

Flying responsibly?

An analysis of the self-reported corporate social responsibility of European airlines

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Abstract

The aim of this PhD research project was to critically examine the self-reported socially-responsible activities of European full-service and low-fares airlines. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a concept that has been described using many terms and with varying definitions. Broadly, it is the recognition that businesses should voluntarily mitigate and manage their externalities. CSR has been touted by businesses and governments alike as a preferred alternative to regulation. This research looked at the self-reported CSR approaches of the European airline sector, which has historically been heavily regulated and is currently facing increasing pressures regarding its impacts on CSR- and sustainability-related concerns. Low cost carriers have been under particular scrutiny for their impacts, and therefore, this research compared the CSR approaches of the two dominant airline business models in Europe: low cost and full service models.

The sample consisted of 21 full service and 13 low cost carriers with headquarters in Europe. Mixed qualitative methods were applied to 566 secondary documents (websites, press releases, annual reports, and standalone CSR reports) and 15 elite interviews with airline managers. A range of established CSR indicators were assessed, including: definitions, reported practices, motivations and justifications for CSR activities, and CSR management and monitoring. Much of what the airlines reported as their CSR was at odds with academic and governmental definitions; as a whole, they placed considerable emphasis on environmental issues and adhering to

regulations. This study also found that the CSR practices were closely correlated with business practices and key sector issues – an understanding of CSR that is most compatible with stakeholder theory-based conceptualisations. Business models on their own were found to be an overly-simplistic explanation for the wide variances of practice that were found in the sample. Instead, four ‘profiles of responsibility’ were identified, which better captured the differences in practices.

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Abbreviations

CC	Corporate citizenship
CR	Corporate responsibility
CSR	Corporate social responsibility
EC	European Commission
ECAA	European Common Aviation Area
EEA	European Economic Area
ELFAA	European Low Fares Airline Association
ETS	Emissions Trading Scheme
EU	European Union
FSC	Full service carrier
IATA	International Air Transport Association
LCC	Low cost carrier
LFA	Low fares airline
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
SR	Social responsibility
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
US	United States

1 Introduction

1.1 Research context: corporate social responsibility and European airlines

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a notoriously slippery concept (Garriga and Melé 2004; Dahlsrud 2008) that can be broadly defined as the recognition that organisations operate within a system and should strive to voluntarily minimise their negative impacts and optimise their positive impacts on that system, without losing their overall usefulness to the system. CSR has been hailed by European governments and businesses alike as the preferred alternative to strict regulation as a means of directing ‘good’ business behaviour (Moon 2007). The European Commission defines CSR as a ‘concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interactions with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis’ (CEC 2006: 5), and in the past twenty years, the European Commission has made a concentrated effort to encourage greater strategic CSR implementation, and has issued four strategies, reports, and assessments of CSR practices since 2000 (CEC 2011). On a global scale, the *Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development* (UN 2002) called for greater private sector involvement in efforts to implement sustainable development plans. Increasingly, then, businesses are being encouraged to make voluntary contributions to wider societal and environmental concerns in addition to – and

sometimes in place of – formal governmental regulations and controls (Moon 2007).

Businesses have, by and large, responded. There have been a burgeoning number of companies that actively report on their social and environmental mitigation (nearly 80% the Global Fortune 250 companies (KPMG, 2008)) through a variety of reporting avenues – from websites, press releases and annual reports to dedicated CSR-specific reports (Henderson 2007; van Wijk and Persoon 2006; Holcomb, *et al.* 2007; Sigala 2008). Public, formalised CSR activities and reporting are especially prominent in industries that have heavy impacts on the environment or society, with finance, tobacco, utilities, mining, forestry, and even fast food chains developing complex CSR programmes (Kotler and Lee 2004; Jenkins 2004). However, extensive CSR strategic management and reporting has not become standard in the travel and tourism industry (van Wijk and Persoon 2006; Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois 2010), in spite of its position as a so-called ‘high impact’ industry (Frynas 2005; Lynes and Andrachuk 2008; Coles *et al.* 2009). While CSR reporting in other ‘high impact’ industries has been studied at length (Kotler and Lee 2004; Jenkins 2004; Lynes and Andrachuk 2008; Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois 2010), there have been relatively few studies of CSR reporting and management in the travel and tourism industry (van Wijk and Persoon 2006; Philips 2006; Holcomb *et al.* 2007) and fewer still in aviation (Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois 2010; Coles *et al.* 2009; Phillips 2006; Lynes and Andrachuck 2008).

Of the relatively few studies of CSR in the travel and tourism industry, the focus of research has been primarily on large, international companies that already publish a dedicated stand-alone CSR report (e.g. van Wijk and Persoon 2006; Holcomb *et al.* 2007; Tsai *et al.* 2010; Kang *et al.* 2010; Font *et al.* 2012; discussed in more detail in Chapter 2). Studies of the CSR management of airlines have likewise overlooked the practices of smaller companies, with the exceptions of Coles *et al.* (2009), which only looked at low cost carriers, and Gupta and Saxena (2006), which focused solely on two airlines in India. This lack of research on developing and less well-publicised CSR practices is especially noteworthy considering the potential implications of studies of less-strategically managed CSR in practice – especially for governments and other bodies intent on encouraging more strategic CSR uptake among all businesses; that is to say, while most previous studies across all industries, and particularly in the travel and tourism industry, have primarily concentrated on companies that already have well-developed CSR in terms of strategic management and regular public CSR communications, studying organisations that are still in the beginning stages of formalising their CSR or that have not taken up a formal CSR strategy can give insight into how to create a targeted approach that will be most effective for their needs and that reflects their understandings and issues relating to CSR. This research gap seems especially noteworthy for ‘high impact’ industries, for which the governmental impetus for some form of self regulation is higher.

This research focused on a particularly high impact sector of the travel and tourism industry – the aviation sector (Frynas 2005; Coles *et al.* 2009), which

has been criticised by policymakers, campaigners, and the media for its negative impacts on the environment, as well as praised for its role in promoting social mobility and fostering economic growth (ELFAA 2004; Graham and Shaw 2008; Duval 2012). Low cost carriers in particular have come under increased scrutiny for their perceived 'irresponsibility' by both the popular press and the general public (Coles *et al.* 2011; Graham and Shaw 2008). The period of research took place during an especially significant time for the European sector. High oil prices and a stagnating economy coupled with high levels of competition meant that operating margins, which are typically tight in the most favourable times (Franke and John 2011), were especially lean (DLR 2011; Franke and John 2011; Duval 2012). Additionally, the airline sector was in the process of being included in the EU-wide Emissions Trading Scheme (EU-ETS) during the period of data collection (DLR 2011), which requires all airlines flying in EU airspace to monitor emissions and pay for any emissions that exceed preset caps. The sample for this research was therefore positioned to be especially impacted by the inclusion of aviation in EU-ETS since it consisted of the top 25 low cost and the top 25 full service carriers in the EU in terms of seats on offer that were headquartered in Europe. Therefore, during a time of increased financial pressures on European airlines, there were also increased regulatory pressures, and the airlines in this study were engaged in debates about whether self-regulation, especially in regards to environmental issues, would be sufficient for airlines to have a place in plans for a more sustainable future. Thus, this research has been able to contribute to and engage with a number of debates about the responsibilities of high impact businesses and the role of self- and external regulation.

This research has expanded on the themes and ideas generated during a previous project on the corporate social responsibility of low cost carriers flying to and from the UK. This previous project was funded as an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Business Engagement Award in partnership with the Exeter-based low cost carrier Flybe. It took place between August 2008 and October 2009. I worked on the project as an Associate Research Fellow, along with Professor Tim Coles, Dr. Claire Dinan, and the Head of Public Relations and Public Affairs at Flybe, Niall Duffy. The ESRC-funded project looked primarily at low cost airlines, though several full service carriers' managers (along with airport managers and trade bodies) were also interviewed. From the research (described in more detail in Coles *et al.* 2009; Fenclova and Coles 2009; Coles *et al.* 2011), some important findings emerged; primarily that many of the low cost airlines claimed to feel a great sense of obligation to address CSR-issues, particularly environmental concerns, though formal strategies and assessment were rare. Furthermore, the airlines reported feeling hesitant to fully publicise all of their efforts out of fear of negative publicity or potential backlash from sceptical consumers and special interest groups. While the previous research project found some pertinent trends, it also highlighted gaps in current research and avenues for future research. This research was initiated in an attempt to further explore some of the issues highlighted by the previous project and to fill some of the gaps in current understandings of the CSR approaches of European airlines: primarily, a lack of information on the CSR approaches of airlines that did not publish CSR reports, previously small sample sizes, and the limited attention that has been given to whether low cost carriers are 'less responsible' than full service carriers.

1.2 Aim and objectives

The aim of this research was to critically examine the self-reported socially-responsible activities of European full-service and low-fares airlines. As was mentioned in the previous section, corporate social responsibility is a notoriously fluid concept, characterised by many different and at times contesting definitions (e.g. Crane *et al.* 2008; Blowfield and Murray 2008; Dahlsrud 2008; Garriga and Melé 2004); by looking at the 'self-reported' CSR of the airlines, this research was able to investigate how the airlines themselves articulated their responsibilities. In order to do this, the data sets were comprised of websites, press releases, annual reports and corporate social responsibility reports, as well as interviews with airline managers. It was anticipated that this wide spread of data would allow for a stronger understanding of the airlines' interpretation of CSR (as was found by Coles *et al.* 2009). By limiting the research only to airlines that were based in Europe (defined as the airlines with headquarters in a member of the European Common Aviation Area (ECAA) or Switzerland), this research was able to look at airlines in a common regulatory environment (DLR 2011), as well as relatively similar cultural norms and expectations. Furthermore, this research only looked at airlines that displayed either of the two current dominant business models in Europe: the low cost and full service models (DLR 2009; DLR 2011; Franke 2004; Franke and John 2011). It was anticipated that by focusing on two divergent business models, any strong trends between views of CSR and business model would become apparent. The differences (if any) between how full service carriers and low cost carriers viewed and reported managing their CSR were particularly relevant considering the popular narrative of low cost carriers as the less 'responsible' of the two models.

In order to accomplish the aim of this research, there were six objectives (Table 1.1). The first two objectives dealt primarily with how the airlines defined their CSR and they were to: undertake a comprehensive survey of the preferred terms and definitions of CSR used by the airlines (Objective 1); and develop a comprehensive typology of the self-reported CSR activities of airlines (Objective 2). Understanding the preferred terms and definitions was important considering how many CSR-related terms and varying definitions are applied to the concept of CSR, both in academia and by organisations (Coles *et al.* 2011). Through clarifying preferred terms and analysing formal definitions, this research positioned the airlines' approach to CSR within the broader academic and policy landscapes. Similarly, this research addressed the intention-behaviour gap between what how the airlines reported viewing their CSR and how they reported practicing it (Fassin and Buelens 2011) by considering the airlines' *de facto* definitions of CSR: that is, the types of CSR activities that they reported as comprising their CSR. These typologies created in response to Objective Two gave insight not only into the broad categories of CSR-related reported activities, but also revealed the main areas of emphasis of CSR in practice. Treemaps were used to visualise the relative emphasis on individual issues within the sample and a general typology, similar to the one created by Holcomb *et al.* (2007) for their research on the CSR of hotel companies, was created. This research was able to identify not only how the airlines' seemed to understand their CSR, but also which areas in particular they prioritised (or, at least, the areas about which they prioritised communicating).

Table 1.1 Aims and objectives of research

Aim	
To critically examine the self-reported socially-responsible activities of European full service and low cost carriers.	
Objectives	
1.	Undertake a comprehensive survey of the preferred terms and definitions of CSR used by the airlines
2.	Develop a comprehensive typology of the self-reported CSR activities of airlines
3.	Examine the approaches to the management and implementation of CSR
4.	Assess the stated motivations behind CSR activities
5.	Investigate the range of collaboration, stakeholder engagement and knowledge transfer
6.	Compare how low cost carriers and full service carriers reported their understandings and practices of CSR

Source: Author

The next three objectives investigated the reported implementation of CSR. They were to: examine the approaches to the management and implementation of CSR (Objective 3); assess the stated motivations behind CSR activities (Objective 4); and investigate the range of collaboration, stakeholder engagement and knowledge transfer (Objective 5). Combined, these three objectives gave an insight into the CSR management, motivations for action, and influential stakeholders of the sampled airlines. For governments and other organisations that want to encourage greater strategic CSR implementation, having a strong understanding of the current levels of strategic management is essential to efficiently targeting suggestions for improvement (Mirvis and Googins 2006). By looking at the reported motivations behind CSR action, this research has been able to identify for the first time the common narratives of

responsibility among airlines. By using similar narratives, external stakeholders could have a greater chance of achieving their goals – for instance, changing the call for greater strategic CSR from an ethics-based plea to one that emphasises the business benefits of active CSR management. Similarly, identifying key influential stakeholders and knowledge transfer relationships could provide useful for encouraging greater CSR through partnerships. Identifying CSR management approaches resulted in one of the key findings of this research: that the airlines' approaches to CSR fell into four distinct 'profiles of responsibility'.

The final objective (Objective 6) was to compare how low cost carriers and full service carriers reported their understandings and practices of CSR. This objective was based on the understanding that levels of CSR implementation and management were not uniform across the sector. It was understood that some airlines would be practicing more desirable levels of CSR than others. Therefore, the intention was to identify whether there were any strong differences between how the low cost airlines and the full service carriers understood and managed their CSR, and whether the popular critiques of low cost carrier as lacking in responsibility (Coles *et al.* 2011; Graham and Shaw 2008) was accurate. This research also considered whether there might be other characteristics of the airlines that might contribute to the airlines' levels of CSR management. This final objective proved to be the most difficult to research, but nonetheless had interesting implications for the industry, for CSR researchers, and for CSR-focused regulatory stakeholders.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

The next chapter, Chapter 2, lays the groundwork for studying CSR in the aviation sector through discussing the conceptual heritage of CSR, how it has evolved, the role of government as a driver for CSR, and debates about CSR strategic management. It also covers previous studies of CSR implementation in the travel and transport industry, specifically in the aviation sector. This chapter argues that modern conceptualisations of CSR have grown out of four larger academic discourses: corporate philanthropy, business ethics, sustainable development, and stakeholder theory. Because of this diverse and diffuse heritage of influences, definitions of CSR abound and vary considerably, which makes it a slippery concept to research.

In spite of the proliferation of CSR definitions, most commentators agree that CSR is inherently voluntary and CSR in practice must go above and beyond what is legally required. While governments cannot, therefore, legislate CSR, they can play a 'softer' role of encouraging CSR (Moon 2004). This chapter also explores how previous research has attempted to assess and analyse aspects of CSR in practice. Mirvis and Googins' (2006) 'Stages of Corporate Citizenship' were identified as one of the most thorough and practice-linked models of CSR development. Chapter 2 also assesses the previous body of knowledge of CSR in the travel and tourism industries with special attention to previous studies of the CSR of airlines. As is discussed in more detail in the chapter, the number of studies of CSR in the travel and tourism industry has steadily increased in the past decade; however, these studies have predominately looked at larger companies, have focused on small samples, and

have generally focused on only one or two aspects of CSR in practice (such as defining CSR or CSR management). This research is the first published study that has both a relatively large sample size (34 airlines), uses a diverse range of data sources, and explores more than just one or two issues of CSR conceptualisation and implementation.

In Chapter 3, the issues of CSR are contextualised within the aviation industry in Europe, starting with the historical ties between regulation and aviation. The aviation industry was cultivated through heavy-handed regulation and large subsidies followed by a gradual lessening of governmental control (Doganis 2006). For much of its development, air transport's value to society was deemed to be continued operations – ideally, without costing their (generally governmental) investors too much. However, over the last 25 years, the regulatory environment for airlines in the European Union has changed dramatically. Privatisation and competition have replaced protectionism as regulatory priorities. Additionally, aviation's environmental impacts – specifically, noise and emissions – are increasingly being addressed (most notably in the inclusion of air transport in the EC's Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) in 2009). As a result, airlines are increasingly operating in a regulatory environment that is less concerned with their individual survival and more concerned with their impacts and overall competition and good practice. In other words, the perceived social value (and responsibility) of airlines is no longer merely for them to keep flying. The chapter also provides an overview of the main CSR-relevant issues faced by contemporary European airlines, primarily: financial troubles (Doganis 2006; Shaw 2007; Franke and John 2011), safety and

security issues (Sullivan-Taylor and Wilson 2009), concerns about airlines' environmental and social impacts (Duval 2007; Graham and Shaw 2008; Mann 2004; Dhanda and Murphy 2011), and internal stakeholder management (Bamber *et al.* 2009a, 2009b; Upchurch 2010). The differences between full service and low cost business models are presented, along with analysis of the predominant European full service and low cost carriers which were in operation during the period of research. Finally, the chapter considers issues for the future of European passenger aviation – an especially relevant consideration since CSR is often touted as being a way for a business to maintain a 'license to operate' (Williams *et al.* 2007).

Chapter 4 addresses the methodological approach and choices of this research, from the epistemological stance which was taken to definitions, aims and objectives. The chapter also covers the practical issues involved with defining a sample and collecting data sets on a concept as constantly evolving and shifting as CSR. Due to the difficulties in identifying one 'true' definition of CSR, this research took a 'wide net' approach to defining CSR and collecting CSR-related data which was based on an interpretivist paradigm. This 'wide net' meant that rather than assessing a single type of data or single conceptualisation of CSR as most of the previous studies of airlines' CSR have done, with the exception of Coles *et al.* (2009) and Lynes and Andrachuk (2008), this research used data triangulation (Decrop 1999).

This research used data from four main sources: 15 elite interviews with airline managers, 406 CSR-specific web pages, 134 CSR-related press releases, and

26 annual and CSR-specific reports. This diversity of data is especially important for the aviation sector as Coles *et al.* (2009) found a significant difference between the types of activities that were reported through different media types. Therefore, this research will be able to analyse an even stronger, more comprehensive set of communicated activities than any previous research project. The 'wide net' approach was also taken during data collection where an innovative 'decision map' was developed and implemented in order to determine what activities the airlines themselves considered to be part of their CSR. This was in contrast to all previous research on the CSR of airlines which have collected data based on what academic discourses define as CSR-related activities.

Chapter 4 also details the sampling methods and how the 21 full service carriers and 13 low cost carriers that comprised the sample were identified, as well as discusses some of their predominate characteristics. It further covers the qualitative analytical approaches which were chosen for their compatibility with the data and with the overall interpretivist paradigm. This study used the mixed methods of grounded theory-based analysis and content analysis. Grounded theory-based codes were developed and applied to the data. The findings which emerged from the grounded theory-based approach were then further explored and tested using a content analysis-based approach, and therefore, this research was able to take into account both meta- and micro-level themes in the data.

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 describe in more detail the analytical approaches, findings, and relevance of findings. Each of the six objectives of this study are considered. Chapter 5 looks specifically at how the airlines conceptualised and reported practicing CSR by examining issues related to Objectives One and Two. It first covers the preferred terms and formal definitions of CSR used by the airlines. It then investigates the types of practices that were included in communications on CSR – thereby addressing Objective Two while at the same time creating a *de facto* definition of CSR in practice. This chapter is concluded with a treemap which provides a visual representation of the most common CSR activities reported by the airlines. The similarities and differences between the full service and low cost carriers' approaches are also considered throughout the chapter and receive particular consideration in the final section.

Chapter 6 investigates the internal and external influencing factors on their CSR understanding and practices cited by the airlines. First, Objective Four is considered using the airlines reported motivations and justifications for CSR activities. The main impediments to CSR action are also analysed. Next, Objective Five is discussed through analysis of the most prominent external stakeholders that the airlines reported by the airlines as playing a role in how they practiced or viewed their CSR, including governments, other airlines, and charities and NGOs. This section describes the range of relationships that were reported and provides broad stakeholder analysis for the key CSR-influencing stakeholders based on Mitchell *et al.*'s (1997) typology of stakeholder identification. As in Chapter 5, the similarities and differences between full

service and low cost carriers' reported approaches are discussed throughout Chapter 6.

Chapter 7 focuses on the airlines' overall approaches to CSR. The first section answers Objective Three by assessing the widely different approaches to CSR monitoring and management. Mirvis and Googins' (2006) 'Scale of Corporate Citizenship' is used to construct four categories of CSR managing and monitoring approaches. The next section addresses Objective Six by comparing the similarities and differences in the approaches of the two sets of airlines that were identified in the data in the previous chapters with the purported influence of business model reported by the airlines themselves. Other characteristics of the airlines that might explain the large variance in CSR approaches are also considered, and four 'profiles of responsibility' are proposed.

The final chapter, Chapter 8, provides an overall summary of the research and the main research findings. It considers the contribution and implications of this research to three categories: the industry, governmental regulators, and academic researchers. It also critically evaluates the limitations of this research. The chapter concludes by highlighting areas of interest for future research based on the findings and experiences of this study. While this study has some necessary limitations (e.g. it is not a longitudinal study, it only looked at two business models), it is a significantly original piece of work that greatly advances current understandings of the reported CSR views and practices of two types of European airlines, and the methodological approaches, specifically, the 'decision map', the sector-based typology of reported CSR

activities, and the application of Mirvis and Googins' (2006) Stages of Corporate Citizenship have significant potential to be adapted for future studies of CSR in aviation and in other sectors.

2 Literature review

Conceptualising corporate social responsibility

2.1 Introduction

The next two chapters will explore the main theoretical and practical background behind this study. This chapter will address the issues of corporate social responsibility from a theoretical and conceptual perspective, providing a literature review of past and current debates and research with particular attention to previous studies in the airline sector. The next chapter, Chapter 3, will approach the issue of CSR and aviation from a different perspective by assessing the past and current regulation and composition of the European passenger airline industry with particular attention to the corporate social responsibility issues faced by European airlines. Combined, Chapters 2 and 3 detail the main impetuses for this study: the increasing importance of CSR for full service and low cost carriers alike, the relative lack of sector-wide research, and the academic contribution of a 'wide net' approach to CSR research to account for wide variances in understandings of the term as well as differing approaches to CSR management.

The structure of this chapter addresses four issues. First, the difficulty of arriving at a concrete conceptualisation of CSR is discussed through the four main contributing discourses (sustainable development, corporate philanthropy, business ethics, and stakeholder theory). Second, the discussions of the role of legislation and governmental intervention will be considered alongside current EU approaches to CSR governance. Third, discourses on how CSR is practiced in organisations and relevant models and methods will be considered. Fourth, this chapter will review past research on CSR in the travel and tourism industries, with a specific focus on airlines. Finally, the conclusion will consider the methodological and epistemological implications of contemporary CSR research.

2.2 Corporate social responsibility: an evolving concept

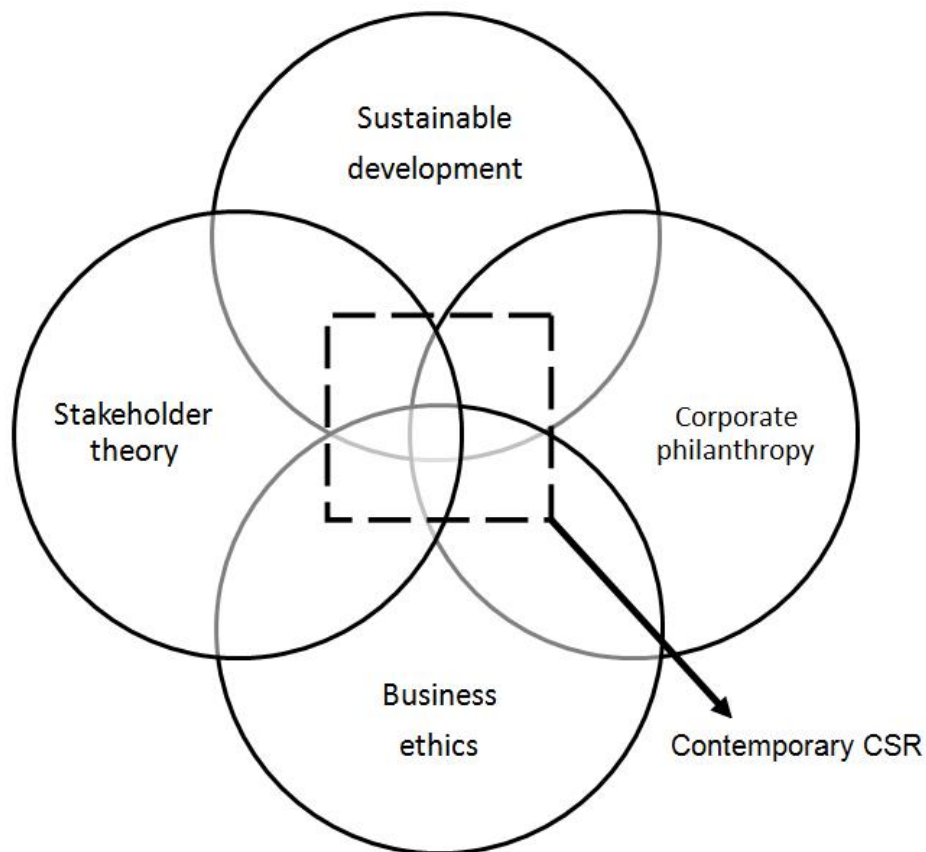
Corporate social responsibility is a notoriously inexact term with multiple referents (e.g. Crane *et al.* 2008; Blowfield and Murray 2008; Dahlsrud 2008; Garriga and Melé 2004). Not only do exact definitions vary widely (Dahlsrud 2008), but different terminology is often used as well, with similar concepts labelled as 'social responsibility', 'corporate responsibility', 'corporate citizenship', 'company stakeholder responsibility', 'corporate sustainability management', and 'corporate sustainability and responsibility' (e.g. Brammer and Pavelin 2004; Mirvis and Googins 2006; Blowfield and Murray 2008; Carroll and Shabana 2010; Salzmann *et al.* 2005). Additionally, even among those who use 'corporate social responsibility', interpretations of the concept differ widely. As Votaw (1972: 25, cited in Garriga and Melé 2004: 51-52) noted:

Corporate social responsibility means something, but not always the same thing to everybody. To some it conveys the idea of legal responsibility or liability; to others, it means socially responsible behaviour in the ethical sense; to still others, the meaning transmitted is that of 'responsible for' in a casual mode; many simply equate it with charitable contributions; some take it to mean socially conscious; many of those who embrace it most fervently see it as a mere synonym for legitimacy in the context of belonging or being proper or valid; a few see a sort of fiduciary duty imposing higher standards of behaviour on businessmen than on citizens at large. [Direct quotation]

In the forty subsequent years since Votaw's pronouncement, a universal definition of CSR has yet to emerge. Part of the difficulty in agreeing on a set definition of CSR lies in the numerous discourses that have contributed to its development. Contemporary conceptualisations of CSR evolved primarily from four main areas of debate: sustainable development, business ethics, stakeholder theory, and corporate philanthropy (Figure 2.1).

As is illustrated in the figure, current discourses about CSR do not happen only where all four concepts merge. Instead, commentators tend to construct definitions based on two, or occasionally three, concepts. Thus, we have, for instance, Carroll's (1991) 'Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility' (Figure 2.2), which defines CSR in the context of business ethics and corporate philanthropy, outlining a series of responsibilities ranging from those that are ethically mandated to those that Carroll considered to be more discretionary.

Figure 2.1 Theoretical contributors to contemporary CSR

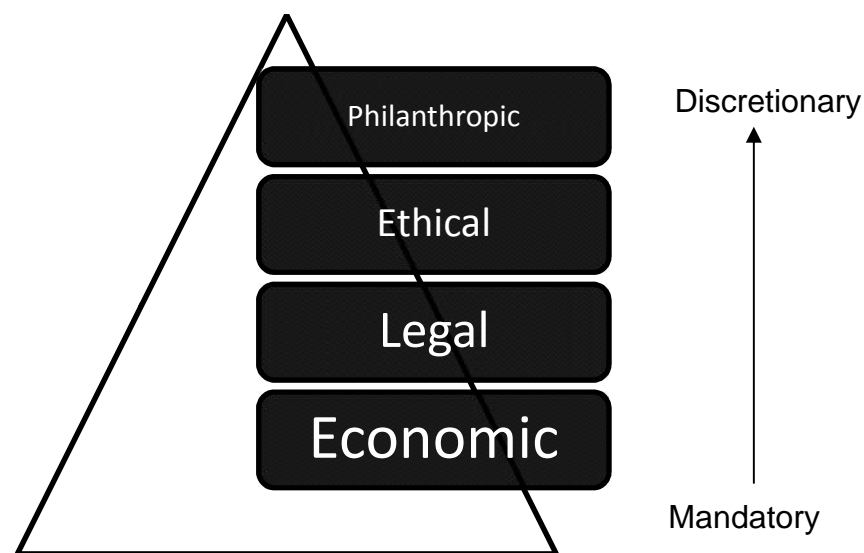


Source: author

While Carroll's understanding of CSR will be discussed in more detail in a following section (2.2.2), here it is worth noting that Carroll argued that corporations have differing levels of responsibilities which they can accept or deny, ranging from economic viability ('be profitable') to legal compliance ('obey the law') to ethical responsibilities ('be ethical') to philanthropic responsibilities ('be a good corporate citizen') (Carroll 1991: 42). Carroll considered corporations that accepted all of the responsibilities, including philanthropic responsibilities, to be managing their CSR in a 'moral' way, thereby integrating

both business ethics discourses (the idea that a corporation's actions can be 'moral') with discourses on corporate philanthropy.

Figure 2.2: Carroll's 'Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility'



Source: adapted from Carroll (1991: 228)

While Carroll's (1991) 'Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility' has been widely cited (particularly in business ethics textbooks - see for instance Fisher and Lovell 2003; Ferrell, *et al.* 2008; Crane and Matten 2004), it is not the only understanding of CSR currently in use, nor is the mixture of business ethics and corporate philanthropy the sole contributors to contemporary approaches to CSR. Another understanding of CSR that is gaining popularity is the so-called 'triple bottom line' approach to CSR – that is, CSR is taking into account an organisation's economic, social, and environmental impacts (e.g. O'Rourke 2003: 683; Moneva, *et al.* 2006: 122; Dodds and Joppe 2005: 9). These classifications of impacts rely heavily on sustainable development's key

concerns of economic, social, and environmental stability (UN World Commission on Environmental Development 1987). More revealing is the justification for a 'triple bottom line' approach – why commentators believe businesses should take this course - which is either ascribed to organisational success through stakeholder engagement (drawing from stakeholder theory; e.g. Salzmann *et al.* 2005; Weber 2008; Ciliberti *et al.* 2008), an ethical imperative to operate responsibly (based on business ethics; e.g. Golob and Bartlett 2007; Henderson 2007), or, occasionally, a combination of the two (e.g. Capriotti and Moreno 2007). Thus, in these cases, CSR is developed from sustainable development and stakeholder theory; sustainable development and business ethics; or a combination of sustainable development, stakeholder theory, and business ethics.

Other definitions of CSR include Falck and Heblich's (2007: 247) statement that CSR is:

....a voluntary corporate commitment to exceed the explicit and implicit obligations imposed on a company by society's expectations of conventional corporate behaviour [...so that] both companies and society [...] prosper.

Their definition, as with many such definitions of CSR, draws upon a number of discourses. The statement that business should adhere to 'explicit and implicit obligations imposed on a company' references business ethics debates – specifically legitimacy theory and corporate citizenship discourses which maintain that businesses have an obligation to conform to society's expectations and demands. At the same time, Falck and Heblich's (2007)

justification for CSR does not strictly conform to a business ethics-based understanding that companies should practice CSR because they have a moral obligation to do so – rather, Falck and Heblich (2007)'s justification for CSR is that it should be practiced to ensure that 'both companies and society [...] prosper' – a sentiment more akin to a stakeholder theory-based view of business responsibilities. Falck and Heblich's (2007) definition is one of many that will be discussed in the following section. Importantly, none of these definitions are necessarily 'correct', and all four concepts have been integral in shaping how academics and practitioners alike approach CSR. The next four subsections will discuss the contribution of each of the four concepts to current conceptualisations of CSR.

2.2.1 CSR and corporate philanthropy

The earliest two contributors to CSR's development were debates about business ethics and corporate philanthropy. Certainly, business ethics has heavily influenced discussions about corporate philanthropy (as well as, it should be noted, discussions about sustainable development and stakeholder theory). However, not all academic discourses on corporate philanthropy focus on the ethics of it, and other discussions about corporate philanthropy range from potential business benefits (e.g. Porter and Kramer 2002; Muller and Kräussl 2011; Falck and Heblich 2007) to engagements with leadership studies (e.g. Szekely and Knirsch 2005; Henderson and Malani 2008) to assessments of practical engagement that eschew ethical debates (e.g. Varadarajan and Menon 1988; Fry *et al.* 1982). Additionally, CSR activity was generally equated with corporate philanthropy well into the 20th century (Carroll 1991), and

corporate philanthropy has been viewed by some commentators as the most objectionable aspect of CSR (for instance, Friedman 1970). In this study, as will be discussed in much more detail in subsequent chapters, corporate philanthropy was reported by the airlines to comprise a large portion of their CSR in practice. Thus, studying the role of corporate philanthropy in modern CSR can contribute to a deeper understanding of corporate social responsibility as a whole.

The origins of CSR are most often traced back to specific cases of corporate paternalism, that is, individual CEOs investing in the socio-cultural well-being of their employees, in the late 19th and early 20th century (Searle 1993; Carroll 2008; Cochran 2007). As the 20th century progressed, more and more businesses began to practice corporate philanthropy by donating money to charity, and the discussion broadened from whether individual cases of CSR violated the rights of shareholders (Banerjee 2007) to whether the private sector had an ethical responsibility to support society (Cochran 2007). By the 1980s and 1990s, the debate shifted again from *whether* CSR was necessary to *how* it should be defined and best implemented (Lee 2008). Conceptually, CSR is now recognised as extending beyond philanthropic giving (Fenclova and Coles 2011); however in practice, philanthropic activities still form a significant proportion of corporations' CSR implementation, with charitable giving and charity involvement often making up most of the 'social' component of the 'triple bottom line' (Phillips 2006). Similarly, in common conceptualisations of CSR such as Carroll's (1991) 'Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility' (see, for instance Crane and Matten 2004; Fisher and Lovell 2003) philanthropy is often

presented as the main, and sometimes only, recognised voluntary socially responsible activity.

Contemporary corporate-charity partnership take many forms – from one-off donations to long-standing support, and from corporate monetary gifts to donations of staff time and expertise, marketing platforms, and business resources (v. Varadarajan and Menon 1988; Campbell, *et al.* 2002; Henderson and Malani 2008; Pelozo *et al.* 2009). Both past and current debates about corporate philanthropy revolve around whether an ethical mandate for corporate philanthropy exists and what differentiates strategic philanthropy from altruistic philanthropy (c.f. Campbell *et al.* 2002; Porter and Kramer 2002; Pelozo *et al.* 2009; Varadarajan and Menon 1988). Some commentators (e.g. Wright 2001; Friedman and McGarvie 2003) have argued that there are subtle etymological differences between ‘philanthropy’ and ‘charity’; however, the majority of commentators use these terms interchangeably (e.g. Pelozo *et al.* 2009; Patten 2008; Varadarajan and Menon 1998; Henderson and Malani 2008; Moon 2004).

The types of relationships formed between businesses and charities, as well as the businesses’ exact motivations for and expectations of corporate charitable involvement, are complex and varied (Varadarajan and Menon 1988; Fry *et al.* 1982). Varadarajan and Menon (1988: 58-59) sought to better categorise these relationships through an evolutionary model of corporate charitable involvement that began with ‘*voluntarily doing good*’ and was followed by ‘*mandated corporate social responsibility*’ and ‘*doing better by doing good*’. Their model has been adapted for this study (Figure 2.3). Unlike Mirvis and Googins’ (2006)

'Stages of Corporate Citizenship' (which ranges from *Elementary to Transforming*) and Varadarajan and Menon's (1988) model, the model used here is not intended to depict linear development or the depth of CSR implementation. Instead, the scale is intended to gauge the degree to which a corporation expects to benefit from partnering with a charity. Many corporations might begin their corporate philanthropy with a cause-related marketing effort, whilst others might have comprehensive and well-developed strategic philanthropic partnerships without deciding to embark on any cause-related marketing. Likewise, Varadarajan and Menon's (1988) categories have been adjusted slightly; this research, as well as other recent studies, suggested that *mandated corporate social responsibility* – that is, CSR activities 'forced' upon businesses – is often practiced strategically to have positive business benefits. As a result, the concept of *mandated CSR* has been combined with the non-marketing specific subcategory of *doing better by doing good*.

The 'scale of corporate philanthropic motivations' sets out to capture the degree to which a corporation expects to benefit financially from philanthropy based on the type and range of activities it conducts and the relationships it maintains. As with the original model, corporate philanthropy is understood as encompassing a range of activities from pure altruism to profit-focused, and these broad behavioural types are defined by the strategies, intentions, and expectations inherent in the corporate charitable involvement (Figure 1). First on the scale, *corporate giving* could be considered the most altruistic form. In this case, a business (possibly motivated by a conscientious CEO or board member (e.g. Szekely and Knirsch 2005; Henderson and Malani 2008) or by a

philanthropy expect to receive at least a minimal degree of positive return on investment, ranging from increased brand reputation and visibility to greater employee morale and motivation (Frynas 2005; Campbell, *et al.* 1999). These benefits might be difficult to quantify in monetary terms as any link between the charity relationship and product sales is predominately secondary, although the tax benefits of corporate donations could be considered a primary, bottom-line benefit (Knauer 1994). Strategic philanthropy might part of a CSR, public relations, or public affairs policy, although a company might expect corporate philanthropy to fulfil CSR/PR/PA goals even without a formalised policy (Campbell, *et al.* 2002).

Cause related marketing has the clearest direct link to bottom-line benefits. Although occasionally used to describe long-standing relationship marketing through a charity (e.g. File and Prince 1998), the term most commonly refers to a portion of a specific product's revenue being donated to a charitable organisation (Pracejus *et al.* 2003; Varadarajan and Menon 1988; Lafferty and Goldsmith 2005). Cause related marketing's origins are often traced back to the American Express Company's promotional programme in 1983, when the company promised to donate a penny for every transaction and a dollar for every newly issued credit card to the Statue of Liberty restoration fund (Pracejus *et al.* 2003; Varadarajan and Menon 1988). As charitable giving is directly linked to sales and product marketing, the primary anticipated benefit to the business is an increase in a specific product's sales - although secondary benefits, such as improved corporate image, could also be a strong motivating factor. The business benefits are also easier to quantify, as an increase in the

cause related product's sales could be used to measure the bottom line benefit to the company (though, of course, this equation might overlook secondary benefits).

Corporate philanthropy, as an early and enduring contributor to the conceptualisation and practice of CSR, offers a snapshot of the complexity of the motivations and implementation of CSR as a whole. As will be discussed later in this chapter, although CSR is currently understood as encompassing more than just corporate philanthropy, the variances in practice and intent explored in this section are similar to those of CSR as a whole. As with corporate philanthropy, motivations behind CSR implementation are complex and varied and range from altruistic to self-serving (Ketola 2006), and the forms of CSR implementation range from being mostly divorced from business practices and goals to being fully integrated in all activities (Mirvis and Googins 2006). While corporate philanthropy is often indicative of broader CSR activity, it should also be noted that much variance in how different aspects of CSR are practiced, from corporate giving to environmental initiatives – even within the same company (Carroll 1979). Additionally, corporate philanthropy is one of the socially responsible practices least closely associated with governmental mandate (unlike, for instance, environmental activity or social equality). At the same time, many countries offer tax credits for companies that give financial contributions to charity (Knauer 1994). Therefore, studying CSR only by looking at corporate philanthropy illuminates only part of the whole of CSR and can suggest trends and practices that are misleading when applied generally for other socially responsible activities being practiced by corporations.

2.2.2 CSR and business ethics

In the business ethics literature, the advent of CSR is often traced back to preliminary discussions about the role of corporations in society during the beginning of the 20th century (Fisher and Lovell 2003; Cortina 2008), although concerns about the potential impact of organisations can be found even earlier. The ethical responsibilities of the economic system's components can be found as far back as the Code of Hammurabi and have been considered by authors ranging from Aristotle and Kautilya to Aquinas, Ockham, and Maimonides to William Petty, Gregory King, and Francois Quesnay, to name a few, who saw, to varying degrees, 'economics as a branch of "practical reason," in which concepts of the good, the right and the obligatory were quite central' (Sen 1993). However, the form of capitalism that developed in both the United States and the United Kingdom during the 19th and early 20th century largely espoused the 'survival of the fittest' doctrine of Herbert Spencer and a prevalent oversimplification of Adam Smith's writings (Werhane 2000).

Smith's most famous work, *An Inquiry to the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776), is often credited with removing ethical considerations from business in favour of letting the inherent selfishness of both business and consumers create a common good, beneficial to both (Sen 1993). This interpretation has been widely adopted by strict free market capitalism proponents (among them Milton Friedman) (Werhane 2000). However, it has been pointed out by several modern ethicists that Smith was not urging for a strict divorce of ethics from business (e.g. Collier and Wanderly 2005; Sen 1993; Werhane 2000). Rather, as Collier and Wanderly (2005: 172) note, Smith

foretold the fundamental problems of strictly profit-focused corporations, arguing that the potential for 'unlimited life, unlimited power, unlimited size' of corporations coupled with the 'unlimited licence' to burden stakeholders with the impacts of their operations threatened the stability of society.

Indeed, Smith's (1776; not paginated) famous statement that it 'is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest' has been widely presented out of context from the rest of the section (Werhane 2000), which dealt with the division of labour among individuals as something of a natural social contract. As the Industrial Revolution progressed, the emergence of larger, more powerful organisations illustrated that any social contract was by no means between equal, and that Smith's concerns were not without warrant (Jacoby 1997). Some business owners recognised the imbalance of power and sought to use their control over employees to better employees' lives and society at large through forms of corporate paternalism that emerge towards the end of the 19th century (Jacoby 1997). Examples include Saltaire in Bradford, a complete community built by Titus Salt exclusively for the use of the employees and which included not only spacious public areas, but mandates on church attendance (Searle 1993); however, cases of large scale corporate social efforts were relatively rare (Jacoby 1997; Smith 2003). Additionally, both free market capitalists and social ethicists found the amount of control over employees lives troublesome (Smith 2003).

Debates about the ethical terms and conditions of a social contract between business and society continued into the early 20th century, gaining momentum during the 1930s when a plummeting economy forced many businesses that had been practicing some degree of welfare capitalism to reduce wages, cut unemployment packages, and disengage from social initiatives (Jacoby 1997). Governments in both the US and the UK stepped in to fill the gaps in social services, and the common maxim that *businesses do business best* gained popularity (Jacoby 1997; Sen 1993; Moon 2004). However, some commentators began to question if the only responsibility business had was to their stockholders, with Dodd (1932: 1149, quoted in Cochran 2007: 449) being one of the first to argue that the modern business does have a social responsibility as it is 'permitted and encouraged by the law primarily because it is of service to the community rather than because it is a source of profit to its owners' – a sentiment that would later be developed further into discourses on corporate citizenship and legitimacy theory. Debates intensified during the 1950s and 60s as social confidence in the ability of corporations to benefit society in a free market was shaken due to a number of well publicised exposés on 'the antisocial behaviour of a number of specific corporations', especially environmental devastation (Fisher and Lovell 2003: 263; also Cochran 2007). On the one hand, these scandals led to calls for greater governmental control of business operations, especially in regards to environmental and social issues (Cochran 2007). However, on the other hand, the increasing number of multinational corporations and concerns over the uneven application of regulations made it clear that governmental controls of strictly-economic focused organisations were not enough (Moon 2004). In order for a global

society to not be harmed by corporations, businesses would have to behave ethically.

But what precisely denotes ethical business behaviour? Some commentators see business ethics and corporate social responsibility as relatively synonymous – that is, if a corporation is acting ethically, it is practicing CSR. Friedman's (1970: 33) perspective is often simplified to his assertion that the 'social responsibility of a business is to increase its profits'; however, his argument runs slightly deeper. For Friedman (1970: 33), the responsibility of a business is to 'make as much money as possible while conforming to [...] basic rules of the society, both those embodied in law and those embodied in ethical custom'. Thus, businesses¹ have the responsibility to behave ethically, but not, he makes quite clear, to proactively assert a social agenda. His objection to proactive CSR was twofold: first, investing in social initiatives detracts from the profits of a company, and thus limits its ability to fulfil its main roles in society – to employ people, to benefit shareholders, and to stimulate the economy; and second, investing in social initiatives is ultimately unethical as businesses, unlike governments, are not democratically elected to enforce social agendas, and businesses' relative position of power does not give them a responsibility (or even a right) to inflict their social and environmental goals on society. Friedman's view was that businesses have too much power to contribute to social goals as an individual and yet are not representative enough of society

¹ Notably, Friedman's (1970) argument relies on a traditional Capitalist shareholder/investor business model with profit maximisation as the ultimate business goal, and he did not address other types of ownership models, such as cooperative business models, or business goals, such as social entrepreneurship.

and the general populace's social goals to set about implementing them. Rather, a business's role in society is to act in its own self-interest and focus on contributing to the overall economic benefit of society, and to do so without trespassing on ethical custom and the basic rules of society.

However, Friedman's assessment is not without its critics, one of the most vocal of whom has been Carroll (1979, 1991). Carroll's (1991) 'Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility' (Figure 2.2, presented earlier) described four levels of responsibility, from economic to philanthropic and categorised businesses as immoral, amoral, or moral depending on how they manage their responsibilities. While Carroll initially seemed to agree with Friedman (1970) that businesses have a responsibility primarily to be economically viable and secondarily to obey laws and be ethically conscientious, he vehemently disagreed that efforts to proactively influence society for the better is harmful. Instead, Carroll (1991: 41, 42) saw businesses participating in activities such as 'to assist the fine and performing arts', '[to] participate in voluntary and charitable activities', and 'to provide assistance to private and public educational institutions' to be part of being 'good corporate citizens' – and therefore such businesses were managing their responsibilities 'morally'. However, Carroll (1979, 1991, 1999) argued that business could also be amoral by not incorporating ethical considerations into their management of CSR issues and that business could also be immoral through contravening legal and ethical norms. Carroll (1979, 1991, 1999) recognised that corporate social responsibility as a concept inhabits a liminal space between what is required and what is completely discretionary, and that businesses will manage CSR issues with different goals and emphases.

While it is not, perhaps, necessary that all businesses implement CSR policies, Waddock (2004) claimed that all businesses practice CSR; some of them practice it well and others practice it poorly. According to Waddock's (2004) view, all businesses are corporate citizens. Society as a whole, she argued, benefits more if more businesses are 'good' (that is, engaged) corporate citizens. Therefore, we can conclude, it is in society's (or, more accurately in the global context, societies') best interest to encourage businesses to practice social responsibility, to make active CSR an ethical custom. The concept of corporate citizenship builds upon the older concept of legitimacy theory, which has been succinctly defined by Guthrie and Parker (1989: 344) as:

...based upon the notion that business operates in society via a social contract where it agrees to perform various socially desired action in return for approval of its objectives, other rewards and its ultimate survival.

Therefore, according to Guthrie and Parker (1989), companies report their CSR-related activities in an effort to gain society's approval – what is often described as a 'social license to operate' (Williams *et al.* 2007). Notably, though, legitimacy theory moves away from a moral imperative for action (e.g. 'it is the right thing to do') and instead relies on the business case for CSR (e.g. 'this will ensure our survival') – an approach that has much in common with stakeholder theory, which will be discussed in more detail below.

Both legitimacy theory and corporate citizenship are contingent on variable societal expectations, which can be different over time, from society to society, and even within a particular society (with different members expecting more or

less engagement from businesses). The variability of societal expectations is particularly relevant in a global marketplace where multinational companies might need to choose between different and conflicting ethical customs and basic rules of society. Previous research has found different conceptualisations of and approaches to business ethics in geopolitical areas (for instance, Phau and Kea's (2007) comparison of Australia, Singapore, and Hong Kong). Even in 1979, Carroll noted that rules of society have changed within even one country; and some issues that were accepted or even encouraged, such as discrimination and environmentally-damaging business practices, are no longer viewed as socially or ethically acceptable. This means that theoretically, CSR best practice should be judged in context of the businesses' environments and organisations would do well to adapt a 'learning organisation' approach to CSR as well as to other aspects of their activities (Jamali 2006).

2.2.3 CSR and sustainable development

While in studies of business ethics, Carroll's (1991) 'Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility' is often used to explain the concept of CSR, in management discourses, contemporary definitions of CSR often equate the concept to 'sustainable development for business' (e.g. Henderson 2001); however, CSR and SD were not always so tightly aligned, as was discussed earlier in this chapter. Conceptually, CSR's definition (at least in mainstream management discussions) has moved away from being equated with the socially-focused concepts of corporate paternalism and philanthropy and towards a more comprehensive, sustainable development-compatible conceptualisation which focuses on economic, environmental, and social

responsibilities. Specifically, it is often defined as how a corporation voluntary takes into account its environmental and social gains and losses along with economic ones (the so-called 'triple bottom line'). This 'triple bottom line' definition of CSR is used heavily by both academics (e.g. O'Rourke 2003: 683; Moneva, *et al.* 2006: 122; Dodds and Joppe 2005: 9) and European policymakers (CEC, 2006; CEC, 2007; DTI, 2004). Thus, we have a case of an older concept ('corporate social responsibility') being redefined by a relatively new concept (sustainable development).

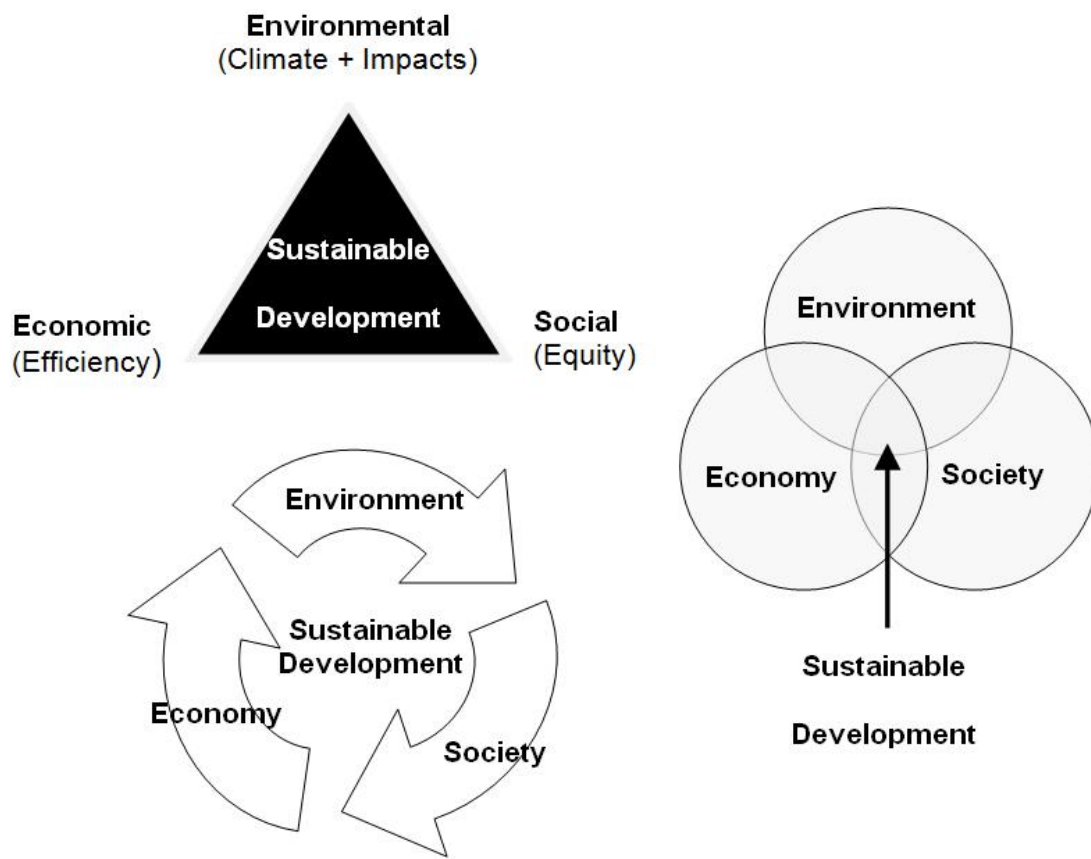
Although concepts of external stakeholders and corporate impacts on the environment and society had been a part of discourses of CSR throughout the 20th century (e.g. Carson's (1962) *Silent Spring*, Hardin's *The Tragedy of the Commons* (1968), and Schumacher's (1973) *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered*), the concept and terminology of sustainable development did not solidify until the 1980s (Holliday *et al.* 2002). Initial definitions of sustainable development focused on environmental protection in the context of economic (and occasionally, social) indicators, with almost all examples of unsustainable development relating to environmental degradation (Redcliff 1987). However, a shift in the most commonly accepted definitions of sustainable development occurred in 1987, when sustainable development was broadened to include social stability and equality thanks to the UN World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) (1987).

Against the backdrop of dissatisfaction with globalisation in many developing countries, the United Nations General Assembly established the WCED with the

aim of addressing future development through a coalition of members mainly from developing countries (Holliday *et al.* 2002). The resulting report, *Our Common Future*, defined sustainable development as ‘development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’ (WCED 1987: not paginated). Throughout the report, sustainable development was considered to be balancing environmental protection with social and economic development, which has subsequently been visualised as a balanced triangle (Najam *et al.* 2003), a Venn diagram (Parkin 2000); and as a cycle (Coles *et al.* 2009) (Figure 2.4), as well as other, more intricate diagrams (e.g. Gudmundsson and Hojer 1996). As a result, sustainable development, which had initially given disproportionate emphasis to the environment, has now been generally accepted to give equal weight to all three concerns. This trifocal definition was further solidified by the United Nation’s *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* and *Agenda 21/3*, both outcomes of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, which stressed the importance of all three concerns in successful sustainability (UN 2002).

More recently, greater efforts have been made in UN missives on sustainable development to highlight that the private sector should be encouraged to join governments and communities in efforts to implement greater sustainability. Most notably, the *Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development* (UN 2002: not paginated) states that:

Figure 2.4 Visualising sustainable development



Sources [clockwise from top left]: adapted from Najam *et al.* (2003: S13); Parkin (2000: 4); Coles *et al.* (2009: 5)

We agree that in pursuit of its legitimate activities the private sector, including both large and small companies, has a duty to contribute to the evolution of equitable and sustainable communities and societies.

And, furthermore:

We agree that there is a need for private sector corporations to enforce corporate accountability, which should take place within a transparent and stable regulatory environment.

Although not labelled specifically as ‘corporate social responsibility’ in the declaration, the idea that the private sector should be a partner in sustainable development has, in recent years, been absorbed into CSR’s definition (Henderson 2001) to the point that many definitions of CSR are virtually indistinguishable from definitions of sustainable development (e.g. O’Rourke 2003; Moneva, *et al.* 2006; Dodds and Joppe 2005). However, as Moon (2007: 297) points out, intertwining the two concepts is not without its problems; part of the difficulty in fusing them lies in the fact that neither are concretely defined, both terms are often used interchangeably, and both concepts must still justify themselves even while exploring possible application as they:

are often accused of being contradictions in terms: one assumption being that corporations are incapable of social responsibility and the other being that sustainability of the planet and its resources and integrity is incompatible with economic (and in some cases, social) development’.

Even if we accept that corporations can act ethically and that [more] sustainable development is possible, other difficulties arise in the baggage that both concepts still have not shaken – CSR is in some discourses still defined as primarily relating to *social* causes (as was discussed earlier in this chapter) while sustainable development discourses downplay economic development (business’s acknowledged primary contribution to sustainable development) in favour of environmental protection and, less often, social development. Thus, the notion that CSR is sustainable development for businesses is overly simplistic at best.

2.2.4 CSR & stakeholder theory

One of the problems in defining CSR exclusively as the 'triple bottom line' of balancing environmental, economic, and social impacts lies in the fact that such a definition ignores not only CSR's developmental background, but also one of its key modern influences: stakeholder theory. Stakeholder theory was initially formalised and popularised by R. Edward Freeman in *Strategic management: a stakeholder approach*, first published in 1984 (Freeman 2010; Philips 2003; Freeman *et al.* 2010), although the term had been used previously in relation to firm objectives (Roberts 1992). Freeman (2010: *Preface*) has claimed that the concept was originally developed to counter 'the usual distinctions between "economic" and "social", or "business" and "non business" ' used in CSR discourses. Additionally, Freeman (2010: *Preface*) has claimed that not only is the terminology suspect, but that "social responsibility" is one of those ideas that prop up a story about business that is no longer useful. [...] It is now "old hat" in many areas of business'. Freeman's alternative to conventional CSR was to adopt a new way of approaching business ethics and strategic management drawing heavily from legitimacy theory and based on the idea that organisations 'have constituencies', and furthermore 'organizations are dependent upon these constituency groups for their success' (Philips 2003: 3). Freeman (2010: iv) termed these constituents 'stakeholders' and defined them as 'any group or individual who can affect, or is affected by, the achievement of a corporation's purpose', which includes 'employees, customers, suppliers, stockholders, banks, environmentalists, government and other groups who can help or hurt the corporation'.

While stakeholder theory shares many of the same basic doctrines as sustainable development (namely, that action and inertia both have a web of impacts and that economic development affects more than just the economy), it is notably more business-focused. Like stakeholder theory, sustainable development also addresses the issues of stakeholders and stakeholder management; however it does so with a view towards broad social (i.e. equity) and environmental (i.e. mitigating climate change) goals and with a focus on creating a stable future. Stakeholder theory steers away from such aspirations. Businesses should adopt stakeholder theory as a management approach not necessarily because it will make a better world, but rather, because it is good business (Freeman *et al.* 2010).

Unlike Friedman (1970), Freeman *et al.* (2010) argue that one of the worst ways to increase profits is to focus solely on the bottom line. Instead, they advocate maximising earnings through maximising stakeholder responsiveness – that is, understanding and adjusting for the needs of customers, suppliers, employees, and external stakeholders such as governments and special interest groups. Practically, it is almost always impossible for a business to accommodate all the needs and desires of its stakeholders, and thus it has been recognised that stakeholders with the most power to affect the business should be appeased first (Roberts 1993; Bantekas 2004). However favourable this might seem from a management perspective, the ethics of downplaying the other end of the power spectrum – the stakeholders most affected by the business – are troubling, and more sustainable development and business ethics compatible implementation of stakeholder theory would be one that prioritises both

stakeholders that have the highest potential to affect the business and those that have the highest potential to be affected (e.g. Byrd 2007).

In spite of Freeman's (2010) objection to academic discourses on CSR, CSR definitions and research have largely embraced stakeholder theory. Falck and Heblich's (2007) definition of CSR was mentioned earlier in this chapter as an example of the current popularity of combining considerations relating to business ethics ('businesses should be good') with elements of stakeholder theory ('and being good is good for them'). Other stakeholder theory-influenced definitions include those used by Salzmann *et al.* (2005), Weber (2008), Ciliberti *et al.* (2008), which, although mentioning social and environmental concerns do so in the context of engaging with stakeholders and with the justification of benefiting the business, as well as society. Dahlsrud's (2008) analysis of 37 modern definitions of CSR shows how integrated stakeholder engagement has become recently. Of his five codes of CSR, the stakeholder and social dimension tied as the most referenced concepts, far exceeding the other dimensions of (in order) economic, voluntariness, and environmental. Notably, though, Dahlsrud (2008) did not specifically trace whether stakeholder engagement is viewed as an ethical or a business issue, and, in the wider sense, could be criticised for not including an ethical imperative dimension in his analysis. However, broad, quantitative research on the definitions of CSR is useful as a means to identifying the main trends in CSR conceptualisation and, as Dahlsrud (2008) exemplified, the awkward marriages of terms and concepts within and between CSR definitions.

