

**Generational differences among stakeholders regarding CSR advocacy in a developing country**

A focus group study on Hungarian consumers' perception and attitudes towards CSR

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## **ABSTRACT**

Following the renewed focus on and demand for corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the contemporary business environment lately, the concept that originates from the Western-country context has also appeared in developing countries starting to gain more traction and shape the corporate initiatives. In this way, naturally, CSR has also raised its head in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) lately, but given that the population of the region is typically thought to be rejecting against social responsibility, the concept did not seem to be rooted in the region. Nonetheless, recent studies suggest that there is a significant change happening in the region, more specifically in Hungary, in terms of the advocacy for CSR, which provokes a number of interesting questions that are worth answering. Among others it would be important to see what may cause the perceived change regarding the acceptance and likeability of the concept in a country, that comprehensively objects volunteerism and social responsibility and whether the approach of the whole of the population is suddenly changing towards CSR or – knowing that Millennials drive the change towards the advocacy of CSR in the Western context – it could be possible that a certain age group is leading this change in Hungary as well. If so, studying what might evoke their support and hinder that of the older generations could also yield interesting results. In fact, looking at whether there are differences with regards to how certain age groups perceive the notion and lastly, if there is really a change in the mind-sets in relation to CSR one can argue about, are also crucial factors to consider. By relying on data from four in-depth focus group sessions, the current perspectives and attitudes of the Hungarian citizens get investigated in the frame of this study. Essentially, therefore, the thesis endeavours to find answers to three key questions: (1) How do Hungarian citizens make sense of CSR? (2) In what ways does generational difference contribute to understandings of and attitudes towards CSR? (3) How do Millennials define their role in promoting CSR in Hungary compared to the older generations? With answering them, the author aims to investigate the distinctive features and peculiarities of CSR in an emerging nation and present the directions CSR as a concept has taken and is taking in a once socialist country, that, being part of CEE as a region can also indicate the perceptions of the citizens and the evolution CSR is undergoing with regards to the neighbouring states.

**KEYWORDS:** Central and Eastern Europe, corporate social responsibility, developing countries, generational differences, Hungary, Millennials, stakeholder perspective

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## **Chapter I.**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Although Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has a long history (Carroll, 1999), the contemporary business environment is witnessing a renewed focus on and demand for CSR (Kolk & Van Tulder, 2010; Perry & Towers, 2009). Transnational organizations such as the World Bank, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the United Nations (UN) are also calling for significantly expanded levels of CSR via voluntary and/or regulated initiatives across countries (Baughn & McIntosh, 2007). Owing to this heightened demand in general, managers around the world are expected to demonstrate social and environmental responsibility as well (Baughn & McIntosh, 2007).

In line with the mentioned demand and growing expectations from managers, the impact of ‘standard-setting’ institutions and nongovernmental organizations has spread from developed western countries’ stronghold, starting to shape corporate initiatives even in non-western contexts (Baughn & McIntosh, 2007). Although the practice of CSR is continuously taking root in more and more developing countries in general, there are at the moment also substantial country - and region – specific differences to detect (Baughn & McIntosh, 2007).

Much of the CSR research focused on developed, Western-country contexts might be inapplicable for developing country contexts (Dobers & Halme, 2009), hence, there is a need to examine CSR questions in developing countries to understand how the concept is understood outside the Western context. However, in the case of CSR in Europe, next to the self-regulatory and voluntary initiatives, most notably codes of conduct issued by bodies such as the UN, the OECD, the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), there has been a rush of governmental strategies and initiatives fostering its spread (Eberhard-Harribey, 2006), the continent along the twentieth century witnessed a great range of political systems, in that both the nature and the level of business incorporation, independence and responsibility differed. These historic and abiding inequalities among European countries contributed to the still existing differentiation between Western and Eastern Europe, making the latter a developing area (Matten & Moon, 2008). Due to the vastly different economic, social, and cultural conditions, there is value added in exploring CSR conceptions and perceptions in a developing country context, and gauging the extent to which CSR practice has already matured or seem to be maturing beyond the boundaries of compliance and public relations in the near future (Jamali & Mirshak, 2007).

Further, most research has focused on the corporate perspective—what companies are doing in the CSR realm (Margolis & Walsh, 2003; McWilliams & Siegel, 2001; Weber, 2008), with limited and only recent attention to the stakeholder perspective (Enquist, Johnson & Skálén, 2006; Jamali, 2008).

Therefore, CSR, which „describes the relationship between business and the larger society” (Steurer, Langer, Konrad & Martinuzzi 2005, p.265) has been thoroughly investigated from the business point of view, in other words, managing business - society relations has been almost exclusively looked at in a strategic way for the sake of successful business operations (Steurer et. al., 2005). The corporate - centric perspective of CSR thus clearly looks at the practice regarding its practicality from a managerial perspective (Jamali, 2008), where engaging in CSR practices can result in better financial performance and enhanced profits for the firms. In order to achieve the main agenda of better performance and securing important resources, firms naturally engage in CSR activities, and so quite a lot is known about how corporations interact with stakeholders (Steurer et al., 2005), but corporations and the performance of them have scarcely been left on the side-lines to mainly approach the perspective and views of the stakeholders (Steurer et al., 2005).

Over the years, stakeholder approach and with that stakeholder theory emerged from a sole "theory of the firm" (Jones & Wicks, 1999 as cited in Steurer et al., 2005, p. 265) into a more comprehensive and diverse research tradition, addressing "the overall stakeholder relationship as a multifaceted, multi-objective, complex phenomenon" (Harrison & Freeman, 1999, p.484) from various perspectives (Steurer et al., 2005). Stepping out of the extensive corporate perspective, researchers can approach the concept from a stakeholder perspective, which offers a new way for firms to think about their organizational responsibilities by suggesting that in order to meet the demands of the shareholders, the needs of stakeholders need to be to some extent satisfied as well, and that CSR practices for firms should be considered beyond achieving profit maximization (Steurer et al., 2005). In this respect considering the needs of stakeholders as well, indicates a new direction when studying the field of CSR, since the importance of stakeholders is steadily growing. Since so far little attention has been given to the understanding of the overall perceptions and motives of stakeholders, their evaluation of CSR practices at firms, as well as their advocacy skills in practice, beyond the theory, this is an area for further investigation.

## Research Purpose

Therefore, my thesis aims to examine the perceptions and motives of stakeholders in the context of a developing country, specifically Hungary and to unfold the general sense making of CSR as well as the generational differences, similarities and patterns in terms of the attitudes of the Hungarians towards CSR implementation and advocacy. Consequently, the research questions guiding this thesis are:

RQ1: How do Hungarian citizens make sense of CSR?

RQ2: In what ways does generational difference contribute to understandings of and attitudes towards CSR?

RQ3: How do Millennials define their role in promoting CSR in Hungary compared to the older generations?

## Relevance

Since the recognition of CSR being a global issue is important (Krumwiede, Hackert, Tökle & Vokurka, 2012), it is vital to incorporate the knowledge on the practice of CSR in countries, that have little or no representation in the CSR literature to date (Krumwiede et al., 2012) to further enrich the overall notion of the concept. Studying countries for example, ones that have recently become part of the European Union and transformed from socialism to market economy (Golob & Bartlett, 2007), can further add to the CSR literature, as in their case, the obstacles regarding CSR implementations can be easily detected, while the practice of how CSR gets a foothold as years pass by, thanks to the institutional circumstances, are clearly to see. With all that, the notion of CSR can get refined, which contributes to the overall knowledge in the field of CSR.

As Hungary has little representation in the CSR literature to date, while it is a country that underwent several political, economic and social changes in the period after 1989 and after becoming an EU member (from 2004), besides Hungary being proxy to both the Western and Eastern markets (Krumwiede et al., 2012), the understanding of how CSR emerged and is currently emerging in the country can contribute to the better understanding of CSR implementations in certain regions outside of the pure Western context, while finding the links between the Western and Eastern approach.

Moreover, when looking at Hungary in the European context, it is worth mentioning that Europe strives for a comprehensive public climate, in which all entrepreneurs make fair



contributions to addressing social challenges besides making good profit. Therefore spreading CSR in the new member states – like in Hungary- is crucial for the European Union. As The European Commission believes, CSR matters to each and every European citizen, because it represents an aspect of the European social model (Feketéné Csáfor, 2006), it is a priority of the EU to promote a European framework for CSR and to urge the wide implementation of CSR among the new member states (Golob & Bartlett, 2007). The results of the EU to facilitate the spread of CSR in new member states can be unveiled in the frame of this study, as the state of CSR in Hungary is extensively examined.

The study particularly focuses on how Millennials - born between 1981 and 1999 (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002) - as a special stakeholder group define their role in promoting CSR in the Hungarian context, since the role of Millennials as a stakeholder group is being increasingly explored lately in the context of business-society relations. In contrast to their predecessors, Millennials reportedly not only prefer to work for companies, that incorporate CSR into their strategic plan rather than as a philanthropic exercise when times are good, they also punish the ones, that do not do so. (McGlone, Spain & McGlone, 2011). Indeed, members of this generation are now called „game changers” among the group of stakeholders („Millennials Look To”, 2014), as they not only want to make the world a better place themselves, but they urge companies to do so too. Due to these reasons and the fact that Millennials will account for 50% of the workforce by 2020 (Meister, 2012), it is essential to take their views into consideration, when it comes to stakeholder evaluation of CSR practices.

Despite the fact that the attitudes of Millennials towards work, CSR and business citizenship is widely researched in the Western context (Deal, Altman, & Rogelberg, 2010; McGlone et al., 2011; „Millennials Look To”, 2014), their attitudes of the generation is scarcely researched elsewhere. Given that Millennials are thought to be “game changers” when it comes to the creation of business citizenship according to a recent study made among Western countries (“Millennials Look To”, 2014), it is important to study whether they could play the very same role in developing countries as well and could be the drivers of the social change towards the implementation of CSR in regions, such as in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), where CSR has not been a common practice or advocated before (Steurer, Martinuzzi & Margula, 2011) due to different prior historical and social experiences of the locals (Elms, 2006). Therefore, based on the prior findings regarding Millennials’ attitude towards socially responsible companies (McGlone et al, 2011), and CSR in general (Deal et.al., 2010; McGlone, et.al., 2011), compared to that of their successors, the exploration of the perceptions of Hungarian Millennials per se and in comparison to the older generations is also regarded as

the crux of the current study.

Because recent studies of CSR in Hungary suggest a significant change happening in the country in terms of the advocacy for CSR (Ligeti & Oravetz, 2009), it can be of high importance to see whether the change can be assigned to Millennials or whether it is the whole of the Hungarian society changing its views on social responsibility. The change perspective and the specific role of the Millennials in it is all the more interesting to detect in Hungary, as the general attitude of the citizens towards all kind of volunteerism and social responsibility throughout the whole of CEE and specially in Hungary is rather rejective (Elms, 2006; Ligeti & Oravetz, 2009; Metaxas & Tsavdaridou, 2010).

### Contribution

The outcomes of this research contribute to enrich the notion of CSR in general as well as to the understanding of how the common EU regulations can enhance CSR implementations in new member states. In addition to that, the results provide important contributions to the overall knowledge on the current state of CSR in the CEE region in general with revealing the social change towards the implementation of the activities and with validating generational differences in one of the countries in the region. At the same time, the results can be important contributions specifically in the Hungarian context with regards to generational differences, as there is a lack of studies on how the Millennials behave in the country and how they are different from the older generations in general and with special regards to how they make sense of CSR activities. Besides, the results of the study could especially benefit CSR practitioners and businesses in general in Hungary, as they may get an insight into how to best approach Millennials living in the country with regards to CSR, what their expectations and needs are and with regards to how influential they, as a generation might be for the future of CSR in the country.

### Structure of thesis

This thesis is structured as follows. In the second chapter, the theoretical framework is presented, where first the conceptualization of CSR is outlined. After that the stakeholder approach of CSR is discussed, with special regards to the heightened power of stakeholders to influence and shape business operations, and as a result, the urge for corporations to take the demands of stakeholders into account while operating. By this logic, the high importance of the studying of CSR also from the stakeholders' point of view is pinpointed. Further, the need for localized studies, with special focus on developing countries is stressed, as CSR is only

very scarcely researched in those regions and since CSR being a global concept should also incorporate the notion of it coming from emerging economies instead of only concentrating on the Western context of it. Subsequently, the peculiarities of CSR in the developing countries are touched upon, followed by that of CEE's. Then, the specific features of the notion are pointed out in Hungary's national context as well, delving into the cultural specifics, socio-cultural environment and economic development of the country, that can further serve as indicators for the current state of CSR and the general attitudes towards social responsibility in the country based on previous research in the field. Further on, the change perspective in the current Hungarian society is discussed. The third chapter reviews the research methodology of the thesis, where a qualitative approach towards the research itself is applied, and where focus groups as a method are used for the data analysis. In the fourth chapter, the results of the focus group sessions are discussed, regarding the general sense making of CSR by Hungarian citizens, especially with regards to how generational differences make a distinction in the understandings of, and attitudes towards CSR. Connected to this, the ways Millennials define their roles in the advocacy of CSR, compared to how the older generations see theirs are highlighted. Finally, the fifth chapter presents the conclusion regarding the results of the research, while providing practical implications of the findings for CSR practitioners in the CEE region, more specifically in Hungary and discussing research limitations, as well as suggestions for further research on this topic.

## **Chapter II.**

### **THEORY AND PREVIOUS RESEARCH**

This chapter outlines literature and previous research on different aspects of CSR needed to investigate in order to conduct a research on the sense-making of CSR, the generational differences among stakeholders in urging CSR implementations in a developing country, as well as the role of a specific generation as the driver of the social change towards the advocacy of CSR. First, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a concept is introduced. Next, the importance of examining CSR as a concept from the stakeholder approach is stressed, thus the stakeholder theory and its essentials are presented. Further, the need for localized studies is pointed out, hence, the impact of culture and context on the acceptance and advocacy towards CSR is presented first by typifying CSR manifestations in the emerging markets' context, then in CEE and finally in Hungary.

#### *Conceptualization of Corporate Social Responsibility*

Academics consider the notion of CSR as a separate and distinct framework in business literature emerging from the United States, existing since the 1950s, proliferating in the 1970s and gaining increased momentum at the third millennium (Golob & Bartlett, 2007), where the concept started to progress from its previous focus on shallow considerations like 'temporary fashion' and 'window dressing' to a serious and critical focus on corporate strategic orientation (Russo & Perrini, 2010).

#### *Towards a definition*

The first definition of the notion stems consequently from the United States and was presented by Bowen (1953, p.6), who stressed the "obligations of businessmen to pursue those policies, to make those decisions, or to follow those lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society." Although CSR is not a new concept and has been widely investigated throughout the last few decades, resulting in a growing body of literature on the concept (Crane, McWilliams, Matten, Moon, & Siegel, 2008; Lockett, Moon, & Visser, 2006), defining it is not easy (Matten & Moon, 2008). Matten and Moon (2008, p.405) identify three reasons for this, namely that CSR is an „essentially contested concept”, being „appraisive”, „internally complex”, and having rather open rules of application in the first place, secondly, that CSR is an umbrella term being synonymous with some business-society relations and overlapping with others, and finally as it has clearly been an ever-changing phenomena. Even nowadays, in both the corporate and the academic world, there is

uncertainty with regards to how best to specify CSR (Dahlsrud, 2008), so much the more as the myriad definitions are often biased towards certain specific interests, hindering the development and even the implementations of the notion (Van Marrewijk, 2003).

Dahlsrud (2008) among other academics, consequently found the case of the definitional confusion regarding CSR a potentially significant problem that could lead to people echoing different CSR interpretations and therefore preventing productive engagements. Thus, various attempts took place among scholars for the conceptualization of CSR. Carrol (1991, p.40) for instance states that CSR is framed by four responsibility categories them being „economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic” and together composing the pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility in a hierarchical way. Economical responsibilities being at the bottom of the pyramid serve as basis for the coming layers, in this sense they are the ones that are of utmost importance. Without them being fulfilled, hence the corporations making profit and being efficient, the other three responsibilities are disputable for businesses to engage in. As the next level legal responsibilities are depicted that indicate companies operation in line with laws and regulations. Ethical responsibilities serve as the third layer that goes beyond reflecting a view of „codified ethics” and basic fair operations as presented in the second level, and so they refer to businesses operating in accordance with standards, norms, expectations of their stakeholders and keeping up with the respect and protection of their moral rights. Lastly, the forth layer refers to the philanthropic responsibilities, that encompass being a good corporate citizen, contributing resources to the community and improving the quality of life.

Matten (2006) finds this „Four-Part Model of Corporate Social Responsibility” criticisable, and bearing a rather simplistic structure ,as it refrains from pointing out the question of possible conflicting responsibilities, whereas it also misses reflecting CSR in the global context and concentrates extensively on the American context of the notion. Garriga and Melé (2004) quite similarly to Carroll’s pyramid distinction, but representing the European perspective, classified four main categories of CSR theories. The first group of theories is called the instrumental theories, referring to CSR as a mere means to the end of profits for businesses, implying that social activities are only accepted in case they are economically beneficial and result in wealth creation. As the second category comes political theories, where the social power of corporations is put emphasis on, specifically regarding the relationship with the society. This results in businesses accepting social duties and even participating in specific social cooperation’s. The third group includes integrative theories, that come to terms with the dependence of businesses from society to grow and even when it

comes to their existence itself. The fourth category suggests that firms ought to welcome social responsibilities as an ethical obligation above any other consideration. These theories are named as the ethical ones.

