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Master's Programme in Strategic Management in a Changing World

Communication of Risks Through Annual Reports: Research on Nordic Construction Companies

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Master's thesis
2025

Aalto-yliopisto
Aalto-universitetet
Aalto University

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Title of thesis Communication of Risks Through Annual Reports: Research on Nordic Construction Companies

Programme MSc in Economics and Business Administration

Major Strategic management in a changing world

Thesis supervisor Postdoctoral Researcher Anna Maaranen

Date 29.09.2025 **Number of pages** 64 **Language** English

Abstract

This thesis explores the risk communication done through annual reports by three publicly listed construction companies based in the Nordics. The focus is on non-financial risks, and financial risks are excluded. The companies researched are NCC (Sweden), Peab (Sweden) and YIT (Finland). All three are large multinational companies operating mainly in the Nordic region and this research covers the risk communication from the annual reports of the companies from the year 2024. The research is done in the form of a critical discourse analysis (CDA). In this research method the language used, the context of the discourse and lastly power relations related to the discourse are explored. In the case of this thesis, the analysis focuses on what type of language is used, the context annual reports provide for the discourse and the power relations involved, along with related theories explaining the discourse. The main findings of the research include that while the companies describe risks in a general and neutral way, the language used when describing risk management and preparation is positive and trust-building. Here, through choices in language used, companies downplay the risks and highlight the strengths. The findings also highlight that companies have a lot of freedom when describing non-financial risks in annual reports and the readers should keep this in mind. Findings related to the context suggest that all companies have similar approaches to risk communication in their annual reports. The thesis suggests institutional theory and proprietary cost theory as useful theoretical lenses to explore and explain the choices made by the companies regarding risk discourse. Overall, the thesis provides useful implications on what might affect the risk communication done by the companies and what readers of annual reports should consider when going over these documents.

Keywords Risks, Risk disclosure, Risk communication, Risk discourse, CDA, Critical discourse analysis, annual reports, institutional theory, proprietary cost theory

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Tekijä Lauri Luoto

Työn nimi Riskien viestintä vuosikertomuksissa: Tutkimus pohjoismaisista rakennusalan yrityksistä

Koulutusohjelma Kauppatieteiden maisteri

Pääaine Strateginen johtaminen muuttuvassa maailmassa

Vastuuopettaja/valvoja Tutkijatohtori Anna Maaranen

Päivämäärä 29.09.2025 **Sivumäärä** 64 **Kieli** Englanti

Tiivistelmä

Tämä opinnäytetyö tarkastelee kolmen pörssinoteeratun pohjoismaisen rakennusalan yrityksen vuosikertomuksissa tapahtuvaa riskiviestintää. Tutkimuksen kohteena ovat ei-taloudelliset riskit ja taloudelliset riskit ovat täten rajatuttu tutkimuksen ulkopuolelle. Tutkimuksen kohteena olevat yritykset ovat NCC (Ruotsi), Peab (Ruotsi) ja YIT (Suomi). Kaikki kolme ovat suuria monikansallisia yrityksiä, jotka toimivat pääsoin Pohjoismaissa. Tutkimuksessa analysoidaan yritysten riskiviestintää vuotta 2024 koskevissa vuosikertomuksissa. Tutkimus toteutetaan kriittisenä diskurssianalyysinä (CDA). Tässä menetelmässä tarkastellaan käytettyä kieltä, diskurssin kontekstia sekä vallan ilmenemistä diskurssiin liittyen. Tässä opinnäytetyössä analyysi keskittyy siihen, millaista kieltä käytetään, millainen konteksti vuosikertomukset ovat diskurssille sekä liittyviin valtasuhteisiin, yhdessä diskurssia selittävien teoreettisten viitekehysten kanssa. Tutkimuksen keskeisimmät havainnot osoittavat, että vaikka yritykset kuvaavat riskejä yleisellä ja neutraalilla tavalla, riskienhallintaa ja riskeihin varautumista kuvatessa käytetty kieli on positiivista ja luottamusta herättävää. Kielellisillä valinnoilla yritykset vähättelevät riskejä ja korostavat vahvuuksia. Lisäksi havaittiin, että yrityksillä on paljon vapauksia päättä, kuinka ei-taloudellisia riskejä kuvataan ja lukijan tulisi pitää tämä mielessä. Opinnäytetyö ehdottaa institutionaalista teoriaa ja omistuskustannusteoriaa hyödyllisiksi teoreettisiksi näkökulmiksi tutkia ja selittää yritysten tekemiä valintoja diskurssiin liittyen. Yhteenvetona opinnäytetyö tarjoaa hyödyllisiä näkemyksiä siihen, mitkä tekijät voivat vaikuttaa yritysten riskiviestintään sekä siihen, mitä vuosikertomusten lukijoiden tulisi ottaa huomioon näitä asiakirjoja lukiessa.

Avainsanat riskit, riskikommunikaatio, riskidiskurssi, CDA, kriittinen diskurssianalyysi, vuosikertomukset, institutionaalinen teoria, omistuskustannusten teoria

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Preface and acknowledgements

I want to thank Postdoctoral Researcher Anna Maaranen for good advice and guidance.

I also want to thank my partner and my family for their support.

Otaniemi, 29 September 2025
Lauri Luoto

1 Introduction

Risks and risk management have for a long time been a large part of doing business. Uncertainties and changes in the operating environment are both opportunities as well as risks for business and thus companies spend a lot of resources on analysing and planning on how to prepare for these events. With the current disruptions in the world such as dramatic changes in US trade policies or ongoing wars and crises, companies are faced with an operating environment where changes happen quickly and even the unlikely risks can materialize.

With analysing and managing risks comes also the topic of communicating these risks to different stakeholders and to the public. Companies are aiming to show how they are prepared for different types of situations, and at the same time, give indications to the public on how certain situations might affect the performance of the company (Hopkin, 2017). Keeping the information on risks up to date shows that the company is prepared and has the capabilities to react if these risks materialize.

Annual reports done by companies are some of the main documents where, in addition to other information, companies discuss their approach to risk management, the risks they are facing, how these risks if materialized would affect the company and even how likely the company sees the risks materialising (Bao & Datta, 2014). In their annual reports, companies can choose how they label, sort and display the risks they face and, in addition, what type of language is they use (van Leeuwen, 2013). This way companies paint a picture to the public of they see their working environment and the challenges they face.

In this thesis, I will be looking into the external risk communication done by three Nordic companies working in the field of construction. Through

researching the annual reports of these three companies, I explain how the companies are doing risk reporting, what type of language is used and possible explanations behind the choices the companies have made. In this research, critical discourse analysis is used as a method to analyse the risk section of the annual reports. More specifically, I will use a CDA structure introduced by Fairclough (1995) that consists of three layers of analysis building on top of each other. This analysis method offers insight firstly into what type of language is used and secondly the context for the discourse: for who the text is produced, who has produced it and where it is shared. Lastly, the analysis aims to offer insight into how power is used in relation to the discourse, or in other words, what the companies might consider or aim to achieve when creating the risk reporting sections in their annual reports (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

The main reasons why I have chosen three companies operating in the field of construction are that firstly, through my work experience, I am familiar with how this industry operates. Secondly, as the construction industry is heavily affected by general economic trends, the ongoing economic challenges combined with disruptions such as new US trade policies and ongoing wars have the companies facing many different types of risks. Thirdly, with the industry having a history of coping during challenging times due to economic trends, I suspect that there is prior knowledge on how to operate during a challenging time.

The companies I research are Peab (Sweden), NCC (Sweden) and YIT (Finland). These are all publicly listed companies with YIT being the smallest one of three. I chose Nordic companies as the construction industry has similar features in these countries, and all three chosen companies are operating also in Finland. Through the companies, I wanted to explore the risks the companies face here in Finland and in the Nordics.

My research question is: How do companies in the field of construction approach risk communication of non-financial risks? The scope of the research is narrowed by excluding financial risks, such as currency risks. Although financial risks are relevant risks, there is legislation and regulation guiding the reporting of these more than there is for non-financial risks. Examples of regulation affecting financial risks would be International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS standards) (2025b) on financial reporting and financial risk reporting. When legislation and regulation guide the reporting, it leaves less room for the company to decide what to report. For example, companies can quite freely choose how they discuss geopolitical risks that might affect their business. The focus of this thesis is to research the reporting on risks that the companies have more freedom over.

This Master's thesis is structured in the following way. The first part is a literature review that gives insight into definitions, topics related to risks and previous research as well as theories that affect risk communication. The topics discussed cover various aspects related to risk communication such as what types of risks companies face, what is risk management, information on risk communication in general and lastly annual reports as a context for the communication as well as related regulation.

After the literature review, there is a short introduction that gives further insight in the chosen research method and the research material. This is followed by a section that offers further information on the communication done by the companies and the first two layers to the critical discourse analysis done. The third layer to the discourse analysis can be found in the last section that connects the findings of this research to previous findings and research on the topic. The third layer of the discourse analysis is located in its own "discussion" section, and this is due to the more reflective nature of the this the third layer of the analysis rather than providing concrete findings. In in the end, there will be a short conclusion of the whole thesis.

2 Literature review

2.1 Defining risk

When discussing risks and risk disclosure it is important to define what is meant by the word risk. In literature there are different definitions but many of these have similar characteristics. In their research, Cabedo and Tirado (2004) define risks as a possible loss in a company's wealth resulting from the interference of factors determining the company's financial success. These factors can be internal or external, but the focus is on the negative effect on the company's financial success.

On the other hand, Linsley and Shrives (2006) use a definition for risks that states that risks are prospects or opportunities of events such as danger or threat that may impact or may have impacted the company. They also note that there are bad and good risks that the company can face. This definition does not include notation on the negative financial effect but rather a general notation of the nature of risks being that, when materialized, these risks have effects on the company.