While this study has focused on specific discourses that have contributed to modern conceptualisations of CSR, Garriga and Melé's (2004) categorisation of different approaches to CSR is also worth mentioning as an alternative approach to categorising CSR conceptualisations. Garriga and Melé's (2004) identified four groups of thought: 1) *instrumental theories* that understand CSR to be important for profits; 2) *political theories* that focus on the relative power of a business in society to enact social agendas; 3) *integrative theories* that believe that businesses ought to benefit society as the business itself is dependent upon it; and finally 4) *ethical theories* that focus on the ethical imperative for social responsibility. As in this chapter, Garriga and Melé (2004) sought to go beyond discussions of terminology and to address issues of ideology – that is, to not just list the wide range of CSR definitions, but to understand the underlying discourses that have contributed to them. In both quantitative and qualitative analyses of CSR definitions and discussions, the amalgamation of concepts that have led to current conceptualisations of CSR become apparent, and, as the resulting unions are by no means homogenous, or even complimentary, it seems that CSR could best be described not as a concept with a definition, but as an umbrella term that shelters many varied debates.

2.3 CSR and the public sector

While there has been a great deal of debate about what CSR is, there has been a general consensus about what it is not – for most commentators, mere compliance with government regulations and laws does not constitute CSR (see for instance Rodriguez and del Mar Armas Cruz 2007; Henderson 2007; Falck

and Hebllich 2007). Governments, then, at a basic level shape CSR by regulating certain activities and thereby making them mandatory and not a part of businesses' CSR. Similarly, CSR has been touted as an alternative to regulation and particularly on the supra-national level (Falck and Hebllich 2007; Fox *et al.* 2002). Governmental influence on CSR practices extends beyond laws and regulations, and the CSR shaping and influencing role of the public sector has been recognised as complex and evolving (Moon 2007).

2.3.1 The historical development of public sector approaches to CSR

The role of government in socially responsible business activities was a contentious issue throughout the twentieth century. The prevalent governmental perception of CSR in the US and Europe has evolved from discouraging any non operations-related CSR, to mandating more responsible activities, and now to governments encouraging businesses to voluntarily adopt comprehensive CSR programmes (e.g. Frynas 2005). Bolstered by the free market capitalism, largely popular in the US and UK during the beginning of the 20th century, courts and legislators alike were suspicious of corporate efforts to assert a social agenda (Jacoby 1997). One prime example in the States is the case of Henry Ford, who in 1919 was taken to court by his shareholders under charges of squandering company money for his own social goals. In the landmark decision *Dodge v. Ford Motor Company 1919*, the courts sided with the shareholders (Banerjee 2007). Interestingly private contributions by wealthy businesspeople were deemed acceptable, and at the same time as Ford was being chastised for wasting shareholders' money, philanthropic projects from successful businessmen such as Andrew Carnegie and J.D. Rockefeller were

relatively unchallenged and even applauded by policy makers and the public alike (Lagemann 1992; Wulfson 2001)—the redeeming factor being that they were financed by the individual.

However, by the 1950s, public perceptions and governmental policies were beginning to recognise that a company's impacts and importance extended beyond the narrow circle of shareholders, and by the 1970s, the argument for corporate responsibility from a public relations perspective was well established (Cochran 2007), as well as the recognition of a new phenomenon of 'social marketing' and a general acceptance that strategically managing stakeholder interactions could be an important component of financially-successful business administration (Kotler and Levy 1969; Kotler and Zaltman 1971). As CSR began to be accepted by academics, the public, and businesses as a means for both society and business to benefit (Falck and Heblich 2007), public policy began to shift away from questioning corporate philanthropy to actively encouraging businesses to implement CSR programmes. As Carroll (1991) notes, the 1970s saw the introduction of government agencies to monitor the impacts of businesses, such as the Environmental Protection Agency, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration in the United States. While many studies focus on the development of public sector involvement in CSR in the United States (Fox *et al.* 2002), the contemporary governmental interest in formally encouraging and shaping CSR has been attributed to the 'pioneer governments' of the UK, Denmark, and Australia, as well as the supranational bodies of the European Commission and the United Nations (Albareda *et al.* 2006; Fox *et al.* 2002).

As Moon (2004) has highlighted, governmental stances on CSR and private corporations' responsibilities for social and environmental concerns are complex, politically linked, and malleable. For instance, in the United Kingdom (one of the 'pioneer governments' identified by Albareda *et al.* 2006), sweeping reforms by the Conservative-led government in the 1980s greatly reduced governmental responsibility for social provisions such as pensions, training, and unemployment benefits (Moon 2004). The private sector was then encouraged to provide coverage for this social safety net gap. The UK government in the subsequent years has shown support for organisations such as Business in the Community (BITC) and the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), as well as implementing 'soft' regulation such as mandated reporting (with no additional requirements) and providing government funding of CSR research, training, and awards (Moon 2004). Recently, 'soft' CSR-related regulations have come into place – most notably Section 417 of the *Companies Act 2006* (HMG 2006), which requires quoted companies to report on environmental matters, employees, and social and community issues. However, specific measurements and indicators are not required. Notably, no CSR-related strategies have been developed since 2004, and both a dedicated, government-sponsored CSR website (csr.gov.uk) and a CSR minister seem to have been abandoned amidst governmental department restructuring in the past few years (Coles *et al.* 2009).

2.3.2 Contemporary public sector involvement in CSR in Europe

While enthusiasm for CSR encouragement has waned in some countries, such as the UK, international governmental organisations have continued to push for greater CSR practices. This interest in CSR at an international level is hardly

surprising. The multinationalism of today's corporations means that governments cannot always control corporations through legislation and expectations (Falck and Heblich 2007). Additionally, environment and social legislation and support vary widely between governments, further blurring the line between legal and illegal activities (Moon 2007). This growing internationalisation of trade and commerce has led some commentators to urge for a greater recognition of the importance of effective self-regulation (e.g. Falck and Heblich 2007), and the public sector has been recognised to be a pivotal CSR-influencing stakeholder (e.g. Fox, *et al.* 2002, Albareda, *et al.* 2006). Fox, *et al.* (2002) proposed that the public sector has four roles to play with regard to CSR: mandating, facilitating, partnering, and endorsing, and that these roles can be practiced in a range of approaches – from a 'hard' ('command and control') approach to a 'softer' approach based on penalties and rewards.

Furthermore, commentators have proposed that CSR practices are strongly influenced by the type of political system in place (e.g. Moon 2004, Albareda *et al.* 2006, Matten and Moon 2008, Gainet 2010), although the extent to which this influence impacts actual CSR practice (and not just reporting) has been questioned by Albareda *et al.*'s (2006) study of European companies in the UK and Italy.

Gainet's (2010) more recent study of the CSR of companies across the EU found that legal systems do influence some aspects of CSR uptake, as do CSR-related regulations. Companies headquartered in 'Scandinavian civil law countries' had a significantly higher assessed level of environmental reporting

than those in 'common law' and 'civil law and German civil law' countries. However, this difference between corporate reported performance in regulatory operating environments was not significant for socially-focused issues, which suggests that the 'stronger' environmental regulations in the 'Scandinavian civil law countries' (Gainet 2010) contributed to the higher levels of environmental reported performance. Gainet (2010) did not clearly distinguish between activities that were required by law and those that were voluntarily undertaken, and therefore it is impossible to say whether the higher levels of environmental performance in the Scandinavian companies was due to voluntary action (CSR) or compliance with more stringent environmental regulations (legal compliance).

Both the European Commission (EC) and the United Nations (UN) have launched appeals and strategies for encouraging their member states to take on proactive roles towards CSR implementation in the private sector. The European Commission issued a call for the encouragement of CSR in its *Green Paper: Promoting a European Framework for Corporate Social Responsibility* (CEC 2001). It has since been followed up by several revisions and reports (D-GESA 2002; CEC 2006; CEC 2011) and has led to the creation of a CSR division under the Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry. *Implementing the Partnership for Growth and Jobs: Making Europe a Pole of Excellence on Corporate Social Responsibility* (CEC 2006) was the European Commission's most recent corporate social responsibility-related strategy document when the data was being collected for this research.

In the strategy, the European Commission took a decidedly non-prescriptive stance on content of CSR reports and strategies. Instead, a course of action to encourage 'good' CSR through education of both business and consumers about environmental and social issues and to encourage 'multi-stakeholder forums' was presented (CEC 2006: 5). Specifically, this course of action led to the launch of the business-led European Alliance on CSR, which is coordinated and facilitated by three non-governmental organisations (NGOs), CSR Europe, BusinessEurope and the European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (UEAPME) (CSR Europe 2010). The European Alliance on CSR has ten priorities (Table 2.1), which include issues such as fair working conditions, ethical supply chain management, sustainability-focused product development, stakeholder engagement, employee development, socially and environmentally-conscious business practices, and transparent CSR reporting.

As was mentioned earlier in the chapter, the UN has also advocated for greater private sector contribution to sustainable development, with the most recent major call occurring in the *Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development* (UN 2002). Other initiatives include the United Nations Global Compact (UN GC), which was launched in 2000 to encourage dialogue and sharing of best practice based on ten principles focused on human rights, labour rights, environmental protection, and transparency (Cetindamar and Husoy 2007). Commentators have had mixed views on the efficacy of the UN GC, with one of the main criticisms being that companies that agree to participate are not forced to follow the UN GC principles (Cetindamar and Husoy 2007), which therefore makes UN GC membership a poor indicator of

actual CSR practices. Nevertheless, the European Commission includes the number of organisations subscribing to the UN GC as an indicator of CSR progress (CEC 2011).

Table 2.1 The European Alliance on CSR's ten priorities

1.	Fostering innovation and entrepreneurship in sustainable technologies, products and service which address societal needs
2.	Helping small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to flourish and grow
3.	Assisting enterprises to integrate social and environmental consideration in their business operations, especially those in the supply chain
4.	Improving and developing skills for employability
5.	Better responding to diversity and the challenges of equal opportunities
6.	Improving working conditions, also in cooperation with the supply chain
7.	Innovating in the environment field with a special focus on integrating eco efficiency and energy savings in the product and service creation process
8.	Enhancing proactive dialogue and engagement with all relevant stakeholders
9.	Further addressing the transparency and communication challenge to make the non-financial performance of companies and organisations more understandable for all stakeholders and better integrated with their financial performance
10.	Operating outside the borders of the European Union in a socially and environmentally responsible way as companies do inside the European Union

Source: adapted from CEC (2006: 12)

While the supranational government of the UN and European Commission have strategies to encourage public sector involvement in private sector CSR, member states in Europe have been slow to implement the suggestions – in the

ten years since the EC published its first communication on CSR, only slightly over half of the EC member states (15 out of 27) have national CSR policy frameworks (CEC 2011). Of the member states that do have formal CSR strategies, the UK and Denmark have been lauded as having especially strong systems in place (Albareda, *et al.* 2006); however, as was noted earlier in this section, many of the governance structures and support for CSR in the UK that were lauded as examples of best practice have since been dissolved or greatly reduced. At the same time, in addition to – and in many cases in place of – public sector frameworks for CSR, not-for-profit organisations' guidance has proliferated (Adams and Narayanan 2007). This guidance takes two forms: CSR consultancy (e.g. Business in the Community, CSREurope, GoodCorporation, the Business Social Compliance Initiative) and CSR-related corporate accreditations (e.g. theGoodCorporation Standard, FTSE4Good, the ISO14000).

2.4 Developing CSR within an organisation

The previous sections have focused on two external influencing factors for organisations' CSR practices: broader discourses that have contributed to contemporary conceptualisations of CSR and the public sector's evolving contribution to CSR practices. The implementation of CSR within an organisation has generated a plethora of how-to books and articles (including among others Kotler and Lee 2004; Brammer and Pavelin 2004; Mirvis and Googins 2006; Blowfield and Murray 2008; Crane, *et al.* 2008). While there are some disagreements about what constitutes 'best practice' in CSR management, whether or not CSR programmes can be expected to bring

financial rewards, and the ideal balance of concerns, most of the commentators on CSR implementation agree that strong leadership and internal stakeholder buy-in are important (e.g. Holton *et al.* 2008; Blowfield and Murray, 2008; Clarkson, 1995; Mirvis and Googins 2006; Ketola 2006), the most effective CSR programmes have clear goals and are regularly monitored (Knox and Maklan 2004; Weber 2008), and that CSR issues should be considered across the whole of the business and throughout all business activities (Mirvis and Googins 2006; Porter and Kramer 2006).

2.4.1 The role of leadership and motivation

Internal understanding and commitment to CSR have been proposed as a key differentiating factor between effective and ineffective CSR implementation (e.g. Holton *et al.* 2008; Blowfield and Murray, 2008; Clarkson, 1995; Mirvis and Googins 2006). Executive- and board-level management support for CSR has been seen as a vital component for what types of CSR-related activities are practiced and the depth of CSR implementation (Mirvis and Googins 2006, Waldman, *et al.* 2006). Studies in leadership and CSR have found that the intellectual stimulation of the CEO has more effect on the level of strategic management given to CSR within an organisation than the charisma of the CEO (Waldman, *et al.* 2006), and that CEOs who are perceived by subordinates to have high levels CSR were also perceived to be more effective and resulted in subordinates reporting higher optimism about their role in an organisation, as well as the future of the organisation as a whole (De Hoogh and Den Hartog 2008). Therefore, not only does organisational leadership affect CSR in

practice, the attitude of those in leadership to CSR would seem to have carry-on effects into the entire organisation.

Beyond improving employee morale and optimism, CSR programmes have been advanced as a 'way for both companies and society to prosper' (Falck and Heblich 2007: 247). Whether companies that strategically manage and report on their CSR practices benefit financially has been extensively debated (c.f. Muller and Kräussl 2011; Porter and Kramer 2006; Burke and Logsdon 1996), and commentators tend to focus on the secondary business benefits of actively managing CSR rather than direct impacts to a company's bottom line. Weber (2008: 248-249) broadly classified the CSR benefits to businesses as the positive effects on company image and reputation; positive effects on employees' motivation, retention and recruitment; cost savings; revenue increase from higher sales and market share; and CSR-related risk reduction or management.

For some organisations, these business benefits are a main motivating factor. For others, these benefits are a happy bonus. The differences between benefit-seeking and benefit-accepting approaches have been studied in some depth. Kramer and Kania (2006) have noted the difference between externally-motivated ('defensive') and internally-motivated ('offensive') CSR in practice. In the former, CSR is used to patch up negative impacts incurred during normal business operations and is often used as an antidote to negative public relations and public affairs. The latter is a morally-motivated attempt to have a positive impact on sustainability-related issues during, but not limited to, the

course of daily business. Similarly, Graafland and van de Ven (2006) identified 'extrinsic' and 'intrinsic' motivations for CSR practices – the former defined by a desire to financially benefit from CSR programmes and the latter defined by a perceived moral obligation to be a good corporate citizen. While, extrinsic/defensive CSR can be more targeted, it is often inefficient at completely placating negative public perceptions (Du *et al.* 2010). On the other hand, intrinsic/offensive CSR can provide insurance against negative publicity (Du *et al.* 2010, Kramer and Kania 2006), even to the point of generating positive brand image (for instance, Fair Trade), but it also could be considered resource intensive and requires full-business integration to maximise its effectiveness.

Notably, motivations for CSR are often defined by the business's conscious or unconscious understanding of the concept of CSR and the responsibilities of businesses in society (Porter and Kramer 2006). This ranges from a stakeholder theory-based approach to CSR which sees the 'good' CSR as necessarily beneficial to the business (e.g. repairing damage in the case of 'defensive' CSR or gaining financial rewards or secondary benefits in the case of 'extrinsic' CSR) to a morally-motivated business ethics approach to CSR ('offensive' and 'intrinsic' CSR) to concepts which fall in between, such as corporate citizenship understanding where businesses are motivated by the so-called 'license to operate' (Porter and Kramer 2006). As Graafland and van de Ven (2006) found, motivations for CSR, much like understandings of the concept of CSR, often occurred in tandem and that in practice, most organisations practice CSR out of a mixture of motivations and expectations.

2.4.2 Managing and communicating CSR

CSR activities that bring the most significant returns on investment tend to be closely aligned to the organisations normal business operations (such as a timber company investing in replanting trees) (Brammer and Pavelin 2004), as well as fully embedded across all business activities (Mirvis and Googins 2006; Porter and Kramer 2006). For organisations whose CSR-related activities are perceived as disingenuous, purely-self serving or poorly implemented, returns can be null, and even strongly in the negative (Becker-Olsen, *et al.* 2006; Mirvis and Googins 2006). Insurance against negative public reactions can be to: have realistic, achievable and properly researched targets (Husted 2003); have a CSR strategy that encompasses all departments and operations (Porter and Kramer 2006); monitor, evaluate, and report on CSR strategies regularly (Knox and Maklan 2004; Weber 2008); designate clear CSR champions within the organisation and foster support among senior management (Ketola 2006); and make proactive communications to all stakeholders – both internally and externally (Clark 2000; Du, *et al.* 2010).

A recognised vital component of an effective CSR programme is the nature, form, and regularity of CSR-related communications (e.g. Mirvis and Googins 2006; Clark 2000; Du, *et al.* 2010; Knox and Maklan 2004; Weber 2008). As a result, CSR communications can be a useful initial indicator of the development of a CSR programme (Du, *et al.* 2010; Blowfield and Murray 2008). Recent studies have mainly looked at communication of CSR aimed at external stakeholders, such as the advertising of cause-related marketing (Pracujes *et al.* 2003) and website communications on CSR issues (Capriotti and Moreno

2007; Esrock and Leichty 1997), or have examined forms of communication aimed at both internal and external stakeholders, such as Holton *et al.*'s (2008) research into the CSR strategies of UK construction companies; Perrini's (2005) study of corporate social and environmental reports of ninety medium to large European companies; and Rondinelli and Berry's (2000) examination of 38 large multinational corporations' environmental performance reports. Communications aimed only at internal stakeholders have largely been overlooked, possibly because of the practical problems inherent in obtaining and presenting research on documents that are not publically available.

While these studies have presented potentially useful models for assessing CSR-related communications through qualitative tables (i.e. Capriotti and Moreno 2007; Perrini 2005), current studies on CSR communications have almost universally looked at large, successful companies. The resources available to larger companies and the potential extra scrutiny their CSR may be under may mean that their communications and (possibly) even CSR implementation are better developed than smaller companies or companies in less stable industries (see for instance Gainet 2011). Studying more strategic and developed CSR can lead to a greater understanding of modern innovations in CSR practices; however, it can also mean that the practices and emerging innovations of smaller companies are overlooked and that the assessment of CSR practices across all businesses are misunderstood. Thus, there is a need for more research into CSR practices across more varied businesses and in a wider range of industries.

2.4.3 Assessing CSR and models of CSR implementation

Practitioners interested in CSR have a number of sources of guidance – from governments (as discussed in the previous section) to pressure groups to the many assessment and education programmes in between. While some available information, especially governmental guidance, is very generic and intended to be generally prescriptive of best practice across all sectors (Coles *et al.* 2009), there is a growing industry of CSR consultants offering to help companies better implement CSR based on their specific requirements (Márquez and Fombrun 2005). In addition to governmental guidance and CSR consultants, there are a number of assessment programmes also available to evaluate current CSR practices. Best practice guidance and assessment for CSR falls into five basic groups: academic models of CSR implementation; governmental guidance (mostly green papers on government-endorsed CSR best practice); indices and awards (aimed at publically evaluating current CSR practices); programmes and partnerships (aimed at increasing the robustness of current and future CSR practices through the sharing of good practice and private evaluations); and pressure groups (passionate stakeholder groups' stances on CSR practices). Notably, this 'industry of ethics' is itself virtually free from regulation and charges have been made about the rigour of some of the awards and qualifications (Dingwerth and Eichinger 2010). Furthermore, there is no consensus of what constitutes 'ideal' CSR. As Márquez and Fombrun (2005: 305) have commented, just within the CSR assessment sector, 'the proliferation of players carrying out evaluations as well as the variety of criteria they apply in judging social responsibility' has contributed to a sector whose standards are 'confusing', at best.

Table 2.2 Mirvis and Googins' Scale of Corporate Citizenship

Stage/Issue	Elementary	Engaged	Innovative	Integrated	Transforming
Strategic Intent	Legal Compliance	License to Operate	Business Case	Value Proposition	Market Creation or Social Change
Leadership	Lip Service, Out of Touch	Supporter, in the Loop	Steward, On Top of It	Champion, In Front of It	Visionary, Ahead of the Pack
Structure	Marginal, Staff Driven	Functional Ownership	Cross-Functional Coordination	Organizational Alignment	Mainstream, Business Driven
Degree of Transparency	Flank Protection	Public Relations	Public Reporting	Assurance	Full Disclosure
Issues Management	Defensive	Reactive, Policies	Responsive, Programs	Proactive Systems	Defining

(Source: adapted and abridged from Mirvis and Googins 2006: 108)

Several typologies or models of CSR integration in an organisation have been proposed, including Zadek (2004), van Marrewijk and Werre (2003), Mirvis and Googins (2006), Ketola (2006), and Dunphy, *et al.* (2003). These models present CSR development within an organisation as a linear evolution (with the exception of Ketola (2006)) although few of them agree on what constitutes the pinnacle of CSR implementation (Maon, *et al.* 2010; Lindgreen and Swaen 2011), and few of the proposed models are supported by empirical evidence (Lindgreen and Swaen 2011). Zadek's (2004) model is one of the least complex and uses five stages of organisational learning to explore shifts in organisations' broad approaches to CSR. Similarly, Ketola's (2006) model looks only at a single aspect of CSR implementation, the types of issues prioritised by organisations (which she classifies as environmental, social, and economic concerns). One of the most detailed and complex models is that proposed by Mirvis and Googins (2006) (e.g. as assessed by the meta-analyses of CSR

models conducted by Maon *et al.* 2010 and Spitzeck 2010). Their 'Scale of CSR Implementation' (Table 2.2), is notable for its juxtaposition of a broad range of CSR-related issues, from motivation ('strategic intent') to structure of implementation to the level of buy-in of the organisation's leaders. At the lowest level of internal buy-in (the 'Elementary' stage), strategies are informal and based on legislated mandates and communications are sporadic. On the other end of the spectrum, companies who practice 'Transforming' CSR ensure that sustainable development goals are important to all employees, committing their CSR programme to be both the defining characteristic of their business activities and an omnipresent ethos. CSR efforts are firmly rooted in conscientious policies and strategies, and communications are regular, thorough, and transparent. Mirvis and Googins' (2006) model is not only one of the most detailed models, it is also one of the few models that has been applied to and tested by empirical data (Maon *et al.* 2010; Googins *et al.* 2007; Spitzeck 2010; Lingenfelder and Thomas 2011; Zappala and Adams 2010).

2.5. Previous studies of CSR in travel and tourism businesses

Up until the past decade, tourism literatures have primarily looked at individual aspects of corporate social responsibility in practice, such as environmental efforts or pro-poor tourism concerns (Coles *et al.* 2013; Van de Mosselaer *et al.* 2012). Similarly, although travel and tourism have been discussed with some detail in regards to the CSR-related issues of ethics and sustainable development (e.g. Goodwin and Francis 2003; Mowforth *et al.* 2008; Spenceley 2008; Frey and George 2010), most commentators focus on the role of governments to encourage sustainable tourism development or of individual

tourists to take responsibility for their impacts. By and large, corporations' roles have largely been overlooked. Fleckenstein and Huebsch's (1999) consideration of the theoretical necessity of CSR in tourism industry, in which they conclude that the tourism industry has a moral obligation to behave ethically, is notable not so much for the ideas it presents, but for its position as one of the few examinations of CSR and tourism from a business ethics perspective.

However, research on the whole of CSR as practiced by travel and tourism businesses has increasingly received attention in the past ten years from both theoretical and empirical perspectives (Coles *et al.* 2013). This growing academic interest in CSR in the travel and tourism industry has coincided with the encouragement and endorsement of CSR by many tourism businesses, intermediaries, trade associations, lobby groups, and non-governmental organisations (Bohdanowicz and Zientara 2009; Dodds and Joppe 2005; Dodds and Kuehnel 2010; Holcomb *et al.* 2007; Kalisch 2002; Mowforth *et al.* 2008; Tepelus 2008; Van de Mosselaer *et al.* 2012; Yunis 2008). While interest in CSR research in travel and tourism businesses has increased, the knowledge base is still fragmented and less developed than in other industries since many of the studies have focused on case studies of individual businesses or specific CSR issues (such as the link between CSR management and profitability) (Coles *et al.* 2011).

Table 2.3 Articles on CSR and travel and tourism January 2000- February 2013

Tour operators	Miller (2001); Kalisch (2002); Van Wijek and Persoon (2006); Gurney and Humphreys (2006); Sigala (2008); Dodds and Joppe (2009); Graci and Dodds (2009); Dodds and Knuhnel (2010); Van de Mosselaer <i>et al.</i> (2012)
Hotels and accommodation providers	Kasim (2004a, 2004b, 2007, 2010); Bohdanowicz (2007); Bohdanowicz and Zientara (2008, 2009, 2012); Bohdanowicz <i>et al.</i> (2011); Deery <i>et al.</i> (2007); Holcomb <i>et al.</i> (2007); Garica-Rodriguez and Cruz (2007); Henderson (2007); Manaktola and Jauhari (2007); Frey and George (2010); Lee and Heo (2009); Lee and Park (2009); McGehee <i>et al.</i> (2009); Kang <i>et al.</i> (2010); Tsai <i>et al.</i> (2010); Kearins and Fryer (2011); de Grosbois (2012); Skouloudis (2012); Font <i>et al.</i> (2012); Garay and Font (2012); Gu <i>et al.</i> (2013)
Aviation	Gebel (2004); Amaeshi and Crane (2006); Gupta and Saxena (2006); Phillips (2006); Lynes and Andrachuk (2008); Tsai and Hsu (2008); Yilmaz (2008); Coles <i>et al.</i> (2009); Vourvachis (2009); Lee and Park (2010); Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois (2010); Rigby <i>et al.</i> (2011); Coles <i>et al.</i> (2011); Stoke and van der Windt (2011); Asatryan (2012)
Other hospitality	Lee and Park (2009); Jones <i>et al.</i> (2006); Williams <i>et al.</i> (2007); Whitfield and Dioko (2012)
Tourism communities	Beeton (2007, 2008); Billington <i>et al.</i> (2007); Gill (2006, 2007)
Multiple sectors	Kim and Miller (2007); Inoue and Lee (2011)
Analysis of the industry as a whole	Dodds and Joppe (2005); Yunis (2008); Goodwin <i>et al.</i> (2009); Adlwarth (2010); Coles <i>et al.</i> (2013)

Source: author

Table 2.3 provides a list of the studies on CSR in tourism and travel businesses published between January 2000 and February 2013. This list was compiled through a series of systemic searches using key words (e.g. 'hotels', 'tourism', 'travel', 'airlines', 'aviation', 'tour operators', 'corporate social responsibility', 'corporate responsibility', 'corporate citizenship') in bibliographical data bases and in Google Scholar, as well as analogue searches through tourism and CSR-related journals in the Association of Business Schools (ABS) (2010) listings. A snowballing strategy was then used by manually searching the bibliographies of the collected publications. Studies that only looked at one aspect of CSR, such as the environmental codes of conduct or charity partnerships were not included. Of the 66 publications which fit the criteria, nine analysed tour operators' CSR, 26 looked at hotels and other accommodation

providers, 15 focused on aviation businesses, five looked at tourism businesses' CSR from the perspective of communities, four dealt with other individual sectors of the tourism and travel industry (such as casinos and the conference sector), two compared two sectors, and five assessed the industry as a whole. The bulk of the research had been published in the past six years; 53 of the publications were released between 2007 and (early) 2013, and only 13 publications appeared between 2000 and 2006.

Many of these studies have focused on a single company as a case study, such as Scandinavian Airlines (Lynes and Andrachuk 2008); TUI (Sigala 2008); Scandic Hotels (Bohdanowicz and Zientara 2008, 2009), and the Hilton (Bohdanowicz 2007, Bohdanowicz *et al.* 2011). The geographical focus of research was primarily limited to individual countries, such as the United States (Kang *et al.* 2010; Lee and Heo 2009; Lee and Park 2009, 2010; McGhee *et al.* 2009; Sheldon and Park 2011), Scandinavia (Bohdanowicz 2007; Bohdanowicz and Zientara 2008, 2009, 2012; Bohdanowicz *et al.* 2011; Lynes and Andrachuk 2008) and Malaysia (Kasim 2004a, b, 2007, 2010). The list of studies was also notable for the reoccurrence of a few prolific authors (e.g. Bohdanowicz, Kasim, Lee, Dodds), which might provide some explanation for the relative lack of diversity in the geographical focus.

2.5.1 Main themes of research on CSR in travel and tourism businesses

Lindgreen and Swaen (2010) identified five broad themes in contemporary research of CSR in business and management studies: implementation,

measurement, the business case, communications, and stakeholder engagement. Of these, implementation, the business case, and stakeholder engagement were prominent in the travel and tourism discourses. Several other related themes were also present that were not included in Lindgreen and Swaen's (2010) narrowly-focused categories, namely: defining CSR, motivations for CSR, and stakeholder views on businesses' CSR practices. In many cases, the travel and tourism publications looked at two related themes in tandem, such as defining CSR along with implementation or the business case along with motivation.

The combined themes of defining and implementing CSR investigated what companies' considered to be their CSR (either explicitly or implicitly through what they reported as CSR) and the approaches they took to managing their CSR activities. These two combined themes had been afforded the most attention out of all of the themes. Studies that looked at how travel and tourism businesses defined and implemented CSR included: Bohdanowicz (2007); Bohdanowicz and Zientara (2008, 2009); Coles *et al.* (2009); Dodds and Joppe (2005); Dodds and Kuehnel (2010); Holcomb *et al.* (2007); Kalisch (2002); Lynes and Andrachuk (2008); Miller (2001); Phillips (2006); Sigala (2008); Van Wijk and Persoon (2006); Font *et al.* (2012); and Van de Mosselaer *et al.* (2012). The awareness of managers of the concept of CSR was generally found to be high across the industry (Sheldon and Park 2011; Dodds and Kuehnel 2010; Gupta and Saxena 2006), although Coles *et al.* (2009) reported that some low cost carriers seemed unsure about which activities constituted CSR in action.

A few studies (e.g. Coles *et al.* 2009; Holcomb *et al.* 2007) focused on how specific sectors (low cost carriers and hotels, respectively) defined CSR. Both noted that while businesses' formal definitions varied, their activities could be best categorised using the stakeholder theory-based understanding of CSR, which Holcomb *et al.* (2007: 468) labelled as: community, environment, marketplace, workforce, and vision and values. Another finding from this group of studies was that the environment, philanthropic engagement, and employee concerns comprised the majority of CSR activities (Sheldon and Park 2011; Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois 2010; de Grosbois 2012; Coles *et al.* 2009), although there was some variance between sectors and studies on which of the three activities were more widely practiced. This group of studies also found that travel and tourism businesses in general reported a low level of strategic CSR management, with few businesses claiming to have a dedicated CSR manager or a formal, regularly monitored CSR strategy (Sheldon and Park 2011; Dodds and Kuehnel 2010), although there were some individual case studies of businesses with more strategic CSR management (Bohdanowicz 2007; Bohdanowicz *et al.* 2011; Bohdanowicz and Zientara 2008, 2009; Sigala 2008; Lynes and Andrachuk 2008). Font *et al.*'s (2012) analysis of ten international hotel groups found that larger hotel groups had a greater range of CSR activities, but also seemed to have a gap between reporting and actual performance, while the smaller hotel groups predominantly focused on the environmental aspects of CSR and had less of a reporting-performance gap.

The second combined strand of motivation and business case looked at why firms choose to practice CSR and the benefits they receive for their activities. The studies that primarily focused on these two themes were: Garcia-Rodriguez and del Mar Armas Cruz (2007); Graci and Dodds (2009); Kang *et al.* (2010); Lee and Heo (2009); Lee and Park (2009, 2010); Nicolau (2008); Tsai *et al.* (2010); Garay and Font (2012); and Whitfield and Dioko (2012). This group of publications contained the most quantitative approaches and many of these studies relied on a variety of numerical models to assess CSR impacts. The link between financial performance and CSR management was inconclusive in the body of studies, with some publications (e.g. Garcia-Rodriguez and del Mar Armas Cruz (2007); Nicolau (2008); Lee and Park (2009)) reporting that high levels of strategic CSR management led to financial returns, while others (e.g. Lee and Park 2010; Kang *et al.* 2010; Inoue and Lee 2011; Lee and Heo 2009) reported that the link between CSR and financial performance was complex and often unpredictable. Kang *et al.*'s (2010) provides a good example of the complexity of some of the findings. They reported that for hotels and restaurants, some CSR activities had a positive impact on the long-term 'firm' value, but not on profitability. Meanwhile, they found that casinos' CSR activities appeared to have no impact on short-term profitability and long-term value and that airlines' CSR activities seemed to have a negative impact on both short-term profitability and long-term value. This suggests that the financial benefits for CSR-practicing firms are highly sector-dependent. The impact on businesses' bottom line was not the only reported impact of and motivating factor for CSR activities found by the studies. Tsai *et al.* (2010) concluded that competitive advantage created through improved image was the main justification for CSR activities for hotels and modest improvements in supply

chains, employee management and philanthropic engagements could deliver increases in competitive advantages. Other reported advantages to tourism businesses that actively managed their CSR activities included cost savings (Kasim 2004a, 2004b, 2010) and employee relations and recruitment (Deery *et al.* 2007; Bohdanowicz and Zientara 2008, 2009). Potential negative secondary impacts due to CSR activities and reporting were not widely considered, although Coles *et al.* (2009) noted that some airline managers did not report all of their airlines' CSR activities out of concern for potential stakeholder backlash.

The final two related themes were stakeholder engagement and stakeholder views on companies' CSR. These studies consider the CSR-motivated relationships of businesses with their stakeholders and the perceptions of those relationships by the stakeholders. The studies in this group included: Beeton (2007, 2008); Billington *et al.* (2007); Gill (2007); Henderson (2007); Tepelus (2008a, 2008b); Williams *et al.* (2007); and Coles *et al.* (2011). Williams *et al.* (2007) demonstrates the potential for strategic CSR to help a tourism business obtain a social 'license to operate' in the case of a Canadian ski resort. However, the societal expectations of tourism businesses can vary widely, even within a country, as was found by Coles *et al.*'s (2011) study of the perceived CSR of low cost carriers in UK regions. Billington *et al.* (2007) and Tepelus (2008a, 2008b) reported high levels of influence of non-regulatory external stakeholders on how businesses implement CSR by looking at a local Tourism Council and global action groups against sex tourism and human trafficking, respectively. In terms of businesses' efforts to engage with stakeholders, Henderson (2007) investigated hotel companies' responses to the 2004 tsunami

in Phuket, Thailand, which they considered to be part of their CSR. However, she found tensions between their commercial and philanthropic activities. The issues of stakeholder engagement were the least explored in the set of publications, which seems to be an especially relevant gap considering the supposed stakeholder-focused concerns of CSR and the argument that CSR can be a viable way to meet stakeholder needs without imposing regulations.

2.5.2 Main findings of previous research on airlines' CSR

Research on the CSR practices in the aviation industry has increased over the past ten years, and aviation-related publications were the second largest group identified in Table 2.3 (above) with 15 studies looking specifically at aviation-related CSR. In spite of this, the number of studies on airlines' CSR was still far from extensive – only 13 publications focused fully or partially on airlines (the other two in the group investigated CSR efforts of airports). Table 2.4 (below) lists the airline-relevant publications along with a short summary of their findings. Like the whole body of research on CSR in travel and tourism, the publications on the CSR of airlines focused on: defining and implementing CSR, the business case and motivation for CSR, and CSR and stakeholder management, although again, the former two pairs of themes were favoured over the latter pair. Some of the studies on airlines' CSR have already been briefly discussed in the previous section; however, this section will take an even closer look at the current knowledge base of the CSR of airlines, and the following section will review the methods of these studies.

Table 2.4 Previous findings of research on CSR and airlines

Publication	Main findings
Gebel (2004)	Main sustainability issues reported by airline managers were local air and noise pollution and the impact of emissions. The main reported value drivers were 'licence to operate' and 'eco-efficiency'. The value drivers' significance was impacted by business model, size, and the airlines' home culture.
Gupta and Saxena (2006)	Interviews with airline managers in India on CSR were compared with interviews with the public. While the managers reported a positive attitude to and commitment for CSR, the public was unaware of any of the airlines' practices and initiatives. Better implementation, communication, and funding of CSR programmes was recommended.
Phillips (2006)	Sector-wide overview of some of the CSR activities by aviation businesses. Some of the aviation businesses equated legal compliance with CSR. A high level of employee volunteering and corporate philanthropy was found, as well as motivations that went beyond pure profit-focus.
Lynes and Andrachuk (2008)	Case study of Scandinavian Airlines (SAS). A model was proposed to assess the motivations for strategic CSR management and then applied to interviews with SAS managers. A high level of cultural pressures and influence on the airline's CSR approach was found, especially for environmental issues. Social issues were seen to be also influenced by internal leadership.
Tsai and Hsu (2008)	A hybrid model for selecting CSR programme activities and focuses was proposed, using China Airlines as an example. The model uses cost assessment, 'trial and evaluation laboratory methods, analytical network processes and zero-one goal programming' (188).
Yilmaz (2008)	A 'corporate sustainability model' was proposed in order to implement a CSR programme that takes into account financial, operational, ecological and social goals.
Coles et al. (2009)	An analysis of the public reporting of low cost carriers coupled with manager interviews found a low level of CSR strategic management and reporting. The LCCs did report on individual issues, particularly environmental concerns; however, strategies and policies were not common.
Lee and Park (2010)	The link between financial and value performance and CSR performance (as assessed by KLD rating scores) was analysed using three models. A degree of correlation was found between CSR performance and value performance, but only using a linear model. No statistically significant correlation was found between finance performance and CSR management.
Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois (2010)	Analysis of 14 CSR reports found a focus on environmental issues that was much stronger than the focus on social or economic issues. Seven major environmental themes were identified and the most common theme was 'emission reduction programmes'. The main social themes were employee wellbeing and engagement, diversity and social equity, community wellbeing. The predominant economic theme was economic prosperity.
Vourvachis (2009)	Analysis of the CSR reporting of five airlines that experienced major accidents. An increase in CSR reporting was found after the accidents. The research postulated that CSR behaviours were externally driven and motivated by image management and profitability. There was a difference between CSR reporting in annual reports and in stand-alone CSR reports.
Coles et al. (2011)	Focus groups were conducted to assess stakeholders' perceptions and expectations of the CSR of low cost carriers. Although stakeholder expectations varied between regions, all of the stakeholders viewed LCCs' role in regional development as a key part of their CSR.
Rigby et al. (2011)	Interview-based study on the views of Air New Zealand staff to Māori culture. The findings are that staff view Māori culture as positive and as a desirable aspect of Air New Zealand's identity.
Asatryan (2012)	Survey-based study of customers' views of airlines' CSR. Airline customers reported valuing CSR management. There was a marginally significant positive association between perceived CSR and behavioural and attitudinal loyalty; however, overall, customers reported disappointment with the current level of strategic CSR management by airlines.

Source: author

The studies that focused primarily on defining and implementing CSR were Gebel (2004); Phillips (2006); Tsai and Hsu (2008); Coles *et al.* (2009); Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois (2010); and Yilmaz (2008); and as a secondary consideration by Vourvachis (2009) and Lynes and Andrachuk (2008). In terms of defining what considerations are considered by the airlines to be a part of their CSR, the studies agreed that environmental issues have been given more consideration and investment than other CSR-related issues. This environmental-focus was evident both in airlines' public reporting of their CSR efforts (Coles *et al.* 2009; Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois 2010) and in interviews with internal stakeholders (Gebel 2004; Coles *et al.* 2009). Of the environmental issues, reducing and mitigating emissions was identified as a key concern (Coles *et al.* 2009; Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois 2010; Gebel 2004). Other environmental concerns that airlines considered to be part of their CSR were: mitigating noise pollution, waste and recycling, reducing energy consumption, reducing water use, and involvement in environmental conservation projects (Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois 2010; also, Coles *et al.* 2009).

Internal and external stakeholder-focused aspects of CSR also were found to be practiced by the airlines by some of the studies, and examples of what airlines consider to be part of their CSR included: employee wellbeing and engagement (Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois 2010; Coles *et al.* 2009; Phillips 2006); diversity and social equity (Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois 2010); general economic prosperity (Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois 2010; Coles *et al.*

2009); community wellbeing (Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois 2010; Coles *et al.* 2009); and philanthropic engagement and giving (Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois 2010; Coles *et al.* 2009; Phillips 2006, *see also* Fenclova and Coles 2011). Notably, Vourvachis (2009) found that safety was considered to be a major CSR-related consideration. Phillips (2006) and Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois (2010) noted the close – and sometimes blurry – relationship between what airlines are legally required to do and what they consider to be their CSR, and Phillips (2006) claimed that many airlines in his experience equated legal compliance with CSR.

Implementation and management of CSR within the airline industry was found to be sporadic (Coles *et al.* 2009; Gebel 2004; Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois 2010). Only a few of the low cost carriers' researched by Coles *et al.* (2009) had a dedicated CSR manager and the management level of CSR issues by the airlines in the study was found to be 'elementary' or, at best, 'engaged' on Mirvis and Googins' (2006) 'Scale of Corporate Citizenship' (which was described in more detail earlier in this chapter). Similar information was not available for other airline business model types, although Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois (2010) looked for measurement indicators for the reported CSR concerns of their sample of full service carriers and found that measured, strategic management of CSR issues was mostly only reported for environmental issues. Additionally, of the 41 international airlines initially included in their sample, only 14 published annual CSR reports. Other reporting avenues might return more information, as Coles *et al.* (2009) found that CSR issues were often communicated through more than just CSR reports (including

annual reports, websites, and occasionally press releases) and Vourvachis (2009) suggested that airlines reported took different approaches to communicating CSR based on which reporting avenue they used. In spite of the low levels of strategic management that were found across the sector, Lynes and Andrachuk (2008) reported a case study of strategic CSR management at SAS, and Vourvachis's (2009) PhD identified high levels of CSR reporting in five airlines, which indicates that there are some examples of good practice.

For CSR programme selection, Tsai and Hsu (2008) proposed a financial benefits-motivated model and tested it using interviews with managers from China Airlines. They concluded that in the case of China Airlines, the most financially-strategic CSR activities would be: 'fuel and resources efficiency'; 'safety design in transportation and service process'; 'financial report transparency'; 'community voluntary work support'; 'charitable and philanthropic offerings'; and 'taking account of consumer interests and rights'. Yilmaz (2008) also proposed model for CSR implementation, which was based on qualitative assessment rather than the quantitative approach favoured by Tsai and Hsu (2008). Yilmaz's (2008) basic six-step plan for instituting a CSR programme included considerations for risk assessment and management, stakeholder management, and sustainable development issues. No case study was provided and additional assessment of the applicability and usefulness of Yilmaz's (2008) model has not yet been published.

Motivations and business benefits of CSR were covered by Lynes and Andrachuk (2008); Lee and Park (2010); and Vourvachis (2009); and as a

secondary consideration of research by Gebel (2004); Phillips (2006); Tsai and Hsu (2008); and Cowper-Smith and de Groisbos (2010). The link between CSR activities and financial benefits was studied by Lee and Park (2010) in their analysis of seven US-based airlines. A statistically-significant positive relationship was found between CSR engagement and the financial performance of the airlines, although this relationship was only found with a linear test and not with the quadratic and cubic tests, which Lee and Park (2010) interpreted to mean that either the levels of strategic CSR management in the sample were suboptimal or that the market valued *some* CSR activity, but was less concerned about the depth of implementation.

Lee and Park (2010) provide a relevant perspective to a key CSR concern; however, Lynes and Andrachuk (2008), Vourvachis (2009); Phillips (2006), Gebel (2004), and Coles *et al.* (2009) have all reported that anticipated financial rewards are not the only motivations for airlines' CSR programmes. Vourvachis's (2009) study of the CSR reporting of five airlines before and after they experienced a major disaster found that along with financial concerns, the airlines used CSR reporting as an image building and management tool. An even more focused and nuanced assessment of possible motivating factors was provided by Lynes and Andrachuk (2008). In their case study of SAS, they found that environmental efforts were primarily driven by financial concerns, although a desire to delay or avoid regulatory action, a perceived competitive advantage, a desire to be 'good corporate citizens, stakeholder pressures, and image management concerns were also motivating factors. For internal and external stakeholder-related CSR activities, the main motivating factors were a

desire to be 'good corporate citizens', image management concerns, and stakeholder pressures. Furthermore, they identified what they called 'catalysts' which provided crucial impetus for the CSR activities. For environmental efforts, these catalysts were the ideals of internal leadership, the surrounding Scandinavian cultural values, and SAS's financial position. For the internal and external stakeholder-related issues, Scandinavian cultural values were the only identified catalyst. While external stakeholders can provide the impetus for CSR activities and communication, Coles *et al.* (2009) found that some of the low cost carriers included in the study confided that CSR efforts were sometime not made public for fear of stakeholder backlash. Similarly, while financial position could aide CSR management, Coles *et al.* (2009) also found that a lack of financial resources was one of the main hindrances to more thorough CSR management.

Stakeholder engagement and views in relation to airlines' CSR were assessed by: Gupta and Saxena (2006); Coles *et al.* (2011); Rigby *et al.* (2011); Asatryan (2012); and internal stakeholder views were discussed as part of Phillips (2006); Lynes and Andrachuk (2008); and Tsai and Hsu (2008). This group was the smallest and most diverse, being comprised of several location- and stakeholder-specific studies. Gupta and Saxena (2006) compared the awareness of CSR of two large airlines flying into India with the Indian public's awareness of CSR. They found a high level of CSR enthusiasm and awareness among airline managers from two airlines, but and a very low level of awareness of the airlines' CSR activities among the general public. In a European context, Asatryan (2012) found that the general public had higher

levels of awareness of the CSR efforts of European airlines than was found in Gupta and Saxena's (2006) study, although the interviewed members of the public also expressed dissatisfaction with the airlines' efforts. Coles *et al.* (2011) found that the CSR-related expectations of the public varied considerably – even between regions within a single country – in their study of the views of regional stakeholders in the UK of the CSR of low cost carriers. In Scotland, a transport-disadvantaged region, the stakeholders expressed the view that the main CSR of airlines was to keep flying and by doing so, encouraging economic growth. In Northern Ireland, however, stakeholders expressed the belief that the main CSR of low cost carriers was to encourage and enable social cohesion. Social cohesion was also a matter of interest for Rigby *et al.* (2011) who found that internal stakeholders viewed Air New Zealand's CSR-inspired engagement with Māori culture and identity as positive. The internal stakeholders reported that Air New Zealand's approach strengthened their satisfaction and self-image.

Other related studies that did not deal specifically with CSR, but nonetheless had relevant findings on related issues were: Miles and Mangold (2005); Heracleous and Wirtz (2009); Hooper and Greenall (2005); Lynes and Dredge (2006); Chan and Mak (2006); Mak *et al.* (2007); and Mak and Chan (2007). Miles and Mangold (2005) and Heracleous and Wirtz (2009) both had findings that related to the internal stakeholder-related aspects of airlines' CSR. Both studies used qualitative analysis to investigate how Southwest Airlines and Singapore Airlines (respectively) sought to establish a competitive advantage through activities that were not clearly related to direct financial returns, though CSR-labelled activities are only mentioned briefly. Nevertheless, both studies

found that internal stakeholder engagement through communication and training had positive business benefits.

The other five CSR-related studies looked solely at the environmental dimension of airlines' CSR. Lynes and Dredge (2006) appears to be a precursor to Lynes and Andrachuk (2008) in that it also focused on a single airline – again, SAS – through an internal stakeholder-based approach. However, unlike Lynes and Andrachuk (2008), Lynes and Dredge (2006) covered only the environmental approach of SAS. Nonetheless, the findings of both studies are similar: Lynes and Dredge (2006) identified Scandinavian cultural values, internal leadership in the form of CSR champions, and a desire for 'eco-efficiency' were the primary motivating factors for SAS's environmental management. The environmental reports of European and Asian airlines were assessed and compared by Mak, *et al* (2007: 46), who found that 'only eight European-based airlines and four Asia-Pacific-based airlines published standalone environmental reports on a continuous basis'. From their perspective, the common elements in most of the reports were promising, although the differences of definitions of fuel efficiency and environmental performance made thorough comparisons of airlines' claims of environmental responsibility difficult. Similarly, Hooper and Greenall's (2005) study of the environmental reports of members of IATA found that reporting was not extensive and that the differences in reporting and measurements between airlines strongly limited any quantitative sector-wide study.

2.5.3 Methods and limitations of previous studies on airlines' CSR

Alongside a detailed analysis of the findings of previous studies on the CSR of airlines, a careful consideration of the methods employed by relevant previous research was also conducted. The focus of the review on previous approaches to studying the CSR of airlines was on analytical techniques, research structure, and data sets, and the lessons drawn from it were used both in the research methods selection and in the application of those methods. Since only thirteen recent (post-2000) studies specifically looked at airlines' CSR practices (Table 2.5), recent studies of airlines' environmental reporting were also closely analysed for examples of best practice (Table 2.6). Even when both environmental and CSR communications were included, only 18 recent, peer-reviewed studies were identified (five of which dealt solely with environmental reports), which suggests a limited breadth of study. The previous studies used a range of approaches, from qualitative (six studies) to a mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches (six studies) to only quantitative (five studies). One article, Yilmaz (2008) assessed airlines' CSR practices from a purely theoretical approach, explaining how a corporate sustainability model could be applied to airlines' CSR programme choices. Models were also used by Chan and Mak (2006), Mak and Chan (2007), Mak *et al.* (2007) and Tsai and Hsu (2008), who utilised quantitative-based models to assess the value of CSR/environmental efforts.

Table 2.5 Methods of previous studies on airlines and CSR

Study	Qualitative	Quantitative	Method	Analytic technique	Data	Sample
Gebel (2004)	X		Semi-structured interviews	Empirical	50 interviews, 60 surveys	13 'major' airlines, 18 external stakeholders
Gupta and Saxena (2006)		X	Structured questionnaires	Statistical hypotheses testing with t-test	6 manager questionnaires, 100 general public questionnaires	2 Indian airlines, 100 members of the public
Philips (2006)	X	X	Case studies	Content analysis	Unspecified publically-available communications	125 US airlines and aircraft manufacturers
Lynes and Andrachuk (2008)	X	X	Not stated	Content analysis	32 interviews, unspecified secondary documents	Scandinavian Airlines
Tsai and Hsu (2008)		X	Researcher-administrated surveys	Analytic network process	35 manager interviews	China Airlines
Coles <i>et al.</i> (2009)	X		Semi-structured interviews, document analysis	Grounded theory, content analysis	13 manager interviews, an unspecified number of webpages, annual reports, press releases	22 European low cost carriers with at least one UK destination
Lee and Park (2010)		X	Application of a model	Multiple regression analysis	KLD rating scores, financial data	7 US airlines
Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois (2010)	X*		Framework of CSR themes	Content analysis	14 CSR reports	14 international airlines
Vourvachis (2009)	X	X	Case studies	Content analysis	Annual reports and CSR reports	5 international airlines
Yilmaz (2008)	-		Theoretical model	N/A	Proposed model	None
Coles <i>et al.</i> (2011)	X		Focus groups	Empirical analysis	Transcripts and participant-created materials	20 airline stakeholders
Rigby <i>et al.</i> (2011)		X	Survey, semi-structured interviews	Empirical analysis	Unspecified number of surveys and interviews	Unspecified number of Air New Zealand employees
Asatryan (2012)		X	Structured questionnaire survey	Hierarchical regression analysis	130 questionnaires	130 business managers
*Professed to be qualitative, though primarily reported quantitatively						

Source: author

Table 2.6 Methods of previous studies on airlines and environmental reports

Study	Qualitative	Quantitative	Method	Analytic technique	Data	Sample Selection
Hooper and Greenall (2005)	X		Survey, secondary data	Framework analysis	86 survey responses 55 environmental reports	IATA members
Lynes and Dredge (2006)	X		Semi-structured interviews	Empirical analysis	27 interviews	27 stakeholders and employees of SAS
Chan and Mak (2006)	X	X	Empirical, based on a model	Content analysis	Unspecified number of environmental reports	23 Asia Pacific-based airlines
Mak and Chan (2007)	X	X	Empirical, based on a model	Content analysis	Unspecified number of environmental reports	3 Japan-based airlines
Mak et al. (2007)	X	X	Empirical, based on models	Content analysis	Unspecified number of websites	33 international airlines

Source: author

At times, the reporting of the overall research technique was unclear; for instance, Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois (2010) reported taking a qualitative approach to content analysis. However, their analysis was heavily based on numerical indicators, indicative of an overall trend of quantizing qualitative reporting (Sandelowski, *et al.* 2009). Many of the recent studies of CSR and airlines have used a form of content analysis that employed some quantitative measures (such as word counts (Vourvachis 2009)), but predominately used qualitative techniques (such as exploring types of charity involvement (Philips

2006)). Other interesting characteristics of previous research on CSR and airlines is the relative lack of cohesion – aims ranged from efforts to develop models for managers to best select and develop CSR programmes (Tsai and Hsu 2008; Yilmaz 2008) to case studies as explanations for CSR involvement (Lynes and Dredge 2006; Lynes and Andrachuk 2008) to the analysis of the role of CSR communications for public relations management (Vourvachis 2009). Similarly, sampling techniques varied widely, and, although the studies almost exclusively had small samples, they ranged from single company case studies (Tsai and Hsu 2008; Lynes and Dredge 2006; Lynes and Andrachuk 2008) and small case study groups (Vourvachis 2006) to the 41 airlines studied by Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois (2010). Philips (2006) had the largest sample size of 125 companies, though notably these included both airlines and aircraft manufacturers and the exact sampling and distribution of the sample were not discussed.

In general, the studies did not give detailed descriptions of the methods used (e.g. Philips (2006)). Therefore, this study had a somewhat diffuse and disparate heritage of research – on the one hand CSR has been widely researched in other sectors from a variety of perspectives and using a wide range of methods and samples; on the other hand, research on airlines' CSR has been very limited and no clear consensus has yet been formed on definitions, approaches, aims, or methods (though content analysis seems to be favoured among the limited number of studies to date). Arguably, it is the wide variance of approaches and views that are generating a wider and deeper

understanding of corporations' socially responsible activities, and this variety is a feature, not a bug, of research on complex concepts.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter is the first of two chapters examining the theoretical and practical background to this study. In this chapter, the theoretical background of CSR was explored, beginning with the difficulties in identifying a single definition – or even single discourse – of CSR. Four main academic discourses were identified as having contributed to contemporary understandings of CSR, namely: corporate philanthropy, business ethics, sustainability, and stakeholder theory. Notably, the strength of influence given to each of these discourses varies considerably between individual discussions on CSR. Therefore, a Venn diagram-based visualisation of contemporary CSR conceptualisations was proposed which illustrated that understandings of CSR are often constructed where two, three, or possibly all four of the discourses meet. This variance in defining and understanding CSR was identified as a key challenge in researching CSR.

Next, the relationship between governments and CSR was explored. The voluntary action which is a vital component of most definitions of CSR (Dahlsrud 2008) means that governments cannot, by definition, mandate specific CSR actions since once the actions are mandated, they are no longer technically 'corporate social responsibility'. Furthermore, CSR is often touted as an ideal alternative to regulation (Falck and Heblich 2007; Fox *et al.* 2002), which allows

businesses to prove that they deserve a 'license to operate'. Both the European Union and the United Nations have implemented what Moon (2004) termed as 'soft' measures to encourage voluntary active CSR management (as opposed to 'hard' regulatory measures) (CEC 2001, 2006, 2011; UN 2002). The sector-specific 'hard' and 'soft' pressures exerted on European airlines will be considered in the next section, and the reportedly strong role of governmental regulators and bodies on the sample's CSR understandings and practices will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

Chapter 2 also discussed discourses and studies on CSR in practice, which included an overview of seminal and current studies on the implementation and development of CSR in an organisation. There is no single consensus on what constitutes CSR best practice, although Ketola (2006) has argued that the best practice approach to implementing CSR consists of a balanced 'triple bottom line', where environmental, social, and economic concerns are given equal weight. Mirvis and Googin's (2006) Stages of Corporate Citizenship take a more nuanced view of CSR management, which considers the role of leadership, communication, motivation and intent, and management and monitoring in the successful implementation of 'ideal' CSR. Their model was identified as a potentially useful analytical tool for assessing multiple aspects of CSR (Maon *et al.* 2010), and some aspects of it were used in the analysis presented in Chapter 7.

Previous studies on CSR issues and the travel and tourism industry were reviewed. While research on CSR in the travel and tourism industry has

increased in the past decade, there is still a significant knowledge gap. Research of the industry as a whole has looked at: defining and implementing CSR; the business case and motivation for CSR; and CSR and stakeholder management. Individual studies have looked at one or, in a few cases, two of these three issues. Most of the studies have used small sample sizes, choosing to focus on case studies and limited groups. Furthermore, the focus of research has been primarily on businesses that actively manage and regularly communicated their CSR. These same gaps were also present in the subgroup of CSR studies of airlines. Only 13 studies of the CSR practices, approaches, and understandings of airlines have been published in the past twelve years, and they have predominately used small sample sizes and investigated only a limited aspect of CSR in practice. As with the wider body of knowledge of industry-wide practices, CSR studies of airlines would benefit from more cohesive studies with larger samples sizes that investigate multiple CSR-related issues. Such studies would provide a stronger knowledge base and would help direct what is currently developing into a scattered and disjointed collection of studies.

From this chapter, four main conclusions can be drawn with regards to creating studies of CSR: a comprehensive study should embrace the many and varied definitions, schools of thought, and approaches to CSR; a comprehensive study should explore the different levels and types of CSR practices; company-produced communications on CSR practices can give a solid insight into the goals for and depth of CSR implementation; and there is currently a lack of

understanding of the CSR practices of smaller companies and companies in some industries, such as travel and tourism.

3 Background

The European passenger aviation sector

3.1 Introduction

'Air transport is a small industry that makes a lot of noise', lamented government and industry consultant Stephen Wheatcroft nearly fifty years ago (1964:13), clarifying that this noise creation happened both literally through noise pollution and more metaphorically in public discourses. He further charged that:

[n]o industry has the right, on behalf of its own customers, to make the lives of other people intolerable. [...] Air transport has developed in such a constant blare of publicity that it often appears to suffer from delusions of grandeur.

Air transport is no longer considered a small industry, carrying approximately 2.8 billion passengers over 5.2 trillion kilometres, directly employing 8.36 million people, and generating a revenues of nearly \$600 billion in 2011 (IATA 2012). Furthermore, the tourism industry is highly dependent on air transport, with an estimated 51% of international tourism activities reliant on aviation (IATA 2012). The rapid growth of the aviation industry is often ascribed to the partial

deregulation of it, which in turn lead to greater growth and innovation (e.g. Vietor 1990; Doganis 2006; Starkie 2008; Lawton 1999). Importantly, deregulation allowed for low cost carriers to flourish, which, in turn, fuelled demand by making air travel affordable for a much wider consumer base (e.g. Groß and Schröder 2007; Franke 2004; Dobruszkes 2006; Doganis 2006).

