Family Firms' CSR Actions: the Case of Barilla

Domenico Morrone
LUM Jean Monnet University
morrone@lum.it
Angeloantonio Russo
LUM Jean Monnet University
russo@lum.it
Donato Calace
LUM Jean Monnet University
calace@lum.it

The development and implementation of CSR oriented strategies is a common trait in modern organizations. As public authorities, customers, suppliers and the wider stakeholder community call for a more socially and environmentally responsible way of doing business, companies commit themselves in actions signaling their sustainable style of management. The publication of non-financial reports, the adoption of ethic codes, the granting of international standards and certifications (such as ISO 14001 or SA 8000) are some examples of actions in this direction. Still, the effectiveness of this commitment in terms of the enactment of corporate sustainability is questionable. Being the attainment of reputation and legitimacy the main driver behind such practices, in a socio-political perspective the appearance rather than the fact of conformity is often sufficient to create the image of a sustainable company, the so-called greenwashing. For this reason, these actions are frequently relegated to a symbolic management domain, failing to provide any proof of triggering substantial managerial acts. In this context, the presence of a sustainability-committed management can evidently play a critical role for CSR actions to generate actual and deep organizational change. In particular, relevant literature provides evidence of the relationship between family firms (that are firms where members of the founding family continue to remain as significant company shareholders and/or are in senior management positions or hold a seat on the board of directors) and socially responsible behavior. Indeed, family firms founders consider their business as an extension of their personal lives, including non-economic reasons and goals in their style of management. Through an exploratory case study of the worldwide famous Italian pasta maker, Barilla, and its sustainability reporting process this study gives an original contribution to the debate regarding the implications of corporate ownerships structures, investigating how the intersection of two principal institutions (business and family) moderates the relationship between CSR actions and substantial management.

Key words: CSR, Family Business, Sustainability Reporting, Substantial Management

JEL classification: M4, M14.

1. Introduction

The call for a more responsible way of doing business is rapidly rising in the agenda of companies worldwide. Although some skeptical and ideologically opposing positions dwelling on the capstone article "The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits" by Milton Friedman (1970), it is generally acknowledged both in the practitioners and academic world that CSR "has won the battle of ideas" (The Economist, 2005). Corporate Social Responsibility strategies and practices are spreading rapidly among firms, creating a new area of resources, competences and skills. Companies are aware that the attainment of the legitimacy to operate requires efforts in terms of social commitment and citizenship (Carroll 1999; Aguinis & Glavas 2012; Castelló et al. 2013; Acquier et al. 2011; Panwar et al. 2013).

Most of the literature in this domain has focused on finding the business case for the adoption of CSR strategies (Porter & Linde 1995; Porter & Kramer 2011; Porter & Kramer 2006). This approach showed how a sustainability-oriented agenda could be a source of competitive advantage in terms of cost savings and/or differentiation through materials and energy savings, emissions cutting, switching to cleaner productions and supply chain shortening. Other authors have indicated that such approach was leading to an oversimplification of the debate regarding the role of business in societies, which is much broader than understanding whether a corporate social performance-financial performance exist (Crane et al. 2014; Wood 2010; Wood 1991).

However, today meta-analyses provided by vast literature have overcome the debate whether "does it pay to be good" or not (Margolis et al. 2007), showing a small but statistically significant positive relationship with the financial performance, and it is investigating the antecedents regarding why such relationship exists. This work contributes to this latter avenue of research, focusing in particular on the effect the intersection of two principal institutions (business and family) has in terms of substantial implementation of CSR practices. Our broad aim is to investigate what is the role of noneconomic logic in driving the implementation and substantial enactment of the CSR agenda within businesses.

For this reason, we propose an in-depth case study of the Italian pasta maker Barilla, established in 1877 by Pietro Barilla and featuring a history strictly interwoven with the family values and the commitment towards social welfare. In particular, we analyze how a specific CSR practice, that is sustainability reporting, is implemented in the organization.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows: in the theoretical background, we provide a conceptual framework describing the CSR domain first, followed by an overview of the literature regarding the family business. On such theoretical grounding, we develop our proposition concerning the moderating effect of family business idiosyncrasies on the implementation of CSR practices. The methodology section points out how the data for developing the case-study was collected, in particular providing details on the semi-structured interview with the CSR manager of Barilla and the secondary data included for triangulation.

In the end, before the findings stemming from the analysis of the case study and their discussion, a short overview of Barilla's history is provided.