Similar to Linsley and Shrives' (2006) definition, Hopkin (2017, p.16), in his book on risk management, defines risk as ”anything that can impact the fulfilment of corporate goals”. Hopkin also notes that ”corporate goals” can often being unclear or hard to define exactly especially by external stakeholders. Hopkin suggests that a risk could in the organizational and business context be defined simply by it being ”an unplanned event with unexpected consequences” (Hopkin, 2017, p. 16). In this definition, a risk always includes that an event of some kind must occur for it to materialize.

The differences between definitions can be at least partially explained by the context of the research. In the case of risk reporting and risk disclosure, annual reports, especially the risk segments of the reports, often showcase

risks that are seen as threats. In this sense, Cabedo and Tirado (2004) as well as Linsley and Shrives (2006) use definitions that are more in the context of annual reports in comparison to Hopkin's (2017) definition that is related to risk management in business in general.

In conclusion from the definitions, we can say that in the context of annual reports, risks are dangers, threats, exposures or similar that have an effect on the company's operations or even the company's financial success. Often an event of some kind must occur for the risk to materialize and to have the effect on the company. The events can be anything from new policies or regulation being implemented to wars or natural disasters. The effects of a risk materializing can be both positive and negative on the company but, in most cases, risk disclosure in the annual report context is about risks that will most likely have a negative effect on the company.

2.2 Categorising risks

Categorising risks is important in understanding the differences between different types of risks. In this thesis, my research focuses on non-financial risks. Financial risks are still mentioned in this section to give a comprehensive summary on different types of risks companies face and the different ways to categorize these risks.

In literature, there are many approaches to the categorization of risks. Linsley and Shrives (2006) use the categories of financial risks, operations risks, empowerment risks, information processing and technology risks, integrity risks and strategic risks. Lajili and Zéghal (2009) list regulatory risks, political risks and technological risks as risk categories. Lastly, Cabedo and Tirado (2004) categorise risks into business risks, strategic risks and market risks.

Hopkin (2017) categorises risks into compliance risks, hazard risks, control risks and opportunity risks. The categories Hopkin uses differ slightly from the ones Linsley and Shrives (2014), Lajili and Zéghal (2009) and Cabedo and Tirado (2004) use as these categories are used in the research to analyse risk discourse and risk disclosure mostly in the annual report context. The categories Hopkin (2017) uses on the other hand support risk management done by the companies on a general level and thus have a slightly different approach.

However, the categories of different authors overlap and, in the end, include same types of risks under different categories. I will use the categories from Linsley and Shrives (2006) to go over one way of categorizing the main risks companies are facing or could be facing. In the next subchapter I will also be covering the categories Hopkin (2017) uses in relation to risk management done by companies, as there are slight differences between these.

Risk categories by Linsley and Shrives (2006, p. 401):

1. **Financial risks** include topics such as risks related to interest rates, exchange rates and credit.

2. **Operations risks** include operations related risks such as risks related to sourcing, environment, customer satisfaction and product development.

3. **Empowerment risks** include risks related to for example change readiness, communication and leadership and management.

4. **Information process and technology risks** include risks related to infrastructure, access and availability. Also, rapid development and changes related to technological development are included here.

5. **Integrity risks** include management/employee fraud, reputation damage and illegal acts.

6. **Strategic risks** include risks related to regulation, changes within the industry, pricing and political/geopolitical factors.

These risk categories illustrate how risks in business include a variety of different dimensions. As the list is from the year 2006 (Linsley & Shrives, 2006), some things have changed. It is, for example, common that environmental risks and related information is covered in its own part for example in the EU due to the new Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) (European Commission, 2025).

In addition, many risks and risk categories are also connected to each other. For example, a political risk, if materialized, might result in financial risks such as changes in exchange rate risks and interest rate risks. For this reason, risk management is not only about identifying the risks and categorising them but also about identifying the likeliness of the risks materializing and identifying connections between the risks. This includes also preparing and making plans for the effects that the risks might have if these materialize.

2.3 Risk management

Risk management is the foundation for risk reporting and for the communication done in annual reports and similar publications by companies. For this reason, it is important to understand how and why companies are doing risk management and what are the key characteristics of these approaches. Hopkin (2017) describes risk management as a practice that has to cover evaluation, control and monitoring of three types of risks. One of the key arguments Hopkin makes right in the beginning is that risk management is something that cannot be done in isolation from the other operations of a company and rather must be well implemented into

everything the company does in order for risk management to support the company's operations in the best possible way.

Hopkin's (2017) book on risk management is based on examples of companies mostly based in the United Kingdom but Hopkin notes that the same principles and logics apply to other parts of the world. Another note from Hopkin's book is that Hopkin considers that the financial crisis in 2008 made risk management at the time a widely discussed and timely topic and that these changes have been considered in the book's content on risk management. The base foundation and principles for risk management can still today be taken from Hopkin's (2017) book and, with the current ongoing changes in the world, risk management continues to be a timely topic.

The three risks categories Hopkin (2017) talks about in the context of risk management are hazard risks, opportunity risks and control risks. In addition to these three risk categories, Hopkin also notes that compliance/regulatory risks can be considered as a fourth category, but in contrast to the other three categories, this category is not so much about the company monitoring these risks. Compliance risks are more about the companies by default aiming to comply with these regulations and the risks are related more to situations where the companies fail to comply with these regulations.

Of the three risk categories, Hopkin (2017) uses hazard risks to refer to risks that can affect negatively what the company is trying to achieve, or in other words, the company's mission or its objectives. Opportunity risks, on the other hand, offer the possibility to enhance what the company is aiming to achieve. Lastly, Hopkin describes control risks as the most challenging risk category to describe but, in short, these can be best described by being risks related to uncertainty, for example related to exact costs of a certain project. Of these risk categories hazard risks are the types of risks commonly discussed in the risk disclosure sections of annual reports.

In practice, there are many different approaches to doing risk management. Some of the most important aspects of risk management, according to Hopkin (2017), are that risk management needs to be implemented as a part in all operations, and it must be built on the company's overall strategy in order for risk management to support the company in the best way possible. External risk communication and disclosure is based on the information that is collected throughout the company's different operations and risk management practices.

2.4 Risk communication and what affects it

Risk communication done by a company is often referred to as risk disclosure. This is also the case with the risk communication done through annual reports. Linsley and Shrives (2006) define risk disclosure as if "the reader is informed of any opportunity or prospect, or of any hazard, danger, harm, threat or exposure, that has already impacted upon the company or may impact upon the company in the future or of the management of any such opportunity, prospect, hazard, harm, threat or exposure" (Linsley & Shrives, 2006, p. 389). They note that while this is a broad definition, it displays how the word risk is most commonly understood. Linsley and Shrives also point out that this includes 'good' and 'bad' 'risks' and 'uncertainties' (Linsley & Shrives, 2006 p. 389). This means that that risk disclosure can relate to risks that can result in positive as well as negative outcomes for the company.

Hopkin (2017) showcases general guidelines for risk communication. As these are general guidelines for risk communication these cannot be directly generalized to all situations. Still, these give an idea of the some of the decisions that go into the choices made when communicating risk information in for example in annual reports.

Risk communication guidelines
Know the stakeholders, by identifying both external and internal stakeholders and finding out their interests and concerns
Simplify the language and presentation although not the content if complex issues need to be communicated
Be objective in the information provided and differentiate between opinions and facts
Communicate clearly and honestly, taking account of the level of understanding of the audience
Deal with uncertainty and discuss situations where not all information is available and indicate what can be done to overcome these problems
Be cautions when putting risks in perspective, although comparing an unfamiliar risk with a familiar one can be helpful
Develop key messages that are clear, concise and to the point, with no more than three messages communicated at any one time
Be prepared to answer questions and agree to provide further information if it is not currently available

Table 1 (Hopkin, 2017, p. 320)

One aspect of understanding choices made regarding the communication of risks by companies is that different groups such as the public and experts can understand the risks communicated as well as risks in general differently (Zinn & Müller, 2022). When companies are communicating risks, they need to take into account how different stakeholders see and react to the information they are giving out and what prior knowledge and information these stakeholders have (Hopkin, 2017). Differences in perceiving risk does not only include different groups of stakeholders but also cultural differences between countries in how people see risks. This also extends to local cultures affecting how companies communicate risks as Suzuki (2024) highlights in his research on the differences in the way Japanese and US companies approach risk communication.

Risk communication can also be used as a tool to benefit the company by challenging mainstream views or information. Zinn and Müller (2022) use the examples of the oil industry challenging the connection between CO2 emission and climate change and the tobacco industry challenging the connection between cancer and the use of tobacco. In these cases, the companies and industries were able to challenge the mainstream information for some time to gain financial benefit. This showcases that it might not always be in the company's best interest to disclose everything and sometimes there might be some information that is purposefully hidden or wrong. This also conflicts with the risk communication guidelines by Hopkin (2017) that include honesty about risks as one of the guiding factors showing that risk communication in annual reports can differ from the general practices related to risk communication. The examples Zinn and Müller (2022) use show that it is possible that risk communication done by companies is not always fully 'honest' about all situations. In other words, especially in public contexts such as annual reports, companies can choose to communicate risks in a way that benefits them the most rather than being always completely open and truthful.

The strategic choices made by the company can have a great impact on the choices regarding risk disclosure. In their research, Weber and Müßig (2022) point out that, based on their findings, firm strategy does in fact affect the choices made in risk communication. The authors divide companies into defenders and prospectors. Defenders are often large established companies who discuss risks in a balanced way across different categories and from year to year. Prospectors, on the other hand, are often newer growing companies that also in a way face more risks and uncertainty. Prospectors report risks in a more detailed way and can even choose to reveal quite sensitive information to support their strategic approaches and to gain additional trust.

