

LAPPEENRANTA-LAHTI UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY LUT  
School of Business and Management  
Master's Programme in International Marketing Management (MIMM)  
Master's Thesis

Atte Kautto

**STRATEGIC BRILLIANCE OR PLAYING WITH FIRE? – CORPORATE  
ACTIVISM FROM MNE PERSPECTIVE**

15<sup>th</sup> of June 2019

1<sup>st</sup> Supervisor: Professor Juha Väätänen, LUT

2<sup>nd</sup> Supervisor: Post Doctoral Researcher Igor Laine, LUT

## **Abstract**

<b>Author's name:</b>	Kautto, Atte
<b>Title of thesis:</b>	Strategic brilliance or playing with fire? – Corporate activism from MNE perspective
<b>Faculty:</b>	School of Business and Management
<b>Master's Program:</b>	Master's Programme in International Marketing Management (MIMM)
<b>Year:</b>	2019
<b>Master's thesis university:</b>	LUT University. 90 pages, 11 figures, 4 Tables
<b>Examiners:</b>	Professor Juha Väättänen & Post Doctoral Researcher Igor Laine
<b>Keywords:</b>	Corporate activism, Corporate governance, Stakeholder theory, Corporate social responsibility

The purpose of this study is to bring new knowledge on the concept of corporate activism by identifying the significance of key stakeholders on the topic, and how these stakeholders perceive a corporate activism centered marketing campaign. Furthermore, the study aims at defining the principles of how this type of campaign is conducted by clarifying the level and quality of corporate governance.

The theoretical background of the research is based on the studies of the concepts of corporate governance, stakeholder theory, corporate social responsibility and corporate activism.

The findings of the study conclude how the quality of corporate governance remain strong in corporate activism, as well as how the stakeholders are prioritized in a corporate activism related marketing campaign.

## Tiivistelmä

<b>Tekijä:</b>	Kautto, Atte
<b>Tutkielman nimi:</b>	Strategic brilliance or playing with fire? – Corporate activism from MNE perspective
<b>Tiedekunta:</b>	Kauppateieteellinen tiedekunta
<b>Maisteriohjelma:</b>	Master's Programme in International Marketing Management (MIMM)
<b>Vuosi:</b>	2019
<b>Pro gradu -tutkielma:</b>	LUT-Yliopisto. 90 sivua, 11 kuvaa, 4 taulukkoa
<b>Tarkastajat:</b>	Professori Juha Väättänen & Tutkijatohtori Igor Laine
<b>Hakusanat:</b>	Yritysaktivismi, yrityksen hallinnointi, sidosryhmäteoria, yhteiskuntavastuu, toimitusjohtaja-aktivismi

Tutkielman tarkoitus on luoda uutta tietoa yritysaktivismiin liittyen, tunnistamalla sidosryhmien rooli yritysaktivismiin nojautuvan markkinointikampanjan luonnissa, sekä kuinka sidosryhmät ottavat tämänkaltaisen kampanjan vastaan. Tämän lisäksi tutkielma pyrkii määrittämään, kuinka yritysaktivismiin nojaava markkinointikampanja suunnitellaan ja toteutetaan. Tätä arvioidaan yrityksen hallinnointiin liittyvillä signaaleilla, jotka saadaan tutkimusaineistosta.

Tutkimuksen teoriaosuudessa käsitellään aikaisempia tutkimuksia liittyen yritysaktivismiin, sidosryhmäteoriaan, yritys vastuuseen, ja yrityksen hallinnointiin.

Tutkimuksen löydökset tiivistävät, kuinka yritysaktivismiin nojaavan markkinointikampanjan jalkauttaja priorisoi kohderyhmiään yhdysvaltalaisessa monikansallisessa muodin vähittäiskaupan yrityksessä. Tämän lisäksi tutkimus tiivistää, kuinka yritysaktivismiin nojaavan markkinointikampanjan suunnittelu ja jalkauttaminen on johdettu organisaatiossa.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank those who have helped me along the way of writing this thesis. Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Juha Väättänen, who pushed me forward and supported me during the thesis writing process.

I would also like to give my sincere gratitude to all of my thesis writing peers, whose peer support have been irreplaceable during the process.

Finally, I would like to thank my family, who were always giving me great support along the way.

## Table of contents

1 Introduction .....	8
1.1 Background .....	8
1.2 Literature review.....	10
1.3 Research questions .....	13
1.4 Theoretical framework .....	15
1.5 Delimitations.....	16
1.6 Definition of concepts.....	17
1.7 Methodology.....	19
1.8 Structure of the thesis .....	20
2 Theoretical background.....	22
2.1 Stakeholder theory .....	23
2.2 Corporate governance .....	29
2.3 Corporate Social Responsibility .....	31
2.4 Corporate Activism.....	35
2.5 CEO Activism .....	39
3 Research methods & case .....	44
3.1 Research methods .....	44
3.2 Case company and case description.....	49
4 Results.....	52
4.1 Findings.....	52
4.1.1 <i>Primary stakeholders and their perceptions of the campaign</i> .....	52
4.1.2 <i>The state of corporate governance</i> .....	61
4.2 Validity and reliability of results.....	63
5 Discussion and conclusions .....	65
5.1 Discussion .....	65
5.2 Conclusions.....	70
5.3 Managerial implications .....	71
5.4 Limitations and suggestions for further research .....	72
References .....	73
Appendix.....	81

## List of figures

Figure 1 Illustrating graph of the need for the study .....	9
Figure 2 Theoretical framework.....	16
Figure 3 The structure of the thesis.....	21
Figure 4 The scope and maturity of the concepts in literature review .....	22
Figure 5 Stakeholder theory literature development (Laplume et al. 2008.).....	24
Figure 6 Model of Stakeholder Theory and CSR (Freeman & Dmytriiev 2017.)...	28
Figure 7 Corporate governance and stakeholder perspective (Gillan 2006.) .....	29
Figure 8 Likelihood of buying (CEO Activism 2018: The purposeful CEO 2018). .	42
Figure 9 Methodology of the study .....	45
Figure 10 Categorized coding method .....	48
Figure 11 Corporate activism positioned in Freeman's and Dmytriiev's model ....	68

## List of Tables

Table 1 Summary of literature review.....	12
Table 2 Summary of other relevant knowledge around the topic.....	13
Table 3 Thesis matrix.....	15
Table 4 The number of mentions about stakeholders in the data .....	53

## **1 Introduction**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, listed companies have increasingly started to take public stand on critical social and political issues. This phenomenon is called corporate activism, that is derived from the original concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR). This research paper's goal is to add knowledge on the concept of corporate activism by identifying the significance of key stakeholders on the topic, and how these stakeholders perceive a corporate activism centered marketing campaign. Additionally, the study aims at defining the principles of how this type of campaign is conducted by clarifying the level and quality of corporate governance. The introduction part of the research paper includes the background of the study, as well as takes look at the previous research about the most relevant concepts in the field. The studied concepts in this paper are corporate governance, stakeholder theory, CSR, corporate activism and to some extent CEO activism. Furthermore, the selected research questions and methodology are introduced.

### **1.1 Background**

Corporate social responsibility (CSR), sustainability, corporate citizenship, corporate activism and CEO activism are all concepts that are strongly present on listed companies' agenda today. The majority of large companies are including these concepts in their values and strategies. The reason why this study is conducted, is that out of these concepts, academia has emphasized CSR and sustainability, whereas corporate activism and CEO activism are far less studied. This is illustrated in the Figure 1 below.

Active companies are taking stand to bring social and ethical conflicts into the public discussion. The corporations' initial intent to engage in CSR and corporate activism has been widely debated and remains somewhat controversial. It is proposed that the concept of proactive corporate activism is just another strategical tool for the companies to strengthen their reputation and satisfy their stakeholders. The concept is complex, as it can easily raise opinions for and against among the consumers. The controversiality of the concept can be illustrated in many ways. For example,

does a company's assumingly calculated motive for engaging in corporate activism diminish the potential positive effects that taking stand will have on society?

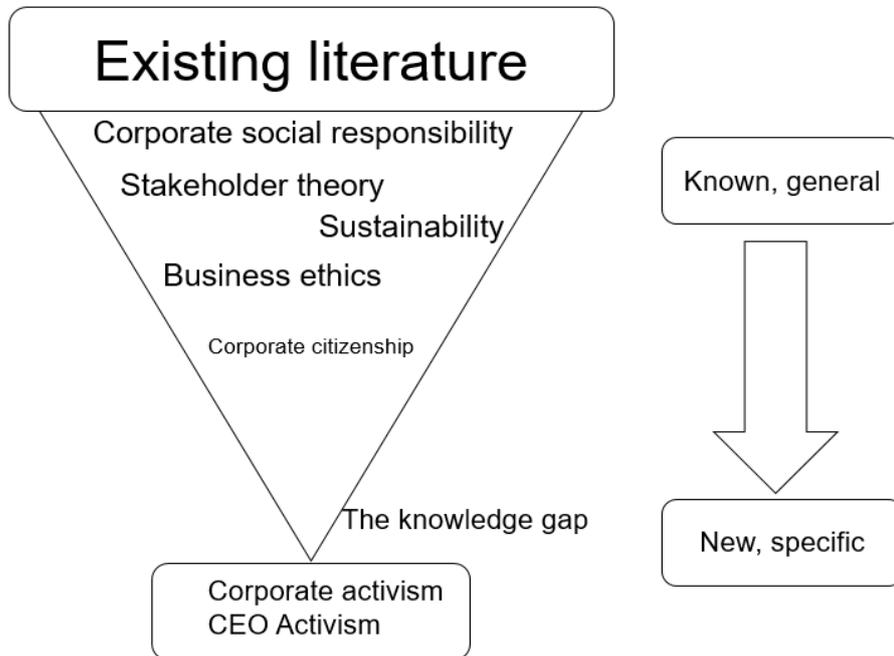


Figure 1 Illustrating graph of the need for the study

In recent years, corporate activism has developed a more humane form aside of it, as it is being implemented by companies' CEOs. The CEOs stand on debated issue can have not only positive but also negative effect. Whereas lots of Americans expressed that they are likely to buy from a company when they agree with the CEO on an issue, even more Americans said they are less likely to buy in case of a disagreement with CEOs stance. (Price 2017.)

What is the most interesting in this topic is, that in any case, the corporate activism led by the company leaders is expected to have its place in the future business environment. Aaron K. Chatterji and Michael W. Toffel (2018) have recently stated in Harvard Business Review, that as an increasing amount of business leaders choose to take stand on political and social issues, CEO activism is to become an extremely important strategic issue for organizations. In order to effectively engage in CEO activism, they should be very careful with the issues and identify the right times and approach to get engaged. In order to being as effective as possible on

the issue, it is crucial from an organizational standpoint that the results deriving from CEO Activism are properly measured. (Chatterji & Toffel 2018.)

On a personal level, I chose to study the topic of corporate activism, since it combines both contribution towards society and strategic perspective from an organizational standpoint. Furthermore, I am confident that I am able to provide new information about the topic and can contribute to the literature.

## ***1.2 Literature review***

In order to assess the relevant topics of what is already being written relating to the concept of corporate activism, the field should be analyzed as a whole. In addition to the main concepts of corporate activism, stakeholder theory and corporate governance, the literature review of this study shall also include an overview of what is written about the concepts of CEO activism and corporate social responsibility (CSR).

One essential factor that potentially separates these concepts from each other is the role of corporate governance. Whereas the linkage among successful corporate governance, CSR activities and stakeholder perspective is clear, the major rationales behind proactive corporate activism may be different compared to traditional CSR activities. It is clear, that traditional CSR activities are usually governed by the large boards in organizations and handled as a strategic way to control stakeholders. However, among corporate activism and especially CEO activism this is not necessarily the case. Out of these two concepts, this study focuses on corporate activism.

Even though corporate activism and CEO activism are derived from the concept of CSR, the potential differences in governing CSR, corporate activism and CEO activism potentially indicate, that the major rationale behind engaging in these actions may vary surprisingly lot.

By grounding the newest concepts with the original theories that they are derived from, greater understanding around the topic will be achieved. The summary of literature review can be examined from the Table 1 below.

<b>Concept</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Study</b>
Stakeholder theory	1984	Edward Freeman	Stakeholder Management: A Stakeholder Approach
Stakeholder theory	1995	Max B. E. Clarkson	A Stakeholder framework for analyzing and evaluating corporate social performance
Stakeholder theory	1995	Mark Starik	Should trees have managerial standing? Toward stakeholder status for non-human nature.
Stakeholder theory	1995	Donaldson and Preston	The stakeholder theory of the corporation: concepts, evidence, and implications
Stakeholder theory	1999	Jeff Frooman	Stakeholder Influence Strategies
Stakeholder theory	2000	Philips & Reichardt	The Environment as a Stakeholder? A Fairness-Based Approach.
Stakeholder theory	2005	Steurer, Langer, Konrad and Martinuzzi	Corporations, Stakeholders and Sustainable Development I: A Theoretical Exploration of Business–Society Relations
Stakeholder theory	2010	Peloza, J. & Shang, J.	How can corporate social responsibility activities create value for stakeholders?
Stakeholder theory	2013	Edward Freeman, Alexander Moutchnik	Stakeholder management and CSR
Stakeholder theory	2017	Freeman and Dmytriiev	“Corporate Social Responsibility and Stakeholder Theory: Learning From Each Other”
Stakeholder theory	2017	Samantha Miles	Stakeholder Theory Classification: A Theoretical and Empirical Evaluation of Definitions.
Corporate governance	1998	Gillan, S. & Starks, L.	A Survey of Shareholder Activism: Motivation and Empirical Evidence

Corporate governance	2006	Stuart Gillan	Recent Developments in Corporate Governance: An Overview
Corporate governance	2011	Harjoto & Jo	Corporate Governance and CSR Nexus
Corporate governance	2013	Chan, Watson & Woodliff	Corporate Governance Quality and CSR Disclosures
CSR	1953	Howard R. Bowen	Social responsibilities of a businessman
CSR	1999	Carroll, A.	Corporate Social Responsibility. Evolution of a Definitional Construct
CSR	2004	Maignan, I., & Ferrell, O. C	Corporate social responsibility and marketing: an integrative framework
CSR	2013	Murphy, Schlegelmilch & Öberseder	CSR practices and consumer perceptions (also intentions to do CSR)
CSR	2013	Holzinger & Prasad	Seeing through smoke and mirrors: A critical analysis of marketing CSR
CSR	2012	Dionysis Skarmneas, Constantinos N. Leonidou,	When consumers doubt, Watch out! The role of CSR skepticism.
Corporate Activism	1982	Sethi S. Prakash	Corporate Political Activism
Corporate activism	2007	den Hond, F. & De Bakke, F.	Ideologically motivated activism: How activist groups influence corporate social change activities.
Corporate activism	2012	Van Cranenburgh, Liket and Roome	Management Responses to Social Activism in an Era of Corporate Responsibility: A Case Study.
Corporate activism	2015	Davis & White	The New Face of Corporate Activism.
Corporate activism	2018	Hoppner & Vadakkepatt	Examining moral authority in the marketplace: A conceptualization and framework.

*Table 1 Summary of literature review*

As CEO activism is fairly new phenomena, there have not been studies, that have went through a scientific method. However, in the Table 2 below are introduced the newest information about the topic.

Corporate activism	2018	Deloitte	The Deloitte Millennial Survey 2018
CEO Activism	2016	Weber Shandwick (firm)	The Dawn of CEO Activism
CEO Activism	2016	Korschun, Aggarwal, Rafieian, and Swain	TAKING A STAND: CONSUMER RESPONSES WHEN COMPANIES GET (OR DON'T GET) POLITICAL
CEO Activism	2017	Weber Shandwick (firm)	CEO Activism in 2017: High Noon in the C-Suite
CEO Activism	2018	David F. Larcker, Stephen A. Miles, Brian Tayan, and Kim Wright-Violich	The Double-Edged Sword of CEO Activism.
CEO Activism	2018	Weber Shandwick (firm)	CEO Activism 2018: The purposeful CEO

*Table 2 Summary of other relevant knowledge around the topic*

### **1.3 Research questions**

The purpose of this research paper is to understand the comprehensive impact that corporate activism has on a listed company. The chosen research questions will guide the empirical research to provide relevant findings within the topic. The research encompasses the concepts of corporate governance, stakeholder theory and corporate activism. The aim of the research is to provide insight about the comprehensive effect that engaging in corporate activism has on the case company and its different stakeholders. It is equally important to get results on how the corporate governance is managed in a campaign setup. Hence, the main research question is formed in the following way:

*Main RQ: “What kind of impact has corporate activism centered marketing campaign on the company and its most valuable stakeholders?”*

The main research question is a broad consideration, guiding the sub-questions to provide more specific answers. The first sub research question is posed as follows:

*Sub-RQ1: How targeted stakeholders have perceived the campaign?*

The above research question is important, as the study aims at finding clear nuances from the public sources, about the case company’s most crucial stakeholders, and how the campaign is accepted by those stakeholders, when a multinational enterprise (MNE) with controversial social history engages in corporate activism. The earlier research shows that whereas people tend to buy more, when they agree with CEOs / brand’s view, they are less likely to buy in case of disagreement. This question aims at adding depth for the study’s final aim to provide comprehensive understanding about the activism’s effect from a company and stakeholder standpoint. Evaluating the effect on stakeholders may also give potential signals of what is the role of corporate governance, when engaging in corporate activism.

