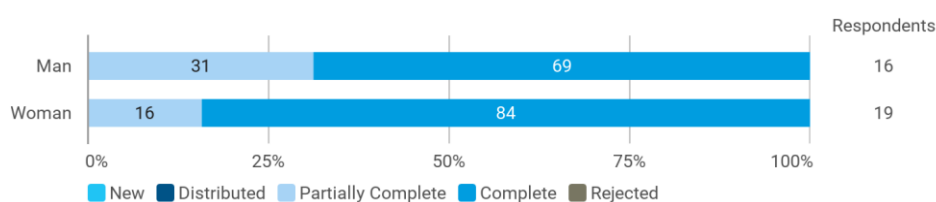
<b>Do you want to participate in a short interview over the phone? If yes, please state your e-mail in the textbox below</b> <b>Women:</b>	<b>Do you want to participate in a short interview over the phone? If yes, please state your e-mail in the textbox below</b> <b>Men:</b>
nej	Jeg ville gerne, men min tid er meget knap i øjeblikket :-)
X	Ja det kan vi godt - +45 22 38 63 22
No thank you:)	22684432
Nej tak	0
Mobil: 25194747 Mail:anchj@evida.dk	.
I am going on maternity leave, otherwise you are always welcome to set up a call.	.
Frederikkeholmberg@hotmail.com	.
??	.
22241804	
.	
.	
-	

Do you want to participate in a short interview over the phone? If yes, please state your e-mail in the textbox below	Do you want to participate in a short interview over the phone? If yes, please state your e-mail in the textbox below
<b>Women:</b>	<b>Men:</b>
+4528962312	
no thank you	
no	
nej tak	
nej	

**Figure 37: Language**



**Figure 38: Overall status**



## 8. Analysis: Fairclough's Three-dimensional model

To start the analysis, I look at the first dimension *Text*, the analysis of discourse. This involves the analysis of the language and includes the features: use of pronouns, adjective, idioms,

### 8.1. First dimension – text analysis of the questionnaire

The text itself is the answers written in the text boxes of the questionnaire from the female respondents. The answers consist of free writing, meaning they were not pre-selected and could potentially prompt qualitative data. The answers are analyzed by examining the linguistics of constructing discourses around the perception of CSR. To make the analysis comprehensible, I have given the answers numbers.

#### Textbox to Figure 19:

<b>How do you perceive CSR? - Are you personally interested in CSR? In other words, do you consider yourself to be socially responsible in your spare time? (please elaborate)</b> <b>Women:</b>	<b>How do you perceive CSR? - Are you personally interested in CSR? In other words, do you consider yourself to be socially responsible in your spare time? (please elaborate)</b> <b>Men:</b>
1: xx	17: Selvfølgelig har jeg en interesse
2: X	18: Nej
3: ja	19: Mest ift. bæredygtighed/affald/CO2
4: ja	20.: Ja
5: Yes, by primarily volunteering in organizations and creating awareness as an individual.	21: JA mindset
6: Yes, I am personally interested, but I could do much more to be more socially responsible in my spare time.	22: I use public transport, recycle and sort my waste. Do not over buy
7: Mener alle mennesker på denne jord har et socialt ansvar, uanset om det drejer sig om miljø eller etiske overvejelser, såsom ligestilling eller menneskerettigheder	23: Har ikke kommentarer

<b>How do you perceive CSR? - Are you personally interested in CSR? In other words, do you consider yourself to be socially responsible in your spare time? (please elaborate)</b> <b>Women:</b>	<b>How do you perceive CSR? - Are you personally interested in CSR? In other words, do you consider yourself to be socially responsible in your spare time? (please elaborate)</b> <b>Men:</b>
8: Ja.	24: Det er ikke en interesse i min hverdag, men det er noget jeg tænker over
9: Ja, jeg interesserer mig nok særligt for den sociale del	25: Bæredygtighed og ansvarlighed er en del af min hverdag
10: Ja	26: .
11: I do. I have a professional interest in CSR (og more accurately in social sustainability) but also a personal one. I think that it all connects, the social, the environmental and economic aspect of fostering a more sustainable future.	27: .
12: ESG Compliance Officer	
13: As a consumer, I'm interested in "free from", and waste sorting an responsible use of consumption of water, electricity and heating are only basic and an obvious choice.	
14: ??	
15: .	
16: -	

The answers that do not include an actual word are not analyzed—answer numbers 1, 2, 14, 15, 16, 27, and 27. This textbox to Figure 19 shows the responses to the question, "Are you personally interested in CSR? In other words, do you consider yourself socially responsible in your spare time?"

The female respondents all said they consider themselves socially responsible in their spare time. Comparable, seven of the male respondents perceive themselves to be socially responsible (17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, and 25). To start the linguistics analysis, I examine the use of active voice. An example is number 5. It includes a female respondent's initiatives. The answer is written using active voice, meaning the subject is acting. Active voice emphasizes the respondent's agency as actively performing the verbs "volunteering and creating awareness." Another example of active voice is number 22. Thus, both female and male respondents use active voice.

Moreover, the female and male respondents use personal pronouns, such as *I* and *my* (6, 9, 11, 13, 17, 22, 24, and 25). The personal pronouns *I* and *my* emphasize the respondents' individualism as they express themselves as individuals. If one approaches this answer about Fairclough's belief that text and discourse are socially constitutive of social identities, the use of pronouns such as *I* and *my* emphasize a focus on the social identity of the respondent as it forms or reinforces their social identity through self-categorization. Self-categorization is the individuals' assignment of beliefs, behaviors, and characteristics to themselves. Differently, the uncountable noun *all* constructs a sense of unity as it refers to a quantity consisting of more than one rather than an individual. In answer number 13, *all* refers to 'humans' that "have a social responsibility, no matter if it is about the environment, ethical considerations such as equality or human rights [translated]." This answer constructs social responsibility as collected and shared among "all humans on this earth... [translated]." Furthermore, "all humans on this earth" expresses nationalism as it connects the respondent with other *humans*, as social responsibility becomes a part of her responsibility to other humans. This unity can be said to build upon values of solidarity.

Moreover, a female and male respondent use *but* to insinuate a contradiction in their statements. For example, answer 6 depicts the perception that the engagement of the female respondent is not enough. In answer 24, the language constructs the perception that CSR is not an interest, but it still affects the male respondent, so he "... thinks about it [translated]." Another use of *but* is in answer number 11. Here *but* emphasize CSR as a personal and professional interest. Thus, CSR is perceived as something in the private and the corporate sphere.

Several of the female respondents (5, 6, 7, 9, and 11) emphasize a social dimension of CSR, whereas most of the male respondents (19, 22, and 25) emphasize an environmental dimension. Likewise, female respondents also emphasize an environmental dimension (7, 11, and 13). Another association of CSR in the answers is to sustainability (11 and 19) by female and male respondents. Thus, CSR is connected to sustainability by both genders.

Furthermore, most of the answers by both genders focus on the respondents' actions, insinuating a shared perception that CSR is about its practices. However, some answers concentrate on the mentality of being socially responsible without necessarily insinuating an engagement in practices (see 5, 17, and 21). Furthermore, number 12 consists of the work position of an ESG Compliance Officer. This answer could imply that the occupation showcases a professional interest because an ESG Compliance Officer works with CSR principles. Also, by stating an occupation, the respondent emphasizes her social identity regarding her work sphere. Likewise, numbers 13 and 22 encompass elements of the identity as a consumer. These respondents construct themselves as sustainable and ethical consumers in their behaviors and principles.

Summarizing the answers of the Textbox to Figure 19, the female and male respondents construct perceptions of CSR that build on a sustainable discourse. Narratives around CSR are found to be frequently connected to sustainability (Dobers & Springett, 2010, p. 64). Moreover, the language emphasizes an agency of practices and consumers' social identity. As consumers, the female and male respondents indicate CSR as entailing underlying ethical principles as part of sustainability.

**Textbox to Figure 20:**

<b>How do you percieve CSR? - Do you percieve CSR as irrelevant for you as an individual? (please elaboratee)</b> <b>Women:</b>	<b>How do you percieve CSR? - Do you percieve CSR as irrelevant for you as an individual? (please elaborate)</b> <b>Men:</b>
28: xx	44: The impacts of my actions as an individual are limited
29: x	45: Ordet CSR ja, det er en virksomhedsting, men jeg tænker på det som mere som samfundsansvar
30: personligt er lige så relevant som for firmaer	46: Nej
31: nej	47: Nej
32: nej	48: Ja

<b>How do you percieve CSR? - Do you percieve CSR as irrelevant for you as an individual? (please elaboratee)</b> <b>Women:</b>	<b>How do you percieve CSR? - Do you percieve CSR as irrelevant for you as an individual? (please elaborate)</b> <b>Men:</b>
33: Som sagt, så har alle mennesker på jorden et socialt ansvar for at løfte i folk	49: Har ikke kommentarer
34: No, CSR aligns with some of my core values. Therefore, it cannot be considered irrelevant.	50: Det er da relevant
35: No	51: Både virksomheder og privatpersoner skal tage ansvar
36: Nej.	52: .
37: Nej, jeg tænker, at der er mange elementer af CSR, som også er relevante for privatpersoner - både i forhold til tiltag man kan gøre, men også i forhold til konsekvenserne hvis ikke man gør det (fx konsekvenser af co2-udledning, børnefattigdom og lignende)	53: .
38: Jeg vil gerne være med til at bevare jorden både privat og arbejdsmæssigt	54: .
39: Being socially responsible towards others and within society is a central part of being part of a society. It is as relevant for individuals as it is for companies and larger organizations. Though progress and action from all societal actors can be a positive push in the right direction.	
40: As a consumer, I'm interested in "free from", and waste sorting an responsible use of consumption of water, electricity and heating are only basic and an obvious choice.	
41: ??	