Besides the logics and guidelines to risk communication, such as the ones described by Hopkin (2017), there are multiple different theories in the field of analysing risk communication and risk disclosure. Below there are explanations of two of the theories that different researchers use in relation to analysing and explaining risk communication and disclosure done by companies. Researchers use these theories especially in the context of analysing communication done through annual reports with the purpose of finding possible explanation to why risk communication is done in a certain way.

2.4.1 Proprietary cost theory

In their article regarding risk factor disclosure in annual reports, Abraham and Shrives (2014) use two theories. First of the two theories is proprietary cost theory which the authors suggest could explain choices made by managers regarding risk disclosure. The theory focuses on the costs and benefits of disclosing certain information. Companies might have good risk management with highly detailed information on potential risks, but the managers might still choose not to disclose certain information they feel is sensitive and could give competitors an edge (Marshall & Weetman, 2007). In other words, the theory suggests that the managers are balancing between disclosing enough information to keep the shareholders and investors happy and keeping them trusting in the company's risk management practices. On the other hand, companies aim not to disclose information that might be harmful for the company or beneficial to their competition. (Abraham & Shrives, 2014.)

Proprietary cost theory is something that also Weber and Müßig (2022) considered in their research on the relationship of company strategy and risk disclosure. They found out that some companies have chosen to disclose more sensitive risk information and thus, in a way, trade sensitive information in order for the company to gain more trust from their investors

and other stakeholders. In these cases, the cost of disclosing sensitive risk information has likely been discussed but the positive aspects have outweighed the cost of having the information out in the public. According to the authors, these are often newer companies that are growing and/or facing more risks than established large companies.

Shivaani and Agarwal (2020) also use proprietary cost theory in their research and found out that companies that were facing decline in their market share were not as willing to disclose risk information than companies in better positions. The authors argue that, in this case, the hypothesis of proprietary cost theory does in fact apply, and the competitive position puts the company into a position where the cost of disclosing more sensitive risk related information is too high. In these cases, companies declining were often facing more competition in comparison to the companies doing well and thus in a more competitive environment the value of information was seen to be higher. Also, in these cases the risks the companies declining could have reported likely would have displayed weaknesses or in general had negative effects on the company's reputation in the eyes of the investors and other stakeholders negatively.

Finally, another research where proprietary cost theory is used to explain risk disclosure is a research done on Italian companies by Guthrie, Rossi, Orelli and Nicoló (2020). Here the authors argue that although the companies were reporting risks quite extensively voluntarily this was done in a positive way, for example by commenting on past risks or by bringing up risks that had neutral effects on the company. The authors highlighted that here proprietary cost theory could be an explanation as the information voluntarily disclosed was not overall negative or commercially sensitive, suggesting that the companies had chosen to possibly voluntarily report risks that wouldn't have negative effects on the perception of the company. This finding supports the findings of Shivaani and Agarwal (2020) in the sense that the companies not doing so well are not reporting as much. This is also

in line with being the opposite of companies in better position reporting more "neutral" risks as companies in decline don't have as many "neutral" risks to report (Guthrie et al., 2020).

2.4.2 Institutional theory

The other theory Abraham and Shrives (2014) use in their research is institutional theory. This is a theory that suggests that, besides economic factors, political and social factors also affect choices regarding risk disclosure well as disclosure of information in general. In short, the first feature of this theory is that companies might choose to mimic other companies' risk disclosure to have appropriate risk reporting themselves. Dillard, Rigsby and Goodman (2004) also show that managers might choose to mimic elements from other companies' disclosures, especially from companies that have a good reputation. The authors suggest that one of the reasons this happens is that this way the companies try to communicate that their risk management and risk disclosure practices are up to par with best of the industry.

Mimicking other companies' risk disclosure is also something Suzuki (2024) suggests as one of the likely reasons for the similarities in the risk disclosure between the companies he had researched. In this case, Suzuki suggests that due to changes in the operating environment combined with ongoing uncertainties it was easier and even safer for companies to mimic each other's risk disclosure to report enough information but also not to stand out.

The second aspect of institutional theory is that risk communication and risk disclosure can become standardized with companies and managers choosing to do risk disclosure in a similar way year after year (Abraham & Shrives, 2014). This is supported by research done by Kravet and Muslu (2013) who point out that companies were likely to repeat information during consecutive years. This might lead to a situation where every year a company

reports the same information with small changes. Although this information might still be accurate, this practice can lead to unwillingness to do larger changes to the disclosure even if it would be appropriate and over time the information repeated year after year might not be useful to the shareholders and investors.

The third aspect of institutional theory suggests that risk disclosure can become quite distant from risk management practices (Abraham & Shrives, 2014). Companies can have good risk management practices, but risk reporting might not showcase this information. Similar to proprietary cost theory, the company ends up in a situation where risk disclosure is just something the company does rather than accurately displaying the company's actual perception of risks and their risk management. This is also related to the second aspect of the institutional theory as, if companies report similar things every year, changes in risks and risk management might not be included. This can result in the risk management being more distant from the risk communication.

2.5 Annual reports as context for communication

Annual reports are documents companies publish yearly that include for example information of a company's business operations, financial situation, risks and results from the previous year. These are documents that do not only display the financial success of the companies in numbers but also provide relevant non-financial information to the public. Annual reports are an important source of information for the company's stakeholders and for example investors make decision based on the information the company is reporting (Bao & Datta, 2014). Van Leeuwen (2013) describes annual reports as a way for companies to offer their explanation of the company's performance and predictions for the future for the stakeholders to review and accept. Annual reports are thus a way for the companies to offer their point of view of the current situation.

There are regulatory standards set for annual reports by international and local regulators, for example standards set by IFRS (IFRS, 2025b) that offers regulation and guidelines on financial reporting. Regulation can change over time and a good example of a big change in the content of annual reports would be the new Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) put into action in the European Union (European Commission, 2025). This recent new regulation requires publicly listed companies of certain size to report in detail their sustainability measures and practices.

With a lot of information disclosed in the annual report regarding past performance, risk related information is usually something that looks more into the future. Kravet and Muslu (2013) highlight that risk disclosure is more about the future range of performance and not so much about the exact level of performance. In comparison to when a company is stating future projections for financial performance that are more exact, risks disclosed rather give a general outline of what could affect this predicted performance and how much the risks would affect this if materialized.

The language used in annual reports also depends quite heavily on the context of the companies. Jindřichovská and Eckert (2022) highlight in their research on the reporting done by mining companies during COVID-19 that these companies had chosen to use more relaxed language on certain topics by for example referring to natural resources as world class assets. The authors point out that these choices were most likely made to contrast the negative topics also discussed in the annual reports and to paint a positive picture of the company as a whole to the shareholders. In other words, within the frame of an annual report, companies can make a lot of choices in how certain topics are talked about. In support of this van Leeuwen (van Leeuwen, 2013) points out that in the written parts of annual reports companies might often downplay company's weaknesses. The reason for this is that the

companies aim in this way to improve or maintain the trust that the shareholders have towards the company.

The fact that companies have room within the annual report to choose how certain things are brought up also affects risk disclosure. Abraham and Shrives (2014) imply that often the information is there in a way or another, but the reader has to ”read between the lines” and find the risks themselves to avoid possible surprises. They also state that ”the information is provided in annual reports but not in an accessible or straight forward manner and user should consider creating their own risk registry” (Abraham & Shrives, 2014, p.103). By this the authors are pointing out that the risks disclosed are often not painting the full picture and to support decision making users of this information should also investigate other sources for risk related information. Similar to this, the findings of Shivaani and Agarwal (2020) suggest that companies in better competitive position choose to disclose risk information more openly. Abraham and Shrives' (2014) note on “reading between the lines” might thus be especially true with companies facing decline or more competitive environment that might disclose less information.

Van Leeuwen (2013) uses the categorisation done by Bhatia (2012) to categorise different types of discourses displayed in annual reports. These four types of discourses are accounting discourse, discourse of finance, public relations discourse and legal discourse. From these categories accounting discourse refers to the financial statement and its contents. Discourse of finance refers to discussion and comments on financial information. Public relations discourse refers to the chairman's letter and other information similar to this that aim to build and upkeep the trust and hopes of the investors and other stakeholders. These parts are forward-looking and aim to showcase the company in the best possible light. Bhatia (2012) notes that these three parts are closely interconnected as numbers support the written parts and wise versa. Lastly, legal discourse is described as disclosures of, for

example, risks known or unknown that might affect the outcomes proposed and future predictions made in the document. In addition to these, annual reports often include other information such as introductions to the company's senior staff as well as pictures.

Of these categories, risk disclosure falls under public relations discourse in the case of forward-looking risks. Materialised risks could also be discussed in accounting discourse as explanations for certain financial outcomes. Risk disclosure is a crucial part of an annual report as it is one of the main ways of providing information on risks from companies and managers to their shareholders as Penela and Palma (2023) describe. They reason this with stating that risk disclosure can boost investor trust as identifying risks is important in making informed investment decisions on the market. They also point out that if more and better information is available the market can be more effective.

2.6 Regulation and guidelines

Both international and national regulation affect what companies report in their annual reports. Depending on where the companies are based, different standards and guidelines need to be followed. Regulations are constantly evolving, a good example of this is the CSRD regulation put into place in European Union for the financial year 2024 (European Commission, 2025). This regulation adds sustainability reporting as a mandatory part of an annual report of companies larger than a certain size.