Conclusions wrap up our analysis, evidencing implications for academia and managers, as well as limitations and avenues for future research.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Literature Review on CSR

The first important contributions defining the CSR domain came from the work by Barnard (1938), Simon (1945) and Bowen (1953). The innovation in their analysis is based on the responsibility companies have beyond the results of production and selling. The vision of Barnard, in *The functions of Executive*, is referred to a new concept of leadership, taking over social and psychological aspects, connecting the instances deriving from the surrounding environment. Managers have to offer a new improved moral contest to their organization. On the same level there is the contribution of Simon in *Administrative behaviour*, expressing the social dimension of company that is beyond the single interest of ownership. He recognizes an enlarged value of company that becomes a part of the public interest. Preston (1975), Carroll (1979, 1999, 2008), Garriga & Melè (2004), Lee (2008) and Acquier et al. (2011), consider the *Social Responsibilities of the Businessman* of Bowen as the first important work that marks the history of CSR, a milestone in this path. He gives the very first and widely cited definition of the "social responsibilities" which *"refer 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 subsequent important evolution in the concept of CSR occurs between the 1960s and 1970s. This is the moment of the structured meaning of CSR: going from *Social Responsibility* to *Corporate Social Responsibility*. Davis (1960) and Carroll (1979) strengthen the importance of this practice in the business administration. Davis (1960) asserts that a manager cannot exempt to take decisions in social responsibility matters, if he desires to keep his power and to reach good performance in the medium and long term. Moreover, Davis (1973) underlines that the starting point of CSR is at the end of what ordered by law, considering the real commitment of firms to adopt specific actions. On the same direction, there is the contribution of Carroll (1979). The scholar identifies various levels of priority regarding to objectives to reach. He introduced the widely quoted "pyramid" model, pointing out four levels of responsibility. At the basis there are the *economic responsibilities*. Firm's activity is oriented to the production of goods and services to create an economic profit by selling. It is and it will remain its central objective. All activities have to be involved in the "rules of game", to respect the rights and duties imposed by law. Here it is the second level of pyramid, the *legal responsibilities*. Then he locates the *ethical responsibilities*. This level consists of all practices that are not yet legally disciplined but it is right to follow to "be ethical". The last level, at the vertex, is referred to the *discretionary responsibilities*. Discretionary responsibilities are completely dependent from company desire to have an active position in the community. Here comes the social involvement to establish a direct relationship with all stakeholders to increase the general level of welfare. The work of Carroll is groundbreaking, being the first to underline the voluntariness and discretion of company action, where the four levels of responsibilities are all connected. He affirms that a CSR policy is a policy in which all aspects above mentioned are included. It is not possible to pursuit social results without considering the economic one. After Carroll, it is possible to describe other relevant contributions that enlarge the theme of CSR. They flow towards the *stakeholder theory* (Freeman, 1984), *business ethics* (Frederick, 1986) and *Corporate Social Performance* (Carroll, 1979, Wood, 1991). These evolutions demonstrate as the concept of CSR is in continuous evolution, since the comparison with social dimension follows the evolution of social instances that socially embedded companies have with the communities they interact with. This vision, sustained also by concrete results, becomes more and more strategic for company success, above all in these last years. There is a deeper relationship between company and surrounded community. Business is evaluated not only through its economic results but also through social impact, increasing the level of welfare.

Aguinis & Glavas (2012, p.234) define CSR as the "context-specific organizational actions and policies that take into account stakeholders' expectations and the triple bottom line of performance", describing the concept at the institutional, organizational, and individual level.

CSR is today widely incorporated in public policy. As an example, the European Commission points out the value of CSR in a significant way.

European Commission identifies in CSR an institutional policy. In 2011 the European Commission defined it as "*the responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society*", a new definition that follows the indication of 2001, "*A concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis*".

2.2. Literature Review on Family Firms

Family firms (FF) are the most common organizational configuration around the world: in Asia and Middle East, they account for the 95% of all firms, in the USA they employ up to the 80% of the workforce and represent roughly the 70% of the publicly traded firms, in Europe (data retrieved from http://www.europeanfamilybusinesses.eu/family-businesses/facts-figures) the highest density of FF (90%) is present in Cyprus, Slovakia and Estonia, while Sweden has the lowest (55%) (Gomez-Mejia et al. 2011).

Despite such spreading and prevalence over the non-family configuration, a wide variety of definition of the idea of "family firm" exists. A broad definition can be "firms where members of the founding family continue to remain as significant company shareholders and/or are in senior management positions or hold a seat on the board of directors" (Dyer & Whetten 2006, p.792). Still, as noted by Gomez-Mejia et al. (2011), a number of problems occurs when it comes to translate into operational terms what "significant company shareholders" means. Proxies such as the majority of shares, the excess of the ordinary voting power, presence of family members as officers or directors are highly context-dependent. For this reason, literature has indicated varying degrees of family involvement, originating subsets of the broader family business concept, such as "family owned firms", "family managed", "family owned and managed", and "family controlled". An alternative definition is provided by Del Baldo (2012, p. 121): "a family firm is a business in which ownership and management are combined with a family unit and its members strive to achieve and maintain intra and extra-organizational family-based relationships. The family nature of a business is determined by the cultural and behavioral aspects introduced by long-term family and community-oriented relationships."