Despite the obvious efforts from academics to conceptualize CSR, the theories, according to Dahlsrud (2008) fail to provide any exact guidance as to how to manage the specific challenges with regards to the phenomena when it comes to businesses. In this way the „lack of all-embracing definition of CSR” (Banerjee, 2001, as cited in Van Marrewijk, p.96) and the absence of a „solid and well developed consensus” (Henderson, 2001, pp.21-22) provide basis for academic debate and ongoing research, hampering action (Göbbels, 2002). Therefore, there is still no unified definition of the concept, but there are many of them. All in all, CSR remains a somewhat incomprehensible concept for academics, and a truly contested issue for business practitioners, owing to the range of contradicting definitions of it, which resulted in the emergence of a variety of practices (O’Riordan & Fairbrass, 2008; Russo & Perrini, 2010). In the following, a selection of the definitions of the notion are presented.

Out of the several definitions of CSR to be found in the literature, Whetten, Rands and Godfrey (2001 as cited in Golob & Bartlett, 2007, p.2), consider CSR as “societal expectations of corporate behaviour: A behaviour that is alleged by a stakeholder to be expected by society, or morally required and is therefore justifiably demanded of business.” According to the Green Paper, ‘Promoting a European Framework for Corporate Social Responsibility,’ the concept of CSR can be defined as a tool, whereby corporations integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and on a voluntary basis with their stakeholders as well (Metaxas & Tsavdaridou, 2010). Finally, the Business for Social Responsibility (BSR) defines CSR as

...operating a business in a manner that meets or exceeds the ethical, legal, commercial and public expectations that society has of business. CSR is seen by leadership companies as more than a collection of discrete practices or occasional gestures, or initiatives motivated by marketing, public relations or other business benefits. Rather, it is viewed as a comprehensive set of policies, practices and programs that are integrated throughout business operations, and decision-making processes that are supported and rewarded by top management... (Mazurkiewicz, 2004, pp.4-5).

### ***Towards the stakeholder approach***

Based on the above definitions, two things are clearly to see. First of all, CSR incorporates

two major aspects for business, namely the social and the environmental ones that matured over the decades of the progression of the concept. Nowadays, on the one hand, social aspects of CSR consist of business ethics, relationships with stakeholders, workers, and external customers as influenced by the political and cultural framework, as well as working conditions and health, and safety (Krumwiede et al., 2012). On the other hand, environmental issues include the environmental implications of a company's operations, products and facilities, in addition to the elimination of waste and emissions, the maximization of the efficiency and productivity of the resources and the minimization of certain practices that might negatively affect the resources for the generations of the future (Mazurkiewitz, 2004). This way how the World Business Council on Sustainable Development (WBCSD) defines CSR can be one conclusion of the development of the concept, namely that CSR embraces „... the integration of social and environmental values within a company's core business operations...” (O'Riordan & Fairbrass, 2008). To conclude, at the heart of CSR lies the idea to expand the core purpose of the company, namely to generate profit (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001) and hence to include the function of contributing to the welfare of the society by taking both social and ecological aspects into consideration.

Second of all, societal expectations about the responsible role of business of the corporations in society are on the increase, getting more and more self-evident and continuously maturing over time when talking about CSR as a concept (Golob & Bartlett, 2007). This potentially has to do with the complex mechanism of the changing roles of business in society, showing itself also in that the previously somewhat neglected socially responsible behaviour of corporations the late 1990s onwards became a universally sanctioned and also promoted notion by governments, nongovernmental organizations and as a result of that, by individual stakeholders as well (Lee, 2008).

This shift can be well explained by the changing circumstances and concepts in the triangular relationship among business, state and civil society. As the once clear-cut roles and relatively independent responsibilities for both companies and governments vanished, businesses became interdependent entities with governments, with regards to fighting the problems of the civil society around them. But since governments nowadays increasingly tend to leave societal issues within the authority of corporations and the society does require someone to have these issues solved, the heightened roles of businesses and with that the growing expectations towards them both from the state and from the civils are fairly indisputable (Van Marrewijk, 2003).

In parallel, while governments and businesses skirmished on their responsibilities, civil society became a countervailing power both in impact and in number, with various representatives of them addressing „new” values and approaches, influencing not only politics anymore, but also business towards acting more responsibly (Van Marrewijk, 2003). As the power of the civil sector became evident by now, businesses next to taking over some of the responsibilities that initially were of the governments and with that attesting their socially responsible behaviour, cannot refrain from paying heightened attention to the needs of the society, when considering engaging in CSR activities. The reason for that lies in the fact that businesses operation can only be perceived as legitimate from the stakeholder’s point of view, when their expectations are taken notice of by the corporations. Consequently, because CSR can no longer exist independently of stakeholder expectations, there is an urge to examine the needs, expectations and demands of stakeholders regarding CSR practices.

Since the social aspect of CSR, along with the rising societal expectations towards the concept constitute the basis of CSR, how the stakeholders make sense of the notion can eventually also contribute to a so-far missing, all-embracing definition of CSR, that might not be existent yet, as the definition mostly looked at the concept from the businesses point of view, not incorporating the stakeholder perspective. As Wood (1991) also argues, stakeholders are likely to develop a different understanding of what CSR means, what they expect from the organisations in relation to CSR and how they assess it. In this respect, in order to create a balanced outcome acceptable to the parties, examining the value systems and ideological positions of stakeholders, is necessary for businesses engaging in CSR practice (Wood, 1991; Sz wajkowski, 2000).

Because the aim of this current research is to examine how CSR is understood from the stakeholder perspective, so that it might enrich the notion in the end, in the following, it is worth delving into how stakeholders’ perceptions can have an impact on and shape business operations and thus why the stakeholder approach towards the concept of CSR is of high importance.

#### Stakeholder approach to CSR

Kakabadse, Rozuel & Lee-Davies (2005) argue that in case CSR aims to define what responsibilities business ought to fulfil then the stakeholder concept addresses the question of whom business should be accountable to, making these two concepts interrelated. Thus, despite the fact that so far only limited attention has been given to the understanding of the



perceptions and motives of stakeholders (Enquist, Johnson & Skálén, 2006; Jamali, 2008), along with their evaluation of CSR practices and advocacy skills in practice, when researching the field of CSR, Carroll (1991, p.43) believes that CSR literature is partly built on stakeholder literature:

There is a natural fit between the idea of corporate social responsibility and an organisation's stakeholders. [...] The concept of stakeholder personalises social or societal responsibilities by delineating the specific groups or persons business should consider in its CSR orientation.

Based on his view, categorizing stakeholders is the first step towards studying their attitudes. As the definition of the term 'stakeholder(s)' incorporates individuals and groups with a 'critical eye' on corporate actors (O'Riordan & Fairbrass, 2008), stakeholders can be defined as groups and individuals who can affect or are affected by, the achievement of an organization's mission (Freeman, 1984). Commonly identified stakeholder groups include shareholders (or owners), employees, customers, suppliers, local community, competitors, interest groups or civil society representatives, the government, the media, and society-at-large (Carroll, 1991). Stakeholders, acting either formally or informally, individually, or collectively, are crucial elements in the firm's environment being able to either positively or negatively affect the organisation (Murray & Vogel, 1997 as cited in O'Riordan & Fairbrass, 2008), because as argued earlier, a characteristic of CSR is the idea that businesses are accountable to various stakeholders who can have a claim, either legally mentioned or morally expected, on the business activities (Frederick, 1987; Mitnick, 1995; Jones, 1999).

### ***Realignment in power relations***

By this logic, CSR is also frequently associated with the theme of 'social contract' or 'licence to operate' (Kakabadse et.al, 2005, p.284). In this perspective „a corporation is defined as an entity, created and empowered by a state charter to act as an individual” (Nisberg, 1988, p.74) by the stakeholders. In this way the idea of a licence to operate implies that society allows businesses to operate, providing that they behave fairly and demonstrate accountability for their actions beyond the legal requirements (Kakabadse et.al. 2005). Moir (2001, p.19) argues that the social contract perspective facilitates businesses to show evidence of their responsible behaviour „because it is part of how society implicitly expects businesses to operate”. Consequently, if stakeholders deem the operation of the corporations as being thoughtful of their requirements, they label them as legitimate and for firms to achieve that legitimacy is unequivocally a key issue, as legitimacy not only means to have a licence to operate, but also

power (Moir, 2001). Accordingly, the 'Iron Law of Responsibility' suggests that corporations not using their power in a manner that society considers responsible, will eventually lose it (Kakabadse et.al, 2005, p.285). This idea therefore proposes that business is endowed with its power and influence only under some specific conditions determined by society and that the non-fulfilment of the allotted obligations challenges the business's economic, social and political position, and even its existence in a large extent (Kakabadse et.al, 2005). Thereupon, in the long run, society seems to have the power to judge what is right and wrong regarding the operation of firms and to be hard upon those that do not abide by the rules. Thus, as Takala (1999) puts it, it is at the end of the day the firm that is meant for society and not the other way around.

The major influence that is by this logic attributed to stakeholders seems to (re)balance the power and forces between business and society (Kakabadse et.al, 2005). Consequently, corporations need to be mindful of that they are leastwise compeers with stakeholders and meeting their requirements is a key to their future success and survival (Lee, 2008). Hence, for corporations aiming for earning and retaining social legitimacy, they must define their core mission not only as a sheer maximisation of profit anymore, but in terms of the social purpose they are determined to serve as well (Wilson, 2000). This idea serves as the basis for stakeholder theory itself, since as the founder of the stakeholder approach, Freeman (1984) envisioned, in the wake of the heightened stakeholder power, a corporation's purpose became entirely different to the prior main objectives of exclusively focusing on generating profits and prioritising cash flows, and their socially responsible behaviour became just as important.

As a consequence, corporations need to allocate their resources to manage stakeholder relationships by satisfying the legitimate claims of the stakeholders in a fair way, while at the same time, trying to achieve their own objectives as well, namely to get profitable (Clarkson (1995). Thus, the essence of stakeholder theory is not

to shift the focus of firms away from marketplace success towards human decency but to come up with understandings of business in which these objectives are linked and mutually reinforcing (Jones & Wicks, 1999, p.209).

This is what some authors call a "balanced scorecard" (Vinten, 2000), and others label it as a win-win outcome (Carrol, 1991). In this sense, considering the demands of society and with that the engagement in stakeholder approach do not necessarily imply that corporations, by pursuing CSR would need to bring the needs of the society to the fore and give up on their profitability. In fact, some argue that organizations can not only benefit from getting

legitimacy for their further operation and profit realization in the wake of their socially responsible behaviour that society expects, but that the pursuit of CSR initiatives can also directly contribute to their prosperity, if managed properly. Porter and Kramer (2006), as well as Jonas (1995) by this logic suggest that CSR can be equally a source of opportunity to get the licence to operate and of competitive advantage.

In this way, as Goodpaster (1991) posits, managing stakeholder relationships and stakeholders themselves can be deemed also as mere means towards both stockholder and managerial ends, in that it allows corporations and managers to achieve the set objectives in narrow economic terms, given that the integration of CSR in the core business practices attests to a wide range of benefits corporation can reap (Du, Bhattacharya & Sen, 2007; Fombrun, Gardberg & Barnett, 2000; Lichtenstein et al. 2004; Maignan & Ferrell, 2004; Bhattacharya & Sen, 2001; Sen et al. 2006; Turban and Greening 1997; Weber, 2008). These, among others can be stakeholders purchasing more of the products or services, influencing other stakeholders 'behaviour, seeking employment within the corporations or investing in them (Du, Bhattacharya and Sen (2010). Gardberg and Fombrun (2006) and Godfrey (2005) stress that CSR might act as an insurance for corporations' brand and reputation, while Vogel (2005) adds that the engagement in CSR activities can also diminish business risks of companies, compared to the less virtuous competitors of them. Accordingly, justifying and rationalizing the benefits flowing from CSR practices and that show themselves also in the balance sheet in the end, is a common practice and can be referred to as the business case of CSR (Carroll & Shabana, 2010). The idea of the business case calls attention to the fact that it is not only the group of stakeholders that can profit from CSR initiatives carried out by the firms, but they themselves as well. CSR is therefore, nowadays also considered as a strategic orientation of corporations, that guide their structure and operations through the stakeholder model to be accountable in the eyes of the stakeholders and to reap the benefits of their actions (Russo & Perrini, 2010).

In light of the power relations described above, it can be argued, that the way stakeholders think about the CSR activities of firms and with that the corporations themselves, impacts companies at large, and thus it is in the interest of the firms to build a positive image in the eyes of their stakeholders and to maintain favourable relationships with them. This, however, is not possible unless the perceptions of stakeholders are investigated. As Brown, Dacin, Pratt and Whetten (2006) argue, the way how stakeholders evaluate certain acts of corporations serves as the 'reality', and since CSR is one type of corporate associations (Ellen, Webb & Mohr, 2006), the perception of the stakeholders regarding the concept of CSR

both in a general way and in detail would need to be examined. In this sense, corporations would need to dig not only into how stakeholders make sense of CSR in general, but also into how they perceive the certain aspects of CSR and the specific actions pursued by the companies.

### ***Stakeholder management***

Yet, gaining understanding of stakeholders' attitude is not universal, as according to Minkes, Small and Chatterjee (1999), stakeholder constituency is culturally specific. Singhapakdi, Vitell, Rallapalli & Kraft (1996) and Jones (1999) share Minkes et. al.'s opinion and add that CSR tends to be very contextual and sensitive to environmental, organisational and even individual specificities, making the concept an indeed rich but highly complex notion.

Since arguably, CSR might even be sensitive to individual specialities, it is vital to also shed light on the generational differences at this point, as the various values, attitudes, ambitions and mind-sets people, share within the same generations are thought to have a huge impact on stakeholders' attitude, further complicating even the culture - specific perceptions towards the concept (Arsenault, 2003).

With regards to the differences among the generations, one can argue that the generation of the Millennials differ in terms of their CSR advocacy and attitudes towards the notion compared to the older generations: Baby boomers - born between 1946 and 1964 - and Generation X-ers -born between 1965 and 1980 – (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002). Therefore, typifying them against the others is necessary, so much the more as the study focuses on the generational differences and Millennials' role regarding CSR.

According to numerous observations and studies, they are vastly different from how elders remember themselves being at the same age (Deal et.al, 2010). A recent study involving 17 nations by the MSLGROUP confirms this opinion, as Millennials seems to have dissimilar views on citizenship and on the role of business, with starkly different overall views from those of the other two generations. They are generally thought of as „game changers”, since the vast majority of them believes that corporate involvement in fighting issues such as economy, health and environment is vital for corporations to be successful in their eyes („Millennials Look To”, 2014). Besides, they are universally more fervent in their support towards CSR and are more engaged in CSR efforts, than the average population (Cone Communication Millennial CSR Study, 2015). Thus they also particularly expect the brands they purchase from to operate sustainably, ethically and openly (McPherson, 2016).

Consequently, they consider companies' social and environmental commitments before making important decisions. Moreover, nine in ten of them would switch brands to one associated with a cause, if the current one they are using is not (Cone Communication Millennial CSR Study, 2015).

They however, not only want businesses to lead, they also seek to actively engage in processes, as they feel personally responsible for making the world a better place (McGlone et al., 2011). In addition to that, they not only prefer to work for companies, that incorporate CSR into their strategic plan rather than as a philanthropic exercise when times are good, they also punish those, that do not do so („Millennials Look To", 2014). In line with that they tend to tell friends and family about companies' CSR efforts or the absence of them, while they are also all set to voice opinions to companies on their CSR efforts (Cone Communication Millennial CSR Study, 2015). Furthermore, they are also ready to make personal sacrifices to impact issues important to them by paying more for a product, sharing products rather than buying, and accepting a pay cut to be on the job at a responsible company (Cone Communication Millennial CSR Study, 2015). Their commitment, unlike that of their predecessors' is more to self-knowledge, besides they volunteer for causes to personally grow themselves rather than purely trying to make the company look good (Alsop, 2008). Therefore, Millennials are expected to impact the organization on two fronts: as consumers and as employees whose self-identification may be strongly impacted by the organization's CSR initiatives (McGlone et al., 2011).

Conger (2001) posits that the differences can be such severe among the generations, because generations can be defined as products of historical events that leave potent emotional memories shaping feelings about authority, institutions, concepts and even family. According to Schewe and Evans (2000), the shared emotions, attitudes, preferences, dispositions and a set of practices are used by each generation to create their own traditions and culture. In this way, CSR and the perceptions of it are not only cultural specific, as the different generations create their own cultures within a culture, further exacerbating the understanding of stakeholder demands.

Accordingly, there is no standard model of stakeholder management (Minkes et al., 1999) and thus the perceptions towards the concept should be at all times examined in their local contexts, considering subcultural differences as well. Because the focus of this thesis is to gain an understanding of how Hungarian citizens as a stakeholder group, and different Hungarian generations as additional stakeholder groups, or in this case subcultures, make

sense of and relate to CSR, it is essential to delve into the sensitivity, concerns and capabilities of the whole of Hungarian population first, given that 'content is everything' (Szwajkowski, 2000). In this way, in the following, the localized manifestation of CSR are put emphasis on.