<b>How do you percieve CSR? - Do you percieve CSR as irrelevant for you as an individual? (please elaboratee)</b> <b>Women:</b>	<b>How do you percieve CSR? - Do you percieve CSR as irrelevant for you as an individual? (please elaborate)</b> <b>Men:</b>
42: .	
43: -	

'Corporate' social responsibility indicates that it occurs in the corporate world. However, for this research, the concept is utilized as something relevant for individuals outside of their place of work. Therefore, I asked the question, "How do you perceive CSR? Do you perceive CSR as irrelevant for you as an individual?" to understand if there is a similar perception by the respondents. Like the previous textbox, some respondents have replied with a single 'no' (No. 34, 35, 36, 37, 46, and 47), indicating the perception that CSR is relevant for individuals. This is evident for some of the female and male respondents. An example is answer number 30: "Personally, it is just as relevant as for firms" [translated]. Thus, the phrase *just as* means 'precisely the same way as' constructs CSR as a non-corporate and corporate phenomenon. Answer number 33 is another example of the perception of CSR as an expected shared responsibility. The discursive construction of shared responsibility entails a sense of unity as it is something to do together rather than alone. Similar meanings are in the phrase 'to act in concert,' which means understanding or participating in 'point action or conscious parallel action towards a goal (see number 33). The phrase can be applied in everyday conversation to signify a joint or conscious action.

Answer number 34 states, "CSR aligns with some of my core values. Therefore, it cannot be considered irrelevant." To align means that something supports and falls in order with something. This answer indicates that the respondent perceives CSR as part of their identity due to its alignment with her core values. This narrative constructs CSR as entailing something the respondent perceives as deeply ingrained and cannot be compromised. Moreover, answer number 37 constructs CSR as a broad term encompassing many elements [translated]. By saying, "... there are many elements of CSR, which are also relevant for private persons..." [translated], it constructs CSR as consisting of elements that concern corporations and individuals. Furthermore, the respondent states that "actions" [translated] and "consequences" ["translated] are relevant for "individuals." Likewise, a twofold perception of CSR is observed in answer number 38 using *both*: "I would like to

preserve the earth both privately and work-related" [translated]. A similar twofold perception is found in answer 39 as it constructs CSR as relevant for a society, entailing "individuals, companies, and larger organizations." The language emphasizes the importance of CSR through the adjective *central part*: "Being socially responsible towards others and within society is a **central part** [emphasis added] of being part of a society." A *central part* emphasizes the essentiality of CSR. Moreover, the phrase: "Through progress and action from **all societal actors** [emphasis added]" constructs shared responsibility. Furthermore, the adjective *positive* and "in the *right* direction [emphasis added]" construct a positive perception of CSR. Both can be said construct a discourse of CSR as the 'right thing to do' because it leads "in the right direction" and is connective to a sense of positiveness.

One of the male respondents (answer 48) states that he perceives CSR as irrelevant for individuals and insinuates it to be a purely corporate concept. In contrast, all the female respondents stated that CSR is relevant for individuals even though the concept is mainly utilized in corporate associations. The other male respondents perceive CSR as relevant for corporations and individuals outside the corporate sphere. Answer number 51 utilizes modality through the modal verb *must*, which linguistically invokes a sense of urgency and emphasizes the perception that CSR is relevant for corporations and individuals. Additionally, it constructs CSR as a shared responsibility between *individuals* and *corporations*.

Answer number 44 is an example of a male respondent who emphasizes the corporate dimension of social responsibility. The corporate dimension is emphasized as the language constructs a limitation to the agency of individualism. The answer diminishes the effect of an individual's action. According to Hadjiosif, underestimating individual power of action is a common perception of sustainable settings (2020). Accordingly, this narrative is often constructed in a sustainability context. Thus, the language in the answer builds upon the context of sustainable discourse.

### **Textbox to Figure 21:**

<p><b>How do you percieve CSR? - Do you percieve CSR as a business strategy in a company rather than a part of your private life? (please elaborate)</b></p> <p><b>Women:</b></p>	<p><b>How do you percieve CSR? - Do you percieve CSR as a business strategy in a company rather than a part of your private life? (please elaborate)</b></p> <p><b>Men:</b></p>
55: xx	68: Som udgangspunkt ja, jeg vil ikke bruge betegnelsen CSR omkring privatlivet
56: Nej	69: Nej
57: begge dele	70: Mest en del af en strategi i en virksomhed, men også som et ansvar jeg har som privatperson
58: We are all responsible for a responsible approach in respect of resources, but it's not a big deal for me.	71: Ja
59: Som udgangspunkt ja, da begrebet jo er "corporate social responsibility" - men jeg tænker ikke, at det betyder, at man ikke kan gøre nogle af tingene som privatperson	72: JA/NEJ
60: Selvom vi som privatpersoner har et socialt ansvar, vil jeg mene, at der med ordet 'corporate social responsibility' også menes, at virksomheder forholder sig til det sociale ansvar, vi som mennesker har, blot på strategisk vis.	73: Har ikke tænkt betegnelsen CSR som en del af privatlivet, så derfor ja til dette
61: Nej se ovenfor	74: Greater impact is achieved through corporate effort
62: Maybe a little. In my head, it's a human duty to be socially responsible and it should go without saying that we all need to do our part. CSR becomes, for me, the equivalent to that when speaking of companies	75: Det er både en strategi i virksomhed men også privat
63: Jeg kan bedre lide ordet: bæredygtighed isf. CSR	76: Både privatliv og virksomhed er vigtigt

<b>How do you perceive CSR? - Do you perceive CSR as a business strategy in a company rather than a part of your private life? (please elaborate)</b> <b>Women:</b>	<b>How do you perceive CSR? - Do you perceive CSR as a business strategy in a company rather than a part of your private life? (please elaborate)</b> <b>Men:</b>
64: It can be both, one doesn't have to exclude the other, but rather be complimentary.	77: .
65: I do consider the common notion of CSR as something that a business or and organization can enact, given that the C stands for corporate. However, speaking to my comment above, being socially responsible is something that is also part of my private life.	78: .
66: CSR er relevant for både virksomheder og privatpersoner	
67: Both	

Most answers insinuate a perception of CSR as a business strategy and a part of one's private life. Interestingly, the word 'strategy' is utilized by both female and male respondents when arguing that CSR is both a corporate and a part of private life. According to Jarboui and Hamza (2020), studies have discussed the vision of CSR as a strategic behavior, a relatively common perception of CSR (p. 1). This is especially evident in answer 64, which refers to CSR at and outside work as "complementary." However, there is a split in the perceptions of CSR as some female respondents perceive CSR as primarily relevant to corporations (59, 62, and 65). The same is apparent for the male respondents, as answers 68, 71,73, and 74 perceive CSR as solely relevant to corporations. A noticeable view of CSR in some female and male responses is the construction of CSR as a strategy (62, 79, and 84). Hamza and Jarboui (2020) argue that studies consider CSR to have a strategic dimension "... according to which CSR is a means and an instrument driven by extrinsic motives to achieve a firm's goals" (p. 2). Despite the strategic dimension of CSR as commonly utilized in a corporate connection, the female and male respondents perceive it as an instrument for work and outside work.

Furthermore, answer 58 refers to CSR indirectly as "a responsible approach. 'Approach' refers to dealing with a situation or a problem, which constructs CSR as a solution. Additionally, the respondent connects CSR with the aspect of resources, representing an environmental focus on CSR. In the first part of this sentence, the respondent insinuates herself as part of a collective that shares a responsibility: "We are all responsible for a responsible approach in respect of resources." *We* refers to everyone and emphasizes the responsibility to act responsibly as a collective and creates unity, as it is something done together. Also, *we* splits the responsibility so it does not fall on a single individual. However, the second part of the sentence, "but it's not a big deal for me," contradicts this perception, as 'but' is a linguistic device that indicates contradiction to previously stated. Furthermore, 'not a big deal' signifies something needing to be more important and impressive. Thus, on the one hand, the respondent perceives CSR as relevant to her as a collective and shared responsibility, but on the other hand, she does not consider it relevant. Thus, the answer constructs a perception of CSR as important for the collective good, but the respondent does not perceive it as much individually. Moreover, the phrase 'we all need to do our part' in answer 62 usually means to do what one is responsible for doing or can do. The phrases emphasize a perception of social responsibility as the 'right thing to do' because it is obvious and, therefore, does not need to be said. The respondent states this perception regards both CSR and social responsibility.

Moving on to answer number 63, the respondent states that she perceives the word 'sustainability' as better than CSR to answer the proposed question. Sustainability is like CSR, a broad concept. It can be defined as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (United Nations, *Sustainability*, n.d.). Studies have also found sustainability perceived to be synonymous with CSR (Jenkins, 2005; Visser, 2005; Broomhill, 2007; Maon et al., 2006, in Osadiya, 2016, p. 6). Thus, CSR is commonly associated with sustainable values, as observed in some of the perceptions of CSR.

