

This document has been downloaded from TamPub – The Institutional Repository of University of Tampere

Post-print

The permanent address of the publication is http://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi:uta-201411262347

Author(s): Lehtimäki, Hanna; Kujala, Johanna; Heikkinen, Anna Title: Corporate Responsibility in Communication: Empirical

Analysis of Press Releases in a Conflict

Year: 2011

Journal Title: Business Communication Quarterly

Vol and number: 74 : 4 Pages: 432-449 ISSN: 2329-4922

Discipline: Business and management School /Other Unit: School of Management

Item Type: Journal Article

Language: en

DOI: http://dx.doi.org/DOI: 10.1177/1080569911424203

URN: URN:NBN:fi:uta-201411262347

All material supplied via TamPub is protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights, and duplication or sale of all part of any of the repository collections is not permitted, except that material may be duplicated by you for your research use or educational purposes in electronic or print form. You must obtain permission for any other use. Electronic or print copies may not be offered, whether for sale or otherwise to anyone who is not an authorized user.

1

Corporate Responsibility in Communication:

Empirical Analysis of Press Releases in a Conflict

Hanna Lehtimäki

Johanna Kujala

Anna Heikkinen

University of Tampere

Introduction

There is a growing public demand for information regarding corporate responsibility actions. Various stakeholders are monitoring companies' operations and actions related to their immediate neighbors and to the global society. Yet, companies have business to run and owners and investors to satisfy. Diverse expectations create tensions between ethical and economic interests. On one hand, it can be argued that economic criteria form the basis for business decision-making, and in order to be a good corporate citizen, a company must be profitable and bring society economic prosperity. On the other, it can be argued that business must be moderated by ethical considerations, and take into account the various demands, expectations, needs and requests of its constituencies and society at large (O'Neil & Pienta, 1994). These two views are grounded in historically contradictory, not to say conflicting, values and this duality contributes to the ideological tensions that are intrinsic to corporate responsibility and to the business-society relationship.

Especially in conflict situations, where the views of stakeholders differ from each other and from the view of the company, it is essential to provide information about corporate responsibility activities in order to receive public acceptance to business. Companies may use

various methods and communication channels to communicate their practices to different audiences; increasingly, they engage in direct dialogue with stakeholders. (de Bakker & den Hond, 2008). In marketing literature, press releases are treated as a part of corporate public relations activity and also as a forum for managing stakeholder relationships (Whysall, 2004). However, in a conflict situation media play a vital role in unfolding and opening up the corporate actions and mediating the information from business to the public. Thus, press releases are an important and sometimes even the only way to disclose essential information to intended audiences.

Despite a growing interest in corporate responsibility research, neither defining the concept nor finding a comprehensive framework for empirical analysis is easy (see Matten & Moon, 2008). One way to conceptualize corporate responsibility is through the notion of the triple bottom line, where responsibility consists of three dimensions: financial, social and environmental (Carroll, 2004; Panapanaan, Linnanen, Karvonen & Phan, 2003; Steurer, Langer, Konrad & Martinuzzi, 2005). To take a more holistic view of corporate responsibility and to better understand how different views of economics and ethics construct our understanding of it, we turn to the "common worlds" recognized by conventionalist analysis (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006; Daigle & Rouleau, 2010). This method enables acknowledgment of the inherent dualism of economic and ethical interests related to corporate responsibility, and also provides an analytic tool for demonstrating how this tension is portrayed in company press releases. Our interest is based on a notion proposed by Kujala, Toikka and Heikkinen (2009) who maintain that even though companies are willing to communicate corporate responsibility issues, the content of official press releases does not necessarily cater to the interests of external media. For example, a company may include information about financial, social, and environmental issues in their press releases, but external media are more interested in the influence of the company's actions for different stakeholders. By using conventionalist analysis to examine the common worlds presented in

corporate communication, we want to reveal and discuss tensions related to corporate responsibility, and further discuss how the information disclosed by a firm could be developed to more adequately address different demands and expectations of both external media and various stakeholders.