#### Localized manifestations of CSR

CSR originally was a luxury good, a concept that people in the developed world cared about, but something that those in transition generally cared less about, than the basic goals such as economic and industrial development, because the constraining economic growth to meet environmental concerns inhibited them from becoming as conscious as citizens in the United States and later in Western Europe (Godfrey, 2009). The concept of CSR has however, according to Jamali (2014) taken the world of business by storm in recent years, contributing to the spread of the notion. Owing to the globalization, the increase in international trade, the incapability of governments to satisfy the needs of the society as well as the international standards pressuring organizations to embrace CSR (Dahlsrud, 2008; Jamali, 2006; 2010; Visser, 2006), the context in which businesses operate is changing at an increasingly fast pace. Accordingly, while the concept was once regarded as largely a domestic business issue in leading countries of origin, its popularity by now has spread onto the world scene, causing the initial thinking and developing to take place, while the concept gains more traction and importance in emerging nations, such as in Hungary, too (Carroll & Shabana, 2010; Matten & Moon, 2008).

As argued beforehand, looking at the concept of CSR from a stakeholder point of view is supposed to enrich the notion, as in case CSR is considered to be a product emerging from the cycles of dialogue between corporations stakeholders (Wheeler & Sillanpää, 1998), then listening to what stakeholders have to say about the concept sheds light on previously possibly undetected aspects of it. By the same logic, given the fact that CSR today is undeniably a global phenomenon, there is an urgent need to also understand stakeholders outside the developed world, who may or may not think, feel, and behave like their North American and Western European counterparts (Carvalho, Sen, de Oliveira Mota, & de Lima, 2010), because new stakeholders and different national legislations put new expectations on businesses and alter the social, environmental and economic terms of CSR as well (Dahlsrud, 2008). Hence the new partakers alter the notion of CSR too. In this way, the concept and meaning of CSR should also be enriched by its meaning in the context of the emerging countries and the perspectives of the concept should reflect the experiences coming from elsewhere than only the Western contexts, to truly achieve an acceptable global definition for it (Dobers and

Halme, 2009). Since this thesis aims to compass the perceptions of the stakeholders in an emerging country, it intends to enrich the notion in two fronts.

Given that CSR in Hungary is embedded in the CSR context of the emerging markets, as well as in that of the CEE region, the peculiarities of CSR in all these three contexts need to be highlighted in order to have a better grasp of the reasons behind the perceptions of the citizens in Hungary regarding the concept.

### *Peculiarities of CSR in emerging markets*

Compared to the Western contexts, a relatively smaller but growing body of research addresses the CSR philosophy and practice in transitional economies, or in developing countries (Dobers & Halme, 2009). Although research on CSR in the developing country context has generally been slower and more fragmented, it can be argued that the notion has distinctive features and peculiarities in the developing world (Baskin, 2006).

Thinking about CSR, citizens mostly identify the concept with philanthropy, which is accordingly often prioritized over legal and ethical responsibilities (Jamali, 2014). Visser (2008) explains this special feature of the concept in the emerging nations by the pressing need for philanthropy in light of the realities of poverty, unemployment, and the shortage of foreign direct investment commanding. Jamali and Neville (2011), Jamali and Mirshak (2010) and Jamali (2014) therefore posit that the cultural norms and expectations appoint the direction CSR should take in these countries, putting pressure on organizations too, to embrace philanthropic programs and interventions in their initiatives. In this way, firms, if engaging in CSR, in the wake of the expectations, feel the urge to address superior social issues and gaps, for instance poverty alleviation, health care provision, infrastructure development, and education, rather than consumer protection, fair trade, green marketing, and climate change concerns as in the Western countries (Amaeshi, Adi, Ogbechie & Amao, 2006). Consequently, however scholars in the emerging markets also stress that CSR is not equal to donations (Nagy, 2016), this is something that is so far not visible in the developing country contexts, given that in case CSR per se is present at all in, it manifests itself in charity.

Academics additionally agree that philanthropy can be the most general form of CSR in this context, owing to the universal lack of pressure on firms to behave generally responsibly like their counterparts in developed countries, as a result of the typically weak judicial infrastructure and limited government capacity and regulatory enforcement with regards to CSR (Khavul & Bruton, 2013; Newenham-Kahindi, 2011). Crane and Matten

(2007) in relation to that postulate that ethics does not have the same influence on the CSR agenda in developing countries as in the developed ones, while Jamali and Mirshak (2007) argue that the legal and ethical dimensions are often glossed over in emerging nations (i.e., either ignored, taken for granted, or not accorded sufficient importance).

To pan out about the role of governments in CSR enforcement, authors highlight the contracted and retracted nature of their operation, in that they usually allow the ripe for abuses (Khavul & Bruton, 2013; Newenham-Kahindi, 2011) and because they do not have any national management and planning in place, that could have significant effect on the naturalization of CSR by gearing up the pursuits of CSR initiatives in developing countries (Ite, 2004). Next to the absence of a particular CSR policy by the governments and their general poor governance hindering the naturalization of the concept, the spread of CSR is also prevented by corruption (Ite, 2005) and economic recessions or instability, resulting in the restrained ability of companies to plan systematically and over the long run (Jamali & Mirshak, 2007; Jamali & Neville, 2011). Comprehensively, if CSR is present, in the developing country context, it is driven by major socioeconomic aggravations (Amaeshi et al., 2006). Yet, the initiatives are generally moulded by the institutional constellations characteristics, such as weak drivers for CSR, limited CSR advocacy, mature community organizations, bounded regulatory capacity, arbitrary law enforcement, bureaucratic inconsistency, insecurity of property rights and corruption along with an array of macroeconomic constraints (Dobers & Halme, 2009; Jamali and Mirshak, 2007). CSR thus in the developing context is landed a very different character than it has in most of the developed countries and is described as being less embedded in corporate strategies and less politically rooted (Baskin, 2006).

As this thesis focuses on the current state and the foreseeable future of CSR with regards to generational differences in one specific developing country and because the various national social, political and economic conditions have a major impact on how CSR practices get implemented in certain countries (Baughn & McIntosh, 2007), it is essential to highlight the region - and country - specific attributes of social responsibility, to not only provide a general portrayal of the developing country context regarding the special features of the concept of CSR.

***The impact of culture, and context on the acceptance and advocacy towards CSR - Peculiarities of CSR in CEE and in Hungary***

CSR in CEE accordingly bears significant characteristics of CSR in emerging markets.



Researchers agree that the concept of CSR barely took root in the CEE member states (Steurer & Konrad, 2009), which can also be attributed as a speciality of the region. As the UNDP study from 2007 (Steurer et al., 2011) suggests, due to the socialist heritage, there is a general perception, both in the business community and the public at large, that social responsibility and social caring is the primary role of government. This is due to, corporations' decisional authorities regarding financial and social issues being limited for decades, therefore there are no entrenched rules for corporations to take responsibly themselves (Csigéné Nagypál, 2008). Therefore, most companies only consider their responsibility to operate in compliance with the legal and regulatory environment of the given country and to basically survive and provide their service to the community after phasing their products in the market (Csigéné Nagypál, 2008; Steurer et al., 2011). The local governments could do against this conviction of the corporations and set new directions for them to follow, but it seems that they are not willing or not able to set CSR as a priority on the political and societal agenda (Steurer & Konrad, 2009). In this way, CEE companies generally and according to a study conducted by Deloitte in 2015, CSR Leaders specifically identify the lack of government involvement, 'appropriate regulations' and the absence of certain directives and tax deductions in place as key barriers in adopting CSR practices (Kandó, 2016; Mazurkiewicz et al., 2005b as cited in Steurer et al., 2011).

As without proper regulations, CSR in CEE is widely understood as charity or marketing instead of responsibility to stakeholders (Elms, 2006), there are no big corporations in the region that clearly institutionalized corporate social responsibility without any concern regarding their responsible operation. This further escalates into general lack of stakeholder responsibility and even interest for the concept compared to Western- Europeans. Besides, the lack of interest is also apparent when it comes to experts and journalists, who could reduce the costs of information gathering and raise awareness on the importance of the topic (Bonardi & Keim, 2005). All in all, governments of CEE countries mirror rather than reverse the low interest in CSR among both companies and stakeholders in the region (Steurer & Konrad, 2009). In this way, CSR in CEE bears significant characteristics of CSR in emerging markets.

Since Gjolberg (2009), when it comes to CSR, points out that the country of origin matters too, after presenting the CEE context of CSR, signalling the specific features of CSR in Hungary as well, the Hungarian context can further serve as indicator for the general attitudes of Hungarian people towards social responsibility. When studying the institutional determinants of CSR, Jones (1999) suggests looking at the national socio-cultural environment and the level of national economic development that can influence the sense

making and practicing of CSR. In addition to that Jamali and Mirshak (2007) highlight the importance of paying attention to the legal factors in the case of developing countries. Therefore, these indicators will further guide the presentation of the general stage of CSR and perceptions towards it in Hungary.

With the shift to market economy in the 1990s, a new economic agenda originated in Hungary, and high profit became the utmost important measurement of success for companies. That resulted in a confidence crisis from the consumer's side towards businesses and social responsibility touched bottom that time (UNDP, 2007 p. 9 as cited in Metaxas & Tsavdaridou, 2010). Hungarians reckon that profit maximization as the main goal of firms in all probability overwrites taking care of their environmental impact and considering the needs of their employees and that of the local communities (Ágoston, Báron, Deák & Gyóri, 2006). The confidence crisis has an impact on how stakeholders perceive companies in the country, with 54 percent of the population not trusting multinational enterprises, as a study from 2003 claims (Habisch et al., 2005). This is all the more problematic, because multinational companies happen to initiate the implementation of CSR in Hungary instead of the stakeholders themselves (UNDP, 2007 as cited in Metaxas & Tsavdaridou, 2010; UNDP 2007a; UNDP 2008; KPMG 2008; CSR Europe 2010 as in Karcagi- Kovács, n.d.), but since people tend not to trust these companies, they do not pay attention to their CSR initiatives either. As a result, a group of Hungarian companies choose to not even broadcast information on their CSR initiatives, since these might raise revulsion among the public, because for historical reasons, people still tend to read among the lines and detect back-door intentions even if there is none behind the messages (Ligeti & Oravetz, 2009). This practice can be referred to as Quiet CSR, the opposite of Loud CSR, where CSR initiatives serve communication interests of the firms (Ligeti & Oravetz, 2009) and it is an additional obstacle of the spread of CSR in the country, given the stakeholders do not even hear about the activities taking place.

Implementing CSR activities however not only faces difficulties because of the lacking trust towards the companies, and their intentions behind CSR, but because – as it was indicated already with regards to the practice of Quiet CSR - it reminds certain older generations of a past era. The legacy of the socialist system makes it difficult for the general public to engage with CSR, since volunteering activities as components of CSR make the older generations to recall the times when participation in such events was compulsory in the communist era (Metaxas & Tsavdaridou, 2010). They in fact, take CSR initiatives with a grain of salt and bear a certain amount of repugnance against the concept (Radácsi, 2006). Zsolnay

et.al. (2005) even claim that public trust in some cases can plummet in corporations communicating about their CSR activities.

As for the economic development in the country, that could advance the pursuit of CSR, a study from 2007 made by the United Nations (2007) suggests that the biggest hindrance for the practice in Hungary is still the relatively bad economic situation of the country. Thus, even though consumer consciousness in addition to the willingness to pay price premium for certain products are given voice to in Hungary, the demand for these types of products in practice is still rather low (Gulyás et al. 2002). Gulyás et.al. (2002) further claims that the poverty and high unemployment rates evolving in light of the collapse of the socialist regime also pulled the need for CSR back for a long while among the firms operating in the country.

Thanks to the overall negative attitude, lacking interest from investors and lacking trust from the stakeholders, them therefore being so ignorant towards CSR practices and the lack of decent purchasing power of the Hungarians, corporations traditionally, in most cases, tend to be reluctant as well, when it comes to the exchange of information with the public and legislators beyond the required scope (Ligeti & Oravetz, 2009). And even most of those ones that do pursue CSR, only act so because of human resource management reasons (e.g. motivation), out of PR-values, with the aim of gaining good points with the authorities, to be able to open up new markets, to boost R&D activities and to win awards. In this way, corporations in Hungary carry out CSR activities only in case they can fulfil the service of inner corporate interests and in order to boost their reputation (Ligeti & Oravetz, 2009). Thus, they in general pay less attention to the question of how creditable their CSR activities may look in the eyes of the stakeholders (Ligeti & Oravetz, 2009) and generally do not perceive CSR as a strategic move with regards to their operation, managing CSR activities and the core business of the company separately (Csigéné Nagypál, 2008; Ligeti & Oravetz, 2009). Hence, the implementation of CSR activities is more difficult in the Hungarian market than in western and northern European countries (Metaxas & Tsavdaridou, 2010). Overall, it is to see that a vicious circle is present when it comes to CSR practices in CEE and in Hungary, as the appropriate conditions for corporations for pursuing CSR activities are not established by the government, thus firms do not engage in them, making stakeholders uninterested in those practices as well, which does not foster companies to act in the end. Besides, in case they do act and try to pursue CSR, stakeholders get suspicious and immediately think about the hidden agenda of the firms behind their actions, therefore implanting the practice in the minds of the citizens is a tough job.

Yet, because one major apropos of the study is, next to delving into the general stakeholder perspectives in the emerging markets, the examination of the possibility of a change occurring in terms of CSR advocacy in the developing country context, briefly touching on the change perspective is also an integrant part of the theoretical background in relation to the localized manifestation of CSR.

### ***Change perspective in CEE and in Hungary***

But as it is always the case, Western trends sooner or later find their way into the CEE and to Hungary, especially since being part of the European Union, the member countries also need to comply with EU legislations. Matten and Moon (2004) state that the concept of CSR in Europe is followed with intense attention lately both by corporations, by politicians and by academics, which, in line with the Lisbon Strategy can be a major tool in contributing to making the EU the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. The EU legislations regarding CSR are further growing in numbers and set a new direction in the way of reporting about CSR, with the aim of enhancing both corporations and consumers' interest in the practice, while offering help for recently joined countries (Knopf, Walter, Hajduk, Weiss, Feil, Fiedler, & Klein, 2011).

Following the EU endeavours, Hungary also started to take actions and enhance the spread of CSR countrywide (“A közösségi szolgálat”, 2013 “Elfogadásra került a”, 2015; Knopf et al, 2011). Two years after joining the EU, the legal predecessor of the Ministry of National Economy established a CSR Directory within the Ministry, having the tasks among others to support the economic integration of Romany enterprises within the country, fostering the environmental performance of corporations in general, improving the taxing morals and mitigating discrimination at workplaces in the country, while the Directory further aims to cooperate with multinational companies that are familiar with pursuing CSR (Csigéné Nagypál, 2008). These initiatives, and the fact that the pursue of CSR activities positively influence the outcomes of public procurements in Hungary point in a favourable direction and indicate that the government becomes more and more conscious of the significance of CSR initiatives taking place (Csigéné Nagypál, 2008). Along with the legislations, other factors help the spread of CSR in Hungary as well. These are namely the growing number of CSR conferences, tenders and applications held, the increasing number of NGOs and associations dealing with CSR, the growing number of CSR- related awards and occurrences, as well as the booming of CSR ratings in the country besides the flourishing of the websites, blogs and

forums relating to CSR lately (Ásványi, 2016; KPMG, 2010 as cited in Karcagi-Kováts, n.d.), which suggest that companies can potentially began to comprehend CSR as a notion and the benefits of it.

Hence, despite the communist legacy and the general ignorance of Hungarians towards social responsibility, in the wake of the enhanced exposure regarding CSR practices in the last few years, consumer consciousness appears to be on the rise in the country lately (Csigéné Nagypál, 2008; Karcagi-Kováts, n.d.; Ligeti & Oravetz, 2009). Besides, according to the latest studies, and in line with the rising consciousness, a significant change appears to be happening in the country in terms of the urge of CSR (Ligeti & Oravetz, 2009; Metaxas & Tsavdaridou), which is, knowing the general mind-set and attitude of the Hungarians, quite remarkable. Because studies regarding the state and future of CSR in Hungary are rather scarce, it is not extraordinary that not much research has been published in the last few years to unveil the cause of, and the drivers of the perceived change regarding the stakeholder attitudes in the country, which gives space for both real change and hope regarding the increased implementation of CSR practices. All the more, as Hungary, Poland and Slovenia alike, was reported to be among the most active members among the CEE countries, regarding the implementation of CSR, even back in 2011 (Steurer et al., 2011).

In summary, one can see that the overall implementation and spread of CSR activities in Hungary, along with the CEE region, is facing difficulties in how the picture is portrayed in previous studies, first of the emerging markets', then CEE's and finally that of the Hungarian CSR pursuit. However, in the CEE region, there seems to be a shift taking place towards the advocacy of the concept too, as research suggests. This shift is most probably a result of Western trends evolving. In relation to the Western movements, a possible cause for the current towards the advocacy of the notion can be a general alteration in the mind-set of the population as a consequence of the heightened exposure of CSR in more and more aspects of life, while another possible reason for the shift can be attributed to the awakening of the Millennials generation in this region as well, and them as influential as they are, stressing the need of the concept not only in the Western, but in the CEE and Hungarian context as well (Cone Communication Millennial CSR Study, 2015; McPherson, 2016). It is in this sense also the ambition of the study to see what might cause this change, if there is one in Hungary, so that it could provide information on the stage of CSR for the whole of CEE as well.