As the size of the airline sector has increased, so, too have the charges of irresponsibility, excessive impacts, and disproportionate sense of entitlement (Gibbons 2008; Mann 2004; Sinclair 2007). Some commentators have gone as far as to question whether airlines – and low cost carriers in particular – have a place in a sustainable future (Hooper *et al.* 2005). Issues of carbon emissions, noise creation, safety and security, staff working conditions, and social impacts have become key public relations and public affairs concerns for airlines (Shaw 2007; Duval 2012). Governments and regulatory bodies have implemented new regulatory measures aimed at these social and environmental issues (Philips 2006; Doganis 2006; Dobruszkes 2006), with the most notable example in Europe being the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) (DLR 2011; Aldred 2012). However, the airline sector has argued that such regulations are far from ideal and that the sector is capable of self-regulation and responsible governance (IATA 2007; Gossling and Peeters 2007; Coles *et al.* 2009, 2011). As will be discussed in more detail in this chapter, modern airlines are increasingly touting voluntary responsibility as an alternative to mandated responsibility, and actively communicating CSR would seem to be especially important for airlines' strategic public relations and public affairs management.

This chapter will cover the complex contemporary operating environment of the sampled airlines. As Lynes and Andrachuk (2008) noted, studies of CSR need to take into account the 'systems of influence' on a business's CSR. This chapter will cover the operating environment and composition of the European passenger aviation sector and key issues. First, the shift in public and governmental expectations from seeing airlines as providing a public service and national pride to expecting airlines to justify their future existence will be explored. Next, this chapter will cover current regulatory pressures and contemporary issues for European airlines, with special attention to EU-ETS and CSR-relevant issues. The two main airline business models operating in the European Union, full service and low cost, will be discussed in detail which will further clarify the business model-focus of Objective 6. Finally, this chapter will review the CSR issues and discourses that are relevant to contemporary CSR practices of European airlines.

3.2 CSR-related issues for the European aviation sector in the 21st century

Contemporary European airlines face a number of CSR-related issues: from governmental and public concerns about their environmental impacts to the dissatisfaction of their internal stakeholders to debates about their contribution to wider societal sustainable development goals (Coles *et al.* 2009; Gerike 2007; Bjelicic 2007). In addition, a large number of European airlines are failing to achieve even the most basic level of Carroll's (1991) 'Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility' of being economically viable (Doganis 2011; Franke and John 2011; Coles *et al.* 2009). IATA (2013: 1) reported that, in keeping with the overall trend for the past decade, over the course of this research (2009-2012),

European airlines as a whole struggled to generate profits, with the highest net profits over that period only reaching \$1.9 billion (2010) and the least profitable year resulting in a loss of \$4.3 billion (2009).

The 21st century has been especially difficult for airlines; and the airline industry as a whole has been facing the most prolonged period of financial crisis since deregulation (Doganis 2011, 2006, 2002; Franke and John 2011). Several factors have contributed to this dark decade for airlines. Rising fuel prices, coupled with over-capacity and increased competition, put pressure on profits even before the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 (Shaw 2007; Doganis 2002). The subsequent wars in both Afghanistan and Iraq have resulted in further rises in fuel prices resulting in both tighter margins for airlines and less attractive prices for consumers (Shaw 2007; Franke and John 2011). Additionally, some commentators have argued that airlines, due to their 'flag carrier' past, are more likely to be targeted by sectarian terrorists, further decreasing both consumer and insurer confidence (Shaw 2007). At the same time, however, efforts to decrease the chances of successful security breaches are also impacting airlines, demanding greater turn-around times and adding complexity to an industry where effectiveness is strongly tied to financial performance (Sullivan-Taylor and Wilson 2009). Additionally, large-scale disasters, most notably the eruption of the Icelandic volcano Eyjafjallajökull in April 2010 have put further financial strain on airlines, with the closure of much of the UK and northern Europe's airspace due to concerns over volcanic ash resulting in an estimated \$1.7 billion in lost revenue (Budd *et al.* 2011).

Along with fuel prices and increased security issues, the nature of the contemporary passenger aviation sector is characterised by a great deal of economic uncertainty (Duval 2007; Doganis 2011). This is due partially to high start up costs and the large percentage of capital that must be invested in buying and maintaining aircraft (at least in the traditional airline business model) (Doganis 2006). Additionally, although the impacts of the global recession at the end of the first decade of the 21st century have not yet been fully analysed, the positive correlation between gross domestic product (GDP) and revenue passenger kilometres (RPK) has been tracked extensively (Hanlon 2007), and future assessments of the past decade are likely to show a strongly negative trend in global airline revenue. Furthermore, increased competition between airlines -and even in some operating environments, between airlines and other modes of transport such as high speed rail – threatens to make operating margins even smaller (Duval 2007; Doganis 2006). In an effort to improve their operating margins, many airlines have turned to technological advances to limit costs, from buying more fuel efficient aircraft to soliciting sales directly with customers through online booking systems to reducing airport staff through e-check in, either online or through kiosks at the airport (Doganis 2006). Additionally, there has been a ‘blurring’ of the traditional business models as many full service carriers have adopting practices that are characteristic of a low cost business model (e.g. charging for luggage and meals on board) (Duval 2007) (this will be discussed in more detail in Section 3.3).

The air transport industry has recently come under increased scrutiny for its environmental impacts and possible contribution to climate change (Mann 2004;

Gibbons 2008; Duval 2006). The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) estimated in 1992 that aviation accounted for at least 2% of all anthropogenic carbon emissions worldwide, with predictions that emissions would continue to increase (IPCC 1999). Other analyses of airlines' environmental impacts have attributed 3% of global anthropogenic greenhouse gases (Gössling and Upham 2009). Along with governmental concerns about airlines' emissions, the general public has also been heavily critical of airlines' contribution to noise pollution (Coles, *et al.* 2011; Graham and Shaw 2008), and popular press discourses on airlines and their impacts in the past ten years are notable for both their frequency and their vehemence (Cohen *et al.* 2011; Coles *et al.* 2009). In response, many airlines have emphasised their investment in fuel-saving technology – including biofuel research in some cases (Coles, *et al.* 2011; Upham, *et al.* 2009). Many airlines, especially in Europe, have partnered with voluntary carbon offset schemes and offer passengers the option of paying extra into these schemes during the booking process (Broderick 2006). However, both biofuels and carbon offset programmes have been criticised for being unable to adequately mitigate aviation's environmental impact (Upham, *et al.* 2009; Broderick 2006; Dhanda and Murphy 2011). Governments, also, are turning their attention to the environmental impact of airlines (Bows *et al.* 2006). Airlines are facing a new era of 're-regulation', this time, with regulations focused on environmental issues. In the EU, the most notable environmentally-focused regulation is the inclusion of air transport in the EU's Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), which will be dealt with in more detail in the following section. Interestingly, in spite of the increasing pressures on airlines to prove their worth in a low carbon future, airlines' customers in two separate studies reported that

sustainability issues did not affect their decision making when choosing to fly (Barr, *et al.* 2011; Cohen *et al.* 2011).

The environment is not the only sustainable development-related issue relevant to contemporary airlines. Air transport has been called ‘a fundamental cog in the global tourism interaction sphere’ and has a recognised impact on both international and domestic tourism flows (Duval 2007: 152). Airlines have been praised for stimulating regional and national economies, as well as promoting the EU goal of mobility (Graham and Shaw 2008). However, these benefits are unevenly felt; incoming and outgoing passenger flows are unbalanced across Europe (Graham and Shaw 2008; DLR 2009; DLR 2011). Airlines, especially low cost airlines, have also been criticised for encouraging ‘trivial travel’ through low ticket prices, and thereby stressing local infrastructure with a seasonal influx of visitors (Coles, *et al.* 2011; Graham and Shaw 2008; Cohen *et al.* 2011). Similarly, while low cost airlines have generally been applauded for supplying routes to transport disadvantaged regions, several headline-making exposés have revealed that some of these routes have come at a great price to local governments and airports which have lowered fees and in some cases provided subsidies in order to attract airlines (Graham and Shaw 2008). A growing disillusionment with airlines as a positive contributor to society has been compounded by news stories that some airlines’ cause-related marketing efforts gave only single-figure percentages to the named charity (Fenclova and Coles 2011).

Perhaps most damning of all for a service industry, worker morale has fallen to 'all-time low levels' as wages have been cut (by more than \$15 billion in the US between 2000 and 2005), thousands of workers have been laid off, and the airlines that have recovered following 9/11 have been reluctant to pass rewards to employees (Bamber, *et al.* 2009a: 2). A surge in lower market focused airlines (specifically, low cost carriers) has also had a negative impact on morale with some airlines focusing on reducing costs through offering below-average wages, cheaper uniforms, and work environments that favour utility over aesthetics and comfort (Bamber, *et al.* 2009a, 2009b; Harvey and Turnbull 2006; Doganis 2006). As a result, employees are expressing dissatisfaction through the delivery of lower levels of service quality (Bamber, *et al.* 2009a) and, for those who are unionised, through strikes (Upchurch 2010). Employee frustrations have spilled over to consumers (Upchurch 2010), and customer complaints have been said to be at 'record levels' (Bamber, *et al.* 2009a: 2). With competition now given a pole position as market regulator, airlines wishing to survive in the 21st century will have to reassess their management of the satisfaction and loyalty of consumers and employees alike.

3.3 European-wide aviation policy and strategy

Until the 1980s, the governmental approach across Europe to passenger aviation was based in protectionism, and airlines were on the whole strongly regulated, subsidised, and controlled by governments with a view towards building a strong industry (Doganis 2002). Notably, the historical governmental view of airlines' CSR has mainly been that airlines should promote regional and national economic prosperity through providing flights – in essence, the primary

governmental concern was that airlines should continue operations. However, following a series of damning reports conducted in the 1970s and 1980s (Levin 1981), North American and European governments became increasingly dissatisfied with flag carriers operating in near-constant states of financial distress (Papatheodorou 2002). As a result, the deregulation of passenger aviation was implemented on both sides of the Atlantic, although the degree of deregulation varied considerably between countries (Lawton 1999; Doganis 2006). For EU member states, the European Commission played a key role in pushing towards a 'single market', with key legislation allowing for all member states access to other member's airspace, removing pricing controls, opening foreign ownership between member states, and creating EU-wide aviation policy (Lawton 1999). Implemented in 1987, 1990, and 1992, the three main legislative packages gradually removed the need for individual countries within the EU to negotiate on behalf of airlines headquartered in their country. The Third Package, which was instituted in 1993, was especially notable in this regard for allowing any EU-based airline to access any route within the European Union, thereby eliminating the need for any of the Eight Freedoms of the Air agreements within the EU. As a whole, these packages increased competition and innovative practices and have been attributed with 'revolutionising' European aviation (Lawton 1999; Barrett 2000; Reynolds-Feighan 2010), most notably through the rise of low cost carriers (Bjelcic 2007) (which will be dealt with in more detail in the following sections). Importantly, the creation of the European Common Aviation Area (ECAA) in 2006 extended the scope of these freedoms through bilateral agreements with nine European non-EU countries (DLR 2011; Dobruszkes 2006).

As was established in Chapter 2, the legislative environment in which a company operates helps to define what constitutes CSR by drawing the boundary between what an organisation *must do* and what it *chooses to do*. For airlines operating in the European Economic Area (EEA), the legislative environment is ‘very liberal’ providing a ‘vast, single, deregulated market’ (Doganis 2006: 19). However, it is worth noting that between *must* and *chooses* is a ‘no man’s land’ of activities that a corporation voluntarily practices in an effort to avoid being forced to practice them. Additionally, while ownership rules and competition controls in the EU have been reduced, environmental regulations are on the rise (most notably the environmental taxes of the UK Air Passenger Duty and the EU Emissions Trading Scheme) (Mayor and Tol 2010). Governmental Green Papers and White Papers are especially useful as indicators of future *must* activities, as well as provide possible explanations for some CSR trends (as organisations seek to prevent regulatory mandates by voluntarily addressing regulators’ concerns). The European Commission, as well as many of its member states, regularly publishes aviation policies and strategies, and recent publications at both levels have focused heavily on sustainable development, and specifically, aircraft noise and emissions (Coles, *et al.* 2009). However, even with the focus on sustainable development, none of the strategies to date have mentioned CSR, and only one EU strategy has hinted at voluntary responsible business practices. Much can be gleaned about the current state of the aviation industry in the EU from an overview of the key issues presented in the most recent documents.

3.3.1 General EU aviation policy

The Directorate-General for Energy and Transport is responsible for aviation-related policies for the European Commission. Communications on specific pieces of legislation are continuously being published; however, the most comprehensive update on current EU aviation policy is *Flying Together: EU Air Transport Policy* (D-GET 2007). It provides an overview of the policies that have been put into place to support the more-generalised policy goals for transport infrastructure as a whole proposed in the *White Paper – European Transport Policy for 2010: Time to Decide* (CEC 2001). As a whole, *Flying Together* (D-GET 2007: 5) was generally positive about deregulation, noting that it has ‘introduced completely new business models and change the travel habits in many European countries’, as well as having ‘expanded from 1% seat capacity to 28% in 2006’. *Flying Together* also remarked positively that, in general, competition has increased and prices have decreased. In regard to managing the growing industry logistically, the increase in air traffic has necessitated additional control and regulation through research and programmes (D-GET-2007). On the sustainable development front, the document included a section entitled ‘Towards greener air travel’ which reports measures to limit the levels of noise produced by aircraft, notes the proposition to include aviation in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (since passed; see CEC 2008), and the investment in ‘clean technology and improving air traffic flows’ (D-GET 2007: 4). *Flying Together* focused mainly on the environmental concerns of sustainable development. The other two concerns of sustainable development— economic and social — are largely absent, although aviation’s contribution to the EU’s economy was briefly discussed and the ‘social impact of air transport liberalisation’ is claimed to be under review. No mention was made of CSR or of the private industry’s voluntary contribution to sustainability.

As mentioned previously, *Flying Together* built upon the goals of *White Paper – European Transport Policy for 2010: Time to Decide* (CEC 2001), which outlined the overall transport policy for the EC, including aviation. Notably, though, *European Transport Policy for 2010* was not in favour of pushing for the aviation industry's development, and the paper proposes that funding should prioritise the development of 'rail, sea and inland waterway transport' (CEC 2001: 12). Not only did *European Transport Policy for 2010* propose that aviation's development be de-prioritised, it also takes issue with current tax exemptions for fuel as it claimed that reduced prices have failed to provide an 'incentive for airlines to use the most efficient aircraft' (CEC 2001: 12, 39). As with the aviation-specific strategy, sustainable development is a major concern of the *White Paper*, which advocates the position that a sustainable transport system should assess an 'economic and social as well as an environmental viewpoint' (CEC 2001: 10). Notably, though, the industry's voluntary contribution to sustainable development is not mentioned. Overall, the EC's recent strategies for aviation suggest that the survival of the industry has been replaced by concerns over managing the magnitude of traffic and environmental impacts.

3.3.2 The EU Emission Trading Scheme

This research took place during the implementation of one of the most significant environment-related regulatory measures for aviation – the inclusion of aviation in the EU's Emission Trading Scheme (EU-ETS). In 2008, the European Council and the European Parliament agreed on a directive to include

nearly all flights with an EU destination in the EU-ETS (Scheelhaase *et al.* 2010). This measure had been preceded by significant debate and heavy lobbying on the part of the aviation industry (both for and against the directive), with many airlines arguing that a global scheme would be fairer (Graham and Shaw 2008). In short, the inclusion of aviation in the EU-ETS stipulates that most aircraft operators will be allocated annual emissions allowances based on historic aviation emissions. Airlines that exceed their allocated emissions targets will need to buy emissions credits. Airlines can 'bank' or 'sell' any remaining portion of their annual emissions allowances. Excluded airlines include aircraft operators with only sporadic flights to and from Europe and some airlines operating routes under a public service obligation (Scheelhaase *et al.* 2010). Implementation of the directive took place in stages, starting with it becoming officially effective in 2009, followed by a period of mandated emissions monitoring and reporting starting in 2010, and finally, the introduction of an emissions cap in 2012.

One of the most significant issues to implementation has been the inclusion of airlines based on EU destinations rather than airline nationality, with countries such as China and the United States objecting heavily to the application of EU-ETS to airlines headquartered outside of the EU (Duval 2012; Scheelhaase *et al.* 2010). These nationality-base objections demonstrate that while airline ownership has largely been privatised, governments are still showing a strong interest in protecting the interests of airlines based in their respective countries. Along with political objects to EU-ETS, commentators have also questioned the ethical aspects of the commoditisation of emissions as well as the unequal

implementation of such schemes to only a select range of industries (Aldred 2012). The inclusion of air transport in EU-ETS suggests that policymakers are dissatisfied with the current state of self-regulation and that for environmental issues in particular, the airlines' management of CSR is perceived to be inadequate.

3.4 Business models and characteristics

While variations exist, the three main business models in the passenger aviation industry are: full service carriers, charter airlines, and low cost carriers (Shaw 2007). Full service and charter airlines were the first two business models to emerge, and low cost carriers are a post-1970s development based on some of the characteristics of the other two models, but with an overarching focus on cost minimisation and lean managerial and operational structures (Shaw 2007; Dobruszkes 2006). This research focused on the two most divergent business models – full service carriers and low cost carriers – whose approaches to nearly all aspects of their operations, from strategy to scale to inventory management, are diametrically opposite. While theoretically low cost and full service carriers take widely different approaches, it is also important to note that in recent decades, the passenger aviation sector has been marked by fragmentation (Budd and Graham 2009), with the same airlines often targeting a range of customer segments, offering a number of different services (for instance, a low cost airline offering ticketing options for a more full-service experience), and running concurrent business models (such as a low cost carriers providing charter services) (DLR 2009). Additionally, many full service carriers have started low cost subsidiaries (such as Lufthansa's Air Berlin and

KLM's Transavia) (DLR 2009). This has resulted in most European airlines offering a hybridisation of business models (Duval 2007) – a fact that complicated analysis, as will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters. The differences between the two business models (both in theory and in practice) will be explored below, as well as a brief outline of other airline business models (including charter airlines).

3.4.1 Full service carriers

The most traditional business model is the full service carrier, also referred to as network, with-frills, traditional, and legacy carriers (in reference to former and occasionally current government-owned 'flag carriers') (Doganis 2006; Claussen and O'Higgins 2010). The full service carrier's strategy relies on differentiation through providing additional services ('frills') to the contracted service of taking passengers from one airport to another (Hunter 2006) (Table 3.1). These services include on-board catering; first, business, and economy classes; free carriage of checked luggage; and access to a network of destinations through guaranteed connecting flights (Claussen and O'Higgins 2010).

The need to guarantee connecting flights is due, in part, to the network organisation of most full service carriers. This traditional, hub-and-spoke network consists of primary and secondary airports, with a select number of primary airports serving as a hub, where staff and aircraft are based (Doganis 2006) (Figure 3.1). All flights operate between secondary, peripheral airports

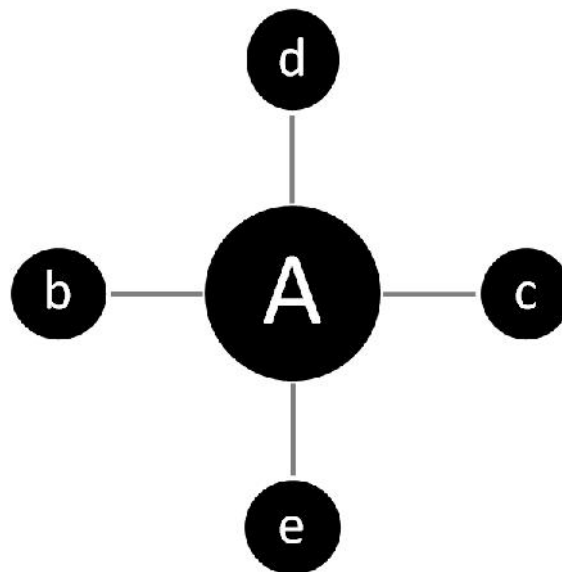
Table 3.1 Characteristic of the full service business model

Characteristic feature	Full service business model
Generic strategy	Differentiation
Scale	Typically large
Operational model	Hub and spoke or Multiple hub and spoke linking with feeder routes Mix of short, medium and long-haul routes Various aircraft type and engines Moderate capacity utilisation (c. 60%)
Market	Normally in competition with other FCSs, leading to differentiation by class of service (e.g. economy, business, first class) High service image Frequent scheduling and flight flexibility Extensive in-flight services Comprehensive ground services Use of primary airports
Inventory management	Pre-arranged tickets and seats Complex reservation systems (due to feeder routes) Use of travel agents

Source: Adapted from Hunter (2006: 316)

and the hub. Thus, to get from airport b to airport c, a passenger would need to take a flight from airport b to Hub A and from Hub A to c. This configuration allows for theoretically more destination options for potential customers in even the most peripheral of airports (a passenger travelling from airport b has four possible destinations, including the hub, in Figure 3.1, and in practice, many more destinations are often available) (Doganis 2006; Franke 2004).

Figure 3.1 Diagram of a hub-and-spoke network



Source: author

Furthermore, airline alliances and code sharing agreements further enhance the offering of destinations, connectivity and continuity of service delivery for customers (Forsyth *et al.* 2011). With the hub-and-spoke system, aircraft servicing and storage can be systemised and centralised at the hub, resulting in both cost-savings and quick responses to faulty aircraft (Franke 2004). However, on the flip side, passengers are inconvenienced by having to take multiple flights (when they would often prefer to have one flight) and the competitive fare for itineraries to more obscure destinations can fall far behind operating costs (Franke 2004). The full-service model has been called outdated and a relic of the past (Doganis 2006); however, many of its major selling points, such as a vast network of potential destination both through the airline's own routes and those of its partners, guaranteed connections, and convenient management of luggage, still have their appeal (Gillen and Morrison 2003).

In Europe in 2009 (the year just prior to data collection for this research), full service carriers offered more weekly seats than any other business model, offering 57% of the market compared to LFAs' offering of 35% and the combined offering of charter and regional carriers of 8% (DLR 2011). The market was largely dominated by Lufthansa (with 11,200 flights per week) and Air France (8,900), though Iberia and British Airways had an impact as well, offering 5,900 and 4,300 flights per week (respectively) (DLR 2011:50). Other large players included Alitalia, KLM-Royal Dutch Airlines, SAS Scandinavian Airlines, Austrian, TAP Air Portugal, and Spanair – almost all exclusively former flag carriers (DLR 2011). Many of the full service carriers in Europe are members of one of the three major passenger airline alliances: Star Alliance, SkyTeam, and Oneworld (DLR 2011),

3.4.2 Low cost carriers

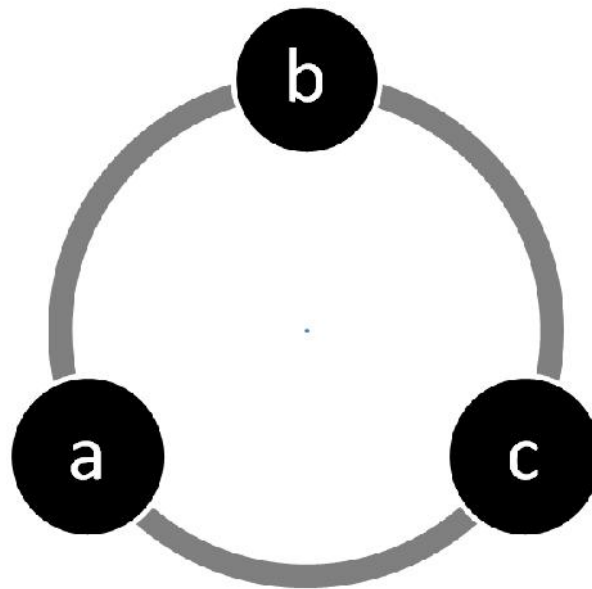
The low cost model, sometimes also referred to as the 'no-frills' or 'low fares' model, has been called 'the fruit of the liberalisation of air transport' (Dobruszkes 2009). Originally pioneered by Southwest in the US during the 1970s, the low cost model could be considered the 'anti-pre-deregulation flag carrier', where the market's whims, rather than regulators', determines what services are provided and what connections are established. As a capitalistic, free-market product, it is based on a desire to streamline processes and have 'minimal complexity in products' (Alves and Barbot 2007: 116), resulting in cost-savings that can then be reflected in ticket prices (Hansson *et al.* 2003; Groß and Schröder 2007). The idea behind the Southwest model is purported to have

been a conceptualisation of an alternative to the established hub-and-spoke networks drawn by Southwest founder Herb Kelleher on the back of a paper napkin (Calder 2002). This new point-to-point network eschewed a hub and ensuing connecting flights in favour of direct services (Figure 3.2). With this network, passengers at airport b wishing to get to airport c, merely have to take one direct flight rather than two through a hub. Additionally, a single aircraft can be utilised on multiple routes (in this case, a to b, b to c, c to a), thereby creating a cost savings on both aircraft purchase and servicing as fewer aircraft are needed to provide a similar level of service (at least in destinations on offer if not necessarily frequency).

The quest for minimising complexity and increasing efficiency does not stop with network reorganisation. Across the whole of business operations, a 'lean' approach is taken where processes are reduced and savings are made (Table 3.2). These cost reductions in operations are particularly important for low cost carriers since, unlike with the full service model, 'service quality' and the promise of ancillaries are not used as incentives when setting ticket prices. The biggest simplifications can be found in procurement/supply chain management (e.g. through standardising aircraft types, using secondary airports), process management (e.g. using point-to-point networks, minimising ground staff), and marketing (e.g. focused primarily online, simplified pricing strategy, ancillary revenue) (Groß and Schröder 2007; Franke 2004; Dobruszkes 2006). From the customers' perspective, they are paying for the basic service (carriage between airports b and c) and paying for additional services (such as on-board catering,

seat allocation, and amount of checked luggage) *a la carte* – rather than paying for a ‘packaged’ service in the form of economy, business, or first class.

Figure 3.2 Diagram of a point-to-point network



Source: author

This post-regulation business model has created much debate. Initial critics feared that the lean approach to human resource and operations management potentially compromised safety, and voiced concerns that, in efforts to further reduce costs, low cost carriers would choose to operate unsafe, poorly maintained, second hand aircraft (Groß and Schröder 2007). These concerns about safety have widely proven to be unsubstantiated (Groß and Schröder 2007), and the debates about low cost carriers have turned to their broader impacts and responsibilities. Detractors claimed low cost carriers in particular are a major driver behind increased emissions, encourage ‘trivial travel’, and

create unsustainable influxes of seasonal tourists (Gibbons 2008; Mann 2004; Sinclair 2007). Supporters praise the new affordability of air travel, claiming it increases quality of life by allowing even the less privileged to experience new destinations and applaud the low cost carriers' focus on regional and traditionally under-served areas (ELFAA 2004; York Aviation 2007; Oxford Economics 2009).

Table 3.2 Characteristic of the low cost business model

Characteristic feature	Low cost business model
Generic strategy	Cost minimisation/cost leadership Innovations and entrepreneurial spirit
Scale	Generally smaller (but with a few highly successful major players such as Southwest, Ryanair, easyJet)
Operational model	Point-to-point Mainly short haul Uniform aircraft type High capacity utilisation (c. 70-80%) in higher capacity aircraft Low margins
Market	Cheap travel sector, focusing on price Basic quality of service (e.g. little flexibility of ticket, no free onboard catering) Ground services typically outsourced Use of secondary airports
Inventory management	Direct bookings (preference for online bookings) Electronic tickets No use of travel agents

Source: Adapted from Hunter (2006: 316)

Notably, the debate tends to centre on what governments should or should not be requiring from low cost carriers (e.g. participating in the EU-ETS). Detractors claim that governments should be regulating airlines more heavily and that the inherent selfishness of the profit-driven airlines is jeopardising countries' economic, social, and environmental well-being (Sinclair 2007). Proponents of airlines, and low cost carriers in particular, object strongly to any additional government control over air transport and claim that the airlines themselves are fully capable of self-regulation (ELFAA 2004; York Aviation 2007). And so, the regulation of aviation seems to have come full circle: from protectionist regulations heavily lobbied for and supported by airlines themselves to operations-limiting regulations heavily protested by airlines.

In Europe, LFAs have been rapidly gaining a competitive advantage over full service carriers on flights both intra-national (especially in larger EU states such as the UK) and intra-EU (DLR 2009). In 2009, their intra-European market share was an estimated 35% of all scheduled air travel (ELFAA 2009). During that period, and in spite of rocketing fuel prices (Walker 2009), the 25 largest LFAs in the EU offered 14% more seats than in 2007 (DLR 2009). The growth, though, was not universal across the sector. The four largest airlines (Ryanair, easyJet, Air Berlin, and Flybe) saw a strong increase in the number of seats on offer and the number of seats filled (DLR 2011). However, while the larger LFAs were expanding, many of the smaller airlines were facing problems. Between 2008 and 2009, Sterling collapsed; Clickair and Vueling merged; SkyEurope filed for creditor protection; and Myair suspended flights (Coles *et al.* 2009; DLR 2011). While there are some examples of code sharing, low cost carriers in

Europe are not members of any major airline alliances. However, they do have a dedicated trade body, the European Low Fares Airlines Association (ELFAA), and seven of the airlines included in this research were members of ELFAA at the period of research (DLR 2011; ELFAA n.d.)

3.4.3 Other business models

While full service and low cost business models dominate the European aviation industry (DLR 2009), other variations on these two models also exist, most notably, the charter, regional, luxury, and long-haul low cost business models. The traditional charter model emerged in the tightly regulated operating environment following World War II, and fulfilled (and arguably fuelled (Papatheodorou 2002)) demand for all-inclusive holidays (Wheatcroft 1964). Run under the same basic principles as a full service carrier, charter airlines are traditionally contracted by tour operators to provide flights to destinations as part of a holiday package, and tickets are sold wholesale to the tour operator who then bundles on other services before selling the whole package to the general public (Shaw 2006; Wheatcroft 1964). In the UK, this business model was extremely popular prior to deregulation as regulators allowed the charter sector to operate largely unimpeded, provided the private charter companies did not sell directly to the public and that the wholesale ticket prices were not less than the rates for the same route offered by the government-owned flag carriers (Wheatcroft 1964). Similarly, the charter business model thrived in France and Switzerland (Papatheodorou 2002).

Now operating without such regulatory constraints and faced with the declining popularity of inclusive package holidays, charter airlines in Europe are having to tweak the traditional business model in order to remain solvent and many are selling blocks of seats wholesale to tour operators and offering the rest of the seats on the same flight to the general public for an increased price (Shaw 2006; Dobruszkes 2006). Many, such as flyglobespan, have adopted a low cost approach to their operations (DLR 2011) resulting in a hybridisation of business models. The five largest charter airlines operating in the EU in 2009 were First Choice Airways, Condor Flugdienst, Monarch Airlines, Jetairfly, and flyglobespan (although notably flyglobespan filed for bankruptcy in December 2009)(DLR 2011). Charter airlines have largely lost their control over the European aviation market, with capacity decreases of 14% in 2009 which followed a period of similar decline in 2008 (DLR 2011: 7).

3.4.4 The future of aviation business models

When looking at the three main airline business models (full service carriers, low cost carriers, and charter airlines) and the many of variations on them (e.g. luxury carriers, long-haul low cost carriers), it is interesting to note some of the debates about which will be the most viable business model long term. While the LFA business model is often touted as the future of aviation (see, for instance Groß and Schröder 2007; Franke 2004; Dobruszkes 2006), a few commentators have suggested that the charter business model might be the most viable long-term (Doganis 2006). Interestingly enough, anecdotal evidence seems to support this. In the particularly troubled economic period between 2008 and 2009, it was the European holiday/charter airlines that were able to

operate at the highest seat load factor – at 87% full capacity, compared with 81% for LFAs, 77% for full service carriers, and 69% for regional carriers in 2008 (DLR 2009). This ability to operate nearly-full aircraft in a period of economic distress is due in no small part to the charter model's inherent flexibility. Without set schedules, charter airlines can combine underbooked flights for increased capacity. Additionally, as charter airlines do not rely on last minute customers paying premium prices, passenger numbers can be estimated with a great deal of certainty even a few weeks in advance – allowing plenty of time to arrange for a larger or smaller aircraft as necessary.

However, it is equally important to note that all is not lost for the low cost carriers. European charter airlines operated at such high capacity due to a reduction in the number of seats on offer – by a grand 25% from 2007 (DLR 2009). At the same time, LFAs were only lagging behind by 6% of filled seats, with very little change in the number of seats available (and in some cases, such as Ryanair, offering more than they did in 2007) (DLR 2009). Perhaps more damning, full service carriers continued to operate at slightly below 2007 seat offerings, with slightly below 2007 capacity – suggesting a much less dynamic and flexible reaction to the changing market than found in the other two business models (DLR 2009). However, the success of other full service carriers, particularly in the Asia and the Middle East, suggests that the market for full service carriers has not disappeared. Considering the trend towards hybridisation (Coles, *et al.* 2009; Teckentrup 2007; Dobruszkes 2006; Francis *et al.* 2006), it seems more likely that, rather than adhering to strict business models, airlines of the future will increasingly amalgamate the successful

aspects of several business models, creating a market-honed mixture of business practices.

3.5 Conclusion

In the previous chapter (Chapter 2), the issues of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and aviation were reviewed through a discussion of current debates and research based on theoretical and conceptual discourses, as well some preliminary discussions of previous industry-based studies. In this chapter, the relevance of CSR debates and the key CSR-related issues facing European airlines were discussed. Situating this study within the context of the European air transport operating environment is especially relevant because, as was discussed in Chapter 2, the concept of CSR is often defined as being activities that go ‘above and beyond’ regulated behaviours (see for instance Rodriguez and del Mar Armas Cruz 2007; Henderson 2007; Falck and Heblich 2007). Furthermore, as Lynes and Andrachuk (2008) have argued, the CSR approaches of airlines are dependent on operating environments and external ‘systems of influence’. Therefore, the nature of what constitutes CSR for a particular company would depend heavily on its regulatory environment. Similarly, other sector- and company-specific external influences affect how CSR is practiced: from ‘soft’ pressures from government to the values of customers to the overall societal perception of the sector (e.g. Ketola 2006; Dahlsrud, 2008; Welford *et al.*, 2007; Trebeck, 2008). Therefore, CSR practices must be considered in the context of the operating environment and pressures of the business, and a strong understanding of these formal and informal influencing factors should be an important part of CSR research.

The rationale for focusing this study on the passenger air transport sector and on low cost and full service carriers in particular was covered in this chapter. There were two main reasons for focusing on airlines. The first was the size and impact of the sector. Worldwide, airlines carried 2.8 billion passengers in 2011 (IATA 2012). Along with the direct and indirect employment they provide, airlines have been identified as vital for international tourism, as well as for the global economy as a whole (IATA 2012; Doganis 2011). However, the aviation sector has also been identified as a 'high impact' industry (Frynas 2005), and the environmental impacts of its business operations have come under increased criticism, with some commentators questioning whether airlines and passenger air transport are compatible with the ideals of sustainable development (Hooper *et al.* 2005).

The second main rational for focusing on airlines, and European airlines in particular, was the complex relationship between airlines and governments, which meant that this study would be able to explore the interplay of 'hard' and 'soft' governmental CSR measures in a post-Liberalised sector. For much of its development, air transport's value to society was deemed to be continued operations – ideally, without costing their (generally governmental) investors too much. However, over the last 25 years, the regulatory environment for airlines in the European Union has changed dramatically. Privatisation and competition have replaced protectionism as regulatory priorities. Additionally, aviation's environmental impacts – specifically, noise and emissions – are increasingly being addressed (most notably in the inclusion of air transport in the EU-ETS

2009). As a result, airlines are increasingly operating in a regulatory environment that is less concerned with their individual survival and more concerned with their impacts and overall competition and good practice (Duval 2012; Doganis 2007). In other words, the perceived social value (and responsibility) of airlines is no longer merely for them to keep flying.

Considering the intense scrutiny on low cost carriers, which have been portrayed in popular discourses as 'less responsible' than full service carriers (Hooper *et al.* 2005; Gibbons 2008; Mann 2004; Sinclair 2007), this research's sample was selected based on business models. By comparing the two dominant business models in Europe, full service and low cost, this research was able to investigate and further clarify the validity of the narrative that low cost carriers, by virtue of their business model, practiced a different, less 'responsible' approach to CSR management.

4 Methods

Research approach to studying the self-reported CSR of airlines

4.1 Introduction

Researching CSR practices presents key epistemological and methodological issues, not least with the fuzziness of the concept (Chapter 2; also, Coles *et al.* 2009; Markusen 1999). Unlike, for instance, studies on financial performance, where a general consensus on the definition of 'financial performance' is present (Orlitzky *et al.* 2003), studies on CSR must contend initially with questions of definitions, both of the concept itself (see Chapter 2) and of examples in practice (which will be explored later in this chapter and includes issues such as: are general statements of ethics and overall compliance with governmental regulation part of an organisation's CSR?). Furthermore, finding CSR information can be difficult; unlike financial performance, CSR is not always neatly summed up in annual reports and financial statements, and can be tucked away in websites, mentioned in press releases, touched upon in annual reports, described in dedicated CSR reports, or even consciously not made public (Coles, *et al.* 2009; Moneva *et al.* 2006). Finally, comparing CSR practices between companies and organisations is further complicated by disparate data and non-standardised units of reporting (Du, *et al.* 2010;

Blowfield and Murray 2008). For instance, while some organisations might report their charitable contributions in monetary units, others report in resources and opportunities made available or employee hours, while still others state more generic 'support' for charities (Fenclova and Coles 2011). As a result, researching CSR is less straightforward than researching more standardised concepts, and must be both focused (with parameters clearly and carefully set) and flexible (able to account for the range of definitions, practices, and reporting units). While these challenges require extra planning and potentially more time for data collection, methods selection, and the justification of methods and results, they are also opportunities for creative and innovative research techniques and theory creation. This research, as will be described in this chapter, was built upon a strategically inclusive definition of CSR which was designed to capture many definitions of CSR while at the same time, had the guiding parameters of a 'decision map' which helped standardise data collection. This resulted in both a clear, standardised focus and a degree of flexibility to reflect how the airlines themselves viewed their CSR.

As was covered in more detail in Chapter 2 (especially in Sections 2.5.2 and 2.5.3) there were further issues and opportunities when focusing on the CSR practices of airlines, namely: a general lack of precedent and previous studies in the sector; a potentially wide range of CSR practices, definitions, and types of communications; a necessarily limited sample group across a spectrum of business model variations, nationalities, and sizes; and as previous research found, inconsistent measuring and reporting within the sector (Hooper and Greenall 2005; Mak *et al.* 2007; Cowper-Smith and De Grosbois 2010). These four challenges shaped the methods used in this research – from overarching

decisions to use a qualitative paradigm to even more practical choices such as the methods and models used to analyse the data. More specifically, to address the four challenges listed above (lack of precedent, wide range of practices, small sample group, and primarily qualitative data), this study used a multiple-triangulated approach – that is, the data came from four sources (websites, annual reports, press releases, and interviews), both content analysis and grounded theory methods were used, and, through the mixed methods, the data sets were examined from multiple angles (format and context; diction; and contextualised content).

Through the multiple applications of triangulation, the four challenges became less of a liability and, instead, were seen as beneficial to the quality and rigour of this study. The lack of precedence (especially in the aviation industry) allowed for a stronger application of a grounded theory approach since the researcher's codes and analysis had less of a chance of being influenced (consciously or unconsciously) by previous theories and studies (Strauss and Corbin 1990; Hall and Valentin 2005). The breadth of data and variables, while making coding more challenging, was also well-suited to grounded theory (which favours diverse data sets - Richardson 1996) and provided an insight into less established forms of CSR in practice. In the same vein, the size of the sample, although one of the largest and most diverse to date, was relatively small at 34 airlines; however, in spite of this, the data set was extensive (1076 annual reports, CSR reports, webpages, and press releases). Therefore, a larger sample would have made deeper analysis of the detailed data logistically infeasible (Bryman 2004). And finally, the descriptive qualitative data gave

insight not just into what CSR-activities are being practiced, but also the narratives that were constructed around the activities, something that has not been explored in depth by previous studies of CSR practices of airlines (Section 2.5.3).

Thus, this chapter will provide a more comprehensive look at the rationale, influences and methods, and application of qualitative research for the study. First, this chapter will outline the definitions, aims and objectives, sample and methodological approach of the study, which were built around the relatively small and diverse sample size and the range of CSR definitions and avenues of communication. The second section will assess the ethical issues inherent in this study and the actions that were taken to address them. The next two sections (third and fourth) will explore the two types of triangulation used in this study: data triangulation and method triangulation. And finally, the fifth section will provide a *post hoc* analysis of the methods used.

4.2 Outline of research issues and choices

Research choices and approaches should be dictated by the underlying epistemological approach (Bryman 2004; Del Casino *et al.* 2000). This research overall took an interpretivist view of epistemological considerations, believing that the true intent of an actor can be impossible to accurately ascertain (Bryman 2004) and that, consciously and unconsciously, elite interviewees especially can be involved in reinforcing their employers' interpretation of events (Welch, *et al.* 2002). While some airline communications and interviews with

managers might offer positivist-based justifications for CSR-related activities (i.e. ‘we decided to plant trees to help the environment’), it was deemed entirely plausible that some of these statements might be misleading (intentionally or otherwise). Furthermore, it was recognised that actions can have multiple motivating factors (such as, in the example, ‘we decided to plant trees as it will help the environment and would be good for public relations’) and that business decisions often involve multiple actors with different motivations and intentions. Therefore, this research took a very broad, ‘wide net’ view of CSR and CSR activities, and in doing so, it included any efforts that could reasonably have been motivated – wholly or partially – by a concern to practice or to further the responsibility of the business. This has resulted in a study that is the most comprehensive and best reflects the sector’s own definition of its corporate social responsibility of any other research on airlines’ CSR to date.

4.2.1 Definitions

This research was based on purposely broad definitions of corporate social responsibility and corporate socially responsible activities (Box 4.1). *Corporate social responsibility* was defined as: ‘the recognition that organisations operate within a system and should strive to voluntarily minimise their negative impacts and optimise their positive impacts on that system, without losing their overall usefulness to the system’, which is usually by being ‘sustainably profitable’ (although some (e.g. Frynas 2005) have argued that this is oxymoronic in a ‘high impact’ sector). Similarly, *corporate socially responsible activities* were defined as: ‘any voluntary efforts initiated by an organisation with the whole or partial intent to behave ‘responsibly’’. However, the first definition that was

adopted for corporate socially responsible activities proved, upon initial analysis of the texts and interviews, to be too deeply rooted in a positivist assumption that one could determine the intent of the businesses. In keeping with the interpretivist approach and – even more importantly – based on the nebulous line between stated motivation and stated justification for CSR in the data sets, a *second definition for corporate socially responsible activities* was adopted: ‘any voluntary efforts that could reasonably have been motivated (wholly or partially) by some concept of corporate social responsibility’.

Box 4.1 CSR and related definitions

Corporate social responsibility (CSR): the recognition that organisations operate within a system and should strive to voluntarily minimise their negative impacts and optimise their positive impacts on that system, without losing their overall usefulness to the system.

Corporate socially responsible activities [First]: any voluntary efforts initiated by an organisation with the whole or partial intent to behave ‘responsibly’.

Corporate socially responsible activities [Second]: any voluntary efforts that could reasonably have been motivated (wholly or partially) by some concept of corporate social responsibility.

Source: author

As was discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, both in academia and in practice, definitions and terminology of CSR vary widely, and these definitions were adopted with the intent of being on the broadest and most encompassing side of the CSR definitions spectrum. This ‘casting of a wide net’ was especially important considering the data. Within the sample group, there was no general

consensus on terminology of the concept referred in this research as corporate social responsibility and most definitions were *de facto* definitions-through-inclusion; that is, no formal definition was given, but the policy/strategy itself had specified subjects (as discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, particularly Section 5.2). For instance, easyJet (2009: 30) included '[s]afety, customer satisfaction, people and the environment' under the heading of 'Corporate Responsibility' in their annual report; however, it did not specifically define CSR or corporate responsibility. Similarly, in its *Corporate Responsibility Report* (2010: 9), British Airways (BA) claims its strategy 'looks at all aspects and issues of Corporate Responsibility', but did not define what they considered corporate responsibility to be. Instead, BA (2010: 9) noted that its strategy 'is made up of four streams: Environment, Community, Marketplace and Workplace'. Further complicating the research, some airlines, such as Flybe (2010a) included only staff skills training and charity involvement in their 'Corporate Social Responsibility policy [sic]' – even though they also reported an extensive environmental policy and resulting efforts on their website (Flybe 2010b).

As this research was based on the understanding that there is no one 'true' definition of CSR, it was illogical to exclude some data because it was not labelled specifically as CSR. Additionally, this study would have been less representative if activities commonly considered CSR (such as environmental mitigation) were included in some cases but not in others solely due to presentational labelling. However, this broad approach to defining CSR – including activities not necessarily labelled as CSR- added a layer of complexity to secondary data collection. As will be discussed in more detail in Section

4.3.2, a 'decision map' was used to guide data collection, based on the definition of CSR detailed above and the work of Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois (2010), Dahlsrud (2008), Vourvachis (2006), and Holcomb *et al.* (2007). In essence, because of definitional heterogeneity, this research was greatly aided by the presence of clear, composite definitions discussed above which were broad enough to encompass multiple views and perspectives on CSR. However, even with these broad definitions, there were many instances of the airlines' reported CSR efforts not being compatible with the definitions adopted by this study – particularly the 'voluntary' aspect, because, as will be discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, many of the airlines included compliance with legal regulations as a key part of their reported CSR.

4.2.2 Aim and objectives

This research was governed by one aim and six objectives (Table 4.2). The aim was to critically examine the self-reported socially-responsible activities of European full service and low cost carriers. Thus, this research looked at only two main business models – the two most popular business models in Europe (DLR 2009) with widely divergent strategies, scales, operational models, market, and approach to inventory management (Hunter 2006; discussed further in Chapter 3). Also particularly relevant to this study, there are clear differences in the responsibilities associated with the business models (discussed in more detail in Chapter 3). Culture and operating environment have been identified as potential influences upon whether a corporation practices CSR and the manner of execution (Übicus and Alas 2009; Waldman *et al.* 2006). It was deemed undesirable to assess airlines from only one country

Table 4.1 Outline of the research framework for this study

Aim: To critically examine the self-reported socially-responsible activities of European full service and low cost carriers.				
Objective	Source	Approach	Analysis	Chapter of main discussion
1. Undertake a comprehensive survey of the preferred terms and definitions of CSR used by the airlines;	Secondary data, Interviews	Qualitative, with some quantizing	Content analysis, Grounded theory	5
2. Develop a comprehensive typology of the self-reported CSR activities of airlines;	Secondary data, Interviews	Qualitative, with some quantizing	Content analysis, Grounded theory	5
3. Examine the approaches to the management and implementation of CSR;	Interviews, secondary data	Qualitative, with some quantizing	Content analysis Grounded theory	7
4. Assess the stated motivations behind CSR activities;	Interviews, secondary data	Qualitative, with some quantizing	Grounded theory Content analysis	6
5. Investigate the range of collaboration, stakeholder engagement and knowledge transfer;	Secondary data, interviews	Qualitative, with some quantizing	Grounded theory Content analysis	6
6. Compare how low cost carriers and full service carriers reported their understandings and practices of CSR.	Secondary data, interviews	Qualitative, with some quantizing	Grounded theory	7

Source: Author

(as it would lead to a challengingly small sample size – particularly for interview solicitation). Therefore, this research looked at airlines that had their main headquarters in a country in the European Union and the four countries of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA).

The focus of this study was on 'self-reported socially-responsible activities' – that is, the CSR-related activities that were voluntarily communicated to the public. Therefore, this research made no claims to present a comprehensive catalogue of all the CSR-related activities of the sample. Rather, it assessed the activities that the sample chose to be communicated to the public and the ways in which they were communicated. There were several reasons for this focus. First, from a strictly practical perspective, it would be extremely difficult – if not impossible – to accurately audit all of the CSR-related activities of the chosen airlines. It is commonly recognised that both interviewees and texts are liable to contain missing and misrepresented information (Welch, et al. 2002; Bryman 2004). While an attempt to compile an accurate accounting of all CSR-related activities of each airline in the sample could have been obtained through a lengthy integration within an airline, that would have required not only a large time commitment, but would also depend heavily on the ability of the researcher to gain both access and the trust of the airline and its employees (for each of the fifty airlines chosen as a sample), a contingency that was infeasible for the sample size.

Secondly, the perceived value of this research was its potential contribution to debates about government regulation versus corporate self-regulation in regards to sustainable development, community development, environmental protection and ethical business behaviour. That is, rather than looking at the internal impacts of CSR, this research was focused on the external implications for CSR activity, particularly in regard to regulation. Therefore, activities that

were communicated externally had a stronger direct link to these public debates. And finally, by only looking at the behaviours and activities actively promoted by airlines as examples of their responsible behaviour, this research was able to focus on the activities deemed by the airlines themselves to be the most important, most responsible, and most relevant (evident in their decision to invest additional resources to communicate them).

In order to accomplish the aim of this research, there were six objectives (Table 4.1). The objectives were to: 1) Undertake a comprehensive survey of the preferred terms and definitions of CSR used by the airlines; 2) develop a comprehensive typology of the self-reported CSR activities of airlines (similar to the comprehensive matrix created by Holcomb et al. (2007)); 3) examine the approaches to the management and implementation of CSR (e.g. whether a dedicated manager or team was in place, how CSR decisions are primarily made and communicated); 4) assess the stated motivations behind CSR activities (for instance, did the airlines attribute their CSR activities to a desire to increase profitability, be a 'good' company, or possibly to comply with UN, EU, or national CSR/sustainable development goals?); 5) investigate the range of collaboration, stakeholder engagement and knowledge transfer (or, in other words, how are airlines' CSR activities influenced by external partners, charities, competitors, stakeholders, supply chains, etc and how do the airlines in turn influence the CSR of others?); and finally, 6) compare how low cost carriers and full service carriers reported their understandings and practices of CSR (e.g. are there any identifiable differences between the ways low cost carriers and full service airlines practice CSR?). Each of these objectives will be

addressed and further clarified in the following chapters (noted in the final column of Table 4.1 for ease of reference).

4.2.3 Sample

To fulfil the aim of this research, the sample consisted of airlines that displayed a business model that was either predominately influence by the low cost or full service approach and were based in countries that were members of the European Common Aviation Area (ECAA) in 2009 (Table 4.2). As was discussed earlier in this chapter, it was deemed advantageous for comparative purposes to have a common operating environment for the sample, and the ECAA provides to airlines with headquarters its member states a nearly fully-deregulated operating environment (Graham 1998; Dobruszkes 2006; discussed in more detail in Chapter 3). Considering the close relationship Switzerland has with the EU, its inclusion in the European Economic Area (EEA), and its potential future inclusion into the ECAA (Dobruszkes 2006), the decision was made to also include airlines from Switzerland in this study. The only Swiss airline that fulfilled the criteria and was included in the sample was SWISS, a full service subsidiary of the German-based Lufthansa Group.

As was discussed in Chapter 3, since the implementation of the Third Package of airline deregulation and the subsequent consultation and implementation of the Single European Sky (SES) packages², European airspace has been close

² SES I (2004, mostly implemented) and SES II (adopted in 2009, to begin implementation in 2012) (CEC 2008, EC 2010)

to a 'single market' governed by EU (and other members)-wide aviation policy, which grants free access for member states to access the airspace of other member states and allows for unlimited foreign ownership between member states' airlines (Lawton 1999). Furthermore, this sample was collected using data provided by the EU (DLR 2009, 2011), and all of the airlines had at least one destination in an EU Member State. As a result, all of the sample will be heavily impacted by the EU Emissions Trading Scheme once it comes into effect in 2012, as well as currently being affected by current noise and emissions regulations and Public Service Obligations. Therefore, practicing – or at least appearing to practice - CSR is a key and timely issue for each of the airlines due to the demands placed on them by the regulators.

Table 4.2 European Common Aviation members in 2009

European Union States		Non-EU States
Austria	Latvia	Albania
Belgium	Lithuania	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Bulgaria	Luxembourg	Croatia
Cyprus	Malta	Iceland
Czech Republic	Netherlands	Kosovo
Denmark	Poland	Latvia
Estonia	Portugal	Macedonia
Finland	Romania	Montenegro
France	Slovakia	Norway
Germany	Slovenia	Serbia
Greece	Spain	
Hungary	Sweden	
Ireland	United Kingdom	
Italy		

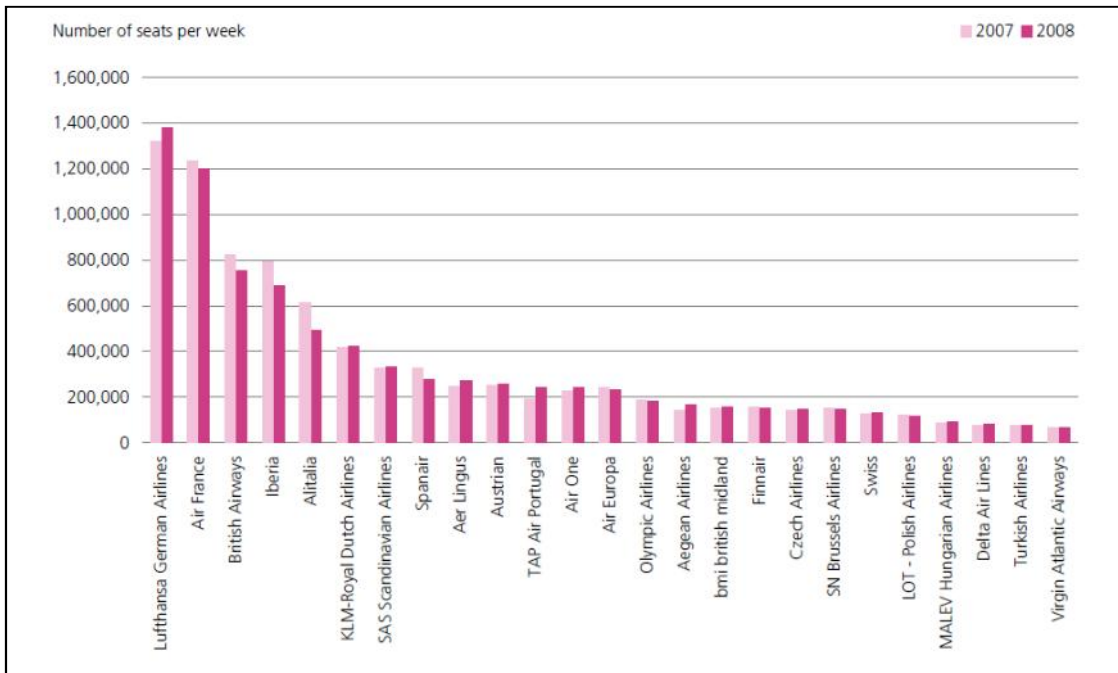
Source: adapted from DLR (2011)

The sample consisted of the top 25 full-service carriers and the top 25 low cost carriers as determined by intra-EU seats offered per week. Other measurements of the top 25 of each business model were considered, such as

number of aircraft, passenger numbers, or annual revenue. However, in the end seats on offer were selected as the criteria that would best reflect the airlines that were most active in Europe. Monetary measurements were not deemed a good fit since many airlines had extra-EU flights that would have been included in the financial data that was available. Number of aircraft and other measures of business capital were deemed to be inexact because, once again, some of them could be used solely for flights outside of Europe. Also, airlines whose business model relied on leasing aircraft would not have been accurately represented since the number of aircraft they operated would not be the same as the number of aircraft they owned. Finally, passenger numbers on intra-EU flights were considered and determined to be one of the best indicators. However, unfortunately, data on passenger arrivals per route were not available for all of the airlines.

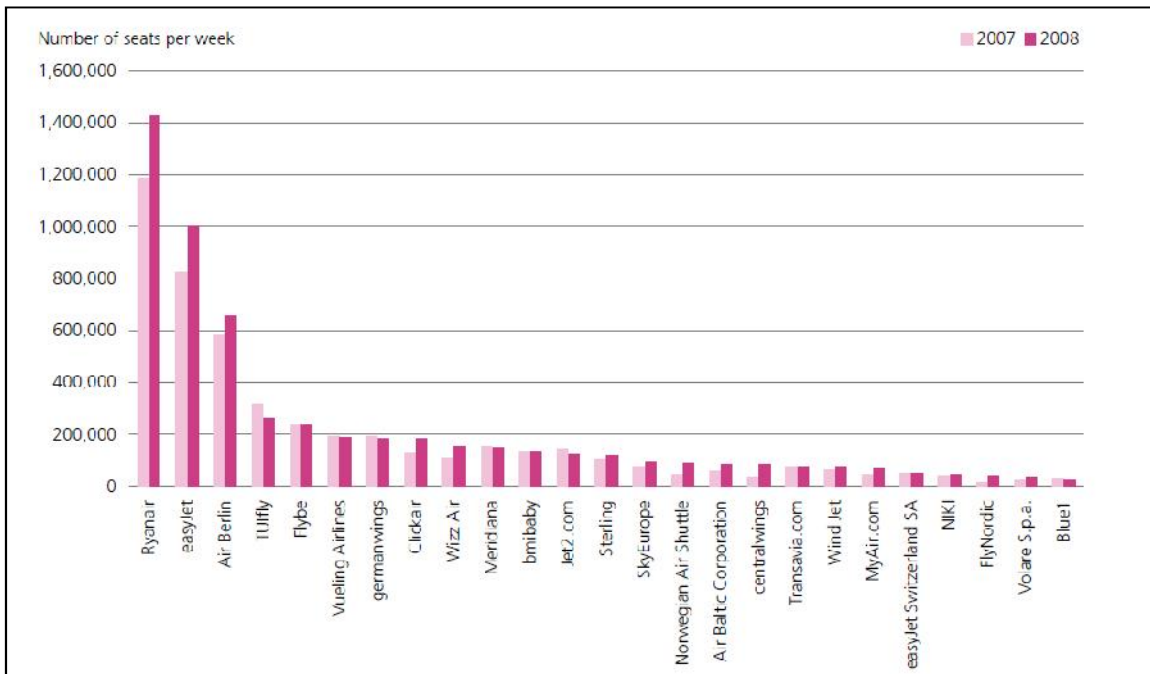
Therefore, intra-EU seats offered per week, for which there was reliable data for all intra-EU routes and the airlines operating the routes, were used. These figures were obtained from the European Commission's annual report on the state of the EU aviation market published in 2009 (DLR 2009) (Figures 4.1 and 4.2). The 2010 annual report would have been used, but it had not been made public when data collection first began in November 2010. This research used the largest 25 airlines from each group as they were deemed to have more impact (economically, socially, and environmentally), potentially more resources

Figure 4.1 Top 25 full service carriers in Europe (seats per week)



(Source: DLR 2009: 52)

Figure 4.2 Top 25 low cost carriers in Europe (seats per week)



(Source: DLR 2009: 53)

to invest in CSR implementation and communication, potentially higher expectations of their responsibility since they are 'leading' businesses, and (from a practical standpoint) were possibly more financially stable and thus potentially less likely to cease operations during the research (this was a particular concern considering the volatility of the sector (Franke and John 2011; Doganis 2011)).

The requirements for inclusion in the study was that the airline: 1) must have an identifiable low cost or full service business model (as described in Chapter 3, also later in this chapter in Box 4.2); 2) must be in the top 25 airlines in Europe (determined by seats per week on offer in 2008) for its business model; 3) must be headquartered in an ECAA member country; and 4) must still be in operation at the time of data collection. The initial pool of 50 airlines was reduced to 39 after the airlines that did not fit the criteria were removed (Table 4.3, Table 4.4).