The main standard and regulation in affecting annual reports is the IFRS (2025b) standards used globally. IFRS standards offer guidelines and regulation for the financial reporting done in annual reports by the companies. This is connected to risk reporting through regulation on financial risks, the management and the reporting of these to be exact. While based on the IFRS standards reporting of non-financial risks is not

mandatory, the IFRS Conceptual Framework (IFRS, 2025a) offers some guidelines for this. The IFRS Conceptual Framework acts as a guideline for companies to use when preparing their annual reports, especially for topics that don't have specific regulated standards from IFRS.

In relation to non-financial risks, The IFRS Conceptual Framework (IFRS, 2025a) offers some guiding regarding reporting on these topics. The IFRS standards and the Conceptual Framework are described to help the companies in creating reliable and usable information for investors and stakeholders to use and for the stakeholders to receive this type of information. In the IFRS Conceptual Framework, clear and transparent reporting is also encouraged and, as said, the meaningfulness and usefulness of the information towards stakeholders is highlighted. In conclusion, to give a full picture of the state of a company and its operational environment, non-financial risks often need to be disclosed in an informative and transparent way.

In addition to IFRS standards and guidelines, there are local guidelines such as the general instruction on preparing an annual report published by the Finnish Accounting Board (Kirjanpitolautakunta KILA) operating under the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö, 2006). This instruction states that even though predicting the future can be difficult, companies should aim to report a realistic picture on what the future could be like which includes going over risks as these are uncertainty factors that affect the future. These future development estimations are free form, but some categorisation of risks is offered. The offered categorisation is strategic risks, operational risks, financial risks and pure/static risks. In conclusion, these are instructions and guidelines, and the companies have a lot of freedom when doing risk reporting within this instruction.

Regulations and their contributions towards risk disclosure have been explored in research previously. Miihkinen (2012) describes the biggest

challenge with regulation to be that if the regulation is too strict, companies are reporting similar things, and it is not useful for the stakeholders. On the other hand, Miihkinen states that if there are no standards or regulation, companies most likely will choose not to disclose enough risk related information resulting in less information for investors and shareholders. One of the key findings Miihkinen highlights in hes research is that detailed risk disclosure guidelines can improve the quality of risk disclosure at least in countries with high compliance and disclosure. In their research Serrasqueiro and Oliveira (2022) also point out that in countries with high levels of compliance and trust companies disclosed more risks voluntarily. This information was also found to be helpful for the investors.

In their findings from research on risk reporting done in relation to the financial crisis, Lajili, Li, Chourou, Dobler and Zéghal (2024) suggest that less strict regulation in combination with best practices and guidelines could be effective. Their argument for this is that this would potentially enable the companies through freedom in reporting to do detailed risk disclosure that would be extremely useful to investors. This is similar to Miihkinen's (2012) idea that the aim with regulating risk disclosure should be that the information would be useful for investors and stakeholders. Lastly, Lajili, Li, Chourou, Dobler and Zéghal (2024) predict that the demand for quality risk disclosure from companies might grow as sustainability reporting grows more detailed, although they suggest that this information could possibly be shared through other channels than public annual reports, for example through conferences or other ways of communication.

To conclude, while there is no direct regulation on how risks should be reported in the annual reports at least in the context of this research some guidelines exist. Previous research suggests that especially in settings where compliance is high, voluntary risk disclosure supported by guidelines is generally a good approach. The provided example of the local Finnish

guidelines to doing annual reports is an example of guidelines that can support risk reporting and result in better information to be reported.

2.7 Summary of the literature review

In this literature review, I covered topics related to risks and risk communication. In the beginning, the word risk and risks were defined in the context of annual reports. The definition was concluded to being that risks are dangers, threats, exposures or similar that have an effect on the company's operations or even the company's financial success. In addition, risks require an event of some kind to happen in order for these to materialize and affect the company.

After defining risks, different approaches to categorising risks were discussed. The main example that was used related to the categorisation was by Linsley and Shrives (2006). The authors categorise risks into financial risks, operations risks, empowerment risks, information process and technology risks, integrity risks and strategic risks. Risks can be categorised in many ways, and this is just one example.

In the third section risk management and in the fourth section risk communication were discussed through Hopkin's (2017) book on risk management and risk communication. Although risk management itself is not the focus of this research it is an important part of it as risk information communicated is based on the company's risk management. In addition to the basic concepts by Hopkin (2017), two theories were also discussed in relation to risk communication and choices made behind risk communication. These two theories, proprietary cost theory and institutional theory, were discussed mainly through the research by Abrahan and Shrives (2014) but also through the research of other authors. These are theories that aim to explain why the companies choose to do risk communication and disclosure the way they do.

The last two sections offered insight first into annual reports as a context for communication in general and into regulations and guidelines related to annual reports and reporting of risks. The annual reports as a context have some features that should be understood in relation to risks communication. These include the annual reports being public material that is accessible for everyone and the main target group being shareholders and investors. In addition, annual reports are documents the companies conduct themselves and as in the last section is noted, there is not much regulation when it comes to non-financial risks in the annual reports. Thus, companies have some freedom in choosing what to disclose, in what detail and in what format.

3 Research methods and material

The research method chosen for the research is critical discourse analysis, CDA for short. CDA is a qualitative method designed to, through the context of the discourse analysed, show social and power relations. The method combines the linguistic aspect of the discourse with the larger context of that discourse. In this research, CDA will be used to analyse the risk disclosure section of the annual reports of three different companies. The analysis will focus on how and what type of language the companies choose to use when discussing these risks in their annual reports, what type of context the annual report is and further who produces the discourse and who consumes it.

There are different types of CDA methods and the type of CDA used in this research is one introduced by Fairclough (1995) in his book Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language. Fairclough's CDA has three layers of analysis that build on top each other. Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) describe the three dimensions of this type of CDA in the following way. The first step is to analyse the language used in the text. The second step is to look at how the discourse is produced, consumed and circulated: in other words, giving the context for the discourse. The third and final step of the analysis is to look at the discourse "as a social practice" for example by explaining who creates the written text and how they use the power they have. This part of the analysis aims to give possible explanations of why the discourse is the way it is.

The criticality in "critical discourse analysis" refers to the idea that CDA aims to go beyond analysing just for example language by trying to connect the discourse into the social context and by pointing out power relations (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). In the case of this research, the companies writing the annual reports are in a position where choices can be made in what and how the annual reports and further how the risk sections are

conducted. The criticality in this research comes through topics such as are there differences between the companies, how detailed the information is, is something highlighted or left out on purpose and what do the companies in general aim to achieve with the risk disclosure.

Authors have previously used CDA as a method for analysing the content of annual reports. An example of this would be the research done by Jindřichovská and Eckert (2022) on three mining companies. Here the authors build their research on multiple different approaches to CDA, including the three-dimensional approach introduced by Fairclough (1995). The main focus of this study is on the language used in relation to social responsibility and thus the research has a strong focus on the language itself. Another example would be the research done by van Leeuwin (2013) on an Australian investment company. Here the approach to CDA is based on 'recontextualization'. The baseline here was that discourse always reflects social practices but when it is changed to written language, the content can change. Van Leeuwin highlights that when this happens, choices will be made on what is written, how and what motives are behind these choices.

This research aims to answer the research question of: How do companies in the field of construction approach risk communication of non-financial risks? I will be starting by describing in detail how the companies are doing risk reporting and how it is structured. After this the research follows a structure similar to the definitions by Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) which is based on the concept introduced by Fairclough (1995). First, through the analysis of the language used, I will describe what kind of language the companies use to communicate their risks. Second, I will describe the context of discourse on risks through describing the context of the research on annual reports as well as who has made the text and who consumes it. This includes also looking into the motives and with what types of limitations the reporting is done with. These two layers and analysis is found in the results section.

The third and final layer to the analysis is in the discussion section. In this part of the analysis, I will be building on top of the first two parts to describe the social context of the discourse. This includes giving insight into what the difference between the different companies can tell us about the usefulness of the information shared and how its structured as well as looking into two different theories possibly explaining the choices made by the companies. This will be done by connecting my research into research done previously and to theories related to risk communication introduced in the literature review section. The reason why this layer of the analysis is in the Discussion section is that it goes on a more reflective level and beyond what my research result can explain or prove. This part is rather more reflective and aims to connect findings from previous research in order to highlight possible explanations for the findings from the previous research layers and to the differences between the companies.

The number of chosen companies for the research was chosen to be three. Choosing three different companies offers diversity with three different approaches to risk communication but is still a small enough sample size so that the communication done by all three companies can be researched in detail. As a reference, Jindřichovská and Eckert (2022) in their critical discourse analysis on reporting of social responsibility in annual reports by mining companies also have a sample size of three companies.

For the research, three Nordic companies from the field of construction were chosen. Two of the three companies, NCC and Peab, are publicly listed in Sweden and the third company, YIT, is publicly listed in Finland. These companies were chosen based on multiple factors. Firstly, all companies had to have operations in Finland to make sure the companies were facing similar risks when operating in the same market. Secondly, all companies had to have their annual sales between 1-10 billion euros to ensure the companies were large enough to have great resources for risk management but also similar enough in size to make the comparison of the companies meaningful.

Lastly, the companies needed to have operations in new building to make sure the companies were operating in similar enough fields. New building was chosen as a section in construction partially as it is a field heavily affected by economic trends and partially just to have common ground between the companies. For example, comparing an infrastructure building focused company to one in new building might not be as insightful as these industries within construction have differences. Still, many of the companies in the field engage in multiple different areas, such as in both new building and infrastructure building.