Moving on to answer number 59, it emphasizes the corporate sphere in the terminology of CSR. CSR originates and applies as a corporate term; therefore, it is most common to associate the term with a corporate sphere. However, the respondent argues for a rationale of CSR as influential outside of work: "... but I do not think this means that you cannot do some of the things as a private person" [translated]. Thus, the language emphasizes CSR in terms of corporate settings, yet one can see how it is transferred into the private sphere. The division is constructed in the language using *but*. The sentence constructs CSR concerning corporations and "we as humans" [translated], which constructs collective responsibility. The word human is also present in answer number 62. It states

that social responsibility is a "human duty." The word duty implies a moral reasoning for advocating CSR, as the narrative constructs it as an obligation. According to Hamza and Jarboui (2020), CSR is often considered to be driven by "moral imperative" (p. 1). A moral imperative constructs an ethical discourse: "The moral duty to be socially responsible can be derived from religious or ethical principles of a moral philosophy" (Hamza & Jarboui, 2020, p. 5). Focusing on CSR from a moral perspective implies an obligation/duty to act responsibly. The same respondent (No. 62) uses the phrase 'it should go without saying,' commonly used when saying something is so obvious that it does not need to be said or explained.

Most of the answers depict CSR as relevant for individuals and corporation. Comparing the perceptions of female and male respondents, both perceive a twosome discourse of CSR as influential in private life and at work. To summarize, the language implies perceptions and discursive constructions of CSR as an umbrella construction that includes the actions/initiatives one participates in, one's mindset and interests, and, for one respondent, their position of work. Furthermore, some of the answers indicate perception(s) of CSR as being the mindset/interest in "responsible use of consumption," i.e., but maybe without participating in the initiatives.

## **8.2. First dimension – text analysis of semi-structured interviews**

In this section, the text itself consists of the conducted semi-structured interviews. The analysis focuses on linguistics (what is said) to examine how it constructs discourses of perceptions of CSR and its practices. The research sample consists of five interviews in total. Each interview is transcribed. The interviews are in Danish, as all interviewees are Danish speakers and wish to speak the language. Therefore, I translated the interviews into the examination to the best of my ability. The interviews comprised five; two identified as men and three as women. Thus, twenty-five percent of the interviewees are male, and seventy-five percent are women. Again, an unequal distribution between the genders is observed, which is noteworthy as it can influence the overall results of the interviews.

### **8.2.1. Interview March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

The interviewee is an employee from Centrica Energy Trading A/S department in Aalborg, Denmark (l. 37). The employee identifies as a male and is 30 years old (l. 17 & 20) and works in the department of communication and strategy in which he also touches upon public relations and public affairs as part of his tasks (ll. 30-31). When asked the first question, "*Are you familiar with CSR?*" (l. 21), the interviewee is familiar "*... to some extent*" (l. 22) and elaborates that he has touched upon some

elements of ESG and CSR regarding reports and the communication surrounding it (ll. 26-27). To clarify, ESG is short for 'Environmental Social Governance.' It refers to assessments or criteria used to measure a company's sustainability (Player, 2024).

When asked how he learned about CSR and if it is a personal interest in being socially responsible or a work-related concept (ll. 41-42), it is not a personal interest but more a part of his job as it has been in "corporate connections" (l. 44) regarding reports that he learned about it (ll. 45-46). Thus, the interviewee is familiar with CSR in his personal and working sphere, but mainly regarding his place of work. Furthermore, he emphasizes CSR's social and environmental aspects (l. 50-52). He associates CSR with "*making the corporation sustainable*" as part of "*climate dimensions*" (l. 51). A review of the historical change in the CSR discourse identifies environmental concern as one of the main themes already in the 1960s (Carroll, 2021, in Aslaksen, Hildebrandt, & Johnsen, 2021, p. 1). Some have also argued for a greater emphasis on CSR on sustainability (e.g., Carroll, 2021; Rank & Contreras, 2021; Trollman & Colwill, 2021; Windsor, 2021, in Aslaksen et al., 2021, p. 1). When speaking of the social aspect, it "is a variety of things" (l. 54), and he emphasizes "inclusion, ethnicity, linguistically, varies forms of handicap, i.e.," (ll. 53-54). He constructs a connection between the social aspect and being people-minded by looking out for one another, for example, by emphasizing inclusion. Furthermore, he states to perceive CSR as more of a business strategy that "*corporations must deliver/act on* [translated]" (l. 65). However, he does mention that the idea of CSR as something that possesses a possibility of "*playing into one's private life*" (ll. 64-65). Whereas he frames CSR as a "*must*" for corporations, it is not necessary for private people (l. 66). Thus, the language constructs a perception of CSR as posing the possibility of influencing one's private life. However, it is necessary in the corporate sphere. When asked to elaborate, he emphasizes the influence and power of "*the big social actors*[translated]" (l. 70) as they have the "*biggest impact*" (l. 71). They need to "*lead the way*" (l. 70) "*or take the responsibility onto themselves*" (ll. 70-71). However, he also emphasizes individual responsibility: "*But we have some things we need to lift* [translated]." His answer emphasizes CSR as a responsibility of corporations with the help of individuals. The perception is also observed in lines 77-80.

Regarding his involvement in CSR through practices, he states he does not "*care much for many of those things, to be honest*" (ll. 86-87). However, he mentions having "*some ideals, ethics, and principles based on my perception of good CSR*[translated]" (l. 89). He gives examples of 'good CSR' concerning both the mindset (l. 94) and practices such as "*be including and speak up on behalf of people when they are not able to themselves* [translated]" (l. 91), and sustainable practices of sorting

waste and recycling (l. 94-95). He does not perceive these practices as being forced upon him by society. Thus, he does it freely.

Concerning his value of CSR in his corporate sphere, he does mention it to be a “*hygiene factor*” [translated] (l. 104) and “*something that needs to be there and have to be in place*” [translated] (ll. 105). Thus, he perceives it as a necessity for a corporation; for himself, he does not assess it as much as “exciting work tasks,” high salary, and flexible hours” (ll. 108-109). He mentions CSR as “*important to some degree, but it would not be the cause for him opting out of a job*[transltd]” (ll. 112-113). Furthermore, he mentions it to be a “*good bonus* [translated]” (l. 117) that makes a company more “*attractive* [translated]” (l. 118).

The answers gathered from this interview construct the perception of CSR as something “nice to have” rather than “need to have” for a business. ‘Nice to have’ constructs CSR as a feature, element, or aspect that is desirable or pleasant to have but is not essential or critical to a corporation's core functionality or success. In contrast to ‘need to have,’ which are essential elements required, ‘nice to have’ are additional features that improve the corporation but are unnecessary. Furthermore, he constructs CSR as being mostly relevant for businesses. However, for individuals, it is relevant to some degree but not on the same scale as corporations, as they carry the ultimate responsibility. Moreover, he emphasizes the psychological sphere of CSR by elaborating on mindset as a vast element of CSR. CSR becomes constructed as a fluid element surrounding sustainable values focusing on social initiatives. In other words, the interviewee displays a discourse of having a sustainable mindset, mainly regarding his work sphere.

### **8.2.2. Interview April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024.**

The interviewee is an employee from Ree Park Safari in Ebeltoft, Denmark. The interviewee identifies as a male, is 29 years old (l. 19), and is a guide and part of their sales and marketing department. He informs that his work assignments regarding his position in the sales and marketing department consist of booking companies to visit Ree Park and hear about their projects, such as their focus on CSR/ESG through their work in Masai mara, Kenya, with the Karen Blixen Camp. Thus, he works with CSR in his work tasks.

When asked about CSR, he associates it with “*Customer Service Relations*” (l. 29). He elaborates by saying he perceives CSR as being various things (l. 32). His background in CSR stems from his education as a Service economics which focused on “*customers, customer relations, and customer handling*” (ll. 43-44). Furthermore, he elaborates that his place of education connected it

with sustainability (l. 49) and inclusion at the place of work (l. 50), as well as focused on marketing and ESG (ll. 55-56). He tells about the CSR initiatives at Ree Park Safari with one being "*Senior Bagaden*," that employees elderly (l. 52), their work with the inclusion of "*vulnerable*" young people (l. 53), and their project with the Karen Blixen camp in Masai mara (ll. 151-152 & 163-167). The interviewee uses the adjective "*extremely cool*" (l. 167) to emphasize that the social projects in Kenya in Ree Park make economic donations in a positive light. In short, the interviewee was introduced to CSR in school and surrounded by practices of CSR at his place of work, especially the social practice of inclusion. Moreover, the interviewee mentions that talking about "*accounting for corporate social responsibility*" [translated] is part of CSR. Thus, the interviewee emphasizes a communicative aspect of CSR to bring about consumer awareness towards the dimensions of CSR activity at his place of work.