The purpose of this paper is to examine how tensions of corporate responsibility are articulated and reconciled within company communications while in a conflict situation that emerged in relation to a foreign investment project. To achieve this goal, we present a textual analysis of a company's press releases in a situation where Europe's second largest pulp producer, Metsä-Botnia (hereafter Botnia) was caught in the crossfire of a heated debate between two countries, Uruguay and Argentina. The situation erupted when the Botnia decided to build a major pulp mill in the city of Fray Bentos by the Uruguay River in western Uruguay. The dispute began as a disagreement between Uruguay and Argentina. Soon, however, it was politicized into an open conflict between the two nations. Argentina decided to take the case to the Hague International Court of Justice (ICJ). The conflict also erupted into a public issue which attracted various sets of stakeholders, including civic and environmental organizations, local people, workers, financiers, and the governments of Uruguay, Argentina and Finland. This conflict attracted considerable research interest, and previous investigations have considered such issues as stakeholder salience and strategies (Aaltonen, Kujala, & Oijala, 2008), legitimacy in corporate social responsibility (Joutsenvirta & Vaara, 2009), the role of media in cultural conflict resolution (Pakkasvirta, 2008), relationships between multinational firms, host governments and nongovernmental organizations (Skippari & Pajunen, 2010), and corporate communication (Kujala et al., 2009).

Throughout the investment project, Botnia engaged in informing various stakeholders and the media, and the case also attracted considerable attention in the media in Uruguay, Argentina and Finland. One of the main information channels to the public were the company's press releases frequently addressing the progress of the investment project and the

construction works, so there is ample information available regarding the focus of our research. Press releases in a conflict situation provide an interesting opportunity to study the tensions of corporate responsibility.

Our analysis contributes to the knowledge of communicating corporate responsibility in four ways. First, at the theoretical level it provides a better understanding of how the tensions in corporate responsibility between the benefits to the company and the wider society are articulated and reconciled within the company's disclosures. Second, at the methodological level, our analysis follows a systematic and rigorous approach to textual analysis based on the conventionalist systems of common values proposed by Boltanski and Thévenot (2006). This study focuses on justifications in a controversial situation and enhances our understanding of the making of agreements between ethical and economical values. Third, at the managerial level this study offers practical insights into ways by which corporate communicators can improve the content of their press releases in terms of corporate citizenship by incorporating views from different common worlds to more effectively address the demands and expectations of the public. Fourth, we suggest that in the teaching of business communication in academic, corporate, government, or other organizational settings press releases can be better formulated by taking into account the different and sometimes even contradictory viewpoints and world views of various audiences to form a multivoiced dialogue to the documents instead of merely promoting the writer's or sender's own point of view.

The pulp mill project

The empirical focus of this paper is on a case where a Finnish forest industry company—
Botnia--invested in a pulp mill in South America, in Western Uruguay. The pulp mill was to be located in the city of Fray Bentos on the banks of the Uruguay River, which forms the

border between Uruguay and Argentina. The investment was remarkable, first, because it was the biggest foreign industrial investment a private Finnish company has ever made, and second, because the pulp mill project was the biggest industrial investment in the history of Uruguay. According to the World Bank, the mill's completion will increase Uruguay's GDP by 1.6% and create 8,000 jobs for the nation. The Uruguayan government supported the project by granting the pulp mill a free trade area.

In March 2005, the board of Botnia decided to start the construction of the pulp mill. Before the investment decision, from 2003 to 2004, Botnia had conducted studies on commencing pulp production in Uruguay and on the environmental and social impacts of the proposed mill. The company arranged conferences and meetings for the media, local communities, and NGOs, invited Uruguayan reporters and politicians to visit Finland, and held local informative meetings in both Uruguay and Argentina. The project received considerable publicity both in Finland and in Uruguay.

Despite good planning and careful elaboration of the plant, a disagreement regarding the plant location erupted. In spring 2005, Argentina claimed that the Uruguayan government had not asked its permission to build the plant on the border river, as the use of the Uruguay River is protected by a 1975 bilateral agreement. In addition, members of environmentalist groups and Argentineans living in Gualeguaychú--a city across the river from the plant--protested against it, saying that it would, among other things, pollute the river, foul the area, and ruin the area's tourism business. The activists organized massive anti-pulp mill protests and road blocks on the border bridge during spring and summer 2005.

Throughout the construction process, Botnia reported that the environmental impact of the mill was being minimized by taking advantage of the best available technology.

In June 2005, the presidents of Uruguay and Argentina set up a joint committee to study the environmental impacts of the mill. In July, the main financier of the mill, the World Bank Group's International Finance Corporation (IFC), started its cumulative impact study.