The material used for the research are the annual reports and more specifically the risk disclosure sections of the three construction companies chosen. These reports have been published in the spring of 2025 and cover the financial year 2024. The reports used are NCC's Annual and Sustainability report (NCC, 2025), Peab's Annual and sustainability report 2024 (Peab, 2025) and YIT's Annual Review 2024 (YIT, 2025). From these annual reports, the section used for the analysis are risk related section under the Board of directors' reports. In NCC's report, this section is labelled "Material risks and uncertainties", in Peab's report the section is labelled "Risk and risk management" and in YIT's report, similar to Peab, the section is labelled "Risks and risk management". These sections contain a short description of the company's approach to risk management and the purposes of it, a description and categorisation of different risks and lastly preventative and preparing action the company is doing to control these risks. All risks besides financial risks are included in this research. Peab and YIT list financial risks in their risk section, but these are excluded as the reporting for these risks differs from other risks in the risk sections. In addition, NCC does not list financial risks in the risk section of the annual report.

In the table below (Table 2) the companies chosen have been listed with some of the main information of these companies. As Peab and NCC are Swedish companies, their turnover has been converted from Swedish krona to euros using the exchange rate of the last day of 2024 (Suomen Pankki, 2025).

	NCC	**Peab**	**YIT**
Listed in	Sweden	Sweden	Finland
Revenue/turnover (2024)	EUR 5,376 billion	EUR 5,122 billion	EUR 1,820 billion
Personnel	11 800	12 899	4 121
Operating in	Norway, Denmark, Finland, Sweden	Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Poland	Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Czech Republic, (Sweden)
Pages in annual report	140	240	231
Pages (words) in risk management section (excluding financial risks)	2,5 (1 783)	2,5 (1 854)	7 (4 834)

Table 2 (NCC, 2025; Peab, 2025; YIT, 2025)

4 Results

In this section I look into how risk communication is done, how the companies have chosen to categorise the risks, what risks are communicated, what type of language is used in relation to the risks, what is the context and how it affects the discourse. Here, the first two layers of the critical discourse analysis will be covered while the third layer will be covered in the Discussion section that follows this section.

The section starts with an introduction to the risk communication done by the companies. This includes what risks the companies report and how these are categorised. Also, the way the sections are structured and differences in approaches are discussed here. This does not yet cover results from the CDA but rather acts as background information for the reader of the content that is analysed. After this, the main analysis begins with the first layer of the CDA that includes analysis of the language used in the reports. Here the language used is illustrated mainly through quotations from the reports. Lastly, the second layer of the CDA analysis looks into the context of the annual reports, who produces the content and who consumes it.

4.1 Overview of risk communication done by companies

The companies have categorised risks into 4-6 different categories, and these will be referred to as categories throughout this section. Within these categories, companies discuss different risks and these will be referred to as risk topics. Lastly, under these risk topics companies describe the risks and their risk management practices and preparation. This will be referred to as risk description or risk information. This is an important clarification as there can be a different use for a different term between companies. For example, one company might use the word “Market” as a risk category that includes multiple topics that further include risk information. Another

company might use the same word “Market” as a risk topic within a different risk category. The use of the words risk category, risk topic and risk description/information clarify this throughout this section.

In the table below, all risks communicated by the companies can be seen with the risk categories being bolded. These risks are placed in tables in the risk section of the annual report that has the risks name, the risks description and risk management practices related to the risk. Many similarities between the companies can be found here, for example, NCC and Peab, while having different categories for the risks, have almost identical risk topics within those categories. YIT has a wider range of risk topics than NCC and Peab but still many of these match the risk topics listed by NCC and Peab.

NCC	Peab	YIT
Market risks	**Strategic risks**	**Strategic risks**
Geopolitical situation	Market	Market risks
Market volatility	Brand risks	Climate change
Material and price increase		Risk related to sustainability legislation
	Operative risks	Changes in legislation and requirements
People	Work environment	Country risks
Competence supply and leadership	Technology	Corporate gorvenance
Health and safety	Strategic input goods	Reputation risk
	Competence	Investment, divestments, mergers and acquisitions
Environment	Governance	Strategic development projects and strategy implementation
Climate	Suppliers and subcontractors	
Resource use (environmental)	Information security	**Operational risks**
	Environment & climate	Resources and personnel
Management		Risk related to occupational safety, inappropriate treatment and human rights
Management of operations	**Compliance risks**	Procurement risks
Supply chain	Ethics and compliance	Acquition risks related to plots of land and properties

		Project and property risks
IT	**(Financial risks)**	
Group common IT development		**Project risks**
IT security		Changes in operating environment, and hybrid operations
		Project portfolio risks
Compliance		Environmental risks
Compliance		Efficient use of resources
		Customer and end user risks
		Risks related to project implementation and liability period
		(Financial risks)
		Event risks
		Information systems, data security and data protection
		Pandemics
		Violations of sanctions

Table 3 (NCC, 2025; Peab, 2025; YIT, 2025)

In the table above (Table 3), the categories used by the companies are shown in the order they appear in their annual reports. The categories labelled as "Financial risks" have been placed in parentheses as financial risks are not covered in this research. Peab and YIT both use categories such as "Strategic risks" and "Operational risks" with YIT going further with having the categories "Project risks" and "Event risks" in addition. NCC, on the other hand, has chosen to do the categorising slightly differently with the use of categories such as "People" and "IT". Both NCC and Peab have chosen to have compliance as its own category. Categories don't directly tell what risks are communicated but categories give an idea of how companies display and want to showcase the risks they report.

Besides the information in the risk tables, the risk sections of the annual reports also contain information structured in other ways. In the case of NCC, this means an introduction as well as a table containing all the risks, how likely these are and how large the consequences would be. In the case of Peab, the risk section contains, in addition to the list of risks, an introduction, written explanation of the risk categories used and a picture showing how likely and large the effects of the risks are. Lastly, in the case of YIT, there is only an introduction to the risk section which partially explains the larger amount of content in the risk list itself. Applying to all companies, the introductions to the risk sections include a description of how the company does risk management and why.

The table labelled "Overview of top risks at Group level" is in the beginning of the risk section of NCC's annual report after the introduction to the section. NCC is the only company of the three that in its annual report has a table that displays the likeliness of the different risks, the estimated financial effect on the company and how this has changed since the previous report. It is also the one of the three companies to offer most clear comparable information related to the different risks that include clear disclosure of the financial effect of the risk materializing. In practice especially the "likelihood" section of the chart offers little variety as all risks besides one are listed as "May occur", which is the second highest tier on the likelihood options. Only one risk is listed as "Most likely", which would be the highest tier. The "Consequences" section offers slightly more variety and here all risks' consequences are listed as either "Serious" or "Major" which are the two highest options of the consequences tiers. This suggests that NCC has chosen to disclose only significant risks that at least "may occur" with none of the risks having been categorized with the lowest two tiers of consequences and likeliness. Reporting only the most significant risks is something that is brought up also in the introduction. Lastly, the change in the likeliness of the risks materializing from the previous year shows that the likeliness has

increased for two of the 12 different risks. For the rest, the likeliness has stayed the same.

In the risk section of the annual report of Peab, after the introduction and before the risk table, most of their risks have also been listed in a comparative form in a circular graphic display. Here risks closer to the centre have a "higher probability of having a higher negative impact on Peab" (Peab, 2025, p. 130). This suggests that risks closer to the centre can have a higher probability of happening, a higher negative impact on the company or both. In comparison, in the table in NCC's annual report likeliness and scale of consequences are discussed separately.

When comparing how the companies list the risks and related information, a clear difference in the approach can be seen. In the case of YIT, within a risk topic there are multiple different things discussed including multiple different aspects and scenarios. If we compare this to NCC and Peab, in their annual reports' risk sections all risks have shorter descriptions and, in the case of most risks, multiple different things are not discussed. In short, the risk descriptions of NCC and Peab are shorter, and the information is on a more general level.

A timely example of the level of details the companies have put in their risk description would be looking at geopolitical aspects and related risks. These are discussed by all three companies but in a slightly different way. First, in the case of NCC, this is discussed under "Market" risk category and under the risk topic of "Geopolitical situation". Here NCC mentions the unstable geopolitical situation in many parts of the world that has a "potential impact on normal course of international relations" which leads to "more complex situations" with multiple risks arising such as "higher risk for cyber-attacks" (NCC, 2025, p.65). Here no specific countries or conflicts are mentioned but the matter is discussed on a general level.

In the case of Peab, geopolitical risks are not mentioned in their risk table but before this in the introduction section. Here the different risk categories are explained and "political turbulence" is mentioned as an example when strategic risks are introduced. It is mentioned that "since Russia invaded Ukraine the global situation has changed dramatically" (Peab, 2025, p.129), highlighting that the uncertainty and general cautiousness that has arisen from this crisis has had a negative impact on the construction industry. Here the conflict in Ukraine is brought up as an example and, more notably, this is not discussed in the risk listing section itself but only in the introduction. This greatly differs from NCC where "Geopolitical risks" are seen as one of, if not the biggest, risks the company faces.

Lastly, in the case of YIT, geopolitical aspects are discussed under the risk topic of "Market risks". Besides multiple different "market" related risks, in YIT's risks section "Domestic and foreign policy tensions in the EU, countries close to EU, the USA and Russia, or other international tensions", "*Russia's continued hostilities in Ukraine and the increased threat of escalation*" and "The unrest in the Middle East and the threat of escalation" (YIT, 2025, p. 20) are mentioned as risks related to the geopolitical situation. Here again the conflict in Ukraine is directly mentioned similar to Peab but, in addition, the Middle East is also mentioned with emphasis especially on the conflict escalating. Political tensions are also mentioned in a general fashion but in comparison to for example NCC's annual report, where just "The global geopolitical situation" is mentioned, this gives slightly more details for the context of the risk and how the company sees it.