The interviewee mentions that he mainly perceives CSR as the social aspects (l. 70 & 74) but also entails environmental and economic elements (ll. 70-72 & 212-213). Moreover, he mentions CSR as the "*responsibility you have within your area of work, and where you shop, i.e.,*" (l. 72-73). Thus, it is the responsibility of corporations and you as an individual in your choices. Looking at his perception of CSR and its value to a place of work, he constructs it as something 'nice to have' rather than 'need to have,' a necessity. This argument is based on his perception that CSR is "*not necessary for a place of work to function, but it is something you do to accommodate the wishes of society*" (ll. 84-85) and refers to CSR as a "*luxury thing*" (l. 189). Furthermore, he constructs CSR as being compromised of "*active choices*" (l. 105), thereby constructing it as something optional. Also, he did not consider CSR at all at the time of his unemployment (l. 182). He argues that he would go after a job with a higher salary even if it did not have a CSR strategy (l. 201). He states, "*It is me; it is about at the beginning regarding my security, and then I can do some CSR at a place of work*" [translated] (ll. 202-203). Thus, his safety in terms of salary, i.e., is valued higher than CSR, as he believes it to be something he can create. Here CSR

Regarding his practice of CSR, he mentions it as having a "*major significance*" (l. 94) for him as he thinks about the "*posthumous reputation you leave behind*" (l. 94). In general, he mentions CSR as being something considered in everyday domains (l. 98). For example, he emphasizes ecology and sustainability regarding grocery shopping (ll. 107-110) and mentions his practice of CSR is something he perceives as "*the right and the healthiest for me*" (ll. 131-132). The interviewee has extrinsic motives for practicing CSR, meaning when someone "... is motivated to behave in a socially responsible way to gain an advantage in return or to avoid punishments" (Jarbou

& Hamza, 2020, p. 4). However, the interviewee's perception creates a discourse of ethical consumption. His emphasis on the "*posthumous reputation you leave behind* [translated]" (ll. 84-85) and his consciousness when going grocery shopping portrays him as a socially conscious consumer. According to Webster (1975), a socially conscious consumer is one "*who takes into account the public consequences of his or her private consumption or who attempts to use his or her purchasing power to bring about social change*" (in Davis, Rives & Maya, 2017, pp. 149-153). In these lines, the interviewee constructs the perception of emphasizing the influence and power of individual actions. The discursive effect of this is an emphasis on the individual's agency.

Moreover, the interviewee states that customers should not feel pressured to do any of these things, but at the same time, society is pressuring customers to make a change to be more sustainable (ll. 125-129). The term 'social responsibility norm' can be applied in connection with this. It means "a societal expectation that people should engage in positive social behavior to contribute to the welfare of their community as a whole. It is the underlying principle that we should all play a role in making the world a better place" (United Way of the National Capital Area, 2023). Furthermore, the term encompasses the belief that individuals have "a moral obligation to act in ways that benefit others, even when there is no direct personal gain" (United Way of the National Capital Area, 2023). The interviewee also states that "... *overall, the pressure is on the customer to make the change* [translated]" by the market (l. 129).

To summarize, the interviewee emphasizes the perception of CSR as a mindset that is an active process consisting of optional choices. He connects it with the social and environmental dimensions, which are influential in his work and private life, as he is conscious about his choices and how they affect himself and the people after him. He believes CSR to be relevant for both individuals and corporations. Thus, to connect this with the thoughts of Fairclough and his perception of language as constructing social identity, the language constructs the interviewee as socially and environmentally influenced by CSR in his work sphere and his private life. Moreover, the language tells that he has extrinsic and intrinsic motives for practicing CSR: his health and well-being and the good he believes in doing through his workplace, which is observed in his emphasis on the various CSR practices at Ree Park.

### 8.2.3. Interview April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024

The interviewee is an event manager at Aarhus Streetfood and has another job where she works part-time at a small consultant business, handling various administrative assignments. The interviewee identifies as female and is 24 years old (l. 25).

The interviewee is familiar with CSR both through her study and in general and through personal relations as her mother works with the UN's world goals (ll. 33-36). She was introduced to CSR as connected to responsibility, social responsibility, sustainability, and the 'triple bottom line' (ll. 34-35). The 'triple bottom line' refers to an interconnectedness of corporations' economic, social, and environmental aspects and how it is no longer enough to be economically conscious. The interviewee perceives CSR as the general responsibility of climate, society, and the people in the job market (ll. 41-42). She constructs CSR as a trinity encompassing the social, environmental, and economic aspects because "*you cannot have one without the other*" (ll. 53-54). However, she emphasizes the social aspect as what she connects with the concept and says it is also the aspect she hears most.

Moreover, she describes CSR as egoless and the act of "*thinking about everybody else before oneself* [translated]" (ll. 120-121). Moreover, the interviewee mentions that she is not an "*activist* [translated]" (l. 153) and is not dedicated to it (l. 154). Instead, if "*there was not somebody who has said it [CSR] was important, then I would not have thought so myself*" (ll. 55-56). Furthermore, she does not value CSR as highly as other elements of her work (l. 62). Thus, she only values CSR to the degree of the meanings others construct. In other words, her value of CSR is socially dependent on the meaning society assigns to it.

The following questions focus more on her personal experience and application of CSR and practices she related to the concept. Here, the narrative shifts as the questions become more personal regarding her social identity about CSR. Linguistic, a minor shift is observed in the use of the pronouns *I and my*, as these emphasize her personal perceptions compared to previous in the interview. For example, she does not perceive herself as CSR-minded as she does not practice CSR initiatives other than sustainability by cycling (ll. 61-65). Thus, the interviewee believes to be engaging in sustainable activities. However, the motivation is extrinsic goals for her own good (ll. 82-83). She elaborates on other examples and mentions that she does not pick ecological groceries due to the prices (ll. 81-83). Thus, her economy (or lack thereof) is an obstacle.

Another narrative in the interview is her belief that the actions of individuals (*customers*) are limited compared to corporations (ll. 106-107 & 118). This limitation diminishes the actions of individuals and places the responsibility of social responsibility onto corporations and away

from individuals. However, the interviewee emphasizes the influence and power of consumers to make corporations act: "*I know that we as consumers can do something, but I think where it does the most is in the corporations, and when we [consumers] say that they have to take action, then something happens* [translated]" (ll. 111-113). The use of *we* emphasizes unity and collectiveness as 'we,' the consumers, compared to corporations' 'they.' Furthermore, using active voice: "... *and it is when we say that ...*" emphasizes the agency of consumers over corporations. However, the corporations have the influence, so something happens.

Looking at the language and how it constructs social identity, the interviewee uses the pronouns *I* and *my* throughout the interview—the pronouns linguistically assign self-categorizations of and by the interviewee herself. To summarize the gathered perception of CSR, the female interviewee does not construct a personal responsibility discourse, as she does not actively engage in any CSR initiative besides bicycling. However, her motivation is based on extrinsic motives, meaning it is to gain an advantage in return. Thus, it is for her good and not for the good of society. Based on this, CSR becomes constructed to achieve personal goods, such as reducing personal economic costs.

#### **8.2.4. Interview April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

This interviewee is an employee at Mols Kroen, located in Ebeltoft, Denmark. She identifies as a female (l. 9) and is 24, soon to be 25 years old (l. 13). She works part-time as a receptionist.

The female interviewee is familiar with CSR from her education and her place of work (ll. 19-20). Regarding the perception, she connects the concept with a corporation's social responsibility (l. 25), which is about consideration for the local community (l. 25), the general social conditions (l. 25), and "*of course also the environment*[translated]" (ll. 26-27). The adverbial phrase 'of course' (l. 26) expresses a personal opinion; in this case, it indicates the environmental aspect of CSR as expected, obvious, or already known. She indicated the environmental aspect, which shows that the interviewee emphasizes the environmental aspect of CSR. Furthermore, when asked which of the three aspects (environmental, social, and economic) she connects the most with CSR, she answers "*definitely the social*" (l. 33). She elaborates that she focuses on employee conditions, considerations for the local community, charity, support and employ someone with social challenges (ll. 36-40). Furthermore, she states that she feels a responsibility to contribute socially, which originates from personal relations (ll. 54-56). She is interested in giving something to others (l. 61) and wishes to volunteer with blind, deaf, or autistic people (ll. 49-50). The personal interest shows an intrinsic motivation as it "... arises from the inside and occurs when engaging in a behavior or an

activity because it is personally rewarding and for its own sake rather than for an external reward" (Jarboui & Hamza, 2020, p. 4). However, she explained that CSR is optional for her right now as it is not her focus (ll. 46-48), but she wishes to work with CSR in the future (ll. 129-132). Another perception of hers is that one can make a difference as an individual, and it is not just something for corporations (ll. 66-67). Moreover, in contrast to other work-related elements, she places flexible hours and salary higher than CSR (ll. 157-158 & 160). As for practices, she voluntarily collects trash at a beach close to her house, chooses to buy organic and second-hand, and knits some of her sweaters (ll. 83-87). Furthermore, she likes to buy local things such as Danish strawberries (l. 97), but the price is sometimes an obstacle (ll. 93-95). Thus, she engages in several CSR initiatives, arguably contributing to a social identity of being personally and socially responsible.

As for her job, she mentions the social conditions at her work, such as a hierarchy (l. 117). She would like to work on promoting a good working environment and conditions (l. 137) and focus on the overconsumption of resources (l. 140). She perceives these elements of CSR as something "*close to [translated]*" (l. 138) herself, "*because it generally means a lot that you are well when at work because we work so much [translated]*" (ll. 138-139). In contrast to other work-related elements, she values the flexibility of hours the most and the salary afterward. However, she believes CSR to be of great value, but at the same time, she would question her actions as an individual: "*How big of a difference do I make [translated]*" (l. 150).