*Sub-RQ2: How corporate governance has been organized in the campaign?*

As corporate activism may have a serious impact on company’s overall performance and its various stakeholders, it is important to understand, how the activism is facilitated from company’s side. This research question adds a context of the circumstances, in which the final findings have generated.

In the Table 3 below, is a thesis matrix that illustrates the research questions in a table form.

Research question	Theory	Concept(s)	Empirical data
<b>Main RQ: What kind of impact has corporate activism centered marketing campaign on the company and its most valuable stakeholders?</b>	Corporate activism	Corporate activism of a large MNE in United States	Reviewing official public sources that are found from EBSCO Business Source Complete database
<b>Sub-RQ1: How targeted stakeholders have perceived the campaign?</b>	Corporate activism / Stakeholder theory	Corporate activism of a large MNE in United States	
<b>Sub-RQ2: How corporate governance has been organized in the campaign?</b>	Corporate activism / CEO activism / Corporate governance	Corporate activism of a large MNE in United States	

Table 3 Thesis matrix

#### **1.4 Theoretical framework**

The theoretical framework of this study is a process triangle, that addresses a concept of corporate activism centered marketing campaign. The process triangle takes through how the campaign is conducted in terms of corporate governance and how company's stakeholders are taken into account. Together these defined themes are forming the comprehensive picture of how a corporate activism centered marketing campaign is performed and what are its effects on a company and how it is perceived by the most valuable stakeholders. The framework of this study is illustrated in the Figure 2 below.



Figure 2 Theoretical framework

### 1.5 Delimitations

Even though it is important to address the relevant topics in the field, the main scope of the study is bounded by corporate activism. In order to stick with the scope of the study, the grounding concepts, such as corporate social responsibility and stakeholder theory are not discussed as profoundly.

Since the empirical portion of this qualitative study is conducted by utilizing secondary sources through EBSCO Business Source Complete database, there will be no primary sources in this study. As the research material is focused on public sources, individual opinions are going to stay in the background.

This study aims to add information about corporate activism's effect on a large multinational listed company. Hence, small and medium-sized enterprises are not covered in this research paper. Furthermore, the empirical research covers only one multinational enterprise with unique reputation and characteristics, which makes it likely that the findings are not applicable to all other enterprises of similar kind.

## ***1.6 Definition of concepts***

All key concepts, that are crucial for understanding the field, are presented and defined in this chapter. The key concepts of this study are corporate social responsibility, corporate sustainability, stakeholder theory, corporate governance, corporate citizenship, corporate activism and CEO activism.

### *Corporate Social Responsibility*

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) may mean different things in different contexts. Whereas in some cases it presents the idea of liability or legal obligations, to many it plainly means a charitable entitlement. A common definition for CSR is that it stands for socially responsible behavior in the ethical sense. (Okoye 2009, 613.) Within this study, the closest definition is “socially responsible behavior in the ethical sense.”

### *Corporate sustainability*

The concept of corporate sustainability has been redefined several times during the past decades, as the business world seeks better understanding of it. Thinking of the most common and generally approved concept definition of corporate sustainability, one needs to go all the way back to 1987, when the concept was defined by World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED). WCED defined the concept of corporate sustainability as “development that meets the need of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own need.” (Amini & Bienstock 2014, 12-13.)

### *Stakeholder theory*

Even though the stakeholder theory is generally accepted in the academia, its correct definition is widely debated. Maignan and Ferrell (2004) propose in their research paper, that the stakeholder theory is about businesses acting in a socially responsible way, when the actions are aligned with various stakeholder interests.

According to Freeman & Moutchnik (2013), Stakeholder theory is explaining the findings that successful businesses are much more than just money and profit makers for shareholders.

### *Corporate governance*

Corporate governance can be seen as a defined set of rules, practices and processes, by which a company is controlled. Corporate governance encompasses taking into account the different interest of a firm's multiple stakeholders, such as primary and minor shareholders, customers, suppliers, government and the whole community, and the company's management itself. (Chen 2018.) For a multinational company, it is important to balance the many effects its actions have on its stakeholders.

### *Corporate citizenship*

According to Maignan, Ferrell and Sherrel (1998), Corporate citizenship can be defined as follows: "The extent to which businesses assume the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary responsibilities imposed on them by their stakeholders."

### *Corporate activism*

The modern corporate activism is a fairly new trend in committing to community welfare. It can be defined as a public stance, which is taken by a company to positively impact social change or legislation. Its controversiality derives from different motives to engage in it. In some occasions the activism may be driven by a company's wish to reach a specific target audience or demographic group, and drive purchase intent. Corporate activism has been revealed to have an effect on product consumption and either causing boycotts or driving more sales. (Rouse 2018.)

## *CEO activism*

In multiple situations, the business leaders are using their personal influence to support a cause (Rouse 2018). This cause could be for example committing to community welfare or changing attitudes. CEO activism can be identified as a phenomenon in which company owners and top management engage in political or social issues that are not directly related to their companies (Toffel, Chatterji & Kelley 2017).

### **1.7 Methodology**

This research paper will include both a theoretical and an empirical portion. The theoretical portion of the thesis forms the ground to the study and is based on a review of the existing literature on corporate activism, CEO activism and stakeholder theory. To support these specific concepts, also literature of corporate social responsibility is skimmed through. Reviewing corporate social responsibility gives this thesis its context, as this concept is not the actual part of the theory. Academic research on corporate activism and CEO activism is yet extremely narrow, and most of the literature has been done during recent years.

The study will be conducted as a qualitative research. Qualitative research is often viewed as an opposite to quantitative research. Even though it is hard to summarize any general comparison between qualitative and quantitative research, some general observations can be made. Whereas a large amount of quantitative researches deal with statistical analysis and hypothesis testing, many qualitative approaches are focused on interpretation and holistic understanding. In qualitative research the accuracy of data collection is extremely sensitive in terms of gaining a comprehensive understanding of the studied issue. Conducting a study with a qualitative approach is highly recommendable in situations, when the previous ideas about a phenomenon are acceptable but modest. This implicates, that an exploratory and flexible approach, such as qualitative approach is, may be utilized. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 3-5.)

The collection of empirical data may be done in several ways, but is generally divided in two categories, which are primary data collection and secondary data collection. Whereas primary data is defined as empirical data that is collected by researchers themselves, secondary data is commonly seen as empirical data, which already exists somewhere else. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 77-78.)

In the empirical research part, only secondary sources will be used. The research material will be collected via EBSCO Business Source Complete database, and categorized by narrowing the search with relevant keywords of the concepts and case company. The qualitative analysis of the material will be done by utilizing NVivo 12 program, which brings the data together and helps categorizing it in a meaningful way.

As there are multiple ways of conducting a qualitative research, this study can be identified as a case study research. In a qualitative case study research, a common feature is, that research questions are always in line with understanding and solving the actual case. The aim of a case study research is to study the case and provide learnings in relation to its historical, economic, social, cultural and technological context. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 115.) In this study, mainly the first three of these are under scrutiny.

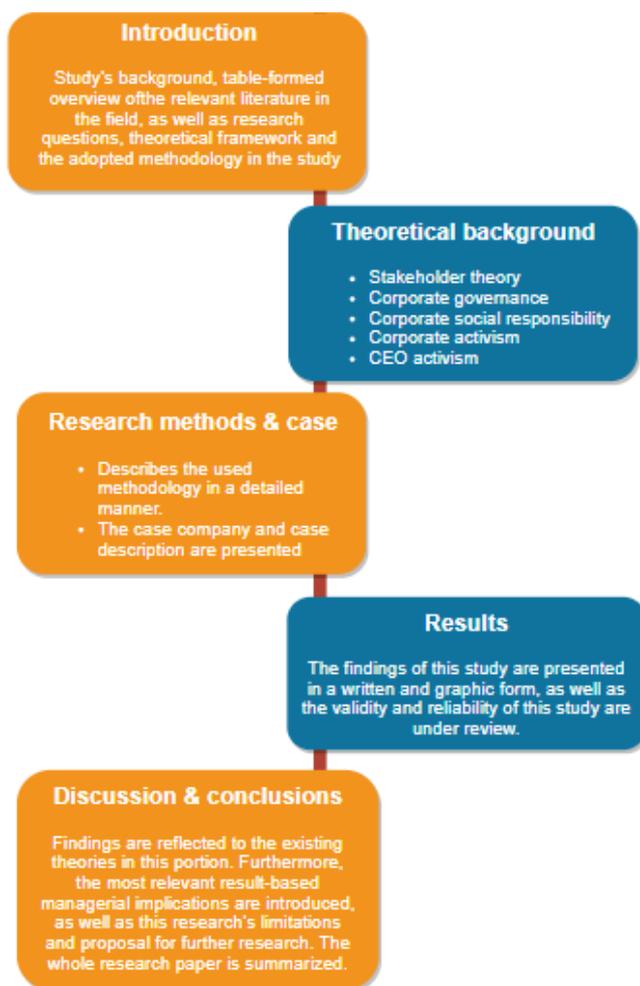
### ***1.8 Structure of the thesis***

The research is divided into four main sections. The thesis begins with introduction, that consists of study's background, table-formed overview of the relevant literature in the field, as well as research questions, theoretical framework and the adopted methodology in the study.

Following the first chapter, the literature review of the thesis is presented in more specific manner. The theoretical part starts with the overarching theme of stakeholder theory and its developments so far, leading into the more specific subjects of corporate governance, CSR, corporate activism and CEO activism, of

which especially stakeholder theory, corporate governance and corporate activism are examined on the empirical part of the study.

The empirical section of the thesis covers accurately the research context and data analysis methods that were utilized in conducting the research. Additionally, the case company and the case description itself are presented in this part. Finally, the study's reliability and validity are under scrutiny, as well as all the results are presented.



In the last section of the study, the discussion and final conclusions based on the earlier chapters' analysis of the findings are presented. Findings are reflected to the existing theories in this portion. Furthermore, the most relevant result-based managerial implications are introduced, as well as this research's limitations and proposal for further research. The whole research paper is summarized in this portion. The structure of the thesis is graphically presented in the Figure 3 on the left.

Figure 3 The structure of the thesis

## 2 Theoretical background

An increasing amount of business entities, such as brands, firms and their CEOs are taking public stances on socio-political issues and are that way heavily engaging in social or political dialogue. (Hoppner & Vadakkepatt 2018, 1-2). Corporate activism is an emerging literature in the field of marketing management and corporate social responsibility. Corporate activism can be identified to be highly related with stakeholder theory as well. This portion of the study will review the literature about corporate governance, stakeholder theory, corporate social responsibility and CEO activism. The triangle in the Figure 4 below illustrates the extent and maturity of the existing literature, and in which scope the concepts should be viewed. The concepts are reviewed in the same order, from top to bottom, as they are placed in the triangle.



*Figure 4 The scope and maturity of the concepts in literature review*

## ***2.1 Stakeholder theory***

Stakeholder theory was initially looked into from the perspective of strategic management. It was initially presented by Edward Freeman. Freeman was the first author conducting a full framework for stakeholder theory in his paper “Stakeholder Management: A Stakeholder Approach” (1984), in which he emphasized how the stakeholder approach can be utilized to enrich the perception of strategical management of firms. Some other significant researchers that addressed the theory in the field of strategic management were Clarkson in 1995 and Frooman in 1999. Clarkson (1995) developed in his research a new framework for analyzing corporate social performance. Clarkson concluded his research by emphasizing how it is managers’ best interest to take into account all primary stakeholders instead of only shareholders. Frooman (1999) in turn, contributed to literature by addressing the influence strategies from stakeholders’ standpoint.

Even though the original intent was to mirror the theory from strategical standpoint, it in fact, also started to divide and have different orientations in the 1990s and 21<sup>st</sup> century. The theory developed and grew into organization theory and business ethics. Few key authors enabling this in business ethics were for example Phillips and Reichardt in the year 2000 and Starik in 1995. Starik (1995) includes the non-human aspect to stakeholder theory. He proposes in his article “Should trees have managerial standing? Toward stakeholder status for non-human nature”, that natural environment should be recognized as one of the stakeholder groups, in addition to political and economic ones. Phillips and Reichardt (2000) strongly criticized this approach later in their own research paper “The Environment as a Stakeholder? A Fairness-Based Approach.”

The fusion between organization theory and stakeholder theory was presented in mid nineties, for example by Donaldson and Preston, Jones and Rowley. Donaldson and Preston (1995) argue that stakeholder management is essential in performing economically well and that stakeholder theory is indeed managerial. The authors propose that attitudes, practices and clear structures formulate a stakeholder management philosophy together.

In 21<sup>st</sup> century, the theory has grown into sustainable development, at least to some extent. Among others, some significant authors developing this orientation are Steurer, Langer, Konrad and Martinuzzi in 2005. (Laplum, Sonpar & Litz 2008.) Steurer, et al. (2005) address in their article how sustainable development (SD) and stakeholder relations management (SRM) relate to each other. The paper took a distinctive angle to the existing literature of stakeholder theory and included sustainability to the theoretical concept, by introducing the SD-SRM approach.

Laplume et al. identify three periods in the development of stakeholder theory in their paper “Stakeholder Theory: Reviewing a Theory That Moves Us”, in which they reviewed the developments of stakeholder theory in between 1984 and 2007. The three defined periods are incubation, incremental growth and maturity. Incubation is the earliest stage of theory development and addresses the period between 1984-1991. During that time, the early literature was largely restricted to book chapters dissertations and conference proceedings. Incremental growth encompasses the period from 1991 to 1998. Theory was developing with rapid pace, and a lot of academic journals and seminal works were published. The last period, maturity, started in 1999 and lasts at least to 2007. During this time, the theory became more well-known and pulled a lot of attention to it. (Laplume et al. 2008.) The larger picture of literature development is described in the Figure 5 below.

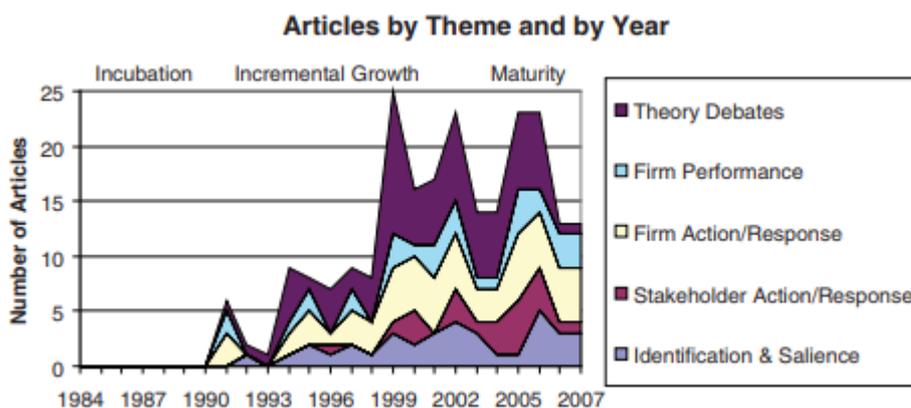


Figure 5 Stakeholder theory literature development (Laplume et al. 2008.)

In 21<sup>st</sup> century, Freeman has been actively developing the theory forward among other authors, such as Velamuri, Moriarty, Maignan, Ferrel, Pelozo, Shang, Miles and Dmytriyev.

Freeman, Velamuri and Moriarty (2006) emphasize in their research paper “Company Stakeholder Responsibility: A New Approach to CSR” the heavy problem with prior CSR interpretations. The issue is, that by separating business and social responsibility as their own separate things, people unintentionally strengthen the corrupt thought that these two involve distinct activities and thought processes. In other words, the authors highlight that CSR falsely reinforces the idea that business, ethics and society can be separated from each other.

Edward Freeman, a stakeholder theory researcher states that the old way of doing business as just making profits and money to shareholders is not working anymore. Stakeholder theory is explaining the findings that successful businesses are much more than just money and profit makers. Freeman proposes that modern businesses are driven by purpose and create value for diverse range of different stakeholders, such as its employees, suppliers, customers, community as well as its financiers. The consciousness of the business entities’ effects on the stakeholders has led to the development of stakeholder theory. (Freeman & Moutchnik 2013, 5-6.)