However, in August 2005, Argentina requested the project to be halted pending the completion of the environmental report, and threatened to summon Uruguay to the Hague International Court of Justice (ICJ) to resolve the dispute. The threat was realized in January 2006 when Argentina brought a case against Uruguay to the Hague ICJ, claiming that construction of the mill violated the bilateral agreement on the use of the Uruguay River. In July 2006, the Court voted 14 to one against Argentina's request and ruled that Botnia could continue building the pulp mill.

In November 2005, the IFC published the results of its cumulative impact study announcing that the mill would not harm the environment. The Argentinean government declared that the report was preliminary and inadequate. In March 2006, the presidents of Uruguay and Argentina urged Botnia to suspend the construction works for 90 days until an independent environmental impact study had taken place. After the appeal for suspension, the representatives of Botnia stated that the construction would go ahead in spite of the appeal. In April 2006, Botnia halted the works for ten days instead of the 90 days requested by the two presidents and, as a result, relations between the governments were broken off.

In spring 2006, the Argentine president and the activists pressured the Finnish government to become involved in the conflict, but the government declined to intervene in the affairs of Botnia. In April 2006, the Finnish Minister for Foreign Trade and Development cancelled her visit to Argentina, expressing concern that she might not be welcomed. In addition, she stated that the conflict was to be resolved by Uruguay, Argentina, and Botnia as a private company. In May 2006, Botnia invited Argentine journalists to tour a Botnia pulp mill in Finland in order to convince them of the company's reliable operating practices. In August 2006, representatives of Argentinean environmental groups visited Finland and delivered a petition of 40,000 signatures from the residents of Gualeguaychú opposing the mill. In October 2006, the IFC and Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) released the final cumulative impact study for the pulp mill project. According to this study,

the mill met all environmental standards and generated significant economic benefits for the Uruguayan economy. In November 2006, the World Bank approved a USD 170 million loan to Botnia for undertaking the construction work. Moreover, MIGA agreed to provide USD 350 million as political risk insurance for the project.

In spring 2007, Argentina and Uruguay tried to resolve the conflict in negotiations mediated by the government of Spain. In the negotiations, parties expected the Finnish government and Botnia to participate in agreement building. At the same time, the opponents demanded that the almost finished pulp mill should be relocated, and in April 2007 there was a huge demonstration of over 100,000 participants. The negotiations between Argentina and Uruguay continued to be unproductive. The construction works were completed in September 2007. In November 2007, the mill was finally started up on permission from Uruguay.

In early 2008, the mill was in full operation and deliveries to customers in Europe and China commenced. In March, Botnia organized a music festival in Fray Bentos with the local authorities and in April 2008, Botnia launched an educational, travelling exhibition on pulp production process in Fray Bentos. The activists continued their protests, insisting that they would not lift the road blocks unless the mill was relocated. In July 2008, the IFC publicly released the first environmental monitoring report of the pulp mill. According to the report, the mill was performing in compliance with the air and water quality standards required by the IFC.

In May 2009, Botnia announced that the mill had reached its planned production, and had produced to date more than 1,300,000 tons of pulp. In July 2009, a letter of intent regarding Botnia's new ownership structure was released. It stated that Botnia's Uruguay-based functions had been transferred to UPM-Kymmene Oy, another Finnish forest industry company.

Data and analysis

Our research data consists of Botnia's press releases addressing the investment project, its progression and the related conflict from 2003 to 2009. This period covers the main events from the beginning of the investment project to Botnia's decision to sell the plant, which we took as the ending point for the press release data included in our research. The press releases were collected from Botnia's website so that each release containing the word 'Uruguay' in its heading or in the text was selected as part of the data. In total, 55 press releases were chosen for the analysis.

Conventionalist analysis framework is used in this study, with particular emphasis upon the justifications invoked in a controversial situation (Daigle & Rouleau, 2010). The focus is on the ways in which communication creates the bases by which actors in a conflict situation may achieve cooperation despite potentially divergent values (Denis, Langley, & Rouleau, 2007, p. 190). The conventionalist framework recognizes six common worlds (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006; Daigle & Rouleau, 2010, p. 17–18):

- 1. *The inspired world* is one in which worth is attributed to inspiration, independent thinking and spontaneity. Creation, visionary action, intuition and uniqueness are valued over commercial considerations. In communicating a foreign investment, this world could be present in sentences referring to such values as autonomy, creativity and imagination, related, for example, to being able to creatively construct a future vision for the local people.
- 2. *The domestic world* attributes worth to personal relationships, allows for constraints of time and place, and values tradition, personal dependence, and family hierarchies. In the case of foreign investment, this world could be identified in the ways by which the relationship between the investor and local people is constructed as a relationship of togetherness, respect and responsibility.