Regarding how she rates the CSR strategies at her place of work, she emphasizes social responsibilities/initiatives and the neglect of sorting waste, even though her work has received a green Michelin star for the third year in a row (ll. 166-175). She mentions that the customers are getting tricked (ll. 176-177). Moreover, she emphasizes that there is no collaboration between the leaders in that particular area and field (ll. 178-179). She questions the generation differences as a possible reason for the lack of prioritizing aspects of CSR (ll. 191-193). Some studies (see Deloitte, 2021; Simmons, 2023, i.e.) have found Generation Z (born between 1995 and 2012) to be the most socially conscious age group regarding conscious concerns.

Summarizing the interview, the interviewee's perception and engagement in CSR practices depict a female who regards CSR highly in her private life and her place of work. She focuses on the social and environmental dimensions of CSR. She is personally and socially responsible in her everyday life regarding her choices and consciousness of work inequalities.

### 8.2.5. Interview April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

The interviewee is a receptionist at Hotel Royal in Aarhus, Denmark. She identifies as female and is 23 years old (l. 12). She was born in Norway but lives and works in Denmark. She has been in the business for about ten years and works full-time.

She is familiar with the concept of CSR and was first introduced to it through her education as an AP Graduate in Service, Hospitality, and Tourism Management (serviceøkonom) (l. 26). She perceives CSR as a three-dimensional aspect that includes economic, social, and environmental responsibility (l. 37). She emphasizes her perception of CSR as centered around the idea of a circular economy, sustainable values, and a shared responsibility in the sense that we all need to try to take care of “*our environment and our dear globe* [translated]” (l. 21). Linguistically a shared responsibility is visible in the pronoun *we, all* (l. 20) and the possessive determiner ‘*our*’ as the word indicates possession to the following noun ‘*environment*’ and ‘*globe*.’ Furthermore, the adjective ‘*dear*’ reflects a positive feeling towards the noun ‘*globe*.’ She gives examples of caring for the globe, the people, the plants, the food we eat, which products we use, what country it is from, and if it is from local suppliers (ll. 40-41). Moreover, she mentions that being socially responsible has “*always been a personal interest*[translated]” (l. 27), and she has cared about sustainability ever since she was a teenager (l. 25). The linguistic devices contribute to the construction of a discourse of personal responsibility because the narrative constructs the interviewee as personally concerned about the environment, the people, and the globe. Regarding the practices, she does the CSR initiatives of buying organic, recycling, and sorting the waste (l. 50, 56 & 59). CSR is also a part of her working sphere with her position as a staff representative in which she is concerned with the social responsibility connected to the employees, such as their physical and mental well-being (ll. 109-112). Furthermore, she elaborates on the CSR initiatives that her place of work does (ll. 193-200). Another argument for constructing a personally responsible discourse is that the interviewee does not perceive the initiatives she does in her spare time as forced upon her by society. However, she thinks society should force more CSR/sustainable initiatives, such as waste sorting (ll. 69-71 & 76). She thinks a corporation and individuals must “... *make bigger demands on corporations, for example, where you shop, hotels, and restaurants* [translated]” (ll. 79-80). The modal verb ‘*must*’ expresses a sense of urgency and obligation to corporations from individuals. Thus, the agency of individuals becomes heightened.

Another noteworthy perception of the interviewee is how she constructs CSR as something that influences her private life and her working relationships. She mentions that CSR-politics is “*very very important* [translated]” (ll. 140-141) both in terms of the demands from guests and especially in

the corporate world (ll. 141-142). ‘Very’ is a degree adverb specifying the degree of the adjective *important*, emphasizing the importance of having a CSR politic. Thus, she constructs CSR as relevant in both the private and corporate spheres. Moreover, she constructs CSR as a broad concept as it “*is so broad, it is a giant umbrella with many things underneath* [translated]” (ll. 162-163).

### **8.3. Second dimension – Discourse practice**

This section approaches the analyzed answers as a discourse practice and specifies the processes involved in the production, distribution, and consumption. To better understand the discursive processes involved in the production, distribution, and consumption of CSR, I begin by elaborating on these. For this research, the production refers to the purpose of producing something, the distribution refers to how it was distributed, and the consumption of the text, being the answers from the participants, are understood as the various ways a text can be understood. Moreover, this dimension also focuses on Fairclough’s belief that language reflects our societal values and vice versa. Thus, language can construct social identities.

#### **8.3.1. The questionnaire**

The author produces the questionnaire for this thesis. The questionnaire was created through the online platform SurveyXact, which allows students and employees at Aalborg University to create online questionnaires, distribute them, and analyze the responses (SurveyXact på AAU, n.d.). The questionnaire was distributed by e-mail through a link that respondents could access and forward to colleagues. To find participants to answer the questionnaire, I contacted various companies. The contact was made by mail or phone.

To summarize the answers in the respondents’ figures, most female and male respondents are familiar with CSR (see Figure 4). Most women connect CSR with a social aspect, whereas more men connect the environmental dimension with CSR (see Figures 5 and 6). CSR is commonly associated with the *social aspect*, as the term indicates. The association of social aspects to CSR is also observed in the textboxes of Figure 19 and Figure 20 by the female and male respondents. Furthermore, when asked if the respondents were socially responsible through examples of socially focused CSR initiatives, there is a tendency for the female respondents to be more engaged compared to the male respondents (see Figures 15, 16, and 18). Furthermore, more female respondents identified themselves as socially responsible compared to the male respondents (see

Figure 19) and value the social aspects of CSR compared to the male (see Figure 24). Here, the male respondents value the environmental aspects more. This is also observed in the textboxes in Figures 19 and 20. The female respondent's engagement in socially responsible practices compared to the male's engagement is observed in the textboxes in Figures 19 and 20. Additionally, more female respondents answered that a CSR strategy is 'essential/necessary' at work compared to males (see Figure 22). However, Figure 23 shows that more male respondents ranked CSR as important regarding benefits at work than female respondents. However, the male respondents also ranked CSR less important (see Figure 23). Figures 26-32 show a tendency for male respondents to place more value on CSR's economic aspects than female respondents. One of the gendered expectations that have dominated gender stereotypes is that of men as financial providers compared to women. These assigned gendered identity characteristics are observed despite women contributing to income nowadays (Parker & Stepler, 2017).

An apparent narrative by female and male respondents in Figures 19 and 20 textboxes is that CSR is building upon a sustainable discourse. Some have argued that as the interest in solving various sustainable issues in society, a shift of CSR is observed to a stronger emphasis on sustainability (e.g., Carroll, 2021; Rank & Contreras, 2021; Trollman & Colwill, 2021; Windsor, 2021) (Aslaksen et al., 2021, p. 1). According to Dobers and Springett (2010), discourses around CSR are frequently linked to sustainability and sustainable development (p. 64). This sustainable perspective builds upon the discourse of ethics and care, as CSR becomes a shared and collective responsibility by individuals regarding each other, the environment, and the whole planet. In other words, like the perception that organizations have a duty or an obligation to engage in CSR initiatives, the female respondents have a similar perception about themselves and other individuals outside of their place of work to engage in CSR. This is evident in using pronouns we and us, constructing a shared responsibility as humans, thus a unity. According to Jarboui and Hamza (2020), "CSR initiatives have often been considered as driven by the moral imperative to undertake activities that are good for society and that enable the individual to act as a good corporate citizen" (p. 1). The female respondents do show a discourse of morality as they construct being CSR-minded with social and environmental initiatives as the good thing, the right thing to do. The discursive construction of CSR as something that also influences the private sphere of the female respondents constructs a discourse of 'Personal Social Responsibility' (PSR), as the participants are personally engaged in CSR, either through practices or in their mindset. Additionally, the response from the questionnaire

also frames and conceptualizes CSR as a common-sense discourse, as it only makes sense for all to engage in CSR because otherwise, it will negatively affect them.

A narrative of PSR has developed in society because of an increasing trend of individuals enforcing socially responsible practices outside of work. PSR is understood as "... the internalized moral identity of the individual (Aquino & Reed, 2002, in Hatch & Stephen, 2015, p. 65). According to Aquino and Reed (2002), PSR "represents the private side or self-importance of individuals' perceptions of their role in society and improving social welfare" (in Hatch & Stephen, 2015, p. 65). It is also argued that PSR is connected to moral identity, which have "a strong association between their moral behaviors and their self-concept" (Hatch & Stephen, 2015, p. 65). The moral behavior and mindset of individuals are believed to dictate moral judgment. However, some female participants are interested in and perceive CSR as a moral duty, yet they do not act upon it. This arguably constructs the engagement of some individuals as symbolic rather than active.

Looking at the male respondents, all the answers from the male respondents in the questionnaire show that the vast majority are familiar with CSR. Furthermore, the male respondents perceive CSR as a personal interest in how they perceive it and the practices that are a part of their spare time. From the answers to the question, if they are personally interested in CSR and thus consider themselves socially responsible, it is evident that the respondents connect it with a certain mindset and sustainable values – both by practices and perception. Moreover, most of the respondents connect CSR with social responsibilities and secondly with environmental responsibilities. Economic responsibilities are the least of the three aspects the respondents connect with CSR. Moreover, most respondents perceive CSR as a business strategy, yet most answered that CSR is still something they perceive as relevant for them as individuals. Compared to other work-related elements, only a few placed CSR as their priority, and more than half answered 'salary' as their priority. Furthermore, the environmental responsibilities are what most respondents value at their place of work compared to the economic responsibilities, which were placed below by the majority. A study empirically confirms the intuitive presupposition that the sustainability discourse increasingly affects how we think about CSR (Aslaksen et al., 2021, p. 12).