Maignan and Ferrell (2004) propose that the stakeholder perspective is about businesses acting in a socially responsible way, when the actions are aligned with various stakeholder interests. However, the authors are concerned about the fragmented literature around the previous CSR studies. The fragmentation is caused by diverse focuses that are chosen in the past literature. In the article, the authors introduce a conceptual framework for marketers to enhance their understanding of the phenomena, by providing a consistent framework for CSR. The article’s framework attempts to point out that marketers can succeed better in CSR management by broadening their focus to include all stakeholders instead of concentrating too heavily on consumers. Additionally, the framework responses to

fragmented past literature by reviewing and combining the diverse initiatives that relate to social responsibility. (Maignan & Ferrell 2004, 4-5, 17.)

Peloza's & Shang's article (2010) responds to Maignan's and Ferrell's research by extending their theoretical model of CSR's potential impact on stakeholder relationships by providing a comprehensive review of the different CSR actions that are defined by academic researchers working in the field of CSR. In short, the paper's objective is to examine and discuss how the different CSR activities can make or destroy value for stakeholders. The authors review the past CSR activities that have already been used in the past studies that evaluate stakeholder responses, as well as examine other potential activities that may provide new kinds of value to stakeholders. The paper also gives insight on what type of CSR activities is the most influential from the consumer point of view.

The authors categorize CSR activities to three wide categories, based on how the phenomena has been studied in the past. These categories are philanthropy, business practices and product-related. Philanthropy category is clearly the most studied from the given categories. Philanthropy related studies encompass approximately 65% of all past studies. According to Peloza and Shang, the most common CSR issue in previous studies has been "cause-related marketing", where the connection between commercial exchange and charity donations is studied. The article uncovers inconsistencies and knowledge gaps in business practices and especially in product-related CSR studies. The authors argue that consumer perceptions of CSR value vary extremely much, depending on the form of CSR activities. The authors propose that compared to CSR activities that are related to philanthropy and business practices, consumers are actually more aware of product-related CSR activities. This is not only since they are deeply linked to the product itself but also because planning and investing in sustainable and ethical R&D is perceived to take a lot more effort from the company, than just tossing money to a responsible cause. (Peloza & Shang 2010, 117-119 & 128-130.)

Even though the stakeholder theory is generally accepted in the academia, its detailed definition is also widely debated in the field. There have been some

simplified groupings that aim to classify what stakeholders actually are in the extant literature. However, since there are still large amount of conceptual confusion within the theory, it undoubtedly effects negatively to the theory's potential development. (Miles 2017, 437.)

Samantha Miles's research on classifying the definitions of stakeholder theory contributes well in the extant literature, as the theory in question still lacks comprehensive and multi-dimensional classification model.

Freeman and Dmytriyev (2017) shed light to the linkage between CSR and stakeholder theory in the paper "*Corporate Social Responsibility and Stakeholder Theory: Learning From Each Other.*" The Freeman's and Dmytriyev's paper focus on showing that both of these concepts are needed in the field of business ethics. In addition to the given insight of how CSR and stakeholder theory relate to each other, the paper elaborates the criticism of CSR, and gives some tools to overcome that.

The way, in which the paper addresses the past and present criticism towards CSR by grouping it into three main categories, which are "violating obligations to shareholders, covering wrongdoing and creating false dichotomies." The first statement about CSR violating obligations to shareholders has already been disproved in the academia. However, the latter two claims about covering wrongdoing and false dichotomies are extremely challenging to bypass when reviewing the CSR criticism. Hence, the elaboration of the criticism concepts in this paper is emphasized on these two factors. The article states clearly that CSR should not be utilized to cover the past violations toward some other stakeholders. What it comes to false dichotomies, the authors do not believe that making profit and effecting positively to the community exclude each other.

The authors propose that stakeholder theory and CSR can be helpful to each other e.g. in several matters, although there are several fundamental differences between these two approaches. For example, whereas stakeholder theory focuses on implementing the socially responsible activities within a local range and quite narrow

reach, the social orientation is often pushed to the maximal reach in CSR. The other illustrative example of the differences between these two concepts, is that whereas stakeholder theory directs the responsibility efforts towards determined stakeholder groups, CSR focuses the most heavily to environmental and ethical labor practices. It can be argued, that stakeholder activism is more multi-directional than CSR, which in turn is often pictured as companies' responsibility to communities and society. Even though the concepts of CSR and stakeholder theory study the phenomena from different perspective, the absolute commonality between the concepts is that they both emphasize how crucial it is to include social interests into running business. Below in the Figure 6 is a conceptual model of stakeholder theory and corporate social responsibility are connected.

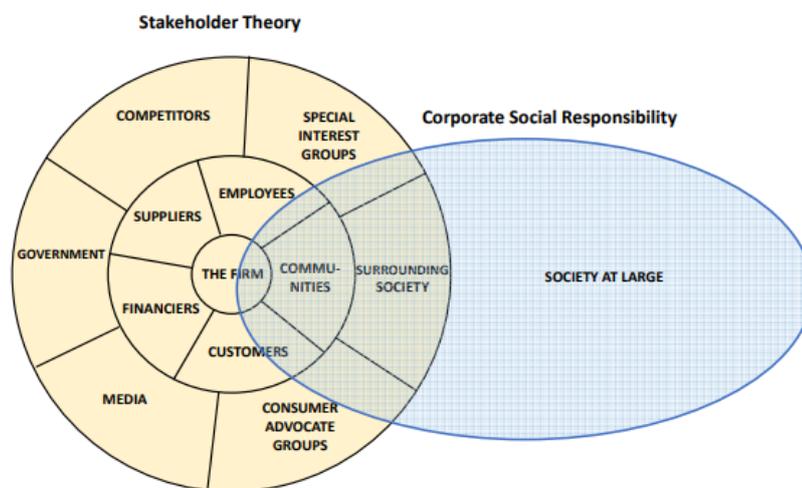


Figure 6 Model of Stakeholder Theory and CSR (Freeman & Dmytriyev 2017.)

According to the authors, these two concepts are interconnected with three basic elements, which are “purpose, value creation and stakeholder interdependence.” In short, the authors propose that company should always have and always stick with its original purpose, why it was established in a first place. Value creation goes hand in hand with stakeholder interdependence, as the value that companies create to one stakeholder, also contributes to value creation for other stakeholders. For instance, the interconnection between stakeholders can be identified in a case, where satisfying suppliers or employees also benefits customers. Also helping

communities in general, likely leads to better company reputation and eventually, better sales. (Freeman & Dmytiryev 2017, 7-13.)

## 2.2 Corporate governance

Corporate governance can be defined in several ways, depending on the standpoint. However, it can be generally defined as a set of rules, practices and processes, by which a company is controlled. It is crucially important to adjust the corporate governance practices into each stakeholders' needs and value. Essential authors with corporate governance, Gillan and Starks (1998), define corporate governance as "the system of laws, rules, and factors that control operations at a company."

The literature about corporate governance started to increase at the end of 1990s, at the same time when the period of "incremental increase" with stakeholder theory's literature was about to turn into the defined "maturity" period.

Corporate governance's mechanisms are often viewed separately by researchers, who split the mechanisms into internal mechanisms and external mechanisms to firms. (Gillan 2006.) This division is illustrated in the Figure 7 below.

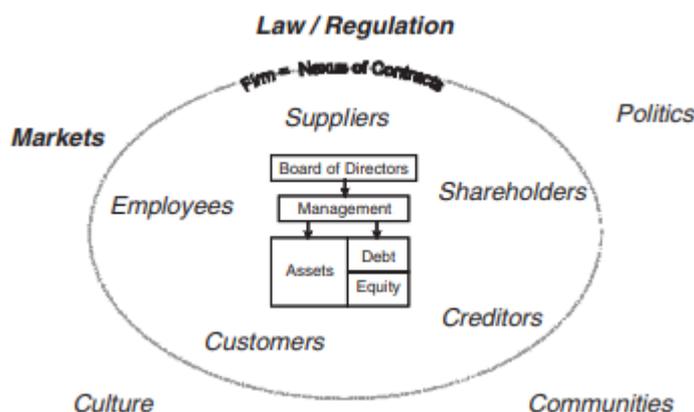


Figure 7 Corporate governance and stakeholder perspective (Gillan 2006.)

Figure 6 represents the division of internal and external mechanisms of a firm, and also incorporates laws, communities, politics and other stakeholders, including a stakeholder perspective into it.

Maretno A. Harjoto and Hoje Jo (2011) studied the linkage of CSR and corporate governance in their research paper "Corporate Governance and CSR Nexus." They contribute to CSR and Corporate governance literature by testing empirically the governance-CSR nexus (linkage). The empirical testing was based on 4 different and competing hypotheses for the rationale behind CSR: over-investment, strategic-choice, product-signaling, and conflict-resolution. The first hypothesis, over-investment, states that firms' top management are over-investing in CSR practices, in order to enhance their reputation as good global citizens. The second hypothesis, strategic-choice, proposes that firms' major motivation to do CSR is not at all managed by firms' board, but rather the CEOs alone, who strategically aim to get support from social and environmental activists, and by having that support, reduce the odds of CEO turnover in the future. The third hypothesis, product-signaling, suggests that firms engage in CSR activities to emphasize their product quality, especially in highly competitive market.

The last hypothesis, conflict-resolution, was the one that the most strongly points out the potential linkage between CSR and corporate governance. The conflict-resolution hypothesis proposes that firms use CSR as a corporate governance tool, to minimize conflict of interest between firms various stakeholders, such as investing and non-investing stakeholders, and managers. The final conclusion in the research paper is that based on empirical evidence, the relationship between CSR, corporate governance and firm performance can be best explained by the conflict-resolution hypothesis. (Harjoto & Jo 2011, 45-46, 60.) The study in question gives tremendous insight, whether firms should engage in CSR activities or not.

The linkage between corporate governance quality and CSR is also investigated by Chan, Watson & Woodliff (2013), who study the association between corporate governance and CSR. Both of these mechanisms are used by firms to control the relations with stakeholders. The study found that listed companies that provide more CSR information in their annual reports are large, belong to high profile industries and have the best corporate governance ratings. Following the prior researches,

also the findings of this study support the previous studies' proposals, that there is a clear link between corporate governance quality and CSR. (Chan et. al 2013.)

Whereas successful corporate governance is strongly linked to traditional CSR activities and stakeholder theory, the linkage among corporate governance, Corporate activism and especially CEO activism has somewhat different nature. Modern Corporate activism and CEO activism are fairly new as an established concepts, so the literature lacks studies of the corporate governance's linkage to these. However, especially with CEO activism it can be assumed that the major rationale behind taking stand is not balancing between stakeholders. Both corporate and CEO activism are a lot more proactive ways to engage in societal discussion. Whereas Haioto and Jo (2011) discovered that the firms' major reason to do CSR was to control the conflicts between different stakeholders, with Corporate and CEO activism the major rationale is probably different. It can be speculated that due to its provocative nature, the major motivation with CEO activism is probably not conflict-resolution between stakeholders, but rather the CEOs personal strategic choice to proactively secure its future position.

CEOs that are implementing corporate activism bursts, are often standing out on their own, impulsively. Neglecting the boards' and other stakeholders opinions on the debated issue is a huge risk compared to traditional CSR, which is often conducted to strategically balance conflicts between diverse stakeholders.

### ***2.3 Corporate Social Responsibility***

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) can be identified as the initial core of the current themes concerning the same field, such as stakeholder theory and corporate activism. Therefore, it is important to have knowledge on the main phases of the concept's development.

In a Kellogg University's interview, Klaus Weber marks a point that public's expectations towards corporations seem to vary within every 20 or 25-years. In the 1970s, companies were expected to have a positive effect on society through their

actions. In 1980s and 1990s, on the contrary, companies were roughly seen as an institutions of which only purposes were to make profit and to follow shareholders' opinions. Companies that were forward-looking trailblazers in environmental and social issues in the early 1970s, actually got back to conservative and ascetic thinking of a general company purpose. However, in the late 90s, there was the most recent shift towards a bigger emphasis on societal and environmental issues in a company context, that is still ongoing. Interviewed associate professor, Klaus Weber predicts that during the upcoming years, yet another shift is coming, this time scaling back to the thinking, in which social responsibility will be increasingly evaluated as an additional cost item that is not worth the effort. (Love 2014.)

Weber's prediction is interesting yet unsure, as the time frame of his prediction is quite narrow. For gaining a more comprehensive picture about corporate social responsibility and its sub-concepts, Archie. B. Carroll (1999) from University of Georgia, presents in his paper "*Corporate Social Responsibility. Evolution of a Definitional Construct*", the historical development and definitional changes of the corporate social responsibility concept. The author represents that the first step at the long road of modern CSR concept development can be traced all the way back to 1950s, which was the time when modern era of CSR was initiated by Howard R. Bowen. The author proposes, that because of the important initial work in the field, Howard R. Bowen should be kept as a father of Corporate Social Responsibility. During the 1960s and 1970s, the CSR concept expanded, and literature base grew with a rapid pace. However, in the 1980s the concept itself did not drastically expand. Instead, multiple alternative themes in relation to the original concept came into existence. For instance, stakeholder theory and business ethics theory can be traced to that decade. In the 1990s CSR continued to serve as a core concept in the field.

CSR was initially defined in the 1950s by Howard R. Bowen (1953), who defined the businessmen's social responsibilities exactly as follows: "It refers to 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.”

The 1960s was the time when the concept's literature expanded by several authors. The most remarkable writers that defined what CSR really meant, were Keith Davis, Robert Blomstrom, William C. Frederick, Joseph W. McGuire and Clarence Walton, who all contributed to the development of CSR concept. The development continued in the 1970s by multiple authors, but to name one trailblazing writer, George Steiner (1971) broadened the meaning and brought up new circumstances in which CSR actions could be applied. The other notable contributions in the 1970s were from Johnson, Davis, Eells, Post, Sethi Preston, Walton and Carroll. It can be argued, that the main characteristic of CSR in the 1970s is that the definitions of concept became a lot more specific. In the 1980s, the writings of Epstein, Wartick, Drucker, Jones, and Cochran stood out from the others. During the decade in question, there were not as much different definitions of CSR, but large amount of thematic frameworks and researches instead. In consequence of the studies in 1980s, the research of CSR concept extended a great deal in the 1990s into these themes that were born in 1980s, such as stakeholder theory popularized by Freeman in 1984, business ethics theory, corporate citizenship and corporate social performance. (Carroll 1999, 268-292.)

There has been a large amount of new literature concerning various CSR themes in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Some notable new authors in the field of CSR are McWilliams, Siegel, Kotler and Lee. Kotler and Lee (2005) defined the CSR as follows: “Is a commitment to improve community well-being through discretionary business practices and contributions of corporate resources.” (Holzinger & Prasad 2013, 1-3.) Additionally, The European commission created the new definition for CSR in 2011: “the responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society.” The definition continues as follows: “To fully meet their corporate social responsibility, enterprises should have in place a process to integrate social, environmental, ethical, human rights and consumer concerns into their business operations and core strategy in close collaboration with their stakeholders.” The definition also stresses that the

companies should be given the flexibility to develop an approach to CSR that is adjusted to their business circumstances. (*European Commission 2011.*)

The article “*CSR practices and consumer perceptions*” conducted by Murphy, Schlegelmilch & Öberseder (2013) offers a well-grounded theory of CSR issues, explaining how companies and consumers perceive Corporate Social Responsibility by shedding light on both for whom and for what companies are held responsible.

More specifically, the article discusses the previous and current form of CSR, as it was treated only as an isolated issue between company and its investors for a long time. As a continuum to this, the article emphasizes the importance of other stakeholders aside from company and its investors, who cannot be neglected either. Also stressed in the article, the authors slightly present the dilemma, in which companies are engaging in CSR activities with very different intentions. While some companies take CSR activities seriously, a great amount of companies only use CSR as their marketing tool without having any substance.

The paper provides several remarkable implications to the broad CSR domain. The study suggests that from both company and consumer perspective, the most important themes across all CSR domains are fairness, respect and honesty. Although these themes are something every company should follow in their CSR strategy, it is to be mentioned, that different companies appear to emphasize the domains that are somehow involved to their core business. (Murphy, Schlegelmilch & Öberseder 2013, 1-2 & 12-13.)

The study “*Seeing through smoke and mirrors: A critical analysis of marketing CSR*” written by Holzinger & Prasad in 2013, dives to the dark side of CSR by studying the controversiality of corporate marketing on CSR. The perspective of this study is based on critical management studies (CSM) framework. The authors are taking a critical view for CSR by claiming in the paper, that in most cases, despite the CSR-wise actions, the CSR itself is not in the DNA of the enterprise. By saying this the authors argue, that the intentions behind CSR actions are unlikely to be always as

sincere and good as the previous literature has often suggested. (Holzinger & Prasad 2013, 1-6.)

The actual concern in the article is that despite of the corporations true social or environmental input, most of them are able to success with the CSR marketing in a way that they appear to be responsible in the eyes of public. The paper argues that in true world, the corporations' effect to the society could not only be non-existent but even negative instead.