In conclusion of the above outlined literature review, one can argue that in the wake of the growing expectations from the government and society for corporations to carry out CSR

initiatives and with that to join in in the handling of social issues, businesses are increasingly under pressure, while stakeholders are gaining more and more power to decide on the legitimacy of the businesses based on how socially responsible they deem certain companies' operation. This recent realignment in terms of the power relations between corporations and stakeholders makes the stakeholder approach of CSR and its importance more and more acute. On the one hand, because corporations can lose out to stakeholders in case they do not engage in CSR activities, while it would be expected from them, and on the other hand because firms can also highly benefit from pursuing CSR activities the way stakeholders appreciate, as the business case of CSR suggests. Yet, investigating CSR from the corporate perspective has so far ruled the literature on the concept, overshadowing the stakeholder perspective. However, when it comes to CSR, the stakeholder perspective is not the only approach that has so far been neglected, since CSR is not yet widely studied in the context of the emerging nations either, although the notion has recently raised its head in the developing world as well. This study therefore, to enrich the concept of CSR with both employing the stakeholder perspective and studying the concept outside of the Western context it, aims to investigate the perceptions of the Hungarian citizens regarding CSR. Consequently, the research question this study is: How do Hungarian citizens make sense of CSR? With this, this study addresses a gap in literature on CSR, given the fact that the overall perception of the Hungarian population being part of the developing world, providing important implications for the stakeholder approach, has not yet been researched. To study the state of CSR in Hungary is so much more interesting, as research suggest that there is a change taking place with regards to the advocacy of CSR in the country. The first research question can also bear testimony with regards to this assumption. As outlined in previous research, generational differences also play a huge role in favouring concepts like CSR, with one particular generation, the Millennials driving the societal change towards the advocacy of it. In order to test whether this hypothesis is also applicable in the Hungarian context, the thesis aims to find answer to the second and third research questions: In what ways does generational difference contribute to understandings of and attitudes towards CSR? How do Millennials define their role in promoting CSR in Hungary compared to the older generations?

## Chapter III.

### METHODOLOGY

The following chapter introduces the chosen methodology to research the overall sense - making of CSR, generational differences and the role that Millennials define for themselves with regards to CSR advocacy in Hungary. This section discusses the methods used in detail: why qualitative methodology as an approach was chosen to conduct the research and how focus group sessions can be applied to examine the research questions. Further, the sampling, data collection and analysis process will be presented. The applied methods are also justified with regards to the goal of the research.

#### Qualitative approach

The purpose of this research was to study the impact of generational differences in Hungary when it comes to the sense making of CSR practices. In addition, this study also sought to examine the extent to which Millennials in Hungary drive the social change towards the advocacy of CSR that appears to happen in the country lately, despite every former perception and reaction of the Hungarians against social responsibility.

In order to gain deep and detailed understanding of these questions, a qualitative research approach was employed in this thesis. Given the fact that CSR itself, the attitude of the society towards the concept, as well as the Millennials as a generation are only scarcely researched within the Hungarian context, furthermore, as there have not been any research done on how the Millennials perceive CSR in Hungary, a qualitative methodology's usage of sensitizing concepts was applied to fill these research gaps. Sensitizing concepts are by nature pre-theoretical, thus they are appropriate to serve observations. Since the knowledge about the Hungarian CSR context is in this respect incomplete, the concepts could lead the research and allow for a 'systematic search' for the unknown and with that implying an inductive cycle rather than a deductive one (Jonker & Pennink, 2010). Jonker & Pennink (2010) also claim that qualitative research is based on the knowledge one can build about certain realities, when looking at them through 'the eyes of someone else'. In this way developing an insight, understanding and theory about certain contexts is only possible through interactions with the people being part of the social contexts. Making sense of the reality of the people involved and of the occurring phenomena is therefore, in qualitative methodology grasped from the 'inside out' (Jonker & Pennink, 2010). Understanding the attitudes of Hungarians towards the concept of CSR in the frame of this study was thus also achieved by grasping the general and

the different ways of thinking within the society from the 'inside out', 'through the eyes' of the citizens.

#### Focus groups with Hungarian stakeholders

Specifically, the project employed focus group methodology (e.g., Qu & Dumay, 2011) to assess generational differences in the Hungarian CSR context. Focus groups as group interviews utilize the communication between the participants of the research to generate data (Kitzinger, 1995).

Because group interviews utilize the flexible and exploratory discussion format, putting emphasis on the interaction between participants, this way they produce insight into the attitudes and approaches of the interviewees, besides the generational differences within the society can also be well detected with their application (Qu, & Dumay, 2011). As the essence of focus groups lies in the interaction and so participants are encouraged to talk to one another, this method is truly useful not only for investigating the knowledge and experience of them and with that what they think, but also to explore how and why they think so (Kitzinger, 1994). Tapping into interpersonal communication, according to Kitzinger (1994; 1995) is of high importance, since it can shed light on the subcultural values or norms of the group and even reveal attitudes of participants that are otherwise not encapsulated in reasoned responses to direct questions.

As a peculiarity of the focus groups, the application of open - ended questions could further help to unfold the importance of CSR for the different Hungarian stakeholders (Kitzinger, 1994). In relation to that, the use of focus groups is deemed to be a good choice when researching sensitive experiences, since participants can provide mutual support in expressing feelings that are considered to deviate from mainstream culture (Kitzinger, 1994). As I expected to identify significant differences among generational attitudes towards CSR in the Hungarian society, the application of focus group sessions might have been the best way to detect them. This way, both participants being in favour of CSR and participants rejecting its importance, could freely express their thoughts and criticism against the opposite point of view. Last but not least, focus groups can also benefit the participants, because participation enables people to explore and clarify their views through the interaction with like and opposite – minded others (Kitzinger, 1995).

In addition to the qualitative approach, in the frame of the focus group sessions, a short questionnaire was provided to the participants. This way the participants were asked to express their attitudes before the group interaction started. The combination of applying focus



groups and questionnaires to find answers for the research questions ensured further justification of the results. Accordingly, the descriptive statistics was an additional method applied to the qualitative approach as being the core of the study.

#### Data collection and sampling

As the thesis focuses on the generational differences in terms of CSR advocacy in Hungary, as well as on the extent to which the generation of the Millennials in particular drives the social change towards the growing advocacy in the country, the focus group participants, as a speciality of theoretical sampling, reflect a range of the total study population to test the hypotheses of the research. That said, this study, just as the majority of the focus group studies has not been able to leverage on a representative sample of the population (Kitzinger, 1994, 1995).

In accordance with the methodological guidelines for this thesis, a total of four semi-structured focus groups of seven to eight participants per group were conducted interviewing Hungarian stakeholders. Each group comprised eight participants, and with two drop-outs, a total of 30 people participated in the four focus group discussions.

The even number of the four focus groups allowed for comparison between the participants. I believe it was necessary to segment the participants from the older generations and the Millennials into different groups in order to unveil the differences between the generations way of thinking. Therefore, two focus groups consisted of only members of the older generations, specifically of Baby Boomers and Generation Xers, whereas two other focus groups exclusively included members of the Millennials. This way I aimed for homogeneity to profit on their shared experiences and see how one generation can bring change (Kitzinger, 1994, 1995).

In the case of the focus groups organized for the older generations, participants were between 35 and 67 years old. These focus groups are further referred to as focus group 1 and focus group 3, while the Millennials participants of the other two focus groups were between 19 and 32 years old and these groups are referred to as focus group 2 and focus group 4. The numbering of the focus group discussions demonstrated above indicates the order in which the group sessions took place during the days of the research. Avoiding gender specific outcome, I took special care of the equal proportion of males and females in each group. A more comprehensive overview on the focus groups participants, in line with Qualidata's, the United Kingdom's national agency for archiving qualitative data, recommendations with regards to what kind of information to unveil (McLellan, MacQueen & Neidig, 2003) is to be seen in Appendix (1).

In order to gather participants' first thoughts and impressions regarding their attitude and role in advocating CSR practices, as well as to detect how they perceive the attitudes and role of generation(s) they are themselves associated with, participants have been provided a questionnaire to fill before the actual group discussion began. The answers given for the questionnaire could further clarify whether there are significant differences among generations' attitudes towards CSR and whether Millennials are in more favour of the advocacy of the concept.

The participants were initially recruited using a personal network. Individuals in the network were asked to share referrals for the recruitment of subsequent focus group participants, so that I did not share close ties with the participants of any of the focus groups. Additionally, the recruitment also took place at two Hungarian Universities, which I previously studied at, while the search for focus group participants continued in various Facebook Groups, such as Vegan in Hungary and numerous Alumni sites of Secondary Schools in Budapest, for example in „Eötvös József Gimnázium Öregdiákok” and „Madách Imre Gimnázium Budapest”. In this way, I could ensure diversity and that the participants themselves did not know each other well, as well as that there was no connection between the participants and me.

The focus group sessions took place in Budapest, Hungary between the 4th and the 13th of April and were conducted in Hungarian language. Focus group discussions were video recorded, with due consent, and transcribed and translated into English. Later on, the English transcripts served as units for the data analysis.

#### Procedure

Prior to the four focus groups having been conducted, a trial interview took place on the 1st of April in Budapest, Hungary as a form of a pilot study with four participants. The term, 'pilot study', according to Van Teijlingen and Hundley (2002), can refer to the pre-testing or 'trying out' of a particular research instrument, which has the advantage of being able to give advance warning about where the research project could eventually fail, as well as if the proposed instruments are either inappropriate or too complicated. Since the authors refer to these pilot studies as crucial elements of a good study design, I also wanted to increase the likelihood of the success in the main study. The discussion guide has been later on reviewed and accordingly, based on the outcome of the pilot, partially modified.

Before the focus group discussion actually started, all participants were asked to sign a Hungarian consent form, declaring their agreement to participate in the focus group session

and to be video recorded on camera. After having been informed about their rights as research participants, all of them gave consent to be recorded during the whole of the discussion.

Followed by this, to acclimatize the participants with the research topic, I introduced the research and myself and afterwards, all focus group sessions started with a questionnaire. The questionnaire was handed out with the purpose of gathering participants' initial thoughts, impressions and attitudes towards the concept of CSR in general, as well as its presence in the Hungarian market. To begin with, the questionnaire measured the extent to which participants were familiar with the concept of CSR as the English abbreviation of Corporate Social Responsibility and the extent to which they knew what the Hungarian equivalent of the notion, namely „Vállalati társadalmi felelősségvállalás” meant. After that, they were asked to provide a definition of the concept themselves. To make sure that all participants came to terms with what CSR as a concept stands for, a short definition was then provided to all of the participants, so that they could continue answering the questions. The following questions among others asked the participants about their perception of the importance of CSR activities and the corporations' intentions in them. Besides, they were asked what kind of elements of CSR they deemed as most important, how their perceptions of companies engaging in CSR activities changed and what kind of aspects guided them while searching for a job and as consumers, and lastly, how they saw the current stage of CSR in the country and what they forecasted for the future. Overall, twelve out of the twenty - five questions featured a five-point Likert scale, eleven of them was open-ended question, while of multiple - choice questions and ranking questions, there was one each to be found in the questionnaire. After answering the questionnaire, the group discussion with all participants of the focus group started. It began with warm - up questions on social responsibility, so that the Hungarian participants, among whom many had not heard of the concept of CSR before, could at least link the socially responsible acts of corporations to the practices individuals do, and to ease them into the conversation they had not hold before in their lives. After the warm - up, participants delved further into exchanging thoughts about their general sense making of CSR, while I detected how generational differences contribute to the attitudes participants have towards the concept and the role Millennials assign to themselves in promoting it.

The Focus groups themselves, having been the heart of the study, bore a semi-structured nature, which made the issues discussed predetermined, and allowed me to stress the core topics, while at the same time maintaining flexibility for new ideas emerging from the flow of the discussions. As a result, the discussions were to some extent determined by the participants' contributions, opinions and experiences and by the additional topics related to the conversation that they brought up. Consequently, there was no standardized order of the

questions discussed, the wording of the questions was adapted to the stream of the dialogues and each of the focus groups interviews touched upon a few sub-topics that were not considered in the rest of the sessions.

Given the fact that I examined the current state of CSR advocacy in the Hungarian market, myself being a Hungarian as well, I truly had to consider moderating without participating and avoiding joining in with the conversation, as Gill, Stewart, Treasure & Chadwick (2008) suggest. Having been mindful about not expressing my own views was crucial, this way I could withdraw from giving participants cues as to what to say.

The four focus group discussions took 120 to 150 minutes each including the time participants spent on filling out the questionnaire, which varied from 15 to 25 minutes. Even though the questionnaire and the discussion questions were presented to the participants in Hungarian, the English translation of these documents is provided in Appendix (2) and Appendix (3).

#### Data analysis

Shortly after the focus group sessions took place, the discussions, held in Hungarian, were transcribed and translated into English. In order to grant enough time for finalizing the transcripts and move ahead with analysing the data, all of the sessions were conducted within a period of two weeks.

As the thesis is based on the understanding of how Hungarian stakeholders give meaning to CSR, the analysis was geared towards the interpretation of their thoughts, experiences, actions, expressions, attitudes and the underlying motives of the participants of the focus groups (Boeije, 2010; Ten Have, 2004). To this end, Inductive thematic analysis as a form of thematic analysis has been applied on analysing the transcripts, given the fact that with the help of thematic analysis, one can identify, analyse and report patterns or themes within the data (Brain & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis categorizes, as well as describes the data set by appropriately interpreting crucial aspects of the topic researched, and by being a flexible research tool, provides rich, detailed and complex account for the data (Brain & Clarke, 2006). As, in order to gain complex data, the thematic analysis researcher is suggested to consider both apparent and latent content in data analysis (Vaismoradi, Turunen & Bondas, 2013), I followed Poland and Pederson's (1998) reasoning of paying attention to not only what has been stated during the discussions but to what has not been said as well, because they are equally important. Consequently, contextual information with regards to silence and pauses in the conversation also constituted the basis of the analysis. McLellan et.al., (2003)

add that mispronunciations, slang and nonverbal sounds, such as laughs and sighs could also provide important insights into the knowledge, attitudes, values, beliefs and experiences of the individuals, therefore I paid due attention to these forms of manifestations as well. Moreover, for the very same reason, I did not modify the statements of participants in case they made use of profane language either. With this type of analysis, I could not only identify patterns and salient themes, but also variations in how social phenomena are experienced and the relationships between certain elements (McLellan et.al, 2003). As the nature of Inductive thematic analysis is that themes identified are strongly linked to the data themselves, and that the process of coding happens without fitting the data into a pre-existing coding frame (Brain & Clarke, 2006), the analysis was very much data-driven and concentrated mainly on what the participants had to share.

Since the research on the one hand indeed strived for acknowledging the ways participants give meaning of their experiences, while on the other hand aimed at examining the ways realities are the effects of discourses operating within the Hungarian society, thematic analysis was the method to choose, as it works both to reflect reality of the participants and to unravel the surface of it (Brain & Clarke, 2006).

The process of a thematic analysis followed in this study based on Brain & Clarke's (2006) recommendation is described in the following. Firstly, I familiarized myself with the data by reading and continuously rereading it after the transcription. After that, I marked and coded all significant and interesting features of the data across the whole of the data set, which process can be called open coding. Thereafter I sought for data relevant to each code and performed axial coding by exploring the relations among the numerous codes and by detecting similarities among them. Then, I applied selective coding and collected the different codes into potential themes, identifying the relationships between the themes and their various levels. As the next step I reviewed the themes and double - checked whether the themes worked in relation to the codes and the entire data set, and thus secured the validity of the single themes as well. Following that, I worked on refining the specifics of the themes until I got to developing and producing the findings section to present a selection of the most vivid, compelling examples of the extract in order to answer the research questions.

As mentioned previously, next to the English transcripts of the focus group conversations, the results stemming from the questionnaire that participants filled out at the beginning of the focus groups served as units of analysis. The latter were studied to back the findings arising from the discussions and to allow for in-depth understanding of the processes

happening and of the mind-sets of the participants with regards to them. The findings of the questionnaire were utilized by using quantitative analysis techniques. Examining the questionnaires used, I analysed the effects of corporations engaging in CSR activities had on Hungarian stakeholders perception regarding the corporations, how important they found CSR, the extent to which they wanted to get more information on the notion, how well informed they were with regards to the whole of the concept and which aspects of it were the most crucial for them.

## Chapter IV.

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The following chapter outlines the findings stemming from the focus group discussions and the questionnaire, and takes a closer look at them. To begin with, the chapter presents the results with reference to the first research question on how the participants in general make sense of CSR. Further, the investigation delves into the differences among stakeholders and demonstrates the results of the second research question on the ways generational differences contribute to understandings of, and attitudes towards CSR. Lastly, the chapter answers the research question on how millennials define their role in promoting CSR in Hungary compared to the older generations.