Of the eleven airlines that were excluded from the study, four of the airlines from the initial pool (SkyEurope, centralwings, MyAir.com, and Volare SPA) had ceased operations between the publication of *Analysis of the European Air Transport Market* (DLR 2009) and the start of data collection in November 2010 (DLR 2011). An additional two airlines had merged (Clickair and Vueling (DLR 2011)) and one had been bought and integrated (FlyNordic into Norwegian Air Shuttle (DLR 2011) – a further demonstration of the recognised volatility of the airline sector (Duval 2007; Doganis 2006). Two of the excluded airlines were subsidiaries that did not have their own dedicated website or annual report, and were therefore logistically inseparable from their parent companies (easyJet

Table 4.3 Low cost airlines in the sample

Airline	Ranking in terms of EU seats on offer in 2008 (2009)	Headquarters	Operating revenue in 2009 (000, \$)	Ownership
Ryanair	1 (1)	Ireland	4,021,669	Publically listed
easyJet	2 (2)	United Kingdom	4,246,497	Publically listed
Air Berlin	3 (3)	Germany	4,703,133	Publically listed
TUIfly	4 (5)	Germany/ United Kingdom	22,089,172*	Majority owned by TUI AG
Flybe	5 (4)	United Kingdom	813,065	Publically listed (as of April 2011), partially owned by BA
Vueling Airlines	6 (7)	Spain	861,868	46% owned by Iberia
germanwings	7 (8)	Germany	830,946	wholly owned by Lufthansa
Wizz Air	9 (6)	Hungary	Not available	Privately owned
bmibaby	11 (13)	United Kingdom	775,072	Owned by bmi group - now part of Lufthansa Group
Jet2.com	12 (11)	United Kingdom	633,994	Subsidiary of Dart Group
[Cimber] Sterling	13 (not ranked)	Denmark	230,877	Privately owned
Norwegian Air Shuttle	15 (12)	Norway	1,258,686	Publically listed
Air Baltic Corporation	16 (15)	Latvia	441,069	52.6% owned by Latvian state
Transavia.com	18 (14)	The Netherlands	921,487	Subsidiary of KLM
Wind Jet	19 (16)	Italy	-	Subsidiary of Finnair Group
NIKI	22 (18)	Austria	385,678	49.9 owned by airberlin
Blue1	25 (23)	Finland	244,413	Part of SAS Group
* - figure for the whole group/for parent company				

Source: author, compiled from DLR (2009), DLR (2011), individual airlines' annual reports (listed in Appendix 5)

Table 4.4 Full service carriers in the sample

Airline	Ranking in terms of EU seats on offer in 2008 (2009)	Headquarters	Operating revenue in 2009 (000, \$)	Ownership
Lufthansa German Airlines	1 (1)	Germany	31,924,069	Part of Lufthansa Group
Air France	2 (2)	France	28,262,450*	Partner with KLM
British Airways	3 (4)	UK	12,057,315	Merged with Iberia in 2011
Iberia	4 (3)	Spain	6,316,619	Merged with BA in 2011
Alitalia	5 (6)	Italy	4,183,381	Privately own, Air France-KLM has a 25% share
KLM-Royal Dutch Airlines	6 (5)	The Netherlands	28,262,450*	Partner with Air France
Scandinavian Airlines	7 (8)	Denmark, Norway, Sweden	6,255,989	Part of SAS Group
Spanair	8 (11)	Spain	Not available	Privately owned, SAS Group has a minority share
Aer Lingus	9 (7)	Ireland	1,727,420	Publically listed
Austrian	10 (11)	Austria	2,951,433	Part of Lufthansa Group
TAP Air Portugal	11 (9)	Portugal	2,755,014	State owned
Air Europa	13 (12)	Spain	1,663,845	Part of Globalia Group
Olympic Airlines	14 (15)	Greece	-	Merged with Aegean in February 2010
Aegean Airlines	15 (13)	Greece	892,139	Privately owned
bmi british midland	16 (20)	UK	775,072	Fully owned by Lufthansa
Finnair	17 (16)	Finland	2,708,023*	Part of Finnair Group
Czech Airlines	18 (18)	Czech Republic	Not available	State owned
SN Brussels Airlines	19 (17)	Belgium	12,057,315	Part of Lufthansa Group
SWISS	20 (19)	Switzerland	4,203,276	Part of Lufthansa Group
LOT-Polish Airlines	21 (21)	Poland	887,965	68% state owned, employees own a minority share
MALEV Hungarian Airlines	22 (22)	Hungary	485,461	Privately owned
Virgin Atlantic Airways	25 (not ranked)	UK	3,678,602	51% owned by Virgin Group, 49% Singapore Airlines
* - figure for the whole group/for parent company				

Source: author, compiled from DLR (2009), DLR (2011), individual airlines' annual reports (listed in Appendix 5)

Switzerland SA and Air One). Meridiana was excluded as, since its merger with Eurofly, it has adopted a business model that was deemed to be too hybridised to allow for low-cost/charter/full-service classification. And finally, Delta Air Lines and Turkish Airlines were both excluded since, although both were in the top 25 in the EU in terms of capacity, neither was based in a member of the ECAA.

Of the 39 airlines included in the study, 17 had business models identified as a variation of the low-cost model, and 22 had a dominant business model more closely aligned with the full-service model. One of the concerns of this research was that the sample would be imbalanced because the 25 largest full service carriers would offer considerably more seats than the low cost carriers, thus making a distinction between the approaches to CSR management due to the scale of business operations and business model difficult, and thus, rendering Objective 6 ('compare how low cost carriers and full service carriers reported their understandings and practices of CSR') impractical. However, it is interesting to note that while the low cost carriers had fewer seats on offer as a whole, the top three low cost carriers (Ryanair, easyJet, and Air Berlin) collectively offer nearly as many seats in 2008 as the top three full-service carriers (Lufthansa German Airways, Air France, and British Airways) (DLR 2009). However, on average, low cost carriers offered fewer numbers of seats and that size and business model needed to be considered together when addressing Objective 6.

The decision to use business models as one of the criteria for sample selection was not without its difficulties. One of the issues with the sample group is that a great deal of hybridisation of business models has occurred, especially in Europe (as was discussed in detail in Chapter 3) (Coles, *et al.* 2009; Teckentrup 2007; Dobruszkes 2006; Francis *et al.* 2006). Nevertheless, some of the airlines labelled as low cost carriers in DLR (2009) adhered more strictly to the low cost business model (as described by Alves and Barbot (2007), Hansson *et al.* (2003), and Groß and Schröder (2007)) than others. For instance, Ryanair's CEO Michael O'Leary has repeatedly stated Ryanair's commitment to the low cost model's practice of charging for ancillary items (Creaton 2004). On the other side of the spectrum, Flybe had two fare classes (economy and 'Economy Plus') and maintains 'Executive Lounges' (Flybe 2009) – both characteristics of a full-service carrier; however its overall structure, management approach, operational model, and much of its inventory management was more closely aligned with a low cost approach.

This research used the business model classifications already given to the sample airlines in DLR (2009) (Box 4.2), which were deemed to be compatible with established definitions of airline business models (e.g. Alves and Barbot 2007; Hansson *et al.* 2003; Groß and Schröder 2007; Doganis 2006; Claussen and O'Higgins 2010). In addition, a brief analysis of business operations was applied to all of the sample airlines to identify any obvious change of business model between the publication of DLR (2009) and the collection of the data. As a result of this, it was found that Meridiana, following a merger and restructuring, was no longer operating a low cost service as defined by DLR

(2009), and instead had adopted a business model that was based on the charter model (Meridianafly 2011).

Box 4.2 Classification of the business models of the sample

Full Service Network Carriers are scheduled airlines with a business model that focuses on providing a diverse and extensive service. These are typically internationally operating companies with a network-oriented system (normally with one or more hubs), covering a wide geographical area and providing transportation in several different classes.

The Low Cost Carriers category comprises those airlines that offer low prices for the majority of flights and which mainly operate on short and medium-distance routes with low overheads and a relatively high load factor; these airlines use a no-frills business model.

Source: DLR (2009: 47)

Another complicating factor of the sample was the ownership of the airlines (Table 4.3 and Table 4.4, above). Many of the airlines in this study (and in the EU) have owners in common. For instance, Lufthansa German Airlines, Austrian, bmi british midland (of which bmibaby is a subsidiary), SN Brussels Airlines, SWISS, and germanwings are all owned by the Lufthansa Group. Similarly, Blue1 is owned by SAS; British Airways (which also has a 15% ownership of Flybe) merged with Iberia during the course of this research (BA 2010); and KLM-Royal Dutch Airlines (of which Transavia.com is a subsidiary) is in a partnership with Air France and, at the time of the study, both airlines were considering buying Czech Airlines from the Czech government. This interconnectivity of the European airline industry was seen both between full service carriers and other full service carriers and between full service carriers and low cost carriers. Thus, the CSR approaches, programmes, and

communications of airlines in this sample had the possibility of being influenced not only by competitors and operating environments, but also by the CSR approaches, programmes, and communications of their partners, parent companies, and subsidiaries (and, by extension, the competitors and operating environments of the airlines' partners, parent companies, and subsidiaries). This convergence between airlines within the sector was a vital consideration for Objective 5 in regards to intersectoral knowledge transfer (which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6).

4.3 Data collection

As was discussed in Chapter 2, previous studies have primarily used either semi-structured interviews (Tsai and Hsu 2008; Lynes and Dredge 2006; Gebel 2004); CSR, environmental or annual reports (Philips 2006; Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois 2010; Vourvachis 2009; Mak et al. 2007; Mak and Chan 2007; Mak and Chan 2006); or a combination of both semi-structured interviews and reports (Lynes and Andrachuk 2008; Coles et al. 2009; Hooper and Greenall 2005). The studies that have looked at both data sources (managers and reports) found differences in the information that was communicated by the sources, with sometimes large programmes, initiatives and strategic management decisions excluded from formal, publically-available CSR communications (e.g. Coles et al. 2009) and some differences between the information available through different types of public reporting (e.g. Vourvachis 2009). Therefore, research in the area of the CSR of airlines has suggested that triangulation of the data sources (as described in detail in Bryman 2004) could lead to a fuller understanding of the messages and decisions behind airlines'

CSR management. Additionally, studies of CSR in other sectors have shown that '[c]ompanies use the annual report and corporate website for reporting different types of information' (Guthrie et al. 2008: 40). This finding was mirrored by Coles *et al.* (2009) for European low cost carriers, with the additional finding that press releases also had different perspectives and sometime divergent information to that which was in reports and on websites. Previous research has suggested, then, that the information provided in the 'CSR communications' of airlines can vary depending on the type of CSR communication (and the degree to which the communication is publically available).

The aim of this research was (as stated earlier in this chapter) to critically examine the self-reported socially-responsible activities of European full-service and low-fares airlines. In the interest of providing a more thorough analysis of the self-reported CSR-related activities of airlines, this study went beyond the dual-source data triangulation that has been the dominant means of data triangulation in previous research. Instead, three publically-available data sources were used: annual reports/CSR-specific reports, company websites, and company press releases. The information that was provided by these three sources was further verified and elucidated by semi-structured elite interviews with airline managers, which lead to a total of four perspectives on the sample group's CSR activities.

While, in the interest of time constraints (both for data collection and analysis), miscellaneous communications about the sample airlines' CSR activities were not included (for example, PDF brochures available for download from airlines'

websites), this study still benefitted from the most diverse set of data sources and the largest data set of recent studies on the CSR activities of airlines. The data was divided into two main sections: the secondary data composed of written communications (annual reports and stand-alone CSR reports, website content, and press releases); and primary data composed of semi-structured elite interviews. Notably, in both sections, the majority of the information provided took the form of qualitative description. That is, while some of the data used numerical measures to describe airlines' CSR-related activities (e.g. '189,000 metric tons of CO₂ saved in 2009-10' (Air France/KLM 2010: 20)), the bulk of the data consisted of narrative descriptions, both in the interviews and in the CSR-related communications ('British Airways is playing a leading role within the aviation industry in developing and promoting proactive solutions for post-Kyoto aviation policy' (BA 2010: 13)).

4.3.1 Data collection schedule

Data collection took place over three stages. First, as was mentioned earlier, this research built on a previous research project looking at low cost carriers' CSR, and five interviews that were collected for that project (from 01 September 2008 to 01 September 2009) were also used in this research. The data that were collected expressly for this research project were collected in two further stages. The secondary data set, which was comprised of annual reports, press releases, annual reports and stand-alone CSR reports, was collected from 01 November 2010 to 01 July 2011. A further ten interviews with airline managers were conducted between 01 July 2011 and 01 October 2011 exclusively for this research. In addition, two of the managers who had been interviewed previously

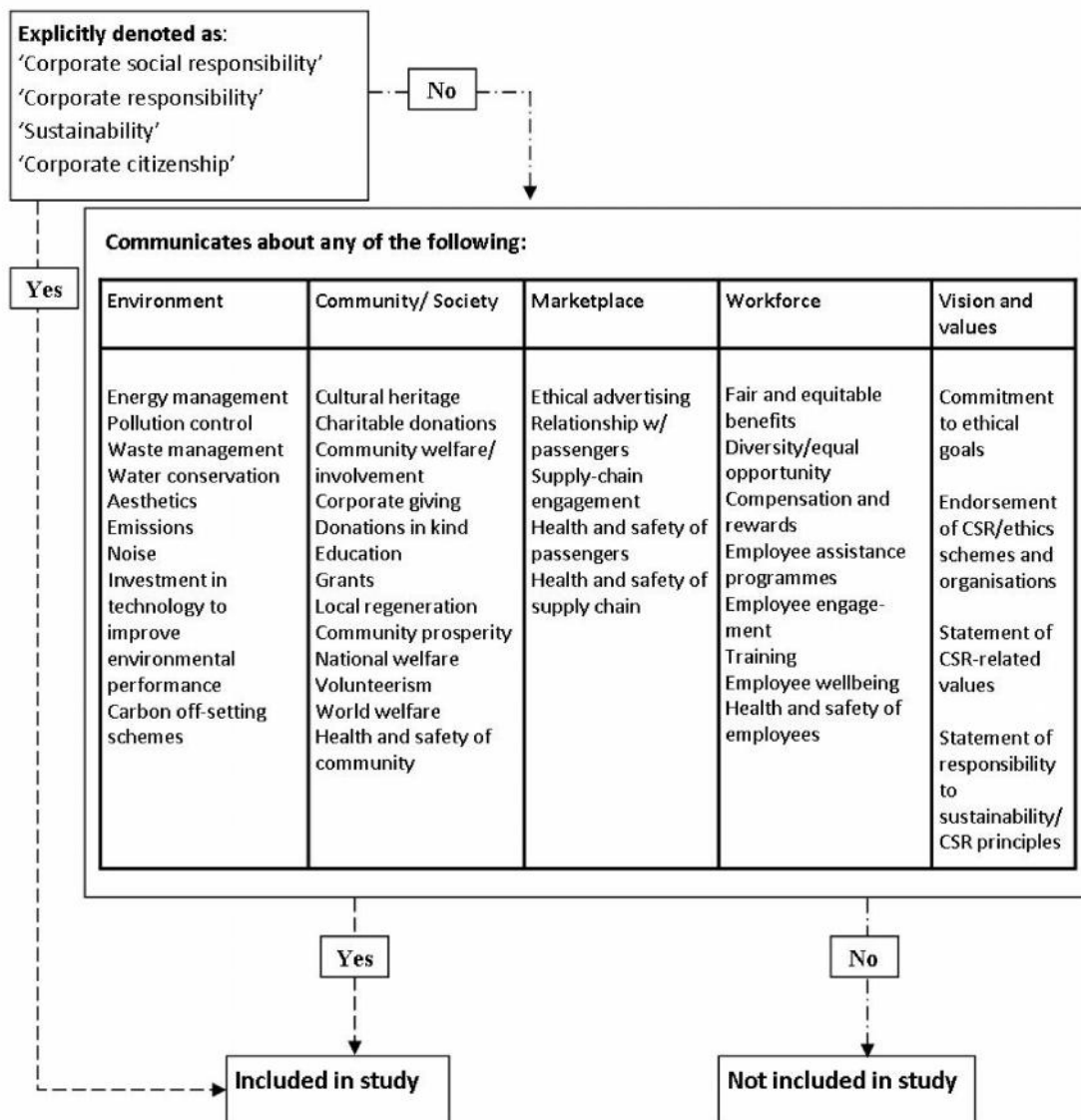
gave extended updates on their airlines' progress since the earlier interviews. More details about how the data collection took place and the characteristics of both secondary and primary data sets will be discussed in more detail in the following two sections.

4.3.2 Secondary data collection

As has been discussed extensively in Chapter 2, definitions of CSR vary widely, with many different definitions vying for general acceptance. In addition, this variance of definitions seemed to extend to the sample group as the initial data collection found that some activities denoted as 'corporate social responsibility' were not explicitly denoted as such by other airlines. As a result, the secondary data collection was faced with the difficulty of deciding what exactly should be considered to be a part of the airlines' CSR communications (and, by extension, what should be considered to be their CSR-related activities). To address this issue, a list of possible CSR topics was used, which was based on a combination of Dahlsrud's (2008) five primary dimensions of 37 academic definitions of CSR (the environmental, social, economic, stakeholder, and voluntariness dimensions), the extensive list of keywords used in Holcomb *et al.*'s (2007) study of the CSR activities of top ten international hotel companies, Vourvachis's (2006) airline-specific CSR coding categories, and the dimensions and themes found during Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois's (2010) research. Based on these taxonomies, a 'decision map' was created to aide in the data collection (Figure 4.3).

On their own, each of the taxonomies that contributed to the 'decision map' would have been potentially problematic for this study. Dahlsrud's (2008) dimensions of CSR (the environmental, social, economic, stakeholder, and voluntariness dimensions), while helpful for framing, are broad and overlook the ethical dimension (such as statements of ethical intent) that have been identified as being common components of CSR in practice in the tourism industry (Holcomb *et al.* 2007). Holcomb *et al.*'s (2007: 446) taxonomy (Table 4.5) was helpful in its thoroughness; however, notably, the taxonomy was created before their study was conducted based on theoretical definitions of CSR. Since this research focused on how the airlines themselves interpreted their CSR, a theory-based, predetermined taxonomy would have been too restrictive. However, as part of a larger approach to data collection, the taxonomy was useful in identifying a wide range of activities that have been considered to be relevant to CSR. Some adaptations were necessary before Holcomb *et al.*'s (2007) categories and keywords could be applied to the CSR communications of airlines. These changes were initially matters of terminology (changing 'guests' to 'passengers', for instance); however, the previous work of Coles *et al.* (2009) revealed that the keywords and terminology used would also have to be reconsidered, primarily in the environmental section. For instance, many of the airlines mentioned technological investment in more efficient aircraft as an example of their environmentally-responsible activities – an investment in technology that is understandably overlooked in Holcomb *et al.*'s (2007) taxonomy.

Figure 4.3 Decision map for data collection



Source: author, developed from Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois (2010), Dahlsrud (2008), Vourvachis (2006), and Holcomb *et al.* (2007)

Table 4.5 Holcomb et al.'s (2007) CSR keywords

Community	Environment	Marketplace	Vision and values	Workforce
Charitable donations Community welfare Corporate giving Donations in kind Education Grants Local regeneration National welfare Volunteerism World welfare	Cultural heritage Energy management Pollution control Recycle Waste management Water conservation	Ethical advertising Providing a product of value Relationship w/ guests Relationship w/ suppliers Relationship with shareholders Supplier diversity	Accountability Clear purpose Enduring values Ethical behaviour Fairness Self regulation Trust	Advancement Fair and equitable benefits Career planning Compensation and rewards Daycare and family accommodations Diversity/equal opportunity Employee assistance program Employee communication Health and safety Recruitment Training

Source: Holcomb et al. (2007: 466)

Both Vourvachis (2006) (Table 4.6) and Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois's (2010) (Table 4.7) presented categories that were airline-specific and tested through research. However, they also have their limitations. Environmental technology investment is also overlooked in Vourvachis's (2006) coding scheme, as is employee training and advancement (topics that the test study uncovered as potentially important). Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois's (2010) dimensions and themes provide broad, sector-relevant concerns for environmental and social/economic components, but overlook issues such as the *vision and values* areas which were identified by Holcomb et al. (2007). Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois (2010) also introduced the theme of *economic prosperity*, which should perhaps be clarified as *external* or *community prosperity* as Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois (2010) (and, for that matter,

Dahlsrud (2008), Vourvachis (2006), and Holcomb *et al.* (2007)) do not include the organisations' economic prosperity as a matter of CSR. Thus, the four

Table 4.6 Vourvachis's (2006) Coding Spreadsheet

Health and Safety	Marketplace	Workplace	Community	Environment	Other
H&S at workplace	Consumers	Employee/pension data	Community involvement	Environmental pollution	Value added statement
H&S at marketplace	Creditors	Equal opportunities	Charities	Energy	Other CSR
H&S of community		Human rights		Aesthetics	
H&S - Other		Consultation with Emp. [sic]		Environment - Other	
		Share ownership			

Source: Adapted from Vourvachis (2006: 149)

Table 4.7 Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois's (2010) Dimensions and Themes of Airlines' CSR

Environmental Dimensions	Social and Economic Dimensions
Emissions Waste Energy Water Noise Other	Employee wellbeing and engagement Diversity and social equity Community wellbeing Economic prosperity

Source: Adapted from Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois (2010: 7, 11)

categorisations, when looked at individually, showed research-tested insight and, at the same time, for application in the study, showed clear limitations.

Based on the initial data collection, the review of CSR literature (found in Chapter 2), the CSR definition adopted for this study (Box 4.1), and the categorisations presented by Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois (2010), Dahlsrud (2008), Vourvachis (2009), and Holcomb *et al.* (2007), the 'decision map' helped standardise the inclusion of the communications on CSR-relevant issues for this study. The decision map sought to include any communicated activities specifically labelled as relating to CSR as well as other communicated activities that could be considered (through both theory and practice) as CSR-relevant. While it was useful for standardising the inclusion and (at times) exclusion of information provided by the airlines, the decision map was used as a guide, rather than an absolute rule. Due to the intentionally broad definition of CSR for this study and the lack of a strong precedence of previous studies specifically on CSR communications of airlines, there were necessarily some instances where the researcher had to rely on her own judgement (based on a careful reading of the text) on whether or not to include certain communications. While this could be criticised as limiting the ability for replication of the research (as it introduces an element of personal choice – and possible researcher bias), Gummerson (2000) argued that a researcher's personal judgement and interpretation are important assets for research and Thomas and Magilvy (2011) suggested that *dependability* (that is, that the choices made during research are clearly presented) is more apt for qualitative research than *replication*.

4.3.3 Composition of the secondary data

The secondary data set was comprised of a total of 566 CSR-related public communications (webpages, press releases, annual reports, and stand-alone CSR reports) (Tables 4.8 and 4.9). All of the bibliographical details for the secondary data set are presented in Appendix 5. Within the period of secondary data collection (01 November 2010 to 01 July 2011), not all annual/CSR reports from 2010 had been made publically available at that stage; therefore, some annual/CSR reports from 2009 were used instead. Annual reports were only used if they included CSR-relevant material (as classified by the 'decision map') that was specific to airlines in the sample. From the full service airlines, ten annual reports and seven stand-alone CSR-related reports were included in the data set. Of the low cost carriers, eight annual reports contained communications relevant to this study, and four low cost carriers in the sample were included in their parent companies' CSR reports (Transavia, TUIfly, germanwings, and Blue1). As was discussed earlier in this section, there were high levels of common ownership among the sampled airlines, and this was especially reflected in the annual report/CSR report data set. Air France and KLM reported together in both their annual report and their CSR report. The Air France/KLM CSR report also included information on Transavia, one of their low cost subsidiaries, although this information was primarily about Transavia's charitable activities and metrics on Transavia's environmental impacts were explicitly excluded from the report. Similarly, Blue1, a subsidiary of SAS was included in its CSR report. Lufthansa's CSR report included some of its subsidiaries (germanwings, Austrian, and SWISS), but interesting, not others

Table 4.8 Full service carriers' secondary data

Airline	Press releases	Annual report		CSR report	Webpages
		2009	2010		
Lufthansa German Airlines	9	1	0	1	32
Air France	2	0	1**	1**	52
British Airways	22	0	1	1	59
Iberia	4	0	1	0	20
Alitalia	0	0	0	0	1
KLM-Royal Dutch Airlines	6	0	1**	1**	35
Scandinavian Airlines	4	0	0	1	19
Spanair	0	0	0	0	5
Aer Lingus	1	1	0	0	2
Austrian	1	0	0	1*	6
TAP Air Portugal	0	1	0	0	6
Air Europa	0	1*	0	0	1
Olympic Airlines	2	0	0	0	0
Aegean Airlines	0	0	0	1	8
bmi british midland	0	0	0	0	0
Finnair	7	1	0	1	23
Czech Airlines	0	1	0	0	5
SN Brussels Airlines	1	0	0	0	10
SWISS	1	0	0	1*	11
LOT-Polish Airlines	1	0	0	0	8
MALEV Hungarian Airlines	3	1	0	0	6
Virgin Atlantic Airways	1	0	0	1	48
Total	65	6 (1)	3**	7** (2)	357
*- included in parent company's report; **-joint reporting, (n) – total number of parent company reports					

Source: author, compiled from sources in Appendix 5

(SN Brussels Airlines, bmi british midlands, bmibaby). Similarly, the CSR-related information on subsidiaries was largely lacking in annual reports, with the notable exception of TUifly, Jet2.com, and Air Europa. All of the relevant annual and CSR reports were downloaded, and their bibliographical details, along with research notes, were recorded in an Excel spreadsheet.

Table 4.9 Low cost carriers' secondary data

Airline	Press releases	Annual report		CSR report	Webpages
		2009	2010		
Ryanair	12	1	0	0	2
easyJet	5	1	0	0	13
Air Berlin	4	1	0	0	5
TUIfly	0	1*	0	1*	14
Flybe	19	0	1	0	6
Vueling Airlines	0	0	0	0	0
germanwings	0	0	0	1*	0
Wizz Air	2	0	0	0	0
bmibaby	3	0	0	0	0
Jet2.com	18	1*	0	0	0
Cimber Sterling	0	0	1	0	1
Norwegian Air Shuttle	0	1	0	0	4
Air Baltic Corporation	2	0	0	0	1
Transavia.com	1	0	0	1*	0
Wind Jet	0	0	0	0	0
NIKI	0	0	0	0	0
Blue1	4	0	0	1*	3
Total	70	4 (2)	2	(4)	49
*- included in parent company's report; **-joint reporting, (n) – total number of parent company reports					

Source: author, compiled from sources in Appendix 5

Twenty full service airlines hosted CSR-related information on their websites with a total of 357 webpages identified as meeting the criteria presented in the 'decision map'. The low cost carriers published considerably less, with nine airlines publishing CSR-related information on their websites for a total of 49 webpages. Two low cost carriers (easyJet and Flybe) and six full service carriers (Lufthansa, Air France, British Airways, TAP Air Portugal, SN Brussels Airlines, and LOT Polish Airlines) had direct links from the website landing page to CSR-related information. In other words, eight of the airlines in the sample had CSR information available with only one 'click' of the mouse, a prioritisation

in the hierarchy of the websites that suggests a strong emphasis on communicating CSR information (Fenclova and Coles 2011; Coupland 2006). Webpages that were not directly linked to the homepage were most often found under 'About us' or 'Investor relations' subsections. An internal website search and an additional Google search using CSR keywords and the airline's name (e.g. 'environment AND "Air Berlin"') were used to verify the data set included all of the relevant webpages available. All of the relevant webpages were converted into PDF documents in order to capture them in a static form and to prepare them for analysis. The bibliographical details, research notes, and a record of where each page was located in the website hierarchy (how many mouse 'clicks' from the homepage) were recorded in an Excel spreadsheet.

Ten of the low cost airlines published CSR-related press releases and they published a total of 70 press releases between January 2010 and December 2010. Of the full service carriers, 15 airlines published a total of 64 press releases on CSR-relevant between January 2010 and December 2010. One of the key decisions made during the collection of press releases was to include press releases discussing staff strikes. These were included because they dealt either with the 'Workforce' issues of 'employee engagement' and 'fair and equitable benefits' in the case of union negotiations or with the 'Marketplace' issue of 'relationships with passengers' in the case of communications on contingency plans. The press releases were also notable in that some of the airlines published multiple press releases on a single issue. For instance, five of the 18 press releases published by Jet2.com detailed its collaboration with a local zoo. All of the relevant press releases were downloaded into Microsoft

Word documents, and their bibliographical details (along with research notes) were recorded in an Excel spreadsheet.

Three low cost carriers (NIKI, Wind Jet, and Vueling Airlines) and one full service carrier (bmi british midlands) did not publish any CSR-relevant webpages, press releases or reports during the data collection period. Thus, the secondary data included in this study came from the 35 airlines that did publically report on some aspects of their perceived CSR: 14 low cost carriers and 21 full service carriers.

4.3.4 Primary data collection

The primary data generated by this research consisted of 15 semi-structured interviews with managers from the sampled airlines. Potential interviewees were originally selected through web research. Managers with titles such as 'Head of Corporate Social Responsibility' or 'Sustainability Manager' were targeted, with precedence given to the more senior manager (when it could be ascertained). There were several airlines from the sample of 39 that did not list any names or contact details of staff with a remit in CSR or related field (environmental management, sustainability), and a 'snowball' technique was used with the first round of managers to identify relevant managers at airlines that had been missed in the first round of interviews. Potential interviewees were first contacted via postal letter in the format suggested by Goldstein (2002) (Appendix 1). This was followed up by an email and phone call as necessary.

One of the most difficult issues with conducting the interviews was gaining access to potential interviewees. As Goldstein (2002: 671) notes, 'scheduling and completing elite interviews takes a fair bit of luck', mostly due to the fact that the sample size was necessarily relatively limited and the people who were targeted were high-level managers with busy schedules (and had the power/privilege characteristics identified by Welch, *et al.*'s (2002) for 'elite' individuals). The time period of research was potentially a large factor in gaining access as, due to scheduling issues, interviews were to be conducted between 01 July 2011 and 01 October 2011 - one of the busiest seasons for the airline industry since it is during the summer holiday period. However, the degree to which the time period of interview solicitation had an impact on the number of interviews achieved is difficult to ascertain. As pointed out by Goldstein (2002), a percentage of elite managers will refuse to grant interviews with researchers no matter what the context or the time of year. In the end, of the 27 managers who were contacted, 12 agreed to be interviewed, three agreed that the interview from the previous research project could be used without a follow-up interview, and one manager called to give an informal, detailed discussion of why he did not want to have a formal interview.

The five interviews that were brought over from the previous research project were included because I had conducted or co-conducted the interviews, the interview format and semi-structured schedule for both this research and the previous research project were very similar, and in all five cases, the interviewees formally stated that they were willing for their interview to be included in this research. This last criteria meant that ten other interviews that

we had conducted for the previous research were not included, but because of the potentially sensitive nature of the interviews and since the interviewees had initially only agreed for the interviews to be used in the original research project, this was deemed to be ethically necessary. In the case of the five included interviews, the interviewees confirmed that they were happy for the interviews to be included in the current research project, and they confirmed that either their airline had not changed its approach to CSR since the interview or that they would be able to provide an additional interview to update the information on their current CSR practices. When reported in this PhD, the interviews which had been conducted as part of the previous research project have been denoted with an 'a' – e.g. Interview 12a. The interviews from the previous research which were included in this project's data set were similar in length to the interviews generated during this research period. The original interviews were especially important to include in this research as requests for elite interviews often have a relatively low response rate (Goldstein 2002).

Another issue that came up during the research was the issue of anonymity and confidentiality. It was recognised that assuring anonymity of any information given during the interview could impact the degree to which interviewees were willing to be candid about their airlines' CSR choices. Therefore, interviewees were guided through a consent form (Appendix 2), which assured them of the confidentiality and anonymity of any information provided during the interview. This was especially important as it was possible that participants might reveal information that is not intended to be publically- known and that the airline might not want to have published in connection with its name (Coles *et al* 2009). Therefore, there could be professional repercussions for participants should the

researcher publish the name of participants or name of the airline that employs the participants. Also, as the airlines studied form a small community of practice, there could also be potential professional repercussions should this research reveal other individual-specific data such as personal details, employment history, nationality, or possibly even job title, and business-specific data such as nationality, number of aircraft, number of passengers, or years in operation. As a result, extra care was taken when conducting and reporting information from the interviews. Any details that might identify the participants or their employers have been removed. Additionally, as the sample is relatively small, information such as the size or nationality of the interviewees' airlines has not been reported. The only differentiating information that has been included in the research is whether the interviewee was employed by a full service or a low cost carrier (explanatory valuable information that is important for the aim and objectives of the research).

Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format loosely based on a formalised schedule (Appendix 3). Questions were specifically chosen to match the objectives of this research. For instance, interviewees were asked how other stakeholders had been involved in their CSR management (Question 20) in order to provide some insight for Objective 5. While it was recognised that face-to-face interviews can offer better insights (since the environment and facial expressions can be observed and the researcher has a better opportunity to establish rapport (Welch, *et al.* 2002)), interviewees were given the option of face-to-face or Skype/telephone interviews in an attempt to make the interview process as easy and appealing for potential interviewees as possible.

In the end, only three interviews were conducted in person and 12 were conducted over Skype/telephone. The interviews lasted an average of 32 minutes, with the shortest interview lasting 24 minutes and the longest lasting 84 minutes. Notes were taken during the interview and a research diary entry on initial impressions was completed after each interview. The research diary was also used to record potential emerging themes and to highlight especially interesting outcomes from the interviews. All of the interviewees consented to having the interviews recorded. Since most of the interviews took place over Skype/telephone, interviewees were verbally asked for their consent before the recording device was turned on. These recordings were transcribed, and the transcriptions, along with the research diary and notes, were the main data used for analysis.

4.3.5 Ethical issues

Great care was taken to ensure that the managers who granted interviews would not be harmed or negatively impacted due to their participation in the research. As was mentioned earlier in this section, it was recognised that there could be negative personal and professional implications should the anonymity of research participants not be preserved. Therefore, an ethical approval form [Appendix 4] was completed and reviewed with the researcher's supervisors to clearly detail the steps that would be taken before, during, and after data collection and presentation. The procedures detailed in the form were also approved by Dr. Emma Bell, then Ethics Officer of the University of Exeter Business School.

In accordance with the agreed procedure, before the interviews were conducted, interviewees were asked to read and sign an informed consent form (Appendix 2), and the researcher explained the measures in place to ensure confidentiality. The researcher also signed the form. Copies of the consent form were also offered to the participants. For the interviews that were conducted over the phone or over Skype, the informed consent form was sent to interviewees ahead of time, and interviewees were asked to give their verbal acknowledgement that they had read the form and were still willing to proceed with the interview, and that they were willing for the interview to be recorded. During the interview, care was taken to ensure the confidentiality of other interviewees was not breached. All interviewees were sent a formal, short email or letter soon after the interview thanking them for their participation. No remuneration was offered, though a brief synopsis was sent in April 2013.

When reporting and analysing the data, as mentioned earlier in the chapter, all quotations have been presented anonymously and any information that might identify the participant and/or their employer has been removed. In terms of protecting the data, recordings of interviews and interview transcriptions were kept on a separate external hard drive in password-protected folders. When not being used by the researcher, the hard drive was stored in a secure, locked desk. Any hard copy interview transcriptions and all informed consent forms were also kept in the locked desk when not being used by the researcher. Interview data (including informed consent forms, transcripts, and voice recordings) will be kept for no more than five years after the conclusion of the

research, at which point the electronic files will be deleted and the external hard drive will be reformatted, and hard copies of interview data will be destroyed.

While the elite interviews were deemed to require a strong, ethically-conscientious procedure, such elaborate requirements were not necessary for the secondary data. This was primarily due to the fact that all of the communications that comprised the secondary data sets were publically-available through the airlines' own websites. Therefore, it was considered reasonable to assume that the information provided through the secondary data was intended to be publically associated with the airlines. Therefore, the names and other identifying information has been included when reporting the findings of this research as no confidentiality-related ethical issues are present. As was discussed above, the bibliographical details for all of the secondary data is in Appendix 5. Direct quotations used in the text are cited and included in the reference list for the whole thesis. Care has been taken to ensure that the information provided by interviewees has not been, nor could be, linked to the information provided through the secondary data sets.

4.4 Methods of analysis

With the data in hand, the fourth issue faced by this research (as mentioned in the introduction) became quickly apparent : the CSR communication style of the European airlines on the whole was based on narratives rather than numbers. The format of the data had a large influence on the types of analysis that could be conducted (Strauss and Corbin 1990; Bryman 2004). Strict quantitative

analysis of the data sets was briefly considered before being discounted, primarily because the airlines themselves primarily chose to report their CSR-related activities in narrative form. One exception was environmental efforts, and many airlines provided quantitative measures of their environmental efforts, though, crucially for comparative purposes, not all of them did. Furthermore, even among airlines that did report using indices and metrics, many of the values were incompatible with inferential statistical analysis due to the unknowns of sample size and the methods used to derive the data (this was also found by Mak *et al.* (2007) and Hooper and Greenall (2005)). Many non-environmental activities were given no numerical evaluation, which would have excluded a large portion of CSR-related engagement from this analysis. Similarly, while it may have been possible to analyse some of the airlines' charitable involvement in terms of the amount of money donated or the number of days that staff participated in charity events, such analysis would have been a drastic simplification of the airline-charity relationships described in the data (see Section 5.3.3). Thus, the scope of the research would have been greatly limited, and the findings would have been a poor reflection of the data.

Beyond the practical issues of using strict quantitative methods, there were further epistemological and ontological considerations. The data themselves through both their creation and presentation were unmistakably emblematic of human construction, reconstruction, and sense making. Or, put differently, from a positivist's perspective, the data would be deeply flawed for research seeking to find the 'universal truth' of airlines' CSR practices – that is, what airlines are, in 'reality' practicing (e.g. Bryman 2004). The reported CSR practices were necessarily filtered by the communicators, which meant that one could not

expect the information to be an objective, impartial, or exact account of what was being practiced. Since all the information has been filtered and reconstructed to fit into human and organisational narratives, from a positivist perspective, we cannot be certain that the information provided and narratives constructed are complete and completely reflective of a scientifically measurable reality. Indeed, CSR itself, in theory and application (as discussed in Chapter 2), is highly subject to multiple interpretations and lacks a standardised, 'true' definition.

While rules and realities could be put into place (e.g. this research could have adopted one of the many CSR definitions as the 'true' definition of CSR), any positivist findings generated from the research would have the potential of only being true for certain artificial conditions (for instance 'if we accept that the airlines are reporting fully and completely all of their activities relating to a 'triple bottom line' understanding of CSR'). A better fit for both the data and the subject was an interpretivist approach based on a hermeneutic phenomenological understanding (Lavery 2003) of the role of the construction and deconstruction of knowledge. Or, put more simply, in this research, it was understood that the exact, objective 'truth' of airlines' CSR practices would be impossible to ascertain from the data; however, what the data did offer was something arguably more interesting for practitioner and policymakers alike – the meaning, narrative, and emphasis constructed by airlines about their activities that are perceived to be relating to the airlines' interpretation of the idea of corporate social responsibility.

4.4.1 Mixed qualitative methods

Based on a positivist paradigm, this study used mixed qualitative methods by combining content analysis and grounded theory-based analysis. Mixed methods in travel and tourism research have become common triangulation practice, and especially prevalent is the use of qualitative research to develop and suggest theories, which are then tested by quantitative research (Walle 1997). While this approach may be popular, researchers have pointed out the difficulties of combining qualitative and quantitative paradigms in the same study (e.g. Hammersley 1996; Walle 1997). Some, such as Bryman (2004), see the differences between methods as theoretical as well as practical and have argued that qualitative and quantitative strategies are based upon separate, and at times, conflicting views of the role of the researcher, epistemological orientation and ontological orientation. However, not all researchers see the line between qualitative and quantitative methods as so decisive – as is clearly evidenced both in practice with the prevalence of ‘mixed methods’ approaches (Walle 1997; Hammersley 1996) and in theory with (for example) debates over whether content analysis as a method of analysis can be applied to both qualitative and quantitative paradigms (Vourvachis 2009).

Some researchers, like some methods, surely are capable of choosing to switch between different roles and epistemological and ontological orientations, and this research does not dispute the potential value of mixing paradigms in research. However, based on the issues raised in the introduction of this chapter (a general lack of precedent and previous studies in the sector; a potentially wide range of CSR practices, definitions, and types of

communications; a necessarily limited sample group across a spectrum of business model variations, nationalities, and sizes; and a CSR communication style based primarily on narratives rather than numbers) using mixed paradigms for this particular project was discounted. Thus, the subject of research (a socially-constructed, contested term) as well as the data was well suited for a qualitative paradigm-based research programme. While paradigms were not mixed, this research did use mixed methods as a means of research triangulation. First, both sets of data were analysed using a grounded theory-based approach which focused on identifying the main, overarching themes and trends. These macro-level themes and trends were then tested through content analysis, which assessed and at times quantified micro-level information (i.e. words and phrases).

4.4.2 Grounded theory

The first method of analysis applied to the data for methods triangulation was a grounded theory-based approach. Suddaby (2006: 633) has argued that grounded theory should be understood as a 'reaction against the extreme positivism that had permeated most social research'. In keeping with this interpretivist approach, the analysis was not based on predetermined hypotheses. This approach was especially well-suited to the focus of research: the malleable issue of CSR in practice. Instead, the objectives were intentionally open and fluid, and the focus of the research was on 'constructions of responsibility' (how the airlines described their CSR) rather than 'adhering to responsibility' (e.g. how the airlines' approaches to CSR conformed to 'triple bottom line' approaches to CSR). These 'open and fluid' objectives were a

necessary alternative to the completely preconception-free approach advocated by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss and Corbin (1990). However, as Pratt (2012: 2) pragmatically notes, research students' application of grounded theory is often shaped by the fact that without clear aims and objectives from the onset of research, '[student projects] would be unlikely to pass through research degree committees'. While creating objectives before the start of analysis is not endorsed by the founders of grounded theory, nonetheless, it is a common – and commonly accepted – practice (Pratt 2012). Furthermore, as this research was based on a prior research project, the objectives for this research grew out of the previous intense scrutiny of data that was similar to the data used in this study.

There has been much debate about what constitutes grounded theory in practice (Pratt 2012; Strauss and Corbin 1990; Suddaby 2006; Starks and Trinidad 2007; Bak 2005), and especially notable is the rift between Glaser and Strauss's views of the role of the researcher (Bak 2005). However, two basic principles are generally accepted as vital components of a grounded theory approach: 'setting aside theoretical ideas' and 'constant comparison' (Urquhart 2001: 107; see also Corbin and Strauss 1990 and Suddaby 2006). 'Setting aside theoretical ideas', as Urquhart (2001) stressed, does not necessarily mean *a priori* knowledge is necessarily excluded. This research adopted Strauss and Corbin's (1990) view that the researcher is an active participant in theory creation (rather than a passive observer as advocated by the Glaser-influenced strand of grounded theory (Bak 2005)), and as such, researcher-generated research notes and observations, as well as previous experience

working closely with the airline industry and aviation stakeholders were assessed for relevance and in many cases, were included in the formulation of theory. Another contentious aspect of 'setting aside theoretical ideas' has been whether comprehensive reviews of previous studies are an asset to grounded theory-based research by providing focus or whether they are a hindrance by creating an overly biased direction to the research. This research followed Suddaby's (2006) interpretation that the ideal of a completely 'untainted' researcher ignores the rich knowledge base and examples of best practice (as well as techniques that could be improved) that can make research projects more focused. Therefore, the review of research included in Chapter 2 and the use of previous research models in the construction of the 'decision map' were compatible with a grounded theory approach since they were used to inform the research, but not to direct it.

The second main component of a grounded theory-based approach, 'constant comparison', was implemented throughout data collection and analysis. As suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990) and Urquhart (2001), comparison started with the data collection. Codes were developed and redeveloped during throughout the data collection process. This was especially evident during the interview period where interviewees were asked to comment on some of the emerging codes that had been identified in earlier interviews (most notably, the role of EU-ETS). This 'constant comparison' was also helpful in the secondary data collection, particularly around the issue of defining CSR, since, as the collection progressed, it became apparent that some of the emerging themes required additional data collection. For instance, the code of 'union

relationships' was developed during the collection of press releases in response to BA's press releases on strikes, and required that many of the press releases from other airlines be reassessed. Once both the primary and secondary data sets had been collected, in keeping with Strauss and Corbin's (1990) vision for a grounded theory approach, all of the primary data and related information (the research notes and information supplied by the interviewees) and the secondary data were read multiple times. Open codes were developed to reflect the researcher's understandings of the data. The data were then carefully read again, and the codes were adjusted as necessary. These codes were then developed into theories relevant to the research objectives, which were then tested and compared with the findings generated from the content analysis.

4.4.3 Content analysis

The secondary data set was then coded and evaluated using a semi-structured form of content analysis based on the format used by Holcomb *et al.* (2007) (for annual reports), Capriotti and Moreno (2007) (for websites), and Coles *et al.* (2009) (for annual reports, websites, and press releases). Codes were developed as 'families', or groups of codes that centred on a theme. The themes were based on the objectives of the research; however, the codes themselves were constructed after an extensive reading of all of the secondary and primary data. Test codes were created and applied manually to one-quarter of the secondary data set along with notes and observations in the margins of the texts. All of the secondary documents were then imported into Atlas.ti (Version 6), a qualitative methods-compatible software package. Atlas.ti allowed for the free coding of large amounts of text and images, enable coded sections

to be viewed both in their original context and as an exported text document sorted by codes, and, unlike NVivo (Version 9), was able to process the large volume of PDF documents.

Many of these codes have been presented using 'quantitizing' (Sandelowski *et al.* 2009), that is, in the interest of clarity, the number of airlines reporting each code has been presented. This type of content analysis walks a fine line between quantitative and qualitative traditions. Some researchers use content analysis in a way that is clearly quantitative, such as applying statistical models to coded data (Krippendorff 2004; Hsieh and Shannon 2005). While this approach might superficially be considered to be a quantitative method of analysis, since some of the reporting is numeric-based, Hammersley (1996), Walle (1997), Riley and Love (2000), and Denzin and Lincoln (2005) (among others) have argued that looking only at reporting units is a simplistic way of differentiating between qualitative and quantitative methods and that understandings of qualitative research are continually evolving to account for 'border' methods that have some characteristics of both paradigms.

In the case of this particular use of content analysis, the application had more in common with a qualitative perspective than a quantitative one (with 'rich, deep' data, an interpretivist approach, an emergent exploration of theory and concepts, and an awareness that the 'truth' being described was highly constructed by all actors (Bryman 1988: 94, cited in Hammersley 1996: 161)). As Hammersley (1996: 161) noted:

qualitative researchers regularly make quantitative claims in verbal form, using formulations like “regularly”, “frequently”, “sometimes”, “generally” [...] the fact that they use words instead of numbers does not alter the character of their claims.

For those researchers, the quantitative units are not used to find statistically significant findings, but rather to help find patterns that can be further explored and developed.

For simplicity’s sake, this research used even more precise quantitative units with the same mindset – the numbers in the table were not used to draw firm, statistically-significant conclusions, unlike the some of the more problematic forms of ‘quantitizing’ described by Sandelowski, *et al.* (2009). Rather, the prevalence of certain codes were analysed for potential patterns and themes, which could be explored in more detail through re-examination of the data through grounded theory-based analysis or a framework analysis approach. Furthermore, care was taken in reporting to attempting to preserve as much as possible of ‘the rich messiness of qualitative data while converting them to another form’ (Sandelowski, *et al.* 2009: 219). This included adding annotations to tables where there were strong variations in approaches within the sample; for instance, there was a great deal of variance in the way the sampled airlines described their interactions with unions – from active cooperation to actively discouraging its employees to unionise (Section 5.3.2).

4.5 Conclusion

In the previous two chapters, the case was made for the relevance of this study. This chapter has established the case for the rigour and trustworthiness of the analysis in the next three chapters. In summary, this research so far has found that existing body of academically-rigorous knowledge on the corporate socially responsible practices of airlines is incomplete and lacking (Chapter 2). At the same time, in practice, CSR is increasingly important for both the aviation industry and industry regulators (Chapter 3). Looking at both the research imperative and research best practice, the previous two chapters have argued that a rigorous study should embrace the many and varied definitions, academic schools of thought, and practitioner-focused guidance on CSR (Chapter 2, 3), and that company-produced communications on CSR practices can give a complex insight into the goals for and depth of reported CSR implementation (Chapter 2). This chapter has explored the issues and opportunities of researching a contested concept such as CSR in an under-researched industry.

This research took an original and innovative approach to both CSR as a concept and CSR research methods, first through its focus on a diverse sample of European airlines, second through its use of triangulated data sources, and third through its inclusive, 'wide net' approach to defining CSR. Therefore, this research offered a stronger understanding of the CSR practices of airlines from a much broader and deeper perspective than has yet been conducted.

In the context of the existing body of knowledge on airlines' CSR, this current research project will make a distinct and important contribution. In terms of sample size, this research studied the largest number of airlines (34 European airlines) than any of the studies to date. This broad sample allowed for a much more thorough understanding of the CSR behaviours and beliefs of a much larger segment of the aviation market. For instance, this research looked at both the Air France-KLM group, the highest-grossing full service carrier in the world which carried 70.3 million passengers in 2009 (DLR 2011: 58), and the Spanish-focused low fares airline, Vueling, which carried 8.2 million passengers in 2009 (DLR 2011: 63). Previous studies have focused only on the larger airlines, whether through explicit sampling (e.g. Gebel 2004) or as a result of other research choices, such as Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois's (2010) decision to use only annually updated, stand-alone CSR reports which therefore excluded smaller airlines that might not have the resources and impetus to regularly report.

In addition, this research considered business models as well as business size – another distinction that, with the exception of Coles, *et al.* (2009), Coles, *et al.* (2011), and Fenclova and Coles (2011), has yet to be acknowledged by previous research. The previous three studies only looked at low cost carriers and any apparent differences in how full service and low cost carriers approached CSR were only mentioned in passing. The findings of this research, therefore, are the first of their kind in the aviation industry and could have implications for how trade bodies and governmental regulators encourage greater CSR activity in the airline industry. From an academic perspective, the

findings of this research could impact the way that future researchers investigate CSR activities not only in the aviation industry, but also in other industries with low-cost/full-service business models, such as the hospitality industry.

Another important contribution of this research is the extensive use of data triangulation (Decrop 1999). As was mentioned above, previous research has predominately relied on only a single data source, with the exception of Coles *et al.* (2009), which used interviews, websites, press releases, and annual reports, and Lynes and Andrachuk (2008), which used both interviews and an unspecified type and number of documents. Studies of CSR in other parts of the tourism industry have been open to triangulating data (e.g. Henderson 2007; van Wijk and Persoon 2006; Holcomb, *et al.* 2007; Sigala 2008), although single-source studies are still common (e.g. Sheldon and Park 2011; Dodds and Kuehnel 2010; Nicolau 2008; Miller 2001). The studies mentioned above that have used multiple data sources in both the tourism sector as a whole, and specifically looking at airlines, have reported that the data triangulation was beneficial to the quality of their research (Henderson 2007; van Wijk and Persoon 2006; Holcomb, *et al.* 2007; Sigala 2008; Coles, *et al.* 2009; Coles, *et al.* 2011; Fenclova and Coles 2011; Lynes and Andrachuk 2008). This research used data from four main sources: elite interviews with airline managers, CSR-specific web pages, CSR-related press releases, and annual and CSR-specific reports. A wide breadth of data triangulation has been argued to make findings more thorough, less susceptible to personal and methodological bias, and make for 'richer and potentially more valid interpretations' (Decrop 1999: 159). This

diversity of data is especially important for the aviation sector as Coles *et al.* (2009) found a significant difference between the types of activities that were reported through different media types. Therefore, this research was able to analyse an even stronger, more comprehensive set of communicated activities than any previous research project.

Furthermore, as is explored further in Chapters 2 and 4, this research takes an innovative approach to studying CSR by using broad definitions (instead of sticking to one 'true' CSR definition) and a decision-map style of data collection. Both of these approaches could be useful for researchers looking for an interpretivist approach to CSR research. By using mixed qualitative methods to evaluate the data, different perspectives emerged, and the findings were better developed than they would have been had only one method been employed. The content analysis allowed for the data to be inspected on the micro-level, since it mostly dealt with words and 'simple concepts' (e.g. the number of airlines that mentioned investing in new aircraft as part of their CSR). On the other hand, using a grounded theory approach to the same data helped ensure that overarching trends and behaviours were not overlooked, and broader, more complex concepts – such as how the managers described the impact of leadership on CSR choices – were included.

5 Defining responsibility

Airlines' terms, definitions and CSR practices

5.1 Introduction

The analysis of the data has been divided between three chapters. This chapter addresses with the basics of corporate social responsibility construction among the European airlines: what terms they favoured and how they defined them (Objective 1) and what activities they reported as falling under the remit of CSR (Objective 2). The following chapter, Chapter 6, deals with the airlines stated motivations and justifications for their CSR engagement and reporting (Objective 5) and the external influences on the CSR-related activities of airlines (Objectives 4). Finally, Chapter 7 further investigates the management approaches to CSR as well as the overall practices of CSR (Objective 3). The similarities and differences between the CSR practices of full service and low cost carriers (Objective 6) will be considered throughout all three chapters; however, special attention is given to interpreting the variances of reported CSR practices in Chapter 7.

Combined, these three chapters paint a multi-dimensional picture of the CSR practices of airlines: from a basic sketch of CSR practices to a more complex

analysis of why airlines chose to, or in some cases, decide not to practice and report on CSR-related activities. Both the basic perspective and the more complex analysis are important. Understanding why industry players implement and report on their CSR programmes is vital to the success of governmental, NGO, and trade body efforts to encourage greater CSR implementation. However, as was discussed in previous chapters, in the case of airlines, research on the CSR practices of airlines has been far from comprehensive to date (see Chapter 2), and therefore a clearer image of what airlines themselves consider to be the important components of their CSR is missing. On an even more fundamental level, with the prevalence of terms used to describe the concept of CSR (Crane *et al* 2008; Blowfield and Murray 2008; Lindgreen and Swaen 2010), identifying the preferred terms used by the industry is an important component of maintaining a clear and consistent dialogue.

Using the analytical methods detailed in the previous chapter, the 406 webpages, 26 reports, and 134 press releases were assessed and reassessed using both content analysis and grounded theory-based approaches. In addition, the 15 elite interviews were analysed using a grounded theory approach and provided an important additional perspective on the airlines' publically-available texts. More detailed discussions of the data and resulting findings will be presented in the following chapters, although at this juncture it is important to convey that the conflicting definitions of CSR in the theoretical discussions were mirrored in practice by the studied airlines. Furthermore, while some have postured that 'ideal' CSR should be a balanced consideration of the so-called triple bottom line (e.g. Ketola 2006, O'Rourke 2003, Moneva, *et al.*

2006, Dodds and Joppe 2005), in practice, the reported CSR activities of the airlines were far from evenly spread across environmental, economic, social and environmental concerns. Instead the sampled group predominantly focused on environmental and charitable efforts, with some concern for staff training and engagement.

5.2 Terms and definitions in practice

One of the first issues encountered in data collection was the issue of defining terms, which was addressed by Objective One ('undertake a comprehensive survey of the preferred terms and definitions of CSR used by the airlines'). As mainstream CSR researchers have noted, the concept described in this thesis as 'corporate social responsibility' has gathered a variety of other labels as well (Crane *et al.* 2008; Blowfield and Murray 2008; Dahlsrud 2008; Garriga and Melé 2004; discussed in more detail in Chapter 2). Preliminary data collection showed that this proliferation of terms was not limited to academic debates, and that the airlines in the sample also used a number of terms to label similar activities. For instance, Virgin Atlantic published a *Sustainability Report* while Air France/KLM published a *Corporate Social Responsibility Report* and, complicating things further, Ryanair did not use any of the standard CSR-related terms identified by Blowfield and Murray (2008), opting instead for a section in its annual report called the 'Social, environmental and ethical report'. However, under this variety of labels, all three examples seemed to cover broadly the same topics and most of the material in the texts fell under Dahlsrud's (2008) CSR categories. Therefore, the choice was made to look at CSR-related and not just CSR-labelled content (discussed in more detail in

Chapter 4, section 3). Not only did this mean that a broader section of data was available, it also allowed for the assessment of what CSR-related terms were favoured by the sample. The main data collection and analysis confirmed that this decision to take a more inclusive view of CSR enriched the findings of this research. The airlines in the sample appeared to take a broad approach regarding which terms to use – often favouring a what initially appeared to be a ‘label bingo’ approach to presenting their CSR-related activities.

5.2.1 CSR-related terms

As with academic discourses on CSR (Crane *et al.* 2008; Blowfield and Murray 2008; Lindgreen and Swaen 2010), there seems to be no general consensus on terms within the European airline industry (Table 5.1). The two most dominant terms were ‘corporate social responsibility’ (used by 12 airlines) and ‘sustainability’ (used by 14 airlines). Other common terms were ‘corporate responsibility’ (used by seven airlines) and ‘social responsibility’ (used by five airlines). ‘Corporate citizenship’ was used by two airlines, though notably in both instances it was used in conjunction with other terms and in both cases by two of the most prolific CSR reporters– Lufthansa and Air France. Twenty-one airlines used non-standard terms to describe their CSR-related activities. Of these 21 airlines, five full service airlines predominantly used self-created labels for their CSR-related activities, including Lufthansa’s ‘Balance’, LOT Polish Airlines’ ‘EcoLot’, Virgin Atlantic’s ‘Change is in the Air’, British Airways’ ‘One Destination’, and SN Brussels Airlines’ ‘b.green’ and ‘b.foundation’. However, with the exception of SN Brussels Airlines, the airlines also clearly linked their terms with more standard CSR-related terms. Nine airlines did not use any

Table 5.1 CSR-related terms used by the sampled European airlines

Airline		Corporate responsibility	Corporate social responsibility	Social responsibility	Sustainability	Other terms
Full service carriers	Aegean	X	X			
	Aer Lingus		X			X
	Air Europa		X		X	X
	Air France**		X		X	X
	Alitalia					X
	Austrian*					X
	British Airways	X			X	
	Brussels Airlines					X
	Czech Airlines					X
	Finnair	X		X		
	Iberia	X	X		X	
	KLM**		X		X	
	LOT Polish Airlines				X	X
	Lufthansa			X	X	X
	Malev Hungarian Airlines			X		X
	Olympic Airlines					X
	SAS		X	X	X	
	Spainair					X
	SWISS*					X
	TAP Air Portugal				X	
	Virgin				X	X
Group total	4	7	4	10	14	
% of group (21)	19	33.3	19	47.6	66.7	
Low cost carriers	Air Baltic					X
	Air Berlin			X	X	X
	Blue1	X				
	bmibaby					X
	Cimber Sterling		X			X
	easyJet	X	X		X	X
	Flybe		X		X	
	Jet2.com*		X			
	Norwegian Air Shuttle	X				X
	Ryanair					X
	Transavia		X			
	TUIfly*				X	
	Wizz Air					
	Group total	3	5	1	4	7
% of group (13)	23.1	38.5	7.7	30.8	53.8	
TOTAL	7	12	5	14	21	

*Mentioned in a parent company's report; **Shared reporting with a partner company

Source: author

conventional CSR terms, but nonetheless reported information that was deemed to be CSR-related as described in the criteria in Chapter 4. These airlines labelled their activities as some variant on 'environment' or societal

involvement (e.g. 'sponsorship' or 'charity'). The airlines that reported less about their CSR practices were more likely to use 'corporate responsibility' and 'corporate social responsibility' than the more prolific publishers, that, as a whole, favoured 'sustainability' and 'sustainable development' (the differences between 'prolific' and 'less prolific' reporters will be explained in greater detail in Chapter 7). The usage of terms used by low cost carriers and full service carriers were similar, although the full service carriers used 'sustainability' and 'social responsibility' more than the low cost carriers (47.6% to 30.8% and 19% to 7.7%, respectively).

Notably, rather than using a single CSR-related term, most airlines used a combination of terms. In a few instances, this was within a single definition, for instance Globalia (2009: 104), Air Europa's parent company, noted that:

The introduction of *Corporate Social Responsibility* [sic] at Globalia in 2002 [...means that] the companies belonging to our corporation foster and apply each day a *sustainable development policy* striking the perfect balance between social well-being and economic wealth [italics added for emphasis].