This comparison gives an idea of the general detail of information displayed by the companies. YIT has the most detailed information and a wider coverage and NCC as well as Peab have more general description on the risks. NCC and Peab, while having great similarities content-wise, have differences in how the risks are categorised. Even with this being the case it can be said

that YIT has the most information and NCC and Peab have a very similar approach in both the amount of content but also in what risks are reported.

4.2 Language used

Analysing the language used is the first layer of the critical discourse analysis. This section shows examples and differences within the risk disclosure sections in terms of what type of language is used and in what situations. First, I will explain how the companies describe their risk disclosure sections and risk management. Second, I will describe what type of language companies use when describing the risks and lastly, I will describe what type of language is used when describing the risk management practices and preparations actions in relation to specific risks.

4.2.1 Risk section introduction

Looking into the language used in relation to risk management, it is logical to start with how the risk management process in described in general. The risk section in the annual reports of all three companies starts with a short description into the section. This includes a general description of what is done, why it is done and who is responsible.

The first sentences of these sections give an idea of how the companies want to describe and display the importance of risk management:

NCC

"Management of operational, strategic, financial and sustainability risks is a key prerequisite for NCC's business and efficient risk management is a necessity for a stable and profitable company." (NCC, 2025, p.64)

Peab

"Risk management, clear delegation of responsibility and an established risk culture are cornerstones of Peab's governance and control, operatively and strategically." (Peab, 2025, p. 128)

YIT

"The purpose of YIT's risk management is to ensure the achievement of the objectives set for YIT's operations and secure the continuity of operations." (YIT, 2025, p. 19)

The quotes from the risk sections of the annual reports of the companies shown above display the general tone of how risk management in talked about. Risk management is described by all companies as something extremely important for the success of the business: NCC claiming risk management to being a "necessity", Peab describing risk management and related actions as "cornerstones" and YIT describing it as something that "ensures achieving objectives and continuity of operations". The rest of the introduction sections into risk management follow similar language with emphasis on the importance of risk management and related actions. All companies also highlight that risk management is something that is deeply implemented into all actions by the company and that the risk management practices done by the company make it possible to prepare for and prevent risks. Overall, the introduction in all three annual reports the introduction is written in a way that highlights the importance of what is done but also highlights how well it is being done to possibly help in gaining trust for the risk management actions and the company in general.

The risk sections are located under the Report of the Board of Directors in the case of all three companies. This suggest that risk management is greatly related to the top management of the companies. This is also clarified in the introduction by both Peab and YIT. Peab states that "Executive management is ultimately responsible for risk management" (Peab, 2025, p. 128) and YIT

states that "The Group's president and CEO carries the overall responsibility for risk management" (YIT, 2025, p. 19). NCC, on the other hand, does not clarify who is responsible for the risk management but rather just emphasises that risk management is important and done on all levels.

4.2.2 Risk disclosure

All three companies have similar structure in their risk listing sections: the risk is explained and next to it preventative actions, preparations practices as well as other possibly important information is listed. The language used to describe risks is in general neutral but also highlights the uncertainty related to the risks materializing. As an example of the language used by the companies, the following quotes from the risks section illustrate how the companies describe the risks related to the general economic trends and their market development.

NCC

"Risk of loss of revenue due to weakening market overall. More specifically a risk of underestimating the size and speed of the downturn of the market and then being too slow to respond. The market sentiment is a material risk for the property development operations both in terms of letting and divestments. Furthermore, there are cost increases linked to interest and inflation." (NCC, 2025, p.65)

Peab

"Customer behaviour and demands can change at such a rate that Peab cannot adapt to these changes quickly enough. . . . We can risk investing in the wrong markets or market segments. There is also a risk that Peab cannot compete with other actors on equal terms." (Peab, 2025, p. 131)

YIT

"- General economic development, the performance of the financial markets and the political environment in YIT's countries of operations affect the company's business operations.

. . .

- Slowing growth in the Finnish economy, inflation, high interest rates, migration and increasing public sector dept may weaken consumers' purchasing power and general confidence, which may have a negative impact on the demand for apartments and business premises." (YIT, 2025, p. 20 & 21)

As mentioned earlier, YIT has more risk related information and the quote above is from sections where YIT describes the risks related to markets in general and its largest market, Finland. This is the closest similar topic to what is discussed in the quotes from NCC's and Peab's descriptions and describes well the language used by YIT even though more information could have been included due to the amount of risk information provided by YIT.

Overall risks are talked about in a way that the underlines the uncertainty related to risks and that it does not raise the concerns of the reader more than is needed. The language and specific choices of words used by in the reports of the three companies varies slightly. In the risk section of the annual report of NCC, the expression of this in done commonly through the word risk. For example, expressions such as "Risk of loss of revenue" and "lack of leadership increases the risk" (NCC, 2025, p. 65) are used. In the risk section of the annual report of Peab, on the other hand, the word "can" is used to describe the uncertainty of the risks. Examples of this would be "can result in substantial damage" and "These events can have legal consequences" (Peab, 2025, p. 131). Lastly, similar to Peab, the word "may" makes multiple appearances in the risk section of the annual report of YIT in relation to describing the unlikeliness of the risks disclosed. Examples of this would be "sustainability legislation may result in additional costs" and "may lead to

decrease in investor demand" (YIT, 2025, p. 20). In addition, both Peab and YIT use the word "risk" in a similar way it is used in NCC's annual report in the risk description in addition to the use of words "can" and "may".

Even though the word "may" is not used in the risk description, it appears in a table in the risks section of the annual report of NCC. The word "may" is used in relation to likeliness of the risks materialising with most of the risks listed being labelled as "may occur". Having a table with this type of information has given NCC the possibility to, in a way, not discuss the likeliness or the effects of the risks as much in the risk description as these are already covered. This can also partially explain why words such as "may" or "can" do not directly appear in the risk descriptions.

To conclude, different choices in words are used to describe uncertainty that is related to predicting risks and their outcomes. The words "can" and "may" are clear examples of this as well as the use of the word risk as in, for example, increase of risk. The use of the word risk in this case works in a similar way to "can" and "may" as uncertainty is something that is built inside the word "risk" itself. In other words, "increase in risk" could be said also in a way that "something can more likely happen" or "something may be more likely to happen".

4.2.3 Risk management and preventative actions

In the risk disclosure sections, next to the risk topics and the risk descriptions, all three companies have a section describing actions related to that risk. NCC labels this as "Key mitigating action plan", Peab as "Action" and lastly YIT as "Risk management". Even with different names, the content here is similar between the companies: the companies describe how they monitor, prepare, prevent and/or act in the situation where the risk materializes. The language used in these sections is in general similar to the

introduction sections in the way that the companies are highlighting the positive things they are doing in preparation and preventions.

The following quotes are from the risk sections actions and risk management parts and correspond to the same topics as the quotes in 4.2.2 Risk disclosure section. This gives insight into what type of language the companies use when talking about risk management and related actions to tackle the risks.

NCC

"- NCC carefully monitors developments in the market and the financial development of customers and suppliers
- Internal processes are designed to ensure that price increases can be passed to customers (fixed prices from suppliers where appropriate)
- NCC works continuously to steer operations through segment prioritization and portfolio governance to limit exposure to vulnerable parts of the economy where possible" (NCC, 2025, p.65)

Peab

"Peab has a broad market offer for both the public and private sectors comprising the entire production chain from manufacturing construction material to production chain from manufacturing construction material to producing complete buildings and roads. Peab always strives to offer customers a comprehensive solution through close collaboration between Group companies. By reallocating Group resources Peab can quickly adapt to market needs. We constantly work on developing our employees, construction methods and new climate smart construction material in order to supply the market of the future. . . . Peab is also active in social debate and strives to highlight barriers to streamlining community building in the countries we operate in." (Peab, 2025, p. 131)

YIT

"- Continuous monitoring and analysis of market developments and the operating environment.

. . .

- Contract structures, practices and a diverse supplier network that make it possible to reduce the negative impacts of changes in prices and availability.

. . .

- Continuously monitoring the economic development and public sector investments in Finland.

- Engaging in risk management related to project financing and the availability of housing company loans by managing working capital and financial reserves through efficient allocation and use of capital, by reducing lead times and by ensuring sufficient financing capacity." (YIT, 2025, p. 20 & 21)

The structures of the action and risk management sections slightly differ between the companies, but a lot of similarities can be found in the language. All three companies describe the how they monitor and are prepared, highlighting that although risks have potential high negative impacts on the company the company is prepared for it. For example, all companies "carefully" and/or "continuously" monitor different things and are "engaging" and "constantly working on" things that help with coping with the risks. Strengths of the companies are also used here, for example in the case of Peab their "broad market offer" is given as factor that makes it easier for the company to react to different situations in the market.

Overall, the risk management and action sections follow a similar structure language-wise throughout the section. To conclude, while the risks are talked about in a neutral and speculative way, highlighting the uncertainty related, the risk management is described in a positive way, highlighting the strengths of the companies. This gives the reader a feeling that although the

companies face great risks and uncertainty, they are prepared to react to these situations.

4.3 The context for the discourse

Annual reports are a way for companies to communicate to shareholders and investors about the previous year's performance as well as what can be expected for the company in the future. These are public documents and even though the reports are mainly aimed for shareholders and investors, anyone can find them online and read them. This means that managers conducting the documents do not only have to make sure they comply with legislation and guidelines and display the company in a realistic manner to investors and shareholders but also acknowledge that for example competitors have access to the material. This can partially explain why risks are not described in much detail. In addition, companies might want to stay away from commenting on for example political topics or crises in order to not cause unnecessary and even negative publicity for the company.