- 3. In *the opinion world* or the world of fame, worth derives solely from the opinions of others. This world puts no emphasis on remembering the past, all that matters is presence in the public eye, and gaining appreciation from the public. When providing information on a foreign investment, this could mean putting effort into building a positive public image of the company, and considering the global press as the most important stakeholder.
- 4. *The civic world* attributes worth to collectives, not persons. Worth is attributed to masses and collectives that organize these masses as civil movements. In press releases on foreign investment, this world could be present in addressing people as members of the local community and public collectives. Worth is attributed to values related to democracy, civic rights and the plant's membership of the local community.
- 5. The market world values customers, creating market value to investors and finding competitive advantage over competitors. In this world, money is the universal yardstick. In press releases on foreign investment, this world could be manifested in references, for instance, to efficiency in transportation and economic value created for investors.
- 6. *The industrial world* attributes value to operational efficiency and superiority in technological expertise. In press releases on the investment this could mean communicating about the engineering competence, production capacity, and reliability on the functioning of the plant.

Following Daigle and Rouleau (2010), a sentence was chosen as the unit of analysis, and all 498 sentences comprising the 55 press releases were analyzed by three researchers. First, we created a table with sentences and the six common worlds. Second, to identify the common worlds present in press releases, each researcher independently classified the sentences into different common worlds. Third, we then discussed the individual classifications, and defined the shared principles by which classification was to be done. For

the most part, all three researchers had originally made similar choices, but there were some differences in the way each of us had interpreted the sentences. The final classification was made relying on content analysis and by reading sentences as statements of truth to be agreed upon. Interpretative analysis of perceived intentions was avoided in the classification.

Research results

To examine how agreements between conflicting interests and values can be achieved in a controversial situation of a foreign investment, we analyzed press releases over a period of seven years with a view to identifying conventional solutions that emerge from these press releases. The results of the analysis as presented in Table 1 show that in the press releases the industrial, market, and civic world were represented. The inspired world and the domestic world were not represented, and the opinion world played a very minor role in the press release communications.

Table 1 Summary of sentences in press releases

	Common worlds						
Year	Inspired	Domestic	Opinion	Civic	Market	Industrial	
2003	0	0	0	1	5	9	
2004	0	0	0	19	5	10	
2005	0	0	0	7	21	50	
2006	0	0	1	61	6	67	
2007	0	0	0	16	8	84	
2008	0	0	3	29	6	49	
2008	0	0	1	5	6	29	
Total	0	0	5	138	57	298	

As our analysis shows, the press releases are constructed drawing primarily on the industrial world. A total of 298 out of 498 sentences in the press releases were associated with the

industrial world. In these sentences, productivity, industrial capabilities, advanced up-to-date technology, pulp mill expertise, and systematic management processes, among other things, were emphasized. Technical details concerning machinery and their capacity were presented. Furthermore, owners were addressed and the progress of the planning, construction and production were explained. Examples of sentences classified into the industrial world are:

The best technology available will be used in the construction of Botnia's and Kemira's plants in Uruguay, and the plants will come up to all the strict European environmental norms. (Oy Metsä-Botnia Ab, 2005d)

The recovery boiler capacity is 4450 tDS/d with dry solids content 80%. (Oy Metsä-Botnia Ab, 2005a)

The mill will start up according to the original timetable during the third quarter of 2007. (Oy Metsä-Botnia Ab, 2006c)

The mill is at the moment running with a production speed of approximately 2,000 tons per day, and the quality of the pulp has reached good levels. (Oy Metsä-Botnia Ab, 2007)

"Already during the very first months, the environmental indicators have been well below the permit limits set by the National Environmental authorities (DINAMA) and those established by the European Union," stated Gervasio González, Manager of Environment at Botnia's mill in Fray Bentos. (Oy Metsä-Botnia Ab, 2008a)