Report

In this case, as in several other instances, CSR and sustainable development were presented as synonymous terms. However, this conflation of labels was not always so clearly juxtaposed in a single sentence or even within a paragraph. More predominantly, the use of multiple CSR-related terms occurred within a document over several pages or between reports and websites. In the

case of the latter, there were several cases of one reporting text using one term and the other text preferring a different CSR-related term. Only three airlines used CSR-related terms in their press releases and in all three cases, these were the same terms they used in their reports and on their websites.

This 'label bingo' approach could be attributed to, among other things, multiple people within individual airlines with different understandings of the concept or different preferred terms writing and editing the texts; a shift of corporate preference over time, with previously published texts not updated to reflect the change; or a conscious decision to use a variety of terms in order to raise visibility and to tick as many boxes as possible. Most of the managers interviewed were vague about choices of terms and the more nuanced discussions of defining CSR and related concepts; however, one manager (Interview 10, full service carrier) was willing to describe in more detail the chosen terms, noting that when he and his colleagues first started the CSR-related programme, they felt that the society around them was interpreting corporate social responsibility to relate only to social programmes. Therefore, after some discussion, they made the choice to use 'sustainability' as they felt that 'if you are sustainable, you are sustainable on the social, environmental and economic areas and that covers – in one way or another, it covers the same thing.' However, he also noted the change in how CSR was perceived in their business environment and remarked that, 'Perhaps today we would have used corporate social responsibility, but then we chose – we chose the buzzword.' This example highlights not only the changing perspectives on CSR-related terms over time, but also role of the airlines' operating environment and

the perceptions of internal and external stakeholders on the airlines' preferred CSR-related term.

5.2.2 Formal definitions of CSR and related terms

As well as utilising an array of CSR-related terms, the airlines also presented many different definitions of their preferred term or terms, and there were no apparent sector or even sub-sector standards. There was no shared CSR / CR / SR / sustainability / corporate citizenship definition between any of the airlines, not even, surprisingly enough, between parent companies and their subsidiaries. However, there were strong similarities between the sample's definitions, with most of the airlines utilising a combination of both the sustainable development-influenced 'triple bottom line' of economic, societal, and environmental efforts and stakeholder theory-influenced terminology. Or, put more simply, most of the definitions included three key words (or variations on them): environment, society, and stakeholders. For instance, Iberia (2010: 340) stated that:

In Iberia, CR [corporate responsibility] is the shared commitment to create economic and social value, respecting the environment and taking into account the expectations of stakeholders at all times.

Report

Similarly, transavia.com (2010:8) reported:

Corporate social responsibility focuses primarily on guaranteeing the quality of business operations along with a responsible attitude towards employees and passengers, and minimising the impact on the

environment. [...] transavia.com takes seriously its responsibility to its staff, passengers, the environment and profits (people, planet, profit).

Report

The 'people, planet, profit' inclusion in transavia.com's definition has a clear link back to the 'triple bottom line' approach to CSR through referencing social, ecological and economic concerns; however, notably, outside of the parentheses in the quotation, the economic role of transavia.com was downplayed, while the 'people' were divided into two groups: staff and passengers – which leads to questions about how it sees its responsibility to other external stakeholder groups.

This emphasis on recognising and addressing stakeholders was also evident in Air France/KLM's (2010: 12) statement that they practice CSR:

[...] by limiting the negative impact of our activities and by making economic and social contributions to the regions we serve. To this end, we proactively engage our stakeholders in our CSR approach [...].

Report

This emphasis on stakeholders was not just displayed by the full service carriers; notably, transavia.com is a low cost airline. Similarly, examples of a stakeholder-influenced approach were apparent in the definitions of both large and smaller airlines. For instance, Aegean Airlines (n.d.: Online), which carried 6.04 million passengers in 2009 compared to Air France/KLM's 71.4 million passengers (DLR 2011), noted under the headline of 'corporate responsibility' that:

Aegean is committed and applies internationally recognized and determined standards and principles, regarding the human rights, the labour relations, the corruptness and the environmental issues. In this way it is positively contributing to the wellbeing of society, the stakeholders for which it operates and the environment.

Website

The prominence of the sampled airlines specifically mentioning stakeholders and indentifying different stakeholder groups within the metacategory of 'society' could be attributed to a general trend towards incorporating stakeholder theory into CSR, which Holzer (2008: 50) called a 'defining element of current approaches to corporate social responsibility'.

Notably, while the interconnected influences of stakeholder theory and sustainability were readily apparent in the airlines' definitions, business ethics-based discourses played a less obvious role in their definitions of CSR. Air Europa's parent company, Globalia (2009: 104), was one of the few that directly referenced 'ethics' and ethical behaviour as part of its CSR, stating that it was:

[...] applying at all times a code of conduct based on ethics and moral respect for the surroundings and society within which we exist.

Report

Aegean and SAS also mentioned corruption as one of their CSR concerns. Aside from these few examples, 'ethics' and related conjugates (e.g. 'ethical') were largely absent from the airlines' definitions. The fact that many of the airlines did not explicitly mention 'ethics' in their definitions could, to the cynical

observer, suggest that the airlines were reluctant to claim that they were ethical businesses or perhaps that 'ethics' was not deemed to be a keyword of CSR. However, it would be short-sighted to claim that business ethics-related concerns were not a part of how the airlines' interpreted their corporate responsibilities. While not explicitly included in many of their formal definitions of CSR and related terms, 17 airlines included information pertaining to business ethics when reporting on their CSR in practice (this will be discussed in more detail in section 5.3.4). Furthermore, the idea that businesses could, and should, be 'good' came up many times in both the interviews with managers and in the airlines' texts (and will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6).

Beyond the formal definitions, the CSR-related terms by the airlines (as listed in the previous section) use words such as 'responsibility' and 'citizenship', which themselves reflect debates about business ethics. In addition, most of the airlines used diction to emphasise their own agency in their CSR approach by stating that they are 'committed' to, they 'want' to, and that they 'support' the idea of CSR. This emphasis on agency highlighted the fact that the airlines were taking on CSR obligations voluntarily – a key component of business ethics-influenced views of CSR (Carroll 1979, 1991; Falck and Hebllich 2007; Dahlsrud 2008). Therefore, it would seem highly likely that, rather than the airlines viewing business ethics being divorced from CSR, they saw the concepts as synonymous. That is, by consciously and voluntarily practicing CSR, the airlines believed they were behaving ethically and specifically mentioning 'ethics' was unnecessary. This seems emblematic of a general shift from in the perception of CSR from a concept whose place in wider discussions

of business ethics is questionable (e.g. Friedman (1970) and Carroll (1979)) to the perception that CSR is a concept that might be considered to be equivalent to business ethics in practice.

Similarly to business ethics, corporate philanthropy played a less obvious role in the airlines' definitions of CSR-related terms. Only three airlines (Brussels Airlines, Malev Hungarian Airlines, and Norwegian Air Shuttle) specifically mentioned charitable involvement in their definitions. However, as with business ethics, this lack of keywords should not be taken to mean that the airlines' understanding of CSR did not include charity work. As will be discussed in the following section, charitable involvement was one of the most popular examples used by airlines of their CSR programmes. Furthermore, in the interviews, more than half of the managers used charitable work as an example of their airlines' CSR activities. When asked to define CSR, however, fewer interviewees used charity or philanthropy as part of their definition. The managers that did use it seemed uncomfortable with the terms. As one interviewee said:

So, it's [CSR], ah – personally, what I'm taking care of is, if you want to use the word, 'charity'. We try to avoid it, but that's what it is. We are also focusing a lot on environmental projects.

Interview 8, full service carrier

As another full service carrier manager explained, his airline deliberately tried to convey that its CSR-related activities were more than just philanthropy (Interview 10, full service carrier). So while in practice, the sample used charity

as its main form of external stakeholder engagement (discussed in more detail in section 5.3.3), when summing up their CSR philosophies, the airlines seemed to deliberately want to distance themselves from corporate philanthropy. This could be attributed in part to corporate philanthropy being seen as an ‘old’ or ‘unsophisticated’ form of CSR, and airlines wishing to align their CSR-related activities with the newer concepts of sustainability and stakeholder theory which have more complex understandings of businesses’ relationships with society/external stakeholders.

5.3 *De facto* definitions: reported CSR practices

The sampled airlines reported a wide range of practices under the banner of corporate social responsibility and related terms, and Objective Two sought to develop a comprehensive typology of the self-reported CSR activities of airlines. To create this typology (presented in section 5.3.5), detailed tables based on the content analysis codes were created, which will be presented in the following sections. Reported practices primarily included those closely related to normal business operations, such as tracking and reducing fuel usage, maintaining aircraft, providing training for staff, and observing standards for the health and safety of passengers and staff. Since ‘sustainability’ featured heavily in the airlines’ terms and definitions of their responsible practices, one might expect their practices to fit approximately into the ‘triple bottom line’ categories of social, environmental, and economic impacts (as discussed in more detail by O’Rourke 2003; Moneva, *et al.* 2006; Dodds and Joppe 2005). However, during the process of coding the data, it became clear that while the airlines often framed their CSR-related activities in terms of sustainability (as was discussed

in the previous section), in practice, their efforts could better be categorised in terms of stakeholder theory-influenced categories of environment, internal stakeholders, and external stakeholders.

These three categories fit the data from the secondary sources much better than the three categories of the 'triple bottom line' (social, environment, economic). The sample airlines' social practices had a clear divide between those aimed at internal stakeholders (e.g. staff training, engagement with unions, encouraging staff diversity) and those related to external stakeholders (e.g. engagement with communities around airports, sponsoring sporting clubs, educational opportunities and events, and donating to charities). Furthermore, with a few notable exceptions, the majority of CSR-related activities were closely tied to usual business activities such as flight procedures or staff management and were related to either bottom-line benefits or influential stakeholders (staff, customers, regulators). Thus, in general, the CSR in practice of the sampled airlines closely resembled the ethos of stakeholder theory (Freeman *et al.* 2010; Roberts 1993; Bantekas 2004) with the concern focused on business benefit and strategic stakeholder management. As a result, the data were sorted into stakeholder-theory influenced categories for the content analysis portion of the research and will be discussed below in terms of those categories, namely: environment, internal stakeholders, and external stakeholders. Additionally, a final category, business ethics, was added during the analytical process and will also be discussed in this section.

5.3.1. CSR activities related to the environment

By far, the largest category of CSR practices was the environment (Table 5.2). Thirty-one airlines mentioned an environment-related activity in at least one of their communications. Unsurprisingly, none of the airlines included offering fewer flights or flying shorter distances as a way to reduce their environmental impact. Instead, in both the interviews and the texts, the focus was on continued, environmentally-conscious growth. As one manager said, 'Yes, we want to grow, but we want to do that responsibly' (Interview 6, FSC). While the question of whether 'sustainable' growth is possible for an impact-heavy industry like aviation has been debated (Bows, *et al.* 2009), the airlines in this study uniformly demonstrated a very 'technocentric' (Ketola 2006) understanding of the issue of growth. That is, they claimed to believe that technological innovations applied to their usual business activities would be enough to combat negative environmental impacts, even if the sector continued to grow. The majority of the airlines' environment-related activities, therefore, focused on the adjustments they were making to standard operating procedures to stabilise or decrease their noise and gas emissions (particularly CO₂), as well as fuel and energy consumption.

The most mentioned operations-focused activities were changes to flight operations, such as modifying landing and takeoff procedures and reducing the weight of aircraft (26 airlines); and efforts to make ground operations more efficient, such as electric vehicles, energy efficient offices, and paperless offices (22 airlines). Technology played a central role to both flight and ground operations with most of the in-flight emissions reductions attributed to

Table 5.2 Airlines' environmental activities

Airline		Environmental activism	Carbon offset	Biofuels	Environmental education	Winglets	Fleet renewal	Fleet maintenance	Flight operations	Ground operations	Waste & recycling
Full service carriers	Aegean			R(o)	RW		R	R		R	R
	Aer Lingus	R			RW	R	RW	R	R	R	RW
	Air France**	R	RW	RW	RW		RW	RW	RW	RW	RW
	Austrian		W			W	W		W	W	W
	British Airways	RW	RW	RWP	RW		RW	W	RW	RW	RW
	Brussels Airlines		WP		W	W	WP	W	WP	WP	WP
	Czech Airlines				RW		W		W	W	RW
	Finnair	RWP	W(o) P(o)	RW	R	W	RWP	W	RWP	RW	RW
	Iberia	R		RW	RW		RW	RW	RWP	RW	RW
	KLM**	RW	RW	RP	RW	W	RWP	RW	RWP	RW	RWP
	LOT		W(o)	W(o)	W		W		W	W	W
	Lufthansa	RWP	RW	RWP	RWP		RWP	RW	RW	RW	W
	Malev Hungarian Airlines				W(o)		WP		W	W	W
	Olympic Air				P						
	SAS		RW	RW	R	RW	RW		RW	R	R
	Spanair		W						W		
	SWISS*		RW	W(o)			RW		W	W	W
	TAP Air Portugal		W		W		W		W		
	Virgin		RW	R			R	R	RW	RW	RW
	Group Total	7	11(2)	11	15	6	17	10	17	16	16
	% of group (21)	33.3	52.4 (9.5)	52.4	71.4	28.6	81	47.6	81	76.2	76.2
Low cost carriers	Air Berlin				W	RW	RP		RWP	RW	W
	Air Europa						R		R		
	Blue1		W				W		WP		WP
	Cimber Sterling				R				R		
	easyJet		RW		RW		RWP		RW	RW	RW
	Flybe	P	W(o)				RW	R		R	
	Jet2.com*	P				R	R(o)	R	R		
	Norwegian Air Shuttle					R	RW	R	R	R	R
	Ryanair					RW	RW		RW		
	Transavia		PW*				R	R	R	RP	
	TUIfly*	R	R	R(o)	R	R	R			R	R
	Group total	3	4(1)	1	4	5	10	4	9	6	5
	% of group (13)	23.1	30.8 (7.7)	7.7	30.8	38.5	76.9	30.8	69.2	46.2	38.5
	TOTALS	10	15(3)	12	19	11	27	14	26	22	21

R – in annual report or CSR-related report; W – on website; P – in press release

*Mentioned in a parent company's report; **Shared reporting with a partner company; (o) Indicates non-standard approach

Source: author

improvements in computerised management programmes and most of the ground emissions reductions ascribed to the adaptation of technologically-advanced equipment and services. Other operations-related efforts included regular fleet maintenance and installing winglets to improve performance (14 and 11 airlines, respectively); programmes to recycle or dispose of operational waste in an environmentally-conscious manner (21 airlines); and education programmes to train staff on environmentally-aware behaviour modifications (19 airlines), which ranged from training on how to use computer programmes designed to make flight operations more fuel efficient to disseminating information on how employees could modify their behaviours to reduce their energy consumption (for instance, through using alternative means of transport to commute to work and unplugging mobile phone chargers when the battery is full).

A technocentric approach was also evident in the environment-related CSR activities that did not directly tie into the airlines' everyday business activities. Twenty-six airlines presented their investment into newer, more technologically-advanced aircraft as an important component of their CSR efforts. A further airline, Jet2.com, included notes on how its current aircraft complied with environmental regulations. The importance of a so-called modern fleet was emphasised again and again in the reports, websites, press releases, and interviews, and the airlines' approach to fleet renewal as a key component of their CSR could perhaps best be summarised in Scandinavian Airlines' (2010:116) statement that:

The most effective measure to improve the fleet's environmental performance is to renew the equipment, investing in aircraft with fuel-efficient engines with low noise and emissions.

Report

However, the decision to invest in newer aircraft was not solely based on environmental concerns. The mix of considerations was highlighted in Lufthansa's *Sustainability Report* (2010: 111) when it discussed SWISS's decision to update their fleet, noting that:

Thanks to the most advanced engines and high-tech materials, the CSeries aircraft manufactured by Bombardier set new benchmarks with regard to economic efficiency and environmental compatibility. High levels of passenger comfort, low operating costs, significantly quieter engines and lower CO₂ emissions are the key criteria that led SWISS to decide in favor [sic] of the CSeries.

Report

The role of other, non-environment related concerns, was evident in nearly all of environmental efforts reported by the airlines. While the issue of CSR motivation will be discussed in the following chapters in greater detail, it is worth noting here that the economic motivation behind many of the airlines' activities, especially fleet renewal, was mentioned by most of the managers and caused one of the interviewees (Interview 5a, LFA) to openly question whether some of the airline's environmentally-related efforts could truly be classed as 'CSR'.

Not all of the environmental efforts could be directly linked to economic savings for the airlines. Two of the most prevalent instances were biofuels support and carbon offsetting, the former of which generally involved investment of money and resources with no immediate direct economic benefit (since biofuels are not yet viable alternatives to fossil fuels in aviation), and the latter of which required less investment, but likewise seemed to offer little economic return. Twelve airlines stated their interest in the development of biofuels. Eight of the airlines, all large, full service carriers, reported having been directly involved in research funding and testing through partnerships with external companies and organisations. The other four airlines (Aegean Airlines, LOT Polish Airlines, SWISS, and TUIfly) claimed 'support' for biofuels and their interest in using them in the future. All twelve airlines acknowledged that biofuels have not yet been developed to the point of being a viable component of their daily activities and that relying on biofuels to reduce their environmental impact would be a 'long-term' (Aegean Airlines) or, more optimistically, 'short to medium term' (British Airways) goal. All of the airlines that mentioned biofuels were full service carriers.

More immediate results were reported by the airlines offering carbon offset schemes, which were mentioned by eighteen airlines. Fifteen airlines provided a 'carbon calculator' on their website which estimated the amount of carbon released into the atmosphere for the individual customer's share of the flight and the option to pay additional money to a charity which would invest the money in an environment-focused project to 'offset' the pollution. Several full service and low cost airlines reported on the uptake of their carbon offset

programmes, though variations in reporting periods made any meaningful comparisons impossible. Two additional airlines announced an interest in offering such a service. Flybe stated on its website that it would offer such a scheme starting in 2011, and LOT Polish Airlines (n.d.: Online) hosted a CO2 emissions calculator on its website and asked customers to:

[...] fill in a survey to let us know your opinion on our plan to provide our passengers in the future with an option to pay a voluntary carbon offset fee.

Website

No date was given for the implementation of any such programme. For the airlines offering the option of paying to carbon offset, there was a partnership with an external organisation – in this case, an environmental charity. A majority of the airlines offering carbon offsetting were either prolific reporters or the subsidiary of a prolific reporter, and none of the least proficient reporters offered a carbon offset scheme. It was also a relatively new activity with British Airways making the seemingly uncontested claim that it ‘was the first airline to introduce a voluntary passenger carbon offset scheme in 2005’ (n.d.: Online).

Notably, though, not all of the airlines agreed that carbon offset was a worthwhile CSR-related activity. Although it hosted a carbon calculator on its website, Finnair (n.d. (a): Online) did not recommend an environmental programme. Rather, it stated:

It is often asked, why Finnair does not offer an emissions offset option on our web site [sic]. It's because Finnair thinks emissions compensation should be the responsibility of an airline. It's the same line as that followed by the EU, on the basic principle of "the polluter pays", which has led to the decision to widen emissions trading to include air traffic.

Website

This statement by Finnair highlights the issue of agency in the airlines' environmentally-related CSR activities. While the first set of operations-centric activities and the purchase of new aircraft left most of the agency in the hands of the airlines themselves, these last two examples, biofuels and carbon offsetting, were mainly implemented by external organisations. In the case of biofuels, while many of the airlines offered funding and allowed the use of their resources, a majority of the action was taken by their external research partners, such as BA's relationship with Solena, a research company. Even more blatantly, onus of the responsibility was transferred to the customers in the case of the carbon offsetting scheme (with the exception of Finnair), which brings up the question of how much direct agency is necessary in order for an action to be considered a part of corporate social responsibility? This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7, though when looking at what actions the airlines themselves considered to be part of their environmental responsibility, it is worth mentioning that there seemed to be minimal internal reflection on the onus of 'legitimate' corporate social responsibility.

The final major code of the sample's environment-focused CSR activities was environmental activism, which was reported by ten airlines, making it the least reported of the environment codes. The code included both low cost carriers and full service carriers, though relative number of airlines reporting this code was higher in the full service carrier group (40% of the full service group; 18% of the low cost group). This activism was not quite marching and placard-waving; rather, it took the form of engagement with environmental, conservation, and wildlife groups to protect habitats and help wildlife – including in three cases, transporting animals for zoos. As with biofuels investment and promotion of a carbon offsetting scheme, the airlines' environmental activism did not seem to be directly tied to economic gains. Four of the ten airlines published the information via press releases – a relatively high ratio of press release to other channels of reporting compared to other environmental activities. Additionally, while three airlines used a single press release to report on their environmental activism, one airline, Jet2.com, released no less than five press releases in 2010 on their work transporting 13 lions to Yorkshire Wildlife Park. This suggests that at least in the Jet2.com case, public relations considerations might have played a role in the decision to publicise their efforts, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6. Like biofuels projects and carbon offset partnerships, environmental activism also involved direct engagement with external stakeholders, in this case environmental organisations.

This code of 'environmental activism' demonstrated some of the difficulties of classifying CSR-related activities; initially, the activities were coded as charitable engagement under the external stakeholder classification. However,

during the second round of analysis, it became clear that these particular activities had some important different characteristics than the other actions that had been coded as charitable engagement. In the reports especially, the differences between the airlines' presentation of the two types of engagement were apparent, with these instances of environmental activism included in environmental sections and other forms of charity engagement included in specific charity or social sections. Furthermore, the reporting emphasised types of engagement not generally seen in other forms of charitable engagement, such as KLM's (2010: Online) reporting that:

KLM participates in the national Taskforce on Biodiversity and Natural Resources. The Taskforce is drafting policy recommendations for biodiversity conservation and restoration.

Website

These final three examples of the airlines' environment-directed CSR efforts begin to demonstrate the complex relationships many of the sampled airlines seemed to have with external partners, which will be explored in more detail in Chapter 6.

5.3.2. CSR activities related to internal stakeholders

Twenty-five airlines reported their stakeholder-related CSR efforts. Compared to the information available on environmentally-related efforts, reporting on internal stakeholder-related CSR issues (Table 5.3) was less detailed and, in general, there was less information available. For instance, the environment code for the website data set was applied to more than 125,000 words while the staff code

for the same data set was applied to just under 11,000 words. While counting and comparing the number of words in this manner is an imprecise measure at best (Krippendorff 2004), even this very imperfect means of comparison illustrates the vast difference in the amount of information published on environment- and internal stakeholder-related CSR efforts. Furthermore, four airlines (Austrian, Brussels Airlines, LOT Polish Airlines, Olympic Air, Spanair) that provided information on their environmental efforts did not report on any activities relating to internal stakeholders.

While a more detailed discussion of why there is this bias towards environmental reporting will be discussed in the following chapters, it is worth noting now that this emphasis on environmental efforts over social programmes among the sampled airlines of this study is in keeping with what other studies have found in their own samples of the airline industry (Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois 2011; Coles, *et al.* 2011; Lynes and Dredge 2006; Lynes and Andrachuk 2008; Tsai and Hsu 2008). This corroboration of findings is especially significant considering that the previous studies have by and large favoured a single data source (unlike this study) and the variation in sampling methods between this study and previous studies— while this research has looked at a comparatively large sample size and a diversity of business models and sizes, most of the previous research has looked only at larger, full service carriers, albeit from a more diverse geographical pool. Nonetheless, the general trend is the same: the environment is by and large prioritised over other, stakeholder-specific aspects of CSR. However, internal stakeholder-related activities were still a key, if less emphasised, part of how many of the airlines

presented their CSR, both during the elite interviews and in the texts. Most managers mentioned how important staff engagement was for their airline. In some cases the managers directly referenced staff engagement as a component of their airline's CSR, such as one manager's statement that her airline's CSR was comprised of environmental and social concerns:

And then we have a whole part – but it's not so....so explicit – about how we treat our employees, the working conditions for our employees, going from the office base to how they are being treated by their superiors. That's the third – that's the third element of our CSR programme.

Interview 8, Full service carrier

More indirectly, many managers used examples of staff satisfaction and working conditions as a metric for analysing the success of other CSR-related activities.

In the texts, the internally-focused CSR fell into three main categories: employment conditions, looking after employees, and engaging with internal stakeholders. Codes related to the category of employment conditions included reporting on conditions and recruitment (17 airlines); commitments to providing equal opportunities (12 airlines); and commitments to encouraging diversity (10 airlines). Working conditions included commitments to adhere to employee-relevant regulations regarding working hours and physical working environment, as well as a few examples of going above and beyond regulations through attempts to create psychologically-positive working environments and modern work spaces. The equal opportunities examples focused primarily on

commitments to achieving more balanced male-to-female staff ratios in the airlines, all of which were otherwise male dominated, especially in the higher management positions, and reports of the current gender balance of the workforce. Commitments to encouraging diversity were included as a separate code because although some airlines amalgamated equal opportunities and diversity, other airlines presented it as a more complex idea that went beyond promoting female managers and included activities such as encouraging staff to participate in gay pride events, providing support for disabled employees and celebrations of the different cultural and religious backgrounds of staff members.

The second category of codes relating to internal stakeholders was the 'looking after employees' category, which focused on what the airlines were providing in terms of training and advancement opportunities (18 airlines); measures to improve the health, wellbeing and safety of staff (14 airlines); and other employer-provided benefits for employees (12 airlines). The training and development opportunities primarily consisted of commitments to providing opportunities for internal advancement and employer-sponsored training on computer programmes, management courses, and language classes. The programmes that focused on the health, wellbeing and safety of staff included offering staff regular health checks and screening clinics, providing information about self-management of wellbeing on the staff intranet, and offering therapy sessions. The employer-provided benefits included a very diverse range of programmes and included transport-related benefits, such as cycle-to-work schemes; post-employment programmes, primarily pension plans; and

considerations for a work-life balance, such as flexible working hours and 'family friendly' benefits. These 'family friendly' programmes included offering places at local daycare centres, reporting on the uptake of maternity and paternity leave, and other consideration for staff with families, including in one case, redesigning the flight crews' uniform to take 'into account all the features of its employees, with a specific garment for pregnant employees' (Iberia, report). For the interviewed managers, the employee training programmes were mentioned the most frequently and with the most enthusiasm, with many of the managers from the low cost carriers especially talking at length about how their training programmes were beneficial to employees.

While all three codes were primarily filled with simple statements of support, bare statistics, and short, positive descriptions of various programmes, a more complex insight into the relationship between the airlines and their employees was also present. Most of the large full service carriers and some of the other airlines reported having to make redundancies, reduce hours, and reorganise staff. Other employee-related measures included cuts to employee pension plans and decisions to halt the planned implementation of stock options for employees. These austerity measures were primarily blamed on external factors, specifically the 'falling market and financial crisis' (SAS, report). While some of the airlines, such as Iberia, primarily reported on how the measures they had taken were in line with government regulations, other airlines made a point to talk about how they were attempting to lessen the impact of staff cost saving measures on their internal stakeholders. For instance, Finnair (2010: 21) noted that it focused on:

[...] 'soft' means, such as pension solutions

Report

Similarly, Air France and KLM (2010: 8) claimed that they were taking a:

[...] supportive, responsible approach, seeking by all means possible to keep existing jobs [...through] improving staff mobility and flexibility, imposing a freeze on new hiring, cutting outsourced labor [sic], and offering a voluntary redundancy plan.

Report

The impact of cost-cutting measures was also mentioned by the managers in the interviews. For many of them, staff reductions had a direct impact on their workload. As one interviewee matter-of-factly noted:

We used to be two persons [sic] [in the environmental team] until last year, but now it's only one.

Interview 4, Full service carrier

Another manager described the difficulties she faced in her role following a major restructuring programme (interviewee details not included to further protect the managers' anonymity). For a few of the managers in higher-level positions, the impact was more personal, and one manager in particular talked in great depth about the conflicting sense of responsibility that he felt regarding the internal and external narrative that he was constructing for the airline, and the impact the airline's actions and the economic climate were having on

employees (interviewee details not included to further protect the managers' anonymity).

The complexity of the relationship between the airlines and their employees was most evident in the final category, 'engaging with internal stakeholders', which was comprised of three codes: staff communication and engagement (17 airlines); and relations with unions (15 airlines), and staff appreciation (eight airlines) (Table 5.3, above). The final code, 'staff appreciation', did not describe a CSR activity as much as a CSR mindset. It was made up of statements that acknowledged the importance of internal stakeholders, such as Cimber Sterling's comment that 'Cimber Sterling's employees are its most important resource' (report) and Ryanair's assertion that 'None of this success would be possible without a team of talented, well motivated, well paid, highly productive people' (report). While these statements describe the airlines' motivation for some of their internal stakeholder-related CSR activities, they can also be a part of CSR in and of themselves as a public and shareholder-directed representation of a workplace culture that actively recognises the importance of employees (Nelson 2006). While public recognition of employees has been shown to improve staff morale and satisfaction, even more important is actively listening and responding to employees (Nelson 2006).

The airlines reported a wide variety of efforts to communicate and engage with their internal stakeholders including conducting surveys to monitor staff satisfaction and well-being; regularly updating intranets, newsletters and other communication channels; and encouraging so-called 'flat' hierarchies to

facilitate more open communication. Some of the initiatives were directly linked with goals for employee morale, such as Air France's (n.d. (a): Online) statement that:

The Quality Innovation Programme (PIQ) at Air France Industries, for example, sparks employee creativity and motivation and contributes to customer satisfaction. It is based on the idea that each agent can come up with a feasible solution to a problem, however minor or major, encountered in their everyday work.

Website

This emphasis on keeping staff satisfied and engaged could be due in no small part to the airlines' sometimes difficult relations with unions. While the other two internal stakeholder-related categories presented the narrative of the airline being mostly in control of hiring, redundancies, benefits, and training opportunities, this category – and the 'relations with unions' code in particular – presented a slightly different narrative, one where the airline was not always the dominant agent. Instead of the narrative of the airlines dictating and gifting their employees' conditions and benefits that was seen in the other codes, the 'relations with unions' code recognised that sometimes the airlines had to negotiate 'mutually acceptable compromises' (Lufthansa, report). Furthermore, sometimes the balance of power was shifted enough that the airlines were unsure of whether or not normal business operations would be maintained, as was especially illustrated in the press releases. In this code especially, then, we can see evidence of the role of other players in debating and refining expectations for the airlines' CSR-related behaviours.

5.3.3. CSR activities related to external stakeholders

Thirty-two airlines reported on at least one form of external stakeholder-related CSR engagement, which fell into three basic categories, 'corporate philanthropy', 'broader impact', and 'operations-relevant activities' (Table 5.4). Two airlines (Wizz Air and Air Baltic) that did not report any other form of CSR-related activities saw fit to publish information on their external stakeholder-focused activities. For both airlines, this engagement took the form of a relationship with a charitable organisation. In fact, no less than 28 airlines reported some sort of charity engagement – making it the most reported CSR practice (followed closely by fleet renewal and changes to flight operations). Engagement with charity partners took two forms, monetary charity donation (16 airlines) and other charity involvement (26 airlines). Non-monetary donations often took the form of free tickets and donated cargo space, as well as time given to staff to volunteer with a charity and donation of office equipment. The most common non-monetary donation, however, was fundraising for the charities by soliciting donations from staff and customers. While this sort of donation was often reported in financial terms, since it was comprised of money donated from others, the airlines' contribution was deemed to be access to staff and customers. Monetary donations took the form of money specifically set aside in funds that were then donated to chosen charities or, in a few cases, a seemingly un-budgeted 'top up' of the customers' or employees' donations.

Table 5.4 Airlines' external stakeholder-related activities

Airline		Monetary charity donation	Other charity involvement	Community education & training	Sponsorship	Economic good for society	'Good neighbours'	Safety & security	Customer care
Full service carriers	Aegean	W	W P		W	W			
	Aer Lingus		R W		R		R	R	
	Air Europa		R					R W	W
	Air France**	R W	R W	R W	R	R W	R W	R W	W
	British Airways	R P	R W P	R W	R W P	R P		R	W
	Brussels Airlines		W		W	W			W
	Czech Airlines				W				
	Finnair	P	R			R W		R W	W
	Iberia	R W	R P	R	R W	R	R	R	W
	KLM**	W	R W	R W	R W	R W	R W	R W	W
	LOT Polish Airlines		P						W
	Lufthansa	R	R W P	R W	R W	W	R W	R W	W
	Malev Hungarian Airlines	P	W P	W		W		W	
	Olympic Airlines		P						
	SAS	R			R	R		R W	P
	SWISS*			R	R	R	R		
	TAP Air Portugal		W			W			
	Virgin	W P	R W	W P	W (o)	R			W
	Group total	10	15	8	12	13	6	10	11
	% of group (21)	47.6	71.4	38.1	57.1	61.9	28.6	47.6	52.4
	Low cost carriers	Air Baltic		P		W	P		
Air Berlin		R W P	R W P		R W			R W	
Blue1			W						W
bmibaby			P						
Cimber Sterling					R W	R			
easyJet		R W	R P					R W	
Flybe			P	P	P	W	W	R	
Jet2.com*		R	R P	P	R P				
Norwegian Air Shuttle		R	R W			R			
Ryanair			P		P			R	
Transavia			R*			R			
TUfly*		R	R			R			
Wizz Air		P							
Group total		6	11	2	6	6	1	4	1
% of group (13)	46.2	84.6	15.4	46.2	46.2	7.7	30.8	7.7	
TOTAL	16	26	10	18	19	7	14	12	

R – in annual report or CSR-related report; W - on website; P – in press release

*Mentioned in a parent company's report; **Share reporting with a partner company; (o) indicates non-standard approach

Source: author

A further two codes helped form the 'corporate philanthropy' group: community education and training (11 airlines), and sponsorship (18 airlines). There was a wide range of community education and training initiatives, which included internships and adult and schoolchild literacy programmes. The airlines sponsored sports teams (primarily unspecified local sports teams) and cultural events including operas, film festivals, and art exhibitions. While a majority of the airlines only reported sponsoring teams and cultural events, there were a few unusual endeavours such as Air Baltic's sponsorship of a band (website). The dominance of activities that could be classified as 'corporate philanthropy' over most other CSR codes, particularly among sporadic and ad hoc reporters, demonstrates that the corporate philanthropic approach to stakeholder engagement so despised by Friedman (1970) is still alive and well.

In the 'broader impact' category, 19 airlines specifically mentioned how their activities made a positive contribution to regional and national economies and social cohesion. This contribution was generally discussed in terms of direct and indirect employment, thus linking internal stakeholder relations with a much broader set of external stakeholders. For instance, in Lufthansa's (2010: 114) report on SWISS's CSR it noted:

Each long-haul aircraft added to the fleet brings with it directly about 110 jobs at the airline plus indirectly 100 jobs at suppliers while inducing another 100 jobs in Switzerland. This leads to significant added value for Switzerland as a business location.

Report

Air France and KLM in their joint CSR report (2010: 8) widened the perceived scope of their impact by claiming:

We assume our responsibilities at the local level, where we generate business, development and employment, not only for the regions in which we are based but also for the countries to which we fly.

Report

In most cases, the airlines also made specific mention of their impact on local economies by providing business links and delivering tourists, though these sorts of statements were generalised to the entire air passenger transport system, such as Finnair's (2010: 4) claim that:

An airline, through its operations, supports economic life and the tourism business, provides connections for citizens and companies, and creates jobs as well as conditions for many other sectors.

Report

However, the airlines also acknowledged that their operations negatively affected a large range of external stakeholders as well, particularly on residents near airports. The 'good neighbours' code (7 airlines) detailed the airlines efforts to limit their negative impacts on people living near airports, such as creating resident-aware flight paths, as well as efforts to engage with them, primarily through focus groups and in partnership with the airports.

An additional two codes emerged during analysis which are not typically considered as CSR-related, but due to the prevalence in reports and websites under CSR or sustainability-specific titles were included into the study. These industry-defined, 'operations-relevant' codes were commitments to and reports on safety and security (14 airlines); and customer care, communication and engagement (13 airlines). Safety was reported to be the 'No.1 priority [sic]' and the 'primary concern' (easyJet, report, and Flybe, report, respectively) for many of the airlines. This code described the airlines' commitments to safety through training and certification and, unlike in the other codes, often reported which manager or department was officially in charge of safety concerns. There was a large emphasis on external bodies and government regulators providing external verification that the airlines were, in fact, as safe as they claimed. While most of the airlines reported high levels of compliance and low instances of safety incidents, Air France (Air France/KLM 2010: 33) admitted that:

We cannot speak of flight safety without mentioning the tragic loss of flight AF447 Rio de Janeiro-Paris on 1 June 2009, which caused the death of 228 people and sent their families into mourning. It is vital to establish the circumstances that led to this tragedy, and to identify and put in place the measures required to ensure such a tragedy never happens again.

Report

Although, notably, the rest of the report described in detail how they had complied with all necessary regulations. Finally, the 'customer care' code described the airlines' commitment to providing good customer care and often

described specific training programmes aimed at customer-facing staff. These two codes were particularly difficult to analyse as some airlines included customer care and safety and security information in sections of reports and websites that were not expressly labelled with a CSR-related heading. Additionally, the press releases dealing with customer care issues, such as those relating to flight cancellations during the eruption of the Icelandic volcano Eyjafjallajökull in 2010 were not framed around narratives of responsibility. In keeping with the parameters of this study, these texts were not included in the analysis. However, incidents such as the massive disruption to European air travel due to volcanic activity and the crash of AF447 perhaps provide some explanation for the airlines' interest in including these operations-related activities.

5.3.4. CSR activities related to business ethics

While ethics-related keywords were not a common component of the airlines' definitions of CSR, ethical issues nonetheless had a strong presence in the airlines' descriptions of their CSR practices (Table 5.5). This group of codes had less information in terms of the number of words used and was comprised of fewer codes than the other groups discussed above. In fact, initially these codes were included as part of the internal stakeholder-focused CSR during analysis. However it was decided that these ethics-related activities deserved to be analysed separately because they dealt with overlapping stakeholder groups; that is, while these codes detailed what was required of employees in terms of ethical conduct, they also described the airlines' efforts to be ethical members

Table 5.5 Airlines' ethics-related activities

Airline		Ethical behaviour & culture	Ethical commitment	Human rights support
Full service carriers	Aegean Airlines	R		R
	Aer Lingus	R	R	
	Air Europa		R	
	Air France**	R W	R W	R W
	Alitalia		W	
	British Airways		W	
	Czech Airlines			W
	Finnair	R W	R W	R
	Iberia	R	R	R
	KLM**	R	R W	R W
	Lufthansa		W	R
	SAS	R	R W	W P
	Transavia		R	
	Group total	7	11	8
% of group (21)	33.3	52.4	38.1	
Low cost carriers	Blue1		W	
	Cimber Sterling	R		
	easyJet	R W	W	
	Norwegian Air Shuttle			W
	Ryanair		R W	
	Transavia		R	
	TUIfly*		R	R
	Group total	2	5	2
% of group (13)	15.4	38.5	15.4	
TOTAL	9	16	10	
R – in annual report or CSR-related report; W - on website; P – in press release				
*Mentioned in a parent company's report; **Share reporting with a partner company; (o) indicates non-standard approach				

Source: author

of the wider society, for instance, in terms of supporting human rights and discouraging insider trading which would have implications for more than just the internal stakeholders. This internal/external focus is evident in Finnair's (2010: 14) statement that:

Business operations are based on internationally accepted ethical principles governing business partnerships and interest group relationships.

Report

This statement highlights the role of internally-practiced ethics on external stakeholders – although notably the specific external stakeholder generated ‘ethical principles’ are not listed. As was discussed earlier in this chapter, the interviewed managers primarily framed discussions about the airlines’ business ethics in terms of external stakeholders and how their ethical approach had society-wide benefits. Nineteen airlines reported on a variety of ethics-related activities, ranging from encouraging ethical behaviour and an ethical business culture (nine airlines), requiring staff to adhere to an ethical code of conduct or other similar written ethical commitment (16 airlines), to a more generalised statement of support for human rights (10 airlines).

The volume of reporting was limited compared to the other code groups; most of the airlines reported a few paragraphs of text at most. The specificity of the reporting was more varied though. For instance, in the ‘human rights support’ code, several airlines only included very generalised commitments, such as Norwegian Air Shuttle’s (2011: Online) statement that:

Norwegian supports the international human rights as outlined by the UN declaration and conventions. No one shall in any way cause or contribute to the violation or circumvention of human rights. We place great

importance on ensuring compliance with employees' basic human rights as outlined in the International Labour Organisation's core conventions.

Website

However, other airlines were more specific about exactly what actions they were taking to encourage human rights, including providing e-learning modules for staff about human rights, efforts to influence human rights-specific legislation in destination countries, and in one case, sponsorship of a 'festival that presents documentary films about human rights' (Czech Airlines n.d.: Online). Similarly, the level of detail varied widely in the other two codes as well. In the 'ethical commitment' code, reporting ranged from easyJet's proclamation that it 'adheres to the highest ethical standards and we take our social responsibilities seriously' (website) to the full reproduction of the ten-point 'Code of Ethics' (Iberia, report). Reprinting the whole code was a rare event – only two airlines, Iberia and Finnair³, reprinted the whole code on their report or website (respectively).

However, six additional airlines (Alitalia, Blue1, British Airways, KLM, Ryanair, and SAS) provided a link to a PDF file version of their codes of ethics. Many of the airlines provided summaries on web pages which included provisions for transparency, adherence to regulations, announcing conflicts of interest,

³ Additionally, although the 'ETHICAL RULES [sic]' on Finnair's website was presented as its own, they began with the line 'In Aurinkomatkat-Suntours, operations are guided by a key ethical rule: [...]', which suggests that they may be only the ethical rules for the single company of the Finnair Group.

adherence to health and safety good practice measures, and respect for colleagues and customers. Several airlines specifically mentioned that all employees, regardless of their position in the organisational structure, were expected to adhere to the ethical codes. The final code, 'ethical behaviour and culture' included broad statements of a desire for a ethical corporate culture as well as more concrete measures, primarily educating employees about the code of ethics and other related issues as well as providing procedures for whistleblowers to report incidents of unethical behaviour. This group of codes shows that while the airlines' formal definitions of CSR tended to overlook business ethics as a keyword, nonetheless, in practice, the airlines did seem to view ethical concerns as a part of their responsibilities.

5.3.5 A summary of airlines' reported CSR practices

While each of the separate CSR codes and categories have been discussed in the previous sections, it is worth considering how all of the reported responsibilities build an overall image of the airlines' communicated CSR. Figure 5.1 is a simple square treemap which combines all four CSR-related categories discussed above (Bederson 2002; Chintalapani 2004). It was created using an add-in for Excel created by DataBison. The treemap is comprised of hierarchical nested boxes. The codes from the content analysis-based tables discussed in the previous sections (Tables 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5) were used along with their frequency of occurrence in the whole sample (both the full service and low cost carriers). The top left box is the most commonly-occurring

Figure 5.1 Treemap of CSR categories



Source: author

code and the bottom right box is the least commonly-occurring code. The boxes are also sized relative to their occurrence. The code most commonly mentioned by the airlines in the sample was 'Fleet renewal' in the upper left. The code mentioned by the fewest airlines was 'Anti carbon offset' (airlines that explicitly objected to carbon offset schemes) in the lower right. The boxes have been

coloured by category: green for environment codes, orange for internal stakeholder codes, blue for external stakeholder codes, and purple for ethics-related codes.

The overall approach of the sample was a far cry from Ketola's (2006) ideal of a balanced 'triple bottom line'. The sample presented an understanding of CSR that emphasised environmental efforts; four of the five most common codes covered environmental activities. This emphasis on environmental aspects of CSR is in keeping with the findings of Gebel (2004), Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois (2010), and notably different from Phillips (2006) which suggested that its sampled airlines primarily practiced CSR through external stakeholder-focused efforts (although Phillips' (2006) findings are no doubt influenced by his narrow, socially-focused definition of CSR). The most common environmental codes were comparable to Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois most common codes, although their approach to coding was different in that they grouped activities by intended outcome (e.g. 'reduce emissions'), whereas this research felt such groupings distract from the actual reported activities and chose to focus only on them (the reported motivations and justifications for reported CSR management will be discussed in the next chapter). The emerging image of reported CSR was heavily focused on activities that directly related to usual business operations. Even the 'Other charity involvement' code detailed a form of charity engagement that utilised business activities and non-monetary resources (such as access to customers during flights, staff time, and carriage of materials). Also notable is the seventh most common code, 'economic good

for society', which expressed the view that the airlines fulfilled some of their CSR in the course of their everyday business activities.

There were some differences between how the low cost and full service carriers presented their CSR. Figures 5.2 and 5.3 are treemaps showing the types of CSR activities reported by the full service carriers and low cost carriers, respectively. The low cost carriers' presentation of their CSR placed greater emphasis on charitable efforts than the full service carriers, with both 'other charity involvement' and 'monetary charity donation' both placing higher on the low cost carriers' treemap than on the full service carriers' treemap. The internal stakeholder-focused codes of 'staff communication and engagement', 'staff conditions and recruitment' and codes of 'safety and security' and 'relations with unions' were also given more emphasis by the low cost carriers than by the full service carriers. While the top codes for the low cost carriers were a mixture of external stakeholder, environmental, and internal stakeholder-related concerns, the most commonly-occurring codes for the full service carriers were largely dominated by environmental concerns with six of their top ten most common codes relating to environmental activities. The 'carbon offset' code formed a larger percentage of the full service carriers' reporting of their CSR than the low cost carriers'. Similarly, 'customer care' placed higher on the full service carriers' treemap, and, as was mentioned previously in this chapter, 'biofuels research' was only mentioned by the full service carriers. While there were some notable differences between how the full service and low cost airline

Figure 5.2 Full service carriers' areas of emphasis for reported CSR practices

Fleet renewal	Enviro education	Economic good for society	Sponsorship	Carbon offset
Flight operation	Staff communication and engagement	Fleet maintenance	Monetary charity donation	Safety and security
Waste and recycling	Staff conditions and recruitment	Staff training	Human rights support	Biofuels research
Ground operation	Ethical commitment	Health, wellbeing and staff safety	Diversity	Staff benefits
Other charity involvement	Customer care	Relations with unions	Equal opportunities	Winglets
		Community education	Ethical behaviour	'Good neighbour'
				Staff appreciation
				Anti carbon offset
				Bio fuels support

Source: author

reported their CSR, the emerging conceptualisations of CSR were not radically different, and the codes of 'fleet renewal' and 'flight operations' placed in the top three positions for both treemaps.

Figure 5.3 Low cost airlines' areas of emphasis for reported CSR practices

Other charity involvement	Staff communication and engagement	Sponsorship	Economic good for society	Staff conditions and recruitment
	Monetary charity donation	Winglets	Ethical commitment	Waste and recycling
Fleet renewal	Relations with unions	Equal opportunities	Fleet maintenance	Carbon offset
		Enviro education	Staff appreciation	Ethical behaviour
Flight operation	Ground operation	Safety and security	Diversity	Community education
		Staff benefits	Human rights support	Customer care
Staff training	Staff benefits	Health, wellbeing and staff safety	Human rights support	Biofuels support
				Anti carbon offset
				Good neighbour

Source: author

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has addressed Objectives One and Two by analysing what terms the airlines used when discussing CSR-related issues, how they defined these CSR-related terms, and the types of activities they reported as comprising their CSR (the *de facto* definitions of CSR). The airlines in this study used a number of terms to describe their CSR-related practices and often used terms

interchangeably, which highlighted the importance of casting a wide net of accepted terms when studying a concept as nebulous as CSR. The two most common CSR-related terms used by the airlines in their publications were 'sustainability' and 'corporate social responsibility', and the former was slightly more popular with full service carriers and the latter was moderately more commonly used by the low cost carriers. In regards to defining their preferred CSR-related terms, the airlines' definitions were heavily rooted in discourses on sustainability and stakeholder theory, with most airlines using the keywords of environment, society, and stakeholders in their definitions. Another influence on the airlines' definitions was the discourse of business ethics, albeit in a more nuanced way than sustainability and stakeholder theory. While 'ethics' was not generally explicitly used as a keyword, the airlines were clear about their own agency in their CSR programmes and constructed their definitions around the assumption that they were voluntarily addressing ethical issues. Similarly, though corporate philanthropy was not generally directly referenced through keywords, its influence was still felt in the way the airlines defined CSR, with many of the interviewees equating the 'society' part of their CSR with charitable work. Thus, we can see that all four streams of discourse discussed in Chapter 2 have had a traceable impact on the airlines' definitions of CSR, though the airlines themselves emphasised sustainability and stakeholder theory through the use of discourse-related keywords.

There were differences between how the airlines formally defined their CSR and what they reported as their CSR-related activities. When it came to defining CSR-related terms, the airlines were in general agreement about keywords, and

most used a variation on the environment, society, and stakeholders when describing their CSR. However, when describing their CSR's practices, the airlines also included information on codes of conduct and other ethics-related issues – a consideration that was generally overlooked in their definitions. Additionally, the external stakeholder element of the CSR in practice largely centred on variations on corporate philanthropy, which was another root of CSR development that was absent in the definitions. Finally, while academic definitions of CSR tend to emphasise the voluntary nature of the term and focus on the idea that true CSR goes above and beyond what is required by law and the airlines themselves emphasised the voluntary nature of their CSR management, the airlines' descriptions of their 'CSR' activities often included compliance with regulations as a primary component of their activities.

The airlines' self-reported CSR-related activities fit into four broad categories: environment, internal stakeholders, external stakeholders, and ethical concerns. While previous studies have looked at the CSR practices of airlines based on a sustainable development-influenced framework of social, environmental, and economic impacts (Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois (2011)), this study has demonstrated that a more nuanced examination of the social aspects of CSR activities based on an internal/external stakeholder distinction can lead to a clearer understanding of how airlines construct their CSR. Thirty-one of the 34 airlines in the sample publically reported environment-related activities as a manifestation of their CSR, 25 airlines reported internal stakeholder-related activities, 32 airlines reported external stakeholder-related activities, and 19

airlines presented ethical behaviour, codes, or support for ethical issues as a component of their CSR management.

Table 5.6 A typology of the samples' self-reported CSR activities

Environment	Internal stakeholders	External stakeholders	Ethical concerns
Waste and recycling	Staff conditions and recruitment	Monetary charity donation	Ethical behaviour Ethical commitment
Environmental activism	Equal opportunities	Other charity involvement	Human rights support
Carbon offset	Diversity	Community education	
Biofuels research and support	Staff benefits	Sponsorship	
Environmental education	Health, wellbeing and staff safety	Economic good for society	
Winglets	Staff training	'Good neighbour'	
Fleet renewal	Staff communication and engagement	Safety and security	
Fleet maintenance	Relations with unions	Customer care	
Flight operations	Staff appreciation		
Ground operations			

Source: Author

Table 5.6 presents a summary of the main CSR-related activities of the sampled airlines in the form of a simple typology, which is similar to the one used by Holcomb *et al.* (2007) to assess the CSR reporting of hotel companies (Table 4.5, presented earlier; also discussed in more detail in Section 4.3.2). Notably, though, Holcomb *et al.*'s (2007) typology was created based on non-sector specific academic discourses on CSR, whereas the typology presented above grew out of the CSR-related reporting of the airline sector itself. The

typology from this research reflects the environment-focused understanding of CSR that was presented by the airlines in the sample. This focus on environmental aspects was evident not only in the wider variety of activities described (as reflected in the typology), but also in the number of airlines in the sample that used these environment-related activities to describe and define their CSR. Four of the five most common codes in the whole of the sample were environmentally-related, which was in keeping with Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois's (2007), Coles *et al.*'s (2009), and Gebel's (2004) findings that airlines place more emphasis on environmental aspects of CSR. Also notable was the role of external stakeholder-related activities, specifically involvement with charities, which was also found by Coles *et al.* (2009) and Fenclova and Coles (2011) (although both cases were only looking at low cost carriers), and which was also suggested by Phillips (2006). There were some differences between what the full service and low cost carriers as separate groups reported as their CSR activities. Environmental issues comprised a larger portion of the CSR activities reported by the full service carriers than the low cost carriers. The low cost carriers, on the other hand, tended to publish less about their CSR, but presented their CSR activities as a more evenly distributed between environmental-, internal stakeholder-, and external stakeholder-focused initiatives. However, as will be explored further in Chapter 7, this distinction between business models was only one way to divide the sample, and while splitting the sample based on business model did produce some differences, there were still a great many similarities between how low cost and full service airlines reported their CSR management.

6 Shaping responsibility

Airlines' reported motivations, justifications and key influencing stakeholders

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of the previous chapter was to undertake a comprehensive survey of the terms, definitions, and CSR-related activities that the airlines used to report their corporate social responsibilities (Objectives 1 and 2). Now with an understanding of *what* the airlines considered to be their CSR, this chapter will focus on *why* they claim they undertake these activities (Objective 4), and the relationships they form with external stakeholders that shape their CSR practices (Objective 5). Notably, for all three of the objectives investigated in this section, the focus is not on analysing what the airlines *did* but rather what they *reported* they were doing. This distinction is important since the nature of the data made it impossible to draw firm conclusions about the airlines' actual practices and motivations as the depth of reporting varied greatly. Similarly, since the data was constructed by the airlines themselves with only limited external verification, the bias of the narrative was also a factor. Thus, the analysis of CSR motivations and relationships with influential stakeholders was necessarily viewed through the (sometimes foggy) lens of the airlines' own

communications. While this meant that the actual practices and influences were possibly obscured, this also meant that the lenses themselves were available for analysis.

6.2 Stated motivations for CSR

Objective Four ('assess the stated motivation behind CSR activities') looked at one of the enduring questions of CSR management both in academia and in practice: *why* do organisations spend time and resources on CSR programmes? Explanations for CSR motivation generated by previous research ranged from so-called 'enlightened self-interest' and the idea that firms can benefit financially in the long term from their CSR programmes to a 'corporate conscience' and the idea that organisations have a moral obligation to practice CSR (Frynas 2005; Lynes and Andrachuk 2008; Graafland and van de Ven 2006; Ketola 2006). Both sides of the motivation spectrum have been challenged as being flawed in practice: the selfish CSR motivation for being difficult to substantiate with strong evidence and liable to lead to patchy CSR in practice (Ketola 2006; Graafland and van de Ven 2006) and the altruistic motivation for being naive and not aligned with strategic management (Frynas 2005, Friedman 1970).

While previous researchers (particularly Lynes and Adrachuk 2008) have analysed what they term 'motivation', this research was limited to only looking at 'stated motivations and justification'. Due to the data used in this research, the statements regarding motivation that were included in this study were ones that

had been constructed expressly for an external audience. These externally-focused statements were useful as a means to assess what motivations the airlines decided to include in their public, externally-focused CSR narrative, which was not necessarily identical to their internal narratives on their CSR motivations. Indeed, the carefully constructed nature of the data meant that differentiating between motivation (*a priori* rationalisation) and justification (*post hoc* rationalisation) was often impossible. Similarly, at times, it was difficult to parse the motivation from the stated benefits and rhetorical constructs. For instance, Lufthansa (n.d (b).: Online) reported that:

Lufthansa demonstrates impressively that commercial success and a corporate policy geared to sustainability are closely interlinked.

Website

This statement clearly makes the connection between having a sustainability-influenced corporate policy and commercial success. However, it does not differentiate between, for instance, Lufthansa choosing to embark on a CSR programme *because* of the commercial benefits and Lufthansa choosing to embark on a CSR programme for another reasons and nonetheless benefitting commercially. In other words, were business benefits a motivating factor or a fortuitous side effect? Due to the lack of direct, specifically-labelled statements of motivation (i.e. 'we practice CSR because...') and the public nature of many of the statements, the following subsections will be looking at the stated motivation and justification for CSR in tandem with, and with the understanding that, any statements regarding motivation and justification for CSR had been constructed expressly for an external audience – either the general public and other external stakeholders in the case of the websites, reports, and press

releases or to me, the external interviewer. Therefore, while objective four refers to the 'stated motivation', this section looks at motivations and justifications in tandem.

When it came to discussing why the airlines in this study engaged with CSR activities, the airlines reported having a number of justifications and motivations, ranging from intrinsic to extrinsic (as defined by Graafland and van de Ven 2006), as well as citing a number of impediments that prevented them from practicing CSR more widely. Twenty-four of the 34 airlines that published information about their CSR practices included some justification for their CSR activities (Table 6.1). While the overall stated motivations and justifications were similar to those reported by Lynes and Andrachuk (2008) and Lynes and Dredge (2006), there were enough differences of emphasis to warrant different codes and themes from their research. The justifications and stated motivations themes were: anticipated financial and secondary business benefits (18 and 18 airlines, respectively); a belief that the airlines needed to contribute to the global good (14 airlines); and the idea that practicing CSR was part of their identity as a business (11 airlines). These three justifications were often used in conjunction. Furthermore, 15 airlines talked about their CSR activities as being 'industry leading', which gave additional insight into the potential reasons for CSR engagement. While the external publications predominately discussed the impetus for and returns on CSR activities in positive terms, the interviews revealed not only the motivations and justifications for CSR action, but also to motivations and justifications for CSR *inaction*. The main impediments to

Table 6.1 Justifications and stated motivations for CSR activities

Airline		Business good - financial	Business good - secondary	Global good	Identity	Industry leader	
Full service carrier	Aegean Airlines		R		W		
	Aer Lingus	R		R		P	
	Air Europa	R		R		W	
	Air France**	W R	R	W R		W R P	
	Austrian Airlines	W	W				
	British Airways		R	R		W R	
	Czech Airlines	W	W				
	Finnair	W R	W R		R	W R P	
	Iberia	R	R	R		W P	
	KLM**	W R	W R	W R P		W P	
	LOT Polish Airlines		P		W		
	Lufthansa	W R P	W P	P	R	W R	
	Malev Hungarian Airlines	W		W	W		
	SAS	W R P	R P	R P		W R P	
	SWISS*	W	P		W R		
	TAP Air Portugal					W	
	Group total	12	12	9	6	10	
	% of group (21)	57.1	57.1	42.9	28.6	47.6	
	Low cost carrier	Air Berlin	W R P	W R P	W P	R	W P
		Cimber Sterling	R	R	R	R	R
		easyJet	W R	W R	W		W
Flybe		W R	R P		W P	W P	
Ryanair						W	
Transavia		R	R	R			
TUIfly*		R	R	R	R		
Group total		6	6	5	4	5	
% of group (13)		46.2	46.2	38.5	30.8	38.5	
TOTAL		18	18	14	10	15	
R – in annual report or CSR-related report; W – on website; P- in a press release							
*Mentioned in a parent company's report; **Share reporting with a partner company							

Source: author

practicing CSR more widely were seen to be difficulties with getting enough resources, CSR being a low priority for high level managers, CSR being seen as offering little direct financial reward, particularly in the realm of revenue generation (which was notably in contrast to the narratives in the externally-focused publications), and the perception that being vocal about actively practicing CSR could have a negative impact on public relations.

6.2.1 Business benefits

The most commonly stated motivations and justifications both in the interviews and in the texts was enlightened self-interest based on the premise that businesses could 'do well by doing good' (Falck and Heblich 2007). Of the 23 airlines that publically reported their justification of CSR, 20 mentioned the benefits to their business due to their CSR activities. Most of the airlines mentioned a combination of the two benefits as justification for their CSR activities. Of the 20 airlines, four airlines talked only about the direct financial benefits of their CSR programmes; three airlines only talked about secondary (and less measureable) benefits such as increased staff motivation and public relations; and the other 15 airlines mentioned a combination of financial and secondary benefits. This focus on the business case for CSR was also echoed in the interviews and the general approach to CSR justification was candidly stated by one interviewee who remarked:

We don't spend money [on CSR activities] without having some interest there.

Interview 6, full service carrier

In their public communications, the airlines were generally more diplomatic, preferring to embed their motivations in a narrative of tradition, culture, and success, such as Air Berlin's (2010: 80) statement that:

Sustainability has traditionally had a fixed place in Air Berlin's corporate culture: economic success is based on acting in a socially and environmentally-friendly manner.