Looking for a non-academic definition, the European Family Businesses (EFB), an international network-of-networks gathering national associations of Family Firms, points out its main features (see http://www.europeanfamilybusinesses.eu/family-businesses/definition): "the majority of decision-making rights are in the possession of the natural person(s) who established the firm, or in the possession of the natural person(s) who has/have acquired the share capital of the firm, or in the possession of their spouses, parents, child or children's direct heirs. The majority of decision-making rights are indirect or direct. At least one representative of the family or kin is formally involved in the governance of the firm. Listed companies meet the definition of family enterprise if the person who established or acquired the firm (share capital) or their families or descendants possess 25% of the decision making rights mandated by their share capital."

Often the notion of FF is equated to the size of the business, and in particular to small and micro businesses. The overlapping of the two concepts is only due to the fact that the vast majority of small and micro firms happen to be family owned and managed too. In fact, the notion of FF refers to other features that are independent from the size of the business. What really characterize a FF is the presence of noneconomic logic in the way it is managed (Gomez-Mejia et al. 2011). Adopting an institutional perspective (Powell & Di Maggio 1991; Scott 1995), FF are at the intersection of two major institutions, the family, which is driven by a logic of nurturing and perpetuation, and the business, which is concerned with profits, efficiency, customer satisfaction and the like (Mitchell et al. 2011). A nexus of two different sets of values and beliefs is present in FF. For this reason, "there is general agreement in the field that family firms are not simply a unique phenomenological setting but are significantly different from nonfamily firms" (Berrone et al. 2012, p.259).

In this sense, the debate on the nature of the FF offers insights in terms of organizational identity (Albert & Whetten 1985), which is what is most central, enduring and distinctive about an organization, what allows to be defined and distinguished from others. The founders of the FF consider their business as an extension of themselves (Dyer & Whetten 2006), and such overlapping is also perceived by employees and external stakeholders as well (Del Baldo 2012; Berrone et al. 2012). Hence, a set of noneconomic idiosyncrasies shapes FFs organizational identity: the perpetuation and infusion of family values through the business, the preservation of family dynasty, the conservation of family's social capital (Gomez-Mejia et al. 2011).

A new theoretical approach is needed to properly describe such features. Gómez-mejía et al. (2007) introduced a new model, they defined as socioemotional wealth (SEW). Through their construct, they are able to describe the non-financial elements or "affective endowments" that sharply characterize FFs. In particular, they claim that the preservation of SEW is the main driver of managerial action in FF: "when there is a threat to that endowment, the family is willing to make decisions that are not driven by an economic logic, and in fact the family would be willing to put the firm at risk if this is what it would take to preserve that endowment" (Berrone et al. 2012, p.259). The SEW construct is articulated along five different dimensions: family control and influence, family members' identification with the firm, binding social ties, emotional attachment, renewal of family bonds to the firm through dynastic succession.

"SEW represents a key noneconomic reference point for decision making, which might drive the firm to make strategic choices that cannot be explained by applying an economic reference point or a risk-averse financial logic" (Berrone et al. 2012, p.261). Evidently, studying CSR actions in the context of FFs cannot ignore the SEW influence. Indeed, its five dimensions can be easily framed in the CSR discourse. Indeed, "Consistent empirical evidence is now available that suggests that because of the strong identification with the firm's name and because public condemnation could be emotionally devastating for family members, family firms exhibit higher levels of corporate social responsibility and community citizenship" (Berrone et al. 2012, p.262). As noted by Bingham et al. (2010), FFs adopt a relational identity orientation towards their stakeholders, which translates into the propensity to engage in social activities with local communities and employees, support charitable and non-profit organizations. Mitchell et al. (2013) argue that the competing institutional logics happening in the FF deeply affect the nature of power, legitimacy and urgency dimensions of stakeholders' claims. In particular, they indicate the SEW as the main driver of the perception of stakeholders' salience. This deep embeddedness of the FFs in their constituencies fosters the development of social capital (Nahapiet & Ghoshal 1997; Spence et al. 2003; Nygaard & Russo 2008; Russo & Perrini 2008; Tencati et al. 2010): in the local community the socially responsible FF is source of stability, employment, development, reciprocity, trust in the market economy and stewardship (Panwar et al. 2013). The long-term perspective associated with the desire to perpetuate the dynasty and family values triggers the transferring of CSR motivations from one generation to the other, allowing CSR to be consistent over longer spans of time (Campopiano et al. 2012). In addition, Déniz & Cabrera (2005) show how the commitment in CSR activities in FFs is based on certain moral and cultural values, rather than cost-benefit analysis. Table 1 summarizes the fitness of FF idiosyncrasies to CSR dimensions.