Dionysis Skarmeas and Constantinos N. Leonidou (2012) elaborate the role of CSR skepticism in their article "*When consumers doubt, Watch out! The role of CSR skepticism*". The paper in question contributes to the literature by adding information of the triggers that cause the recent development of CSR skepticism. Additionally, the article identifies some factors that may prevent skepticism development towards CSR. The main findings of the study are, that while egoistic- and stakeholder-driven motives are triggering the skepticism towards CSR, values-driven actions are the kind that restrain the consumer skepticism. As the consequences of increasing CSR skepticism may be very harmful for the company, these findings are extremely valuable for managerial implications. One effective way to prevent skepticism is to have CSR on point i.e. tied to companies' values from the start. (Leonidou & Skarmeas 2012, 1-3, 7.)

## **2.4 Corporate Activism**

The idea of companies taking political stand is not new at all. S. Prakash Sethi (1982) is one of the earliest researchers to study corporations' political activism. Even though the paper focuses on the phenomena of companies taking direct political stand for a political candidate, its learnings can be applied to corporate activism cases as a whole.

The paper's purpose is to demonstrate that political corporate activities should be based on a strategic planning and be aligned with a company's long-term objectives. The framework itself describes the different approaches that could be taken by

corporations, to engage in political moves. Sethi also encompasses that political involvement in the form of positive activism includes multiple risks, which should be evaluated beforehand, at the time of choosing the most suitable strategic approach. Whereas positive long-term effect is the most desirable outcome, some political activity strategies may yield positive short-term benefits, but seriously negative long-term consequences, by contrast. Few of the major risks are a misinterpretation of external environmental responsiveness and inconsistency with the corporate activities.

According to Sethi, historical actions of a company has a big impact on how the political involvement is perceived by the public. In case the company that engages in corporate activism has a controversial history including any kind of corporate abuses in the past, the public is likely to question its motives for taking stand for a cause. There is a great challenge in changing these perceptions, as it calls for remarkable investments and resources from a company-side, to switch these negative perceptions into positive ones. Furthermore, analyzing the external environmental factors carefully has a big role in a successful political involvement of a company. Market knowledge is an important point when formulating a large picture of current societal needs and most probable responses in the society. Sethi states, that when the external environment in the form of societal needs and potential responses are accurately analyzed, the potential impact of several long-term political, as well as business strategies may be simulated and further researched. (Sethi 1982, 32-34, 42.)

Gerald F. Davis and Christopher J. White (2015) present "*The New Face of Corporate Activism*" in the Stanford social innovation review. The article derives from Davis and White's book, "Changing Your Company from the Inside Out: A Guide for Social Intrapreneurs, Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2015." The authors emphasize employees' rising role as a stakeholders that give pressure for corporations to take social and environmental stand. These employees are often called "social intrapreneurs", who urge to make a positive impact within the corporation.

The main giving of the article is the provided guideline for social intrapreneurs of how to be more effective in their aims in their companies. Authors give insight for the four most important questions that should be thought through when becoming a social intrapreneur. These four questions are: “When? Why? Who? and How?” Additionally, the article dives to the diverse benefits and hazards of social intrapreneurship.

In summary, Davis and White give comprehensive overview of the currently rising role of employees as a social activists in the company. (Davis & White 2015, 40-45.)

The article *“Examining moral authority in the marketplace: A conceptualization and framework”* by Hoppner & Vadakkepatt contributes to the literature by starting the new research agenda into moral authority in the context of marketplace.

The article examines and defines moral authority of a business entity. According to the authors of the article, the contribution of the study is highly important, as stakeholders increasingly demand business entities to utilize their moral authority. Additionally, while there are already scholars that have studied firms’ reactions to stakeholders’ social activism, this journal was the first one that gives insight what is actually meant with moral authority in the context of marketplace. The article also gives initial understanding on the motives why the moral authority is potentially used, and what are the possible consequences for entity and society, when business entities are exerting their moral authority.

The article introduces the formal definition for moral authority in the marketplace context as follows: “The potential to influence the morality of others through the use of power and platform granted to an entity based on the perception of its stakeholders that the entity is moral.” (Hoppner & Vadakkepatt 2018, 1-2, 10.)

There are many reasons, why companies are engaging in social activities. The original intent to do CSR or corporate activism varies a lot. There may be managers’ wishes to participate and do good to community or to do good to improve financial performance and competitive position, for instance. However, also societal demand

from different activist groups may put some drastic pressure on firms. Den Hond and de Bakker present in their article that activist groups utilize multiple well-organized tactics to affect companies' decision-making with the matters that the activists find important. In order to respond to this pressure, the authors propose that companies should figure out the range of activist tactics in order to be proactive in the right way, response correctly to the given pressure, and keep control to themselves. (den Hond & de Bakker 2007, 901, 917-198.)

The dynamic interactions and managerial responses to social activism are addressed in the paper "*Management Responses to Social Activism in an Era of Corporate Responsibility*" written by Van Cranenburgh, Liket and Roome (2012).

The study examines the managerial responses for social activism in the context of companies that have a great reputation for implementing corporate responsibility in their daily practices. The article contributes to the CSR literature by taking the angle to study the phenomena from the perspective that very few had done before. According to the authors, demand for the study was obvious, as it seems that the activism is more and more targeted towards companies which have already been proactive and established a positioning on corporate responsibility. The study examines a case in which social activists find the international case company's company-centered CSR activities insufficient and put pressure on the case company to start being a more active forerunner with its CSR activities in the industry. The study interestingly finds that targeted social activism does not necessarily have an effect on the industry-level performance, even though the targeted company put major efforts to provide leadership for industry-level change. (Van Cranenburgh et al. 2012, 498-500.) It is obvious, that the interaction and demands between social activists and corporations is complex and should be researched more.

Jewell Parkinson, SAP's Head of Human Resources in North America, has written about the latest progress in the field of corporate activism. Parkinson covers the potential background of the growing support for corporate activism and addresses the issue when companies should choose to take stand on social issues.

Traditionally, companies' role have been to make profits for shareholders by selling products or services. In exchange for making this growth possible, employees have been paid wages and other benefits. In today's digital world, the border between people's work and personal personas has become so blurred, that these two personas are integrating into one. This fusion has in part led to an increasing demand for purpose-driven businesses, which are now built in a rapid pace. People increasingly expect companies to stand for something. In today's environment, having a purpose enhances the customer and employee loyalty of a company. (Parkinson 2018, 38.)

Deloitte's Millennial Survey report (2018) reveals, that millennials and generation Z respondents expect organizations and business leaders to show the way in solving global challenges and shifting the organizations' motives from concentrating on mainly making profits to stabilizing social concerns. If being able to respond to these wishes, companies are in a good position in attracting and retaining the best talent among millennials and Gen Z employees. (Deloitte Millennial Survey 2018, 27.)

From a company standpoint, Parkinson points out the importance of taking account the company's different stakeholders, when considering whether to take a social stand or not. When sociopolitical issues are debated with, there cannot be only one deserted opinion about these matters. Parkinson argues, that a great principle to follow in terms of opinion control is to consider what the company stands for and to make sure, that the company's stance will not be against the interests of company's key stakeholders, such as employees, consumers and shareholders. (Parkinson 2018, 38-39.)

## **2.5 CEO Activism**

A relatively new trend to handle the public is CEO Activism, that has become popular way to engage in the public conversation. CEO Activism can be identified as the latest development of corporate activism phenomena. In May 2016, a public relation company Weber Shandwick and global public opinion research consultancy KRC Research partnered to conduct a comprehensive online survey "The Dawn of CEO

Activism”, that covered over 1,000 U.S. adults representing the general Americans. The survey’s intent was to gather and study research group’s awareness, attitudes and favorability toward such companies, whose CEO speak out and take stand over political issues.

According to the study, CEO activism’s five doctrines that reflect its risks and incentives, that are, that it has an influence on purchase intent, it has support but does not always drive favorability, it tests company loyalty, it appeals to millennials, but its motivations are questioned by Americans in general.

The study sheds light on the fact, how the type of issue affects how CEO’s stand is received and accepted by the public. In case large amount of consumers disagree with CEO’s stand, company’s sales can be decreased. Furthermore, if the issue is extremely compulsive one, company may even suffer from boycotts. The study reveals that 40% of Americans are more likely to buy from a company, if CEO’s stand is in line with their own opinions. On the other hand, in case of disagreement, 45% say that they are less likely to buy.

Whether to engage in CEO activism or not has an effect on company loyalty as well, according to the study. The research group’s answers indicate that whereas 26% of working Americans would be more loyal if their CEO took stand, 19% say that their loyalty toward a company would suffer. However, the fact that even 55% of answers indicate ambivalent attitudes and 22% stayed undecided, point out the employees’ unwillingness to take any kind of stand, that would potentially set one employee against another.

The public doubt towards the initial motivations behind CEO activism is strong. In this study, the three most common reasons that Americans think are behind CEO activism are to get attention in the media, to build the CEOs reputation and to sell more products or services. Only 14% of respondents thought that one reason is “to do what is right for society.” Based on these results it is clear, that companies and CEOs have a lot of room for improvement when communicating CEOs stance for the public. (The Dawn of CEO Activism 2016, 3-9.)

CEOs such as Tim Cook of Apple, Howard Schultz of Starbucks and Marc Benioff of Salesforce have lead the way of communicating their intentions to the public by emphasizing their passion to take stand of things in such ways that they think are right. Rather than driving better business results, they are inspiration to stand up for something derives from the frustration and outrage of recent political upheaval in the U.S. Even though the phenomom has being bordered inside the U.S. territory, it can be expected that CEO activism is going global in the near future. The more CEOs take stand on social and political matters, the more the public will expect them to do so. (Chatterji & Toffel 2018.)

The other matter that speaks for increased global CEO activism is, that according to the before mentioned Weber Shandwick's and KRC Research's study, 18 to 35-year-old Millennials are the generation that appreciate CEO activism the most. However, also with this generation the nature of an issue matters. Millennials are extremely more likely to make a purchase from those companies, that has CEO they share the opinion with, compared to companies whose CEO's stance they disagree with. In general, Millennials still favor CEOs that are taking stand at least for something. It can be considered, that social media platforms have had a straight effect on creating new kind of cultural environment for more open opinion sharing, especially for Millennials. In short, the study finds that for a company, whose main target customer group is Millennials, engaging in CEO activism is highly reasoned. However, if company has a customer segment over that age group, engaging in CEO activism should be extremely carefully approached. It is also to be remembered, that even though Millennials favor CEO activism, they are also highly doubtful about the underlying motivations of the true motivations behind CEO activism. (The Dawn of CEO Activism 2016, 10-11.)

To have a broader understanding of CEO activism's development, Weber Shandwick has conducted another study about the phenomom in 2017 and 2018. The study, "CEO Activism in 2017: High Noon in the C-Suite", reveals that there was a significant progress of how CEO Activism is perceived, especially among Millennials. When comparing the report from 2017 to the earlier report from 2016,

there was an 11 percent increase in Millennials willingness to buy from a company, whose CEOs stance they agree with, which makes it a total of 51 percent of Millennials. However, the willingness to buy came down by 2%, when reviewing respondents from all age groups. (CEO Activism in 2017: High Noon in the C-Suite 2017).

Weber Shandwick releases in their 2018 report, that CEO activism is still expected to grow in the upcoming years. Amongst Americans, the favorability of CEO activism has also increased compared to 2017. Whereas in 2017, 31% of Americans favored CEO activism, in 2018 the topic was favored by 38%. In the context of Americans, democrats are significantly more in favor of companies taking stance outside of business. In general, Americans are nearly divided in their opinions about this topic. The likelihood of buying a product increased again, after 2% drop in 2017. 46% of Americans were more likely to buy from a company, whose CEO speaks out a debated issue they agree with. The rate of 46% is remarkably higher than in 2017, when it was only 38%. When assessing the employee loyalty, the report reveals that it is more likely to be benefited from CEO activism, than eroded by it. (CEO Activism 2018: The purposeful CEO 2018.) The near development of buying willingness can be seen from the Figure 8 below.

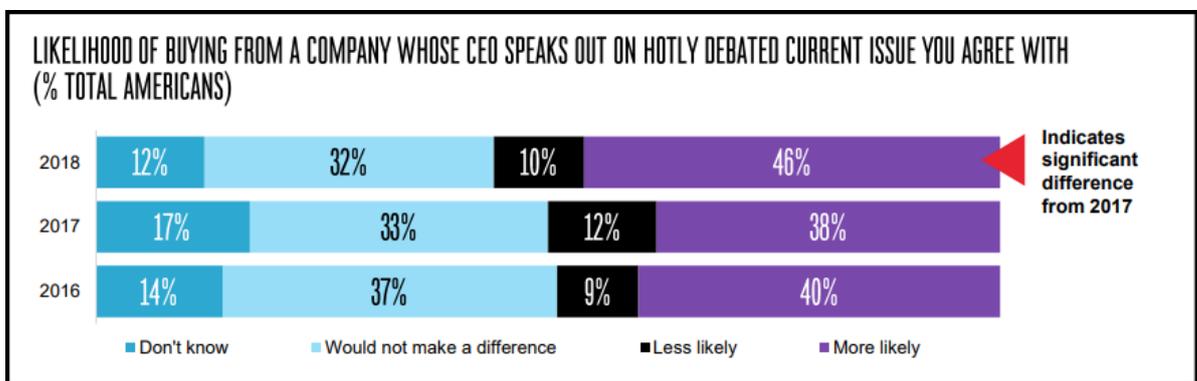


Figure 8 Likelihood of buying (CEO Activism 2018: The purposeful CEO 2018).

CEO activism is addressed from multiple angles in “the double-edged sword of CEO activism” research paper (2018), which is part of Stanford Closer Look series from the Corporate Governance Research Initiative (CGRI) at Stanford Graduate School

of Business. The paper is conducted by David F. Larcker, Stephen A. Miles, Brian Tayan, and Kim Wright-Violich, and sheds light on the issue from CEOs perspective by presenting the best practices and challenges for CEOs making public positions. Commenting publicly on extremely controversial issues calls for serious risk calculation from CEOs side.

The paper addresses the previous CEO activism studies from Weber Shandwick's and KRC Research from 2016 – 2018. Whereas Weber Shandwick and KRC Research have come to a conclusion that more and more Americans are increasingly aware of it, as well as view it favorably. In addition to this, according to the Weber Shandwick's and KRC Researches studies, CEO activism is seen as a potential force for influencing public policies. The authors of Stanford Closer Look paper do not wholly question these findings, yet point out that these results are not universal, and the CEO activism's impact on company performance remains highly unknown. (Larcker, Miles, Tayan & Wright-Violich 2018, 1.)

There are lot of question marks around the phenomenom. Chatterji & Toffel (2018) have found that engaging in CEO activism increases consumers' willingness to buy, but only, when there is similarity between CEOs statement and individuals' opinions. However, Korschun, Aggarwal, Rafieian, and Swain (2016) have had somewhat different outcomes.

The findings of the research challenge the previous notion in the literature that consumers do not purchase from companies they have a disagreement with, when all other things equal. The data from their study shows, that it is clear, that consumers do not necessarily reject political stand from corporations, even when the views of company and consumers do not match. The data propose that the trick is to not necessarily have the aligned view with consumers, but rather having value-oriented culture and reputation. The authors suggest that consumers may consider opposing views bearable, as long as they perceive a company to be value-oriented. If company's previous history is controversial and immoral, taking stand for an important cause is probably seen as hypocritical, by consumers' point of view. (Korschun et al. 2016, 3-5.)

### **3 Research methods & case**

The empirical part of this inductive research paper is conducted as a qualitative study. The data was collected from EBSCO Business Source Complete database with relevant search terms. The analyzed articles consist of public sources, such as Newspapers, Magazines and Trade Publications. This chapter of empirical research is divided into three main sub-chapters, that address methodology, case and findings. In this further chapter, I will portray the utilized research methods and the reasoning behind them. In the following chapter, the case organization and case description are introduced.

#### ***3.1 Research methods***

This chapter deals with data and methods utilising the data. Firstly, in the first paragraphs it is explained how the research is conducted. Followingly, the emphasis is on data collecting, what types of sources in this research are included and how the data is coded.

This study's methodology can be divided to six phases. First the data is acquired by utilizing EBSCO Business Source Complete database, with keywords Colin Kaepernick and NIKE. After that, the data is filtered to include only public sources, that address the Colin Kaepernick case. Relevant articles were stored in NVivo 12 program. There are 64 utilized articles in total. Data is coded by utilizing NVivo 12. The main goal of coding is to identify the key stakeholders, which NIKE wanted to have effect on with the campaign, and how the campaign was governed. After having the codes, the results are critically analyzed and presented in both graphic and written form. The methodology of this study is also presented phase by phase in the Figure 9 below.