Report

Similarly, Finnair (n.d. (a): Online) emphasised their perception that CSR would result in benefits to their business, stating:

Responsible operations are in the long term the cornerstone of profitable business activity.

Website

Notably, this business-case justification of CSR activities was not just found in the shareholder-focused reports and, there was no noticeable difference in the narratives on the websites and in reports.

Direct links to economic success were most often made to the environmental aspects of the airlines' CSR programmes. For instance, SWISS (2011: Online) explained that:

Environmental investments go hand in hand with economic interests. Especially since jet fuel prices have more than doubled between 2004 and 2008. Fuel costs currently account for approximately 30 percent of SWISS's total expenses, making it the company's single largest expense item.

Website

The price of fuel and the cost savings made through efforts that were branded as being environmentally responsible came up time and time again in the airlines' reports, websites, and press releases. Cost savings through reduced fuel consumption also were noted by nearly every interviewee as a positive benefit and motivating factor of their CSR activities. For example, when asked

what were the positive and negative aspects of actively practicing CSR, one interviewee immediately summed up the impetus for environmental actions in particular, noting that his airline's main motivator was the idea that:

[...] if you use less fuel, you're going to save money. So, the fact is that airlines buying new planes with better technology are actually going to save money. And those fuel costs are increasingly a big portion of the costs of running an airline. [Unclear] And if you can minimise the fuel, you're going to have wins there as well. And with many of these issues, by trying to solve one problem, you end up solving another.

Interview 7, low cost carrier

While they were the most common example of direct financial benefit, cost savings through reduced fuel consumption were not the only perceived financial benefits; the airlines also reported that financial incentives included reduced costs due to environmentally-conscious office equipment, reduced training costs due to internal stakeholder-focused training initiatives, preferential airport fees based on their environmental performance, and reduced office supplies expenditure due to 'e-office' initiatives. The direct bottom line benefits that most of the airlines saw as a result of their efforts on the environmental aspects of their CSR might at least partly explain the airlines' strong focus on their environmental programmes. However, this begs the question: if the activity is undertaken as a normal part of cost-reduction measures, does it count as corporate social responsibility? This question was brought up by one interviewee who mused whether her airline's environmental efforts really could be classed as CSR since she believed them to be primarily driven by financial

concerns. Notably, most commentators do not qualify CSR activities based on motivation, for example a 5% reduction in carbon emissions motivated by a concern for the environment has the same impact as a 5% reduction in carbon emissions motivated by a concern to reduce costs. At the same time, it is also worth noting that Graafland and van de Ven (2006) have found that financially-motivated CSR efforts resulted in reduced involvement overall when compared with morally-motivated CSR efforts.

Not all of the benefits listed by the airlines were monetary, and aspects of the airlines' CSR activities that were not related to the environment were predominately justified through the secondary benefits. The three most commonly mentioned secondary benefits were increased internal stakeholder satisfaction and engagement, competitive advantage, and improved perception by external stakeholders. For instance, Lufthansa (2010: 36) described the benefit of their internal stakeholder efforts as primarily secondary, noting:

[Employees] benefit not only from a measurable increase in creativity, innovative power and mobilized potentials, but also from a decrease in intercultural conflicts. In other words, it pays off to respect and appreciate employees' individuality.

Report

Other airlines claimed that their CSR activities made them a more attractive employer and increased employee morale. Several of the airlines reported that satisfied internal stakeholders had an impact on customer service, such as easyJet's (n.d.: Online) statement that:

There are proven links between an engaged workforce and excellence in customer service. The attitude and passion of our staff was ably demonstrated by their support for customers and flexibility through the periods of bad weather and, most notably, the ash cloud.

Website

An even more direct link between their CSR programmes and a competitive advantage was noted by some of the airlines, such as a SAS's (2010: Online) press release which included a quotation from its Chief Commercial Officer that:

Many of our customers, particularly corporate customers, demand environmentally certified products and services. We can now offer these, which further strengthens our position as one of the most environmentally aware airlines on the market.

Press release

While several airlines mentioned in their public communications the competitive advantage created by their CSR programmes, the interviewed managers were less certain about the measureable benefits, although they seemed to feel that there *should* be a commercial advantage to their airline's CSR activities. For instance, one manager admitted:

Now, whether people choose to fly with us [because of our CSR programme] - we did some research, quite recently as well, I've got the results on my desk. And although lots of customers find that very important, it wouldn't be their first choice for choosing airlines. So, we don't think that we get the customers by doing this. So, financially, it's not

very important. But we believe that it makes a difference, basically. And personally, I think that in the long term, it will benefit financially, as well. Because, me, for example, if I were to choose between two companies...and of course, if I can afford the price, but two companies if they charge you the same price, you will go for the one that you think is a good company.

Interview 3, full service carrier

While the competitive advantage of CSR was called into question by some of the interviewed managers, one secondary benefit that both the interviewees and the public communications agreed was the importance of the airlines' CSR activities in improving external stakeholder perception especially as it related to their so-called 'license to grow'. As Finnair (n.d (b).: Online) noted:

For airlines it is vital to have good relations with interest groups, whether they be customers, investors, the media, non-governmental organisations or officials. Operational conditions and entitlement to growth depend on these.

Website

The importance of maintaining good relations with external stakeholders also came up frequently during the interviews. This was often in the context of sector growth and regulations. As one manager stated:

I think it's one of the basic elements of the social contract, so the company's license to operate, so you have to be operating in a socially and ecologically and economically considerate way.

Interview 1, full service carrier

Another interviewee was even more explicit about the role of the CSR programme in his airlines' efforts to maintain a favourable regulatory environment, commenting:

I'm convinced that, um, that this [CSR programme] has a positive impact on politicians and on their decisions, the decisions of the politicians. That they take into account what they see. Let's put it that way: if you are ignoring everything that is currently being discussed and then come with some proposals, nobody believes that you are really being serious. You have – when I discuss with colleagues, discuss trying to find ways to improve sustainability, they always say, 'walk the talk.' And I think that is necessary. Again, something like image, you have to prove that you are serious about what you are talking about. Then, people listen to you if you have an opinion.

Interview 6, full service carrier

6.2.3 Global good

While business benefits were the primary justification reported by the airlines, they were not the only stated motivating factor. Fifteen of the airlines presented their CSR activities as 'win-win' initiatives in the sense that they mentioned not only how they would benefit as a justifying factor, but also how society and the environment were benefitted from their CSR activities. An example of this 'win-win' approach is SAS's (2010: 103) statement that:

Continuously improving processes and optimizing production in a sustainable way creates value, not only in the form of growth for

shareholders *but also for outside stakeholders, suppliers and passengers.*

Report [italics added for emphasis]

Statements such as these framed CSR activities as having benefits that extended beyond the airlines themselves, although, as in the above quotation, these benefits were generally not discussed in great detail and were often reported as generalised 'good' rather than focusing on specific benefits. The airlines were fairly evenly divided between those who presented these external impacts of their CSR activities as 'win-win' benefits and those who presented them as part of an ethical imperative. For the 'win-win' airlines, the external benefits of their CSR was presented as a value-neutral or positive result of their CSR activities, such as in the SAS statement above. Iberia (2010: 371) also displayed this 'win-win' approach in its statement that:

Many of the projects implemented to improve processes and quality of products and services within the company *also lead to major savings of resources, thereby reducing the impact on the environment.*

Report [italics added for emphasis]

These 'win-win' statements still displayed an extrinsic justification for CSR since the leading and seemingly primary justification for the activity was the business benefit ('creates value [...] in the form of growth for shareholders' and 'improve processes and quality of products and services'), with the happy additional benefit for external stakeholders.

However, there were several airlines who presented their contribution to global good not as a fortunate side effect of their CSR, but as a driver for it. These 'ethical imperative' airlines expressed an (at least partial) intrinsic motivation (Graafland and van de Ven 2006) for their activities with statements to the effect that they believed it was their moral duty to act in a responsible manner. These statements were noteworthy in that they introduced to the discourses on the airlines' CSR the idea that the airlines had an ethical obligation to behave responsibly, rather than solely talking about the business case for these activities. For instance, Aer Lingus (2010: 13) stated that:

Aer Lingus acknowledges that its operations have an impact on the environment. Balancing the protection of the environment with people's need to travel is essential for both ethical and business reasons.

Report

This pairing of 'ethical and business reasons' as a justification for CSR activities was also apparent in easyJet's (n.d. (a): Online) statement that:

Addressing our environmental impact is clearly part of our responsibility as an airline. However, it is also a business imperative.

Website

Notably, though, as with the 'win-win' airlines, easyJet (n.d. (a): Online) quickly focused on the business benefits by further explaining:

Environmental concerns have a significant impact on public policy towards aviation, from restrictions on airport expansion to passenger

taxes. It is therefore in our own interest to ensure that both we and the wider industry properly address environmental concerns.

Website

None of the airlines mentioned the ethical imperative for their CSR in isolation; it was always mentioned within the context of the business benefits. This was also true for the interviewees, and while many of them mentioned an ethics-based justification for their CSR activities or used ethics-influenced diction (such as talking about their 'responsibilities' to stakeholders and the environment), the business case and business benefits of CSR was never far away. For instance, one manager, when asked why his airline had developed their environmental programme, said:

Um, because we have a very big environmental impact and we want to reduce it. It's something – it's a personal feeling about the environment. The other thing is that it reduces costs if we save fuel and it's also good for the image.

Interview 4, full service carrier

Although unlike in the public statements listed above, the intrinsic 'personal feeling' was mentioned first, the extrinsic business case for CSR was quick to follow. Another manager answered the question of whether he thought his airline had benefitted from its CSR activities that:

I think you—I think most people want to think they're doing the right thing. And I—I think that's really quite prevalent throughout the company that you want—I think good employers---We're in a competitive labour

market and...uh...you want people to feel happy about what they're doing and where they are and you know, like with anything, if you're happy, you'll do a better job. You're more committed. So, it's kind of a win-win there. You want to—you know, you want to do the right thing. So, it's...um....I do feel like we've benefited from it. Definitely. Definitely.

Interview 7, low cost carrier

Looking at both statements in the airlines' publications and statements made in the interviews, it would appear that while some of the airlines included intrinsic motivators in their justification of CSR programmes, the dominant justification used by the airlines in this study were the business benefits, and there were no cases of CSR programmes being reported as having been undertaken solely based on a perceived ethical imperative.

6.2.4 CSR and image

While statements that fit into the 'business good' and 'global good' codes were the most obvious discussions of CSR justification, there were two more codes that contained insight into how the airlines constructed their CSR motivations. The two codes were 'identity' (presented by 11 airlines) and 'industry leader' (presented by 19 airlines). These codes were related in that both dealt with the airlines' self conceptualisation. In the case of 'identity' statements, the conceptualisation was based around the idea that CSR was something that was inherent in the identity of the airline itself. For the 'industry leader' statements, CSR activities were presented as contributors to their identity as a competitive, innovative airline. While the 'identity' statements related to intrinsic motivators

(as many of them indirectly referenced the idea that *we are a good company so we do this*) and the 'industry leader' statements indirectly referenced extrinsic motivators (since the often unstated implication was that *being the first in this gives us a competitive advantage*), both sets of statements did so indirectly and therefore were not included in the 'business benefits' or 'global good' codes.

'Identity' statements were different from 'global good' statements in the construction of the narrative; while 'global good' quotations focused on positive impact on the whole, the 'identity' quotations were more internally-focused, presenting their CSR activities as an extension of *who we are*, presumably as an ethical company. Similarly, the 'industry leader' statements claimed that certain CSR-related activities were an 'industry first' or 'industry leading' and contributed to the airlines' identity as a leading innovator; however, while the implication was that this identity as an industry leader would bring business benefits, direct links to how the business was benefitting were not made. Therefore, the two codes relating to identity were comprised of statements that focused on the construct of the organisation and were situated in a liminal space between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations which could better be considered an 'internal-focused' motivation.

As was mentioned above, the 'identity' coded statements contextualised CSR activities within the self-created definitions of the airlines, and while the unspoken implication could be considered to be ethics-based (*we do this because we are good*), the statements did not explicitly make that link. For instance, SWISS in Lufthansa's CSR report (2010: 110) claimed that:

Switzerland's national airline embodies many typically Swiss values, such as "personal care", "quality in every detail" and "typically Swiss hospitality" – we do our best to ensure that our passengers feel right at home. SWISS is committed long-term and at various levels to an economical use of resources and sees a responsible course of action with regard to the environment as a basic component of its corporate culture.

Report

In this statement, SWISS tied its purported responsible outlook with its long-term strategy, but emphasised corporate values of hospitality and customer care – values not typically emphasised in mainstream business ethics debates. Furthermore, the close juxtaposition of 'Swiss values' and a corporate culture committed to 'a responsible course of action with regard to the environment' demonstrates not only the application of CSR as a matter of corporate identity, but also as a part of a national identity as well. This was seen in a few of the other airlines' statements, such as Finnair's (2010: 17) statement that:

Finnishness [sic] encompasses accepting responsibility at every stage of the service chain.

Report

The role of identity as a driver for CSR activities was also apparent in several of the interviews, and, as in the two examples above, several managers made direct links between the nationality of their airline and a corporate focus on

CSR. For instance, one manager reported that during management discussions of what to publish as CSR:

The answer from the [airline's] Board was, this - this is natural for us. We are a [national] company. But I thought, well, we cannot respond like this. We have to explain. But for us, it's so natural that people don't even think we have to write something like that.

Interview 1, full service carrier

This link between CSR and identity – and especially national identity – was especially prevalent among full service carriers and was particularly relevant considering many of the airlines' previous (and in a few cases, current) status as nationally-owned government businesses. Therefore, what was often apparent was a possible ethical motivation twice removed: *we do this because we are [x] nationality and [x] nationality are good/ethically responsible*. The main emphasis, then, was not on ethical behaviour or global good, but rather on constructing the image of an organisation that practices CSR.

The 'industry leader' coded statements were also focused on self-definition, although this definition of a 'leader' was set in the context of external stakeholders. For instance, Air France (n.d. (b): Online) on its website stated that:

A leader must be exemplary to set the standard in his field, and that is Air France-KLM is committed through a Statement of Corporate Social Responsibility [sic] signed by the Presidents of both companies.

Website

For Air France and its partner KLM, their CSR activities were presented as a way for them to gain a position in the industry hierarchy, although why both airlines wanted to 'set the standard in [the] field' was not explained further. The implied business benefits of commercial or possibly first mover advantage were implied, rather than explicitly stated (and, because of the lack of specificity, it is possible that the aim of being an industry leader in CSR was motivated by other desires, such as the simple desire to be seen as a powerful airline). While the 'identity' statements often contextualised the airlines' CSR activities within the context of general society, the 'industry leader' statements were, as the name suggests, contextualised within the airline industry. For British Airways (2010: 8), the industry it wished to lead was the whole of the global airline industry, as it said:

Our aim is to be the leading global premium airline. To achieve this we must also become the world's most responsible airline.

Report

Other airlines were less ambitious, such as Air Europa (2009: Online), which stated:

The aim is to obtain external recognition of Air Europa as a leading airline, not only from the perspective of the quality service it provides, but also as a result of the continuous improvement of working methods, customer service and respect for the environment.

Website

Air Europa, then, reported that it was content to be 'a leading airline' rather than British Airways' desire to be '*the* leading global premium airline' [italics

added for emphasis]. Air Europa's statement was one of the few in the 'industry leader' code group that directly referenced the role of external stakeholder recognition as a justifying factor. However, as will be discussed later in this chapter, external stakeholder recognition and verification maintained a prominent place in the airlines' public CSR communications. Furthermore, all of the airlines in the 'industry leader' group by definition were situating themselves in comparison to other airlines. For many of the airlines in this study, then, CSR activities were reported to have been practiced at least partially with the airline's image in mind – and not just with the intention of being seen as a 'good' airline, but also to be a 'leading' airline.

6.2.5 Limiting factors and obstacles

While the airlines' publications predominately presented the case for CSR activities, the interviews with airline managers also revealed the other side of the justifications for CSR action: the justifications for CSR inaction. Many of the managers were seemingly apologetic that their airline was not doing more in regards to CSR. The main impediments to CSR activities identified by the managers were: lack of resources; difficulties with higher management buy-in; and concerns over promoting the CSR-related activities they did undertake. These three main impediments were reported as hindering CSR good practice – from CSR in action, to formalisation of CSR policies, to public reporting and openness about CSR activities. The externally-focused publications largely ignored impediments to CSR action, aside from a few examples of how 'onerous' regulations prevented them from instituting measures that would reduce fuel burn and emissions. Since this impediment centred on the airlines'

relationship with regulators on a select set of issues, it will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

Managers who talked about the lack of resources to meet demand used examples which largely focused on small staff numbers and the many demands placed on airlines by external stakeholders, both in practice and in reporting. In practice, the managers reported being overwhelmed by external stakeholder expectations – especially by charities asking for donations. Nearly all of the interviewees mentioned having to deny many charity requests simply because there was not enough money to go around. For instance, one manager described the pressures on the CSR team:

[The members of the CSR team who deal with charity requests] are very busy. Very, very busy. We get....we get so many. I don't know how many. I know we don't say yes to everyone, because there are so many. It's literally impossible. So I don't know what criteria they use to decide what is a 'yes'. Because it---we've always got someone in charge of the phone because it's always ringing all the time.

Interview 3, full service carrier

Notably, the interviewed managers did not tend to talk about environmental requirements in the same way. While they talked about environmental regulations often, these pressures were presented as something to which the airlines would be able to adapt – the resources, presumably, would be made available. On the other hand, charitable engagement was presented by the managers as an insatiable demand for which they had limited resources ('it's

always ringing all the time', in the above quotation). While not explicitly stated, this demonstrated that potential CSR activities were being prioritised by the airlines based on their perceived relevance to the business, as well as, potentially, the strength of the external stakeholders' claims.

Limited resources were also cited by managers as a large impediment to publishing more widely about their CSR practice. Most of the managers reported engaging in more CSR activities than were published publically; however, roughly half of the interviewees reported that making these activities public was not a priority due to limited resources. For instance, one manager compared what his airline published about CSR to what other companies such as Shell publish, stating:

And being as leanly staffed as we are, obviously, we don't have the, uh, sort of comfort of being able to produce this sort of reports. If you go and see our website, you will not see the CSR section on it. We have a short environmental statement of four pages, a copy for you, and a few pages in the annual report on—on the—on the, um, corporate governance and on social responsibility as well. But it's unlike anything you would find on Shell's website, for example, with their CSR—[...] We—we couldn't afford it.

Interview 12a, low cost carrier

This manager was keen to point out further on in the interview that just because his airline did not extensively publish its CSR activities, this did not mean that CSR was not part of its business. As with the charity involvement, these

examples of limited CSR reporting due to a lack of resources were qualified as not being vital – as ‘comfort’, to use the manager’s terminology, rather than necessity. The dominant narrative in this group of explanations for CSR impediments was that some areas of CSR were being limited by a lack of resources, but that these areas were on the peripheries of CSR – and that the managers could understand why these particular instances of charity involvement and CSR communications, should not necessarily be prioritised.

However, along with the areas of CSR that were limited by resources, many of the managers also remarked (generally at different points in the interview) that their whole CSR programmes were hampered by a lack of top-level buy-in, especially during periods of difficulties. This was especially apparent in interviews with the low cost airlines’ managers, though it was also clearly present in the interviews with many of the full service carriers’ managers as well. One low cost carrier manager reported that:

I asked the board where [a formalised CSR strategy] was on their priority list and it’s not one of their priorities at the moment. We’re doing more with less people and the focus is on ensuring that we’re all here in five years’ time.

Interview 11, low cost carrier

This observation that blatantly-badged CSR activities were not given priority by top management came through in other interviews as well. Another manager talked about how her airline’s new CEO had temporarily suspended CSR-labelled plans while a reorganisation effort took place. However, some of this

lack of buy-in seemed to come down to the title of 'CSR' – both of the managers reported other CSR-related activities that were taking place and well-supported by senior management. In these two cases, as in other instances, a formal, specifically-labelled CSR programme was seen to be of secondary importance, even while, paradoxically, specific CSR activities were considered to be worthy of investment.

Another main impediment to CSR practice that emerged during the interviews was concerns about promoting or actively reporting on CSR activities that were being practiced. The reasons given in the interviews for not publicising more widely about CSR activities included a lack of resources, as mentioned above; however, some of the interviewees also questioned whether wider publicity of their activities was necessarily a good thing. Some of the managers also expressed the idea that publicising about their airlines' CSR practices made them an open target to external stakeholders, and that the 'safest' CSR, from a public relations perspective, was unreported CSR. However, the managers did not only talk about fears of being 'punished' for their CSR activities. Several managers expressed the belief that publishing about ethically-motivated CSR activities was unseemly. As one manager stated:

I don't think we have to sell ourselves with the CSR programme. I think it is something that is a vital element of our culture, of who we are. But we won't –we don't use it to our advantage of course. It is what we are doing, supporting communities, it's not for our own benefit. So I think it's...we go for discrete communications.

Interview 8, full service carrier

This idea that CSR programmes should not be publicised ‘for our own benefit’ was also echoed by another manager for a full service carrier who talked at length about how her airline had taken a moral stance not to publicise photos of the children and their families who benefited from the airline’s charity flights because they felt it called into question its true motivations.

6.3 External influences and engagement

Objectives Two and Five were similar in that they both looked at the airlines’ CSR activities in relations with stakeholders. However, while Objective Two analysed the stakeholders that the airlines claimed were impacted by their CSR programmes, Objective Five sought to investigate the range of collaboration, stakeholder engagement and knowledge transfer. The acknowledgement that organisations’ activities have an impact on stakeholders underpins both the sustainable development-based and stakeholder theory-based conceptualisation of CSR. On the other hand, the impact of stakeholders on businesses and their CSR practices is emphasised more heavily in the stakeholder theory-based tradition of CSR research than the sustainable development-based discourses. The role of external stakeholders in the development of CSR in the aviation sector has been largely overlooked. The exception has been Lynes and Andrachuk’s (2008) research on the motivations for CSR at SAS. In their study, they found that Renn’s (2001) four systems of influence could be identified in the CSR motivations of SAS. The four systems are: the market system; the political-institutional system; the scientific system; and the social system. This research took a different tack. Rather than looking

at systems of influence, this research identified influencing stakeholders and evaluated them based on their respective power.

The airlines in this study reported a wide range of external stakeholders who had an impact on their CSR practices (Table 6.2). The most widely cited influencing stakeholders were airports (17 airlines), other airlines (21 airlines), governments (26 airlines), and charities and NGOs (28 airlines). Knowledge sharing between non-aviation businesses was mentioned by ten airlines. The airlines also discussed using consultations with customers and other society-wide stakeholders as a means of shaping their CSR agenda (8 airlines), as well as engaging with universities and other educational bodies (12 airlines).

The airlines often used outside sources to give credence to their CSR activities; the use of paid auditors to verify CSR activities and reports was mentioned by nine airlines, and 25 airlines reported externally-granted awards, certifications and memberships, and subscription to codes, accords, and agreements related to CSR issues. Finally, the role of unions as a driver for CSR – and especially internal stakeholder-focused CSR programmes – cannot be ignored. Fifteen airlines reported their engagement with unions within the context of their CSR practices. As with previous studies, and Lynes and Andrachuk's (2008) study in particular, this research identified different forms of reported engagement depending on the stakeholder type, which will be described in detail below.

Table 6.2 External stakeholder influences on the airlines' CSR practices

Airline		Airports	Other airlines & trade bodies	Governments & regulators	Educational bodies	Auditors	Customers & wider society	Other non-aviation businesses	Charities & NGOs	Unions
Full service carriers	Aegean	P		RWP	P				W P	R
	Aer Lingus	R		R					R W	RP(o)
	Air Europa*			R					R	
	Air France**	RW	RW	RW	RW	RWP	R W	R W	R W	R
	Austrian			W				W		
	British Airways	RW	RW	RWP	RWP		R W	R W P	RWP	RP(o)
	Brussels Airlines	WP		W				W P	W	
	Czech Airlines	W	W	RW						
	Finnair	RW	RWP	RW	RW	RP	R W	R W	RWP	R
	Iberia	RW	RP	RW	RP	R	R	R	RWP	RWP
	KLM**	RW P	RW	R	RW	RWP	R W	R W	RW	R
	LOT Polish Airlines		W	RW					WP	
	Lufthansa	RW	RWP	WP	RWP		R	R W	RWP	R
	Malev Hungarian Airlines	WP	WP	WP					W P	
	Olympic Air								P	
	SAS	RW	RW	RW	R W	RW	R W	W	R	RP
	SWISS*	W	W	R					W	
	TAP Air Portugal	W	W	W		W			W	
	Virgin	R	R	RW		W			RWP	
	Group total	15	13	18	8	7	7	9	17	9
	% of group (21)	71.4	61.9	85.7	38.1	33.3	33.3	42.9	81	42.9
Low cost carriers	Air Baltic			P					P	
	Air Berlin		W	RWP	P				RWP	P
	Blue1		P			P			W	W
	Bmibaby								P	
	Cimber Sterling		R	R						
	easyJet		RW	RW	R W			R	RWP	W
	Flybe	P	W	WP	R P	W			P	
	Norwegian Air Shuttle	R	R	R					R W	R
	Ryanair		W	R P					P	R(o)
	Transavia*								R	R
	TUIfly*		R	R	R		R		R	
	Wizz Air								R	
	Group total	2	8	8	4	2	1	1	11	6
% of group (13)	15.4	61.5	61.5	30.8	15.4	7.7	7.7	84.6	46.2	
TOTAL	17	21	26	12	9	8	10	28	15	
R – in annual report or CSR-related report; W – on website; P- in a press release										
*Mentioned in a parent company's report; **Share reporting with a partner company										

Source: author

Gaining the interviewed managers' perspectives of the external stakeholders' influences on the airlines' CSR activities was challenging. The interviewees did not in general spontaneously mention examples of external influences on their CSR activities, and most of the quotations below are the result of a careful discussion with the manager ('careful' in the sense that the questions were mindfully phrased to reduce chances of 'leading' the interviewee and much of the information was gleaned by asking the interviewee to clarify further). This was relatively in keeping with the public communications; although there were many examples of external influences on the CSR practices, only a few airlines flagged these examples specifically as cases of external influence on their CSR. The exception to this was a few of the larger, full-service carriers like Air France/KLM (2010: 13) that explicitly stated the role of external stakeholders in developing its CSR programme, stating:

Stakeholder feedback helps to shape the Group's CSR strategy. This means listening long-term to the expectations of customers, employees, people living close to airports, experts, associations, local authorities, civil society representatives such as NGOs.

Engaging with various stakeholder groups helps to track societal developments and expectations, dilemmas for Air France-KLM and possible CSR innovations.

Report

External stakeholders were reported to have three roles: shaping of CSR, contributing to CSR implementation, and verifying and validating the airlines'

CSR management. The quotation above is an especially explicit acknowledgement of the role of external stakeholder expectations in directing the CSR engagement choices of the airlines. The airlines also reported that external stakeholders played a role in the implementation of the airlines' CSR programme – especially for activities related to the environment and for charitable work. The difference between helping shape CSR and helping implement CSR were subtle, but important. The CSR shapers had the power to influence and direct *how the airlines understood their responsibilities* and which CSR programmes they decided to implement, as well as helping them assess their CSR activities. The CSR implementers, on the other hand, had the power to enable and empower *how the airlines practiced their CSR-focused activities*, and, along with that power of implementation there was also the power to restrict or inhibit CSR implementation. Meanwhile, the CSR verifiers provided a mixture of shaping and implementation influences, as well as contributed a degree of perceived legitimacy to the airlines' actions by providing external verification for them. For governmental and non-governmental agencies intent on increasing CSR practices within an industry, identifying and supporting both CSR shapers and CSR implementers could result in stronger implementation across the sector as well as offering the chance to influence how the organisations view their responsibilities through indirect means. This research, therefore, assessed whether the relationship between the airlines and their external stakeholders had an impact on their CSR views and strategies or on their CSR in practice.

Table 6.3 Summary of predominant CSR-related external stakeholders

Stakeholder	Power	Legitimacy	Urgency	Engagement types	Influence focus	Main CSR issue
Airports	High to medium	High	High	Regulation, collaboration	Implementing CSR, verifying CSR	Environment, some external stakeholder
Trade bodies	High	High	High	Collaboration, knowledge transfer	Shaping CSR, verifying CSR	Environment
Other airlines	High to low	High	High	Collaboration, knowledge transfer, regulation, competitive pressure	Shaping CSR	Environment, some whole CSR
Governmental regulators	High	High	High	Regulation, collaboration, lobbying	Shaping CSR, implementing CSR	Environment, health and safety, some internal stakeholder engagement, some external stakeholder engagement
Governmental bodies	Medium	High to medium	Medium	Collaboration, subscription to CSR-related goals	Shaping CSR, verifying CSR	Environment, societal concerns
CSR issues-related charities	Low to medium	Low	Low to medium	Collaboration, donation	Implementing CSR	Societal concerns, environment
CSR practice-related charities and NGOs	Medium to high	Medium	Medium	Collaboration, knowledge transfer, assessment	Shaping CSR, verifying CSR	Environment, whole CSR

Source: author

This research also assessed the types of relationships and power balances between the airlines and their reported external CSR influencers. A table was

constructed to aide and summarise analysis of the relationships and influences of most predominate external stakeholders (Table 6.3), which summarised the main types of engagement, focus of engagement, and CSR-issues as well as assessed the relationships using Mitchell *et al.*'s (1997) typology of power, legitimacy and urgency (Table 6.4). These assessments were based on the information provided in both the primary and secondary data sets, and in some cases from the extensive industry analysis which was summarised in Chapter 3. The assessments were created during the grounded theory-based analysis. Mitchell *et al.*'s (1997: 854) typology of stakeholder identification uses three criteria to analyse stakeholders: '(1) the stakeholder's *power* to influence the firm, (2) the *legitimacy* of the stakeholder's relationship with the firm, and (3) the *urgency* of the stakeholder's claim on the firm' [italics original]. Applying these three criteria to the airlines' stated stakeholders showed that the range of typologies was broad: from governmental regulators with a great deal of power, legitimacy and urgency to charities and NGOs that have high urgency, but considerably less direct power and less legitimacy to make a claim on the airlines' resources.

The assessments presented in Table 6.3 are necessarily broad, since they cover all of the sampled airlines and a wide range of stakeholders. Similarly, it is the first such stakeholder analysis of airlines external stakeholders to be published to date, and therefore, it does not build on previous assessments. Notably Mitchell *et al.* (1997) (among others (e.g. Friedman and Miles 2002; Treviño and Weaver 1999)) acknowledged that a great deal of variance should be accepted when the models is applied in practice due to the constantly

Table 6.4 Mitchell, et al.'s (1997) Key Constructs of in the Theory of Stakeholder Identification and Salience

Construct	Definition	Sources
Power	A relationship among social actors in which one social actor, A, can get another social actor, B, to do something that B would not have otherwise done	Dahl, 1957; Pfeffer 1981; Weber 1947
Legitimacy	A generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, definitions	Suchman, 1995; Weber, 1947
Urgency	The degree to which stakeholder claims call for immediate attention	Original [to Mitchell, et al. 1997]—builds on the definition from the Merriam-Webster Dictionary

Source: adapted from Mitchell, et al. (1997: 869)

shifting and evolving nature of stakeholder and stakeholder relationships with an organisation. For instance, a children's charity in Thailand could be perceived to have little power and legitimacy, but if they engaged in a public campaign to pressure a major international airline (such as BA or KLM) into taking a stand on sex tourism (an issue which tourism businesses are encouraged to take a stand (Tepelus 2008)), their perceived power and even legitimacy could increase dramatically. While necessarily broad, the analysis of power, legitimacy and urgency, as well as the focus of the relationships themselves, was deemed to be a beneficial starting point to discuss the complex relationships the airlines seemed to have with a range of stakeholders.

This section will discuss these relationships in more detail by specifically look at the CSR shaping and implementation relationships of the stakeholders most identified by the airlines: the airports and other industry organisations, regulators and governments, and charities and NGOs. Next, the CSR verifying relationships of all of the stakeholder groups will be discussed. Ultimately, this research found that the stakeholders' power relative to the airline was a good indicator of the strength of the relationship, with the notable exception of charities. While legal requirements and regulations seemed to direct much of the airlines' conceptualisation and management of CSR, the airlines (and the full service carriers in particular) also emphasised and promoted any external verification they received and voluntary engagement they undertook with CSR-related initiatives. This suggested that while mandatory pressures from governments were a main influencer and shaper of the airlines' CSR practices, they were not the only influences. External partnerships, recognition, and legitimisation through auditing of the actions airlines undertook provided the 'carrot' to the regulators' 'stick'.

6.3.1 The intra-industry influence: Airports, airlines, and trade bodies

Twenty-four airlines referenced airports, airlines, and/or airline trade bodies as having an influence on their CSR practices. Seventeen of those airlines talked about their relationships with airports and 21 discussed their relationships with airlines and airlines trade bodies. A very similar percentage of low cost and full service carriers reported relationships with other airlines and airline trade bodies (61.9% and 61.5%, respectively). This was not the case with the airlines' reported relationships with airports, which were reported at much higher rates

by the full service carriers than by the low cost airlines (71.4% and 15.4%, respectively).

As with the other external CSR influences, this impact was primarily focused on only part of the airlines' CSR practices – in this case, the environmentally-focused aspects, although there were a few cases of collaborations aimed at external stakeholders. The types of engagement ranged from regulatory pressures (from the airports) to voluntary knowledge transfer (airports, other airlines, trade bodies) to competitive pressure (other airlines). All of the organisations in this group were deemed to have high legitimacy and generally high urgency based on the relevance to the airlines' business operations. The level of power varied greatly and was reflected in the airlines' descriptions of their relationships with CSR-influencing stakeholders. On one end of the spectrum was a power imbalance in favour of the airports. In these cases, the airports had the power to impose fees and regulations, such as in the case of Prague Ruzyn Airport. Czech Airlines (n.d. (b): Online) stated that:

The noise level caused by aircraft operation at Prague Ruzyn Airport is regulated by the Prague Airport Corporation. Czech Airlines, as other carriers, pay noise fees for each landing at Ruzyn . [...] The Prague Airport Corporation is responsible for noise-prevention measures in the noise-protection zone around Prague Ruzyn Airport. It uses the noise fees collected in a fund to finance those measures. Czech Airlines is the largest contributor to this fund, as it accounts for nearly one-half of the airport's traffic.

Website

These relationships were not commonly reported. Instead, the airlines tended to emphasise cooperation and joint action, particularly with their 'home base' airport, such as Brussels Airlines' (n.d.: Online) reporting that:

Brussels Airlines together with Brussels Airport is currently evaluating the installation of solar panels on its premises.

Website

These collaborations were particularly emphasised by the large, full service carriers such as KLM, Air France, Iberia, and British Airways, but were also mentioned by smaller, full service carriers as well – particularly by the subsidiary airlines. Airport-airline collaborations were not as frequently mentioned by the low cost carriers, possibly due to low cost airlines' propensity to favour airport relationships where the balance of power is tipped towards the airlines (resulting in lower fees and more favourable terms and conditions). There were a few instances of airlines reporting that they had been given awards from an airport in recognition of environment-related CSR activities.

Joint action was also reported between the airlines, airports, and other airlines in the form of committees focused on environmental and 'good neighbour' concerns. Once again, these engagements were primarily reported by full service carriers. As with many of these collaborations, the exact details of the relationship were not reported. For instance, all that Aer Lingus (2010: 13) reported about its involvement in an airport committee was that:

Aer Lingus is a member of the Airport Environmental Committee at our home base in Dublin Airport.

However, in the interviews and in a few of the airlines' publications, there were more details, which reported that these committees generally dealt with noise, waste and recycling, reducing ground services emissions, and fostering relations with residents local to the airport. Therefore, while these committees might have had some influence on how the airlines viewed their CSR, the focus of the committees seemed to be primarily on CSR action and implementation for specific issues.

On the other hand, the airlines' relationships with other airlines and trade bodies were mostly related to CSR shaping. The reported influential sector bodies included the International Air Transport Association (IATA), the European Low Fares Airlines Association (ELFAA), the Association of European Airlines (AEA), and the European Regions Airline Association (ERA). There were also mentions of joint-action industry groups focused on environmental issues, such as Sustainable Aviation, the Sustainable Aviation Fuel Users Group (SAFUG), the Aviation Global Deal Group (AGD), and the Air Transport Action Group (ATAG). Communication and agreed joint action was reported to have been formed through airline alliances as well, specifically, Star Alliance and SkyTeam. Oneworld was also mentioned, though not in the context of CSR-related issues. CSR-influencing relationships were also mentioned between individual airlines, predominantly in parent-subsidary situations. These relationships included ones between equal power partners (such as the KLM/Air France partnership) and between entities of unequal power (such as between the airlines and International Air Transport Association (IATA) and between

airlines and their subsidiaries). Both full service and low cost carriers reported these intra-sectoral collaborations.

The relationships were described by the airlines in their public communications as instances of cooperation and knowledge transfer. Finnair (n.d.: Online), for example, explained that:

Sector cooperation on environmental issues has increased commendably. It could be said that this is one area in which airlines do not compete, but cooperate closely. [...] All share a common goal - to reduce air transport emissions. In this, Finnair is actively involved in various working groups, events and seminars. Collating and sharing information and best practices benefits us all and especially our shared environment.

Website

This cooperation was especially seen to be facilitated by sector organisations, such as IATA, and through joint initiatives such as ATAG and their website enviro.aero, which is an aviation sector-wide information platform for the sectors' environmental efforts, and the UK-based Sustainable Aviation, which calls itself a sector-created 'strategy' for sustainable aviation measures (Sustainable Aviation n.d.: Online).

IATA was the most commonly mentioned facilitation organisation and its impact on how the airlines framed their environmental efforts in particular is worth

mentioning. Air France (n.d(c).: Online) described IATA's work as an industry-leader and environmental action-shaper on its website, stating:

On behalf of all its member airlines, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) undertook at the Copenhagen Conference to make its rightful contribution to combating climate change. Air France KLM has worked very hard, together with IATA, to achieve this sector mobilization [...]. Manufacturers, airlines, airports and air traffic control bodies have accordingly decided to commit to specific targets to cut aviation-related emissions together and at [sic] global level: By 2020, to improve energy efficiency by 1.5% a year; From 2020, stabilization and neutral growth in CO2 emissions; By 2050, 50% reduction of CO2 emissions relative to the 2005 level.

This kind of commitment from an entire sector is unprecedented.

Website

Not only was IATA's efforts lauded and cited by the airlines as instrumental in how they understood their environmental obligations, IATA's action plans for the environment were repeated throughout the airlines' publications as something the airlines helped develop, supported, and were working to fulfil. While these action points were attributed to IATA, as was evident in the quotation above, the main emphasis was on the airlines' buy-in into the actions points, which displayed a strong sense of ownership and desire to be identified with IATA's proposed action. IATA seemed, therefore, to have a great deal of influence on the direction of many of the airlines' environmental goals. This influence was

especially interesting considering the difficulties of creating sector-wide agreements that was reported by some of the interviewed managers. For instance, one interviewee responded to a question about the dialogue between airlines by saying:

[This airline], as well as other airlines from the European airlines sector actively contribute to that in the International Air Transport Association and to give you two or three key words which are the outcome of this intense dialogue is that the aviation sector has developed the concept of carbon neutral growth, has developed the idea of global sector approach to the idea of climate change issues [...]. So that's proof, I think, that we have a clear and close and an intense international discussion and negotiation and exchange of information, not neglecting, even though I didn't explicitly mention that as we have in Europe various, let's say, interests from local competitive point of view, we have the same on the global level.

Interview 6, full service carrier

Therefore, the strong uptake of IATA's position on the environment is particularly significant considering the 'intense' discussion that went into its creation.

The public reporting of the interactions between airlines and sector groups was much less detailed for the other trade bodies, environmental action groups, and airline alliances, which were predominantly mentioned in a list of membership groups or only briefly, such as TAP Air Portugal's (n.d.: Online) statement that:

With TAP's membership of the global STAR Alliance on March 14 2005 [sic] and the signing of the important Environmental Commitment document of the alliance, TAP has increased its commitment to protecting the environment.

Website

In the above quotation and the surrounding passage, TAP Air Portugal did not elaborate on the specifics of its relationship with STAR Alliance and other member airlines, and the creation of and TAP Air Portugal's commitment to the environmental agreement are not detailed further. However, this does not mean that these interactions between airlines and within industry bodies are without conflict. In the interviews, some low cost carrier managers whose airlines were members of ELFAA described briefly some of the tensions between member airlines, particularly in regards to whether or not ELFAA should support the inclusion of aviation in EU-ETS.

The airlines with subsidiaries also appeared to have a great deal of influence on how their subsidiaries understood their CSR, although the actual implementation of CSR activities and programmes seemed to be largely left in the control of the individual airlines. There was a large amount of variance between what was written on the parent companies' websites regarding CSR and what the subsidiaries reported. Similarly, the parent companies' CSR reports often reported their subsidiary airlines' CSR activities in separate sections at the back of the report – making a clear distinction between the CSR practices of the parent company and the CSR practices of their subsidiaries.

Many of the interviewed managers – both from the subsidiaries and the holding companies – discussed the CSR shaping influence of holding companies on their subsidiaries. Managers from parent companies talked about meeting with subsidiary airlines to impart best practice and managers from subsidiaries talked about the formative impact provided by their parent companies. One manager from the low cost subsidiary of a large full service carrier described the relationship as vital to her work, stating:

[The parent airline] is very important for us when you talk about CSR. The practice is very high and they can do much more than we can. [...] But it is good that we can discuss things and we can give our input and they are now working to gain the knowledge they have, so that's very important for us. And that's much, much better than two years ago, for example. And that's very nice for me as well also. I'm just the only one within [the subsidiary airline] with this function and [the parent airline] has six, seven people who in a full-time basis work on this CSR and a lot of people who through the company are working on it. So, it [is] much better and easier to arrange things.

I learn a lot from them, so that's good.

Interview 5, low cost carrier

The airline to airline CSR knowledge transfer appeared to be primarily between airlines where a power imbalance was in place, and in the cases of CSR knowledge transfer, the flows were almost exclusively from high power to lower power actors, that is, from the larger airlines with more resources to smaller airlines with fewer resources and in many cases from airlines that had legal power over the other airline through a parent-subsidary relationship. The

exception would seem to be the relationship between Air France and KLM, which, as partners, would appear to have a balance of power. Both airlines maintained separate websites, but published a joint CSR report. Management of their CSR programmes was described in their CSR report as being agreed at Group level together, and then implemented separately. For instance, the airlines reported a joint commitment to: 'foster staff employability and mobility' (Air France/KLM 2010: 38). How they reported implementing this commitment was slightly different, with Air France claiming its management objective was to '[d]evelop staff skills and support professional mobility, to boost employability and safeguard jobs, [sic] as part of the new 3-year employment agreement' and KLM reported its management objective was to '[s]timulate mobility inside and outside the company' (Air France/KLM 2010: 38). The differences between the airlines' management objectives adds credence to the airlines' assertion that the CSR management was conducted at least partially independently between the two airlines, but unified through a joint vision for CSR.

While there seemed to be CSR shaping knowledge transfer from airlines to their subsidiaries, as was mentioned above, there was less evidence of knowledge transfer from subsidiaries to their parent companies. Furthermore, with the notable exception of Air France/KLM, collaboration between airlines in a more equitable relationship also seemed to be limited. In the public communications, none of the airlines mentioned instances of knowledge transfer between low power airlines and higher power airlines, and there were only a few instances of knowledge transfer between equally powerful airlines. There were also few examples of CSR knowledge transfer that were not from high to low powered

actors in the interviews. Furthermore, there were several examples of a lack of knowledge transfer. One of the interviewed managers talked at length about the CSR initiatives her airline had undertaken; however, when asked if she had had any contact with her similarly-positioned colleague in an airline that had recently merged with her airline, the manager said they had not spoken and, in fact, she was unaware that such a colleague existed.

Similarly, an airline manager talked in length and enthusiastically about the CSR projects practiced and publically communicated by his airline. Over the course of this research, his airline was acquired by a larger airline which did not publically promote its CSR. The manager's airline was fully integrated into the larger airline, and the larger airline continued to maintain a public silence on CSR issues. Unfortunately, the original interviewed manager was not willing to be interviewed after the integration. However, the continuity of the acquiring airline's approach to CSR (non-)communication suggests that the more open and seemingly more strategically-managed approach to CSR of the manager's airline had not been transferred. While some of this apparent lack of cooperation and knowledge sharing could be contributed to the upheavals of the transition period, the data collection period covered a range of over six months after the respective airlines had merged/been acquired. This suggests that even if knowledge transfer on CSR issues took place at a later date, CSR issues were deemed to be low priority and given low urgency in the airline-to-airline relationship.

Another influencing factor on CSR knowledge transfer and cooperation in the airline to airline relationships was competition between airlines. As was discussed in the previous section, being an 'industry leader' in CSR was one of the main stated justifications for the airlines' CSR activities. While an environment of competition has been identified as a driver for CSR (Fernandez-Kranz and Santalo 2010), in the operating environment of the sampled airlines, the culture of competition seemed to also be an inhibitor to knowledge transfer. For instance, Flybe created an ecolabelling scheme to compare aircraft in 2007. According to Flybe (n.d.: Online):

The labels are presented in a clear and transparent way as part of the on-line ticket booking process and we also display them on our aircraft as well as in our onboard literature and advertising. The labels have been subjected to an assurance process by Deloitte & Touche LLP, a leading professional services firm and represent best in class methodology and *we expect the rest of the industry to follow suit.*

Website [Italics added for emphasis]

However, at the time of this research – nearly four years after Flybe proposed their labelling scheme, only Flybe provided this sort of detailed information on its aircraft. This could be an example of an idea that was considered but ultimately rejected by the sector as a whole. However, it was far from an isolated incident, and the interviews especially highlighted a general lack of engagement with peer-level airlines. For instance, when asked if they could identify some examples of good practice in CSR as practiced by other airlines, most of the managers answered that they could not. The airline managers' unwillingness to pinpoint other airlines' good practice might be attributed to a

position of professional loyalty, although there also seemed to be a general lack of awareness of what other airlines were doing, particularly airlines that were not strongly affiliated with the interviewees' own employer. Within the sector, then, the highest level of interaction and knowledge transfer on CSR issues appeared to be from high power actors to lower power actors. Airports, trade bodies, and holding companies were identified as potentially influential stakeholders for CSR issues. Subsidiary airlines and peer airlines seemed to have little influence on the CSR of the sample.

6.3.2 Government as a driver for 'CSR'

While many definitions of CSR explicitly state that only activities that are above and beyond what is legally required should count (e.g. Falck and Hebllich 2007; Dahlsrud 2008), the airlines in this study reported and often defined their CSR in terms of compliance with regulations and engagement with governments (Table 6.6). Governmental regulators were deemed to have high power, high legitimacy, and high levels of urgency and the airlines' relationships with them ranged from regulation to collaboration to lobbying, primarily due to their ability to implement legal requirements for the airlines. Other governmental bodies that the airlines mentioned included educational bodies and governmental CSR/sustainability initiatives, which, since the airlines' interactions with them were typically voluntary and since the airlines' license to operate were not dependent on them, were deemed to have medium power, medium to high legitimacy, and medium urgency. The government influenced both how the airlines viewed their CSR and their CSR in practice, although the CSR shaping influence was the most prominent.

Table 6.5 Airlines' engagement with governmental regulation

Airline	General compliance	Contribution to regulation	EU Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS)		
			Compliance	Support	Dissent
Aegean	R				
Aer Lingus	R W	R	R	R	
Air Europa	R W				
Air France**	R W	R W	R W	R	
Austrian			W		W
British Airways	R	R W	R W	R W	
Brussels Airlines	W				
Czech Airlines	W		R W		
Finnair	R W	R W	R		R W
Iberia	R W	R	R		R
KLM**	R W	R W P	R	R W	
LOT Polish Airlines	W	W	W	W	
Lufthansa	R W	R			R W
Malev Hungarian Airlines	W	W			
SAS	R W	R W	R W		R W
SWISS*	W	W	W		R W
Virgin	R				
Full service carriers					
Group total	16	11	11	5	6
% of group (21)	76.2	52.4	52.4	23.8	28.6
Air Berlin	R				
Blue1	W				
Cimber Sterling	R		R		
easyJet	R W	R W	R W	R W	
Flybe				W	
Jet2.com*	R				
Norwegian Air Shuttle	R W	W		R	
Ryanair	R	R		R	
TUIfly*	R	R	R		
Low cost carriers					
Group total	8	4	3	4	0
% of group (13)	61.5	30.8	23.1	30.8	0
TOTAL	24	15	14	9	6
R – in annual report or CSR-related report; W – on website; P- in a press release					
*Mentioned in a parent company's report; **Share reporting with a partner company					

Source: author

The airlines' responses to the governments' CSR pressures took two routes: compliance with regulation and lobbying regarding regulation and governmental controls. The former is not generally considered to be a part of CSR by academics, as was mentioned above; however, 24 airlines included compliance with existing laws and regulations under the heading of CSR and associated

titles. For instance, the first item on LOT Polish Airline's (n.d.(b): Online) action list to 'minimise our impact on the environment' was:

Proceedings [sic] in accordance with the applicable laws and standards of environmental protection and with the internal regulations of the company.

Website

The regulations for which the airlines reported compliance included: staff hours, health and safety, security, waste disposal, and flight path; however, by far, the most commonly mentioned regulation compliance was related to the impending ETS guidelines. Fourteen airlines reported that they had instituted measures so as to be in compliance with ETS when it was introduced (data collection took place before ETS came into effect), and of those airlines, four did not mention compliance with any other governmental regulations.

The airlines reported a relationship with governmental regulators that went beyond mere compliance with what was legally required. For many airlines, lobbying and otherwise influencing regulations was reported as part of the sampled airlines' overall approach to CSR. In many cases, this took the form of stated support for or opposition to incoming regulations and legislation. Several airlines talked at length how introducing Single European Skies (SES) agreements to reduce state sovereignty issues over airspace would positively impact their CSR-related plans to reduce fuel usage and carbon emissions. Reducing restrictions at certain airports was also mentioned by a few airlines,

such as SWISS's (2011: Online) statement under the title 'Eliminating onerous restrictions' that:

The approach restrictions for Zurich Airport over Southern German territory also impact the environment. Changing the approach route increases fuel consumption by some 200 kilograms per approach – translating into an annual increase of 3,000 metric tonnes of fuel consumption and 9,200 metric tonnes of CO₂ emissions. The aircraft also emit an extra 47 metric tonnes of NO_x as well. SWISS is seeking to remedy this situation by advocating better operating conditions at Zurich Airport.

Website

The relationship described in these cases between the airlines and government regulators was one of CSR obstruction, with the former limiting the airlines' attempts at environmentally-conscious efforts by continuing to implement 'onerous restrictions'. According to this narrative, then, industry responsibility was pitted against governmental regulations, and thus the airlines' perceived CSR included lobbying for changes in regulation (instead of mere compliance). Several of the interviewed managers expressed frustration with these interactions – and especially with how their airlines were being perceived by regulators. One interviewee noted that his airline had two environmental taxes levied against it – one at the EU level (ETS) and one at the national level (Air Passenger Duty), and went on to remark:

And we have mentioned to the UK government that when ETS comes in, we expect a reduction on our [environmental] taxes. And obviously the

laughter can be heard from Whitehall all the way to [our head offices].

We are still seen as a soft target.

Interview 11, low cost carrier

This idea that the airlines were at a disadvantage in their lobbying efforts due to their image was echoed in other interviews, especially with managers in low cost carriers.

In several cases, the airlines also talked about their role in shaping regulation in conjunction with other external stakeholders – specifically, other airlines and trade bodies – possibly as a way to gain more lobbying power. For instance, Flybe (n.d. (b): Online) commented that:

Flybe, along with all member airlines of ELFAA, the European Low Fares Airline Association, supports the inclusion of aviation in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme.

Website

Notably, none of the low cost carriers in this sample publically expressed dissent with ELFAA's support for EU-ETS.

This joint action with government regulators and other external stakeholders was also seen in the collaborative partnerships some of the airlines reported. These partnerships were unique in the airline-government group in that while most of the relationships between airlines and governments were focused on CSR shaping (that is, negotiating what is and is not legally required from the

airlines), these collaborative partnerships were more involved with implementing CSR. For instance, several airlines reported their involvement with the government and educational bodies, including Flybe's newly-created training academy, which was a joint collaboration between local educational organisations and government and was certified by a governmental educational body. This was one example of high legitimacy, since the governmental educational body provided necessary certification and permission for the training academy, which was reported by Flybe (2010) to be an integral part of its long-term strategy for business growth and staff development. Along with a few examples of collaborative partnerships, there were a number of airlines that reported using governmental guidance on CSR-related issues. The most prominent of these were the UN Millennium Goals and the UN Global Compact.

6.3.4 CSR-focused external stakeholders' influence

The airlines reported that non-governmental CSR-focused external stakeholders also had a large influence on their CSR, particularly with implementing aspects of their external stakeholder-focused efforts and in shaping their CSR through assessment and guidance. These stakeholders included charities focused on CSR-related issues (the environment, poverty, children, societal health, etc.) and NGOs focused on CSR-related good practice (recommended codes of conduct, environmental certification, sustainable business awards). Twenty-eight airlines reported engaging with these CSR-related charities and NGOs, making this group the most widely referenced of all of the external stakeholder groups. A similar percentage of the full service and low cost carriers reported relationships with CSR-focused charities and NGOs

(81% and 84.6%, respectively). The emphasis the airlines put on these CSR-focused external stakeholders' analysis and input into their CSR was particularly interesting considering that, on the whole, the CSR-related non-governmental organisations were deemed to have less power, legitimacy, and urgency than the previously mentioned industry and governmental stakeholders.

Unlike with the government regulators, the airlines were not legally required to form relationships with CSR-focused external stakeholders. Similarly, this group of stakeholders was not directly related to the airlines' normal business operations – unlike the industry stakeholders. Furthermore, while some of these CSR-focused organisations were considerably well-known within their field (such as UNICEF and FTSE4Good), they were not marked by a particular relevance to the aviation sector. However, the airlines nevertheless seemed to value these interactions highly. Many of the stand-alone CSR reports had a page dedicated to listing the airlines' externally-granted CSR awards, charity relationships were widely advertised on websites, in websites, and in press releases, and many of the interviewed managers stressed their relationships with these CSR-focused external stakeholders – even in one instance, with the interviewee starting the interview by proudly pointing out a glass case full of various CSR-related awards that the airline had won.

The airlines' interaction with charities was mentioned in Chapter five as one of the most universal examples of the sampled airlines' CSR in practice. While there were a few examples both in the publications and in the interviews of the

charities helping the airlines shape their views of CSR, the focus of the airline-charity relationships was predominantly on CSR implementation. This CSR implementation ranged from joint projects to improve the natural environment around airports to one-off donations. The relationships were largely described in terms of the airlines being in the position of power over the charities, both in the publications and in the interviews; and the primary narrative centred on the airlines having the luxury of choosing to work with particular charities. For instance, one manager described the many charities his airline had to choose from, stating:

Why did we go with a cancer charity instead of say, Childline or the ectopic pregnancy charity or the Woodland Trust or any of those? I had to find that balance between a charity that would appeal to the public but that would also motivate our staff to want to get involved.

Interview 11, LFA

In this case, as with many of the other conversations with managers, the emphasis was the choice the airlines had regarding which charity to bestow the good fortune of a relationship. Similarly, the climax of the narrative in many of the publications and interviews was the benefit bestowed on the charities by the airlines, both in terms of financial donations and in the form of donated staff time and other resources. This further emphasised the charities' position in the narrative as the beneficiary – the lower-power player in the relationship. Therefore, while the charities were presented as a vital component of the airlines' CSR in practice by the airlines, the acts of charity as a whole were seemingly more important to the airlines than relationships with individual charities. That is, most of the airlines reported that engagement with external

stakeholders through the use of CSR-related charities was a large part of their CSR in practice, but this engagement was not seen to hinge on individual charities.

On the other hand, NGOs and charities that focused on CSR good practice helped shape the airlines' perception of their CSR (rather than playing a part in CSR in practice), and these relationships seemed to be prized by the airlines for the perceived legitimacy that they gave to the airlines CSR efforts, for instance, by providing ISO 14001 environmental certification. These NGOs' and charities' formed a majority of the airlines' reported external audits of their CSR programme, although there were also examples of airports, governments, and other aviation-related businesses conferring awards and positive assessments of the airlines' CSR approaches. The CSR-shaping interactions of these stakeholders with the airlines primarily fell into three categories (Table 6.5): presenting awards (reported by 17 airlines), granting certification and membership into exclusive groups (17 airlines), and proposing codes, accords, and agreements to which the airlines subscribed (15 airlines). Only nine airlines out of the 34 airlines that reported some form of CSR practices did not publically talk about the role of these external CSR-focused stakeholders, and a majority of those nine (7) were low cost carriers. The percentages of full service carriers that reported these CSR-shaping relationships with CSR-related external stakeholders were greater in all of the three categories than the percentages of low cost carriers that reported these relationships. Most of the airlines that reported one form of interaction also reported another type of interaction with

NGOs and charities. Also notable is the use of paid auditors, which was reported by nine airlines, seven of which were full service carriers.

Table 6.6 External assessment of the airlines' CSR management

Airline		Awards	Certification and memberships	Codes, accords, agreements	External auditors
Full service carriers	Aegean	R	R	R W	
	Aer Lingus	R	R		
	Air Europa*		R		
	Air France**	R W P	R W	R W	RWP
	Austrian	W			
	British Airways	R W	W	W	
	Brussels Airlines	W	W		
	Czech Airlines		W		
	Finnair	R	R W	R W	RP
	Iberia	R W P	R W	R W	R
	KLM**	R W P	R W	R W	RWP
	LOT Polish Airlines		W		
	Lufthansa	R W P	R W	R W	
	Malev Hungarian Airlines	W			
	Olympic Air			P	
	SAS	P	R W	R W	RW
	SWISS*			W	
	TAP Air Portugal	W	W	W	W
	Virgin				W
	Group total	13	14	11	7
	% of group (21)	61.9	66.7	52.4	33.3
Low cost carriers	Air Berlin	R W			
	Blue1		P	W	P
	easyJet	W		R	
	Flybe	P			W
	Norwegian Air Shuttle			W	
	Transavia		R		
	TUIfly*	R	R	R	
	Group total	4	3	4	2
	% of group (13)	30.8	23.1	30.8	15.4
TOTAL	17	17	15	9	
R – in annual report or CSR-related report; W – on website; P- in a press release					
*Mentioned in a parent company's report; **Share reporting with a partner company					

Source: author

The main benefits of these relationships seemed to be the guidance and perceived legitimacy that the charities and NGOs imparted to the airlines. These benefits were conferred in varying degrees of intimacy – from mere association, such as in the cases where the airlines subscribed to codes of conduct or ‘self audited’, to in-depth external auditing, such as in the cases of NGOs assessing the airlines’ CSR activities and deciding that those activities merited a CSR-related award.

As was mentioned earlier in this section, some of the airline managers demonstrated a great deal of pride when discussing the awards that had been given to their airline based on its CSR work. This pride was also apparent in some of the public communications. Many of the airlines listed in Table 6.5 prominently featured the CSR award logos that they had won on their websites and in their annual reports and/or released press releases announcing recent certification. Along with the logos, most of airlines also stressed the importance of the awarding bodies and the rigour of the selection process – further qualifying the awards as significant accomplishments for them. For instance, Air Berlin (2010: 80) announced in its annual report that:

Air Berlin was recognised for its ecological, economic and social balance in 2009. The renowned sustainability agency, oekom research AG [sic], describes Air Berlin as an attractive investment, when taking sustainable issues into consideration. oekom research [sic] also awarded Air Berlin the “Prime” investment status. In the annual oekom [sic] Corporate Responsibility Ratings, a “Prime” rating is only given to companies which are leaders in their industry and which meet minimum requirements in

the areas of ecology and social responsibility. The main areas which oekom [sic] evaluated positively were Air Berlin's progressive fleet policy, the focus on efficiency in operations and customer management.