Family Firms Idiosyncrasies (SEW)	Fitness to CSR
Family control and influence	Consistency in governance
Family members' identification with the firm	Engaging with stakeholders to build a good image and protect family reputation
Binding social ties	Embeddedness and accountability in the local community, engaging and supporting social initiatives. Building social capital
Emotional attachment	CSR commitment beyond cost-benefit reasoning
Renewal of family bonds to the firm through dynastic succession	Long-term orientation and perpetuation of the values over generations, including socially responsible commitment

Table 1: Fitness of FF SEW dimensions and CSR – Elaboration of the authors

Looking at empirical results, Dyer & Whetten (2006) analysis of S&P 500 from 1991 to 2000 show that FFs are significantly better socially responsible actors than non-family firms, looking at the KLD qualitative screens for social initiatives and concerns.

Despite being less likely to have the slack of resources required to engage in vast CSR programs (Panwar et al. 2013), FFs consistently show higher social responsibility than other firms. As non-family organizations, they seek legitimacy, but their response to institutional pressure is moderated by the SEW perspective, and cannot be explained by the socio-political perspective.

"Contrary to this socio-political perspective, in which parties with a contractual relationship to the firm rely on subtle and sometimes overt manipulations to gain personal advantages, family owners are likely to be guided by a very different set of motives, namely, the preservation of socioemotional wealth, or the stock of affect-related value that the family has invested in the firm. Hence, when a firm is under the control of a family, it is more likely to respond to institutional pressures in a more substantive manner than is its nonfamily counterpart, particularly when the firm concentrates its operations in a local area and the institutional pressures involve environmental actions, which have great impact on the local area" (Berrone et al. 2010, p.82). Figure 1 represents this dynamic.

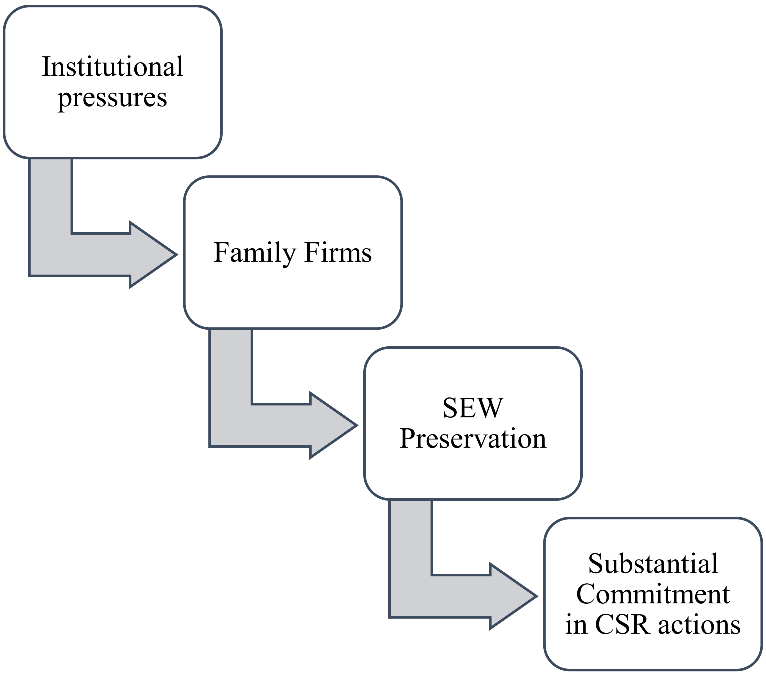

Figure 1: The moderating effect of the SEW preservation in the CSR commitment of FF – Elaboration of the authors

Our proposition is thus the following: being Barilla a family firm strongly committed towards its social responsibility, its CSR actions are fully integrated in their management and substantial in their nature.

3. Methodology

Our study follows a single case study methodology (Yin, 2003). The case studies are particularly suitable to observe a new phenomenon and start to draw some exploratory remarks on it. Research underlines the persuasive power of a single case (Siggelkow, 2007) in particular if it is "unusually revelatory, an extreme exemplar, an opportunity for unusual research access" (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007, p. 27). The proposed case study was built on a semi-structured interview, administered by the researchers to the CSR Manager of Barilla. The transcript of the interview was submitted to the interviewee, so that she would guarantee the correct and faithful data retrieval of the collected information. Finally, data was triangulated with relevant internal documents provided by the interviewees, such as present and past sustainability reports, presentations, internal documents, articles from the web and newspapers, Barilla's website.

The use of interviews in exploratory studies is strongly backed by literature. Elliot (2005) claims that "allowing respondents to provide narrative accounts of their lives and experiences can help to redress some of the power differentials inherent in the research enterprise and can also provide good evidence about the everyday lives of research subjects and the meanings they attach to their experiences" (Elliot, 2005, p. 17). Graham (1984) and Mishler (1986) underline how the interview prevents data fragmentation, as the respondent is free to set the agenda. The interview is "a site for the production of data and an opportunity to explore the meaning of the research topic for the respondent" (Elliot, 2005, p. 22).

The interview was recorded and then transcribed. Recording is a standard practice in all qualitative interviewing (Hermanowicz, 2002), as it allows not only to retain the narrative itself, but also includes paraverbal components such as pauses, intonation, laughter. Those details help the researcher to understand the production of meanings by the interviewee.