## Research methodology phase by phase



*Figure 9 Methodology of the study*

As this research's aim is to study the overall impact of implementing corporate activism in the US, data collection will be conducted by utilizing only the most generic search terms, that lead to all relevant articles within the issue. The utilized search terms are "NIKE" and "Colin Kaepernick." When the data is collected, main themes of in the articles are sorted out from the collected data by coding. This is done for the purpose of better understanding the phenomena and arising themes. Accessing the themes in a proper way, the data collection is handled by utilizing relevant keywords in EBSCO Business Source Complete database, limiting the sampling to public sources in English language, such as newspapers, trade publications and magazines.

In order to sticking with the theoretical framework and answering to the research questions in this study, the article collection will follow the describing themes: What are the primary stakeholders, whom NIKE wanted to connect and resonate with in this campaign? How did these primary stakeholders react to the controversial corporate activism centered marketing campaign? It is also important to identify, how the campaign was governed, so all signals related to corporate governance will be carefully analyzed.

For the assessment of corporate activism's impact on case company's stakeholders, it is beneficial to know the most relevant search terms and filters for data collection. For the purpose of this study, generic pair of search terms will be used.

To conclude the methodology, the research data in this study consists of 64 (sixty-four) public articles, that were searched from EBSCO Business Source Complete database with search terms "Colin Kaepernick" and "NIKE". Only the articles that include both of these keywords are taken into evaluation, whether those matched the purpose of this study or not. The research data will be narrowed to the public articles, that are written after the campaign launch, which was on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> September in 2018. The Colin Kaepernick ad campaign was indeed addressed in multiple sources. This will be narrowed down to public sources, such as newspapers, magazines and trade publications. Data includes only highly valued and reliable publications, such as Forbes, Times, Footwear News, Oregon Business Magazine, Economist, Wall Street Journal, Investor's Business Daily, Bloomberg and Fortune. All articles that are used in this study with the intention of providing relevant findings, can be found at the end of this study, under Appendix.

After the articles are stored in NVivo 12 program, they will be coded accordingly. Both positive and negative nuances in the articles are examined, in order to receive better understanding of the overall impact to stakeholders. For data interpretation, the collected data needs processing, i.e. coding. Coding can be defined as a system to divide and organize the data. After the data is collected, it needs to be organized in a systematic way in order to interpret the content. In other words, the data samples have to be coded for analyzing purposes. Since data organizing can be done in numerous ways, it is essential to define the specific way of coding before the work.

Content can be categorized and analyzed by creating codes that can be applied to data. There can be filtered two main approaches that apply in qualitative research coding. The two approaches to the coding of data are emergent coding, where the codes are taken from the text, and priori coding, where labels are created beforehand and positioned to the text. Even though there are no strict rules for

choosing the exact way of coding based on the nature of the case, it should be justified, why particular approach has been chosen. Whereas emergent coding approach is used at interpreting the data without any prejudices, priori coding approach uses the developed framework for formulating a meaning out of the text. (Blair 2015, 16-17.)

This research's purpose is to shed light the total impact of engaging in corporate activism from the standpoints of both company and its stakeholders. Having more than one approach to the coding process sets some challenges for choosing the most suitable coding method for reliable results. Choosing purely emergent coding approach seems the most suitable for the purpose of figuring out the results, as there should be no prejudices in this research. Despite the growing trend, the few prior researches of corporate activism have shown somewhat contradictory results of the phenomena, so heavy preconceptions should not be made. Coding will be linked to the context of stakeholder theory, so predefined codes could theoretically be made. However, since corporate activism in its modern form most likely has different effect on different stakeholders, it is not meaningful to make prejudices, but rather utilize the emergent approach and see later, how those findings categorize in a broader picture.

The articles in the data collection phase are expected to be too fragmented and different in nature compared to each other, so a clear generalization of the results should be determined. When figuring out the effect on case company's stakeholders, coding is aiming in the end to categorize the results based on positive or negative perceptions and effects. In order to get these results, coding needs to have certain structure for categorizing the insights. The structure of the coding will target to generate broader understanding of how to organize this kind of campaign in the first place, and additionally whether it is even wise to launch corporate activism centered marketing campaign. In other words, the coding structure will go from specific level to broader trends, as seen in the Figure 10 below.

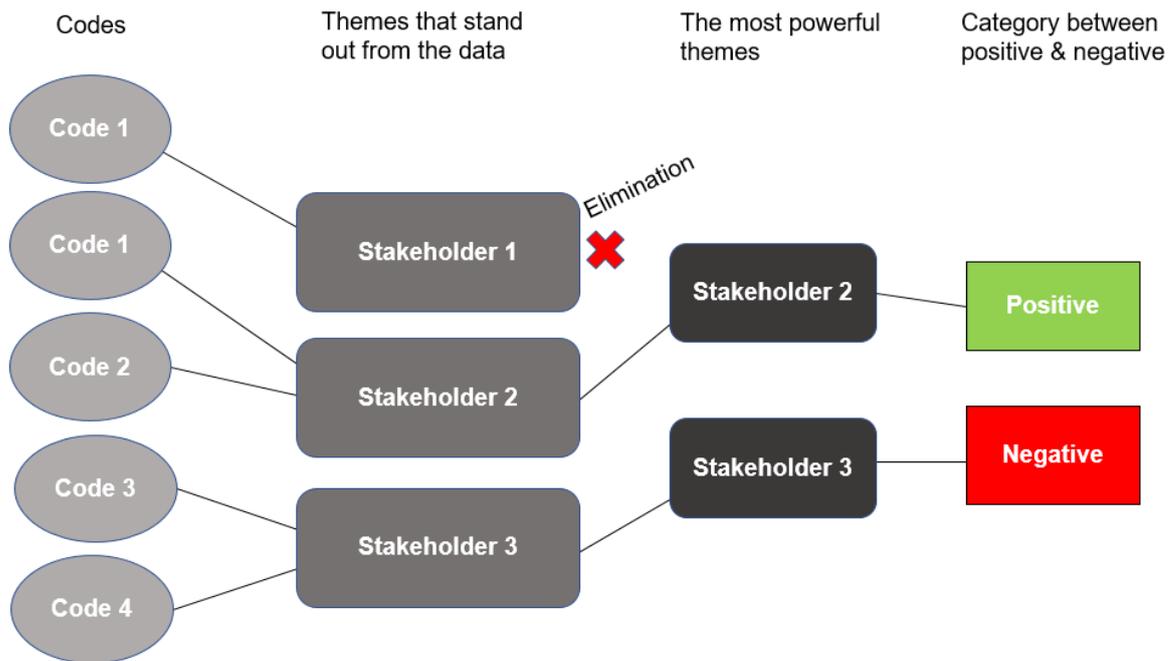


Figure 10 Categorized coding method

Coding will be based on listing undefined themes (nodes), that stand out from the data, yet in the context of research questions. Articles are read through one by one, and nodes are taken separately from each text paragraph in the article.

The first section of the study is analyzing the case company's most valuable stakeholders and how these stakeholders perceive the corporate activism centered marketing campaign. There is a structured way, how coding the data will be done in NVivo 12 program.

Whenever a potential stakeholder is mentioned in the research data, it will be added as a new node under the same folder, where other nodes addressing the same stakeholder are stored. This creates multiple folders, each addressing different stakeholders. After doing so, nodes are filtered by dividing them based on whether they address the phenomena in negative or positive light. After the large picture has been generated, insights will be made by identifying the most important points standing out in the nodes. The second section of the study is to gather any signals about corporate governance policy in the case and interpret the outcome. Coding

the corporate governance is done in same manner as it is done with identifying stakeholders.

### ***3.2 Case company and case description***

In this chapter, the case company and case description of this study are introduced and described. NIKE, Inc., established in 1964, is a Multinational corporation that has operations in several markets. The Company's mission statement is to "bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete in the world." By athlete NIKE means every human being: "If you have a body, you are an athlete." The corporate vision is "to remain the most authentic, connected, and distinctive brand." (NIKE 2019.)

NIKE's operating segments include North America, China, Japan, Western Europe, Central & Eastern Europe and Emerging Markets. The Company is engaged in development, design, marketing and selling of athletic footwear equipment, accessories, services and apparel. The Company's products are produced mainly by independent contractors. NIKE's business model is to sell its products to retail accounts by utilizing various sales channels, such as independent global distributors and licensees, Internet Websites and its retail stores. The Company's brands encompass NIKE, Jordan, Converse and Hurley.

The Company highly identifies as a sports-centered company. It competes with other major sports goods brands, such as adidas, ASICS, Puma and Under Armour. NIKE brand product offerings are summarized in nine categories, which are Running, the Jordan Brand, NIKE Basketball, Men's Training, Women's Training, Football, Action Sports, Sportswear and Golf. The Company also offers products that are meant for kids, and other sports, such as tennis, wrestling and diverse outdoor activities. The Company sells a wide range of accessories under the NIKE brand name, such as eyewear, digital devices, bats, gloves and other sport activity equipments. The Company's Converse brand designs and distributes accessories under following trademarks: Converse, All Star, One Star, Jack Purcell, Star Chevron and Chuck Taylor. The Company's Hurley brand designs youth lifestyle

equipment under the Hurley trademark. The Company's Jordan Brand is focused on basketball apparel, using the trademark Jumpman. (Reuters 2019.)

NIKE remains a highly contradictory company what comes to its ethical and social operations. Being among the first large companies globalizing its operations, NIKE has faced enormous amount of ethical challenges along the way to its current state. As a matter of fact, NIKE has been one of the world's most criticized companies in terms of ethical issues in the past. In order to keep its manufacturing costs low in the 1990s, most of the NIKE sports goods were produced in developing countries, with extremely poor conditions. For a long time, NIKE was seen as a company that tolerates sweatshops, uses child labor and increases its profits by paying unnecessarily low wages to its employees in developing nations. However, NIKE made a decisive turn in 2002, when it announced a new code of conduct for its factories worldwide and started to make audits for its factories. The new code of conduct addressed multiple safety requirements that were to be followed by factories. (Nisen 2013.)

Changing the way a multinational company works is not a quick process, but with consistent and transparent actions, NIKE has been able to change its course for the better in the past decades. However, an organization United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS) claims that NIKE has been slowly slipping back to the previous ways of treating its factory workers. USAS point out, that in 2015, NIKE stopped allowing independent inspectors to follow its working conditions at the factories and took over the monitoring on its own. After this, some disturbing information from the factories has leaked out, for example from the plants in Cambodia and Vietnam, where worrying news from wage theft to forced overwork has been reported.

NIKE has responded to these claims by verifying that it still allows third-party audits as before, but not cooperating with the Worker Rights Consortium, since it was founded by USAS. NIKE has explained its approach to not work with them by recognizing that as a campaigning organization, USAS does not represent multi stakeholder approach, which NIKE believes is the long-term solution for the problem. (Segran 2017.)

It is important for NIKE to engage with its multiple stakeholders, such as consumers, investors, government, industry, society organizations and others. According to NIKE's stakeholder team, engaging stakeholders in a constructive counsel gives NIKE a lot of new ideas for innovation, by offering them better understanding of the emerging issues in the changing world. (FY16/17 Sustainable Business Report NIKE, Inc.)

Colin Kaepernick, a former National Football League (NFL) quarterback started protests against police brutality especially towards black people across United States. Kaepernick started protesting by kneeling during the national anthem of United States before NFL games in 2016. Many NFL players started to follow Kaepernick's example by taking a knee during the national anthem. In other words, Colin Kaepernick started a movement in the NFL. Kneeling during the national anthem caused a lot of debate in the United States, as some saw it brave and others unpatriotic, including the President.

Only few days before the start of the 2018 season of NFL, NIKE announced that the company will have Colin Kaepernick as the face of NIKE's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary "Just Do It" campaign. This ad campaign has caused an unseen amount of controversy across the United States, as it was a strong political stand from the company. This campaign can be seen a clear act of corporate activism centered marketing campaign. The phenomenon of corporate activism is studied in this research by getting acquainted how the campaign has been addressed in the public sources.

## **4 Results**

In this chapter, the main findings of the research are introduced. Firstly, the large picture of the findings is formulated and illustrated in the form of a clustered column. After that the outcomes are described in more detail. After the findings of the study have been introduced, the validity and reliability of the study are under scrutiny in the following chapter.

### **4.1 Findings**

In order to answer the main research question (RQ1) of this study “*What kind of impact has corporate activism centered marketing campaign on the company and its most valuable stakeholders*”, sub-questions should be informative and yet shed light to the phenomena in a reasonably restricted and structured way. The main research question is answered by splitting the sub-questions into two. Firstly, this research aims at answering to what stakeholders NIKE has been trying to reach, and how these stakeholders perceive the campaign. Secondly, since corporate activism in its modern form is a fairly new phenomenon, it is important to know how the campaign launch itself was managed. In other words, how the corporate governance turned out in this campaign. In the following portion of the study, both of these aspects have been taken into account.

#### *4.1.1 Primary stakeholders and their perceptions of the campaign*

Research data showed that NIKE has aimed at growing its brand and resonate with its primary stakeholders, which are 18 to 34-year-old consumers. In addition to consumers, NIKE has tried to meet its investors expectations as a fashion retail organization, that has consistently shined at brave marketing strategies. In addition to consumers and investors, research data indicated that NIKE wants to contribute to the well-being of community, and possibly to increase the company’s attractiveness as an employer in the eyes of young, both its current and potential future employees. These stakeholders stood out in the research by their positive view of the Colin Kaepernick marketing campaign. What needs to be mentioned as

well is that based on the research data, NIKE did not consider U.S. government & other politicians as an especially important stakeholder. In fact, it appeared to be quite the contrary. The scope of how the stakeholders stood out from the data is illustrated in the Table 4 below. These stakeholders and how they perceived the campaign are next introduced more specifically.



Table 4 The number of mentions about stakeholders in the data

### Consumers

Based on the collected research data, it can be clearly seen, how NIKE’s Colin Kaepernick ad campaign raised both positive and negative opinions and reactions amongst US consumers. However, the common image is that even though it was a highly controversial campaign that divided NIKE’s fanbase, the rewards for NIKE as a brand and shoe-seller are inevitable. In total, consumers were mentioned 56 times in the research data. Whereas forty-two (42) of the mentions had positive tone, only fourteen (14) articles addressed that consumers perceived the campaign in a negative light.

Additionally, all publications reporting that the campaign had been perceived negatively by consumers, were published rather soon after the campaign launch. The more time had passed, the more positive articles about consumers’ perceptions appeared in the data. Based on the findings it can be argued, that even though there

were some extremely visible protests from certain consumer groups, NIKE got the targeting right with the campaign, speaking to its most crucial consumer groups. More about consumer perceptions are presented in the following paragraphs.

Data proposes that it has been estimated that 80 percent of the people wearing NIKE shoes, do not wear them exclusively for their designated purposes, such as running or other sports. Consumers are wearing these premium shoes to feel better about themselves. Even if the consumers are not actually wearing the shoes for the activities they are designed for, lacing up a pair of NIKE's seem to have an impact for its carriers to feel that it is the first step toward some kind of action.

The research data suggests that when considering a political position of the brand, it is crucial to understand the field where brand operates. Consumers increasingly stick with their "tribes" and expect influential companies to take stand over social and political issues, as common trust to government and public institutions has started to decrease.

This is something that a large global brand cannot necessarily avoid. Even though a brand would like to stay on the sideline, consumers are expecting them to take stance. Unexpected forces like one employees misbehaviour, the public or even US President's Twitter handle may force a company to the spotlight.

According to Toluna's survey in the research data, it is a lot more likely that 18 to 34-year-old US consumers are to be NIKE's customers, compared to older people. Toluna's research was conducted on behalf of Marketing Week. Toluna investigated, that 79 percent of among the 18 to 34 age group in the US are customers of NIKE. This compares well to older age groups, as 63 percent of those aged 35 to 54, and only 41 percent among the over-55s.

Close to 50 percent of those aged 18 to 34 see NIKE more positively after the Colin Kaepernick campaign. Only 14 % said they view NIKE less favorably. In addition to this, same kind of figures were drawn from the question how likely they were going to buy NIKE products. Only 9 % said they were going to buy less, as opposed to 49

% who were likely to buy more. The difference is remarkable especially to over 55-year-old consumers, of which 42% view NIKE less favorably, and only 22% more favorably after the Colin Kaepernick campaign.

Another study of this issue that stood out in the collected data backs up these results by giving the same kind of figures, as according to Quinnipiac University survey, approximately 67 percent of consumers below 34 years of age stand behind NIKE and Kaepernick.

Same kind of pattern seems to appear when the ethnicity in the US is under scrutiny. African Americans, Black Americans and Asians view NIKE more favorably compared to white consumers, and are likely to buy more products from NIKE after the campaign.

The data from the survey proposes, that in the long term the controversial Kaepernick campaign boost NIKE's brand. However, Colin Kaepernick is not the only one to take account, when measuring the impact. Colin Kaepernick was part of the wider campaign that included also athletes like Serena Williams and Caster Semenya, which in part fitted with NIKE's aim to position itself correctly.

Several sources take note, that taking a stand on the issues of racism or police brutality suited well for NIKE's position in the market. Data on American NIKE customers suggests that people buying NIKE's products want brands to take visible actions, and position in the market according to their values.