Regarding the practices of CSR, most of the respondents are environmentally responsible and socially responsible in their spare time, but they are mostly environmentally responsible through initiatives. Moreover, most perceive themselves as socially responsible in their spare time. However, their answers to the questions frame CSR as a collective responsibility and an obligation as "Both companies and private persons must [emphasis added] take action" (see textbox to figure 9b).

Furthermore, when asked if they perceive CSR as more of a business strategy, some answered that CSR is about corporations. In contrast, others answered that despite the concept being applied in the corporate world, it also implies a shared responsibility as individuals. However, compared to the empirical data from female participants, the male participants regard CSR as more of a business strategy and motivated by extrinsic motives. Thus, while the perception of CSR indicates it belongs in the corporate world, the ethics and sustainable values of doing CSR and that of doing/being socially responsible are something the male respondents also seem to connect to CSR, just not to the same degree as the female participants.

### **8.3.2. The interviews**

The interviews are conducted and produced to gather empirical information for this thesis. This data helps explain, understand, and explore the research subject's perceptions of CSR. I found the interviewees through the questionnaire by answering the last question indicating their participation agreement. The production of interviews was conducted and recorded over the mobile telephone and transcribed on my computer. This allowed both the interviewee and me flexibility in conducting the interview. Before recording and transcribing the interviews, I had gained consent from each interviewee.

In the interview of a male interviewee conducted on March 11th, 2024, CSR is consumed, thus understood, and identified as primarily a corporate phenomenon. CSR consists of various practices that make a positive difference. The responsibility of 'doing' CSR is primarily placed on corporations because they have the influence/power to make a change. This perception emphasizes a corporate discourse of CSR. Moreover, the language emphasizes a sustainable discourse of CSR that surrounds the climate and makes the business social through inclusion practices and focus on equality. The value and importance of CSR at the interviewee's place of work is diminished to be a 'hygiene factor' and a bonus, yet, compared to salary, it is not as important.

In the interview from April 12th, 2024, the female interviewee identifies CSR as responsibility and the action of taking responsibility regarding the climate and individuals. CSR includes social and sustainable values and the corporate concept of 'Triple Bottom Line.' The Triple Bottom Line is "a business concept that states firms should commit to measuring their social and environmental impact—in addition to their financial performance—rather than solely focusing on generating profit, or the standard "bottom line" (Miller, 2020). The association with 'the Triple

Bottom Line' constructs a corporate discourse of CSR. The interviewee emphasizes CSR's social and ethical dimensions, such as caring for the people on the job market (l. 42 & 52). An example that emphasizes a dimension of selflessness is the perception that CSR "... is about not being selfish and thinking about others before yourself [translated] (l. 121).

Moreover, CSR is not perceived as influential in her everyday life as her motivation for practicing sustainability through cycling is extrinsic and not an influential part of her work. The interviewee divides the responsibility of CSR between corporations and individuals, as individuals have the influence and power to stand up against corporations. However, the corporations also have the power and influence to act on CSR. Moreover, her value of CSR becomes socially constructed as it depends on the meaning and importance others have assigned it (ll. 154-156).

In the April 15th, 2024, interview, the female interviewee values the social dimension of CSR the most, emphasizing working conditions, caring for the local community, charity, and support for others with social challenges (l. 35-40). When speaking of the concept of CSR, the interviewee associates it with the corporate sphere. However, she perceives herself socially responsible through various practices (ll. 78-80 & 83-84). Her engagement of CSR practices and her mindset that both individually and together we have an influence constructs a discourse of 'Personal Social Responsibility,' which is "... the way a person performs in his daily life as a member of the society --- and not only as a consumer --- basing his decisions in a desire to minimize the negative impacts and maximize the positive impacts on the social, environmental and economic environment in the long run. This range of personal behavior, more than as a consumer role, directly and indirectly, embodies the economic, legal, ethical, discretionary, and environmental actions derived from the individual's role in the marketplace, the society, the environment, and the world as a whole" (Davis et al., 2017, p. 159). The following quote in the interview illustrates PSR's relevance: "Because if I can do a little, and you can do a little, and someone else can do a little, then we can do a lot together" (ll. 70-71). The quote emphasizes the interviewee perceiving individual agency as influential, not only corporations.

The female interviewee from the April 16th, 2024, interview identifies CSR as encompassing sustainability values of taking actions and shared responsibility to positively influence the environment and the globe (ll. 20-21). She states that she is personally conscious of sustainability and social responsibility, thus indicating a mindset that supports the notion and discourse of PSR. Arguably, the emphasis on sustainable consumption in the interviewee constructs a social identity of

the interviewee as a consumer. The interviewee constructs a discourse of sustainable consumption through her mindset and actions of constraining herself as a consumer with CSR practices. The following quotes illustrate examples of sustainable consumption: "But something I care about a lot at home is recycling... [translated]" (ll. 49-50), "... it is something I am trying as a means to decrease consumption... [translated]", and "We care a lot about buying organic... [translated]" (l. 54). The language in the quotes illustrates a social identity of the interviewee as encompassing the characteristic of conscious awareness of consumption. Moreover, the language reflects CSR initiatives' perception as vital because they should be forced upon more in society (ll. 70-71). Moreover, her position as a staff representative allows her to include social dimensions of CSR in her work (ll. 109-111).

The language linguistically constructs the social identities of the respondents in various ways; for example, more directly using pronouns such as I and my construct an identity of the respondent based on self-categorized characteristics. To approach the answers from the questionnaire about Fairclough's belief that language is constitutive regarding social identities, the answers from the female respondents construct a hegemonic perception of CSR as not only being a part of a business plan but being the overall idea that we as individuals share normative goals of responsibility towards each other, society, and the planet. However, for several respondents, the language in their answers constructs a complex social identity for themselves because of contradictions, such as the respondent feeling a (shared) responsibility or duty but not acting upon it. This shows CSR as arguably a symbolic responsibility perceived regarding the mentality. This constructs the social identity of the respondents as less of a match with the gender characteristic of agency.

#### **8.4. Third dimension – Social practice**

The third dimension looks at the text regarding social practice. To do so, I consider what the text says about the society the text was produced in and for (Simpson et al., 2019, p. 133). In terms of social practice, social or cultural elements is considered to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the ideology behind the discourse.

##### **8.4.1. Discourses on CSR**

Since the first proposed definition of CSR, the concept has received several "enrichments and modifications" in alliance with the context it was used in and for (Jarboui & Hamza, 2020, p. 2).

Commonly, the idea of CSR is about the behavior of corporations to act "properly, fairly and responsible" regarding their management of economic, social, and environmental impact on society (p. 3). The dynamics of CSR continue to grow, preventing a universal definition of CSR, as it depends on the context (Jarboui & Hamza, 2020, p. 1).

Big companies often dominate society's public discourse about CSR as they become trendsetters (Fryzel, 2017, p. 62). Looking at society, "... there has been an increasing importance placed on the efforts of corporations, as well as individuals, to be more socially responsible" (Hatch & Stephen, 2015, p. 63). In the questionnaire and the interviews of both male and female respondents, CSR discursively encompasses sustainable values. Globally, sustainability has become a trend in society due to the rise of conscious awareness and the practice of various sustainable initiatives. Jarboui and Hamza (2020) claim that the debate around the conceptualization of CSR has become focused on its "*operalization, motives, and strategies...*" (p. 1). CSR is usually connected to the narrative that corporations have a moral duty to society (Hamza, 2020, p. 1). The moral discourse is driven by intrinsic motives such as moral and personal values (p. 1). Studies such as those by Crilly et al. (2011) have also revealed a "positive and significant association between CSR behavior and moral reasoning" (Jarboui & Hamza, 2020, p. 6). The morality perception is motivated by it being a 'duty' and 'obligation' of individuals and corporations toward society rather than an opportunity. One of the ways the language depicts a duty/obligation perspective of CSR is it being intrinsically motivated, as the CSR behavior and practice is motivated by personal reward, meaning it is personally rewarding. Furthermore, from a moral perspective, CSR is also an "act of reciprocity" of duty/obligation to society (p. 5). This perspective constructs CSR as a moral obligation based on ethical principles. As a moral duty, CSR is an ethical obligation based on values that highlight the right thing to do or the obligation to create a good society (Jarboui & Hamza, 2020, p. 4). Thus, CSR becomes based on an obliged feeling to do right and good based on morality. Jarboui and Hamza (2020) argue that studies have found individuals in the corporate sphere to be "significantly more driven by intrinsic motivation than by extrinsic ones" (p. 4).