RQ1: Hungarian participants' sense making of CSR

*This section provides insights pertaining to RQ1 - How do Hungarian citizens make sense of CSR? It reviews participants' perceptions of CSR as a concept touching upon aspects such as how they interpret the notion of CSR in general and more specifically in Hungary, how they perceive corporate motives of CSR and lastly, what conditions Hungarian participants find as relevant when it comes to CSR.*

#### ***How Hungarian citizens interpret CSR***

Before the focus group conversations started, participants were asked to fill out a questionnaire to demonstrate their knowledge of prior perceptions on the concept of CSR. At the very beginning of the questionnaire, they were asked if they were familiar with the concept of CSR or "Vállalati társadalmi felelősségvállalás", which is the Hungarian term for corporate social responsibility. Overall, the results across all groups suggest that the declared knowledge of the participants on the phenomena was rather low, with (M=2.03) in the case of CSR as the English abbreviation and (M=2.63) with regards to the Hungarian equivalent to it. Here, 1.0 refers to participants being "not at all" familiar with the concept, while 5.0 refers to being "extremely" familiar with it. It can also be argued, that it is somewhat easier for participants to comprehend and to get familiar with the Hungarian form of the term.

In spite of the low level of the confessed grasp of the terms, 58 percent of the respondents across all focus groups made an effort to note down their interpretation of the concept. This yielded a variety of interpretations, with some recurring patterns. For a few of them, CSR

showed itself in that companies take responsibility for what they produce and sell in terms of quality and not harming consumers. Others saw CSR as an altruistic move from the companies' side with the aim of mitigating excessive social and environmental problems. In relation to that some respondents emphasized that CSR is about firms devoting a given proportion of their profit so that they can engage in CSR activities. Again others interpreted CSR as an action towards creating something beneficial for the society and making the world a better place, a group of the participants reckoned that CSR is about creating awareness of the occurring problems, while a couple of respondents claimed that pursuing CSR is an attitude itself, which is about firms integrating environmental and social aspects into their way of operation. Overall, the sentiment regarding the concept in general was universally positive at this point, with participants concentrating on the added values CSR initiatives may bring to the society one way or the other.

Participants similarly graded the notion of CSR as highly important ( $M=4.64$ ). Considering the rather minor level of familiarity of the participants of CSR and their ultimately positive attitude towards it, the extent to which Hungarian stakeholders across all of the groups were longing for gaining more information on the concept ( $M=3.99$ ) can be well justified.

Hungarian stakeholder's generally positive attitude towards the pursued CSR activities can also be tracked in their professed attitudes. Respondents across the focus groups think of companies that engage in CSR activities more favourably than of those that do not ( $M=4.06$ ), while companies carrying out CSR activities leave an ever more positive impression in them in the long-term ( $M=4.20$ ). Although they are not as sure about how their bond strengthens with companies engaging in CSR activities, they still have a rather positive opinion on that as well ( $M=3.50$ ). Participants tend to think that their loyalty increases as a result of the pursued CSR activities by firms ( $M=3.75$ ), whereas they report about enhanced trust towards companies that carry out CSR activities compared to those, that do not ( $M=3.90$ ). As for their purchasing behaviour, participants admit that they are more willing to buy companies' products that engage in CSR than products of companies that do not, provided the products or services offered are otherwise the same ( $M=4.00$ ) and the same goes for their intention to work for socially responsible companies compared to their non-responsible counterparts providing that the conditions are alike ( $M=3.90$ ). Lastly, participants also show a tendency towards recommending companies' products / services / companies as workplaces that engage in CSR than companies that do not, in case all other conditions are the same ( $M=3.88$ ).

The results of this research, suggesting that CSR is not a well-known concept in Hungary



approve Steuer and Konrad's (2009) theory, that the concept barely took root in the CEE region, while the ways participants interpret CSR in that it was also raised that not harming stakeholders can be also called CSR, and additionally in that the majority of them still perceive CSR being pursued rather as an „add on” to core business practices than being integrated in the operation of firms shows evidence of how CSR is not yet a mature concept in the country (Carroll & Shabana, 2010; Matten & Moon, 2008). Similarly, the fact that Hungarian citizens largely associated CSR with philanthropy, most probably in light of financial circumstances present in the country, is also in line with how Jamali and Mirshak (2010) and Jamali (2014) argued in academic literature that citizens of developing countries do.

This research also provides evidence for how companies can reap substantial multi-faceted business benefits on two fronts from the stakeholders (Scholder, Webb & Moh, 2006), building and strengthening stakeholder relationships. Firstly, because Hungarian consumers argued to react favourably when learning about CSR activities (Du et al., 2007), and secondly, because they also indicate their willingness to seek employment at and recommend firms engaging in CSR (Sen et al., 2006)

In this way one can argue that the way Hungarian participants indicated perceiving CSR affirms prior findings both regarding the state of CSR acclimatization in the country and stakeholders' general attitudes towards the concept.

### ***Sceptical Hungarians when it comes to the existence of CSR in Hungary***

However favourably participants had thought of CSR in general, their perceptions and attitude indicated a relatively severe alteration from the comprehensively positive sentiment when it came to CSR initiatives specifically in the Hungarian context. Respondents across all sessions could be broken down into two groups, the first group of respondents basically doubted the practice of corporate social responsibility to be present or to be a well-established practice in Hungary, reporting about CSR being simply invisible, while the second one, while acknowledging the existence of CSR initiatives was immensely sceptical about the whole notion.

Therefore, besides those voices that claimed the non-existence of the notion in the country, several participants also revealed their scepticism towards CSR in Hungary. Although they, to some extent, acknowledged the presence of CSR, they were only moderately positive about it, proposing that even though it exists, it is neither widespread nor compelling and has a long

way ahead in evolving still. One participant pointed out that CSR in Hungary is only a feel-good practice, which suddenly appears in the country at Christmas time, when everyone is ready to do some extra good in the society. Another, who has just heard about the notion immediately told, that even though she did not have much thoughts on it, since it was a new notion for her, but she was sure there is space for it to spread, given we were talking about Hungary. Respondents were also highly sceptical about the choices of managers in the country having two possibilities, devoting a certain amount of money for noble causes or pocketing that sum. The general proneness of the participants to think sceptically about CSR manifested itself also in the way how they said they react when they learn that a company of their preference does not engage in CSR activities. With a group of them claiming that their overall impression can change for the worse and they may search for an alternative firm, the generality admitted that they do not bother, they could not care less, they do not even think about that and it would not affect their opinion on the product or company.

I cannot even see its existence in traces (*Participant no.6, focus group 3*).

As far as I can see, it is not something very common here: “Oh my god, can I earn some more money / can I create a better world? “ – facing this dilemma, most of the managers would go for the first option (*Participant no.2, focus group 2*).

This negative attitude of the Hungarians and them arguing the non-existence of CSR recurrently supports the non-institutionalization of the concept in the country, while the emerging scepticism from the stakeholders' side reacts to the thoughts of the critics who argue that CSR serves to dilute its focus on wealth creation (Clement-Jones, 2005; Murray, 2005), in that participants do not believe in the selfless intentions of corporations to engage in CSR and not wanting to benefit from it or to manipulate the public. In relation to that, while researchers claim that today's citizenship efforts, irrespective of whether they are proactive, reactive, or defensive, regularly play a prominent role in corporate reputation (Brown & Dacin, 1997; Bhattacharya & Sen, 2001; Kytte & Ruggie, 2005; Brammer & Pavelin, 2006; Bebbington, Larrinaga & Moneva, 2008; Vanhamme & Grobbsen, 2009) and while it was also verified by the participants in theory beforehand, these findings can be disproved in the Hungarian context at this point, given the fact that Hungarian citizens in reality admit that their vision of the corporations do not change in the wake of CSR pursuits due to their overall scepticism and negligence towards the concept in their inland context.

### *Reasons for the sporadic presence of CSR in Hungary*

Participants agreed that CSR is not a settled routine in Hungary and identified numerous reasons for the sporadic presence of CSR and argued why the concept cannot get a foothold that easily in the country. Firstly, they acknowledged that they, as stakeholders do not traditionally claim the existence of these practices as much as Western- Europeans or Americans do, and with that they agreed that CSR is a lot less rooted in Hungary than it is in Western Europe or in the United States. In relation to that they stressed the absence of partnership in the country in any sense compared to that of the Western countries, implying this general difference between Hungary and the West as a potential cause.

Respondents also admitted the lack of pressure on and expectations for the well-defined aims of CSR activities from their side as well as the absence for the allotted resources and funds dedicated to CSR. Relatedly, participants indicated that CSR initiatives tend to get rooted only to the extent certain regions, environments and cultures require, laying the blame upon themselves as stakeholders, but also on corporations for the moderate prevalence of CSR pursuits in Hungary. Overall, they testified that the concept is only slightly important in Hungary, as consumers are not really interested in it and corporations do not remarkably attend to it either.

There are no expectations with regards to CSR in our society. I can only state that going through the questionnaire, I had to mark having the following thoughts: I did not even think about it, it did not cross my mind, it was not an angle I considered. Thus, as far as I am concerned, I am for sure responsive to some things, but not for these (*Participant no.6, focus group 3*).

The whole concept, the attention to it and the funds for it are all the matter of social and cultural traditions. CSR activities emerge as a result of societal attitudes, as it becomes necessary for the firms to engage in them eventually. This happens in Germany, in France, in The Netherlands. In Hungary it does not. (*Participant no.5, focus group 4*).

Besides the lack of interest, expectation and pressure from the stakeholders' side and the reluctance of corporations to engage in CSR activities in an environment like this, participants also identified the Hungarian economic situation as a reason for the modest presence of CSR initiatives in the country, saying that money plays a vital role both for firms being able to take part in CSR activities and for consumers to be in a situation, where they can even have an eye

on the companies that engage in CSR. Participants reflecting on the economic situation thus justified why certain companies do not pursue CSR in the country at all, next to why stakeholders cannot bring the existence of CSR initiatives forward on their list of important aspects when searching for a job or purchasing products. Similarly to corporations' worry about the bottom line, employees typically have to utmost consider salary as their top priority, whereas for customers, price, value for money and quality are the main criteria, indicating a less wealthy background and limited possibilities for trade-offs.

The heart of the problem in Hungary lies in the economic situation. Entrepreneurs or corporations of Hungarian origin simply cannot afford to devote money to causes like CSR, because they have to strive for survival. In this way it is not just about principles, but about the wherewithal as well (*Participant no.4, focus group 1*).

In case it is vital for me to spare a given sum of money in a given time, then certainly, I will mostly care about the salary I can gain and the opportunities I may have in the future and I would not care that much about whether a company is acting socially responsible or not (*Participant no.7, focus group 4*).

CSR only plays a considerable role in the USA and in Western Europe, where upper-middle class can afford themselves to choose basically any product from the range and to weigh CSR initiatives in purchase decisions. In Hungary, there is no option for that and when purchasing, people have to decide based on such classical dimensions, as price in the first place (*Participant no.5, focus group 4*).

Comprehensively, when Hungarians think about CSR, they welcome the notion and find it constructive, but when talking about the concept in the Hungarian context, they suddenly got a lot more pessimistic, sceptical, and justified the lack of CSR with several grounds from the lack of stakeholder pressure to the economic situation in the country. They too, argued that they cannot perceive CSR as positively in Hungary as they do outside of the country context, because they consider all the prevailing conditions in the country as well, which make them bitter about the concept too.

This country is absolutely unsuitable for surveys like this, since when talking about CSR, we are not just talking about the concept, but we fire up and such wrathfulness spreads around, that should not have anything to do with this subject (*Participant no.6, focus group 3*).

As small a country as Hungary is, it is as if it were a tiny mock-up of Europe, in that it

is fragmented, full of conflicts etc. that manifest itself when thinking about CSR too, just to reflect on the lack of partnership (*Participant no.4, focus group 1*).

Among all focus groups, participants stressed that they do not postulate the existence of CSR practices and pressurize companies to engage in initiatives as much as the leading countries do, which view is supported by scholars. Baskin (2006) in relation to that argues that CSR in the developing country context generally spreads slower and is more fragmented, while it is also suggested that the interest for the concept in CEE has not reached that of the Western-Europeans yet (European Commission, 2005). In fact, the perceptions of the Hungarian citizens regarding their relatively minor expectations and interest for the concept as well as the macroeconomic constraints hindering the acclimatization of CSR are all approved in prior researches (Gulyás et al. 2002; Jamali & Neville, 2011; United Nations, 2007).

Academics state that CSR initiatives in developing countries are among others moulded by weak drivers for CSR and limited CSR advocacy, and implicitly enhanced by the personal values, morals, and altruistic desires of stakeholders (Jamali & Mirshak 2007; Michailides & Lipsett, 2013). Accordingly, as corporate responsibility makes no sense without the altruistic desires of stakeholders, corporations will not value it unless until stakeholders value CSR as well (Wicks, 2004). In this way, unless Hungarians take on more fully their responsibilities as consumers, employees, shareholders, other input suppliers, competitors, and members of communities (Elms, 2006), and try to forget about their bitterness about the political and economic thwarting they mix with CSR, the development, that respondents in theory would indeed welcome, simply cannot arrive in the country.

### ***CSR does exist in certain forms and ways***

Since Hungarian citizens immediately expressed their discredit in the concept when they thought about CSR in their country, they needed some extra time to single out their general pessimism and concentrate on how CSR does show itself in their inland context. When directly and insistently asked about the CSR practices and the categorization of them, the generally sceptical respondents, finally agreed on a few points where they could sense CSR activities being pursued to some extent.

As the first point, a couple of respondents mentioned the role of start-ups in engaging in CSR, having the needed attitudes for the notion, while without exceptions, participants, who could think of any CSR activities going on in the country, all named multinational companies as the main source of those initiatives. Consequently, participants agreed that CSR activities are both

in prevalence and in volume the most visible at multinational companies, because they, unlike SMEs have the means and the resources to engage in them. At the same time, respondents raised that CSR may as well be present at SMEs, but it is not pronounced as such as SMEs are not even aware of the fact that they do carry out such activities.

In addition to that, participants shared the views that there is a major difference between Budapest, the capital city of Hungary and the rest of the country in terms of the spread of CSR. Respondents argued that people in the countryside think differently, find dissimilar things as important, and have divergent attitudes towards concepts like CSR. Besides, participants also believed that information and needs as well as provincial businesses reach people living in the countryside a lot harder and also later than the people and firms based in Budapest. Participants additionally also referred to the even worse financial circumstances of the country-folks that hinder CSR pursuits, while they claimed that the local culture of Budapest is in its specific elements a lot like that of the Western countries, which is a must for the establishment of CSR initiatives.

The country is extremely divided with a centre around Budapest and corporations more or less have the philosophy...In this way, one can further differentiate this question in Hungary, as in the countryside not even the concept is known (*Participant no.4, focus group 1*).

When asked about the change in terms of the spread of CSR practices in the last few years in the country after identifying that CSR initiatives do to some extent exist in Budapest and at multinational practices, participants tended to be slightly positive about the perceived change in the Hungarian context with opinions ranging from quite positive to extremely negative. Optimistic participants called attention to competition as an initiative that moves things forward. They agreed that in case companies sense that they lag behind, stand away or cannot demonstrate anything, their HR people then get together and come up with something CSR related. A couple of respondents also highlighted the fact that CSR is taught as a subject at the university offering the best business training in the country, and graduates there must capture the meaning of CSR. They also mentioned how one can find CSR - related information on more and more websites these days and that firms engage increasingly in the concept in general. Participants illustrated the latter with the example of the spread of the linen bags offered at diverse supermarket chains after Tesco's initiative.

CSR initiatives have made an appearance in the past few years at relatively lots of corporations as I heard in the frame of my studies, and as I see things now, these

activities will still increase in number. More and more companies will engage in CSR activities and companies will support these initiatives increasingly. I think from around 2010 CSR initiatives have been gaining ground in Hungary too (*Participant no.3, focus group 2*).

At the same time, those working in the SME sector reported about bad experiences, all the more, they described the situation as being a disaster, with no progress in place, while there were also some that doubted whether information provided by the companies regarding the increased amount of CSR activities reflected the truth. In the future, respondents would therefore appreciate transparency and frequent communication about CSR initiatives taking place, so that the scepticism towards the concept could lessen.

Companies claiming what they have done last year and the year before might not necessary refer to 2013/ 14/ 15. For a laymen to track how honest these information are and how well they are documented and what is behind them is close to impossible (*Participant no.2, focus group 1*).

The idea of participants that CSR is mostly relevant at multinational corporations, because they have the means and the resources repeatedly confirms the respondents general thoughts of CSR being a philanthropic add on in the country. This reflects prior findings regarding CSR acclimatization in Hungary, since indeed multinational companies initiate the implementation of CSR (Michailides & Lipsett), while a study researching rhetoric and realities of CSR in Europe also suggests that CSR is generally less adopted by SMEs, and it is especially so in Hungary compared to Western Europe, where practical implementations are more advanced (Szlávik, Pálvölgyi, Csigéné Nagypál & Füle, 2006).

Nonetheless, respondents also called attention to the possibility that CSR does exist at smaller companies as well, but they might not actually be aware of pursuing CSR activities. Thus some SMEs seem to instinctively have a set of principles, but they do not link these to their actual engagement in CSR. Again, the findings at this point refer to the persistent disparity of CSR implementation between Hungary and the West, in that it can be possible that certain companies do not even know that they actually engage in CSR, while they do. The disparity between Budapest and the countryside is also pinpointed, providing insights into the spreading of the notion in Hungary and suggesting that in the wake of the heightened attention to CSR lately (Ásványi, 2016; Csigéné Nagypál, 2008), at least in Budapest, CSR as a concept is on the rise.

