



UNIVERSITY  
OF TAMPERE

**RESPMAN**  
RESPONSIBLE MANAGEMENT  
RESEARCH GROUP

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# Stakeholder relationships in a non-profit network organization

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# Background and aim

- In 2014, European Business Ethics Network (EBEN) released a call for research proposals focusing on:
  - the expectations of members and other stakeholders towards EBEN
  - how EBEN ExCom could better respond to these expectations
- Master's thesis 2015:
  - Aim to describe and create understanding about the stakeholder relationships of a non-profit network organization (case EBEN)
    - Identification and classification of **stakeholders**
    - Identification and analysis of **issues advocated** by stakeholders

# EBEN



- **The mission of EBEN** is to promote ethics and excellence in business, to increase awareness about ethical challenges in the global marketplace and to enable dialogue on the role of business in society.
- **18 National Networks**, active groups in over 40 countries
- Main activities:
  - EBEN Annual Conference (20.–22.6.2016, Nottingham, UK)
  - EBEN Research Conference (8.–9.9.2016, Palermo, Italy)
  - EBEN Doctoral Workshop
  - EBEN Interests Groups
- [www.eben-net.org](http://www.eben-net.org) / [www.eben-net.fi](http://www.eben-net.fi)

# Theoretical framework

- Framework consists of stakeholder theory and stakeholder analysis
  - Stakeholder approach proposes that the purpose of business is to create value to all its stakeholders (eg. Freeman et al., 2010)
  - Previous research mostly on business organizations
- Identifies four main elements of stakeholder analysis
  - Stakeholder interests (Freeman, 1984)
  - Dependencies between organization and its stakeholders (Frooman, 1999; Mainardes et al., 2012)
  - Relationship contributions (Post et al. 2012)
  - Stakeholder advocated issues (Roloff, 2008; Bundy et al. 2013)

# Data and analysis

- Data
  - Semi-structured interviews and stakeholder maps
    - 5 EBEN ExCom members
  - Internal EBEN documents
    - Minutes 2011-2013, webpages, articles
  - Open-ended survey to national networks via email
    - 15 survey replies
- Qualitative content analysis

# Stakeholder identification and classification

Stakeholder group	Main actors	Classification (Post et al. 2002)	Influence relationship (Mainardes et al. 2012)
National Networks	a) Smaller networks b) Larger networks	Resource base	a) Dependent b) Controller/Regulatory
Members	Academics, students, institutions, companies	Resource base	Controller
Companies	Partners, sponsors	Resource/industry base	Controller
Similar organizations	ABIS, CSR Europe, SBE, Academy of Management	Industry base	Controller
Other stakeholders	Local communities, institutions, teaching, affiliates, media, EU and political actors	Socio-political	Non-stakeholder , Regulatory, Controller

# Issues advocated by stakeholders

1. Business ethics research
2. Business ethics education
3. Network as a social hub
4. Financial stability
5. Strengthening EBEN
6. Ethical business conduct
7. Political impact and public awareness

# Issues advocated by stakeholders

1. Business ethics research
2. Business ethics education
3. Network as a social hub

## TRUE OPPORTUNITIES

- Key issues for stakeholders
  - At the core of EBEN's strategy and identity
- A true opportunity for developing the organization

4. Financial stability
5. Strengthening EBEN

## INSTRUMENTAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Consistent with EBEN's strategic frame

6. Ethical business conduct
7. Political impact and public awareness

## POTENTIAL CONFLICT



# Discussion

- Contributions
  - Stakeholder research has focused on business organizations; approach well-suited for analyzing **non-profit** organizations and networks
  - A non-profit network an “**ultimate**” **stakeholder organization**: the organization’s objectives consist of the stakeholders’ objectives
    - Similar goals & different means may bear risk for the organization
  - Key elements of relationships between non-profit organizations and stakeholders: stakeholder contributions to the relationship, size and level of activity, and power and influence
- Managerial implications
  - Attention should be paid to what kind of **value** each stakeholder appreciates and what kind of value satisfies all stakeholders
  - Communication practices and exchange of knowledge subject for improvement
    - Increases **transparency**
    - Practices of stakeholder **engagement** an ongoing process
    - **Relevant issues for future research**

Thank you!

Questions & comments?

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