A noteworthy narrative in the questionnaire and interviews is the belief that businesses are the root of the problem as they cause the need for CSR. However, they are also solutions as they are perceived to have the influence and power to make a positive change by implementing CSR. Aslaksen et al. (2021) propose, "In line with development in the sustainability discourse, businesses are increasingly envisioned as drivers of the green transformation. Considering environmental sustainability, businesses are seen as both a part of the problem and as part of the solution" (p. 11). Studies have

noted, "A new hope of change is emerging in some groups of consumers that find in their purchase decisions a way of economic power that can control or, at least, impact the way corporations behave. This perspective that takes into account the influence and power of consumer decisions on the direction that will guide the evolution of societies is the one considered in the main contributions of responsible, green or ethical behavior" (Antil & Bennet, 1979; Antil, 1984; Ha-Brookshire & Hodges, 2009; Mohr et al., 2001; Roberts, 1995; Uusitalo & Oksanen, 2004; Vitell, 2015; Webster, 1975, in Davis, et al., 2017, p. 148). The *Text* dimension revealed notions of CSR as a shared responsibility between corporations and individuals and among individuals as human beings. Demands are increasing in society for more responsible management of corporations. However, the demand for responsibility and sustainability has led to a conscious awareness of sustainable consumption in our behavior and daily practices (Davis et al., 2017, p. 147). A study by Fundación Adecco (2015) found that individuals as consumers are essential contributors to responsibility towards society (in Davis et al., 2017, p. 147). The expanding interest in solving global issues has sparked an awareness of incorporating dimensions of social, environmental, and economic responsibility into individuals' daily lives. Therefore, when discussing social responsibility, studies argue that there exist branches of individual and personal social responsibility and CSR (Galaskiewicz, 1991; McGee, 1998; Davis et al., 2017). However, taking upon the social identity of a consumer indicates that CSR is a corporate concept and placed in an economic dimension.

A contrasting narrative observed in the questionnaire and the interviews from both male and female participants is the perception of CSR as an instrument and a means driven by extrinsic motives to achieve the goal of corporations (Jarboui & Hamza, 2020, p. 2). Jarboui and Hamza (2020) argue that studies have found the underlying motives of CSR as a strategic instrument to be economic as it would contribute to the corporation's financial performance (p. 4). Based on this narrative of CSR, Jarboui and Hamza (2020) claim that corporations often sort to CSR "to reduce cost, increase sales and market share by differentiating the firm from competitors and influencing social impression, gain consumer support and enhance the firm's reputation, and ultimately facilitate the positioning of their products in international markets" (p. 4). Bronn & Vrioni, and Kim & Rader, (2001: 2010) found the strategic discourse on CSR is related to communication concerned with CSR activity and is becoming "an integral part of corporate identity" in society (Gadeikiene & Banyte, 2015, p. 705).

### **8.4.2. Social identity gender stereotypes**

This section discusses the participants' social identities and whether they conform to socially constructed expectations of men and women in society. Comparing the perception of CSR, more men responded that CSR is more of a business strategy for them compared to the female respondents. Moreover, it is evident to emphasize factors such as more women than men answering the questionnaire, which could influence the distribution of responses. Also, the difference is minimal; male and female respondents answered that they perceive themselves as having a 'personal' social responsibility when asked about CSR. Thus, male and female respondents construct a discursive perception of CSR as also entailing a personal sphere because it influences them both at work and in their private lives. Thus, the language of male and female respondents constructs a discourse of PSR.

Regarding the construction of CSR as encompassing sustainable values, the answers from the questionnaire and the interviews show no or little difference in the perceptions of CSR between the female and male participants. This is despite studies on sustainability suggesting "that women customers are more likely than men to place more importance on sustainability than on the functional performance of products, as well as to express concern about the broader impacts of consumption and act upon those concerns (Luchs & Mooradian, 2012; Pomerici & Vecchio, 2012; Vicente-Molina et al., 2013) (Calabrese, 2016, p. 10). Based on the answers to the questionnaire and the interviews, the answers from both the female and male participants construct sustainable discourses around CSR where the focus is on the social and environmental aspects. However, more female participants constructed a PSR discourse than male participants, who constructed CSR as belonging to the corporate world. A relevant question is to what extent the results of the questionnaire and interviews reflect how different men and women are from each other in terms of how they perceive and practice CSR and to what extent the differences reflect how we believe men and women differ from each other because of gender stereotypes. Ellemers (2018) makes the compelling claim that "Identifying the nature and content of gender stereotypes clarifies the fact that they not only describe typical differences between men and women but also prescribe what men and women should be and how they should behave in different life domains" (p. 276). Every day, people's gender influences their expectations of behavior, perceptions of and by others, the roles they take, and possibilities. As Ellemers (2018) states, "Even if men and women display similar characteristics, preferences, and ambitions, the different views and stereotypical expectations that we have of them place them in different worlds." Considering the origins and the implications of gender stereotypes helps us understand how these relate to gender differences in society" (p. 276).

The data from the questionnaire and the interviews shows a tendency of the female participants to express their motivations for conducting and practicing CSR due to personal values rather than extrinsic motives. This aligns with the gendered perception of women as inhibiting the character/personality trait of being 'caring,' 'considerate,' and 'nurturing' (OHCHR, 2014, p. 1). On the other hand, the male respondents align with the male-gendered assumptions about the character/personality trait of not being as considerate compared to women. This argument is based on the answers from the questionnaire and interviews depicting the male participants as less considerate compared to the general construction of the female perception of CSR. However, this is also the case with some of the female participants; for example, in the interview from April 12th, where the female participant states that she is not considerate in the sense that she does not perceive CSR or its practices as an alliance with her behavior or interests.

## **9. Conclusion**

This research has attempted to answer the research question, “Can gendered differences be found in the perception and practices of CSR?” However, before concluding remarks, it is evident to emphasize that this research does not attempt to generalize any assumptions about either men or women and their perceptions and practices toward CSR. Instead, this research aims to examine if there is an inclination that the two genders differ somehow from one another from the data I have gathered. My concluding remarks are that a slight tendency is observed in some of the female respondents to conform to socially constructed expectations about their behavior and mindset, such as the characteristics of being compassionate towards others and morally driven to engage in CSR. This is also observed in their emphasis on the social dimension of CSR. The same can be said about the male participants, as most view CSR as corporate-related, emphasizes the economic dimensions, and do not engage in CSR activities compared to women. However, this study also showed mismatches with socially constructed gender expectations of men and women.



perceptions of corporate social responsibility. *Journal of Cleaner Production*. Pp. 135-149. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2015.12.100>

Cojocaru, S., Bragaru, C., & Ciuchi, O., M. (2012). The role of language in constructing social realities. The Appreciative Inquiry and the reconstruction of organizational ideology. *Revista De Cercetare Si Interventie Sociala*. Vol. 26, pp. 31-43.

Dashwood, H. (2020). The Rise of Corporate Social Responsibility as a Global Norm Informing the Practices of Economic Actors [Google Books]. In H. Hansen-Magnusson & A. Vetterlein (Eds.), *The Rise of Responsibility in World Politics* (Chapt. 8), pp. 167–188. Cambridge University Press. Retrieved March 22, 2024, from [https://books.google.dk/books?hl=da&lr=&id=StX7DwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA167&dq=CSR+global+norm+informing+the+practices+of+international+business&ots=RXy7s\\_C8H0&sig=ArXrzKilqC2H96PWaUO6IvVzkAk&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.dk/books?hl=da&lr=&id=StX7DwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA167&dq=CSR+global+norm+informing+the+practices+of+international+business&ots=RXy7s_C8H0&sig=ArXrzKilqC2H96PWaUO6IvVzkAk&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false)

Davis, S., L., Rives, L., & Ruiz de Maya, S. (2017). Introducing Personal Social Responsibility as a key element to upgrade CSR. *Spanish Journal of Marketing – ESIC*. Vol. 21, pp. 146-163. Retrieved May 29, 2024. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.sjme.2017.04.00>

Deloitte. (July 22, 2021). For Millennials and Gen Z's, Social Issues Are Top Of Mind – Here's How Organizations Can Drive Meaningful Change. *Forbes*. Retrieved May 27, 2024, from [For Millennials And Gen Zs, Social Issues Are Top Of Mind—Here's How Organizations Can Drive Meaningful Change \(forbes.com\)](https://www.forbes.com/sites/deloitte/2021/07/22/for-millennials-and-gen-zs-social-issues-are-top-of-mind-here-s-how-organizations-can-drive-meaningful-change/)

Dobers, P., & Springett, D. (2010). Corporate Social Responsibility: Discourse, Narratives and

Communication. *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*, 17, pp. 63-69. DOI: 10.1002/csr.231

Edwards, R., & Holland, J. (2013). What is Qualitative Interviewing? *The 'What is?' Research Methods Series*. Bloomsbury Academic: London. Pp. 1-127. DOI: 0.5040/9781472545244

Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing discourse: Textual analysis for social Research*. [Taylor & Francis E-Book Library]. Routledge. <https://howardaudio.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/n-fairclough-analysing-discourse.pdf>

Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: Longman.

Fairclough, N. (2001). Critical Discourse Analysis as a method in social scientific research. Wodak, R. and Meyer, M. (eds.). London: Sage.

Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and Power*. London and New York: Longman.