The civic world was also prominent in the press releases, with 138 sentences. The common good, equality, freedom and democracy were underscored in sentences classified into this world. Sentences classified into this world talked about the rate of domestic production, bringing the benefits of economic growth to Uruguay, job creation and the positive impact on the local environment. Furthermore, collaboration between the Uruguayan government and officials in dealing with environmental issues and the willingness to comply with the local laws and criteria for high quality production were emphasized. In addition, local people's well-being was addressed. For instance, the following sentences were classified into this world:

Once completed, the mill will employ about 300 people, and will provide further jobs, either directly or indirectly, for roughly 8,000 people. (Oy Metsä-Botnia Ab, 2005c)

In addition to these larger scale benefits, Botnia is willing to utilize its know-how in improving the quality of the water in the Rio Uruguay, contributing to the well-being of the inhabitants in the area. (Oy Metsä-Botnia Ab, 2006a)

Botnia wants to emphasize that according to the final Cumulative Impact Study and the experts' report (Hatfield), both commissioned by IFC, the mill will not harm the environment or the present livelihoods in the area, but will have significant positive socio-economic impacts in the entire area. (Oy Metsä-Botnia Ab, 2006b)

Espacio Ciencia at the LATU (Technical Research Institute in Uruguay) has been in charge of the development and implementation of the project, which includes games,

explanations and recreational activities so that all visitors learn about the pulp production process and also about environmental care. (Oy Metsä-Botnia Ab, 2008b)

The market world was the third world present in the press releases. It was, however, considerably less prominent than the industrial and the civic worlds. Following the argumentation related to the market world, press releases discussed market forces, competition, economic outputs, profit seeking, customers and customer relationships, and other business relationships. Access to raw material, cost efficiency, superior location, profit maximization and competitive advantage created by the free-trade location were highlighted. Some of the examples of sentences classified into this world are:

Situated in western Uruguay by the Rio Uruguay river, this town of some 20,000 inhabitants lies close to large eucalyptus plantations, a vital consideration in terms of fibre raw material supplies. (Oy Metsä-Botnia Ab, 2003)

The Government of Uruguay has granted free trade zone status to the planned Botnia pulp mill project. (Oy Metsä-Botnia Ab, 2004)

Oy Metsä-Botnia Ab and Andritz Oy have signed a letter of intent under which Andritz will supply the main process equipment for Botnia's pulp mill currently being built in Uruguay. (Oy Metsä-Botnia Ab, 2005b)

To link the analysis to the progress of the investment and to the evolution of the conflict, we examined the number of press releases in different years, and studied how the common worlds were distributed in different years. We classified the press releases into three phases of the project: (1) the planning phase, where preparations for starting the construction were made

from March 2003 until February 2005, (2) the actual construction of the pulp mill in Fray Bentos in Uruguay from March 2005 to November 2007, and (3) the start of production from November 2007 to July 2009 (Table 2).

Table 2 Press releases in different phases of the project

	Common worlds							
Year	Opinion	Civic	Market	Industrial	Total			
	Planning period							
2003	0	1	5	9	15			
2004	0	19	5	10	34			
2005	0	0	0	4	4			
Total	0	20	10	23	53			
	Construction period							
2005	0	7	21	46	74			
2006	1	61	6	67	135			
2007	0	4	4	29	37			
Total	1	72	31	142	246			
	Production period							
2007	0	12	4	55	71			
2008	3	29	6	49	87			
2009	1	5	6	29	41			
Total	4	46	16	433	199			
Total	5	138	57	298	498			

In the planning period, there was a steady growth in the number of the press releases as the project proceeded. The sentences were more evenly spread across the three most frequently used common worlds than in the later phases of the project, where the industrial world was used most often. In the construction period, both civic and industrial worlds are prominent in the press releases, and in the early phases of the period, the market world's presence is also strong. There is a noticeable increase in drawing on the civic world during 2006--a period of heated dispute between Argentina and Uruguay. In the production period, the industrial world prevails; excellence in the functioning of the mill is emphasized. However, towards the end of the production period, the opinion world gains some presence.