Our study focused in particular on the CSR practice of sustainability reporting (SR). A number of reason supports our choice. First, SR is the most evident expression of CSR (Perrini, 2005). This means that such reports gather all the relevant information in a single source, making a company sustainability strategies and practices observable. Gond & Herrbach (2006) indicate that corporate social reporting is a more wide-encompassing process in comparison to other social assessment tools. Milne & Gray (2013, p.16) underline that "business' engagement with the sustainability agenda is firmly rooted in a history of practices of corporate reporting, and more particularly, with the reporting of impacts beyond an organization's traditional financial transactions" and Spence & Rinaldi (2012, p.18) observe that "the sustainability discourse is embedded in the familiar economic language of accountability". For this reason, such documents are a key object of analysis in the CSR field (Calace 2014).

The interview lasted roughly one hour and dealt with the following topics: 1 -Motivations that prompted the choice to introduce the sustainability reporting practice in your company; 2- Short description of your reporting process: stages, people and functions involved, by-products and collateral documents; 3- Internal use of the data coming from the reporting process; 4- Examples of KPIs from the reporting process used in the strategic planning or other activities, examples of something (a strategy, a rule, a policy) that has changed because of the reporting process.

4. Findings

4.1. Barilla profile

Barilla was founded in 1877 by Pietro Barilla. Today it is managed by the fourth generation of family. Barilla Holding S.p.A.'s board of directors is composed by Guido Maria Barilla (chairman), Paolo Barilla and Luca Barilla (as deputy chairmen), Claudio Colzani (chief executive officer) and Emanuela Barilla (director). Guido, Paolo, Luca and Emanuela are siblings (Source: www.barillagroup.com, Barilla Group – Corporate Governance).

Key figures for the Barilla Group are: 140 years of history, more than 8.000 workers, 30 production sites (between Europe and America, 13 sites for pasta and sauces production and 17 for bakery products) and offices among Europe, America, Australia and Asia, 1.7 million tons of products (Source: "*Barilla Holding 2013 Key Data"* available at www.barillagroup.com).

In the international context, Barilla is considered one of the most important company representing the "Italian pasta", since its position as market leader (Source: "*Barilla Company Profile*", latest version available at www.barillagroup.com). The sales are equally divided between bakery and meal solutions and the end markets are Italy (50%), Europe (30%), Americas (16%) and Africa, Asia and Australia (5%) (Possamai, 2015). This position has been obtained also through the acquisition of foreign companies, leaders in their domestic markets. Barilla operates on the markets with its main brand, that is “Barilla” (for pasta and sauces), and other 12 brands. These are Mulino Bianco, Voiello, Pavesi, Gran Cereale, Pan di Stelle, Wasa, Harry’s (France and Russia), Accademia Barilla, Misko (Greece), Filiz (Turkey), Yemina and Vesta (Messico).

The most significant economic and financial results of Barilla group in 2013 are (Possamai, 2015):

- Net revenues: 3.198 million Euro (3.156 in 2012 and 3.061 in 2011);
- EBITDA: 407 million Euro (396 in 2012 and 450 in 2011);
- Profits before tax: 199 million Euro (230 in 2012 and 233 in 2011);
- Net financial position: 347 million of Euro (574 in 2012 and 688 in 2011);
- EBITDA on net revenues (%): 13 in 2013 (13 in 2012 and 15 in 2011);
- Net debt to EBITDA: 0,8 (1,3 in 2012 and 1,4 in 2011).

In 2013, considering the net revenues, Barilla is the third company in the Italian food and beverage industry. The first is Parmalat Spa (5.350 million of Euro) and the second is Cremonini Spa (another family firm at its second generation with 3.440 million Euro of net revenues) (Faieta, 2014).

Barilla is long engaged in social activities. The Group is considered as an “institution” in the city where it was born, Parma. One of the most relevant actions in the path of CSR, above all for food sector, is the creation of “Barilla Foundation Center for Food & Nutrition”. Considering the last remarkable contribution of the Center, it is possible to bring up the work for the “Carta di Milano”. Probably it will be the best result of EXPO 2015, the International Exposition of Milan. The Chart is an endeavor to fight the imbalances in production and consumption of food. There are the indications of same good practices to reduce, for example, food waste, considering that a large number of world populations suffer the lack of food. It is not a case that latest version of Barilla Company Profile closes with this sentence signed by Barilla family: *“The most exciting challenge facing our company is the ability to continually improve in all of our activities. What is at stake is the sustainability of our growth, our future, the future of our children”*.

4.2. Barilla’s sustainability reporting

The Group sustainability reporting started in 2007 and has changed significantly over the years. The first report, published in 2008 and referring to the 2007 sustainability performance, followed the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) G3 Guidelines, and recorded a C Application Level – that is the amount of disclosure provided in the report according to GRI framework, which spans from A (disclosure on all the indicators) to C (disclosure on core indicators). In 2009 and 2010, Barilla published sustainability reports following the G3 Guidelines, achieving a B Application Level and the conformity to the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC). The structure and length (90-140 pages) of such reports is consistent over the years, encompassing the following sections: Nutritional Facts, Supply Chain, Environment, Human Resources, People, Communities, and Stakeholders.