Annual reports of the companies researched are long documents with the shortest of the three being NCC with 140 pages in total and longest being Peab with the document being 240 pages long. YIT is quite close in length to Peab with the document being 231 pages long. Here the layout of the document affects the length, and this partially explains why NCC's report seems to be much shorter. Some differences in length are also explained by the recent introduction of sustainability reporting in annual reports and the differences in these sections as 2024 was the first year it was a mandatory part (European Commission, 2025).

The risk sections of the annual reports of all three companies are located in the Report of Board of Directors. These are sections where insight is given in to both the past performance from the previous year but also into what the future holds for the companies. Annual reports are a way for companies to

offer explanations and predictions for the stakeholders to review and accept. Report of Board of Directors is a crucial part in this as it offers both explanations and predictions regarding the company. In the case of NCC, Peab and YIT these sections are short ranging from 15 to 30 pages depending slightly on how the annual reports are structured. This includes also the risk section that offer description of the risks as well as in a way predictions on what the future could hold for the company.

The annual reports are long documents with a large part of the annual reports being information from and related to the previous financial year. Risk sections are relatively small parts in these larger documents and in the case of these companies range from 5 to 9 pages. With a large part of the annual report being on reporting related to the previous year, the risk disclosure section is one of the sections with forward looking information.

The risks sections of the companies generally follow a similar pattern. First there is a short introduction to of who does risk management, why it's done and how it's done. After this in the annual reports of NCC and Peab there is overview of all the risks. The annual report of YIT does not feature an overview of this kind. Lastly, the risk section in all three reports ends with a table that displays the risk categories, risk topics and descriptions of the risks and its impacts and lasty the actions that the company aims to take in preventing the risk and in preparation to the situation where the risk materializes. These tables are the main content in the risk reporting section and take up the most space.

As the risk disclosure section is one of the more forward-looking sections in the annual reports and as it does not only cover risks but also the description of risk management and preventative actions, it gives the companies an opportunity to make choices in what is communicated. In the case of NCC, Peab and YIT a similar approach language wise was found between the annual reports. Content-wise YIT has clearly the most content and a wider

range of risk with more detailed description while NCC and Peab have chosen a more general level in their reporting with the two companies reporting a similar amount of information.

As highlighted in the previous chapter discussing the first layer of the CDA, the content of the risk sections of NCC, Peab and YIT are fairly neutral and promote the good preparation and prevention in relation to the risks. This suggests that the aim is to build the shareholders and investors trust in the companies which is in line with the general purpose of the annual reports on top of reporting mandatory information. All risks listed are explained in relation to how the company can minimize the risks or the effect of the risk or even how this risk does not necessarily affect the company. Especially in the annual reports of NCC and Peab where risk disclosure is on a general level most of the risks reported are risks that the reader can be aware of by following the general state of the world and the construction industry. In this case the interesting information is in the preventative actions and risk management where the reader can find out how the companies answer to the possibly already known risks. In the case of YIT, the situation is slightly different as the information is in general more detailed and a wider range of risks are displayed.

With the risk description being short as shown in the quotes from the annual reports in the previous section, the reader must have a general knowledge of the market. As risks are described on a general level, these sections do not offer for example information on what causes the risks but rather just mentions of a risk. An example of this would be the quote from NCC's annual report that was also shown earlier: "Risk of loss of revenue due to weakening market overall. More specifically a risk of underestimating the size and speed of the downturn of the market and then being too slow to respond." (NCC, 2025, p.65). Here in relation to markets "underestimating the size and speed of downturn" is listed as one risk NCC can face. Here for example the reader must know beforehand how the economy is in general doing in order to

understand the full scale of the risk. In addition to this, other sections of the annual report can offer insight into these topics, for example in this case about the general development on the market. This can be helpful in understanding the scale and impact of the risks in addition to the information provided in the section.

On the other hand, as mentioned, NCC and Peab in their risk sections before the table including all the risks include information on how likely a certain risk is to happen or affect to company and how greatly this will impact the company. In the case of NCC, this is done in the form of a table including the likeliness and the financial impact of the risk and, in the case of Peab, a visualisation shows which are the most significant risks for the company. These can help the reader of the annual report to understand how the companies see the risks compared to each other but further information on risks can still help in understanding the full scale.

To conclude, the annual reports and the risk sections from the researched companies follow many of the same logics and introduced before. The managers have a lot of freedom over reporting non-financial risks, and this can be seen from the different approaches from the companies. Although there are a lot of similarities in both content and structure, differences can be found. Annual reports offer a setting where companies can give explanation as well as future predictions with an aim of improving investor and shareholders trust in the company. This means these documents are greatly from the viewpoint of the company with a focus on the information given being beneficial for the companies especially when talking about topics such as non-financial risks that the companies have a lot of freedom over when reporting. This is supported by the findings from the first section suggesting that the risk information is in general talked about in a neutral way and the risk management and preparation done by the companies is talked in a more positive manner.

5 Discussion

So far in this thesis I first went over literature related to risks, risk management and risk communication. After this I introduced the research method and research material with the research method being critical discourse analysis and the material being the risk section from the annual reports of the three Nordic companies operating in the field of construction. This was followed by the results of the first two layers of the critical discourse analysis conducted on the risk section the annual reports. The key findings here were related to what type of language is used in relation to communicating risks and risk management as well as what type of context the annual reports are for risk communication. This includes who produces the material, who consumes it and what type of platform the annual reports are in general for communication.

In this discussion section I continue my critical discourse analysis by building on the first two layers from the Results section. The third layer of the analysis aims to connect my research findings to previous research in order to give possible explanations to why certain choices have been made in relation to the communication. This is done by looking into theories introduced in the literature review section and through prior research and findings connecting these to the companies I have researched. This section is located in the discussion part as these findings are rather more reflective and build for future research than concrete findings that can be explained with a high certainty.

Within the context of the annual report, risk disclosure falls into an interesting category because the risks discussed in these sections are something that can have a negative impact on the company. Thus, reporting on risks means highlighting some of the weaknesses and possible challenges related to the company. At the same time, companies highlight how these

risks are dealt with and this way can display the company in a positive light even while bringing up risks and possible weaknesses. Keeping this in mind when analysing risk disclosure done by companies is important because it is not an objective report on risks but rather, behind the information, choices have been made especially in how but also in what information is being presented.

In critical discourse analysis, the social power structures are one of the main focuses (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Who uses power and how it is shown are some of the questions that the analysis aims to answer. In the case of annual reports, looking into the possible motives, explanations and theories behind the discourse can help with understand why it is the way it is. Looking into the possible motives behind the discourse can also help with understanding the purpose or the purposes of the discourse. These questions are discussed in the latter part of this section.

In this section I will first look into two possible theories introduced in the literature review section explaining why risk sections in annual reports are the way they are. This includes also discussing if there are signs that these theories could apply to the researched annual reports. After this I will go over question related to power relations and how useful the risk information in the researched annual reports is to the users. This includes comparison between the companies as well as implications for both managers conducting the documents and consumers of the documents. These are based on the research done on the annual reports of the three companies as well as previous research on the topic. This also supports the CDA as it takes the idea deeper of how well do these risk sections do their job in relation to what is expected and even further adding another angle into what is the purpose of these section at the end.

5.1 Proprietary cost theory and institutional theory

In the literature review section of this thesis two theories explaining choices made in risk communication were introduced. Abraham and Shrives (2014) use both of these theories in their research into risk disclosure and risk related information in annual reports. In their research, they find indications of both of these theories applying in the companies they researched. In the case of NCC, Peab and YIT it is also interesting to consider how the ideas behind these two theories could relate to the way their risk communication is done.

First, proprietary cost theory suggests that when doing risk reporting, companies are balancing between reporting enough information for it to be informative and useful for shareholders and investors but not too much in order not to reveal sensitive information that could have a negative impact on the company. This often refers to information that could be useful for competitors themselves or useful against the company itself. As mentioned earlier, the risk reporting done especially by NCC and Peab is done on a general level and although the risks information is clearly tailored for the companies it does not go into much detail. In YIT's annual report, more information related to risks is shared and risks are in general talked about in more detail. This raises the question of would it be possible and useful for NCC and Peab to also expand and add detail in their risk reporting without revealing sensitive information harmful to the companies. The reason behind sharing less information might also be related to the companies not seeing added value to the shareholders and investors from additional information.

With this being said, Weber and Müßig (2022) argue that proprietary cost theory is especially noticeable in growing industries and startups. They divide companies in defenders and prospectors and growing newer companies fall into the prospector category. Here the companies are not yet established and need all possible trust from the shareholders and investors

and thus might be interested in giving out more detailed description of the risks the company faces. In newer and growing companies, the situation in general is also not as stable from year to year and this can also lead to changes in the risks affecting the companies and the way these are communicated. In addition, newer companies might have weaknesses resulting in risks that the competitors might benefit from knowing about which might lead to leaving some risks or weaknesses out of the reports. NCC, Peab and YIT are more established companies in an established industry and would rather fall into the defenders category. Weber and Müßig (2022) describe that these companies often report risks and in balanced way across different categories from year to year. This could suggest that proprietary cost theory does in fact not affect the decision making related to risk disclosure much in the researched companies.

In relation to NCC, Peab and YIT, the second theory that Abraham and Shrives (2014) use might explain the choices more than the proprietary cost theory. The second theory, institutional theory, has three main aspects that are used in explaining how and why risk communication is done the way it is. The first aspects is that companies might mimic the risk communication done by other companies in the same industry or in general companies that are considered to be doing risk management and risk communication well. The second aspect is that over the years the companies might end up using similar information each year with minimal changes to the contents. This can especially be the case if the information is general and more industry specific than company specific. The third aspect is related to the first and second one and suggests that risk communication might become distant from the actual risk management done in the companies. This means that even if there might be improvements and changes in the risk management practices by the companies it is possible that it is not shown in the annual reports risk section as this is just done by repeating similar information each year.