### ***Important Aspects of CSR***

In order to identify what aspects of CSR are or would be most vital for Hungarian citizens, participants were confronted with a list of CSR aspects. They regarded Environmental protection (n=21) coupled with Energy conservation (n=10) and Policies on fair trade, and equitable trade (n=15) as the most important from the list. These were followed by Fighting poverty (n=10); Protection of human rights in the company's sphere of influence (n=10); Non-discrimination at the workplace (n=10); Primary / secondary education support (n=8); Staff development, in-house education and vocational training (n=7); Workplace health and safety (n=6); Community development (n=6); Commitment to local community protection and engagement (n=6); Statement on normal working hours, maximum overtime and fair-wage structures (n=6); Policy on restrictions on the use of child labour (n=6) and Consumer rights (n=5). The preferences clearly indicate that environmental aspects come first for respondents, while their own wellbeing at the workplaces and general social issues are also of high importance for them. At the same time, it can be argued that their rights as consumers are a lot less vital in their opinion. When probed, they stated that they show the biggest interest for CSR initiatives in case they are personally involved in them, if they can also take part in them, if they occur at their workplace. In line with the results, participants further shared the opinion that CSR is more important for them when they think of themselves as employees rather than of their role as consumers.

I think the existence of CSR activities are definitely more important if I think of myself as an employee, as I spend 8-10 hours at my workplace, while I spend 30 seconds with eating a KitKat bar. Hence, what Nestlé is doing is obviously less important to me than what my employer is doing (*Participant no.8, focus group 4*).

Respondents in fact claimed, that they, as consumers usually, - again somewhat country specifically, as they say- , do not even know which company pursues CSR and which does not. Consequently, participants appreciated team-building opportunities, where colleagues can get together and can mutually contribute to the creation of something noble. In relation to that, Hungarian participants expected firms to put efforts in organizing the ways for employees to participate in CSR initiatives and to seriously engage in them themselves and not only to pretend to do so or to try to devolve the activities or responsibility itself in a way. Consequently, respondents found monetary donation of secondary importance and as a fake practice, as they could not see the active engagement of corporations behind it, while they thought very negatively about the practices when consumers have to pay for the social



responsible behaviour of the firms by paying more for certain products.

The findings of the study at this point show evidence of how CSR in developing countries is driven by major socioeconomic aggravations, as opposed to consumer protection, fair trade and green marketing as in the Western countries, given that respondents are worried about their own wellbeing as employees of certain firms and the wellbeing of the whole of the nation and confessedly care less about CSR in their roles as consumers. Nevertheless, climate change concerns do matter to Hungarians, that typically would not matter in a developing country context (Amaeshi et al., 2006), which cast doubts that CSR in Hungary's case can be labelled as bearing only the peculiarities of CSR in emerging markets and confirms the fact that Hungary is proxy to both the Western and Eastern markets (Krumwiede et al., 2012). With regards to that, although participants claimed that they usually do not even know about CSR initiatives as consumers, they increasingly tend to define for themselves what they, as stakeholders would expect and not accept from corporations positing to pursue CSR initiatives. This reveals the rising consumer consciousness among Hungarians in spite of their general proneness to see themselves as unconscious and powerless stakeholders, indicating at least a slight change towards the naturalization of responsible thinking in the country (Csigéné Nagypál, 2008; Gulyás et al., 2012; Karcagi-Kováts, n.d.; Ligeti & Oravetz, 2009).

### ***Perception of Corporate Motivations for CSR***

Respondents' perceptions of the intentions behind CSR varied from believing that the main incentive of corporations to engage in CSR activities is the urge for making the world a better place, having the right positions to intervene, to the vastly suspicious ones. One participant in particular pointed out that it is also a decision of the multinational companies to engage in CSR activities and not to spend their funds on broadcasting even more commercials, thus they at least try to contribute to the greater good, but his idea got strongly contested by the majority, stressing that the aim of CSR initiatives are exclusively the selfish interests of the firms. A group of participants identified PR and marketing purposes as underlying interests. Respondents argued that the real goal of these initiatives is to post about them on corporate websites and social media and to be seen as more likeable in the eyes of the stakeholders and eventually sell more of their products. In this way, they saw CSR activities being only window dressing.

I have not seen or heard of anyone, who pursues CSR but does not communicate about it. I sense that to be able to communicate about it is the main aim [...] The essence of it is to gain bigger publicity, better assessment and more money at the end of the day

*(Participant no.3, focus group 1).*

On the one hand, the critical thinking of participants manifested itself in how another group identified the interest of companies to engage in CSR as motives of commercial nature. Participants here concluded that the only motivation of firms is to gain increased profit and to benefit from the initiatives in one way or the other, and if there is no realizable profit as an outcome of the activities, firms would not engage in CSR. They at the same time acknowledged, that CSR initiatives may be great sources of profit nowadays.

I do not think there is any other motivation for firms to engage in CSR but gaining more money and power. If a company can profit from pursuing CSR activities, then it will engage in CSR, if it cannot, well, then it will not care about it *(Participant no.1, focus group 3).*

In relation to that, participants are divided into two groups in terms of whether they acknowledge the benefits CSR provides to society, or whether they do not care at all, after having noticed that the main incentive for corporations for the pursuit of CSR being the bottom line. Some shared the opinion that companies do have to engage in CSR and that it is not a problem if they profit from it too, as long as it gives back to society as well, given that creating shared value does just as much good to the planet and people. Greenwashing came up as well, and some echoed that even those companies whose operation is undoubtedly environmentally destructive, should carry on engaging in CSR activities.

Engaging in CSR activities is valuable for the firms, useful to the world, firms are happy, the world is happy, poor kids are happy too, because they can go to university. I think it is a favourable practice *(Participant no.1, focus group 2).*

I do think it is ironic and makes me laugh when I see MOL Bubi (a form of communal bike rental system in Budapest – auth.) around, but it does not make anything better if, given that we all know what MOL (Hungary's largest oil firm – auth.) is doing, they do not engage in CSR activities. They should! [...] It does not hurt my feelings at all *(Participant no.3, focus group 2).*

Others were of the opinion that CSR actions are simply ingenuous and they just do not want to get involved in them. Participants sharing this view argued that they do not even care about such initiatives once they realized what the real interests behind them are.

I do not care if a company creates a training program, because I immediately think that

it is guided by their own interests, therefore it appears disbelieving to me (*Participant no.6, focus group 3*).

The findings of this research indicate that the vast majority of Hungarian citizens perceived CSR either as a PR, communication or marketing tool to achieve better corporate reputation or as a concept that is carried out for the sake of the economic benefits its existence can provide the organizations pursuing it, rather than the genuine desire of the firms to do good for the society and environment. Their thoughts reflect that of the critics' of CSR in that the notion as is insincere and instead of the genuine and intrinsic motives behind it to create a better world, corporations only care about their corporate image and the commercial gain they can realize by the pursuit, indicating purely extrinsic motives (Bakan, 2004; Chandler, 2006; Frankental, 2001; Lichtenstein et al., 2004; Roberts, 2001). While, their opinion additionally echoes the general views both with regards to the emerging markets and CEE, namely that CSR is usually perceived as marketing by the stakeholders (Elms, 2006). Besides, the general perceptions of the corporate motives sadly match the real intentions that guide Hungarian firms for CSR executions, since according to a study by Ligeti and Oravetz (2009), human resource management (e.g. motivation) and PR concerns, alongside with the aim of gaining good standing with the authorities, to be able to open up new markets, boosting R&D activities and winning awards are the main drivers for CSR engagement. In connection with that, it is important to stress that participants acknowledged that self-serving interests of firms overshadow ethical considerations, since the faint positive voices regarding firms motives and actions were put to silence by the others, who did not even question that CSR could work differently in Hungary.

RQ2: Generational differences as contributors to understandings of and attitudes towards CSR

*This section presents the findings relating to RQ2 – how generational differences can contribute to the understandings of and attitudes towards CSR among Hungarian citizens. It first investigates how different generations think their successors / ancestors perceive the notion, further it outlines the roles generations attach to firms in fighting societal problems, while lastly, it discusses generations' thoughts on multinational companies and the concepts they link CSR to.*

***How generations perceive the difference in terms of the interest and advocacy of CSR between themselves and their successors / ancestors***

When directly asked if they sensed any difference in how their generation and the older /

younger ones differed in terms of their awareness and advocacy of, and interest in CSR in the Hungarian context, participants did not share the same opinion. One participant of the elder ones raised that CSR could be better embraced by the younger generations, but his thoughts were not shared by any other members of Baby boomers and Generation X-ers. Participants of the older generations were therefore rather sceptical about the existence of such differences among them and the Millennials generation, and suggested that it could as well be a matter of intellect rather than generational differences, as they did not see huge ones. Respondents claimed that their children, typically members of the Millennials generation only seem to favour CSR initiatives and act socially responsibly, but in reality, they are most probably not that responsible citizens as they would want them to be.

Do you think they also live accordingly? I doubt it (Participant 1 referring to what Participant 4 said) [...] They are enthusiastic in words, [...] they talk about it, if they would need to act too, they would make a huge fuss about it (*Participant no.1, focus group 1*).

Millennials on the other hand, saw these things differently. They did believe that there was a significant difference between them and the older generations with regards to their CSR advocacy and interest in the notion. They argued that age is an important indicator when it comes to interest in the notion, as the older generations care about CSR a lot less, only thinking about their own interests and rising, as they were taught to do so in the past era. One respondent however emphasized that generational differences in this way are only valid for the Hungarian context, as in Germany for example, even people who could not care less about behaving socially responsibly know as much about CSR as those Hungarians who try to get familiar with the concept, irrespective of generational differences, with that again highlighting the major difference in the advocacy of CSR between Hungary and the West.

I think rather the smaller start-ups [...] engage in these things, than for instance a 60-year old, moustached construction contractor, who [...] was not grown up in this world and has not been socialized this way (*Participant no.2, focus group 2*).

The results of asking the different generations how they reckon their younger or older fellows relate to CSR clearly suggest scepticism from the Baby boomers' and Generation X-ers' side with regards to the advancement in their society regarding how responsible thinking as such matters to citizens, and positivism from the Millennials' side. The latter stress that there is a certain evolution in terms of how generations see concepts like CSR and that they think absolutely differently than their forefathers. Thus, the findings in this way confirm that

Millennials can be thought of as „game changers” in Hungary as well („Millennials Look To”, 2014).

### ***How different generations see the role of corporations in tackling environmental and social problems***

Based on the statements of the participants of the focus group sessions, it is obvious, that in spite of how older generations think, there is a distinct variance with regards to how the generation of the Baby boomers and Generation X-ers perceive CSR compared to the Millennials. The most obvious difference is to be seen when the generations are asked about the role of the government, corporations and individuals in handling social issues in the country. The older respondents argued that the government impacts everything, while corporations can only come off badly from all the regulations the government conducts and so they do not consider corporations having any responsibility.

In my opinion, everything that CSR embodies would be the task and responsibility of the government [...] Everything would be their responsibility, health care, social issues (*Participant no.5, focus group 3*).

Consequently, because they believed the government should tackle social and environmental problems in the society, participants of the older generations were generally sceptical about CSR as a concept and did not believe in it.

I question the whole existence of CSR: Why is there a need for that? Because our world is made so that there are certain people on the periphery or in a tough situation. It is because of the inequalities in the distribution of wealth, if it were not like that, then there would be no need to support anybody [...] If everybody would gain a decent pension, no one would need to be aided and go and beg for food (*Participant no.1, focus group 1*).

On the contrary, while Millennials also claimed that governments have a major responsibility in fighting social and environmental problems, they emphasized the important role of corporations in contributing to the creation of a better world too, and their power for triggering very strong and positive processes, since they claimed that governments are just simply not efficient in the mitigation of those problems. Thus they did not suggest any of the parties to pick up the fight on their own, but to join their forces, so that individuals eventually could also join in.

I would say if governments were the implanters of CSR and people could see that the parent companies of the brands they prefer engage in CSR activities, then these three together could achieve much more than any of the three alone or two out the three (*Participant no.3, focus group 2*).

I reckon if governments, Microsoft, Apple and Facebook would join in, they could give a major boost to CSR and achieve amazing things, because they are clever, people listen to them, it is cool to follow them and to buy their products, as well as follow what they communicate (*Participant no.5, focus group 2*).

Millennials agreed, that because unlike their predecessor' generation, theirs has been and is being brought up in an environment, where corporate enterprises make up a decisive part of the economy and hence their ideology and attitude is so significantly different from that of the older generations' in every single aspect that has something to do with businesses, they attach concrete responsibilities to firms as well, as they know exactly what corporate enterprises can give to the world. They identified firms' most vital role in raising awareness to global and regional problems by communicating about them in the frame of their CSR initiatives.

The findings of the research are typically in line with what previous researches suggest, namely that due to the socialist heritage, the public feels social responsibility to be the primary role and sole responsibility of the governments (Steurer et al., 2011). In this sense, how the members of the older generations think can be fully justified with their prior experiences from the socialist era, which is in stark contrast with how the Millennials think, given they do not only perceive governments to have an unaccompanied role in fighting social problems, but they tone the responsibility of corporations too. Their behaviour certifies the changing nature of societal expectations regarding the responsible role of business of the corporations in society (Golob & Bartlett, 2007) that seemingly does not affect the way of thinking of the older generations yet.

Nevertheless, Millennials also acknowledge the crucial role of governments in the establishment of the concept in Hungary, so that corporations can have a solid ground to start pursuing CSR activities. They however, scholars alike realize that this is something currently still missing from the Hungarian context, since there are still not broadly efficient and appropriate regulations, in other words national management and planning with regards to CSR that can set the directions for companies for their CSR engagements (Kandó, 2016; Ite, 2004; 2005; Mazurkiewicz et al., 2005b as cited in Steurer et al., 2011). The findings in addition also show evidence for the dissimilar views different generations have on business

citizenship („Millennials Look To”, 2014).

### ***How generations think about multinational companies and what other concepts they link CSR to***

The significant differences in terms of how they see the role of governments and corporations, and with that the justification of CSR among generations is however not the only reason why Baby boomers and Generation X-ers think rather sceptical of CSR as a concept. Baby boomers and Generation X-ers opposition with regards to CSR may be attributed to the fact, that as many of them deny the need for CSR, the concept does seem to be to some extent present in the country, largely at multinational companies, but they are not in favour of multinational companies to say the least. First of all, they think multinational companies simply exploit their workforce, take their profit out of the country and rule the whole of the supplier market, supressing and quashing the smaller firms, undermining local producers in addition to bringing globalisation to the Hungarians.

Multinational companies came here so that we cannot produce anything [...] They have destroyed well-functioning Hungarian firms, made their operation impossible and they now produce their own products in those plants (*Participant no.6, focus group 3*).

All the more, they object CSR initiatives, since multinational companies are the advocates of these activities, and they find multinationals as bossy in a way in the Hungarian context as they found the leaders in the socialist system before.

The only difference is that doing something for the greater good was a policy and a governing principle led by the governors of the communist system, while now multinationals set the conceptions (*Participant no.5, focus group 1*).

Consequently, their general attitude towards CSR is hostile, as many of them link CSR to socialism and the so called societal work they had to carry out, so that they could become a good socialist.

I have also worked at a multinational company for 15 years. When it comes to CSR, I think of socialism all the time (*Participant no.1, focus group 1*).

And whereas they tend to think back of the life they once had with pleasing nostalgia bringing up all the funny and nice things and feelings they shared, from everybody having Trabant as a car, a small summer-house and a secure career path, families coming together and building their homes with the help of each other to how they have been craving for everything that was

sold in Vienna, they also recall having compulsory things to do being a good socialist. And this is exactly what they would not want to be remembered again, but what they see in CSR activities too, as it seems, since when learning about CSR initiatives, they immediately linked them to the so called communist Saturday, when they were ordered to collect garbage in the wood.

When I was a student, I was on several occasions assigned to collecting garbage at certain nature reservations and this is why I do not really feel like doing such things anymore (*Participant no.2, focus group 1*).

Millennials, on the other hand believe that there is nothing compulsory about CSR activities, and the peculiarities of them are that one has a great time taking part in them and that people generally are aware of the fact that CSR is actually a great thing, making things better. They only after about a minute of silence could think of concepts they can link CSR to, thus they did not immediately connect it to anything as the older participants did. Finally they identified Islam, where charity is one of the five pillars and the partnering of individuals and communities to help each other out as similar concepts. Unconsciously however, they also recalled socialism, since they mentioned some aspects of it, though they insisted they were only joking. Overall, they claimed that the two things, namely communism and CSR are two totally different concepts. Thus, because they do not think that it is only the government that should contribute to creating a better world, in addition to that as they do not have any preconceptions towards multinational companies, since they did not live in the communist era and did not have to experience how the world has changed, and with that, what multinational companies may have destroyed in their country, they tend to have a generally more positive attitude about the concept of CSR.

This contrast in the perceptions of the different generations can be noticed also in the ways they think about the whole concept during the conversation. While the older participants mainly searched for the failures of the system and with that the ones of the concept, the younger ones were enthusiastic for learning about CSR, had loads of questions in terms of whether certain aspects belong to CSR or not, and constantly realized how many different things they previously have not thought about can also be incorporated in the socially responsible behaviour of corporations. With that they meet the actual expectations regarding the usual behaviour of their generation, namely to pose and answer a series of questions and being confident and optimistic as opposed to their forefathers (Deal et al., 2010). As conversations evolved, they accordingly came up with additional ideas regarding what they



consider as being CSR, even though they found the notion hard to specify, owing to the limitless possibilities attached to it. Yet, they reckoned that companies need to take on extra expenses so that their activities can be named as CSR, that environment protection as such does not equal CSR and that a feature of CSR initiatives is that they go beyond legal obligations. In addition to that, they also claimed that CSR initiatives of a company with a bad reputation do not look as appealing to them or touch them and that CSR initiatives can only matter to them, if price and quality of a product wins them as customers in the first place.