Report

This example, like many of the ones found in the airlines' reporting, emphasised the credibility of the awarding charity/NGO, as well as the award itself, which was presented as providing external (positive) assessment and verification of the airlines' CSR activities.

6.4 Summary and conclusions

This chapter has addressed Objectives Four and Five by assessing the stated justifications and motivations for CSR practices as well as the reported CSR-shaping relationships with external stakeholders. For governmental and non-governmental organisations that want to encourage greater CSR, understanding why companies are (or, similarly, are not) practicing CSR can lead to better targeted programmes and initiatives (Maon *et al.* 2010). Within the organisations themselves, having a clear understanding of why CSR-related projects are undertaken is an important part of strategic management and can be especially relevant during economic downturns or times of crisis when business programmes are being reassessed (Graafland and van de Ven 2006).

The first section analysed the stated motivations for CSR activities, which were considered in tandem with the stated justifications for CSR activities since often these two were indistinguishable. The airlines reported a wide range of

business due to their CSR activities. Full service carriers as a group communicated more about their reasons for proactively managing their CSR.

Reasons for not engaging in a more proactive form of CSR practice and management also came through – especially during the interviews. The main cited impediments to CSR activities were a mixture of internal and external factors, namely: lack of resources; difficulties with higher management buy-in; and concerns over the consequences, both from a public relations and a ‘moral’ position, of promoting the CSR-related activities they did undertake.

The second section assessed the airlines’ CSR-shaping interactions with key external stakeholders, and the external stakeholders’ positions of power relative to the airlines were considered using Mitchell, *et al.*’s (1997) stakeholder analysis model. This is the first study that has taken such a structured approach to classifying and assessing the key stakeholders that influence the airlines’ understandings and practices of CSR. External stakeholders’ CSR-influencing relationships with the airlines were complex and in many cases appeared to be highly individualised. However, they could be broadly categorised as relating to: the shaping of CSR, contributing to CSR implementation, and verifying and validating the airlines’ CSR management.

The mostly commonly reported CSR-influencing external stakeholders were: airports, other airlines and airline trade bodies, governmental regulators and governmental bodies, and CSR issues-related charities and NGOs. Key

relationships seemed to be centred on external stakeholders with more power than the airlines (with the exception of the charity and NGO relationships). Governments and regulators were reported to play a large role in how the airlines practiced CSR, not only through threatened and realised 'hard' regulations, but also through collaborations. Airline trade bodies were highlighted as a potential key stakeholder for further developing airlines' approaches to CSR due to their reported role of having a strong influence on the understandings of and approaches to CSR issues. This was especially evident in IATA's reported influence on many of the samples' approaches to emissions and other environmental issues, which suggests that a trade body-led standardisation of terms and key issues could lead to greater unity and clarity for the sectors' CSR management approaches.

7 Profiles of responsibility

Understanding variations in CSR approaches

7.1 Introduction

As has been discussed in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, the reported CSR conceptualisations and practices across the sample were far from homogenous. Some airlines reported practicing a very involved management of their CSR and had clearly defined understandings of CSR. Other airlines seemed to practice a much less 'evolved' and less strategically informed approach to CSR issues. As has been discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, some of these variations in practice initially appeared to be related to the airlines' business models. However, while analysing the airlines' management of CSR (Objective 3), a different approach to analysing the data emerged: one that fit the data better than the simple low cost/full service carrier dichotomy. This analysis pivoted on grouping the airlines into four categories based on the level of strategic management as presented by Mirvis and Googins (2006). These categories were developed into four 'profiles of responsibility' which were used to assess they had reported. a set of profile types emerged based on the depth of the airlines' reported management of CSR, which were applicable to other aspects of the airlines' CSR. This chapter will first discuss Objective Three and the profile types of CSR

management, monitoring, and reporting; next, the profile types will be applied to the wider issues of CSR definitions, practices, motivations, and influencers which were already covered for the sample as a whole in the previous two chapters (Chapters 5 and 6), and the popular narrative of differing approaches to responsibility of full service/low cost will be discussed in detail (Objective 6).

Mirvis and Googins' (2006) 'Stages of Corporate Citizenship' was chosen as an analytical tool for a number of reasons. First, as was discussed in Section 2.4.3, it is one of the few practice-focused in-depth models of CSR development (Maon *et al.* 2010), and Googins' *et al.* (2007) details many of the case studies which were used to develop the model. While applications of the model by other researchers has not been extensive, Mirvis and Googins' (2006) model is one of the few that has been applied to empirical data (Spitzeck 2010; Maon *et al.* 2010; Lindgreen and Swaen 2010). Lingenfelder and Thomas (2011) and Zappala and Adams (2010) are two recent studies that have found the 'Stages of Corporate Citizenship' to be a useful framework for their analysis. Mirvis and Googins' (2006) model is especially useful since, unlike many other models which only look at one or two aspects of CSR in practice, it juxtaposes public messages with CSR processes, motivations, and management approaches. Relevant to Objective Three and the data, their use of 'issues management' and 'transparency' as concurrent indicators of the level of CSR being practiced seemed to be mirrored in the data for this study. In other words, the airlines that seemed to have the most complex understandings of CSR as a concept, had dedicated managers and teams, and seemed to have carefully monitored, formal CSR programmes were also the airlines that provided the most

information about their CSR programmes. Similarly, since the model covers a wide range of CSR-related issues, including most of the areas looked at by this research (CSR-related activities, motivations and justifications, and communication of CSR information), the model was also a useful tool for assessing Objective Six and the analysis of multiple aspects of the sample's approaches to CSR practices concurrently.

7.2 Monitoring and managing CSR

Objective Three ('examine the reported means of the management and implementation of CSR') was approached by looking at the airlines' CSR management, monitoring, and reporting efforts. This was initially done through grounded theory-based analysis on both the primary and secondary data sets, which produced codes covering structured/unstructured approaches, leadership and direction, length of time/monitoring, and development of approaches. This grounded theory-based analysis highlighted both the wide variance in practice and the wide gap in reporting, with some airlines reporting highly structured strategies with strong support at CEO- or Board-level and others reporting more sporadic approaches to managing CSR and difficulties with garnering top-level support. Some airlines (such as Air France, KLM, and BA) produced extensive CSR reports and had more than 40 webpages dedicated to CSR communications, while others (such as Olympic Air) only published one CSR-related press release during the period of data. The secondary data were then assessed using a content analysis-focus approach. The codes for the content analysis were similar to the ones used in the grounded theory-based approach; however, instead of arising from the data themselves, these codes were

constructed using some of the indicators presented by Mirvis and Googins (2006), which are themselves reflective of commonly-accepted indicators of best practice in CSR discourses (e.g. Kotler and Lee (2004), Brammer and Pavelin (2004), Blowfield and Murray (2008), Crane *et al.* (2008) all agree that high-level support for CSR, regularly monitored and strategically managed CSR programmes, and transparency are important components of CSR best practice). The code families included 'management and leadership' (which captured mentions of who was responsible for implementing CSR programmes as well as who was communicating CSR information, such as quotations in press releases and annual reports); 'monitoring' (which covered any reported instances of monitoring efforts, such as whether goals for emissions were being achieved); and 'management' (which included mentions of policies, programmes, and strategies). This final code was the most useful for analysis since only a few airlines published detailed information on management and leadership. Similarly, reported examples of monitoring were limited to a small percentage of the sample. However, the management code allowed for a greater deal of nuanced examination, since all of the samples' reported CSR could be placed along the 'issues management' section of Mirvis and Googins' (2006) scale (which will be discussed in more detail in the following sections). The airlines reported a wide range of formalised strategies: from comprehensive CSR 'proactive systems' (Mirvis and Googins 2006) to less structured CSR goals to no mention of any formal CSR plan.

Of the 34 airlines that published any information on CSR-related issues, six airlines provided only very minimal contextualise their individual activities within

a wider plan for CSR. As analysis progressed, it became apparent that there were four clear approaches to managing and implementing CSR in the sample, which have been labelled: minimal information (6 airlines), general goals (14 airlines), specific targets (6 airlines), and CSR vision (8 airlines) (Table 7.1). Table 7.1 shows the highest level of CSR strategy that was publically reported through the airlines' websites, reports, and press releases. The parentheses denote communication channels which reported a lesser level of CSR management than was found in other communication avenues. The fact that eight airlines used some communication channels to publicise a more complex picture of their CSR management than others (and many did not include any information on CSR management/strategies in certain communication channels) highlights the importance of triangulating data sources when researching CSR.

The airlines slightly favoured websites as an avenue for reporting on their CSR programmes over annual or CSR reports (23 websites to 18 reports), though most of airlines used both for reporting. Press releases were a relatively poor source of information on the airlines' management of their CSR, with only six airlines including any details of their CSR management through them. The information on that was included in press releases on CSR management was less detailed and often presented a less thorough perspective on the individual airline's approach (which could be attributed to the format and purpose of press releases).

Notably, all of the information about the airlines' monitoring and management of their CSR was dependent on the depth of the airlines' public reporting and the

openness of the interviewees to discuss the finer details of their CSR programmes. This proved somewhat problematic since the airlines' public communications provided only patchy and often only superficial summaries of how they were managing their CSR programmes. This was not the case with all

Table 7.1 Depth of reporting of CSR strategies

Airline		Minimal information	General goals	Specific targets	CSR vision
Full service carriers	Aegean Airlines		(W)	R	
	Aer Lingus		R W		
	Air Europa		R W		
	Air France**				R W P
	Alitalia	N			
	Austrian Airlines		W		
	British Airways				R W
	Brussels Airlines		W		
	Czech Airlines		W		
	Finnair			(P)	R W
	Iberia		(R)		W
	KLM**				R W P
	LOT Polish Airlines		W		
	Lufthansa		(P)		R W
	Malev Hungarian Airlines		W		
	Olympic Air	P			
	SAS			(P)	R W
	Spanair	W			
	SWISS*		W		
	TAP Air Portugal		W		
	Virgin Atlantic			R	
Group total	3	9	2	7	
% of group (21)	14.3	42.9	9.5	33.3	
Low cost carriers	Air Baltic	W			
	Air Berlin			W	
	Blue1		(P)	W	
	Bmibaby	P			
	Cimber Sterling		R		
	easyJet		(W)	R	
	Flybe		W		
	Jet2.com*			R	
	Norwegian Air Shuttle		R W		
	Ryanair		R		
	Transavia		R		
	TUIfly*				R
	Wizz Air	P			
	Group total	3	5	4	1
% of group (13)	23.1	38.5	30.8	7.7	
TOTAL	6	14	6	8	
R – in annual report or CSR-related report; W – on website; P- in a press release; N – no implementation issues mentioned in any communication avenues; (x) – lesser degree of management reported					
*Mentioned in a parent company's report; **Share reporting with a partner company					

Source: author

airlines, and part of the difficulty in assessing the airlines' management of their CSR programmes was the wide variance of reporting. For instance, some of the larger full-service airlines such as British Airways, Finnair, and Lufthansa provided details of long-term and short-term priorities and included specific targets, as well as analysis on whether previous targets had been met; however, a majority of the other airlines were less candid and their reporting was vague. For instance, Cimber Sterling (2010: 28) stated that it:

[...] worked to identify and prioritise focus areas for its corporate social responsibility efforts. The process of defining a complete corporate social responsibility strategy, which will chart the course for and create consistency in Cimber Sterling's future efforts, continues.

Report

While the airline went on to detail some of the areas of focus of its CSR strategy, it did not list the strategy itself or describe any indicators it was using to assess and monitor the strategy. This could mean that Cimber Sterling's CSR strategy did not include specific goals and monitoring measures; however, equally possible is that Cimber Sterling simply did not report all the details of their CSR strategy, especially if they felt that the current strategy was still the draft stage ('the process [...] continues'). Furthermore, since no manager from Cimber Sterling was willing to be interviewed for this research, it was not possible to ask directly how detailed the strategy was. Indeed, of the managers from other airlines who were interviewed for this research, few were willing to go into the more nuanced details of their airline's CSR strategy. Therefore, Objective Three's remit is to 'examine the *reported* means of the management

and implementation of CSR', and does not claim to assess the *practiced* management and implementation of CSR.

The next four sections will describe in more detail the four CSR management profiles identified in this research. The profiles of CSR management were further assessed using Mirvis and Googins' (2006) Stages of Corporate Citizenship (Table 2.2, earlier), which will also be described in detail. The eight airlines that produced the most detailed reports on CSR (Air France, British Airways, Finnair, KLM, Lufthansa, SAS, Iberia, and TUI) also seemed to practice a comparatively high level of CSR implementation, with formal programmes, clear long and short term goals, and dedicated managers (among other indicators of good practice as described by Mirvis and Googins (2006)). This does not necessarily mean that the other airlines in this study did not have a high level of CSR management, although discussions with the managers suggested that, in general, the degree of transparency corresponded with the degree of complexity of the monitoring and management of the CSR programme. A few airlines, such as Cimber Sterling in the quotation above and a few airline managers who declined interviews, cited a concentrated effort to improve their current CSR programme as a key reason for not being more transparent about their current CSR programmes.

7.2.1 The 'minimal information' group

The seven airlines in the 'minimal information' group reported on a CSR activity but provided extremely limited or no information on a wider CSR strategy or

programme were Air Baltic, Alitalia, bmibaby, Meridiana Fly, Olympic Air, Spanair, and Wizz Air. Some of the airlines' communications hinted at a possible over-arching plan for the various CSR-related activities they reported; however, the amount of information presented made it impossible to deduce to what extent the CSR activities were part of a larger, formalised strategy. For instance, Olympic Air (2010: Online) reported that:

The first phase of Olympic Air's educational program [sic], named "A day in the Museum", was completed on Monday, 31st May. The program provided hundreds of Cypriot secondary school students the opportunity to travel to Athens and visit the new Acropolis museum.

Press release

These two sentences comprised the entirety of the press release and there was no additional information on Olympic Air's website or in their annual report; therefore, the only certainty is that Olympic Air claimed to have an 'educational program [sic]' that seems to include at least one phase. Similarly, bmibaby reported having partnered with BBC's Children in Need for seven consecutive years (press release), which suggests a degree of purposeful commitment. These examples indicate that at least some of the activities of this group of airlines might have been directed by an unpublicised, formal strategy. However, other activities appeared to be more *ad hoc*, such as Wizz Air's announcement and subsequent reflection on its decision to offer customers the option of donating to victims of the Haitian earthquake. Neither of the two press releases included any mention of whether this individual charitable activity was part of a wider CSR strategy, or even contextualised the activity with previous or future charitable or CSR-related partnerships. Even more opaquely, Air Baltic

merely stated on their website which organisations it sponsored, without providing any context for why or how it sponsored the Latvian National Theatre, the Latvian National Opera, and most puzzling, a band called Brainstorm. Unfortunately, no manager from any of the six airlines agreed to be interviewed, so an internal perspective was not possible on the degree to which unpublicised formal strategies were used.

With the limited information available, assessing the airlines using Mirvis and Googins' (2006) scale, the seven airlines seemed to have practiced a defensive or, at best, a reactive approach to CSR issues management. Certainly, there was little evidence that the airlines in this group based their activities on a comprehensive CSR programme and it seems more likely that any formal strategies took the form of a single, or possibly series of, policies. In regards to transparency, this group of airlines practiced public relations-level transparency. Their reporting could not be considered public reporting since their communications lacked all but the very basic information about their CSR approach; however, the issues they reported about were largely proactive (charity work and partnerships with other external organisations), so their reporting clearly went beyond flank protection. In these two issues, then, the airlines in this group seemed to manage their CSR at a level that contained elements of both the elementary and engaged levels. Mirvis and Googins (2006) did not include the level of sophistication of communications as an indicator on their scale; however, this group especially highlighted the role of communications in transparency. Most of this group's press releases were several sentences long, their websites were comprised of a few pages, and the

amount of space they dedicated to CSR-related issues in their reports was limited to a few paragraphs. Furthermore, Spanair's website in particular illustrated the difficulties with analysing this group's management of CSR. Its webpage titled 'Spanair and the environment' (Figure 7.1) had four links: 'Environmental Policy', 'Our Challenges', 'CO2 compensation [sic]', and 'the flight Path [sic]'.

The first link especially suggested a potentially more complex approach to CSR management and transparency than some of the other airlines in this group. However, all of the links returned with 404 errors, meaning the addresses were no longer linked to actual pages, which possibly indicated that content had been moved and the links had not been updated or that the content had been removed from the public World Wide Web altogether. Moreover, the webpages were assessed multiple times 01 December 2010 and 16 March 2011 (during the collection of the webpage data set) and no change occurred. This technologically-abridged communication made it impossible to assess the environmental policy further – or even to state with any certainty that Spanair had a current environmental policy since the links could have been left dead due to a shift in strategy. Therefore, along with assessing issues management and transparency, it seems prudent to add an additional assessment criterion – transparency of communication. To this end, Table 7.2 shows the details of the 'Transparency of Communication' stages that were developed by the author as an amendment to Mirvis and Googins' (2006) 'Scale of Corporate Citizenship' in order to better assess the sampled airlines' management of their CSR activities.

Figure 7.1 Spanair's webpage, 'Spanair and the environment'

[This image has been removed by the author of this thesis/dissertation for copyright reasons]

Source: Spanair (n.d.: Online), cropped by author

On the elementary end of the scale, the organisation uses only one avenue of reporting (such as publishing CSR-related information only in their annual report or only through press releases). These bits of information are challenging to access, being several mouse clicks away from the homepage on a website, for example, or under unclear headings in the annual report. Furthermore, there is no consistency between communications and no reference back to other CSR-related activities.

Table 7.2 Mirvis and Googins' Scale of Corporate Citizenship, abridged and amended

Stage/Issue	Elementary	Engaged	Innovative	Integrated	Transforming
Transparency	Flank Protection	Public Relations	Public Reporting	Assurance	Full Disclosure
Issues Management	Defensive	Reactive, Policies	Responsive, Programs	Proactive Systems	Defining
Transparency of Communication	Only one avenue of reporting, challenging to access, disjointed and brief information	Two or more avenues of reporting, limit information available, basic narrative	Several avenues of reporting, general information available to public, some narrative	Many avenues of reporting, strong level of public access, coherent narrative	Innovative avenues of reporting, Full public access to information, exceptionally coherent narrative

Source: adapted and abridged from Mirvis and Googins (2006: 108), additional category added by author

Thus, the narrative is disjointed and made even more unclear as only very limited and brief information is available. On the other end of the scale, a transforming approach to transparency of communication uses the usual avenues of reporting, such as a dedicated annual CSR report, many webpages, and regular press releases. Other more innovative communication avenues are also used, such as regularly updated blogs, Twitter accounts, or Facebook pages. The organisation makes public access to CSR information a priority, and publishes strategies, policies, and assessments of progress (including neutral or negative assessments). The narrative and discussion are exceptionally easy to follow, with a clear, coherent narrative woven throughout all of the reporting. If we apply this scheme to the airlines in this study, the transparency of the communications by this first group of airlines would be best classed as elementary, although, a few of the airlines demonstrated a few of the characteristics of the engaged level as well.

7.2.2 The 'general goals' group

The second group of airlines, the 'general goals' group, was the largest with fourteen airlines. These airlines were more direct in tying their CSR-related activities to an overall commitment to CSR than the previous group and mentioned general goals for their CSR activities. The fourteen airlines were: Air Lingus, Air Europa, Austrian Airlines, Brussels Airlines, Czech Airlines, Cimber Sterling, Flybe, LOT Polish Airlines, Malev Hungarian Airlines, Norwegian Air Shuttle, Ryanair, SWISS, TAP Air Portugal, and Transavia. Unlike the previous group, these airlines clearly referenced an overarching plan for their CSR. Norwegian Air Shuttle (2010: 10), for instance, commented that:

Norwegian is committed to actively engage in and support sustainable environmental policy, and to continue to reduce emissions from aviation.

Report

This clear statement of purpose was followed by examples of how Norwegian was addressing environmental issues. As well as structuring the narrative more strongly around the idea of actively managing CSR issues, the airlines in this group presented a more nuanced discussion of their CSR-related management than previous group of the 'minimal information' airlines. For example, Czech Airlines (n.d. (b): Online) admitted:

We realise that flying, like other modes of transport, has an adverse impact on the environment. We strive to eliminate as much of that impact as possible. In the following section, read about the measures we have already taken, as well as the steps we are planning to take.

Website

In this quotation, Czech Airlines admitted that there is a problem ('flying [...] has an adverse impact on the environment') and included a clear goal ('to eliminate as much of that impact as possible'). There was also reference to future goals ('steps we are planning to take'). Further down on the webpage, more information was given about specific activities on which Czech Airlines was focusing, although, unlike the airlines in the next group (the 'specific targets'), there were no specific, measurable targets mentioned. Instead, Czech Airlines and the other airlines in this group presented general areas of concern, such as emissions, noise, waste water treatment, waste, consumption of de-icing fluid, and dealing with historical environmental hazards in the case of Czech Airlines.

Indeed, for most of the airlines in this group, the management of the environmental component of their CSR was heavily emphasised and much less information was available about how they managed their internal and external stakeholder concerns. This is especially interesting considering that four of the airlines, Austrian Airlines, Brussels Airlines, SWISS, and Transavia, were subsidiaries of airlines who presented the highest level of CSR management (the 'CSR vision' group). The wide variance between the levels of reported CSR management by the 'CSR vision' airlines and their subsidiaries suggests that there might be a gap in the implementation of the 'CSR vision' or even that the 'CSR vision' might not include other group airlines in its scope.

When assessed using Mirvis and Googins' (2006) scale, the airlines in the 'general goals' group best fit into the engaged and innovative categories for both issues management and transparency (stages 2 and 3, respectively). Most

of the airlines indicated that they did use policies to manage aspects of their CSR-related practices. However, for a majority of the airlines in this group, these policies did not seem to be part of a unified, comprehensive CSR strategy. Rather, the policies seemed to have been created to address a single aspect of CSR - primarily the environment, as discussed above, but also charitable giving and internal stakeholder management. This focus on single CSR issues suggests that the airlines had taken a more reactive approach to managing their CSR; the policies seem to have been created in response to issues as they arose. Emblematic of this general lack of unity, was Ryanair's inclusion of CSR-related issues in its annual report. Under the heading of 'Social, environmental and ethical report', Ryanair (2010: 18) directed interested parties that they should:

See pages 99 to 100 of the Annual Report for details of employee and labour relations.

See pages 69 to 70 of the Annual Report for details on environmental matters.

See page 124 of the Annual Report for details of Ryanair's Code of Ethics.

Report

Certainly, the scattered information about CSR revealed a low level of transparency of communication; however, it also suggested that an overall strategic approach to managing CSR issues was absent as there were no obvious links between how Ryanair was managing employee and labour relations and how it was managing environmental matters. This scattered

approach to CSR management was not unique to Ryanair; several of the managers in this group who were willing to be interviewed confirmed that this pick-and-mix approach to managing CSR was currently being practiced within their airline. For these managers, their remit was only a part of CSR, and they reported that communication between them and other managers with CSR-relevant responsibilities was minimal. Thus, while the airlines in their communications and the managers in the interviews recognised CSR as a broad concept with many integrated issues, the relevant issues themselves were generally dealt with in isolation and with little consideration for the follow-on impact on other components of CSR.

These airlines, then, embodied Mirvis and Googins' (2006) description of an engaged approach to CSR issues management. However, not all of the airlines in this group displayed such a scattered approach to CSR management. Air Europa and Cimber Sterling, both made mention of an overarching CSR policy which they claimed shaped all of their CSR-related activities. Neither airline provided detailed information about the CSR policy in their reports or on their websites. For several of the airlines, interviews and other communications with managers revealed that some of the airlines in this group had an overarching CSR policy that was still in development or was currently under review. Two of the interviewed airline managers talked about CSR policies that were not publically available. Another manager declined to be interviewed on the grounds that a CSR policy was in the progress of being finalised and he/she was unwilling to discuss CSR approaches yet. Therefore, of all of the thirteen airlines in this study, only a small number showed signs of having – or at least

beginning to have – management approaches to CSR that could better be described as falling in Mirvis and Googins' (2006) innovative category (stage 3).

In regards to transparency and the transparency of communication, the 'general goals' group of airlines predominately had an engaged approach. Nearly all of the airlines used two or more avenues of public reporting. The exception was TAP Air Portugal which only reported its CSR activities on its website. Four airlines (Aer Lingus, Flybe, Ryanair, and Transavia) used all three avenues investigated by this study. The other nine airlines used two avenues – reports and websites in the cases of Air Europa, Austrian Airlines, Czech Airlines, Cimber Sterling, Norwegian, and SWISS (included in Lufthansa's CSR report), and press releases and websites in the cases of Brussels Airlines, LOT Polish Airlines, and Malev Hungarian Airlines. While multiple reporting media were used, the detail of the information was relatively basic, and the airlines on the whole reported their CSR activities in general, unquantifiable terms. For instance, SWISS (2011b: Online) stated that their environmental principles included:

1. Reducing CO2 emissions
2. Lowering NOx emissions
3. Modernising the fleet [...]

Website

However, these principles, along with the other eleven principles espoused by SWISS, were not detailed further and there was no further information publically available on, for example, whether SWISS had specific goals for the amount of

CO₂ and NO_x emissions it wanted to reduce. Unlike the previous group of airlines, though, there was a greater level of transparency overall, with many of the airlines providing quantifiable measurements for some of their activities, such as SWISS's (2011b: Online statement that:

In recent years, SWISS has reduced its specific emissions by 15%.

Website

While there was no discussion about how these figures compared with the airlines' goals for CSR-related measures, the presence of some measurement indicators suggested that at least an elementary level of monitoring was happening and, furthermore, the public reporting of some of these figures showed an increased interest in transparency. Nonetheless, the quantifiable indicators were primarily limited to emissions, noise, and charitable contributions, which meant that the level of transparency could not be considered full public reporting. Overall, then, for both the issues of transparency and the transparency of communications, the airlines in the 'general goals' group would best be classified as practicing an engaged form of CSR (stage 2).

7.2.3 The 'specific targets' group

The 'specific targets' group was the third group of airlines and was comprised of six airlines: Aegean Airlines, Air Berlin, Blue1, easyJet, Jet2.com, and Virgin Atlantic. On the surface, the narrative of CSR management of the 'specific targets' group was not all that different from the narrative presented by the

'general goals' group. Both groups of airlines on the whole did not seem to have overarching CSR strategies that dictated their individual issues policies. Instead, their approach to CSR management appeared to be comprised of separate policies for the environment, internal stakeholders, and external stakeholders. However, unlike the 'general goals' group, this group of airlines reported having specific, measurable indicators for their CSR goals, albeit primarily for environmental concerns. For instance, as part of its 'environmental policy', Virgin Atlantic (2010: 2) stated that:

In 2007, we set ourselves an ambitious target of a 30% reduction in carbon emissions for every passenger and cargo kilometre flown between 2007 and 2020. It's a big target and we're sticking with it. Here's our plan for how we'll get there.

Report

Virgin Atlantic's report also had quantified indicators for ground energy consumption, waste production and recycling, and water usage. Of all the airlines in the 'specific targets' group, Virgin Atlantic reported the most quantifiable indicators. The other airlines in this group primarily listed reducing their emissions by a certain percentage as their specific target. For Blue1 (2010: Online), this meant that:

The focus is on reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 20% by 2020, as compared to those in 2007.

Website

easyJet (2010: 34), meanwhile, reported that:

[...] we have set a target to reduce our CO2 emissions per passenger Km [sic] by 3% by 2011.

Report

Even for the one airline of the group that seemed to have an overarching CSR policy (which was based on the United Nations' Global Compact principles), Aegean Airlines, future targets were limited to environmental issues. Aegean Airlines' (2009: 10) time-unlimited and potentially unclear target was presented as:

We keep records of energy, water and paper consumption. Our aim is to achieve a 5% reduction.

Report

The absence of indicators for the other components of CSR suggests that communicating management approaches for environmental issues was prioritised by this group of airlines over communicating the specific management approaches for issues relating to internal and external stakeholders. Based on the data, it is difficult to say with any certainty whether the inclusion of specific environmental targets in their communications by this group was indicative of a more carefully-considered strategic management approach to environmental issues or whether it denoted a more conscious effort to communicate the airlines' approach to environmental management. Whatever the underlying reason, though, this emphasis on environmental management was in keeping with the findings of the previous chapter: that the sample as a whole publically communicated much more about their environmental activities than any other component of their CSR.

When assessed using Mirvis and Googins' (2006) scale, the airlines in the 'specific targets' group fared similarly to the airlines in the 'general goals' group. While the presence of the environmental targets demonstrated an increasing level of proactive management, the fact that these indicators were only applied to environmental issues (and in the case of three of the airlines, only to a single environmental issue) meant that the airlines' total CSR programme could hardly be characterised as wholly proactive. Additionally, like the airlines in the 'general goals' group, in general, the 'specific targets' group's reported CSR management centred around several issues-specific policies and did not seem to be unified by an encompassing CSR programme. As was mentioned earlier in this section, the exception to this was Aegean Airlines. It framed both its policy and its CSR report around the principles of the United Nations' Global Compact and cross referenced them with the indicators from the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). This made Aegean Airlines unique among this group for its public reporting of a CSR-wide strategy.

Compared with the other airlines in the 'specific targets' group, Aegean Airlines' approach to CSR management seemed to be slightly more strategically structured and proactively focused; however, as with the other airlines in the group, Aegean Airlines' conceptualisation of responsibilities was less comprehensive than that of the airlines in the 'CSR vision' group. Since its CSR understanding was based primarily on the UN Global Compact, the reported management of internal and external stakeholders was limited to human rights, the right to the freedoms of association and collective bargaining, standing

against forced labour and child labour, and a commitment to eliminate discrimination. The management for all of these stakeholder-related issues was only discussed in terms of what had already been accomplished – future plans were not included in the reporting. In the same vein, these stakeholder-related aspects of Aegean Airlines' CSR programme were not accompanied by specific targets. For instance, under the principle that 'Business should support the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation', Aegean (2009: 9) reported that:

Women represent 53% of the total workforce.

Report

However, it did not discuss how this 53% figure compared with any existing targets or whether there were any future targets in place. This was in contrast to how Aegean Airlines, and indeed all of the airlines in this group, dealt with environmental issues, where the management was presented as much more proactive and their reporting included discussions of future plans for investment, training, and similar actions, which were accompanied by specific targets that could be used to monitor progress. Therefore, even for the airline whose CSR management seemed to be the closest to a CSR programme rather than a series of policies, the management approach seemed to be disproportionately focused on environmental aspects. Without exception, then, the CSR management approach of all of the airlines in the 'specific targets' group could best be classified as engaged (stage 2) on Mirvis and Googins' (2006) scale with some characteristics of a more innovative approach (stage 3) to environmental issues.

The transparency and transparency of reporting for the 'specific targets' were more advanced than what had been produced by the other two previous groups. Two of the airlines, Aegean Airlines and Virgin Atlantic, had dedicated CSR/sustainability reports. Compared to the CSR reports of the 'CSR vision' group, these reports were relatively short at 2,227 words and 3,995 words, respectively. However, the dedicated CSR reports showed an increased effort to clearly communicate their CSR efforts compared to, for instance, Ryanair's inclusion of CSR issues scattered throughout its annual report. The other airlines in this group reported their CSR activities within their own annual report (easyJet and Air Berlin) or were included in their parent companies' annual report (Jet.com) or separate CSR report (Blue1). All of the airlines in this group, aside from Jet2.com, hosted webpages on CSR issues, and all of the airlines used press releases to communicate some of their CSR activities. The use of all three avenues of reporting by the airlines in the 'specific targets' group was much higher, percentage wise, than the 'general goals' group (80% and 28.6%, respectively). The narrative was sometimes disjointed and, as was discussed earlier in this section, the emphasis was less on CSR as a whole and more on environmental actions.

Nevertheless, the level of detail provided by the airlines in their reporting was more detailed than that published by the two groups discussed so far. As a result, the level of transparency of reporting for the 'specific targets' airlines could best be classified as innovative. Similarly, the overall stage of transparency for this group was on the border between engaged and innovative. While for many of the stakeholder-related CSR issues, reporting was often

focused on public relations and did not include any public reporting of monitoring and assessment, for environmental issues, the airlines in this group did include some public analysis of their activities. Virgin Atlantic (2010: 5) especially included critical assessment of their environmental CSR with statements such as:

In 2008 our annual energy consumption for ground operations was 23,080,100 kWh.

Unfortunately we've not been doing as well as we'd like with an increase in total energy use in 2009 meaning an annual consumption of 26,950,016 kWh - but we will continue to focus on energy reductions over the coming months and years.

Report

Statements such as this showed a more complex approach to public reporting than the exclusively positive reporting of CSR activities that was practiced by the 'minimal information' and 'general goals' groups of airlines.

7.2.4 The 'CSR vision' group

The final group of airlines, the 'CSR vision' group, was made up of eight airlines: Air France, British Airways, KLM, Finnair, Iberia, KLM, Lufthansa, SAS, and TUIfly. All of the airlines in this group were large, full-service carriers except for TUIfly, which was integrated into much of its parent company's reporting. With the exception of Iberia, all of them published a dedicated, annual CSR report. These reports were considerably longer than any of the CSR reports/CSR sections in annual reports that had been published by the other

airlines. For example, British Airways' CSR report was comprised of 34,902 words – nearly ten times more than the longest report of the previous groups, Virgin Atlantic's CSR report. The number of webpages was also considerably higher among the 'CSR vision' group than any other previous group. The average number of CSR-related webpages published by the airlines in the 'CSR vision' group was 36 pages and ranged from 19 pages (SAS) to 59 pages (British Airways).

Once again, the volume of information was far greater than that provided by any of the other airlines; among the airlines in the other groups, the highest number of webpages was 13 (easyJet), and the average number of CSR-related webpages for all of the airlines in the previous three groups was 4.92. The 'CSR vision' group on the whole published slightly more press releases than the airlines in the other groups. The average number of press releases for the 'CSR vision' group was 7.7 in 2010; of the other 19 airlines that published press releases on CSR-related issues, the average was 4.31 for the same period. However, like the other airlines, the 'CSR vision' group did not on the whole use press releases to discuss the details of their CSR management and overarching CSR vision, and instead, they generally used press releases to communicate individual, CSR-related events. However, on the whole, the CSR management as presented in the airlines' publications was less ad hoc and appeared to be considerably more structured than the CSR management that was presented by the other airlines.

In both the reports and on the websites, the 'CSR vision' group presented a coherent and structured approach to CSR management; the airlines included their own CSR definitions, descriptions of their CSR concerns and areas of emphasis, specific goals for individual CSR issues, and evidence of regular monitoring. Some of the airlines included tables with details of their monitoring and management of CSR issues in their CSR reports, which presented their activities in a structured format. The most in-depth tables were published by Air France and KLM in their joint CSR report which had reporting tables for each of their CSR foci, including for their environmental objectives (Figure 7.2). This figure clearly shows that Air France and KLM had measurable long-term and short-term objectives. These objectives were annually benchmarked and the airlines reported whether the target was 'partially achieved', 'on target', or whether the target was 'achieved or exceeded. Although there was slightly more emphasis on environmental issues both in the amount of information available (especially on the websites) and in terms of measurable goals, the balance between environmental issues and the stakeholder-related aspects of CSR was more in line with Mirvis and Googins' (2006) (among others) ideal of an equally-weighted 'triple bottom line' than any approach taken by the other airlines.

When compared against Mirvis and Googins' (2006) stages of corporate citizenship, the 'CSR vision' airlines' approach to issues management appeared to best fit into the integrated management stages (stage 4). Rather than being composed of a series of policies, the CSR issues management of the 'CSR vision' group seemed to be unified under a single, overarching CSR strategy. Additionally, all of the CSR categories seemed to be directed by proactive long-

Figure 7.2 Air France/KLM's environmental objectives

[This image has been removed by the author of this thesis/dissertation for copyright reasons]

Source: Air France/KLM (2010: 20), cropped by author

and short- term goals which were regularly assessed – a management approach that seemed to be sporadically practiced in the ‘specific targets’ group and not at all in either of the other two airline groups.

Furthermore, all of the airlines reported having a high-level manager or collection of managers in charge of overseeing all CSR-relevant activities. For instance, Lufthansa (2010: 18) reported that:

The basic framework for managing and controlling sustainability-related processes at Lufthansa is defined by the Sustainability Board. This

interdisciplinary cross-departmental body is part of the top management level and is composed of the heads of Investor Relations, Corporate Sourcing, Corporate Communications, Corporate International Relations and Government Affairs, Group Human Resources Policies and Group Environmental Issues.

Report

According to Mirvis and Googins (2006), high-level responsibility of CSR issues is a hallmark of an integrated approach, and all of the airlines made a point of noting that CSR management was ultimately overseen and directed at the executive and board of directors' level. Air France and KLM (2010: 12) noted in their joint CSR report:

CSR is guaranteed at the highest level within both airlines: for Air France, at Executive Vice President, member of Executive Committee, level, and for KLM at Board level.

Report

Finnair (2010: 53) even more explicitly tied the top-level management of CSR to other aspects of the board's responsibilities, noting:

The Board of Directors of corporate responsibility as part of realisation of general strategy.

Report

Along with this top-down approach to managing CSR, most of the airlines in this group specifically mentioned encouraging bottom-up buy-in through employee communications and training programmes. The CSR management approach of

the 'CSR vision' group of airlines closely resembled Mirvis and Googins' (2006) description of integrated management across the aspects of strategy, proactive approach, and top-level impetus.

In regards to transparency and transparency of communication, the airlines in the 'CSR vision' group had a much greater degree of both than any of the other airline groups. As has been discussed above, the volume of information available on the airlines' efforts was considerably greater than for any of the other airline groups, although once again the depth and clarity of reporting varied between the airlines in the group. Iberia, for instance, had far fewer reported indicators and future goals than Air France/KLM and the format of their report was less structured. Other airlines, like Finnair, included a great deal of information in its report on its CSR and even included extensive analysis from external experts (including external consultants and a professor in aviation technology); however, the information available on its website was considerably less detailed and nearly every page linked back to the CSR report. While there were instances where the reporting (and possibly CSR management) could have been clarified further and structured more clearly, nonetheless, the 'CSR vision' airlines as a whole had considerably greater CSR transparency than the other airlines. Additionally, the airlines in this group also allowed a greater level of public access and scrutiny by publishing their goals and targets with specific dates and numerical indicators, and even in a few instances admitted publically that they fell short of their targets. While gaps and omissions in reporting meant the group was still a way away from what could be considered full disclosure,

five airlines (Air France, KLM, Finnair, Iberia, and SAS) included an assessment by external auditors as part of their CSR report.

Along with using external assurance through consultants like PricewaterhouseCoopers (Finnair), KPMG (Air France/KLM), and Deloitte (SAS), the five audited airlines also claimed to adhere to the Global Reporting Initiative's (GRI) indicators. While the GRI has been critiqued as an easily misused reporting tool that potentially gives the impression of greater scrutiny than is actually present (Moneva *et al.* 2006), the airlines that did use the GRI indicators showed a willingness to engage with what has become a standard reporting framework for many industries (Moneva *et al.* 2006). Other examples of external assessment of CSR included BA's disclosure of their so-called 'forest footprint' as assessed by the Forest Footprint Disclosure Project (report), which they claimed helped to shape their CSR management. More so than any of the other airlines, this group allowed for external scrutiny and assessment. While the airlines were still some way from full disclosure, they nonetheless could best be classified as practicing an integrated (stage 4) approach to transparency. The transparency of communication was more difficult to assess since this research only looked at three avenues of reporting, and therefore the use of innovative reporting avenues could not be fully assessed. However, it is worth noting that some airlines did mention in their CSR reports that they used Twitter and Facebook as a way to communicate with stakeholders. This use of social media to publicise CSR was also mentioned by two interviewees.

The narrative through the publications that were included in this research was coherent, and there was clear continuity between the narrative presented in the CSR reports and the narrative conveyed online (even to the point of some sections being reused, word-for-word). Similarly, many of the reports encouraged readers to go to the airlines' websites for additional information, and the websites often referred back to reports as well as providing the downloadable document. Therefore, the CSR communications seemed to be part of a conscious, managed effort that encompassed more than one reporting avenue. The CSR narrative from the 'CSR vision' airlines was much more unified and coherent than that published by any of the other airlines; however, it still fell short of full public access. Therefore, the transparency of communication was clearly somewhat away from a fully transforming (stage 5) approach. Rather, as with issues management and transparency, the transparency of communication as practiced by the 'CSR vision' group most closely resembled an integrated approach.

7.3 The false low cost/full service dichotomy: a more complex profile of responsibility

The final objective, Objective Six, sought to: compare how low cost carriers and full service carriers reported their understandings and practices of CSR. The differences between the low cost and full service carriers in the sample have already been discussed in relation to the other five objectives; and some differences were found in what CSR terms the airline business models preferred (the full service carriers used 'sustainability' slightly more and the low cost carriers slightly preferred 'corporate social responsibility'), the types of CSR

activities they reported (the full service carriers placed more emphasis on environmental efforts and the low cost airlines presented a more even distribution of environmental, external stakeholder, internal stakeholder-related concerns), their motivations and justifications for CSR activities (the full service carriers reported more about them and seeming to place more emphasis on the 'business benefits' of CSR management), and their external stakeholder engagement (the full service carriers reported engaging more with airports and other aviation-related businesses and reported more about the auditing and assessment of their CSR activities by external stakeholders).

However, there were more similarities than differences in how the airlines reported conceptualising and practicing CSR. Furthermore, all of these findings were valid for the whole of the two groups in the sample, and within the two groups of low cost and full service carriers there was a great deal of variation. Many of the full service carriers reported approaches to and understandings of CSR that were similar to many of the low cost carriers' approaches and understandings. The findings related to Objective Three (discussed earlier in this chapter) suggested that, at least in terms of managing CSR, the full service carrier/low cost carrier division was overly simplistic and overlooked more complex patterns in the data. The airlines themselves in both their public communications and during the interviews offered some explanation of their approaches based on characteristics of the airline, and predominately referenced their business model as a key differentiating characteristic to their approach to CSR management. The following section will discuss the airlines' self-appraisal of the role of business models in their approach to CSR.

However, an even clearer ‘profile of responsibility’ emerged when all of the issues covered by Objectives One, Two, Four, Five, and Six were considered based on the groups created in response to Objective Three. In other words, the four groups of CSR management which were discussed in the previous section (‘minimal information’, ‘general goals’, ‘specific targets’, and ‘CSR vision’) shared more than just their approach to CSR management; they also had similar approaches to defining and practicing CSR, reported CSR motivations and justifications, and the stakeholders that they reported engaging with in order to fulfil their CSR. The wider application of these groups and the ‘profiles of responsibility’ that emerged will be discussed in more detail in Section 7.3.2.

7.3.1 Reported differentiating factors to CSR approaches

In both their public communications and during interviews, the airlines discussed their approaches to and practices of CSR with reference to characteristics of the airline. Some of these narratives have already been discussed in Chapter 6.3 since many of these differentiating factors were also used as a stated motivation or justification for CSR activities. Therefore, much of the data that had been coded for the ‘motivation and justification’ content analysis-based code were also included in the ‘responsible profile’ grounded theory-based code. In spite of the crossover of data, there were subtle etymological differences between the two codes (as well as different methodological approaches to their implementation). While the ‘motivation and justification’ code was applied to data that fit approximately into the formula of

we do [CSR activity] because of [reason], the 'responsible profile' code was applied to data that fit approximately into the formula of *our CSR is shaped by [characteristic]*. Therefore, while many of the airlines' statements were included in both codes, some codes were unique to one or the other. For instance, statements that dealt with the financial benefits of CSR activities were included in the 'motivation and justification' code and not in the 'responsible profile' code. Similarly, most of the statements that described the effect of the airlines' business model on their CSR practices were included in the 'responsible profile' code and not in the 'motivation and justification' code.

The three main reported characteristics that influenced the airlines' approach to CSR were: business model, national/regional operating environment, and corporate ethos. None of these characteristics were presented as the only, overarching factor that dictated the airlines' approaches to CSR; that is, the airlines' definitions, practices, and management of CSR were not attributed to a single differentiating factor. This was true for both the primary and secondary data sets. The business model emerged as the most commonly reported influential characteristic. This research was especially interested in the potential role of business model in CSR practices considering the current narratives in the media and popular discourses which paint low cost airlines as the sustainable development 'villains of the sky' (e.g. Coles *et al.* 2009, Coles *et al.* 2011, Graham and Shaw 2008). Some of the low cost airlines in this sample included a short statement on their website or in the annual report about how their approach to business operations actually made them more sustainable

development-compatible than full service carriers. For instance, easyJet (n.d.

(b): Online) claimed:

easyJet high efficiency = lower emissions = low fares

Website

EasyJet then detailed specific aspects of its business model – such as using secondary airports and maximising occupancy – that made its approach more efficient than other ‘traditional’ approaches. Similarly, Ryanair (2006: Online) noted:

Other characteristics of Ryanair’s low-cost business model include, for example: the use of secondary airports and point-to-point services, which help to increase fuel efficiency and limit emissions. Ryanair avoids long taxiing times and holding patterns at congested primary airports, and delivers passengers to their destination directly on one flight ("point-to-point"), as opposed to forcing passengers onto connecting flights through congested main hub airports, which require two take-offs and two landings.

Website

These statements by the low cost airlines were in keeping with Graham and Shaw’s (2008) observation that low cost airlines are countering claims that their practices are unsustainable by focusing on how their business model is less wasteful than traditional business models.

However, the low cost airlines were not the only members of the sample that talked about their approach to CSR in terms of their business model. A few of the full service carriers discussed how their approach to overall operations made them more efficient. For instance, KLM (2010b: Online) talked extensively about their use of a hub-and-spoke network, noting:

Even the way we have organized our passenger traffic – using a hub system (...) – contributes to sustainable travel. Thanks to this system, which coordinates connecting flights with great efficiency and minimal transit times, we can transport more passengers using fewer flights.

Website

There were fewer instances of the full service carriers than there were of low cost airlines discussing their business model as a contributing factor to their CSR approach; however, the few examples suggest that the narrative of the low cost business model being more efficient has now become so prominent that the full service carriers feel pressure to justify their own business model.

During the interviews, the managers were asked directly whether they thought the full service carriers had a different approach to CSR than the low cost airlines. Without exception, the interviews agreed that there were different approaches and issues that were business model-dependent. Many of the low cost airline managers echoed the familiar narrative that the low cost model was more efficient. However, a few managers broke from this pattern. One manager remarked:

I think it's much easier for full service airlines to work with CSR ambition than it is for low cost airlines, because the external environment – the people [sic] express doubts about the quality of the technical research and improvements these days and that's not an issue with full service airlines.

Interview 5, Low cost carrier

Among the managers from full service carriers, the general consensus was that the low cost airlines did not have a culture of responsibility that was as well developed as the full service carriers'. One manager admitted that she was not completely familiar with low cost airlines' approach across Europe, but that:

[...] from my experience, looking at the [national low cost] airlines, they don't have CSR programmes. Or at least they don't communicate about it. I think they....they must have different priorities. I think for them it's less important...less of an element of their company culture than for us.

Interview 8, Full service carriers

Along with corporate ethos, the managers also pointed to smaller financial resources as a reason for low cost airlines' perceived less developed approach to CSR. For example, one manager said:

I think [low cost airlines] don't care as much because they don't have much money to pay for it. I think there is much....how do I say it in English? They are doing much less than normal airlines do because they don't have the people who care about this and they don't have the money.

Interview 4, Full service carrier

What is most notable in the interviewees' reflections on the link between business model and CSR is that while they agreed that there was a strong link between the two, there was very little consensus on what the link was. Furthermore, the interviewed managers' answers often included other characteristics – such as corporate ethos and operating environment – as part of the explanation for the differences in practice. Both the interviews and the airlines' public communications cited a number of characteristics that shaped their CSR practices. With very few exceptions, these characteristics were presented as differentiating the airlines' CSR practices in a positive way: the low cost airlines believed their business model allowed them to practice a better form of CSR, the Scandinavian airlines highlighted their operating environment as a positive influence on their CSR. However, no clear profile of responsibility emerged from the airlines' own assessment of their CSR approaches.

7.3.2 Emerging 'profiles of responsibility'

It was expected that the airlines' own perspectives would offer interesting narratives, but little in the way of reliable analysis of their CSR approaches. Therefore, the analysis for Objective Six also included an assessment of the reported practices and approaches to CSR in conjunction with some possible influencing characteristics to see if a profile of the most – and least – developed reported CSR would emerge. This was not intended to be a comprehensive analysis of all the possible factors that could shape the airlines' CSR practices. Instead, it was intended to highlight any obvious profiles of responsibility and identify possible directions for future research. This research's sample of 34

airlines was deemed too small to allow for statistically significant cluster or factor analysis. Furthermore, this research was based on a qualitative approach to data, and the epistemological direction of this research made quantitative analytical techniques a poor fit for this project (although such an approach could return interesting results in a differently-structured study).

Analysis for this section was derived from a detailed table which contained profiles for each of the airlines included in this study (some of the information from this mega table is provided in Tables 7.4, 7.5, 7.6, and 7.7). Along with basic characteristics of the airlines, such as business model, passenger numbers, and the airlines' nationalities, this table was comprised of all of the content analysis-based tables that were discussed in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

Sorting the airlines based on the single characteristics of the geographical location of their headquarters, number of flights, annual expenditure, or annual profit did not provide any clear categorisation of CSR-related behaviour and beliefs. However, when the airlines were sorted based on business model, more distinctions between the groups became apparent, particularly in the types of activities that the airlines reported as being part of their CSR. While sorting the airlines based on business models suggested that there might be some differences between the way the low cost airlines and the full service airlines practice their CSR, the strongest profiles emerged with the airlines were sorted into groups based on the four groups of CSR monitoring, management and reporting discussed in the section above (7.2). The clearest profiles were at either end of the reporting spectrum – the airlines that had been classified in

Section 7.2 as providing either 'minimal information' or a 'CSR vision'. The two groups in the middle were more muddled, and this difficulty in dividing the two middle groups most probably is due to gaps between practice and reporting. As was mentioned in the previous section, several of the interviewed managers from the 'general goals' group described higher levels of CSR implementation (as described by Mirvis and Googins (2006)) than was reported in their public communications.

While the two middle groups present a very similar approach to defining and practicing CSR, a similar mixture of low cost and full service business models, and a diverse range of nationalities, the groups on either extreme showed a large gap of practice and had more clearly defined profiles (Table 7.5, Table 7.6). The 'minimal information' group airlines were predominantly from Southern or Eastern European countries. They carried fewer passengers than the 'CSR vision' airlines. They talked about their CSR using non-standard terms and practiced their CSR mainly through engagement with external stakeholders (specifically, charities).

On the other hand, the 'CSR vision' airlines were predominately from Northern or Western Europe. They were all full service carriers, with the exception of TUIfly (which was included in its parent company's CSR report). They carried a comparatively large number of passengers. Most of them used several terms when talking about CSR-related concepts, although the predominantly favoured CSR-related term for this group was 'sustainability'. The practices that they reported as part of their CSR were many and spread across environmental,

internal stakeholder and external stakeholder concerns. All of them considered some ethics-related aspects of their business and practice, which were also reflected in their reported motivations and justifications for CSR: nearly all of them discussed 'global good' as a motivating factor for their CSR, along with anticipated business benefits. And finally, all of the 'CSR vision' airlines reported complex relationships with a range of stakeholders which impacted how they practiced CSR.

The relatively small size of both groups – with only seven and eight airlines, respectively – limited the conclusions about what factors contribute to higher levels of CSR implementation (or at least, reported implementation). However, these findings suggest that the differences between airlines with complex reported CSR practices and those with less well-developed practices is not as simple as the location of the headquarters or the airlines' business models.

Table 7.3 'Minimal information' group's profile

Airline	Business model	Headquarters, by region	Operating revenue in 2009 (000, \$)	Net income/loss in 2009 (000, \$)	Passenger numbers (million) in 2009	CSR terms	Environment	Internal stakeholders	External stakeholders	Ethics	Motivation	External stakeholder influence
Air Baltic	Full service	Eastern	441,069	23,150	2.8	OT	-	-	OC, S, EG	-	-	G&R, C&NGOS
Alitalia	Full service	Southern	4,183,381	-467,049	21.2	OT	-	-	-	EC	-	-
Bmibaby	Low cost	British Isles	part of British Midlands 775,072	-	2.9	-	-	-	OC	-	-	C&NGOs
Olympic Air	Full service	Southern	-	-	3.7	-	EE	-	OC	-	-	C&NGOs
Spanair	Full service	Southern	-	-	-	OT	CO, FO	-	-	-	-	-
Wizz Air	Low cost	Eastern	-	-	7.8	-	-	-	C-M	-	-	C&NGOs
- No data available, * data shared with a parent/partner company												
CSR terms from Table 5.1, Environment data from Table 5.2, Internal stakeholders data from Table 5.3, External stakeholder data from Table 5.4, Ethics data taken Table 5.5, Motivation and justification data from Table 6.1, External stakeholder influence taken Table 6.2												

Source: author

Table 7.4 'General goals' group's profile

Airline	Business model	Headquarters by region	Passenger numbers (million) in 2009	CSR terms	Environment	Internal stakeholders	External stakeholders	Ethics	Motivation & justification	External stakeholder influence
Aer Lingus	Full service	British Isles	10.4	CSR, OT	EA, EE, W, FR, FM, FO, GO, W&R	C&R, EO, B, HW&SS, T, SC&E, U	OC, S, GN, S&S	EB, EC	BG-F, GG, IL	A, G&R, C&NGOS, U
Austrian	Full service	Western	9.95	OT	CO, W, FR, FO, GO, W&R	-	-	-	BG-F, BG-S	G&R, OB
Brussels Airlines	Full service	Western	4.68	OT	CO, EE, W, FR, FM, FO, GO, W&R	-	OC, S, EG, CC	EB	-	A, G&R, OB, C&NGOs
Czech Airlines	Full service	Eastern	5.46	OT	EE, FR, FO, GO, W&R	C&R, HW&SS, T	S	HR	BG-F, BG-S	A, OA&TB, G&R
LOT Polish Airlines	Full service	Eastern	3.65	S, OT	CO(o), B(o), EE, FR, FO, GO, W&R	-	OC, CC	-	BG-S, I	-
Malev Hungarian Airlines	Full service	Eastern	3.23	SR, OT	EE, FR, FO, GO, W&R	-	C-M, OC, CE&T, EG, S&S	-	BG-F, GG, I	A, OA&TB, G&R, C&NGOs
SWISS	Full service	Western	14	OT	CO, B(o), FR, FO, GO, W&R	EO	CE&T, S, EG, GN	-	BG-F, BG-S, I	A, OA&TB, G&R, C&NGOs
TAP Air Portugal	Full service	Southern	8.4	S	CO, EE, FR, FO	SC&E	OC, EG	-	IL	A, OA&TB, G&R, Au, C&NGOs
Air Europa	Low cost	Southern	9	CSR, S, OT	FR, FO	SC&E	OC, S&S	EC	BG-F, GG, IL	G&R, C&NGOS
Cimber Sterling	Low cost	Northern	1.8	CSR, OT	EE, FO	C&R, B, HW&SS, SA	S, EG	EB	BG-F, BG-S, GG, I, IL	OA&TB, G&R
Flybe	Low cost	British Isles	6.7	CSR, S	EA, CO, FR, FM, GO	T	OC, CE&T, S, EG, GN, S&S	-	BG-F, BG-S, I, IL	A, OA&TB, G&R, EB, Au, C&NGOs
Norwegian Air Shuttle	Low cost	Northern	10.8	CR, OT	W, FR, FM, FO, GO, W&R	C&R, EO, HW&SS, SC&E, U	C-M, OC, EG	HR	-	A, OA&TB, G&R, C&NGOs, U
Ryanair	Low cost	British Isles	65.3	OT	W, FR, FO	C&R, B, T, SC&E, U(o), SA	OC, S, S&S	EC	IL	OA&TB, G&R, C&NGOs, U
Transavia	Low cost	Western	5.2	CSR	CO, FR, FM, FO, GO	C&R, B, T, U	OC, EG	EC	BG-F, BG-S, GG	C&NGOs, U
- No data available, * data shared with a parent/partner company										
CSR terms from Table 5.1, Environment data from Table 5.2, Internal stakeholders data from Table 5.3, External stakeholder data from Table 5.4, Ethics data taken Table 5.5, Motivation and justification data from Table 6.1, External stakeholder influence taken Table 6.2										

Source: author

Table 7.5 'Specific targets' group profile

Airline	Business model	Headquarters by region	Passenger numbers (million) in 2009	CSR terms	Environment	Internal stakeholders	External stakeholders	Ethics	Motivation & justification	External stakeholder influence
Aegean Airlines	Full service	Southern	6.04	CR, CSR	B(o), EE, FR, FM, GO, W&R	C&R, EO, D, B, HW&SS, T, SC&E, U	C-M, OC, S, EG	EB, HR	BG-S, I	A, G&R, EB, C&NGOS, U
Virgin	Full service	British Isles	5.4	S, OT	CO, B, FR, FM, FO, GO, W&R	C&R, B, SC&E	C-M, OC, CE&T, S, EG, CC	-	-	A, OA&TB, G&R, Au, C&NGOs
Air Berlin	Low cost	Western	27.9	SR, S, OT	EE, W, FR, FO, GO, W&R	C&R, EO, B, T, SC&E, U	C-M, OC, S, S&S	-	BG-F, BG-S, GG, I, IL	OA&TB, G&R, EB, C&NGOS, U
Blue1	Low cost	Northern	1.46	CR	CO, FR, FO, W&R	EO, D, HW&SS, T, U	OC, CC	EC	-	OA&TB, A, C&NGOs, U
easyJet	Low cost	British Isles	39.7	CR, CSR, S OT	CO, EE, FR, FO, GO, W&R	C&R, EO, D, B, T, SC&E, U, SA	C-M, OC, S&S	EB, EC	BG-F, BG-S, GG, IL	OA&TB, G&R, EB, OB, C&NGOs, U
Jet2.com	Low cost	British Isles	3.1	CSR	EA, W, FR, FM, FO	EO, D, HW&SS, T, SC&E, U	C-M, OC, CE&T, S	-	BG-F, GG	A, OA&TB, G&R, EB, C&NGOs
- No data available, * data shared with a parent/partner company										
CSR terms from Table 5.1, Environment data from Table 5.2, Internal stakeholders data from Table 5.3, External stakeholder data from Table 5.4, Ethics data taken Table 5.5, Motivation and justification data from Table 6.1, External stakeholder influence taken Table 6.2										

Source: author

Table 7.6 'CSR vision' group's profile

Airline	Business model	Headquarters by region	Operating revenue in 2009 (000, \$)	Net income/loss in 2009 (000, \$)	Passenger numbers (million) in 2009	CSR terms	Environment	Internal stakeholders	External stakeholders	Ethics	Motivation	External stakeholder influence
Air France*	Full service	Western	28,262,450	-2,098,250	71.4	CSR, S, OT	EA, CO, B, EE, FR, FM, FO, GO, W&R	C&R, HW&SS, T, SC&E, U, SA	C-M, OC, CE&T, S, EG, GN, S&S, CC	EB, EC, HR	BG-F, BG-S, GG, IL	A, OA&TB, G&T, EB, A, C&WS, OB, C&NGOs, U
British Airways	Full service	British Isles	12,057,315	-641,026	31.8	CR, S	EA, CO, B, EE, FR, FM, FO, GO, W&R	C&R, EO, D, HW&SS, T, SC&E, U, SA	C-M, OC, CE&T, S, EG, S&S, CC	EC	BG-S, GG, IL	A, OA&TB, G&R, C&S, OB, C&NGOs, U
Finnair	Full service	Northern	2,708,023	-145,989	7.4	CR, SR	EA, CO(o), B, EE, W, FR, FM, FO, GO, W&R	C&R, EO, D, B, HW&SS, T, SC&E, U, SA	C-M, OC, EG, S&S, CC	EB, EC, HR	BG-F, BG-S, I, IL	A, OA&TB, G&R, EB, Au, C&S, OB, C&NGOs, U
Iberia	Full service	Southern	6,316,619	-391,117	20.5	CR, CSR, S	EA, B, EE, FR, FM, FO, GO, W&R	C&R, EO, D, B, HW&SS, T, SC&E, U	C-M, OC, CE&T, S, EG, GN, S&S, CC	EB, EC, HR	BG-F, BG-S, GG, IL	A, OA&TB, G&R, EB, Au, C&S, OB, C&NGOs, U
KLM*	Full service	Western	See Air France	See Air France	71.4	CSR, S	EA, CO, B, EE, W, FR, FM, FO, GO, W&R	C&R, HW&SS, T, SC&E, U, SA	C-M, OC, CE&T, S, EG, GN, S&S, CC	EB, EC, HR	BG-F, BG-S, GG, IL	A, OA&TB, G&R, EB, Au, C&S, OB, C&NGOs, U
Lufthansa	Full service	Western	31,924,069	-160,458	55.6	SR, S, OT	EA, CO, B, EE, FR, FM, FO, GO, W&R	C&R, D, B, HW&SS, T, SC&E, U, SA	C-M, OC, CE&T, S, EG, GN, S&S, CC	EC, HR	BG-F, BG-S, GG, I, IL	A, OA&TB, G&R, EB, C&S, OB, C&NGOs, U
SAS	Full service	Northern	6,255,989	-410,446	21.4	CSR, SR, S	CO, B, EE, W, FR, FO, GO, W&R	C&R, EO, D, B, HW&SS, T, SC&E, U, SA	C-M, S, EG, S&S, CC	EB, EC, HR	BG-F, BG-S, GG, IL	A, OA&TB, G&R, EB, Au, C&S, OB, C&NGOs, U
TUIfly*	Low cost	Western	Part of TUI Travel, 22,089,172	-38,217	9.5	S	EA, CO, B(o), EE, W, FR, GO, W&R	D, T, SC&E	C-M, OC, EG	EC, HR	BG-F, BG-S, GG, I, IL	OA&TB, G&R, EB, C&S, C&NGOs

- No data available, * data shared with a parent/partner company

CSR terms from Table 5.1, Environment data from Table 5.2, Internal stakeholders data from Table 5.3, External stakeholder data from Table 5.4, Ethics data taken Table 5.5, Motivation and justification data from Table 6.1, External stakeholder influence taken Table 6.2

Source: author

7.4 Conclusion

This Chapter has assessed the overarching aspects of the airlines' reported CSR practices. The first half of this chapter looked at how the airlines reported monitoring and managing their CSR. Two of the categories of Mirvis and Googins' (2006) 'Stages of Corporate Citizenship' were found to be a good fit for the data, especially when a third category was added to account for the depth and quality of available information. The sampled airlines' stated approaches to CSR monitoring and management was spread across four profiles: minimal information, general goals, specific targets, and CSR vision. The final group of airlines demonstrated an approach to CSR that was considerably more advanced (at least according to Mirvis and Googins' (2006) categorisations) than the other groups.