Morning Consult's recent survey in the research data reveals that especially young consumers would react positively to a brand supporting protesters that kneel during the US national anthem.

According to social media analytics company, Listen First, there was over 100 000 posts with the hashtag #BoycottNike in twitter within the first full day. Despite of that, NIKE received clearly more support than negative feedback against them, said

Jason Klein, chief executive of ListenFirst. NIKE had over 170 000 new Instagram followers within a very short period of time. Mostly 18-34 year-old males.

Colin Kaepernick is extremely polarizing character, what comes to the opinion of American public. 34 percent of American adults think positively of him, as opposed to 31 percent that have a negative opinion. Compared to the generic like him or does not like him question, he is a lot less divisive among NIKE followers. Even 46 percent of NIKE's fairly recent customer base viewed him favorably, as opposed to 23 percent having a negative view of him. Furthermore, 65 percent of NIKE's customers appreciate when brands stand visibly for something. Senior sport industry adviser Matt Powell from The NPD Group Inc. presents that about two-thirds of the people wearing NIKE sneakers (or other footwear) are under 35: Generation Z and millennials are the core demographic for NIKE, and they want NIKE to do this kind of outcomes.

A lot of NIKE's retailers, Foot Locker among others, have given positive feedback of how consumers in the stores have taken the campaign largely positively.

Having a look on the overall results of the Colin Kaepernick ad campaign, it is easy to say that NIKE's targeting has definitely worked. Even though there were some backlash in social media, it was with mainly right-wingers and older age groups. Millennials and generation Z consumers, who are more left-wing or come from the BAME community (black, Asian or minor ethnic) are more likely to be NIKE customers, support NFL players taking the knee and appreciate brands standing up for something.

When targeting has gone right, and the most potential customers are thrilled, it has positive effects to sales as well. As NIKE clearly prioritized consumers in its controversial ad campaign, it paid off when looking at sales numbers after the launch. Public sources have confirmed that NIKE's online sales saw a rapid boost after the launch of the campaign. Thomson Reuters' research discovered that compared with 10 days before the campaign launch, there was a 61 percent rise in the amount of sold-out merchandise when looking at the 10-day-period after the

campaign launch. Furthermore, NIKE reduced one-third of discounted products on its e-commerce site after the campaign launch, and still managed to do well and showed impressive numbers.

An US-based Magazine brought up, that Edison Trends investigated, that NIKE's online sales grew 31 percent in the following days of the campaign. There was a significant difference, compared to last year period, which was a seasonal increase of 17 percent. The data was put together by analyzing the purchases from 3 million Americans email receipts, including any NIKE item from over 200 American retail outlets and NIKE itself. However, the research did not include brick-and-mortar sales.

NIKE's approach has been widely praised by the marketing professionals and authorities. Colin Kaepernick ad's disruptive nature has been called tremendous. While it raised a boycott on other side, \$6 billion in sales is hardly debatable outcome. In December 2018, NIKE reported its quarterly revenue was 10 percent higher than last year's Q4 revenue.

### *Investors*

As one of NIKE's primary stakeholders as a publicly traded company (NKE), investors took the Colin Kaepernick campaign mostly very well. In total, there were twelve (12) positive mentions in the research data, and only one (1) negative mention about investors' perceptions. These mentions are addressed more deeply in the following text chapters.

In a short-term period, the Colin Kaepernick ad raised some negative opinions among investors, causing that NIKE's stock fell a little over 3% right after the campaign was launched. There were few large public pension funds, that wanted to send NIKE a message, by divesting their shares. The public funds that chose to divest, manage the retirements of police and firefighters. Among some others, remarkable divesting was done by the State of Wisconsin Investment Board (\$117

billion), the Oregon (\$71 billion) and Ohio (\$91 billion) public employee retirement systems, and the Colorado Public Employees Retirement Association (\$48 billion).

However, even though the 3% decrease in stocks in a matter of only few hours is to be taken seriously, investors were not too concerned, and in general saw the campaign to add value in a long-term, rather than diminishing it. One of the main reasons, why investors were so calm about it, was the long-term bull run in stock markets. In the past five years, NIKE's stock had increased over 130%, and in the last year it was even up to 50%, including the 3% decline after the campaign. The other massive reason for investors good night sleep was the fact, that NIKE is an extremely strong brand in the fashion retail business. In fact, it is the world's 18th most valuable brand, according to the research data. The third reason why investors shrug off, was that they know where NIKE's current growth is coming from. Within the last nine months before the Colin Kaepernick campaign, NIKE's revenue grew the most in China (16%), Europe (13%) and in Latin America (8%). These markets do not care about NFL player kneeling during the U.S. national anthem. In fact, NIKE's revenue in U.S. had declined 5% in the same nine-month period. And that was before the Kaepernick's campaign.

According to the research data, long-term investors are aware of how NIKE is boosting its growth by utilizing social impact. It is so usual that NIKE aims at clear positioning in these kind of controversial issues that some of the investors were actually surprised how long it took, before NIKE positioned like this. In addition to this, based on the previous research, there are highly mixed evidence that boycotts even work, if they are not executed by the true fans of the brand. Again, NIKE's targeting was on point, and most of its most loyal fans were thrilled.

What happened to the stock? After a hard start, NIKE's stock climbed and hit very quickly the record high numbers and products were selling a lot more frequently than before. According to analysts in research data, the bigger risk for NIKE was failing to meet investors' expectations. Investors recognize NIKE's value as an excellent marketing company, of which marketers have achieved extraordinary

things when building the brand. The company's journey to its current state has not happened by shying away from the important matters.

### *Community*

The data had two (2) positive mentions, that addressed clearly the community as NIKE's stakeholder. The wish that consumers and society want its brands to be authentic is also mentioned within the data. In addition to that, NIKE wants to connect with its customers and gives back to the community by donating some of the campaign profits to a little-known charity, named "Know Your Rights." The data showed that even though NIKE had not officially announced the contract in question, the source, who is closely familiar with Kaepernick's and NIKE's contract for the campaign has revealed that part of Kaepernick's salary goes to the organization.

"Know Your Rights" is an organization, that has already organized workshops in U.S., to tell people about their rights, including the human rights to be healthy, brilliant, alive, trusted and free. The Know Your Rights campaign is founded by Colin Kaepernick, and it wants to underline and raise the awareness of higher education and advises how to behave with law enforcement in different scenarios.

However, even though this can be counted as contributing to the well-being of U.S. community, the data does not show, whether this has been a strategic move from the top management of NIKE, or Kaepernick's private wish to give to the society.

### *Employees*

There were three (3) articles, that addressed the employer attraction viewpoint. These articles were however rather speculative and did not show any verified statistics about the issue. In other words, there were some signals in the research data, that in addition to buying consumers, companies are nowadays also trying to appeal workers with liberal messages. In the context of Colin Kaepernick's NIKE ad "Just do it, even if it means sacrificing everything", and Gillette's "The best man can be" campaigns, the data addressed the general phenomena that businesses

are more and more aiming at associating themselves with liberal social values, in order to look more attractive in the eyes of young consumers. NIKE has tens of thousands of employees worldwide, and the company is constantly hiring new ones. Young workers are extremely valuable stakeholder group for NIKE in the future, so engaging in corporate activism with a right message can be a very effect tool to do employer branding.

As a finding, this is extremely interesting and should be researched more. However, there were only few articles that mentioned this as a speculative side note, so comprehensive conclusions about this cannot be made within this research. In addition to this, it is not known, how the employees of NIKE have reacted to the campaign. It could yet be assumed, that the results would reflect to the same demographic age groups and ethnic groups as with consumers, in United States at least.

#### *Government & Politicians*

None of the articles showed that the U.S. Government and politicians would have seen this campaign in a positive light. There were thirteen (13) articles in the research data, that pointed out how negatively policymakers perceived the campaign.

President Donald Trump has been actively commenting on the protests that begun by Colin Kaepernick. The President has often used insulting tone about the players taking part in the protests. In September 2017, Trump advised NFL owners to fire protesting players. Later on, Trump belittled players' intelligence by claiming that they don't understand the concept of what they are protesting about.

What it comes to Kaepernick's NIKE ad campaign, Trump has criticized the campaign by saying, "I think it's a terrible message, and a message that shouldn't be sent." However, even though Trump did not approve NIKE's opinion, he did recognize the company's right to have its own kind of marketing strategy.

Nevertheless, research data confirmed very strongly, that NIKE did not think government as a key stakeholder in this campaign. One of the reasons for this is, that they do not need to, as the company operates in several continents in multiple countries and cannot dance along with every markets' government.

In addition to U.S. government, also some other politicians have disapproved with company's message. Only one day after NIKE had announced the face of its campaign, Louisiana's mayor banned NIKE products from recreation facilities, for instance. The mayor reasoned the act, saying that it is not appropriate to use a such powerful voice as a political tool.

#### *4.1.2 The state of corporate governance*

What it comes to the way that NIKE's Colin Kaepernick campaign was governed, nothing points at it being an uncontrollable output of a single person, or a small group. Research data disinterred several points, which imply it being quite the contrary. The signals from the research data propose, that the campaign was designed with care, taking into account NIKE's brand image, management's preferences, and stakeholders' values. In total, there were twenty-one (21) mentions in fifteen (15) articles, that addressed the corporate governance was a strategic move from NIKE.

Data suggests that NIKE's ad campaign was a highly strategic move to secure its future customer base, which are millennials and generation Z consumers. When asked about NIKE's Colin Kaepernick ad campaign, the company's CEO, Mike Parker very often speaks as "we", when talking about it. As "we", Mike Parker wants to emphasize that the whole brand is behind the campaign and the values in its message. According to the research data, there are no divergent opinions about the case inside the NIKE Inc., at least leaked in public whatsoever.

Despite the fact, that Colin Kaepernick's NIKE ad has become close to a legend in the advertising industry, The New York Times have reported that the company almost cut the athlete loose, because of his editorialized kneeling during the national

anthem. NIKE's spokesman KeJuan Wilkins was interviewed by the Times, and he told that the company had some serious discussions about what to do with Kaepernick. In the interview he emphasized, that "In keeping with NIKE's mission, any final decisions are made as a group", and it is normal that a number of people have different perspectives.

In the most recent years, NIKE has been fighting fiercely with its main rivals Under Armour Inc. and Adidas AG, for the attention of young consumers, which have been proven to think more favorably of Colin Kaepernick and his cause. NIKE's former product director at brand Converse is confident mentioning that the company was ensuring a long-term investment in its brand, to position and differentiate itself. Furthermore, it is not a new strategy for NIKE to rely on controversial campaign bursts, as there are lots of opinionated and political of those in its history. Having Tiger Woods reminding that some country clubs had turned him away because of club's racial requirements, some could say it is in NIKE's DNA. This in turn implies how strategic and well-thought move this campaign actually was.

It is mentioned in the research data, that NIKE has been struggling in creating excitement around its new products, and its sales had been dropping quite continuously during the last year. It is estimated, that catching the attention through controversy was an extremely smart move from the company, as the risk to start fading in the grey neutral zone is always present.

When Mark Parker (CEO) spoke to investors after the campaign, he emphasized campaigns effect on consumers. Parker presented extremely proudly, that campaign resonated "quite strongly" with consumers and presented "Just Do It" mindset to a new shopper generation. Parker was inspired about the athletes, that helped NIKE deliver a statement that truly connects with its consumers. Parker was especially proud of the new record engagement rates between the consumers and the brand.

It is stated many times in the research data, that NIKE went into the campaign surely knowing what they were doing. From Day 1, NIKE has stood up for things that are

important to their athletes, and for them. Having a strategic and collective approach to this kind of marketing decisions is crucially important to the company, that is continuously under global scrutiny. Having this campaign governed uncontrollably would be also risk in terms of NIKE's cooperation agreement with National Football League (NFL).

#### ***4.2 Validity and reliability of results***

Compared to quantitative research, the conclusions in qualitative research are more likely to be questioned and under scrutiny. This is because in qualitative research, findings are based on the data that has been interpreted by researchers from their subjective perspective. Therefore, it is crucial for researchers to make sure of the validity and reliability of their findings. In order to get recognized or cited by other readers and researchers, the findings of the study must be consistent, credible, repeatable and applicable. (Establishing Validity in Qualitative Research.)

Reliability of the study refers to whether the study will produce the same conclusions if conducted again. In other words, it is important that the study is consistent and repeatable. In this study the reliability was closed up to the methodological portion of the paper. In order to producing a reliable study, the demonstration of the used methods was kept as transparent as possible. The documentation of the used methods was presented in detail, from the exact search terms to the actual name of a database that was used to collect the data. To add transparency, all sources from the secondary research data were listed under Appendix.

Validity of the study refers to correctness and accuracy of the findings. To be more precise, validity is how accurate the research is at measuring what it is trying to measure. As of this study, the findings were formulated by following the terms of data. The research questions and coding method were built in a way, that it was unnecessary to make any preconceptions, but rather letting the data to guide the final form of findings. The nodes that were separated from the collected data, were split into themes that stood out. Credibility refers to the trustworthiness and believability of the findings. As the coding method in this study has remained

transparent and faultless, it comes down to the credibility of collected data, when assessing the credibility of results in this study. The utilized data was all from highly valued public sources, which had several interviewees from high level analysts, professionals, and people in touched with the case company.

## **5 Discussion and conclusions**

In this chapter, discussions are made and final conclusions are presented. In the first sub-chapter, the research data, study's findings and relevancy of those are reviewed in a speculative manner. Connections with the chosen theories and this study's results are discussed and presented. In the second sub-chapter, final conclusions are presented.

### ***5.1 Discussion***

The study revealed multiple factors, of which the most that can be identified essential when comparing to the extant theoretical literature relating to how corporate activism marketing campaign is implemented in terms of corporate governance, and how do stakeholders perceive it. In this portion of the study, relevant themes that rose from the collected data are presented and reviewed in relation to theoretical background. Furthermore, study's applicability and deeper insight into how it was conducted is provided in this segment.

This research's data was collected from secondary sources, and no primary sources, such as in-depth interviews were utilized. During the data collection, it was interesting to see how the public sources' articles' tone changed from the very start of the campaign launch compared to only a week later. In a matter of fact, almost all negative articles were written during the first few days after the Colin Kaepernick's ad campaign launch. This was something to take into account, when interpreting the results, as some of the very same public sources later wrote about the issue with different tone. There sure were positive articles from the start as well, but all in all, negative articles were emphasized in the beginning of the timeline from September 2018 to May 2019. This could derive from the pressure, that was around the topic when Colin Kaepernick was announced to be one of NIKE ad campaign's faces. The public opinion, overall picture of NIKE's strategic approach and the success of the campaign were still formulating, so it is only natural that especially in the beginning there were a lot of different perspectives around the topic, not to be

forgotten that public sources and their interviewees had seen the rapid dip with NIKE's shares.

When still reviewing the division of positive and negative attitude in the research data, articles' tone started to turn positive very quickly, since the stock had risen again. After this, positive tone took space more and more, in relation to the published online sales numbers, that were rapidly increasing and positive consumer surveys from multiple consult companies, of which results also spoke for the undeniable success of NIKE's targeting.

The results of this study reflect well to the stakeholder theory. As described in the research of Freeman & Moutchnik (2013) in the theoretical review of this study, modern businesses are not only profit makers but also driven by purpose, aiming at creating value for diverse range of stakeholders. Freeman mentions stakeholders, such as company's employees, suppliers, customers, community and its financiers.

This study revealed multiple stakeholders, which NIKE wanted to target with its corporate activism campaign. On diverse set of emphasis, four different stakeholder groups were able to be separated from the data. These stakeholder groups were consumers, investors, community and employees. In addition to these stakeholders, one stakeholder group, governmental policymakers, was identified as a group, which NIKE did not care much about. Out of the stakeholder groups that were identified in the gathered research data, consumers, especially of those aged 18 to 34 were clearly the most fundamental one. The second largest stakeholder group that stood out from the gathered data, was investors. The Kaepernick ad campaign's success was addressed in the public sources by reflecting the effect on mostly to these two stakeholder groups. Additionally, even though the research data included some indication that NIKE contributed to community by paying to a charity organization, it was a very small scaled campaign. However, it can also be argued, that both the company's customers and the community it operates in are mostly under the stakeholder group of consumers, as this kind of campaign is a clear statement from the company side to make consumers think about the injustices across the community. The results of employee stakeholder group stayed to the

level of speculation, as there were no NIKE employees as interviewees in the research data. Therefore, even though employee stood out from the data, the applicability of this particular result should be critically reviewed.

Given that on this matter NIKE's prioritization for its stakeholders can be identified and ranked based on the data, this research sheds light on how corporate activism as a concept positions with the concepts of stakeholder theory and corporate social responsibility. Freeman and Dmytriiev (2017) presented a conceptual model in their study, that corporate social responsibility is tightly linked to stakeholder theory, and these two concepts should learn from each other. In this study, Freeman's and Dmytriiev's thoughts are presented in the theoretical review. According to their model, CSR is not tied to all stakeholders. The CSR concept is only tied to the stakeholders that are a part of society at large, leaving out investors and other financiers, suppliers and government, for example.