With NCC, Peab and YIT, this theory is quite interesting; as mentioned before the companies are not new and are rather established, meaning that they have done multiple years of risk reporting in their annual reports. Evaluating if the suggestions from institutional theory apply with the researched companies is largely not possible in the setting of this thesis. The main reason is that the aspects of the theory are related to how the reporting has evolved over the years would require research on the risk communication over multiple years and this research only covers the annual reports from the year 2024. This would be an insightful research topic for future as in an established industry as construction it would be interesting to see how the risk reporting has evolved and how similar the reporting over the year is.

The aspect of the institutional theory that can be discussed with the scope of this research would be the first aspect of mimicking risk reporting between the companies. As mentioned before both of the companies researched based in Sweden, NCC and Peab, have extreme similarities in the risks reported as well as the amount of risk information and how its structured in the annual report. This could suggest that one or the other company has at some point looked at what their competitor is doing or even that both are taking ideas from a company in Sweden doing reporting well. Again, having more concrete evidence of something like this would require researching the annual reports of the companies throughout multiple years as well as expanding the research into other companies in Sweden, which is outside of the scope of this thesis. The similarities between the risks communicated can partially be also explained by the companies operating in the same industries but the difference in approach to YIT raises the question if mimicking hypothesised in institutional theory could in fact be the case here. Another explanation for the difference between NCC and Peab to YIT could be established local practices for reporting such as risk reporting in the annual report.

Overall, from the two theories in the case of NCC, Peab and YIT institutional theory could explain more the choices made by the companies in relation to risk reporting. Proprietary cost theory, as interesting as it is, most likely would not explain the choices as much as institutional theories as proprietary cost mostly appears in newer industries and with newer companies. Even though this is the case, proprietary cost theory and the main idea of having to consider what to report with gaining trust from shareholders and investors but not revealing anything sensitive and unnecessary are basic principles that most likely are in a way or another behind the thought process that goes into the risk reporting. On the other hand, the second theory considered, institutional theory, would be something future research could look more into. Similarities between two of the three researched companies raise questions regarding mimicking information and looking into the evolution of the communication over the years could offer insight into the other suggestions from the theory.

5.2 Usefulness of the information

In the case of annual reports, the companies and the managers conducting the reports use a lot of power. Regulation greatly affects the content of an annual report especially regarding reporting on the past financial year. On the other hand, as mentioned in the risk reporting section, the managers have a lot of freedom when talking about non-financial risks. When categorising different types of discourses found in annual reports, Bhatia (2012) suggests that risk disclosure falls under “Public relations discourse”. This type of discourse is described to be aimed at building and up keeping the trust and hopes of the investors and other stakeholders. This is in line with some of the key findings from the research done on the annual reports of the three construction companies. This includes the language related to the risks being neutral and, on the other hand, the risk management practices and preparations done by companies being described in a way that leaves the

reader a convinced feeling on the companies' readiness for the possible challenges.

This being said, this point of view is one of the important factors that readers of annual reports should keep in mind: that annual reports do not include objective descriptions of risks faced by a certain company or in a certain field of operation but rather a description from a company's point of view with the aim often being improving investors and shareholder trust as Bhatia(2012) describes. Abraham and Shrives (2014) describe this by stating that you might have to "read between the lines" to get the full picture of the situation of the company and further that the reader should have other sources for risk related information to judge the whole situation. It might be useful to read for example annual reports from other companies operating in the same area and industry to get a more comprehensive view and in addition follow other information outlets such as the news.

On the other side, managers conducting the annual reports and the risk section should keep concepts of the theories used in this thesis in mind. Proprietary cost theory and institutional theory (Abraham & Shrives, 2014) suggest multiple things explaining the risk disclosure and especially why it might not be as useful or as good as it could be. These include things such as copying information from previous years, mimicking the risk disclosure done by competitors, the risk disclosure getting too distant from the risk management done by the companies and not giving too detailed information to competition. This does not mean that the risk communication section from the annual report needs to be recreated fully into different forms each year but by considering the suggestions from these theories, managers can avoid some of the negative developments regarding risk communication especially over multiple years. By doing this, managers can also produce good and reliable risk information for their shareholders and investors that on the other side can consider the information more trustworthy. This can then lead

into increased trust and hope within investors and other stakeholders (Bhatia, 2012).

When it comes to the researched companies, there are differences in the risk reporting sections. NCC and Peab have a similar structure with and overview of the risks in the beginning and similar risk topics despite having different ways of categorising the risks. YIT on the other hand has a different approach with not having an overview of risks and having more risk information than NCC and Peab. YIT had double the amount of risk topics and much more information was shared in the risk description in comparison to NCC and Peab. Although YIT had more individual risk topics, all companies had a wide range of different risk topics covering risks from various sources. To conclude, all companies had variety in their risk reporting and different types of risk were covered.

The overview sections that the annual reports of NCC and Peab had can be useful for the reader of these documents. The overviews give perspective on the size of the risks, and which risks affect the companies the most or are more likely to materialize. NCC was the only company to have any indication on the effect of the risks materializing financially. This was unique in comparison to the other companies, but the usefulness of this information leaves questions as there was little variety between the different risks, and it was in generally stated that only the most significant risks were covered. Similar to in the same overview table NCC was the only company to address the likeliness in combination with how it has changed since last year. With this information there was even less variety than with the financial impact categories with most of the levels of likeliness staying the same and most risks being in the same likeliness category.

In the case of Peab, their overview of the risks had less information but offered a way to compare the risk to each other with aspects of both impact and likeliness of the risk happening. This overview has less information in

comparison to the overview by NCC, but it more clearly highlighted the most significant risk topics from the company perspective and how these compare to one and other.

In the case of YIT, no overview was displayed and the section besides the introduction contained a list of the risks. YIT has chosen not to discuss the likeliness of the risks materializing or the size of the impact this might have but rather just listing risks and actions the company takes in prevention and preparation. In this sense it is more challenging to highlight from YIT's annual reports' risk section which would be the biggest risks for the company. Also, with significantly more risk information available than in the annual reports of NCC and Peab, it might be challenging for the reader to get a hold of all the risks. On the other hand, as more risk information is presented, it brings up the question of is the additional information in comparison to NCC and Peab actually useful to the reader or is it just additional information that maybe has not been significant enough for the other companies to disclose. As there is no comparison of the significance of the risks, it is difficult to judge whether YIT faces more significant risks than NCC and Peab or if some of the risks are just not as significant but as the companies are operating roughly in the same field and area, this can be deemed as unlikely.

Overall, it can be said that the risk disclosure sections of all three companies offer a good variety in risks reported and probably also a realistic picture on the preventative actions and preparations the companies do. The differences in the overview parts and display of likeliness of the risks as well as significance of the risks leaves questions if this could be done in a way that would be more informative and useful for the reader. Also, the difference in the amount of risk topics and risk information shared by YIT in comparison to NCC and Peab leaves some questions as to why this is. After all, the companies are operating in roughly in the same area and in the same field of business with slight differences. It seems that YIT is not facing necessarily more risks than NCC and Peab but has just simply chosen to report a wider

range of risks with more detailed information related. If this is the case, it still raises the question, would it be more beneficial for YIT to narrow down its communication on risks or should NCC and Peab report risks on a larger scale.

As highlighted in the literature section, there is no clear regulation or guidelines for the reporting of non-financial risks in annual reports and rather some guidelines. Improving the guidelines supporting reporting of non-financial risk is something that Miihkinen (2012), Serassqueiro and Oliveira (2022) as well as Lajili, Li, Chourou, Dobler and Zéghal (2024) all find to be improving the quality of risk information shared by the companies. This applies especially in situations where compliance in general is high. In addition to improved quality of risk reporting, additional information could be beneficial for the readers of the annual reports. On the other hand, having less information while highlighting the largest risks can be a good approach in the context of risks disclosure. These are topics that future research could investigate from the viewpoints of both the company as well as the consumers of the annual reports. Can the quality of risk disclosure be improved for example through guidelines and does it require increasing the amount of risk information? Does increasing the amount of risk information benefit the reader, making the information more useful and possibly increasing trust in the investors and shareholders, or is less more and the same outcome can be reached with reporting less and highlighting the key risks?

6 Conclusion

This thesis set to explore the question: How do companies in the field of construction approach risk communication of non-financial risks? This was done through exploring the risk disclosure section from the annual reports of three publicly listed construction companies: NCC (Sweden), Peab (Sweden) and YIT (Finland).

The research was conducted in a form of a critical discourse analysis. First, I looked into the language used in relation to the risk information. Second, I looked into the context of the discourse: who produces the content, who consumes it and where is it published. Lastly, the final layer of the critical discourse analysis was conducted through connecting the findings from the first two layers into previous research and theories behind the communication. This was done from a more reflective angle due to the limitations of the research.

The main findings of the research include that while risks were described in a general and neutral way, the language used when describing risk management and actions by the companies was more positive and trust-building. Here the strengths and great preparation were some of the focus points. Companies have a lot of freedom when describing risks and risk management and this was highlighted as something the reader of the information should keep in mind. Lastly, in relation to previous research, two theories as well as other findings were introduced as ways to give possible explanations to the choices made by the companies. Future research could further investigate the theories in a specific context, such as the construction industry in this case, as well as what amount of risk information is the most beneficial for the readers and the companies. Does increasing the amount of risk disclosure and the quality have benefits or is less more in this case?

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