Starting from 2011, the reporting document changed its structure, always addressing the same content as before, but giving up the G3 Guidelines and adopting a much shorter length (about 30-40 pages, even though the 2011 report is also available in the longer version). It was also labelled “Good for you, good for the planet”. This change was due to a different internal role of the reporting activity.

“Initially, the reporting activity was a project. It remained a project for the first years. Today is a process, in the sense we have a cyclical monitoring that goes by each year, starting with data collection, discussion with stakeholders‘ panels, internal and external communication activities. The reporting activity is now driven by goals to achieve within 2020.”

Indeed, the reporting process is starting to gain its own managerial value, thanks to a background process that involves the entire organization.

“The reporting process is formalized by a stable structure. We have an internal scorecard which is updated four times per year. This scorecard is monitored by directors, and they report directly to the CEO on the results of the process. We have a steering committee heading our sustainability unity. It meets every two months, and includes representatives from all the relevant functions: Supply Chain, Marketing, Sales, HSE, HR. We discuss data in these meetings”

In addition, the SR process is synchronized to the financial reporting one in order to strengthen the integration of within the standard organizational routines and assure its consistency with the other flows of data in the company.

"The data collection process is intertwined for both the sustainability and financial reporting. I work with the accounting manager to be sure that our data is convenient and gathered within the same boundary. Barilla cannot have a document with a specific horizon and another with a different one. We synchronize our processes."

Data from the SR is then largely conveyed within the organization using house organs, organizing events and through speeches of the top management and the ownership. In particular, the role of the founding family infuses such practice with values and beliefs.

" "Good for you. Good for the planet" stems from the values of the family. The core of family values we have since 1877 is what characterizes Barilla the most. These values evolved over time, embracing the concept of sustainability. Our president, Guido Barilla, always says that sustainability and business have a unique sense, companies of the same nature of Barilla, socially familiar, live to flourish over time, in order to give to future generations what we have. In Barilla, we have this permeability of family values in the appointed managers, who in turn embrace this view and transfer it to the employees at all levels."

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Our aim in this paper is to show how the influence of SEW perspective triggers substantial CSR actions in family firms. We propose the case of Barilla SR process as a way to analyze this phenomenon. The SR process perspective implies that "the design and implementation of corporate social reporting can be viewed as a learning tool" (Gond & Herrbach, 2006, p.359). Extensive literature has shown how learning effects play a central role in terms of strategy formulation and implementation (Mintzberg, 1990; Mintzberg & Waters, 1985). Looking at SR as a process, it becomes a management control system (Gond & Herrbach 2006; Simons 1990). Simons (1990) underlines how management control systems trigger organizational learning which in turn affects strategy substantially, especially when managers use those systems in an interactive way rather than a diagnostic one. In this view, defined by Gond & Herrbach (2006, p.366) "corporate social learning", SR demands that "information generated by the system is an important and recurring agenda addressed by the highest level of management; the process demands frequent and regular attention from operating managers at all levels in the organization: data are interpreted and discussed in face-to-face meetings of superiors, subordinates and peers; the process relies on the continual challenge of underlying data, assumptions, and action plans". Looking at the process analyzed before, this perspective is present in Barilla. Table 2 summarizes the learning process associated to the use of SR in Barilla.

Principles	**Processes**	**Perceived outcomes**
Beliefs, values and ideas that are behind the choice of introducing the social reporting system in the company	*Practices, procedures and actions that shape the social reporting system, from the data collection to the internal and external dissemination of the final document*	*Changes in the organization triggered by the use of the social reporting system*
Barilla Family Values	Allocation of time to monitor the data; Frequent and intense data review; Participation of superiors/ subordinates and peers in discussing the information provided by the system; Communicating the agenda through speeches/newsletters/audiovisual materials; Use of new rules/standards	Top Managers use personally and regularly the management control system; Communicate/educate/signal commitment/ build confidence in the viability of the proposed strategic redirection; Integration with the existing management system; Strategic turnaround/evolutionary change

	(boundary systems); Presence of a common calculability infrastructure with other management control systems; Socialization of management accountant as sustainability report/control specialists; Presence of staff specialists;	

Table 2: Summary of the learning process triggered by the SR process – Elaboration of the authors

Our exploratory case analysis shows how Barilla responds to institutional pressure with a substantial implementation of the sustainability reporting process, driven by the values of the founding family. Our contribution to theory is twofold: first, we provide a descriptive insight on how the idiosyncrasies of the family firm interact on the CSR dimensions; secondly, we give an indication on how the sustainability reporting process can be substantially integrated into management (Calace et al. 2014). Such results are of interest for managers and practitioners, as they shed light on the best practices that can be used to trigger substantial CSR commitment in the organization. Clearly, the single case study perspective limits the generalization of our findings. Further research should expand the sample, investigating common patterns in the SEW influence on CSR practice implementation and integration into strategy across multiple cases and industries.

