

The confrontation between managerial practices and monolithic management models in the context of a global crisis: the relevance of CSR as a risk management tool in post-socialist and emerging economies' firms

Key words: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs), Justice, Sustainability, Risk Management, Firm Management, Multicultural Aspects

Presentation: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), considered as a microeconomic facet of sustainable development, has appeared during the last two decades both in discourses and practices of multinational firms.

Schematically defined as the meeting point between the necessity to satisfy all internal and external stakeholders of a company (employees, suppliers, clients, shareholders, civil society) on the one hand, and the obligation to protect the natural environment on the other hand, CSR was and still is a strongly debated issue in developed countries.

As far as transition or developing economies are concerned, until recently the various dimensions of CSR and its concrete expressions did not constitute an issue of prime importance for local firms or civil society. Obviously, the concept of CSR seemed to be a concern reserved for some “privileged” firms or societies.

The current global economic crisis leads to a confrontation between the highly criticized liberal economic model, which has now shown its limits, and the temptation to hijack the term of “CSR” for a mere aim of image. This situation makes it urgent to reconsider the conceptual and instrumental relevance of CSR, which is used to be a “hazy concept” according to some authors.

However, despite their potential limits, CSR related issues remain operational and should continue to challenge both researchers and practitioners in management.

Confronted with the emerging uncertainties, should managers continue to draw on a set of management tools elaborated according to a paradigm which is increasingly undermined by the impacts of the current world crisis? Could CSR practices contribute to shaping of a new post-crisis social and economic environment, and how?

While we suggest using Central and Eastern European countries - sometimes called “new Europes” (see Koleva, Rodet-Kroichvili & Vercueil, 2006) as a basic “testing laboratory” for studying these issues, this does not exclude a comparison with other geographical areas.

This track will welcome theoretical and empirical analyses on one of the following topics:

- The limits of CSR as a referential model of firms' management
- CSR as a global management tool in the context of transition and emerging economies
- Expressions of CSR in the field of Human Resource Management
- CSR as a tool for the transfer of a leading managerial model (including issues of acculturation and homogenization of the corporate culture)
- Peculiarities of CSR practices in companies operating outside the E.U. area

- Transmission and teaching methods of CSR
- Multicultural aspects of Human Resource Management

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