The second half of this chapter investigated whether the airlines' overall approaches to CSR could be attributed – or at least differentiated – by any characteristic of the airlines themselves. The airlines themselves constructed narratives about how their characteristics impacted their CSR approach – particularly how their business models improved their CSR practices. However, when the airlines were sorted according to some of the most obvious characteristics, there were relatively few clear differences in their approaches to CSR (as analysed in Chapters 5 and 6). The airlines were then assessed based on the management and monitoring profiles that had been developed earlier in the chapter, and clearer profiles of reported CSR in practice emerged. The airlines were not initially assessed using all of the categories of Mirvis and Googins' (2006) 'Stages of Corporate Citizenship' due to concerns that to do so

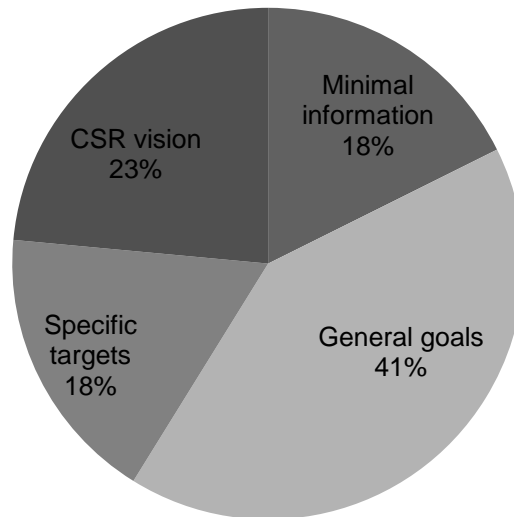
might 'force' the data into a model that might not be a good fit. However, the similarities between the types of CSR approaches and practices of the airlines in this study's 'profiles of responsibility' and the full descriptions of Mirvis and Googins' (2006) 'Stages of Corporate Citizenship' suggests that the whole descriptions of the stages would be applicable to this study.

Notably, as Figure 7.1 illustrates, there was a great deal of variance of approaches to CSR within the sample as a whole, as well as within the business model subgroups of the sample. The low cost carriers' approaches to understanding and practicing CSR ranged from 'minimal information' with only a few seemingly *ad hoc* communications about CSR, an approach to CSR that was primarily comprised of relationships with charities, and only very limited information on their CSR management approaches, to 'CSR vision' in the case of TUIfly (mostly reported by its parent company, TUI) with a clearly managed and monitored approach to CSR, an understanding of CSR that emphasised sustainable development and environment-related issues and a range of business- and ethics-related stated motivations and justifications for CSR action.

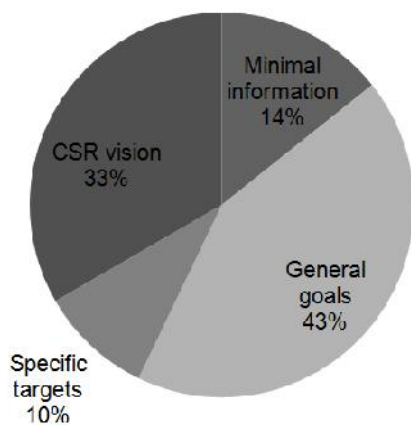
Similarly, the full service carriers displayed an equally diverse range of approaches to CSR. Thus, it seems that the higher number of full service carriers (7 to 1) in the 'CSR vision' group provides a distortion effect on many of the findings in the previous two chapters: the full service carriers as a whole did report some different approach to CSR and CSR management than the low cost carriers as a whole. However, a more nuanced investigation of the individual

Figure 7.3 CSR 'profiles of responsibility', visualised

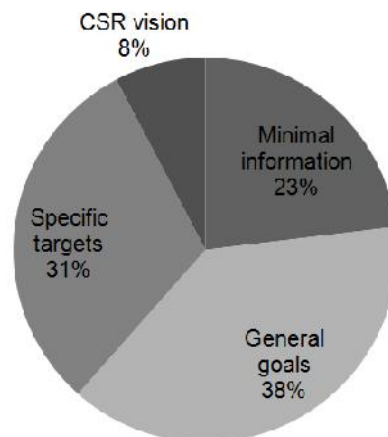
Whole sample



Full service carriers



Low cost carriers



Source: author

airlines suggested a simple low cost/full service carrier dichotomy was inexact and that other characteristics and leadership and management approaches

determine how the airlines reported understanding and practice CSR. More research is needed into the other characteristics that shape airlines' reported approaches to and understandings of CSR.

8 Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

This study has looked at the nebulous and notoriously difficult to research concept of corporate social responsibility (Crane *et al.* 2008; Blowfield and Murray 2008; Dahlsrud 2008; Garriga and Melé 2004). CSR is often defined as voluntary activities that go ‘above and beyond’ legal requirements (Chapter 2; Moon 2007; CEC 2006; Dahlsrud 2008), as well as touted as an alternative to heavy government involvement by allowing industries to self-regulate (Falck and Heblich 2007). This research has looked at how European airlines – traditionally a heavily regulated and currently environmentally-criticised sector (Chapter 4) – self-report and self-define their CSR.

This chapter (Chapter 8) will provide a summary of the main findings of this research, discuss the contribution and implications of this study, consider the limitations of the project, and finally, provide recommendations for future research.

8.2 Summary of main findings

The aim of this research was to critically examine the self-reported socially-responsible activities of European full-service and low-fares airlines. This was accomplished through six objectives, the design of which has been described in more detail in Chapter 4, and reported in detail in Chapters 5, 6, and 7. This section will provide a brief overview of the main findings pertaining to each of the objectives.

8.2.1 Objective One

Objective 1 sought to: undertake a comprehensive survey of the preferred terms and definitions of CSR used by the airlines. The sampled airlines used a variety of terms to describe their CSR-related behaviour, and often used several different terms throughout their communications. The main terms favoured by the airlines were 'sustainability' and 'corporate social responsibility', although the most commonly occurring code was 'other categories' which was comprised of terms that were not standard for describing CSR and related concepts. In regards to the airlines' definitions of defining these concepts, many airlines did not include a formal definition and instead, the terms were defined in a *de facto* manner through the types of activities that they included under the heading of CSR and related terms, which will be discussed in more detail in the following section. Of the airlines that did include a formal definition along with the CSR-related terms, most of them used definitions which included sustainable development-associated terms of 'society', 'environment', and 'economy' along with stakeholder theory-based terms, primarily, 'stakeholders'. There was a slight difference between the terms preferred by the low cost and

full service carriers, with the full service carriers using 'sustainability' more and the low cost carriers using 'corporate social responsibility' more.

This proliferation of terms by the airlines is not unexpected considering the wider academic and practitioner discourses, which themselves use a variety of terms (Crane *et al.* 2008; Blowfield and Murray 2008; Dahlsrud 2008; Garriga and Mele 2004; detailed in Section 2.2). As was discussed in Chapter 2, this lack of consensus on what to label the concept of CSR is due in part to the many related discourses that have contributed to current conceptualisations of it. This study was able to demonstrate that CSR-labelling is an issue for practitioners as well as academics.

While other studies of CSR in the travel and tourism industry have noted that many different terms are used to describe the same concept in practice (e.g. Holcomb *et al.* 2007; Coles *et al.* 2009; Sheldon and Park 2011; Wijk and Persoon 2006; Bohdanowicz 2007; Bohdanowicz and Zientara 2008, 2009), this is the first structured analysis of which terms were used in practice. In order to research the issue of terms, the data collection was based on a 'decision map', which meant that data was collected primarily due to their conformity to standard conceptualisations of CSR, rather than the use of the term or related terms. This structured 'wide net' approach was the first of its kind in travel and tourism studies, and it allowed for a greater understanding of a broader set of reported approaches to CSR management.

Along with confirming and clarifying the findings of other research that airlines apply a variety of terms to CSR-related activities, this research also has implications for practitioners. For governments and other organisations wishing to engage with the sector on CSR-related issues, using ‘corporate social responsibility’ or ‘sustainability’ would allow for the greatest amount of shared discourse. For the sector itself, the wide array of terms, and particularly the high number of ‘other terms’ (terms that were not widely used or recognised) to describe similar management approaches and concerns is almost certainly contributing to the gap between airlines managers’ reported efforts to implement CSR and the public’s perception that airlines are not practicing high levels of CSR, as found by both Asatryan (2012) and Gupta and Saxena (2006). Therefore, a greater degree of sector-wide collaboration with the aim to present CSR-related efforts in a more standardised manner would make the airlines’ approaches more readily apparent to consumers, regulators, and the general public. Such an effort could be organised by a trade body (such as IATA) or a coalition of airline alliances.

8.2.2 Objective Two

Objective 2 looked at the *de facto* definitions of CSR – the types of activities that the sampled airlines reported as being part of their CSR – with the goal to: develop a comprehensive typology of the self-reported CSR activities of airlines. The activities described by the airlines as part of their CSR fell into four categories: the largest was environment-related activities, followed by external stakeholder-related initiatives and internal stakeholder-focused measures, and the least-mentioned group of activities in the ethics-related section. The

dominance of environmental issues in the CSR communications paralleled public and governmental discourses criticising the airlines' environmental impacts (Chapter 3) and correlated with previous research (specifically, Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois 2011; Coles, *et al.* 2011; Lynes and Dredge 2006; Lynes and Andrachuk 2008; Tsai and Hsu 2008), which have found that airlines' CSR practices are dominated by environmental concerns. This focus on environmental efforts was also found in other sectors of the travel and tourism industry, most notably hotels (Holcomb *et al.* 2007; Sheldon and Park 2011; de Grosbois 2012; Font *et al.* 2012). Ketola (2006) would consider this prioritisation of the environment to be emblematic of a corporate 'psychopathic' approach (instead of an ideal of a balanced 'triple bottom line' of environmental, social, and economic concerns). However, a stakeholder theory-based approach (as interpreted by Porter and Kramer (2006)) would interpret this environmental emphasis as expected and even advisable considering the significant environmental impacts of aviation (Gibbons 2008; Mann 2004; Sinclair 2007).

The airlines themselves, on the whole, seemed to practice a stakeholder theory-compatible form of CSR in that they largely emphasised activities that were closely related to their normal business practices, such as purchasing new aircraft and communicating with staff. This study also found a several activities that are not conventionally considered to be CSR-related, but that were nonetheless reported by the airlines under CSR-related headings. These activities were coded as 'customer care' and 'safety and security'. Some of the airlines' reported CSR activities, particularly those coded as 'safety and security'

as well as adhering to environmental and employment regulations, were so tightly aligned with expected and required business practices that they seemed not to adhere to one of the most basic of most definitions of CSR – the aspect of being voluntarily undertaken (see, for instance, Holcomb *et al.* 2007; SOURCES; and Section 2.2). This finding that a portion of what airlines reported as being part of their CSR does not, in fact, adhere to general academic definitions of CSR is particularly significant since it highlights the role of regulations in shaping the airlines' 'responsible' behaviours and is additionally important as it has been widely overlooked in previous studies of the CSR of airlines, although Phillips (2006) noted anecdotally that some airlines seemed to equate legal compliance with CSR and Lynes and Andrachuk (2008) found that airline managers in SAS reported that the social and regulatory pressures shaped how their airline practiced CSR.

While the sampled airlines primarily reported CSR activities that were closely aligned to their normal business practices, there was one significant exception – the inclusion of charitable monetary donations and other forms of charity partnerships in the CSR communications. These involvements with external charity partners were mentioned by nearly every airline in the sample that reported on CSR-related activities, and, with 28 airlines reporting some form of charity engagement, it was the most widely reported CSR-related activity. This popularity of charity involvement was noted by Fenclova and Coles (2011) in low cost carriers, and this study was able to confirm that full service carriers also reported charitable involvement as a key component of their CSR in practice. Both Coles *et al.* 2009 and Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois 2010 also

found that philanthropic engagement formed a significant portion of airlines' reported CSR. This study's findings contribute to the wider discourses on CSR in the travel and tourism industry where studies such as Sheldon and Park (2011) and de Grosbois (2012) have also found high levels of charitable involvement in the hotel sector. The prominent presence of philanthropic engagement in this study's sample suggests that while academic conceptualisations of CSR have moved away from equating CSR with corporate philanthropy (Falck and Heblich 2007; O'Rourke 2003; Monela *et al.* 2006; Dodds and Joppe 2005; also discussed in more detail in Section 2.2) corporate philanthropic efforts are still a prominent part of CSR in practice in some industries.

The analysis conducted for this objective culminated in the creation of a typology of the self-reported CSR of airlines (Table 5.6). This typology showed the predominate codes that related to the environment, external stakeholder, internal stakeholders, and ethical considerations, and included the non-standard categories of 'customer care' and 'safety and security'. While similar to the typology used by Holcomb *et al.* (2007) in their study of hotels, the typology created during this research was based on what the airlines themselves reported (instead of being based on academic CSR discourses, as in the case of Holcomb *et al.* (2007)) and there was therefore less of an emphasis on the traditional academic definitions of CSR. Because this typology was so closely linked to the airlines' self-reported CSR, it will be a valuable tool for future research of CSR in the sector.

8.2.3 Objective Three

Objective 3 sought to: examine the approaches to the management and implementation of CSR. The analysis for Objective 3 was paired with the analysis for Objective 6 in Chapter 7 since the findings for both objectives were closely related. The analysis for Objective 3 found a great deal of variation within the sample of approaches to management and implementation of CSR, although at times it was difficult to differentiate between *variations of management* and *variations of communication*, and some of the interviewed managers claimed their airlines practiced a more strategic approach to CSR management than was represented in their public communications. In order to account somewhat for the limitations of transparency, this study turned to a model that took into account (at least partially) the interconnectivity of pro-active management and clear communications, Mirvis and Googins' (2006) 'Stages of Corporate Citizenship', which is one of the few models of CSR implementation to be applied to empirical data (Spitzeck 2010; Maon *et al.* 2010; Lindgreen and Swaen 2010). Two of the management and implementation-related categories from Mirvis and Googins' (2006) model, 'Issues Management' and 'Transparency', proved to be a useful assessment tool for the wide breadth of reported practice. A third category of assessment was added to account for the limitations of the airlines' reporting – one that focused on the 'Transparency of Communication' (presented in Table 7.2).

The sampled airlines' approaches to reported CSR management fell into four groups: 'minimal information', 'general goals', 'specific targets', and 'CSR vision'. The seven airlines that were in the 'minimal information' group did not

discuss their CSR management in any detail. Their communications were sporadic and did not seem to be indicative of a unified CSR strategy. The largest group was the 'general goals' group, which was comprised of fourteen airlines. These airlines generally used at least two avenues of communication and reported on several CSR-related issues. Few of them reported having an overarching CSR policy, and none of the airlines in this group reported using specific, measurable indicators of progress (such as a goal of reducing emissions by a certain amount by a specific time). There were six airlines in the 'specific targets' group. These airlines shared many characteristics with the 'general goals' group in terms of transparency and public reporting, with the important distinction being that the 'specific targets' airlines included – as the title suggests – at least some specific, measurable indicators of progress. These targets were unevenly applied and most of the indicators pertained to environmental issues. The final category, the 'CSR vision' group, was comprised of eight airlines. These airlines' reported approach to managing CSR was considerably more strategic than any of the other groups'. Not only did the 'CSR vision' airlines produce a great deal of public information on their specific goals and targets (often for a range of CSR issues – not just the environment), they also included details about CSR policies and management systems. These airlines were on the whole, large full service carriers.

Other studies of the CSR of airlines have noted that there are different approaches to CSR across the sector (primarily Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois 2010; Phillips 2006; Coles *et al.* 2009); however, this was the first study to systematically make a differentiation between CSR management and

implementation approaches. Similarly, in wider travel and tourism studies, such systematic, indicator-driven analysis of CSR management is largely absent, with the exceptions of the hotel-focused research of Sheldon and Park (2011), Dodds and Kuehnel (2010), and Font *et al.* (2012), and some individual company case studies (Bohdanowicz 2007; Bohdanowicz *et al.* 2011; Bohdanowicz and Zientara 2008, 2009; Sigala 2008; Lynes and Andrachuk 2008). Notably, while the case studies presented examples of carefully managed CSR (which were universally presented as 'strong' examples of CSR management, particularly in the case of Lynes and Andrachuk's (2008) case study of SAS), this research was able to look more closely at the other end of the spectrum - the airlines that did not seem to be strategically managing their CSR.

This research contributes to wider studies of CSR in practice as well, primarily in its application of Mirvis and Googins' (2006) 'Stages of Corporate Citizenship'. By using Mirvis and Googins' (2006) model, this research was able to contribute to a growing number of studies which, rather than adding to the large number of proposed models, have instead applied empirical evidence to test and assess already existing models. Mirvis and Googins' (2006) model was chosen as it is one of the most the most enduring and most thorough (Spitzeck 2010; Maon *et al.* 2010; Lindgreen and Swaen 2010). Furthermore, a few other studies, such as Googins *et al.* (2007), Lingenfelder and Thomas (2011), and Zappala and Adams (2010) have applied the model to empirical data with mostly positive results. Like those studies, this research also confirmed that Mirvis and Googins' (2006) model is a useful framework for empirical analysis,

although like Lingenfelder and Thomas (2011) and Zappala and Adams (2010), this study found that the sampled businesses displayed characteristics of several different stages. For instance, the airlines in the 'specific targets' group displayed 'innovative' approaches (stage 3 on the scale) to transparency, but only 'engaged' approaches (stage 2) to CSR management. However, this minor discrepancy in the stages does not discredit the model, which was otherwise a useful tool; it merely highlights the complexity of capturing a holistic view of how CSR is practiced. This study also proposed that, based on the difficulties of assessing CSR through public communications that was experienced during the course of analysis, an additional category be added to Mirvis and Googins' (2006) model, 'transparency of communication' (introduced in Table 7.2). This additional category expands Mirvis and Googins' (2006) category of 'transparency' by assessing the availability, breadth of reporting, and accessibility of information on CSR, rather than just the presence of reporting, a distinction that is missing from the original model.

8.2.4 Objective Four

Objective 4 set out to: assess the stated motivation behind CSR activities. However, there were issues discerning between stated motivations (*pre hoc*) and stated justifications (*post hoc*) for CSR activities. Therefore, stated motivations and justifications were assessed together. The four main codes were: anticipated financial benefit to the business (18 airlines), anticipated secondary business benefits (18 airlines), a stated desire to contribute to the global good (14 airlines), and the idea that practicing CSR was part of their business identity (10 airlines). Most of the airlines that discussed their CSR

motivations and justifications used a combination of the four codes. Although perhaps not a direct motivation or justification, 15 airlines talked about their CSR activities as being 'industry leading', which gave additional insight into the potential reasons for CSR engagement.

As with research in the wider field of travel and tourism (Section 2.5.1), previous studies of airlines' CSR have generally overlooked the reported motivations for CSR management (discussed in more detail in Section 2.5.2), with the exception of Gebel (2004), Lynes and Andrachuk's (2008) case study of SAS, an anecdotal report by Phillips (2006), and the implicit assumption in Tsai and Hsu (2008) that their model will help airlines achieve a goal of maximising financial returns from CSR-related activities. Both Gebel (2004) and Lynes and Andrachuk (2008) found that intended business benefits, such as financial returns on investment, were a predominant motivating factor for CSR activities, and this research has extended this finding to a larger and more diverse sample. Twenty of the 23 airlines that published statements about their CSR motivations or justifications mentioned intended business benefits. Wider studies of CSR have also found that business benefits, which Graafland and van de Ven (2006) labelled as 'extrinsic' (as opposed to 'intrinsic') motivations, are a primary motivating factor for CSR involvement (e.g. Hebllich 2007; Muller and Kraussl 2011; Porter and Kramer 2006; Burke and Logsdon 1996; Weber 2008). Notably, as Lee and Park (2010) reported, the link between CSR activities and financial return on investment for airlines is not clear. The difficulties of finding a clear financial reason for CSR involvement was also mentioned by some of the interviewed managers for this research, which

suggests that initiatives to encourage greater strategic CSR practices among airlines should focus on the secondary business benefits, such as improved public and employee relations.

This research, like Lynes and Andrachuk's (2008) study, also found high levels of justification for CSR actions based on moral or ethical imperatives (e.g. a perception that such action was the 'right thing to do') with slightly under two-thirds (60.9%) of the airlines that reported motivations or justifications for CSR including a concern for 'global good'. Lynes and Andrachuk (2008) attributed the ethical justification they found in SAS to Scandinavian cultural pressures and systems of influence, which would seem to be in keeping with the findings of Matten and Moon (2008) and Gainet (2010) that cultural norms and expectations shape CSR; however, this study found that many of the airlines in the sample, from a range of countries, reported ethical justifications which were not explicitly tied to cultural influences. Some of the airlines in this study did report that their cultural identity influenced and motivated their CSR management, which were presented in the 'identity' code, although these cultural motivations (e.g. 'we practice CSR this way because our culture says it is moral') were not as prominent in the data as more direct explanations (e.g. 'we practice CSR this way because it is moral') and the analysis conducted in relation to Objective 6 (discussed in more detail below) found that the link between where an airline was based and how it reported practicing CSR was unclear. The airlines in this study constructed a narrative that emphasised their own agency in deciding to practice CSR (through favouring direct explanations of the ethical imperative to practice CSR), and interestingly, there was little

difference between the narratives constructed by the full service and low cost carriers. As this study used public communications and interviews for the analysis, it was unable to distinguish strongly between stated motivations and stated justifications, and therefore whether the airlines were motivated by perceived ethical responsibilities or whether they merely framed their CSR-related activities with ethical platitudes is impossible to parse. However, the fact that these intrinsic motivators are a part of the discourses in the sector demonstrates that many airlines are aware of the ethical impetus for CSR activities. As a result, any initiative to encourage greater strategic CSR implementation should acknowledge the possibility of ethical motivations along with anticipated business benefits and emphasising the supposed 'win-win' outcomes (e.g. Hebllich 2007) for society and business that pro-actively manage their CSR.

The reported obstacles to implementing a strategic CSR programme were also analysed for this research. These CSR impediments were mentioned predominately in the interviews rather than in the secondary, publically-available data, and included: difficulties with getting enough resources, CSR being a low priority for high level managers, CSR being seen as offering little financial reward, and the perception that being vocal about actively practicing CSR could have a negative impact on public relations. The perceived barriers to pro-actively practicing CSR have been largely overlooked by both studies of CSR and airlines and studies of CSR in other sectors of the travel and tourism industry (see Sections 2.5.1 and 2.5.2) with the exception of Coles *et al.* (2009) which, like this study, found that some managers were reluctant to publicise

their airlines' CSR-related activities based on the belief that doing so might attract negative publicity. In wider CSR discourses, the support of high-level managers for CSR programmes is commonly accepted to be an important factor for successful management (e.g. Waldman *et al.* 2006; Mirvis and Googins 2006; Blowfield and Murray 2006; Holton *et al.* 2008; Ketola 2006). Similarly, the difficulties of justifying investment in CSR programmes when the benefits to companies are often non-monetary are also widely recognised (e.g. Burke and Logsdon 1996; Porter and Kramer 2006; Weber 2008).

However, the finding that some managers reported wariness about publicising their CSR-related activities has not been as widely explored, although a few studies, such as Becker-Olsen *et al.*'s (2006) research on the public perception of charitable involvement, have found that negative publicity and public perceptions of a company based on its CSR reporting should be a company concern. Considering the lack of research on the perceived barriers to strategic CSR management in the travel and tourism industry, this study makes an important contribution to widening the discussion to include not just the motivating factors for active CSR engagement, but also the reasons why companies might not engage or might limit their engagement, and the fear of negative publicity for communicating CSR activities in particular would warrant more research. The findings of this study and similar research should be of particular interest to individuals or groups focused on encouraging higher levels of strategic CSR management in the airline sector since this information allows them to specifically address and target the main perceived obstacles, such as, in the case of this research: resource allocation and the non-monetary returns

of CSR-related investment, gaining high-level support, and protection against the possibility of negative public relations and public perceptions.

8.2.5 Objective Five

Objective 5 aimed to: investigate the range of collaboration, stakeholder engagement and knowledge transfer. This was accomplished through identifying the key external stakeholders, assessing their relative power, legitimacy, and urgency based on Mitchell *et al.*'s (1997) stakeholder classifications, and identifying the relationships between them and the airlines. The three main CSR-influencing external stakeholder groups were: industry-related organisations (comprised of airports, which were reported by 17 airlines, and trade bodies and other airlines, which were reported by 21 airlines), regulators and governments (26 airlines), and charities and CSR-focused organisations (28 airlines).

The airlines reported a range of relationships with stakeholder groups. With industry-related organisations, such as airports, other airlines, and trade bodies, the airlines reported engaging in collaboration and knowledge transfer as well as having regulative and competitive pressure (from trade bodies and airports, and from other airlines, respectively). IATA was identified as an especially influential industry-related stakeholder, especially with regards to the airlines' environmental commitments. There were three main relationships that were reported between governmental stakeholders and the airlines in the sample. These relationships were: regulation, collaboration, lobbying (with the airlines

lobbying the governments for more favourable regulatory conditions). The third main CSR-influencing stakeholder group, CSR-focused organisations, was especially notable considering that these stakeholders had less relative power over the airlines than the other stakeholder groups and were less closely related to the airlines' normal business operations. Nonetheless, these relationships were mentioned by many of the airlines as an important part of their CSR practices. The reported relationships were: collaboration, donation, knowledge transfer, and assessment. The CSR-focused stakeholders seemed to be especially valued for the perceived legitimacy they could infer on the airlines' CSR activities.

The role of external stakeholders in the CSR of travel and tourism businesses has not been extensively studied (see Section 2.5.1) in spite of the vital role of stakeholders in CSR implementation, both as recipients and as shapers of CSR (e.g. Blowfield and Murray; Porter and Kramer 2006; Kramer and Kania 2006; Frynas 2005; Cochran 2007; Moon 2004). Only two studies of the CSR practices of airlines, Coles *et al.* (2011) and Asatryan (2012), have assessed the role of external stakeholders and both have looked only at community and customer groups (respectively). This study's wider focus allowed a greater comparison of external stakeholder relationships, and the finding that, by far, the airlines appeared to prioritise CSR-related engagements with more powerful stakeholders. This prioritisation further supports the analysis that a stakeholder theory-based understanding of CSR best describes how the airlines reported practicing CSR in that the main relationships seemed to be primarily strategically beneficial to the airlines (rather than chosen for the highest level of

global good). This research highlights the importance of high-power players in encouraging, shaping, and monitoring CSR, particularly governments and regulatory bodies, airlines with subsidiaries, and trade bodies.

8.2.6 Objective Six

The focus of Objective 6 was to: compare how low cost carriers and full service carriers reported their understandings and practices of CSR. Considering the wide variations in practice that had been found in the previous objectives, particularly for Objective 3, this objective sought to identify any differentiating characteristics that could help create profiles of approaches to CSR. First, the airlines' public communications and interviews with the airline managers were assessed to see what the airlines themselves reported as being differentiating characteristics that influenced their CSR approaches. The three main self-identified characteristics CSR were: business model, national/regional operating environment, and corporate ethos. However, none of the airlines presented any of these characteristics as the single, defining characteristic of their CSR approach.

This study then assessed the findings of the previous five objectives in conjunction with key differentiating characteristics of the airlines. However, once again, sorting the airlines based on single characteristics, such as business model or geographic location of headquarters, did not produce strong 'profiles of responsibility'. The airlines were then sorted according to the four management and reporting profiles identified through Objective 3 ('minimal

information', 'general goals', 'specific targets', and 'CSR vision'), and stronger profiles emerged, particularly on either end of the spectrum. The 'minimal information' group talked about their CSR using non-standard terms and practiced their CSR mainly through engagement with external stakeholders (specifically, charities). They were predominately from Southern or Eastern European countries and were a mixture of low cost airlines and full service carriers. They carried fewer passengers than many of the other airlines in the sample, and much fewer than the 'CSR vision' airlines.

As would be expected, the airlines with the more complex reported management and communication of CSR also had a more complex reported understandings of CSR, engagements with external stakeholders, and motivations/justifications, and the model proposed by Mirvis and Googins (2006) was shown to be a good fit for the data for a wider range of CSR management indicators. At the top of the spectrum, the 'CSR vision' airlines generally used several terms when talking about CSR-related concepts (although they tended to prefer 'sustainability'). They communicated a comparatively large number of CSR practices which were spread across environmental, internal stakeholder, external stakeholder, and ethical concerns. They reported a number of motivations and justifications for CSR, and nearly all of them discussed 'global good' as a motivating factor for their CSR, along with anticipated business benefits. And finally, all of the 'CSR vision' airlines reported complex relationships with a range of stakeholders which impacted how they practiced CSR. These airlines were predominately from Northern or Western Europe. They were all full service carriers, with the exception of TUIfly

(which was included in its parent company's CSR report). On the whole, they carried a large number of passengers compared to the other airlines in the sample.

While it is difficult to construct a solid 'profile of responsibility' since all of the groups are relatively small, the findings that came from Objective 6 suggest that a more strategic, more complex approach to CSR management is dependent on a number of interconnected factors and cannot be distilled down to a simple matter of business model or the location of headquarters. This study was therefore able to confirm and enhance Gibbon's (2004) finding that airlines' strategic CSR management was driven by a number of organisational characteristics. As will be discussed in the following sections, more research in this area in particular is warranted, especially as it calls into question the dominant narrative that low cost carriers are 'irresponsible' (Hooper *et al.* 2005; Gibbons 2008; Mann 2004; and Sinclair 2007) – a narrative that was also repeated by many of the interviewees.

8.3 Research contribution and implications

This research has made an important contribution to both CSR discourses and aviation-related discourses and has implications for policymakers, the practitioners, and academic researchers. As was discussed in Chapter 1, this research was anticipated to make a significant contribution to academic dialogues. This study used the largest set of data of any previous studies on the CSR practices of airlines (Chapter 4). It also looked at a larger sample than

most studies to date (with the exception of Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois (2010) and possibly Philips (2006)). Furthermore, and even more importantly, this research looked at the three main possible avenues for public CSR reporting: websites, press releases, and annual reports/standalone CSR reports. This was a key differentiator from previous studies which have largely looked only at annual reports or CSR reports (with the exception of Coles, *et al.* (2009), Coles, *et al.* (2011), and Fenclova and Coles (2011)). This use of a broad and diverse data set captured a more thorough picture of the reported CSR practices of airlines, and allowed for the accounting of practices that were reported only through one channel. This was especially useful for capturing the CSR practices of airlines with a less organised and strategic approach to CSR management whose single press release (for instance) would be overlooked by a less thorough approach. This use of multiple reporting avenues would be beneficial for studies of CSR both in the aviation industry and in other industries – especially for studies that aim to capture less developed CSR management practices. This study was designed to capture a wide range of airline business sizes and approaches to CSR, and thus has been able to provide a richer, more complex picture of CSR in practice than any previous studies to date. Therefore, this study has highlighted the richness of a ‘full sector’ approach to CSR research.

Another contribution of this study to CSR research has been the testing of a ‘wide net’ approach to data collection which was aided by a ‘decision map’ to standardise which data was included. This research recognised that CSR-related approaches can be reported under a range of banners (Chapter 2) and

sought to systematically assess what terms were favoured by the airline sector – something that had not yet been covered in any detail by previous research. This approach was largely justified; only twelve airlines specifically labelled their activities as ‘corporate social responsibility’, but the other 22 airlines reported activities that were similar and CSR-related under a range of other labels. These differently-labelled activities would have been missed had this study only looked at ‘corporate social responsibility’. Other research in the field has dealt with this issue of differing terms by collecting data based on tables of predetermined issues (e.g. Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois 2010; Dahlsrud 2008; Vourvachis 2006; and Holcomb *et al.* 2007). This research streamlined and standardised data collection further through the creation of a decision map based on accepted terms and previous categories from similar studies.

The decision map aided in the collection of a robust data set which allowed for a better analysis of how the sector itself understood its CSR. This included the finding that many airlines included ‘customer care’ and ‘safety and security’ as part of their CSR as well as that, while many accepted definitions of CSR stipulate that those activities must be voluntary (e.g. CEC 2007; CEC 2011; Dahlsrud 2008), compliance with existing regulations formed a significant part of the sampled airlines’ reported CSR. Therefore, this study has trialled a novel approach to data collection for CSR studies, and this methodological approach has uncovered a number of interesting and relevant results. A ‘wide net’ approach based on a decision map could prove to be useful for future CSR studies, especially in sectors such as aviation where no clear sector-favoured terms have yet emerged. Furthermore, the key terms identified by this research

as having been used by the sampled airlines could aide data collection for future studies of airlines' approaches to CSR.

Especially pertinent to discourses on the responsibilities of airlines, this research took special interest in business models as a possible influencing factor on the airlines' approaches to CSR. This decision was based on previous research (Coles, *et al.* 2009, 2011; Fenclova and Coles 2011), as well as popular narratives in the media and created by the airlines themselves that different business models result in a different approach to CSR issues. However, although these narratives were repeated in the data sets, there was not a clear difference between how low cost airlines and full service carriers practiced CSR, as was discussed in detail in Chapter 7 and earlier in this chapter. Therefore, this research calls into question the narrative that low cost airlines are more 'irresponsible' and take their CSR less seriously than full service carriers. Similarly, it also questions the counter-narrative that low cost airlines necessarily practice a leaner, more responsible form of CSR. Rather, this research suggests that the specific leadership and management approaches, as well as a more complex profile of external pressures, shape how the airlines viewed and reported practicing their CSR. This research, then, has contributed to current discourses on airlines and responsibility by suggesting that using business models as a means of differentiating approaches to CSR is an oversimplification of what appears to be a more complex interplay of differentiating factors.

This study also has implications for policymakers and discourses on the role of governments in shaping CSR practices. Not only were governmental stakeholders one of the key CSR influencing groups cited by the airlines, adhering to governmental regulations also formed a significant part of the airlines' reported CSR activities. As discussion on EU-ETS highlighted, regulations had a large isomorphic influence (DiMaggio and Powell 1983) in that EU-ETS spurred airlines across the sector to account for their carbon emissions in an ordered and uniform manner and using similar frames of reference. There was much less of this isomorphism seen for other issues that were not controlled through regulations. The looming introduction of EU-ETS was also presented by the airlines as a driving force not only for regulation-compliant actions, but also for increased dialogues about their carbon emissions. While recent debates have centred on the non-coercive roles of governments in encouraging and shaping CSR (Vallentin and Murillo 2012; Matten and Moon 2008), this research found that the current dynamics of the relationships between European airlines and governments relied heavily on the regulatory powers of governments. Therefore, a more nuanced role of governments as CSR driver through 'softer' approaches seems to be some way from being standard in the sector (e.g. Vallentin and Murillo 2012).

There were a few instances of government-airline collaborative partnerships, which suggests that there is the potential to develop these types of voluntary, government-directed CSR initiatives in the sector. Therefore, there is a need for governments that want to encourage an 'above and beyond regulation' approach to CSR to educate the sector, as well as key stakeholders (such as

investors and consumers), that CSR should exceed what is legally required. Furthermore, considering the large variance in CSR practices and understandings that were found in the sector, there would seem to be a need for greater support and focus on the lower end of the CSR management spectrum; that is, there appears to be a need for a concentrated effort on educating and building relationships with the airlines that do not practice high levels of CSR management.

For the industry, the large number of terms that are applied to CSR-related activities illustrates the need for a more cohesive approach across the sector to presenting CSR-related information. This use of a wide range of terms in the sector means that researchers, policymakers, and the general public might overlook portions of the airlines' approaches to CSR management. If the sector were to adopt a single term, such as 'corporate social responsibility' or 'sustainability', the sector-wide understandings of responsibilities would be clearer. Additionally, many of the airlines in this study reported an understanding of CSR that was at odds with prevalent definitions of CSR, by focusing on compliance with regulations and corporate philanthropy. The former approach is at odds with the 'above and beyond regulation' definitions of CSR – including the European Commission's definition of CSR (CEC 2007; CEC 2011). The latter is arguably an outdated implementation of CSR based on a limited understanding of the role of organisations in the broader environmental and socio-cultural system. Therefore, there seems to be a need for a unifying voice within the industry to define CSR, present accepted terms, and – considering the wide variance of practice within the sector – provide guidance

on CSR management best practice. Considering the reported leading role trade bodies (and IATA in particular) have seemingly successfully taken on environmental issues, they would appear to be strong intra-industry champions for spearheading such an initiative.

8.4 Limitations of the study

While considerable care was taken to follow good practice guidelines for research and to maintain the highest levels of research integrity, this study – like all research projects – is not without its limitations. Some of these limitations are due to the nature of the data. As has been discussed in Chapter 4 and again in some detail in Chapter 7, this research was only able to look at what the airlines *reported* they did. Therefore, this research cannot claim to fully represent the whole CSR practices and approaches of the airlines in the sample. Indeed, interviews with many of the managers suggested that there were many CSR activities that were being practiced away from the public eye.

In a similar vein, the information provided by the interviewees was limited for the most part to single interviews - and many of these interviews took place over Skype. While this was accepted as a necessary limitation due to the difficulties of obtaining interviews, particularly with high-level managers (Goldstein 2002, Chapter 4), the interviews that were made in person were richer and the interviewees seemed more candid when talking face-to-face. For instance, as was discussed in Chapter 6, during one in-person interview, the interviewee walked us over to a glass case in the corner of the office to point out some of

the CSR-related awards the airline had recently won. This added an extra, more personal layer to the data (as well as, interestingly, mirroring the CSR reports of the airline which included a page dedicated to its awards). It is possible that other such instances were missed since nearly all of the interviews took place remotely.

This study looked at a snapshot of the CSR reporting of the sampled airlines. Previous longitudinal studies have shown interesting developments of CSR over time (perhaps most famously Guthrie and Parker (1989) and Abbott and Monsen (1979)). A longitudinal study would have been able to better capture whether some activities were one-off responses to events (such as the impending introduction of airlines to EU-ETS) or were a true representation of the airlines' integrated approach to CSR. It would also have allowed for temporary disruptions to CSR communications, such as with changes in leadership or in the case of several airlines with websites that seemed to be under construction or possibly reorganisation. Due to the time and resource limitations of this study, a longitudinal approach was, unfortunately, not possible.

This study also would most likely have benefited from having multiple researchers involved – particularly for the coding (recommended by (Strauss and Corbin 1990)). Researcher triangulation would have reduced the possibility of researcher error and unconscious bias (Strauss and Corbin 1990), as well as potentially aided the development of codes. The nature of this PhD study required this research to be undertaken individually, so extra care was taken to

ensure data collection and coding procedures were as reliable and standardised as possible, such as through the use of the 'decision map' for data collection.

8.5 Recommendations for future research

This research was intended to provide a snapshot of current reported CSR practices of European full service and low cost airlines – and to cover the European airlines' CSR practices in a more comprehensive way than any previous research has done. While this research has succeeded on many accounts, there is still a great deal of scope for future research, particularly for a longitudinal study, studies that take into account more business models, relationship-based approaches, and quantitative approaches.

As was mentioned in the previous section, this work (like the studies of airlines' CSR that have previously been published) only looked at a limited period of the airlines' CSR reporting. A study that took a longer view might be able to track changes over time and would possibly find that rather than developing in a linear progression (as Mirvis and Googins 2006), the CSR practices of this group went through periods of regression. Some of the interviewees talked about how their airline was taking a less structured approach to CSR or were de-emphasising their CSR management programmes. A longitudinal study would be able to trace these occurrences and might also be able to trace the development of CSR approaches from before EU-ETS was fully implemented (using the data collected for this study) and after the full implementation of EU-ETS in a few years time.

This study found that the airlines' business models did not seem to have the profound effect on CSR practices that popular discourses in academia and in the media might suggest (Chapter 3). Therefore, future research might benefit from building a sample based on other criteria than business model. While this research provides the most comprehensive and inclusive study of the CSR practices of airlines since it included the smaller carriers and airlines that did not publish separate CSR reports (both of which have been largely overlooked by previous research – Chapter 2), there is scope for an even more comprehensive study that would include all passenger aviation business models in Europe, not just the full service carriers and low cost airlines. Similarly, there is scope to perform a similar study in a different operating and regulatory environment, such as North America or Asia.

While for the most part, the interviews revealed useful and candid perspectives on the non-publicised aspects of the airlines' CSR practices, future research programmes might have even stronger interview data sets if they take a relationship-based approach to data collection. As has been mentioned throughout this thesis, this study built on a previous one. The managers who had been interviewed previously or had otherwise had an already established relationship with me were considerably more forthcoming in the interviews for this study about the issues faced by their respective airlines; while the other interviewees primarily discussed the positive aspects of their CSR management, these interviewees were very open about the challenges and obstacles that they faced. Some of the previous studies in the field have been

the products of close collaboration with an airline – specifically, Lynes and Dredge (2006) and Lynes and Andrachuk (2008). The strength of data for these two studies also supports a relationship-led approach. Integrating into the highly-competitive sector might prove challenging for research that includes more than one airline, and therefore a study in partnership with one of the key external stakeholders identified by this research (Chapter 6) might allow for a stronger perceived intimacy and trust – particularly if that stakeholder were a trade body or other industry-based organisation. This approach of cultivating relationships with managers would be especially relevant for a longitudinal study.

Finally, there is scope for a quantitative approach to studying the CSR of airlines. This research took a wholly qualitative approach for a variety of reasons discussed in Chapter 4 (primarily: a relatively small sample for many quantitative tests and little understanding of industry-wide practices and approaches). This study has set the groundwork for a strong quantitative study by providing a thorough assessment of how the airlines report their CSR, from terms to definitions to activities to management of CSR programmes. Using this sector-specific analysis of how CSR is conceptualised and practiced, a quantitative or mixed methods study could use a larger sample and explore the idea of ‘profiles of responsibility’ further, possibly by using cluster analysis. Such analysis might come to more detailed explanations of the seemingly complex influences of business model, nationality, and business characteristics (passenger numbers, gross income, number of non-EU destinations) on CSR approaches. Additionally, such a study might be able to map the influences of

relationship between airlines, trade bodies, alliances, code sharing and shared ownership between many of the airlines. The complex linkages between the airlines in the sample was discussed in Chapter 4 and discussed in Chapter 6, but a quantitative study might be able to develop a model or map for understanding the interactions and CSR knowledge exchange within the sector.

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Appendix 1

Letter to potential interviewees

Sample letter to managers who had been interviewed for the previous project



Streatham Court
Rennes Drive
Exeter
UK EX4 4PU

Telephone +44 (0)7846 083023
Email e.fenclova@exeter.ac.uk

28 June 2011

[Interviewee address]

Dear Mr./Ms. [Interviewee last name],

I am writing about an interview you very kindly granted to Prof. Tim Coles and me (Emily Fenclova) in 2008. It was for an ESRC-funded project on low-cost airlines and corporate social responsibility (CSR) conducted by the University of Exeter. Your time and insight were invaluable to our research.

Would it be possible to arrange another interview with you or one of your colleagues?

I have been given the chance to expand this research – this time looking at how 50 of Europe's low cost and full service carriers' approach CSR and sustainability – for my PhD thesis.

I am very interested in any changes you have made in the last three years, as well as the progress of your activities that we already discussed.

I will be conducting interviews between 01 July and 01 August, and I would be happy to meet with you in person or talk to you over the phone.

The interview will last no more than an hour. The highest standards of research ethics will be observed, in particular in the areas of anonymity and confidentiality. The insights will be used to for my PhD thesis and related publications, and I would be happy to provide you with a summary of my findings.

Thank you for your time. I will be in contact shortly to answer any questions you might have and to arrange an interview time if possible.

I look forward to speaking with you.

Yours sincerely,

Emily Fenclova

PhD
University of Exeter

Researcher

Sample letter to managers who had not been interviewed for the previous project



Streatham Court
Rennes Drive
Exeter
UK EX4 4PU

Telephone +44 (0)7846 083023
Email e.fenclova@exeter.ac.uk

28 June 2011

[Interviewee address]

Dear Mr./Ms. [Interviewee last name],

I am writing to request your help with some groundbreaking research on the environmentally and socially responsible activities of European airlines currently being conducted by the University of Exeter, UK.

I am currently arranging interviews with managers within the airline industry who are involved with the corporate social responsibility/sustainability portfolios for their organisations.

While there have been many calls for greater regulation of the aviation industry recently, there have been very few studies into what airlines are saying about their own sustainability, corporate social responsibility, and environmental efforts. This research will be the first in-depth look at what fifty of Europe's dominant airlines are reporting about themselves and their activities.

Would it be possible to arrange an interview with you or one of your colleagues? I would very much appreciate more information about [Airline]'s views on corporate social responsibility, its publicised and unpublicised activities, and any strategies behind its responsible activities.

I will be conducting interviews between 01 July and 01 August, and I would be happy to meet with you in person or talk to you over the phone.

The interview will last no more than an hour. The highest standards of research ethics will be observed, in particular in the areas of anonymity and confidentiality. The insights will be used for my PhD thesis and related publications, and I would be happy to provide you with a summary of my findings.

Thank you for your time. I will be in contact shortly to answer any questions you might have and to arrange an interview time if possible.

I look forward to speaking with you.

Yours sincerely,

Emily Fenclova

PhD Researcher
University of Exeter

Appendix 2

Consent form for interviews

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

University of Exeter Business School

Research on airlines and corporate social responsibility

Thank you for agreeing to participate in a study of airlines and corporate social responsibility conducted by Emily Fenclova, University of Exeter Business School (e.fenclova@exeter.ac.uk).

Please know that:

- Your participation is voluntary;
- Your responses will be kept strictly confidential;
- Any information that identifies you or your organisation will be anonymised;
- All information you provide will be stored securely;
- You are free to end the interview at any time;
- You are free to refuse to answer questions;
- You will be provided with the findings of this study upon request.

If you are willing for this interview to be recorded for ease of transcription, please check the box.

I have read and understand the above and consent to participate in this study. My signature is not a waiver of any legal rights.

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

Appendix 3

Semi-structured interview schedule

Outline questions for semi-structure interviews

[Preliminaries – notes about anonymity and confidentiality. Verify permissions status].

Key questions in bold.

Corporate Social Responsibility as a Concept

- 1. What does ‘corporate social responsibility’ mean to you / your organisation?**
2. Which business(es) — in any sector — would you point out for their CSR work and why?
3. What are the greatest challenges currently facing businesses that want to act in a socially responsible manner?

Corporate Social Responsibility and Airlines

- 4. What are the costs and benefits to airlines acting in a socially responsible manner?**
- 5. Are there any reasons why airlines may disregard their CSR or not want to promote their CSR or have a CSR strategy?**
6. What constitutes good / best practice in airline CSR and why?
- 7. Which *other* airline CSR strategy/ies are good / best practice in your view?**
8. What components should be included in an ideal aviation CSR strategy?
9. How do your organisations’ CSR activities / CSR strategy compare?
- 10. Do [low-fares/full-service] airlines experience distinctive CSR challenges?**

CSR and Your Business

11. Tell me more about how you practice corporate social responsibility?
- 12. What are the costs and benefits of acting in a responsible for your business?**
13. Why does your organisation practice CSR?
- 14. Does your organisation have a corporate social responsibility manager?**
15. Does your organisation have a corporate social responsibility team?

16. Do you have a formal corporate social responsibility statement?

17. What are main issues / challenges in compiling / managing / running strategy?

18. Do you monitor and evaluate your strategy? i.e. collect data and metrics?

19. What are / have been the main barriers to the development / uptake / dissemination of CSR in your organisation?

20. How have other stakeholders been involved in developing your CSR work e.g. in developing CSR strategy / monitoring and evaluation?

Appendix 4

Ethical approval form

**University of Exeter Business School
Ethical Approval Form: Research Students**

This form is to be completed by the research student. When completing the form be mindful that the purpose of the document is to clearly explain the **ethical considerations** of the research being undertaken.

Once completed, please submit the form **electronically and a signed hard copy** to Emma Roberts at E.Roberts@exeter.ac.uk. A copy of your approved Research Ethics Application Form together with accompanying documentation **must be bound into your PhD thesis**.

Part A: Background

Student name	Emily Fenclova		
Supervisors names	Dr. Adrian Bailey, Prof. Tim Coles		
Title of thesis	Flying 'responsibly': Corporate social responsibility communications of EU airlines		
Date of entry	September 2009	Status	FT/PT/Continuation
Start and estimated end date of the research	September 2009 – September 2012		
Aims and objectives of the research	<p>Aim: To critically examine the self-reported socially-responsible activities of full-service and low-fares airlines flying to and from the UK.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a comprehensive typology of the CSR activities of airlines; 2. Examine the means of implementation of CSR; 3. Assess the stated motivation behind CSR activities; 4. Map examples of collaboration, stakeholder engagement and knowledge transfer; and 5. Draw comparisons between variations in business model, business operating environment, and corporate ethos on reported CSR activities. 		
Please indicate any sources of funding for the research	GRA position (Business School)		

Part B: Ethical Considerations

Describe the methodology that will be applied in the project (no more than 250 words)	<p>This research will use both publically-available secondary data and a programme of interviews as primary data in order to increase the validity of this research through data triangulation (Bryman 2004; Decrop 1999). The secondary data will consist of annual reports, CSR/sustainability reports, press releases, and webpages produced by airlines on CSR and related concepts (e.g. environmental responsibility, charitable partnerships, community support). This information is all in the public domain and no privileged or confidential textual data will be used.</p> <p>The primary data will be obtained through elite,</p>
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	<p>semi-structured interviews of airline managers with some connection to their airline's CSR activities. The entire sample of 50 airlines will be contacted for interviews, though it is estimated that only 15 to 20 managers will agree to participate. These interviews will be used to inform and give additional perspectives to the secondary data, as well as to be used for case studies.</p> <p>Both sets of data will be analysed using Strauss and Corbin's (1990) conceptualisation of Grounded Theory. Thus, no hypotheses will be formulated before analysis in order to reduce the risk of finding only that for which the researcher is actively searching (Bryman, 2004). Content analysis will be used, such as Capriotti and Moreno's (2007) tools for the analysis of CSR information on websites and a categorisation system similar to the one developed by Holcomb, <i>et al</i> (2007).</p> <p>The commentary will be illustrated using quotations from both the secondary sources and the interviews. While identifying information will be included with the secondary information, the interviewees' quotations will be presented anonymously and any information that might identify the participant and/or their employer will be removed.</p>
<p>Describe the method by which you will recruit participants and gain their informed consent. If written consent will not be obtained, this must be justified.</p> <p><i>[Note: Please attach a copy of any Information Statements and Consent Forms used, including translation if research is to be conducted with non-English speakers]</i></p>	<p>Participants will be airline managers, who will be recruited through targeted emails, networking, and snowballing. Prospective participants will be given a brief outline about the research purposes and how their interviews will be used ('this research is about the corporate social responsibility and airlines in the EU for a PhD research project'), and additional information will be given to them should they ask for more clarification.</p> <p>Before interviews are conducted, interviewees will be asked to read and sign an informed consent form [attached], and the researcher will explain the measures in place to ensure confidentiality. The researcher will also sign the form. Copies of the consent form will be provided to participants if they so desire.</p> <p>For any interviews that are conducted over the phone, interviewees will have the informed consent form read to them and will be asked to give their verbal consent. This will be recorded either in the notes of the interview, or, if the interviewee consents to having the interview digitally recorded, in an MP3 of the interview.</p> <p>All interviewees will be sent a formal, short email or letter soon after the interview thanking them for their participation [Sample thank you letter</p>

	<p>attached], and I will send them a brief synopsis of the research findings in September 2012.</p>
<p>Will there be any possible harm that your project may cause to participants (e.g. psychological distress or repercussions of a legal, political or economic nature)? What precautions will be taken to minimise the risk of harm to participants?</p>	<p>It is possible that participants might reveal information that is not intended to be publically known, and that the airline might not want to have published in connection with its name. Therefore, there could be professional repercussions for participants should the researcher publish the name of participants or name of the airline that employs the participants. Also, as the airlines studied form a small community of practice, there could also be potential professional repercussions should this research reveal other individual-specific data such as personal details, employment history, nationality, or possibly even job title, and business-specific data such as nationality, number of aircraft, number of passengers, or years in operation</p> <p>Therefore, this research will present all information obtained through the interviews anonymously. Any details that might identify the participants or their employers will be removed. Additionally, as the sample is relatively small, information such as the size or nationality of the airlines will also not be reported. The only differentiating information that will be included in the research will be whether the interviewee is employed by a full-service airline or a low-fares airline (explanatory valuable information that is important for the aim and objectives of the research).</p> <p>In additional, care and attention will be made to ensure any identifying data is stored securely [detailed in the next section].</p>
<p>How will you ensure the security of the data collected? What will happen to the data at the end of the project, (if retained, where and how long for)?</p> <p><i>[Note: If the project involves obtaining or processing personal data relating to living individuals, (e.g. by recording interviews with subjects even if the findings will subsequently be made anonymous), you will need to ensure that the provisions of the Data Protection Act are complied with. In</i></p>	<p>All of the publically available secondary data will be stored on a password-protected laptop, although such information is not deemed to have confidentiality-related ethical issues.</p> <p>Recordings of interviews and interview transcriptions will be kept on a separate external hard drive in password-protected folders. When not being used by the researcher, the hard drive will be kept in a locked desk. Any hard copy interview transcriptions and all informed consent forms will also be kept in the locked desk when not being used by the researcher.</p>

<p><i>particular you will need to seek advice to ensure that the subjects provide sufficient consent and that the personal data will be properly stored, for an appropriate period of time.]</i></p>	<p>Interview data (including informed consent forms, transcripts, and voice recordings) will be kept for no more than five years after the conclusion of the research, at which point the electronic files will be deleted and the external hard drive will be reformatted, and hard copies of interview data will be destroyed.</p>
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Part C: Ethical Assessment

Please complete the following questions in relation to your research project.

	yes	no	n/a
Will participants' rights, safety, dignity and well-being be actively respected?	x		
Will you describe the main details of the research process to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	x		
Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	x		
Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	x		
Will confidentiality be appropriately maintained at all stages of the project, including data collection, storage, analysis and reporting?	x		
Will any highly personal, private or confidential information be sought from participants?	x		
Will participants be involved whose ability to give informed consent may be limited (e.g. children)?		x	
Will the project raise any issues concerning researcher safety?		x	
Are there conflicts of interest caused by the source of funding?		x	

Please provide any additional information which may be used to assess your application in the space below.

[Informed consent form, to be supplied to all participants]

INFORMED CONSENT FORM
University of Exeter Business School
Research on airlines and corporate social responsibility

Thank you for agreeing to participate in a study of airlines and corporate social responsibility which is being conducted from September 2009 to September 2012 by Emily Fenclova, University of Exeter Business School (e.fenclova@exeter.ac.uk).

Please know that:

- Your participation is voluntary;
- Your responses will be kept strictly confidential;
- Any information that identifies you or your organisation will be anonymised;
- All information you provide will be stored securely;
- You are free to end the interview at any time;
- You are free to refuse to answer questions;
- You will be provided with the findings of this study upon request.

If you are willing for this interview to be recorded for ease of transcription, please check the box.

I have read and understand the above and consent to participate in this study. My signature is not a waiver of any legal rights.

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date



[Sample thank you letter/email, to be sent after each interview]

Dear [Participant],

Thank you very much for speaking with me on [Date]. The information you gave me will be immensely useful for my research, and I appreciate the time you took to talk with me.

If you would like more information about the research or how your interview will be used, please do let me know.

As I said on [Day], I will send you a brief summary of the research conclusions in September 2012.

Kind regards,

Emily Fenclova

PhD Researcher
University of Exeter Business School
e.fenclova@exeter.ac.uk

Part D: Supervisor's Declaration

As the supervisor for this research I can confirm that I believe that all research ethics issues have been considered in accordance with the University Ethics Policy and relevant research ethics guidelines.

Name: A. R. BAILEY (Primary Supervisor)
Signature: [Handwritten Signature]
Date: 24-01-2011

Part E: Ethical Approval

<p>Comments of Research Ethics Officer and PGR Management Board.</p> <p><i>[Note: Have potential risks have been adequately considered and minimised in the research? Does the significance of the study warrant these risks being taken? Are there any other precautions you would recommend?]</i></p>	
<p>This project has been reviewed according to School procedures and has now been approved.</p> <p>Name: <u>Emma Bell</u> (Research Ethics Officer) Signature: <u>[Handwritten Signature]</u> Date: <u>04/02/11</u></p>	

Appendix 5

Bibliography of secondary data set

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