Overall, while the older generations associate multinational companies with organizations solely aiming for high profits and suppressing the smaller, once successful Hungarian firms, and therefore, they lost all their confidence in them, in fact they educated an adversary attitude towards them and everything they could link their actions to (Metaxas & Tsavdaridou, 2010), Millennials do not even have such thoughts, as they grew up in a world, where the presence of multinational companies was unquestionably necessary for the economic growth. By the same logic, the attitudes of the respondents among Baby boomers and Generation X-ers approves the findings of Radácsi (2006), Zsolnay (2005) and Metaxas & Tsavdaridou (2010) in that the concept of CSR makes older generations remindful of the socialist era and counter the notion in its essence, since they do not ever want to be part of something that they sense could bear any mandatory character. Consequently, whereas Millennials perceive the required presence of the whole department of a company for instance in order to carry out a certain CSR activity for the greater good as a plume to spend some time together, older generations feel the urge to ring the alarm and back out.

RQ3: How Millennials define their role in promoting CSR in Hungary compared to the older generations

*This section presents the findings pertaining to RQ3 – what, if any is the difference in how Millennials define their role in promoting CSR in Hungary compared to the older generation?*

### ***What Hungarian Baby boomers and Generation X-ers think they could do with regards to supporting CSR initiatives***

The differences in terms of the attitudes and perceptions of the participants between the older generations and the Millennials culminate in their perceived roles in advocating CSR activities. It has already been argued that the older participants identified governments to only be in charge of solving social and environmental problems, therefore their unwillingness to also do their part is nearly natural, as is their attitude to not attribute big relevance to their own

role in promoting CSR. They first of all believed that they simply cannot have any influence on such processes that are out of their scope, and CSR, in their opinion, is a process of that kind. In this way they do not even consider thinking of what their role might be in advocating CSR. In fact, they seemed to be startled when hearing the question regarding their role in spreading the concept and stated that such a commitment is absolutely none of their business. They however also added an explanation for their passiveness, namely that the government in Hungary simply does not ensure and indicate the paths in which individuals or even corporations could help them in fighting the emerging problems „because the ways in which one could offer help are not organised at all, neither individuals nor corporations see their manners in providing help” (*Participant no.3, focus group 3*). In this sense, the results of this research show evidence of governments in CEE countries still mirroring rather than reversing the low interest in CSR among both companies, and stakeholders in the region (Steurer & Konrad, 2009) and so question the role of governments in the perceived advancement regarding the spread of CSR in Hungary.

### ***How Baby boomers and Generation X-ers even hinder the spread of CSR as a concept***

Baby boomers and Generation X-ers do not feel any pressure coming from the society regarding their engagement in the advocacy of CSR, all the more, one of them even confessed having supported a socially non-responsible initiative at his workplace recently, namely that women older than 35 do not get hired there, illustrating the absolute lack of pressure. He explained his move by stating that individuals nowadays are extremely vulnerable, especially if their living is at stake depending on if they agree or not. His thoughts got affirmed by others who admit that because of their dread for their future and because making people aged older than 40 redundant became an everyday practice, they decide not to do anything anymore. Participants confirmed their fear from possible retaliation if they try to change something at their workplace, while many have experienced that nothing has changed after they tried to step up, which made them indifferent towards actions regarding social responsibility. Therefore, not only they do not feel pressurized, but they also try not to put pressure on their companies to engage in CSR.

At my previous workplace I tried to do a lot for my inferiors, telling my own boss what should be and what should not be done, but I always got the answer that we can leave the company if we do not like how things work there (*Participant no.4, focus group 3*).

We usually ‘save the world’ sitting in a pub talking, or we discuss at home how things

should be done, but in reality, we do not do much... (*Participant no.7, focus group 3*).

The same goes for persuading others to advocate CSR, members of Baby boomers and Generation X-ers do not commit to that either. As for giving voice to their opinions as consumers about given companies' operation, CSR activities or the absence of them, about half of them mentioned that they have not even heard about anything like purchasing or boycotting certain products because one intends to reward or punish firms depending on how socially responsible they are, while the other half of them admitted punishing certain companies. Nonetheless, participants of the older generation punish those companies that display their socially responsible behaviour, as they claimed that they do not want to feel that something is pressed upon them or they are forced to behave in a defined way, therefore statements on products referring to the socially responsible behaviour of companies are counterproductive in their case.

I deliberately do not buy products that advertise what kind of CSR initiative I can support by purchasing them. And not because I would not want to support noble causes, but because I do not want anybody to pressurize me to buy something because they do something good (*Participant no.2, focus group 1*).

Likewise, Baby boomers and Generation X-ers can be divided into two groups when it comes to their willingness to potentially take part in CSR activities at their workplace and by that contribute to the spread of the concept. Half of them agreed that they would under no circumstances like to take part, again, because it seems like a must for them. While there is a group of people, who would be delighted to know about such initiatives at their workplace and would join the activities gladly if they were provided, saying that they would love to be part of such organizations, but they find it not their task to set them up. Overall, members of the older generations very much doubt that they could do something for the promotion of CSR, they do not think that it would be their responsibility and a good proportion of them would not even want to do anything.

The dread that Baby boomers and Generation X-ers described when it comes to their future employment approves the ongoing practices in the country, in that people aged over 42 or even 35, in most cases having difficulties in finding a job („Álláskeresés 50 felett", 2013; Kutasi, 2011). As they say, this fear for their own future stops them from being thoughtful of CSR, hence their interest is to maintain the status quo, as in case they do not try to step up and change things at their workplace, they have a better chance to keep their job.

As for pressurizing the companies they reported about, members of these two generations touched upon the fact that companies unveiling their socially responsible behaviour are given a bad name in their eyes, since they interpret that gesture of companies as an attempt to, in fact, put pressure on them as consumers. This finding is in line with Zsolnay et.al.'s (2005) argument that public trust in some cases can even lessen in corporations communicating about their CSR activities in the CEE region and corresponds with the indications of Vallentin's (2003) research, namely that in certain cases, companies that are most active within CSR are the ones mostly criticised, whereas companies doing the least are correspondingly the least criticised.

Also, the evidence shown in this study with regards to the negative sentiment of some Hungarians towards the firms that propagate their CSR initiatives supports Ligeti and Oravetz's (2009) prior findings in that companies, as a result of the bad reception of their CSR communication do not wish to display their activities or in even worse cases, they stop or not even start to engage in CSR initiatives. With regards to that, one can argue that while respondents previously expressed their desire for the future to hear more about companies' CSR initiatives, they tend to perceive this communication negatively. Morsing, Schultz and Nielsen (2008) call this phenomena the 'Catch 22' of communicating CSR: Even though companies are systematically encouraged to engage in CSR, they are simultaneously discouraged to communicate about this engagement by the reactions they eventually gain from the consumers.

### ***Millennials' attitude towards CSR initiatives***

Millennials' attitude towards the advocacy of CSR shows distinct differences compared to the older generations. Even though, they, the older generations alike, do not feel any pressure coming from the society to engage in CSR activities, they admit that they feel that the older members of the society put up for them to change how things generally work in the country, including corporate culture and as they say, these expectations to some extent got ingrained in their mind-set as well.

My surroundings, my teachers, my elder colleagues all expect my generation to change corporate culture and the way things work in Hungary, because they sense that we are a bit more open to the best practices in place elsewhere. They pass it onto us, as they say they cannot change things anymore (*Participant no.4, focus group 2*).

Consequently, they do think that they have a big responsibility in making the world a better

place. Millennials share the vision that they even as individuals can achieve a lot and that their liability compared to that of the elder generations is even bigger, as they know exactly that what has and is being done to the planet points in the wrong direction, while the elderly could still be optimistic back in time. In relation to that they believe that there are certain focal points for their generation to urgently do something about, such as environment protection, while they pinpoint their importance in the labour market in the coming decades as well.

Them trying to make the world a better place also showed itself in how they became more conscious about their decisions when choosing their service providers, picking products and searching for their ideal workplaces, as they tend to care about how they, by getting in touch with certain companies can contribute to creating a better world. Thus, they are inclined to prefer companies that act socially responsible to the ones that do not, and are willing to be loyal to them as well. In this fashion they tend to reward certain companies, while they also punish others by boycotting their products, services and the jobs offered by them.

I can easily boycott a company that positions itself as premium – I am specifically talking about Apple now –, since to me, it is not premium when Chinese children assemble the products for a bowl of rice, no matter how crazy the whole world is about it and how superb I otherwise find the products (*Participant no.4, focus group 2*).

In relation to their willingness to reward and punish companies depending on how socially responsible they deem them, Millennials in Hungary are typically willing to switch brands to the ones offering the same products or services, while sharing their experiences about the responsible and even about the non-responsible companies with their friends and family whenever they have the opportunity.

Basically if I use a product that I am satisfied with and the brand acts socially responsible [...], then I tell my friends and family about it. All the more, if my workplace orders for instance bottled water for the employees to drink, then I tell them to order the kind that does something to the greater good too, while being of the same quality (*Participant no.3, focus group 4*).

It is also clearly to see that Hungarian Millennials tend to influence companies operating in their country not only as consumers, but as employees as well, as they admit that they have the confidence to step up for the causes they find as important for themselves and their colleagues within the company. A few of them even mentioned the impulse in them to fight for causes they deem as crucial, feeling the urge to talk over their firm about socially

responsible behaviour, and try to motivate them with their own attitude to engage in these practices so that they can spread in the society. Some even go further and want to have an impact on companies whose operation do not actually affect them, but that they find as irresponsible for their fellow creators. Those having this mission even reported to have taken steps to stop the non-responsible operation of companies and harming the consumers and employees. In this sense, Millennials unlike Baby boomers and Generation X-ers pressurize companies that are not acting socially responsible and not those that broadcast that they do so. On the other hand, the vast majority of them acknowledged not expecting being provided with possibilities to engage in CSR activities at their workplace either, but many of them would be thrilled to take part in them, once the opportunity was there, claiming that those actions would mean so much to them and they would feel that they are part of something majestic besides doing their actual job.

Based on how Millennials think about CSR initiatives, one can argue that even though there is no pressure they feel to directly engage in CSR activities, they are in fact pressured and feel the need to excel their forefathers, just as Strauss and Howe (2000, 2003) previously stated. In relation to that, the attitude of the Hungarian Millennials tally that of the Western- European and American ones, since they also personally want to do something so that the world they live in can eventually be a better place and believe in their own responsibility, as well as their power and potential to rationalize significant changes (Strauss & Howe 2000, 2003; McGlone et al., 2011). The findings regarding the mentality of the respondents correspond with how Millennials as a generation have been previously typified by researchers, them being ready to punish, reward and switch brands subject to the socially responsible behaviour of them, in addition to spread the word in case they come across something exceptionally good or bad regarding the operation of the firms (Cone Communication Millennial CSR Study, 2015; „Millennials Look To”, 2014). Moreover, Hungarian Millennials similarly to what prior researches stressed influence organizations not only as consumers, but as employees as well, having the motivation to discuss their needs and desires in terms of the socially responsible behaviour of their employers (Altes, 2009; McGlone et al., 2011). However, there is a distinct difference to notice between Millennials of Hungary and the West, in that Hungarians to date do not actually expect their employers to engage in CSR activities or to provide them the possibility to take part in them, but they are willing to procure pursuits if they feel it is needed and indeed happy to join them („Millennials Look To”, 2014).

### ***Millennials' attributed role for themselves in promoting CSR***

Even though Millennials seem to be committed to change the world for the better, reward, punish and pressurize companies depending on the extent to which they act socially responsible, use expressions such as „engaged for a while in fighting” and „as individuals having responsibility for claiming our needs for socially responsible operations of firms”, they did not link their actions and thoughts with being the advocator of CSR activities, since when asked about their actual role in connecting with spreading CSR, they too, look puzzled. One participant also raised the query whether they collectively think about how good it is that CSR per se exists, which resonated well with how the others were seeing this question: Never discussing the concept among themselves, consequently they did not define their role in connection to it either.

Obviously, what I actually do for contributing to the creation of a better world, I observe as me individually taking part in it, rather than advocating CSR activities (*Participant no.6, focus group 2*).

Indeed, the majority of them do not even think that promoting, spreading or advocating CSR activities as such would be their job or responsibility to take. Some argued that pursuing them when provided with possibilities to do so, is their task, again some unsteadily claimed that promoting CSR could also be their responsibility, but even they got easily convinced by the mass stressing that advocating CSR initiatives is absolutely not their job, maximum their hobby. Consequently, they agreed that promoting CSR initiatives is the job of companies pursuing the activities and detected the major role of the CEOs' of firms, having the resources and the power to promote. In this way they identified different levels relating to the responsibility in the promotion of CSR, and labelled theirs as bearing zero to very little, having no time and getting no refunds for the promotion.

At the age of 20, in the middle of my student life, I do not think that I would passionately need to stand by CSR initiatives [...] so I would rather say that this will be of real importance to me in the future (*Participant no.3, focus group 2*).

Millennials in this way do not define a specific role for themselves in the advocacy of CSR either. In this sense, they do not differ that much from the older generations, although, they, in comparison to them, do believe they have a major role in contributing to making the world a better place and in relation to that they unconsciously do support CSR initiatives. Yet, they do not think of themselves as being the advocators of the concept and having a major role in

spreading it to the extent to which Millennials in Western Europe and in the United States so (McPherson, 2016; „Millennials Look To”, 2014). Nonetheless, even without them realizing, their behaviour, actions and attitude actually help the acclimatization of CSR in Hungary.

### ***Hungarian Millennials’ role in setting a good example for the generations to come***

Millennials in Hungary, notwithstanding that they do not believe in their comprehensive role in CSR advocacy, do not deny that they have one major role when it comes to CSR initiatives, namely to set a good example for the generations to come. Hungarian Millennials expect the next generations to be brought up experiencing that companies all around pursue CSR activities and that socially responsible behaviour is actually a must. They admitted that however hard they try to act socially responsible themselves and to put pressure on companies to engage in CSR initiatives, they still sense the legacy of the socialist era first-hand in that they sometimes still do not perceive certain things as evident, can be indifferent towards social responsibility and towards the concept of CSR.

This mentality of being neutral towards social responsibility and CSR from time to time, that I can sense with regards to my own behaviour as well, is probably the legacy of the socialist system for the whole of CEE. I have to say that I neither not feel guilty nor do something about it, when I do not have the possibility to act socially responsible or see companies not acting so, while when having the chance to choose, I usually choose the responsible options (*Participant no.2, focus group 4*).

Millennials having been brought up by Baby boomers and Generation X-ers state that the maximum they can do is to behave as exemplary as possible, so that their successors can see their case as an example to be followed and they in the future as a consequence, can not only support CSR initiatives, but be also promoters of it. As Millennials claimed, the implantation of CSR, every new notion alike, takes decades to get rooted, thus they believe they simply cannot do more than trying their best to outstrip the behaviour of the older generations. With that they justified that they cannot be assigned to any major role in the advocacy of CSR and testified the responsibility only of the generations to come in promoting the concept.



## Chapter V.

### CONCLUSION

This chapter provides practical implications, outlines the research limitations and suggestions for future research, while presenting the main findings of the research.

#### Limitation and suggestion for future research

Overall, the current study is limited by a few aspects, which give several implications for further research. Generally, the qualitative approach and within that the usage of focus group methodology yielded rich insights into the attitudes and perceptions of Hungarian citizens regarding the notion of CSR, especially so because researches on the stakeholder perspective of CSR in Hungary are extremely scarce, thus the discussions proved to be highly effective. However, the study is based on a relatively small sample, of 30 participants, therefore the outcomes of the research should not be deemed as being representative for the whole for the Hungarian population. Thus, it would be advisable to observe whether further research could reach identical results providing the sample size would be much larger. In addition, future research could also take notice of the sample demographics in detail. Even though this current research investigated the perceptions of three different generations (Baby Boomers, Generation X-ers and Millennials), but because the study also aimed to specifically examine how Millennials, compared to their forefathers define their roles in the advocacy of CSR, the two older generations were mixed in the sessions, resulting in a disproportion in terms of the total number of respondents interviewed from the three generations. Thirdly, it has also been raised by the participants, that their sample was not representative for the population in the sense that the vast majority of them hold a university degree or were currently enrolled in either a Bachelor or a Master program. In this way, even though the attitudes of the population interviewed could be well confronted to one another in this specific case, their generally high education levels could influence their perceptions towards CSR. Similarly, in its present form, the research only reached participants living in the capital of Hungary. Although some of them originates from the countryside, even they have been living in Budapest for a few years or even decades. Since respondents during the interviews stressed that CSR per se is only present in Budapest, if anywhere, their perceptions and knowledge on the concept could be influenced by their current habitation. Consequently, future research should sample participants in a way that the variety of educational backgrounds as well is ensured, while the comparative element of the study is enhanced by the recruitment of country-folks.