Fryzel, B. (2017). Reporting, Public Discourse, and Devaluation of Corporate Social Responsibility. *Organization Review*, Vol. 935, No. 12. Pp. 62-67. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33141/po.2017.12.09>

Gadeikiene, A. and Banyte, A. (2015). Discourse on corporate social responsibility in the context of

marketing scientific research. *Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 213. Pp. 702 – 708. Retrieved May 31, 2024. DOI: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.11.490

García-Rosell, J. (2019). A Discursive perspective on Corporate Social Responsibility Education: A Story Co-creation Exercise. *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 154, No. 4, special issue on Rethinking Corporate Agency in Business, Philosophy, Law. Pp. 1019-1032. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/45022924>

Grosser, K., & Moon, J. (2017). CSR and Feminist Organization Studies: Towards an Integrated Theorization for the Analysis of Gender Issues. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 155(2), pp. 321-342. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-017-3510-x>

Hadjiosif, S. (2020). The Power of Individual Action is Underestimated. *Terra Movement*. Retrieved May 24, 2024, from [The Power of Individual Action is Underestimated • Terra Movement](#)

Hur, W., Kim, H., & Jang, J., H. (2016). The Role of Gender Differences in the Impact of CSR Perceptions on Corporate Marketing Outcomes. *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environment Management*, 23, pp. 345-357. (Wiley Online Library) DOI: 10.1002/csr.1380

Holt, D. (2020). HUM210 Introduction to Women and Gender Studies. Pressbooks/VIVA Open Publishing. Retrieved April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024, from [https://viva.pressbooks.pub/hum210/open/download?type=print\\_pdf](https://viva.pressbooks.pub/hum210/open/download?type=print_pdf)

Johnstone, B., & Andrus, J. (2024). *Discourse Analysis*. (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). [Google Books]. Wiley Blackwell.

Retrieved April 9, 2024, from [Discourse Analysis - Barbara Johnstone, Jennifer Andrus - Google Bøger](#)

Jones, R. H. (2019). *Discourse Analysis: A Resource Book for Students*. (2nd ed). London: Routledge.

Jørgensen, M., & Phillips, L., J. (2011). I the Field of Discourse Analysis in: *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*. SAGE Publications. Pp. 1-23. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781849208871>

Kahreh, M., Babania, A., Tive, M., & Mirmehdi, S. (2014). An examination to effects of Gender Differences on the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): 2nd World Conference On Business, Economics And Management- WCBEM2013. [Science Direct]. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 109, pp. 664-668. DOI: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.12.525

Kukla, A. (2000). *Social Constructivism and the Philosophy of Science*. [ProQuest Ebook Central]. *Philosophical Issues in Science Series*. Taylor & Francis Group. Retrieved April 23, 2024, from <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/aalborguniv-ebooks/reader.action?docID=165925>

Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2014). *Interview: Det kvalitative forskningsinterview som håndværk*. (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Lamont, C. (2015). *Research Methods in International Relations*. SAGE Publications.

- Marshall, G. (2004). The purpose, design and administration of a questionnaire for data collection. *The Society and College of Radiographers*, [ScienceDirect] 11, pp. 131-136. DOI:10.1016/j.radi.2004.09.002. Retrieved March 13, 2024, from [The purpose, design and administration of a questionnaire for data collection - ScienceDirect](#)
- Miller, K. (Dec., 8, 2020). The Triple Bottom Line: What Is It & Why It's Important. *Harvard Business School Online*. Retrieved May 28, 2024, from [The Triple Bottom Line: What It Is & Why It's Important \(hbs.edu\)](#)
- OHCHR. (2014). *Gender stereotypes and Stereotyping and women's rights*. OHCHR.org. Retrieved March 19, 2024, from [Gender stereotyping.pdf \(ohchr.org\)](#)
- Onuf, N., G. (2013). Making Sense, Making Worlds: Constructivism in social theory and international relations [E-book]. Routledge. Retrieved April 23, 2024, from [Making Sense, Making Worlds | Constructivism in Social Theory and Inte \(aau.dk\)](#)
- Osadiya, T., T. (2016). Reflecting on Corporate Social Responsibility Discourse. *Research Gate*. Retrieved May 28, 2024, from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/291522426\\_Reflecting\\_on\\_Corporate\\_Social\\_Responsibility\\_Discourse?enrichId=rgreq-508ee6bd4821625a40a7e58235e3db1d-XXX&enrichSource=Y292ZXJQYWdlOzI5MTUyMjQyNjUzozMjExMjc4ODczNzYzODVAMTQ1MzU3NDI2MjUwMg%3D%3D&el=1\\_x\\_2&esc=publicationCoverPdf](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/291522426_Reflecting_on_Corporate_Social_Responsibility_Discourse?enrichId=rgreq-508ee6bd4821625a40a7e58235e3db1d-XXX&enrichSource=Y292ZXJQYWdlOzI5MTUyMjQyNjUzozMjExMjc4ODczNzYzODVAMTQ1MzU3NDI2MjUwMg%3D%3D&el=1_x_2&esc=publicationCoverPdf)
- Parker, K. and Stepler, R. (September 20, 2017). Americans see men as the financial providers, even

as women's contributions grow. *Pew Research Center*. Retrieved May 31, 2024, from [Men seen as financial providers in U.S., even as women's contributions grow | Pew Research Center](#)

Player, I. (January, 2024). ESG and sustainability – What's the Difference? *Action Sustainability*.

Retrieved May 25, 2024, from [ESG and Sustainability – What's the Difference? - Action Sustainability](#)

Popowska, M., & Ratkowska, B. (2018). Doing well by doing good — CSR in a global context.

*Ekonomia i Prawo. Economics and Law*, 17(3), pp. 289–305.  
Doi:10.12775/EiP.2018.021

Qiu, J. (2013). A Critical Study of English Eco-Hotel Profiles – Based on Fairclough's Three-

dimensional Model. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 10. Pp. 1879-1886. DOI: 10.4304/tpls.3.10.1879-1886

Rai, D., Lee, K. & Sørensen, M., D. (2021). Gender equality and women's representation: A case

study of H&M's CSR reports to the United Nations Global Compact. *Aalborg University*. Retrieved March 22, 2024, from [8th semester project FINAL.pdf \(aau.dk\)](#)

Reig-Alexandre, N., Garcia-Ramos, J., M. & De la, Calle-Maldonado, C. (2023). Gender differences

in professional social responsibility: Are women more responsible at work than men? *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14, pp. 1-7. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1049389>

Risdaneva, R. (2018). A Critical Discourse Analysis of Women's Portrayal in News Reporting of

Sexual Violence. *Studies in English Language and Education*. Vol. 5, No. 1. Pp. 126-136. URL: <https://doi.org/10.24815/siele.v5i1.9433>

Rodriguez-Gomez, S., L Arco-Castro, M., V. Lopez-Perez, M., & Rodríguez-Ariza, L. (2020). Where Does CSR Come from and Where Does It Go? A Review of the State of the Art. *Administrative Sciences*, 10(3), 1–19. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci10030060>

Simmons, M. (Dec., 29, 2023). Which Generation is Leading the Way in Sustainability? *TerraMovement*. Retrieved May 27, 2024, from [Which Generation Is Leading the Way in Sustainability? • Terra Movement](#)

Simpson, P., Mayr, A. and Statham, S. (2019). *Language and Power: A resource book for students*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed). Routledge: New York.

*SurveyXact på AAU*. (n.d.). Aalborg Universitet. Retrieved March 18th, 2024, from [SurveyXact på AAU - Aalborg Universitet](#).

Talja, S. (1999). Analyzing Qualitative Interview Data: The Discourse Analytic Method. *Library & Information Science Research*. Vol. 21, No. 4, Pp. 459-477. ISSN: 0740-8188. Retrieved May 20, 2024, from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0740818899000249/pdffft?md5=267dc0ac7b048bb99552052c1a3a4ad4&pid=1-s2.0-S0740818899000249-main.pdf>

United Nations. (n.d.). *Sustainability*. Academic Impact. Retrieved May 31, 2024, from [Sustainability | United Nations](#)

United Way of the National Capital Area. (2023, December 18). The Social Responsibility Norm and Community Impact. United Way of the National Capital Area. Retrieved May 26, 2024, from <https://unitedwaynca.org/blog/social-responsibility-norm-guide/>

Vilke, R., Raisiene, A. G., and Simanaviciene, Z. (2014). Gender and corporate social responsibility: 'big wins' for business and society? *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*. Conference, [Research Gate]. Vol. 156, pp. 198-202. Retrieved March 31, 2024, from [\(PDF\) Vilké R., Raišienė A.G., Simanavičienė Ž. \(2014\) Gender and corporate social responsibility: 'Big Wins' for business and society? Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences. Amsterdam: Elsevier. Vol. 156, p. 198-202. \(researchgate.net\)](#)

Wang, W. (2006). Critical discourse analysis, intertextuality and present study (Chapt. 4). *University of Sydney*. Retrieved May 23, 2024, from [https://www.google.dk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwiagM79q6SGAxXRVPEDHaPaBCgQFnoECCsQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fses.library.usyd.edu.au%2Fbitstream%2F2123%2F1701%2F5%2F05chapter4.pdf&usg=AOvVaw1TWfA2wewtMDU4\\_EiK2Vui&opi=89978449](https://www.google.dk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwiagM79q6SGAxXRVPEDHaPaBCgQFnoECCsQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fses.library.usyd.edu.au%2Fbitstream%2F2123%2F1701%2F5%2F05chapter4.pdf&usg=AOvVaw1TWfA2wewtMDU4_EiK2Vui&opi=89978449)

Zalesna, A. (2017). CSR VS WOMEN: POTENTIAL APPLICANTS' EXPECTATIONS OF CSR AND GENDER DIFFERENCES. *Torun Business Review*, 16(3), pp. 35-45.

Zotzmann, K. and O'Regan, J. (2016). Critical Discourse Analysis and Identity, in *The Routledge*

*Handbook of Language and Identity* [ResearchGate]. Retrieved May 30, 2024, from [\(PDF\) Critical Discourse Analysis and Identity \(researchgate.net\)](#)