Whereas CSR actions are directed to the surrounding society, communities, special interest groups, slightly customers and employees, stakeholder theory takes account all company's stakeholders. In the context of this study, corporate activism seems to be more tightly tied with a wider range of stakeholders, as CSR is in Freeman's and Dmytriiev's model. Purely based on this research, a company has targeted consumers, investors, community and with some volume employees. An illustration for the suggestion of how corporate activism fits to this model is presented in the Figure 11 below. Red circle is representing the concept of corporate activism in the model.

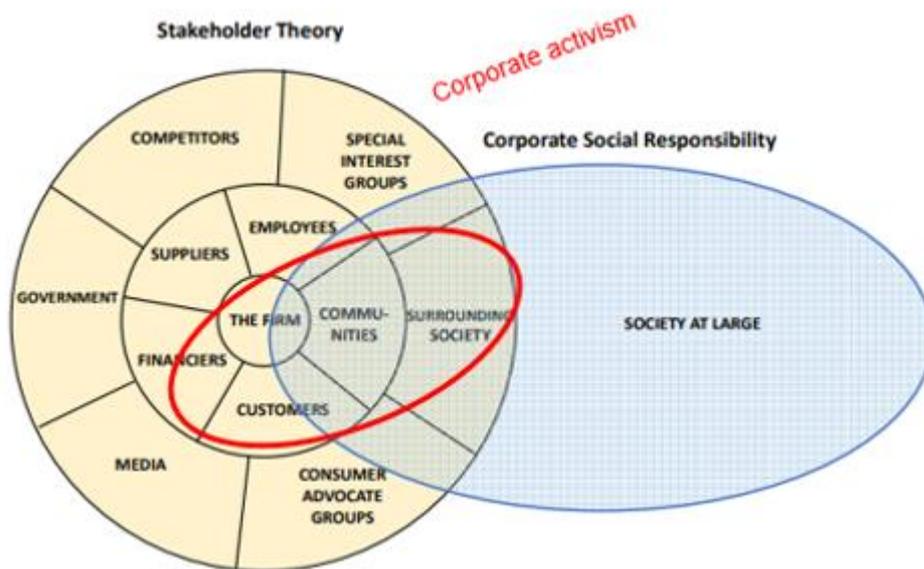


Figure 11 Corporate activism positioned in Freeman's and Dmytriye's model

The research of Maignan and Ferrel (2004) was previously addressed in this study. Authors proposed that the stakeholder perspective is about businesses acting in a socially responsible way, when the actions align with the interests of multiple stakeholders. Whereas it is undeniable, that corporate activism links to stakeholder theory very strongly, at the same time the strong emphasis on certain stakeholder groups, such as consumers and investors indicate, that the initial goal to contribute with society in a socially responsible way is not as great, as Maignan and Ferrel propose. Based on the data about NIKE's stakeholder prioritization in this research, it seems that the campaign was initially launched with the goal to mainly connect with consumers and develop the brand.

In addition to assessing the role of different stakeholders, this study's objective was to shed light on the quality of corporate governance within the context of corporate activism. The study of Chan, Watson & Woodliff (2013) was presented earlier in the theoretical review of this study. The authors studied the linkage between corporate governance quality and CSR. They identified, that both of these mechanisms are used to control the stakeholder relations in a company. What is interesting, is that The study found that listed companies that provide the most CSR information in their annual reports are big companies, belong to high profile industries, have the best

corporate governance ratings and that there is a clear link between corporate governance quality and CSR. Since corporate activism in its modern form is fairly new phenomena, that has not been studied as much as before-mentioned concepts, there seems not to be previous literature about the corporate governance's quality in the context of corporate activism centered marketing campaign's launch.

Even though Hairto and Jo (2011), which were also presented in the theoretical review of this study, had discovered, that the major reason to do CSR was to control a company's relationships with different stakeholders, it could be assumed that the major reason behind corporate activism, due to its more provocative nature, is somewhat different. However, the matter appeared to be a double-edged sword. The results of this study indicated very strongly, that the corporate activism marketing campaign was a highly strategic move from the company side. The data suggests, that whereas NIKE's goal was obviously to create an effect in its stakeholders, the campaign caused extremely controversial feelings and perspectives in the company's various stakeholders. This could be a signal for poor corporate governance, but it is actually the opposite.

Traditional and successful CSR activities aim to a decent level of harmony between the stakeholders, and do not normally cause radically opposite opinions between them. However, it seems that in the context of corporate activism, controlling the stakeholders has got different nuances. Whereas NIKE was undeniably successful with the campaign, it emphasized very strongly its core audience and the stakeholders that seem worthy for the business, totally neglecting the others, such as consumers over the age of 55 and U.S. government. In other words, the quality of corporate governance turned out to be very high in the corporate activism campaign. What explains the caused controversiality among stakeholders, is the approach to not control all stakeholders, but to clearly emphasize the most important ones, in terms of doing good business.

The quality of corporate governance appears to be high, when engaging in both CSR and corporate activism. Additionally, the underlying motivation to engage in both CSR and corporate activism is to have an impact to stakeholders. What seems

to separate these concepts, is that in CSR companies trust the interdependence between stakeholders. Freeman and Dmytriiev (2017) proposed in their study, that when contributing to CSR actions, the value created to one stakeholder contributes to the value creation for other stakeholders as well. Based on the research data, creating value collectively to all stakeholders seems not to be the intention in corporate activism. It can be argued, that the underlying motivation for engaging in corporate activism is to do traditional brand positioning, assisted by relevant target group segmenting. Additionally, Mark Parker, NIKE's CEO, has emphasized to the investors, that the company wanted the campaign message to primarily resonate with its consumers. This leads to a conclusion, that in corporate activism the management identifies the most valuable stakeholders in terms of growing the brand and business.

## **5.2 Conclusions**

To the first sub research question *“How targeted stakeholders have perceived the campaign”*, study provided answers by recognizing the case company's key stakeholders, and how they perceived the campaign. NIKE's key stakeholders were consumers, investors, community and employees, which all finally perceived the corporate activism centered Colin Kaepernick marketing campaign in a positive light. Furthermore, data revealed that NIKE did not view government and politicians as key stakeholders. These state policymakers perceived the campaign in an extremely negative light.

With the second sub research question *“How corporate governance has been organized in the campaign”*, study aimed at providing insight about whether the campaign was governed vaguely with no control, or with strategic mindset and great control. Study answered to this question unambiguously. Campaign was designed and governed strategically with care, together in the executive board.

These sub research questions provided valuable information and added new knowledge, that help to understand corporate activism as a phenomenon. These sub research questions were designed to answer in a structured manner to the main

research question “*what kind of impact has corporate activism centered marketing campaign on the company and its most valuable stakeholders.*” In other words, the research’s goal was to define, whether to engage in corporate activism at all, and if so, with what kind of approach.

To conclude, this research was able to answer to the research questions and bring new knowledge on the concept. The study contributes to the extant literature by defining which are the key stakeholders in corporate activism within the context of MNEs in United States, and how do these stakeholders perceive this course of action. Furthermore, positioning the concept more accurately and strengthening its relation to other essential theoretical concepts in the field, and finally clarifying the level and quality of corporate governance, when conducting a corporate activism centered marketing campaign.

### ***5.3 Managerial implications***

At a practical level, study provided significant findings that can be utilized in companies’ managerial level. If a manager is able to implement a corporate activism centered marketing campaign and follow certain principles in doing so, it will most likely be a successful pull.

There are few principles that should be considered at companies’ managerial level. The most important ones are to know the most important target audience, and to work on the campaign together with other members in the executive board. Since conducting a controversial corporate activism marketing campaign can have major effects on brand favorability across different stakeholders, it is crucial that managers do not make such bold moves without consulting others and better yet, without having any data supporting the call. All members in the executive board should be able to share their opinions, as this kind of campaign burst is a major statement and effects on brand positioning in a long-term period.

To conclude, in order to conduct a successful campaign, managers should be aware of the most valuable stakeholders and prioritize the ones that matter the most.

Especially if company profits come from consumers, it is important to identify the current and future consumer demographic groups, as well as their values and perceptions around the campaign's main statement. Furthermore, it is recommendable that it will not be a surprise to other decision-makers, when a manager wants to take a stand. In short, managers should be brave, know their customers and work together.

#### ***5.4 Limitations and suggestions for further research***

Even though the results are reliable and valid with this particular case, it is unlikely that the results apply collectively to all organizations. Company size, historical actions and thereby stakeholder preconceptions may have a strong effect on the final results. That mentioned, further studies supporting these findings with varying circumstances are needed.

Natural continuation from this point would be, that further studies on the subject would concentrate on repeating the findings of this research. Furthermore, this study can be also be followed with deepening the research methods within the same organization. Since this study was focused on generating findings from the public sources, it is yet unknown how are the values in the message come true inside the organization. It would be interesting and important to know, how the values messaged in corporate activism marketing campaign come true in different organizational levels of a MNE in the United States.

## References

- Amini, M. & Bienstock C. C. (2014). Corporate sustainability: an integrative definition and framework to evaluate corporate practice and guide academic research. [www document]. [Accessed 10<sup>th</sup> February 2019]. Available: <https://link-springer-com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/article/10.1007%2Fs11625-018-0564-3>
- Blair, E. (2015). A reflexive exploration of two qualitative data coding techniques. [www document]. [Accessed 27<sup>th</sup> April 2019]. Available: <https://journals.uair.arizona.edu/index.php/jmmss/article/view/18772>
- Bowen, H. (1953). Social Responsibilities of the Businessman. [www document]. [Accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2019]. Available: [https://books.google.fi/books/about/Social\\_Responsibilities\\_of\\_the\\_Businessm.html?id=ALIPAwAAQBAJ&redir\\_esc=y](https://books.google.fi/books/about/Social_Responsibilities_of_the_Businessm.html?id=ALIPAwAAQBAJ&redir_esc=y)
- Carroll, A. (1999). Corporate Social Responsibility. Evolution of a Definitional Construct. [www document]. [Accessed 21<sup>st</sup> October 2018]. Available: <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/docview/199339277?pq-origsite=primo>
- Chan, M., Watson, J. & Woodliff, D. (2013). Corporate Governance Quality and CSR Disclosures. [www document]. [Accessed 23<sup>th</sup> March 2019]. Available: <https://link-springer-com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/article/10.1007%2Fs10551-013-1887-8>
- Chatterji, A. & Toffel, M. (2018). The New CEO Activists. [www document]. [Accessed 26<sup>th</sup> January 2019]. Available: <https://hbr.org/2018/01/the-new-ceo-activists>
- Chatterji, A. & Toffel, M. & Kelley, J. (2017). CEO Activism (A). [www document]. [Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> February 2019]. Available: <https://www.hbs.edu/faculty/Pages/item.aspx?num=52500>

Chen, J. (2018). Corporate Governance. Investopedia. [www document]. [Accessed 23th March]. Available: <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/c/corporategovernance.asp>

Clarkson M. (1995). A Stakeholder framework for analyzing and evaluating corporate social performance. [www document]. [Accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2019]. Available: <http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=0&sid=facff647-9dcd-4eb5-af20-47d080ab1d73%40sessionmgr101>

Davis, G. & White, G. (2015). The New Face of Corporate Activism. [www document]. [Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> October 2018]. Available: <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/docview/1708822864/fulltextPDF/A9BFAEF76601400BPQ/1?accountid=27292>

Deloitte. (2018). The Deloitte Millennial Survey 2018. [www document]. [Accessed 16th February 2019]. Available: <https://www2.deloitte.com/global/en/pages/about-deloitte/articles/millennialsurvey.html>

Donaldson, T. & Preston, L. (1995). The stakeholder theory of the corporation: eoncepts, evidence, and implications. [www document]. [Accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2019]. Available: <https://www.istor.org/stable/pdf/258887.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A58ae8071c336bfd4868eccec4b8b53e4>

den Hond, F. & De Bakke, F. (2007). Ideologically motivated activism: How activist groups influence corporate social change activities. [www document]. [Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> October 2018]. [www.document]. Available: <https://www-istor-org.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/stable/20159341>

Eriksson, P. & Kovalainen, A. (2008). Qualitative Methods in Business Research. London: Sage.

European Commission. (2011). New EU definition on CSR mirrors Enterprise 2020 aspirations. [www document]. [Accessed 21<sup>st</sup> October 2018]. Available: <https://www.csreurope.org/new-eu-definition-csr-mirrors-enterprise-2020-aspirations>

Freeman, E. (1984). Stakeholder Management: A Stakeholder Approach. [www document]. [Accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2019]. Available: [https://books.google.fi/books?hl=fi&lr=&id=NpmA\\_qEiOpkC&oi=fnd&pg=PR5&dq=Stakeholder+Management:+A+Stakeholder+Approach&ots=60goH7L3QO&sig=e5RE6DWe1QmbRwEA8z3FzteV8DA&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Stakeholder%20Management%3A%20A%20Stakeholder%20Approach&f=false](https://books.google.fi/books?hl=fi&lr=&id=NpmA_qEiOpkC&oi=fnd&pg=PR5&dq=Stakeholder+Management:+A+Stakeholder+Approach&ots=60goH7L3QO&sig=e5RE6DWe1QmbRwEA8z3FzteV8DA&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Stakeholder%20Management%3A%20A%20Stakeholder%20Approach&f=false)

Freeman, E. & Dmytriyev, S. (2017) Corporate Social Responsibility and Stakeholder Theory: Learning From Each Other. [www document]. [Accessed 21<sup>st</sup> October 2018]. Available: <http://symphonia.unimib.it/article/viewFile/2017.1.02freeman.dmytriyev/11574>

Freeman, E. & Moutchnik, A. (2013). Stakeholder management and CSR: questions and answers. [www document]. [Accessed 21<sup>st</sup> October 2018]. Available: <https://link-springer-com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/article/10.1007%2Fs00550-013-0266-3>

Freeman, E. & Velamuri, R. & Moriarty, B. (2006). Company Stakeholder Responsibility: A New Approach to CSR. [www document]. [Accessed 29<sup>th</sup> November 2018]. [www.document]. Available: <http://www.corporate-ethics.org/pdf/csr.pdf>

Frooman, J. (1999). Stakeholder Influence Strategies. [www document]. [Accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2019]. Available: <https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/stable/259074>

Gillan, S. (2006). Recent Developments in Corporate Governance: An Overview. [www document]. [Accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2019]. Available:

<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.538.3754&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

Gillan, S. & Starks, L. (1998). A Survey of Shareholder Activism: Motivation and Empirical Evidence. [www document]. [Accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2019]. Available: [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=663523](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=663523)

Grand Canyon University. Establishing Validity in Qualitative Research. [www document]. [Accessed 16<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available: [https://cirt.gcu.edu/research/developmentresources/research\\_ready/qualitative/validity](https://cirt.gcu.edu/research/developmentresources/research_ready/qualitative/validity)

Harjoto, A. M., & Jo, H. (2011). Corporate Governance and CSR Nexus. [Accessed 23<sup>th</sup> March 2019]. [www document]. Available: <https://link-springer-com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/article/10.1007%2Fs10551-011-0772-6>

Holzinger, I. & Prasad, A. (2013). Seeing through smoke and mirrors: A critical analysis of marketing CSR. [www document]. [Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> October 2018]. [www.document] Available: <https://www-sciencedirect-com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/science/article/pii/S0148296313000374>

Hoppner, J. & Vadakkepatt, G. (2018). Examining moral authority in the marketplace: A conceptualization and framework. [Accessed 13<sup>th</sup> October 2018]. [www document]. Available: <https://www-sciencedirect-com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/science/article/pii/S0148296318303655>

Korschun, D. & Aggarwal, A. & Rafieian, H. & Swain, S.D. (2016). Taking a Stand: Consumer Responses to Corporate Political Activism [Accessed 24<sup>th</sup> February 2019]. [www document]. Available: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2806476> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2806476>

Laplume, A., Sonpar, O. & Litz, R. (2008). Stakeholder Theory: Reviewing a Theory That Moves Us. [Accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2019]. [www document]. Available: <https://journals-sagepub-com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/doi/pdf/10.1177/0149206308324322>

Larcker, D. & Miles, S. & Tayan, B. & Wright-Violich, K. (2018). The Double-Edged Sword of CEO Activism. [www document]. [Accessed 24<sup>th</sup> February]. [www.document]. Available: <https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/sites/gsb/files/publication-pdf/cgri-closer-look-74-double-edged-sword-ceo-activism.pdf>

Leonidou, C. & Skarmeas, D. (2012). When consumers doubt, Watch out! The role of CSR skepticism. [www document]. [Accessed 21<sup>st</sup> October 2018]. [www.document]. Available: <https://www-sciencedirect-com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/science/article/pii/S0148296313000283>

Love, J. (2014). Corporate Activism Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow. An interview about how social movements continue to shape corporate behavior. [www document]. [Accessed 13<sup>th</sup> January 2018]. Available: [https://insight.kellogg.northwestern.edu/article/corporate\\_activism\\_yesterday\\_today\\_and\\_tomorrow](https://insight.kellogg.northwestern.edu/article/corporate_activism_yesterday_today_and_tomorrow)

Maignan, I., & Ferrell, O. C. (2004). Corporate social responsibility and marketing: an integrative framework. [www document]. [Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> October 2018]. [www.document]. Available: <https://link-springer-com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/article/10.1177%2F0092070303258971>

Maignan, I. & Ferrell, O.C. & Sherrel, D. (1998). Definition and operationalization of corporate citizenship: A cross-cultural approach. [www document]. [Accessed 10<sup>th</sup> February 2019]. [www.document]. Available: <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/docview/199501597/?pq-origsite=primo>

Miles, S. (2017). Stakeholder Theory Classification: A Theoretical and Empirical Evaluation of Definitions. [www document]. [Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> October 2018].