References

ACQUIER, A., GOND, J.-P. & PASQUERO, J., 2011. Rediscovering Howard R. Bowen's Legacy: The Unachieved Agenda and Continuing Relevance of Social Responsibilities of the Businessman. *Business & Society*, 50, pp.607–646.

AGUINIS, H. & GLAVAS, A., 2012. What we know and don't know about corporate social responsibility a review and research agenda. *Journal of Management*.

ALBERT, S.. & WHETTEN, D.A., 1985. Organizational identity. In *Research in Organizational Behavior, vol. 7*. pp. 263–295.

BARNARD, C. I. 1938. *The Functions of the Executive*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press.

BERRONE, P. et al., 2010. Socioemotional Wealth and Corporate Responses to Institutional Pressures: Do Family-Controlled Firms Pollute Less? *Administrative Science Quarterly*.

BERRONE, P., CRUZ, C. & GOMEZ-MEJIA, L.R., 2012. Socioemotional Wealth in Family Firms: Theoretical Dimensions, Assessment Approaches, and Agenda for Future Research. *Family Business Review*, 25(3), pp.258–279.

BINGHAM, J.B. et al., 2010. A Stakeholder Identity Orientation Approach to Corporate Social Performance in Family Firms. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 99(4), pp.565–585.

BOWEN, H.R. 1953, *Social responsibilities of the businessman*, New York, Harper & Row.

CALACE, D., 2014. Non-Financial Reporting in Italian SMEs: An Exploratory Study on Strategic and Cultural Motivations. *International Journal of Business Administration*, 5(3), pp.34–48.

CALACE, D., MORRONE, D. & RUSSO, A., 2014. Corporate sustainability , green marketing and reporting : where are we going ? In *Annals of the University of Oradea*. pp. 59–68.

CAMPOPIANO, G., DE MASSIS, A. & CASSIA, L., 2012. The relationship between motivations and actions in corporate social responsibility: An exploratory study. *International Journal of Business and Society*, 13(3), pp.391–425.

CARROLL, A.B. 1979, *A Three-Dimensional Conceptual Model of Corporate Performance*, Academy of Management Review, 4, 497-505.

CARROLL, A.B. 2008, *A history of corporate social responsibility: Concepts and practices.* In A. Crane, A. McWilliams, D. Matten, J. Moon, & D. Siegel (Eds.), The Oxford handbook of corporate social responsibility (pp 19-46), Oxford, Oxford University Press.

CARROLL, A.B., 1999. Corporate Social Responsibility Evolution of a Definitional Construct. *Business & Society*, 38(3), pp.268–295.

CASTELLÓ, I., MORSING, M. & SCHULTZ, F., 2013. Communicative Dynamics and the Polyphony of Corporate Social Responsibility in the Network Society. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 118(4), pp.683–694.

CRANE, A. et al., 2014. Contesting the value of "creating shared value." *University of California, Berkeley*, 56(2), pp.130–153.

DAVIS, K. 1960, *Can business afford to ignore social responsibilities?*, California Management Review, 2, 70-76.

DAVIS, K. 1973, *The case for and against business assumption of social responsibilities*, *Academy of Management Journal*, 16.

DEL BALDO, M., 2012. Family and Territory Values for a Sustainable Entrepreneurship: The Experience of Loccioni Group and Varnelli Distillery in Italy. *Journal of Marketing Development and Competitiveness*, 6(3), pp.120–139.

DÉNIZ, M. DE LA C. & CABRERA, M.K., 2005. Corporate Social Responsibility and Family Business in Spain. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 56(1), pp.27–41.

DYER, J.H. & WHETTEN, D.A., 2006. Family firms and social responsibility: Preliminary evidence from the S&P 500. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 30(6), pp.785–802.

EISENHARDT, K. & GRAEBNER, M., 2007. Theory Building from Cases: Opportunities and Challenges. *Academy of Management Journal 50 (1),* pp. 25-32.

ELLIOT, J., 2005. *Using Narrative in Social Research.* s.l.:SAGE.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2001, *GREEN PAPER Promoting a European framework for Corporate Social Responsibility*, Brussels.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2011, *A renewed EU strategy 2011-14 for Corporate Social Responsibility*, Brussels.

FAIETA A. edited by, 2014, *Export salva-bilanci*, Food.

FREDERICK, W. C. 1986, *Toward CSR3: why ethical analysis in indispensable and unavoidable in corporate affairs*, California Management Review, 28.

FREEMAN, R. 1984, *Strategic Management a stakeholder approach*, Pitnam, Marshfield.

FRIEDMAN, M., 1970. The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits. *The New York Times Magazine*, September.