Besides, given the fact that the likes of this study are truly rare in the whole of the CEE region, CSR being a new notion in the member countries, while the attitude of the citizens is said to be alike among the countries, this research provides important implications not only in Hungary's case. Yet, as the focal point of the study was to dig into how the Hungarian citizens specifically relate to CSR, for the better understanding of the surrounding countries regarding the attitudes of their citizens, it would be even more valuable if further research would capture the country-specific factors in each case.

Further, even though descriptive statistics was also applied as an additional method in this study, the scope of it could still be extended and thus the results could provide ever deeper insights into the understanding and attitudes of the respondents. For example, while this research has employed the questionnaire to study the general perceptions and attitudes of Hungarians regarding the concept of CSR and the focus group conversations to learn about the generational differences in terms of the attitudes and perceptions, variations among the answers of the different generations throughout the whole of the questionnaire could have additionally been given close attention to and so the mean answers could have also been contrasted. Finally, with regards to that, the themes identified in the frame of this research could be followed up and validated by quantitative research.

### Practical Implications

Despite the fact that this qualitative research lacks generalizability, based on the findings of this study, a few pragmatic considerations can be argued for practitioners. Essentially, the findings of this research suggest that Hungarian participants indicate a generally positive attitude towards CSR as a concept, but their opinion suddenly takes a turn for the worse when they are asked about CSR in their inland context. However, there are numerous possibilities for corporations to change this negative sentiment, all the more as Hungarian stakeholders can be further distinguished in terms of whether they are highly sceptical about CSR, whether they simply do not see the presence of it in the country or whether they prefer the idea of CSR, just do not want to take the lead as the advocators of it.

Respondents raised that they care a lot more about CSR initiatives in case their employers pursuit them, than if they learn about such initiatives as consumers. This aspect could be of high importance for the companies operating in the Hungarian market, so much the more as stakeholders typically identify selfish motives, such as marketing and PR purposes and increased commercial gain with CSR initiatives crossing them as consumers, for example

when the CSR activities of certain firms are communicated on the products. By focusing on CSR initiatives targeting their employees, rather than their consumers, corporations therefore could be better off, since this way stakeholders would be less sceptical about the aim of the pursuits and would be also a lot more engaged. Due to the fact that a notable proportion of the participants do enjoy partaking in CSR initiatives, familiarizing the others with how majestic it is to assist would strengthen the so far limited CSR advocacy in the country. However, as the Baby boomers and Generation X-ers link CSR to the socialist era, in that taking part in the activities is a must, companies should keep in mind, that the activities should not be advertised as compulsory, so that the scepticism of the older generations could lessen. Given that the older generations also have a certain revulsion against multinational companies and CSR in Hungary is normally initiated by the big corporations, organizing CSR activities within the firm's own operation, rather than spending a significant sum on CSR communication, sponsorship and donation could also motivate SMEs to join in. In this way, the scepticism could again drop if seen that CSR is not necessarily about multinational companies trying to benefit from the pursuits.

As described above, the findings indicate that there could be a few techniques to successfully address the sceptical respondents and change their negative attitudes. As for those citizens, who barely see the existence of CSR in the country, it would be appropriate for corporations to introduce the concept to them as employees of certain firms, so that they would immediately esteem the CSR as desirable, while attaching a positive corporate image to companies pursuing CSR initiatives. As CSR is a new notion in Hungary and because of the developing country context, it is driven by major socioeconomic aggravations, the only way the notion could take roots is by first giving attention to the wellbeing of employees and through the persuasion of them to also help others by partaking in CSR activities organized by their employers. Then, when CSR is already a recognized and beloved concept, it could also turn to addressing consumers, as Hungarian stakeholders would then be less rejective about learning from such initiatives also as consumers and about the whole communication on the concept and the intentions behind it.

Practitioners on the other hand should also take note of the fact that the generation of Millennials is usually a lot more open to the concept and even though they do not assign any role for themselves regarding the advocacy of CSR, they perceive the phenomena as overall beneficial for everybody, already even as consumers. Thus, companies, next to trying to neutralize the negative attitudes of the older generations, should also endeavour to sustain and even strengthen Millennials' comprehensive favourable attitude towards the concept, while to

try to even tempt Generation Z to promote CSR in Hungary in the future.

## Conclusion

It looks as if CSR were gaining a foothold around the globe, still, there are certain aspects of it that are yet to be widely investigated, such as looking at the notion from the stakeholders' point of view and examining how the concept is made sense of outside of its Western European stronghold. This research made an attempt to enrich the notion by incorporating these two novel angles of looking at CSR and studied how the attempts of the Western world to facilitate CSR in developing countries succeeded. More specifically, it looked at how CSR gets rooted in Hungary - a country transforming from socialism to market economy and becoming part of the European Union-, in the wake of the EU endeavours to spread the notion and to transmit its initial characteristics. This thesis opened by stating that Hungary, given this transformation, can be deemed as proxy to both Western and Eastern markets. The findings vastly confirm this assumption, as CSR in Hungary on the one hand bears the typical peculiarities of emerging markets: it is moulded by the institutional constellations characteristics, is less embedded in corporate strategies and less politically rooted, with the vast majority of stakeholders being sceptical even about its existence in the country, not to mention the corporate motives behind it, while on the other hand, one can argue that it is only a question of time and CSR in Hungary will resemble that of the Western world's.

Thus, while at the moment there is no universal rejoice over the concept in the Hungarian context, the findings of this research confirm that there is a change happening in terms of the advocacy of CSR owing to the generational differences present in the country, with Millennials driving the societal change towards the advocacy of the concept. In this way, the study also affirms that Millennials can be thought of as “game changers”, seemingly in Hungary as well. However, despite the fact that Millennials in Hungary are nowadays exposed to a milieu being fairly similar to the Western ones, they have been raised by generations living in the socialist era. Hence, Millennials too, sense the socialist heritage in their way of thinking, including their perceptions regarding CSR. In this sense, their game changer role manifests itself in reckoning with the legacy that hinders the spread of CSR in the country and not in defining themselves as actual advocators of it. Yet, given the fact that their attitudes do tally that of the Western Millennials in many ways and given their willingness to set examples for the generations to come, the concept has the potential to, in the future become entirely identical with its current manifestation in the Western contexts. Accordingly, with the help of

Millennials, there is space for CSR in Hungary to get rooted and reach its potential popularity, even though it takes time still. As a consequence, while CSR implementations and advocacy in Hungary are at the moment lagging behind that of the Western worlds', the exposure of Hungarian citizens and in particular Hungarian Millennials to the Western - like milieu and endeavours for the facilitation of CSR, can, in the long run contribute to the complete transmission of CSR practices of Western origin to Hungary as well, doing away with the classification of Hungarian CSR practices signalling the peculiarities of emerging nations and giving ground only to study CSR in Hungary from the stakeholders perspective. The Hungarians along with the facilitators of the spread of CSR only have to sweat it out, waiting for the shift to happen.

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## APPENDIX

### Appendix 1 - Overview of focus group participants

In total, there were 30 Hungarian participants divided into four focus groups. Two focus groups consisted of Millennials and two focus groups consisted of participants of Baby boomers and Generation X-ers mixed together.

#### ***Focus group 1 – 4th of April, 2016***

Total number of Pages of transcription: 55

Length of the recording: 2 hours and 2 minutes

Number of participants: Seven participants, including three males and four females

Age group: Baby boomers and Generation X-ers

Age of the participants: 46, 48; 52; 56; 58; 63 and 65

Level of education: Ranging from obtaining a High School Diploma (2) to holding a University Degree (5)

Place of residence: Budapest, Hungary

#### ***Focus group 2 – 11th of April, 2016***

Total number of Pages of transcription: 75

Length of the recording: 2 hours and 32 minutes

Number of participants: Eight participants, including five males and three females

Age group: Millennials

Age of the participants: 19; 19; 20; 21; 24; 27; 28; and 30

Level of education: Ranging from not yet obtaining a High School Diploma (2), having obtained a High School Diploma (1), being enrolled at a University program (2), to holding a University Degree (3)

Place of residence: Budapest, Hungary

#### ***Focus group 3 - 12th of April, 2016***

Total number of Pages of transcription: 62

Length of the recording: 2 hours and 25 minutes

Number of participants: Seven participants, including four males and three females

Age group: Baby boomers and Generation X-ers

Age of the participants: 35; 36; 39; 48; 62; 64 and 67

Level of education: Ranging from obtaining a High School Diploma (3) to holding a University Degree (4)

Place of residence: Budapest, Hungary

***Focus group 4 - 13th of April, 2016***

Total number of Pages of transcription: 75

Length of the recording: 2 hours and 23 minutes

Number of participants: Eight participants, including four males and four females

Age group: Millennials

Age of the participants: 21; 23; 24; 26; 26; 28; 30 and 32

Level of education: Ranging from obtaining a High School Diploma (1), being enrolled at a University program (1) to holding a University Degree (6)

Place of residence: Budapest, Hungary

## Appendix 2 – Questionnaire

1. On a scale from 1 to 5 how familiar do you think you are with the concept of CSR?  
(from not at all to extremely)

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

2. On a scale from 1 to 5 how familiar do you think you are with the concept “Vállalati társadalmi felelősségvállalás”? (from not at all to extremely)

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

3. How would you describe the concept of CSR?

### Definition of CSR:

*Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) - „Vállalati társadalmi felelősségvállalás” in Hungarian) – is a form of [corporate self-regulation](#) integrated into a [business model](#), when firms consider not only their own interest, but also voluntarily the needs of the society, that of their business partners and suppliers, employees, shareholders and consumers, while they are also thoughtful of the impact of their operation on the environment beyond compliance and the requirements by the law.*

1. On a scale from 1 to 5 how important do you find companies acting socially responsible? (from not at all to extremely)

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

2. On a scale from 1 to 5 to what extent would you like to be more informed regarding CSR practices? (from not at all to a great extent)

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

3. What aspects of CSR are most important to you? Please mark a maximum of five!

Workplace health and safety – Consumer rights – Environmental protection – Energy conservation – Disaster relief – Helping elderly – Helping youth and children – Civil rights advocacy – Fighting poverty – Arts and culture promotion – Primary/ secondary education support – International relations engagement – Higher education support – Patriotism promotion – Policies on fair trade, equitable trade - Protection of human rights within the company’s own operations - Non-discrimination at the workplace - Staff development, in-house education and vocational training - Policy on restrictions on the use of child labour - Commitment to local community engagement - Education programs



for the promotion of corporate citizenship – Policies and procedures for engaging a wide range of stakeholders in two-way dialogue – Commitment to reporting on corporate social responsibility and/ or sustainable development – equal opportunity statements and implementation plans – External campaign programs for raising social and sustainable development issues – The right of freedom of association, collective bargaining and complaints procedures – Policy on labour standards adopted by suppliers in developing countries – Statement on normal working hours, maximum overtime and fair-wage structures - Inspection of suppliers’ facilities for health, safety and environmental aspects - Other:

(List of CSR aspects by Welford, 2004; Wang & Goodman, 2006)

4. Which of the following activities have you engaged in / practiced / promoted in the last 12 months?
  
5. To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (1 means that you strongly disagree, 5 means that you strongly agree.)
  - a. I think of companies that engage in CSR activities more favourably than of those that do not.
 

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---
  
6. Companies carrying out CSR activities leave a positive impression on me in the long-term.
 

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---
  
7. CSR activities of companies strengthen my bond to them.
 

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---
  
8. CSR activities of companies strengthen my loyalty towards them.
 

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---
  
9. I trust companies that engage in CSR activities more than those ones that do not.
 

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---
  
10. I am more willing to buy companies’ products that engage in CSR than products of companies that do not, in case they offer the same products / service.
 

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

11. I am more willing to work at companies that engage in CSR than at companies that do not, in case all remaining circumstances are the same.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

12. I am more willing to recommend companies' products / services / companies as workplaces that engage in CSR than companies that do not, in case all other conditions are the same.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

13. Now, think about CSR in Hungary.

14. How does your impression change of companies that you initially prefer when you learn that...?

- a. they engage in CSR activities ...
- b. they do not carry out any CSR activities ...

15. Imagine that a company which you have no prior experience with implements CSR activities. What kind of affect does it have on you?

16. When thinking about choosing a company to work for, which motivations do you find the most important regarding your decision? Rank the motivations from 1 to 10 from the list below, whereas 1 means your utmost priority.

- Carrier opportunities
- The milieu at the workplace (Relationship with co-workers and supervisors)
- The extent to which you feel challenged / have responsibilities
- The organizational structure of the company
- The socially responsible behaviour of the company
- Salary, additional benefits and compensations
- To extent to which you enjoy your job and feel engaged to it
- Work-life balance
- The location of the workplace
- Other:

17. You intend to purchase a product / service. List three elements that are most important for you to decide which to choose from the range!

18. I care for CSR activities of companies the most when...

19. Thinking about the presence of CSR in the Hungarian society, I believe...

20. What kind of associations do you have when you think of...?

- a. the drivers of CSR in Hungary...
- b. the advocates of CSR in Hungary...
- c. the spread of CSR in the coming years in Hungary...

21. Please indicate your age!

22. Please indicate your gender!

- Male
- Female
- Other

23. What is your highest level of education achieved?

- I have not (yet) completed High School
- High School Diploma
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Doctoral Degree
- Other:

### Appendix 3 – Discussion Guide

#### Warm up on Social Responsibility

- How would you describe social responsibility?
- How do you think one could act socially responsible?
- Do you act so?
- Give us an example to illustrate your behaving socially responsible! (buying certain products, volunteering etc.)
- What are your motivations to do so?
- In case you do not act socially responsible, what is it that stops you? (lack of trust, lack of time, no interest, etc.)

#### ***RQ1: How do Hungarian citizens make sense of CSR?***

##### *Understanding of concept*

- How do you interpret corporate social responsibility and how would you describe it to the others?
- How would you describe the socially responsible behaviour from the corporations' side?
- Can you give us a good example you can think of?
- Why do you think companies engage in CSR activities? What do you think their intentions might be?
- How can CSR activities strengthen your relationship (trust, commitment, loyalty) with the firms that pursue them in general/ result in companies' better reputation in your eyes?
- Can you share an example with us?

#### *Relevance*

- Given that many of you did not know what CSR was, in your opinion, how popular, desired and spread CSR is in Hungary? ( many people who are participating were not familiar with the concept when I got to them to ask if they would come)
- How often do you hear about CSR in your everyday life?
- Can you recall examples of companies CSR practices in Hungary?
- Do you sense any change in the spread / popularity / desire of and for CSR in the in the country lately?
- What can potentially cause this? (applicable for both yes / no answers)

#### *Importance*

- Would you say that the concept in Hungary is important?
- Is it personally important to you?
- If yes, in which role, as consumers or as employees?
- Please tell us why CSR is important for you in (any of) these two roles and how the importance of CSR shows itself in your everyday life as consumers / as employees!

#### ***RQ2: In what ways does generational difference contribute to understandings of and attitudes towards CSR?***

- When did you first hear about CSR? / How was it explained to you?
- Can you link the concept to any other practice?
- Have you heard of something similar before in the Hungarian context?

- Can you attach any good / bad memory regarding any elements of CSR? (for example compulsory volunteering in the communist era)
- What would you consider the drivers for CSR?
- What about the challenges, especially in the Hungarian context?
- When thinking about social issues in the country, whose responsibility do you think it is to solve them? Is it the governments / corporations', single people, is it everybody's?
- How does your generation think about the role of business in /and society?
- What do you think corporations' role can be in tackling social issues?
- Comparing your generation to the older / younger ones, do you sense any difference in terms of their awareness / advocacy/ interest of / in CSR?
- Do you feel any pressure coming either from the society in general or more specifically from your generation / other generations for the advocacy of CSR?
- Can you recall an example if yes? (lets buy / do not buy products of certain companies / work / do not work for specific companies)
- Are you convincible in such cases?
- Do you also try to convince others?
- Do you reward companies that engage in CSR?
- Do you punish others that do not?
- Can you recall examples for rewarding / punishing companies?
- In what other ways do you pressurize corporations to engage in CSR?
- Can you share an example for that?
- When are you satisfied with corporations' CSR activities? Is charitable giving enough for you to think they act socially responsible or you want more of them?
- Do you have any expectations on companies regarding their CSR activities?
- If yes, please share!

- Do you expect them to provide you the possibility to engage in CSR / participate in CSR activities?
- If yes, what are your expectations as consumers / employees regarding the partaking in CSR activities? (For example having the option to pay more for something /specific activities where you can take part in, having the time off to volunteer etc.)
- Do you assess the CSR activities of companies differently
  - in case CSR is integrated in their operation / they engage in CSR activities because of external pressure
  - in case the CSR activities they carry out match / do not match their company profiles
  - in case the CSR activities they carry out address the most severe social issues in Hungary and only have minor roles in mitigating them / the CSR activities address rather specific problems and have bigger impact

***RQ3: How do Millennials define their role in promoting CSR in Hungary compared to the older generations?***

- When you think of your role with regards to business-society relations in Hungary, how would you describe it?
- When you think about your generation's role with regards to CSR, how would you explain it?
- Advocating CSR in Hungary is the duty of...
- Do you believe that your generation have a decisively different relationship with companies than the other generations? Why/why not? In what way? Please explain in detail!
- How are companies in Hungary responding to /adapting to the influence of your generation?
- How different do you think they react to the impact of your generation on them to that of the other generations?
- Can you recall any examples that illustrate companies' response / adaptation to your influence?