[www.document]. Available: <https://link-springer-com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/content/pdf/10.1007%2Fs10551-015-2741-y.pdf>

Murphy, P. & Schlegelmilch, B. & Überseder, M. (2013). CSR practices and consumer perceptions. [www document]. [Accessed 14<sup>th</sup> October 2018].

[www.document]. Available: <https://www-sciencedirect-com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/science/article/pii/S0148296313000295>

NIKE, Inc. (2019). About Nike. [www document]. [Accessed 8<sup>th</sup> May 2019].

Available: <https://about.nike.com/>

NIKE, Inc. FY16/17 Sustainable Business Report NIKE, Inc. [www document].

[Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available: [https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/sbi-prd-s3-media-bucket/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/18175102/NIKE-FY1617-Sustainable-Business-Report\\_FINAL.pdf](https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/sbi-prd-s3-media-bucket/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/18175102/NIKE-FY1617-Sustainable-Business-Report_FINAL.pdf)

Nisen, M. (2013). [Accessed 8<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. How Nike Solved Its Sweatshop

Problem. [www document]. Available: <https://www.businessinsider.com/how-nike-solved-its-sweatshop-problem-2013-5?r=US&IR=T>

Okoye, A. (2009). Theorising Corporate Social Responsibility as an Essentially Contested Concept: Is a Definition Necessary? [Accessed 10<sup>th</sup> February 2019].

[www document]. Available: <https://link-springer-com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/article/10.1007%2Fs10551-008-0021-9>

Parkinson, J. (2018) Navigating the rise of corporate activism. Leadership Excellence. [www document]. Accessed 16<sup>th</sup> February 2019]. Available:

<https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/docview/2135018833?pq-origsite=primo>

Price, S. (2017) What CEOs Need To Know As We Enter A New Era Of Corporate Activism, Forbes. [www document]. [Accessed 13th January 2018]. Available:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/susanprice/2017/02/08/what-ceos-need-to-know-as-we-enter-a-new-era-of-corporate-activism/2/#54c4907540c6>

Peloza, J. & Shang, J. (2010). How can corporate social responsibility activities create value for stakeholders? A systematic review. [Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> October 2018]. [www.document]. Available: <https://link.springer.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/article/10.1007%2Fs11747-010-0213-6>

Phillips, R. & Reichardt, J. (2000.) The Environment as a Stakeholder? A Fairness-Based Approach. [www document]. [Accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2019]. Available: <http://web.a.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=0&sid=40c0e3eb-dacd-47e3-b0aa-fd3d68e6337f%40sessionmgr4006>

Reuters. (2019). Profile: Nike Inc. (NKE.N). [www document]. [Accessed 8<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available: <https://www.reuters.com/finance/stocks/company-profile/NKE.N>

Rouse, M. (2018). Definition Corporate activism. [www document]. [Accessed 10<sup>th</sup> February 2019]. Available: <https://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/corporate-activism>

Segran, E. (2017). Escalating Sweatshop Protests Keep Nike Sweating. [www document]. [Accessed 8<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available: <https://www.fastcompany.com/40444836/escalating-sweatshop-protests-keep-nike-sweating>

Sethi S. Prakash. (1982). Corporate Political Activism. [Accessed 13<sup>th</sup> January 2018]. [www.document]. Available: <https://search-proquest.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/docview/215880217/?pq-origsite=primo>

Starik, M. (1995). Should trees have managerial standing? Toward stakeholder status for non-human nature. [www document]. [Accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2019]. Available: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/BF00881435>

Steurer, R., Langer, E., Konrad, A. & Martinuzzi, A. (2005). Corporations, Stakeholders and Sustainable Development I: A Theoretical Exploration of Business–Society Relations. [www document]. [Accessed 2nd June 2019].

Available:

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/226546467\\_Corporations\\_Stakeholders\\_and\\_Sustainable\\_Development\\_I\\_A\\_Theoretical\\_Exploration\\_of\\_Business-Society\\_Relations](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/226546467_Corporations_Stakeholders_and_Sustainable_Development_I_A_Theoretical_Exploration_of_Business-Society_Relations)

Van Cranenburgh, K. & Liket, K. & Roome, N. (2012). Management Responses to Social Activism in an Era of Corporate Responsibility: A Case Study. [Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> October 2018]. [www.document]. Available:

<https://link-springer-com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/article/10.1007%2Fs10551-012-1597-7>

Weber Shandwick & KRC Research. (2016). The Dawn of CEO Activism.

[Accessed 26<sup>th</sup> January 2019]. [www.document]. Available:

<https://www.webershandwick.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/the-dawn-of-ceo-activism-2.pdf>

Weber Shandwick & KRC Research. (2017). CEO Activism in 2017: High Noon in the C-Suite. [Accessed 26<sup>th</sup> January 2019]. [www.document]. Available:

<https://www.webershandwick.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/ceo-activism-in-2017-high-noon-in-the-c-suite.pdf>

Weber Shandwick & KRC Research. (2018). CEO Activism 2018: The purposeful CEO. [Accessed 16<sup>th</sup> February 2019]. [www.document]. Available:

[https://www.webershandwick.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/CEO-Activism-2018\\_Purposeful-CEO.pdf](https://www.webershandwick.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/CEO-Activism-2018_Purposeful-CEO.pdf)

## Appendix

### Research data sources

Abel, K. (2018). Master Class. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019].

Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=132807784&site=ehost-live>

ARANCIBIA, J. C. (2018). Stocks Close Mostly Lower As Semiconductors Plunge; How Nike Is Doing After Kaepernick. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019].

Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=131630517&site=ehost-live>

Barnes, S. (2018). How Nike turned a protest about racial injustice into advertising. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available:

<https://www.spectator.co.uk/2018/09/how-nike-turned-a-protest-about-racial-injustice-into-advertising/>

Barron, L. (2018). A Louisiana Mayor Ordered a Boycott of Nike Gear Over “Political” Colin Kaepernick Ad. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019].

Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=131718486&site=ehost-live>

Beaton, A. and Safdar, K. (2018). Nike Risks Backlash With Colin Kaepernick Deal. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available:

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/nikes-colin-kaepernick-deal-puts-risk-on-display-1536081832>

Bloomberg. (2018). “A Terrible Message.” Trump Slams Nike Ad Featuring Colin Kaepernick. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=131639246&site=ehost-live>

Bloomberg. (2018). The Colin Kaepernick Campaign Created \$43 Million in Buzz for Nike in Less Than 24 Hours. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019].

Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=131598908&site=ehost-live>

Bruell, R. (2019). P&G Challenges Men to Shave Their “Toxic Masculinity” in Gillette Ad. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=134109183&site=ehost-live>

Butera, C. (2018). NJ Investment Council Won't Pull Its Nike Shares over Kaepernick Ad. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available:

<https://www.ai-cio.com/news/nj-investment-council-wont-pull-nike-shares-kaepernick-ad/>

Calfas, J. (2018). Here's How Much Colin Kaepernick Will Make in His Controversial New Ad Deal With Nike, According to Sports Experts. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available:

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/money/companies/heres-how-much-colin-kaepernick-will-make-in-his-controversial-new-ad-deal-with-nike-according-to-sports-experts/ar-BBMSwIT>

CLARK, E. (2018). Nike Stock Drops After Colin Kaepernick Ad: The sports brand's latest move puts controversy front and center. [www document].

[Accessed 7<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=131625317&site=ehost-live>

COFFEE, P. (2018). Nike Just Did It. [www document]. [Accessed 7<sup>th</sup> May 2019].

Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=132043324&site=ehost-live>

Coggan, P. (2018). Time to woke up. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available: <https://worldin2019.economist.com/thepoliticsofbusiness>

Coleman, J. (2018). Nike, Kaepernick and the business of impact. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available: <http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=131955422&site=ehost-live>

Creswell, J., Draper, K. & Maheshwari, S. (2018). Nike Returns to Familiar Strategy With Kaepernick Ad Campaign. [www document]. [Accessed 5<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/04/sports/nike-colin-kaepernick.html>

Detrick, H. (2018). The Little-Known Charity That Will Benefit From Nike's New Contract With Colin Kaepernick. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available: <http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=131598909&site=ehost-live>

Dobush, G. (2018). Colin Kaepernick's Nike Ad Almost Didn't Happen. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available: <http://fortune.com/2018/09/27/colin-kaepernick-nike-ad-backstory/>

Ducharme, J. (2018). "Believe in Something." Colin Kaepernick Is the Face of Nike's New "Just Do It" Campaign'. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available: <http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=131574942&site=ehost-live>

Economist. (2019). Bartleby: Woke, not broke. [www document]. [Accessed 5<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=134383386&site=ehost-live>

Economist. (2018). Nike invites controversy. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=131655624&site=ehost-live>

Fitzpatrick, A. (2018). Watch the Colin Kaepernick Nike Ad That Will Run During the NFL Season Opener. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=131617995&site=ehost-live>

Gajanan, M. (2018). President Trump Says Nike's Colin Kaepernick Ad Sends a "Terrible Message". [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=131598882&site=ehost-live>

George-Parkin, H. (2018). HOW NIKE SCORED A MAJOR SOCIAL COUP: A Colin Kaepernick ad drew huge reaction. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=131712957&site=ehost-live>

Germano, S. (2019). Acknowledge, Apologize, Investigate: How Big Brands Combat Online Outrage. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=134791941&site=ehost-live>

HOPKIN, K. (2018). Nike Sees Record Engagement After Colin Kaepernick Ad. [www document]. [Accessed 7<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=131965541&site=ehost>

Horst, P. (2018). Nike's Colin Kaepernick Campaign: Bold Move or Brand Suicide? [www document]. [Accessed 5th May 2019]. Available: <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/319582>

Joachimsthaler, E. (2018). Lessons Learned from Nike's Colin Kaepernick Campaign. [www document]. [Accessed 7th May 2019]. Available: <http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=131835208&site=ehost-live>

Kelleher, K. (2018). Nike Shares Close at Another Record High After Controversial Colin Kaepernick Endorsement. [www document]. [Accessed 6th May 2019]. Available: <http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=131774648&site=ehost-live>

Kelleher, K. (2018). Nike's Stock Fell 3% on Colin Kaepernick's Endorsement Deal. Here's Why Investors Will Shrug It Off. [www document]. [Accessed 6th May 2019]. Available: <http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=131598927&site=ehost-live>

KINGSTON, A. (2018). When brands go political. [www document]. [Accessed 6th May 2019]. Available: <http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=131778438&site=ehost-live>

Kirsch, A. (2018). The Destructive Politics of Pseudo-Boycotts. [www document]. [Accessed 6th May 2019]. Available: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-destructive-politics-of-pseudo-boycotts-1536332350>

KLEIN, R. (2018). Nike and the Arrogance of Moral Certainty. [www document].

[Accessed 7<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=132176312&site=ehost-live>

Kochkodin, B. (2018). New Colin Kaepernick Ads Have Already Created \$163

Million in Buzz for Nike. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available:

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/money/companies/new-kaepernick-ads-have-created-163-million-in-buzz-for-nike/ar-BBMXYkM>

LARKIN, M. (2018). Just Doing It: Nike Sacrificing Nothing From Colin Kaepernick

Campaign. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=131897654&site=ehost-live>

LOW, E. (2018). Forget Colin Kaepernick — Nike Isn't Done Making Bold Moves.

[www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=132014866&site=ehost-live>

Low, E. (2018). Nike's Colin Kaepernick Deal Goes Beyond "Just Do It" Ad

Campaign. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=131588316&site=ehost-live>

LOW, E. (2018). Here's How People Now View Nike Since Its Colin Kaepernick

Ad. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available:

<https://www.investors.com/news/colin-kaepernick-just-do-it-ad-hits-nike-favorability/>

Lyons, E. (2018). Recommended reading: Ritson's Nike response and living

fearlessly. [www document]. [Accessed 7<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=131637414&site=ehost-live>

Marketing Week (Online Edition). (2018). The best campaigns of 2018: Part 1.

[www document]. [Accessed 7<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=133406416&site=ehost-live>

Marketing Week (Online Edition). (2018). Why brands are taking a political stand.

[www document]. [Accessed 5<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=132883544&site=ehost-live>

McCann, D. (2018). Nike Ads Highlight Brand-Value Risks: How bold should companies be on political and social issues?. [www document]. [Accessed 7<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=132369899&site=ehost-live>

Meyer, D. (2018). Controversy Sells: Nike Sold Out of More Items After the Colin Kaepernick Ad, Even as It Cut Discounts. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=131882272&site=ehost-live>

Meyer, D. (2019). Gillette's New "Toxic Masculinity" Ad Makes Nike's Colin Kaepernick Stance Look Coy. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019].

Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=134126059&site=ehost-live>

Meyer, D. (2018). Nike Is Featuring Colin Kaepernick in Its New Ad Campaign and Critics Are Already Cutting the Swooshes From Their Socks. [www document].

[Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=131598907&site=ehost-live>

Morris, C. (2018). Colin Kaepernick Campaign Gives Nike a Big Sales Boost.

[www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May]. Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=131659607&site=ehost-live>

Noveck, J. (2018). LeBron James “Stands With Nike” Amid Controversy Over Colin Kaepernick Ad Campaign. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019].

Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=131617979&site=ehost-live>

Odell, P. (2018). Angry Nike Customers Set their Gear on Fire. [www document].

[Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=131598562&site=ehost-live>

Odell, P. (2019). Super Bowl Puts Kaepernick/Nike Back in the Spotlight: CMOs Weigh In. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=134565728&site=ehost-live>

Oregon Business Magazine (2018). Newsfeed. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=132133310&site=ehost-live>

Ozanian, M. (2018). Nike’s NFL Opening Night Ad With Kaepernick Is Based On False Advertising. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=131639017&site=ehost-live>

PRWeek (U.S. Edition). (2018). Planet PR. [www document]. [Accessed 7<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=132431603&site=ehost-live>

Reints, R. (2018). Colin Kaepernick Pushes Nike's Market Value Up \$6 Billion, to an All-Time High. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=131987817&site=ehost-live>

Reints, R. (2018) Louisiana Mayor Bans Nike From City Rec Facilities Following Colin Kaepernick Ad. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=131704112&site=ehost-live>

Reisinger, D. (2018). With Colin Kaepernick Deal, Nike Splits From the NFL. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=131598910&site=ehost-live>

Safdar, K. (2018). #NikeBoycott Is Over. Why Retail Activism Rarely Changes Sales. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=131804313&site=ehost-live>

STAFF, I. (2018). Growth Stocks Stumble, Tesla Takes Hit, Facebook Shunned, Micron Warns, Nike Divides: Weekly Review. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=131679990&site=ehost-live>

Taylor, D. (2018). 'Nike's "Just do it" just keeps doing it. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=131818239&site=ehost-live>

Tesseras, L. (2018). Trends for 2019: Brands realise the risk of sitting on the fence. [www document]. [Accessed 7<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available: <http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=133546900&site=ehost-live>

Verry, P. (2018). Stars and Stripes. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available: <http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=132807781&site=ehost-live>

VERRY, P. (2018). All but Melo. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available: <http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=132807788&site=ehost-live>

Vizard, S. (2018). Consumers split over impact of Nike's Colin Kaepernick campaign. [www document]. [Accessed 7<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available: <http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=131747077&site=ehost-live>

Vizard, S. (2018). Nike "proud" of Colin Kaepernick ad as campaign drives "record engagement". [www document]. [Accessed 7<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available: <http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=132054673&site=ehost-live>

Wade, J. (2019). THE CALCULUS OF CONTROVERSY: Weighing the Pros and Cons of Taking a Stand. [www document]. [Accessed 7<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available: <http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.lut.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=134462357&site=ehost-live>

Winkler, E. (2018). Nike's Moral Arc Bends Toward Sneakers. [www document]. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019]. Available: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/nikes-moral-arc-bends-toward-sneakers-1536168615>