Discussion

The findings lead us to ask how the language used in press releases seeks to reconcile opposing values related to a foreign investment, and how the language use of press releases could be developed to better accommodate both ethical considerations and meeting economic goals of business. Business culture influences language choices (Levin & Behrens, 2003; Mahin, 1998), and language choices in press releases targeted at media are important, as company image is controlled by media professionals (Levin & Behrens, 2003; Sokuvitz & George, 2003).

First, the use of language and articulation in press releases serves to mobilize certain stakeholders while reassuring others (see Daigle & Rouleau, 2010). The predominant voice in the press releases of this study is embedded in industrial and market worlds. Thus, the emphasis is on communicating managerial values. Most of the sentences address interests and values of stakeholders to whom industrial efficiency and market value are of importance. Such stakeholders are owners, investors, and institutional actors, such as governments. We therefore conclude that these are the audiences whom the press releases seek to mobilize.

The civic world is the third to be represented in the press releases. Sentences related to this world are particularly frequent at the height of the conflict. This appears to represent an effort to address the concerns of local people. The company seeks to address issues raised by local inhabitants by stating the pulp mill's and the adjacent chemical mill's capabilities to provide solutions to pressing environmental problems and to provide a chance for economic growth and well-being in the area. The civic world addresses local people, not so much as individuals or members of a family, but as a collective. We thus conclude that stakeholders whom the press releases seek to reassure are, on the one hand, local people, groups of activists and local administrators, and on the other hand, the institutional stakeholders, local press, and also global press. The press releases not only address the

achievements in terms of economic and business goals but also seek to provide evidence and proof of good intentions and responsibility.

Second, the presentation of factual information in corporate press releases creates value-neutral communication, which allows for building a common ground for pursuing strategic goals despite competing values. In the press releases of our case company, the language used abounds in expressions concerning economic or technological expertise. The topics in the press releases are abstracted from local day-to-day reality and from the controversial issues causing concern in the lives of local people. The inspiration world and the domestic world are absent, and the opinion world is only weakly represented. Typical of many corporate communications, the writing relies on the rhetoric of certainty, tends to ignore controversial topics, and constructs the corporation as a central actor in relation to stakeholders (see Daigle & Rouleau, 2010; Eriksson & Lehtimäki, 2001). The long history of practices in providing financial information to stockholders provides for communicating economic results while communication of ethical issues remains of lesser importance. The communication of ethical issues is typically channeled via different sustainability reports. As a result, although effective in creating common ground for competing values, the use of solid and factual language also entails a risk of silencing voices that present ethical issues in other than economic terms.

In terms of future research, examining the language of the press releases could be supplemented with a study of the processes by which press releases are created to find ways by which corporate communication could more effectively address the competing values of various stakeholders. Writing press releases is usually a function of people working at company headquarters, and a standardized guideline in writing press releases is often followed. The disposition in writing press releases, thus, leans towards the corporate perspective. The purpose of the press releases is to build corporate identity, which leads to communicating the best possible image in relation to matters of importance from the

corporate position. This supports the distancing of communication from local matters to matters deemed important to stakeholders with prominence in the operations of the headquarters. The press releases, thus, do not particularly address matters that are either interesting to the local people, or of importance to individuals in different parts of the organization. Press releases are seldom modified to speak to the concerns raised by different groups of stakeholders.

Despite addressing the common interest and pursuing value neutrality, the guidelines and standards for writing press releases could, perhaps, draw more broadly on different common worlds. The different worlds would help in giving authentic worth to different ethical values in their own terms, and allow for the co-existence of diverse values. Thus, communication on a broader scope could provide for taking into account the various demands, expectations and needs of the corporation's constituencies and society at large.

Our study suggests that, when teaching business communication in academic, corporate, government, or other organizational settings, we should provide students with alternative models for corporate responsibility communication with respect to what information to include and what tone to adopt. Communication in a business context always implies an ethical bias (Mahin, 1998). We suggest that the common worlds approach utilized in this study can help in recognizing this bias, and thus in addressing the different and sometimes even contradictory viewpoints and world views of various audiences. Corporate responsibility issues could also be included in communication by adopting a stakeholder perspective to provide for frames of communicating to meet the information needs of various stakeholders. In addition, students' better understanding of the discursive effects of language practices used is a prerequisite for being more open to both intended and unintended consequences and meaning-making effects of communication.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine how the tensions of corporate citizenship are articulated and reconciled within company communication while in a conflict situation. To achieve this goal, we presented a textual analysis of a company's press releases in a situation where Europe's second largest pulp producer, Botnia, was caught in the crossfire of heated debate between two countries - Uruguay and Argentina.

