

HUMAINE a Research Network with Social Responsibility

Shay Tzafrir

University of Haifa

Introduction

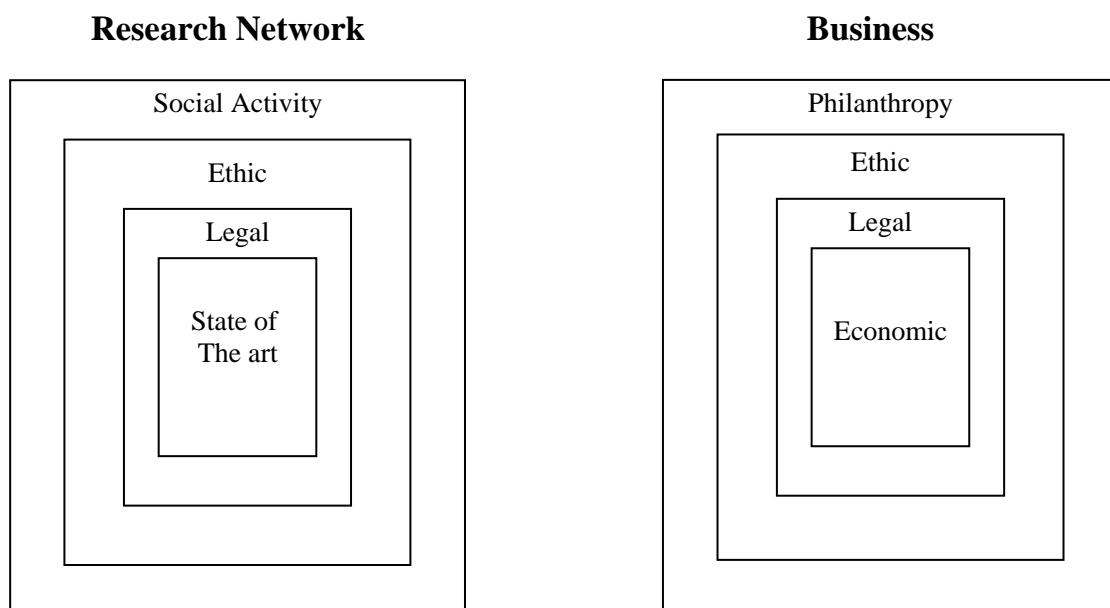
In recent years, the focus of social responsibility issues has shifted considerably. Bowen's 1953 publication of *Social Responsibilities of the Businessman* may be said to mark the beginning of the social responsibility era. The basic claim is that the core responsibility of business is economic. Therefore, before anything else, the business institution is the basic economic unit in our society. As Friedman (1962; 1970) noted, the only social responsibility of business is to maximize profits within the rules of the game. Society expects business to fulfill its economic mission within the framework of legal requirements. Facing a different set of challenges in the new business environment of the 21st century, a move from an economic perspective toward a more moralistic perspective (see "duty-aligned perspective" – Swanson, 1995) has meant a reality for different kinds of organizations in the private and public sectors. One of these challenges is rooted in the recognition that the organization is part of society and a reciprocal relationship is necessity between both these elements. As Krizov and Allenby (2004) pointed out, organizations are given privileges by and are obligated to the society in which they operate, so they are required to take into account society's needs and claims within the process of their decision making.

Backman (1975) defined social responsibility as "the objectives or motives that should be given weight by business in addition to those dealing with economic performance" (p. 2). Much of the interest in this construct is due to its consistently significant relationship with a number of established variables in organizational research, including organizational effectiveness (Zahra & La Tour, 1987), and financial performance (McWilliams & Siegel, 2000). While there has been considerable research on this issue as it related to the for-profit organization, little effort has yet to be devoted to studying other types of organizations such as Research Networks (RNs). Nonetheless, this information is crucial since such organizations rest on a public foundation, as well as on the possible consequences of their research may have on the society to which they belong; for example, research of technological innovation.

The Research Network and Social Responsibility

The move from corporate social responsibility (Carroll, 1979) through organizational social responsibility (Acar, Aupperle & Lowy, 2001) to research network social responsibility has shifted attention to non-revenue public foundation organization. Carroll (1991), in his seminal work, described a pyramid of corporate social responsibility of organizations. According to Carroll, "The total corporate social responsibility of business entails the simultaneous fulfillment of the firm's economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic responsibilities...the CSR firm should strive to make a profit, obey the law, be ethical, and be a good corporate citizen" (1991, p.43). The term Research Network Social Responsibility (RNSR) connotes the same basic idea of integrating social and other stakeholder concern in research networks' organizational operations, while specifies the special conditions of such an organization to the basic term (see figure 1). RNSR is about values and putting values into activity. It represent a sustained commitment by the RNs demonstrate the requisite good behaviour across the widest possible range of research operations, including experiments, human rights, knowledge transfer and invention. In order for a research network to be accepted as legitimate, it has to address four categories: state of the art, legal, ethical, and social activities.