GARRIGA, E., & MELE', D. 2004, *Corporate social responsibility theories: Mapping the territory*, Journal of Business Ethics, 53 (1-2), 51-71.

GOMEZ-MEJIA, L.R. et al., 2011. The Bind that Ties: Socioemotional Wealth Preservation in Family Firms. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 5(1), pp.653–707.

GÓMEZ-MEJÍA, L.R. et al., 2007. Socioemotional Wealth and Business Risks in Family-controlled Firms: Evidence from Spanish Olive Oil Mills. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 52(March), pp.106–137.

GOND, J. & HERRBACH, O., 2006. Social reporting as an organisational learning tool? A theoretical framework. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 65(4), pp.359–371.

LEE, M. D. P. 2008, *A review of the theories of corporate social responsibilities: Its evolutionary path and the road ahead*, International Journal of Management Reviews, 10(1), 53-73.

MARGOLIS, J.D.., ELFENBEIN, H.A.. & Walsh, J.P., 2007. *Does it pay to be good? A meta-analysis and redirection of research on the relationship between corporate social and financial performance*, Boston.

MILNE, M. & GRAY, R., 2013. W (h) ither ecology? The triple bottom line, the global reporting initiative, and corporate sustainability reporting. *Journal of business ethics*, 118(1), pp.13–29.

MINTZBERG, H., 1990. The design school: reconsidering the basic premises of strategic management. *Strategic management journal*, 11(December 1987), pp.171–195.

MINTZBERG, H. & WATERS, J., 1985. Of strategies, deliberate and emergent. *Strategic management journal*, 6(June 1984), pp.257–272.

MITCHELL, R.K. et al., 2011. Toward a Theory of Stakeholder Salience in Family Firms. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 2(April), pp.235–255.

NAHAPIET, J. & GHOSHAL, S., 1997. Social Capital, Intellectual Capital and the Creation of Value in Firms. *Academy of Management Best Papers Proceedings*, 8(1), pp.35–39.

NYGAARD, S. & RUSSO, A., 2008. Trust, coordination and knowledge flows in R&D projects: the case of fuel cell technologies. *Business Ethics: A European Review*, 17(1), pp.23–34.

PANWAR, R. et al., 2013. The Legitimacy of CSR Actions of Publicly Traded Companies Versus Family-Owned Companies. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 125(3), pp.481–496.

PERRINI, F., 2005. Building a European Portrait of Corporate Social Responsibility Reporting. *European Management Journal Vol.23, No.6,* pp. 611-627.

PORTER, M. & LINDE, C. VAN DER, 1995. Green and competitive: ending the stalemate. *Harvard Business Review*, 73(5), pp.120–134.

PORTER, M.E. & KRAMER, M.R., 2011. Creating Shared Value. *Harvard Business Review*, (February), pp.63–77.

PORTER, M.E. & KRAMER, M.R., 2006. The Link Between Competitive Advantage and Corporate Social Responsibility. *Harvard Business Review*, 84(December), pp.78–92.

POSSAMAI P., 2015. *Barilla una via italiana alla conquista dei mercati*, la Repubblica – Affari e Finanza.

POWELL, W.W. & DI MAGGIO, P.J., 1991. *The new institutionalism in organizational analysis*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

PRESTON, L. E. 1975, *Corporation and society: The search for a paradigm*, Journal of Economic Literature, 13, 334-354.

RUSSO, A. & PERRINI, F., 2008. Illycaffe: value creation through responsible supplier relationships. *Journal of Business Ethics Education*, 5, pp.139–170.

SCOTT, R.W., 1995. *Institutions and Organizations*.

SIMON, H.A. 1945, *Administrative Behavior*, New York, Free Press.

SIMONS, R., 1990. The role of management control systems in creating competitive advantage: new perspectives. *Accounting, Organizations & Society*, Vol.15(Issue 1/2), pp.127–143.

SIGGELKOW, N., 2007. Persuasion with Case Studies. *Academy of Management Journal 50 (1),* pp. 20-24.

SPENCE, L.J. & RINALDI, L., 2012. Governmentality in accounting and accountability: A case study of embedding sustainability in a supply chain. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*.

SPENCE, L.J., SCHMIDPETER, R. & HABISCH, A., 2003. Assessing Social Capital : Small and Medium Sized Enterprises in Germany and the U . K . , pp.17–29.

TENCATI, A., RUSSO, A. & QUAGLIA, V., 2010. Sustainability along the global supply chain: the case of Vietnam. *Social Responsibility Journal*, 6(1), pp.91–107.

THE ECONOMIST, 2005. The Good Company.

WOOD, D.J., 1991. Corporate social performance revisited. *The Academy of Management Review*, 16(4), pp.691–718.

WOOD, D.J., 2010. Measuring Corporate Social Performance: A Review. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 12(1), pp.50–84.

YIN, R., 2003. *Case Study Research - Design and Methods 3rd Edition.* s.l.:Sage Publications.