The case of this foreign investment shows that communicating primarily on market issues, issues of efficiency and issues related to the company as an institutional member of the local society well serves corporate interests. Despite a long standing and escalated dispute, the pulp mill was constructed, put into production, and ultimately acquired by another company. Thus, it could be argued that the communication strategy the company implemented in the press releases was effective in distancing the company from the dispute. Typical to a conflict situation, Botnia's communication was neutral and focused attention on issues less likely to generate conflict. Thus, the emphasis on market and industrial worlds in press releases was effective from a corporate perspective. It could, however, be questioned, if being more open to addressing the local people could have prevented, or at least mitigated, the many conflicts that emerged.

For teaching purposes, this study provides a discussion point on how to best communicate in a conflict situation. We suggest that the common worlds approach utilized in this study can help in addressing the different and sometimes even contradictory viewpoints and world views of various audiences. A stakeholder perspective could provide for frames of communicating to meet the information needs of diverse stakeholders. Better understanding of the discursive effects of language practices used makes it possible to be more open to meaning-making effects, both intended and unintended.

References

- Aaltonen, K., Kujala, J., & Oijala, T. (2008). Stakeholder salience in global projects. *International Journal of Project Management, 26*, 509–516.
- de Bakker, F. G. A., & den Hond, F. (2008). Activists' influence tactics and corporate policies. *Business Communication Quarterly*, 71, 107–111.
- Boltanski, L., & Thévenot, L. (2006). *On justification. economies of worth.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Carroll, A. B. (2004). Managing ethically with global stakeholders: A present and future challenge. *Academy of Management Executive*, *18*, 114–120.
- Daigle, P., & Rouleau, L. (2010). Strategic plans in arts organizations: A tool of compromise between artistic and managerial values. *Strategic Management*, *12*, 13–30.
- Denis, J.-L., Langley, A., & Rouleau, L. (2007). Strategizing in pluralistic contexts:

 Rethinking theoretical frames. *Human Relations*, 6, 179–215.
- Eriksson, P., & Lehtimäki, H. (2001). Strategy rhetoric in city management: How do the presumptions of classic strategic management live on? *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 17, 201–223.
- Joutsenvirta, M., & Vaara, E. (2009). Discursive (de)legitimation of a contested Finnish Greenfield investment project in Latin America. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 25, 85–96.
- Kujala, J., Toikka, T., & Heikkinen, A. (2009). Communicating corporate responsibility through media. *Progress in Industrial Ecology An International Journal*, *6*, 404–420.
- Levin, L. A., & Behrens, S. J. (2003). From swoosh to swoon: Linguistic analysis of Nike's changing image. *Business Communication Quarterly*, 66(3), 52–65.

- Mahin, L. (1998). Critical thinking and business ethics. *Business Communication Quarterly*, 61(3), 74–78.
- Matten, D., & Moon, J. (2008). "Implicit" and "explicit" CSR: A conceptual framework for a comparative understanding of corporate social responsibility. *Academy of Management Review*, *33*, 404–424.
- O'Neil, R., & Pienta, D. A. (1994). Economic criteria versus ethical criteria: Toward resolving a basic dilemma in business. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *13*, 71–78.
- Oy Metsä-Botnia Ab. (2003). Botnia investigates prospects for starting pulp production in

 Uruguay [Press release]. Retrieved from

 https://newsclient.omxgroup.com/cdsPublic/viewDisclosure.action?disclosureId=3918

 31&lang=en
- Oy Metsä-Botnia Ab. (2004). Uruguayan government grants free trade zone status to Botnia pulp mill project [Press release]. Retrieved from https://newsclient.omxgroup.com/cdsPublic/viewDisclosure.action?disclosureId=3918 07&lang=en
- Oy Metsä-Botnia Ab. (2005a). Alstom to supply air pollution control systems for greenfield pulp mill in Uruguay [Press release]. Retrieved from https://newsclient.omxgroup.com/cdsPublic/viewDisclosure.action?disclosureId=3913 16&lang=en
- Oy Metsä-Botnia Ab. (2005b). Andritz Oy to supply the main process equipment for Botnia's pulp mill in Uruguay [Press release]. Retreived from https://newsclient.omxgroup.com/cdsPublic/viewDisclosure.action?disclosureId=3917 25&lang=en
- Oy Metsä-Botnia Ab. (2005c). Botnia to build a pulp mill in Uruguay [Press release].

