

## **Communicating CSR as shared value: Towards a multi-stakeholder perspective**

**Purpose** – The notion of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a way of creating shared value has been criticized for disregarding that corporate decisions related to social and environmental problems involve multiple stakeholders with competing expectations and interests (Crane *et al.*, 2014) which might turn the communication of CSR as shared value into a complex process. Following this, the purpose of this paper is to propose a theoretical framework that provides an understanding of the dynamic and complex communicative processes that construct CSR in a multi-stakeholder network.

**Design/methodology/approach** – By adopting a discourse-based approach, the paper discusses the strategic potentials and implications of integrating communication studies and multi-stakeholder studies into a theoretical framework that enables an examination of the different interpretations of CSR as shared value from a multi-stakeholder perspective.

**Findings** – The suggested framework demonstrates a significant potential for communication studies to contribute to the understanding of the discourse of CSR as shared value in a multi-stakeholder network. First, it offers a way of identifying the key discourses by which CSR as shared value is constructed in a multi-stakeholder network. Second, it enables an examination of how the various stakeholder voices are (or are not) given an equal opportunity to influence the construction of CSR as shared value.

**Practical implications** – The conceptual paper is highly relevant in a time of increasing quest for engaging multiple stakeholders in the development and implementation of companies' CSR strategies.

**Originality/value** – The paper represents the first attempt to integrate the two (separate) theoretical bodies of literature: communication studies and multi-stakeholder studies in a CSR setting. Its value is in exploring how communication studies can contribute with discursive insights that enable an understanding of how CSR as shared value is constructed in a multi-stakeholder network.

**Keywords** - Corporate Social Responsibility, Communication, Multi-stakeholder, Discourse

**Paper type** - Conceptual paper