Figure 1: Business vs. RN social responsibility



The first and obvious responsibility refers to state of the art. The Research Network (RN) is, before anything else, a societal research unit in the society. This role means it has to explore and develop new knowledge, ways, products, services and technologies answering the present and future needs and desire of its society. The second category refers to legal responsibilities. The RN is expected to obey the laws and regulations of the state in which it operates. This is part of the social contract between society and any organization. Knowing the difference between what you have a right to do and what the right thing to do constitutes the third step in our pyramid. Ethical responsibilities, unlike laws that are formally codified, refer to the activities and practices that are expected from organizations by societal members, such as norms and standards (reliable and verifiable research). Finally, social activity refers to all research network actions that demonstrate its willingness to be a good member of society — for example, the actions that facilitate society members’ exposure and access to the research outcomes and knowledge.

Table 1: RNSR dimensions

State of the Art Components (Responsibilities)	Legal Components (Responsibilities)
1. It is important to explore and develop new knowledge, products, and technology.	1. It is important to perform in a manner consistent with expectations of government and law.
2. It is important to be committed to scientific truth.	2. It is important to comply with various EU, state, and local regulations.
3. It is important to maintain a strong research position.	3. It is important to be a law-abiding research network citizen.
4. It is important to maintain a high level of transparency and clarity.	4. It is important that a successful research network be defined as one that fulfills its legal obligations.
5. It is important that a successful Research Network be defined as one that is consistently developing new ideas.	5. It is important to provide goods and services that at least meet minimal legal requirements.

Ethical Components (Responsibilities)	Social activity Components (Responsibilities)
1. It is important to perform in a manner consistent with expectations of societal mores and ethical norms.	1. It is important to perform in a manner consistent with contribution to society.
2. It is important to recognize and respect new or evolving ethical moral norms adopted by society.	2. It is important to facilitate society members' exposure to the research outcomes.
3. It is important to prevent ethical norms from being compromised in order to achieve research network goals.	3. It is important that scientists participate in voluntary activities within their local communities.
4. It is important that to perform fair treatment for research subjects/participants.	4. It is important to provide assistance and access to society members as well as private and public institutions to the research knowledge.
5. It is important to recognize that RN integrity and ethical behavior go beyond mere compliance with laws and regulations.	5. It is important to assist voluntarily those projects that enhance a community's "quality of life."

Why should we care about our social responsibility?

Each society determines what its social issues are, and, when it considered it necessary, also drafts the relevant polity and enacts legislation and regulations. When no legislation or regulations exists, an issue may be a stakeholder issue, but not necessarily a social issue (Clarkson, 1995). If this is true, why should the research network take in account social responsibility's philosophies, policies and actions? Answers to this query may be found in three different points of view. The first point of view emphasizes the relationship of the RN with its society and its responsibility in the political sphere. The basic concept on which this political perspective relies is power. The RN has the power, potentially, to influence market equilibrium. As a consequence, it should control its power and take responsibility for it. The 'iron law of

responsibility' means that power might is a two-edged sword. If a research network does not take responsibility for its power, it may lose it (Davis, 1967 in Garriga & Melé, 2004). In order to establish its relationship with society and retain its power, the research network must act responsibly in the environment in which operates.

A second point of view emphasizes the corporation's dependence on society for its existence and growth. These integrative theories focused on the concept of legitimacy. In order to get the legitimacy needed from society, the RN must take in account social demands and values, and ensure that its operation corresponds to them.

Finally, ethical points of view focus on the ethical demands that set the relationship between the research network and society. Normative Stakeholder Theory sees the organization as socially responsible when it gives attention simultaneously to the interests of all its stakeholders. The concept 'stakeholder' in this case refers to the groups who have a stake or a claim on the research network.

The above theories offer different explanations for why RNs should adopt social responsibility policies. They see society and organizations as inter-correlated in a way that RNs cannot ignore. The latter must recognize the significance of society in its most basic existence. Whether it is for economic, power, legitimacy or ethical reasons, each organization needs to understand that it does not exist in a vacuum. Stakeholder theory (Cornell & Shapiro, 1987) suggested that a firm must satisfy not only stockholders and bondholders, but also those with less explicit, or implicit, claims. This includes shareholders, consumers, employees, suppliers, community, social activist groups and so forth (Carroll, 1991; Krizov & Allenby, 2004; Haigh & Jones, 2006). In order to know which of the stakeholders' claim should have top priority in a given category of the ones mentioned below, RNs should recognize the stakeholders' legitimacy and power (Carroll, 1991).

Mapping stakeholders could help RNs identify what social activities they are already conducting and which SR activities could help them to do more of what is required of them. Among these activities are disseminating their knowledge about the society by facilitating access to the network's common knowledge repository; creating and using HUMAINE products (i.e., only after ethical clearance has been granted by the ethics committee as well as verified by local institution or clearance granted after a hearing of the committee) as a tools for helping non-members.

HUMAINE social responsibility

Drawing from the above, the core responsibility of research is creating state of the art knowledge within the rule of the game – legal and ethic aspects. Nevertheless, a RN has several other obligations for its stakeholders. The issue here is not *whether* RNs should be responsible in some way to society but rather *how* they should be held responsible and to *whom*.

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