 Retrieved from

- https://newsclient.omxgroup.com/cdsPublic/viewDisclosure.action?disclosureId=3917 66&lang=en
- Oy Metsä-Botnia Ab. (2005d). Kemira selected as chemicals supplier for Botnia's pulp mill in Uruguay [Press release]. Retrieved from https://newsclient.omxgroup.com/cdsPublic/viewDisclosure.action?disclosureId=3913
 18&lang=en
- Oy Metsä-Botnia Ab. (2006a). Botnia willing to contribute in improving the Rio Uruguay river water [Press release]. Retrieved from https://newsclient.omxgroup.com/cdsPublic/viewDisclosure.action?disclosureId=3912 45&lang=en
- Oy Metsä-Botnia Ab. (2006b). Botnia's project approved by the boards of IFC and MIGA

 [Press release]. Retrieved from

 https://newsclient.omxgroup.com/cdsPublic/viewDisclosure.action?disclosureId=3912

 04&lang=en
- Oy Metsä-Botnia Ab. (2006c). Works continue at Botnia Fray Bentos mill site in Uruguay

 [Press release]. Retrieved from

 https://newsclient.omxgroup.com/cdsPublic/viewDisclosure.action?disclosureId=3912

 58&lang=en
- Oy Metsä-Botnia Ab. (2007). Fray Bentos pulp mill working well [Press release]. Retrieved from https://newsclient.omxgroup.com/cdsPublic/viewDisclosure.action?disclosureId=3911 51&lang=en
- Oy Metsä-Botnia Ab. (2008a). A new world record in pulp production by Botnia Fray Bentos mill [Press release]. Retrieved from https://newsclient.omxgroup.com/cdsPublic/viewDisclosure.action?disclosureId=3910 85&lang=en

- Oy Metsä-Botnia Ab. (2008b). Botnia launched a traveling exhibition in Fray Bentos [Press release]. Retrieved from https://newsclient.omxgroup.com/cdsPublic/viewDisclosure.action?disclosureId=3910 86&lang=en
- Pakkasvirta, J. (2008). From pulp to fiction? Fray Bentos pulp investment conflict through the Finnish media. *Cooperation and Conflict*, 43, 421–446.
- Panapanaan, V. M., Linnanen, L., Karvonen, M-M., & Phan, V. T. (2003). Roadmapping corporate social responsibility in Finnish companies. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *44*, 133–148.
- Skippari, M., & Pajunen, K. (2010). MNE–NGO–host government relationships in the escalation of an FDI conflict. *Business & Society*, 49, 619–651.
- Sokuvitz, S., & George, A. M. (2003). Teaching culture: The challenges and opportunities of international public relations. *Business Communication Quarterly*, 66(2), 97–113.
- Steurer, R., Langer, M. E., Konrad, A., & Martinuzzi, A. (2005). Corporations, stakeholders and sustainable development I: A theoretical exploration of business–society relations.

 *Journal of Business Ethics, 61, 263–281.
- Whysall, P. (2004). What can we learn from retailers' news releases? A 'stakeholder engagement' perspective. *International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research*, 14, 31–45.

Hanna Lehtimäki works as a research rirector at the University of Tampere, Finland. Her research interests include the dialogical approach in strategic management, networks and social capital, university-business collaboration, and constructionist research methodology.

Johanna Kujala works as a professor of management and organization at the University of Tampere, Finland. She teaches responsible management, and conducts research on stakeholder relationships, managers' moral decision-making, and ethical leadership.

Anna Heikkinen is a doctoral student at the School of Management at the University of Tampere. Her research interests include company responses to climate change, stakeholder theory, stakeholder relationships and corporate responsibility.

Address correspondence to Hanna Lehtimäki, School of Management, University of Tampere, FIN-33014 University of Tampere, Finland; email: hanna.lehtimaki@uta.fi.

Author Note:

This research was conducted as part of the RESPMAN Research Group at the University of Tampere. We would like to thank the Academy of Finland, the Finnish Work Environment Fund and Foundation for Economic Education in Finland for funding the RESPMAN Research Group's work.