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*Peter Herrmann: CSR – CSA – CSO: Responsibility,
Accountability, Organisation - Or: On Regaining Political
Economy*

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**CSR – CSA – CSO: Responsibility, Accountability, Organisation - Or: On
Regaining Political Economy**

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Abstract

The following wants to sketch some considerations on Corporate Social Responsibility. The concept is high on the agenda, suggesting some kind of shift to a more comprehensive and 'holistic' understanding of entrepreneurial activities. However, in actual fact the concept can well be understood as step back, providing some selective changes, however shifting away from extending social rights.

The present contribution approaches the topic in a more fundamental way by looking at the principal economic shifts that are re-establishing looking for structural conditions in which the debate on Corporate Social Responsibility has to be located.

The current work should be seen in conjunction with the author's ongoing search for an objective basis for the re-emergence of traditional patterns of political hegemonies and is a first version looking on CSR.

Setting the Framework

Corporate social responsibility is en vogue – roughly speaking it is especially since the middle of the 1990s an upcoming issue within the European Union. And here I am not speaking of the term in the strict sense. Rather, we can see at this time a shift which is marked by a fundamental tension:

- 1) On the one hand, neo-liberalism made its way. It had been the time not necessarily of the massive neo-liberal action. More important is that we find the ideology of privatism and individualism striking firm roots.
- 2) On the other hand it had been the time of an ongoing crisis of the system. Exceptional conditions characterising the development after WWII, the early upswing of European integration and consolidation of the global hegemonic structure could not be maintained. In terms of Kondratjev-waves, we are now facing a phase A, i.e. a downturn. This includes the oil-crisis and a subsequent shift which manifested itself as energy- and 'environmental' crisis. And it includes the depreciation of production through the rapid development of

information technology. We can speak of hegemonic waves, the societal patterns that allow for at least some time socio-political reproduction despite existing contradictions. However, in this respect we are facing as well a downturn, to some extent directly linked, to some extent somewhat secular. The patterns of justification and legitimation are breaking away on the national and also the international level of world-orders.

We cannot further explore the complex developmental pattern. Importantly, this meant the emergence of a tension, urgently waiting for an answer. Again, only part of this can be presented here – proving to be important for the question of corporate social responsibility.

We can start with the crisis of the legitimacy of the European Union, especially noticeable at the end of the 1980. Leaving the discussion of the reasons aside, we can briefly point on two issues: the highly bureaucratic system of the EU couldn't have convincing results in terms of what became known as the Monnet-method of European integration: the idea that people would grow together from the bottom up, emerge as demos by close cooperation and developing mutual understanding. The reality had been a distant bureaucracy: 'Europe in Brussels', characterised by an inscrutable bureaucracy and represented by frequently Kafkaesque decisions. We can leave aside if and to which extent this picture reflects the reality – at least it defined the perception of many people who would soon gain formally the status of European citizens. And this perception had been underlined by a second feature – one that can surely be seen as reality: the process of European integration was and is led by a specific economic model. It claims a strong reference to the social market economy, is in actual fact however, dominated by a neoliberal approach. Though this does not foster monopolisation in the strict sense, it supports a reality that fosters a particular division of labour. SMEs play a major role in the entire economic process – from production to marketing; but at the same time two factors prevail: (i) the overall economy – as accumulation regime – is structurally based on large enterprises; (ii) on the micro level we find that the important role of SMEs is qualified by their subordinated position for instance as suppliers and subcontractors. It has also to be noted that this is not fundamentally changed by the shift from Fordist to post-Fordist (or post-Taylorist) restructuration of production

It is also important to see this shift within the general framework of a globalising economy: though a large part production in the sense of construction/manufacturing had been relocated, taking now place for instance in South American and Asian Countries, this did not change the image of Western industries towards ‘socially clean industries’. On the contrary, issues arose around child labour and extreme exploitation, often widely publicised. An additional point had been what we may call a ‘consolidated critique’ of enterprises. This continued a critique of practice of some main enterprises and conglomerates during history – by and large these critiques have to be seen as part and parcel of the ‘world-revolution from the 1960s’, not least criticising the aggressiveness of many corporations during WWII and as well in connection with the Vietnam war and when it came to developing answers to the requests of the new movements.

In the longer run, this went hand in hand with developing consumer expectations or consumer consciousness in the vein of what Ronald Inglehart called the silent revolution, taking place after the noisy revolution of the 60s. A changing work ethos in respect of the ‘meaning of work’, protection of the environment, and the increasing awareness of ‘poverty in the one world’ – the emphasis laid on the need of poverty eradication but also on one world. Although to some extent being disputed, another factor had been a new push in secularisation: we find at least a remarkable push towards accepting and demanding taking responsibility for ‘human action in this one world and on this one planet and its future generation’. In short, we find some kind of new awareness of time and space.

This sketches the background for steps taken by the European institutions, some cornerstones being:

- * the White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness, Employment: The Challenges and Ways Forward into the 21st Century (European Commission, 1993 (b))
- * the White Paper on European Social Policy – A Way Forward for the Union - A White Paper (European Commission, 1994) and possibly more important the discussion on the preceding Green Paper – European Social Policy - Options for the Union (European Commission, 1993 (a))

- * the debate on services of general interest and deregulation and finally privatisation of network industries (see for the official EU-positions: http://ec.europa.eu/services_general_interest/index_en.htm - 29/11/2009 6:00 p.m.)
- * finally the White Paper on European Governance (European Commission, 2001).

Important is the complex overall strategy rather than the individual steps and measures. If looking at the individual steps in such a wide perspective, we come across a shift away from the traditional and widely accepted rigid forms and borders. In political terms, the old pattern of democracy had been questioned in some way. The accepted division of power and more importantly the simple and sole principle of representative democracy had been seen in a new light as limited. It had been a question of extent but more importantly it had been seen as matter of a limited depth of the traditional patterns. Governance rather than governing, the entire process from needs evaluation over decision-making to implementation has been seen as equal parts of the political process. With this a reconsideration of citizenship had also been required. And in economic terms, we find a seemingly highly paradoxical situation: on the one hand we see the orientation towards a strict application of market rules. It is important to note the politico-economic side of this shift, the 'social meaning'. Rather than seeing it simply as matter of economisation, the more important point had been the kind of economic model that had been fostered: a purely individualist model. On the other hand we see the call for a more comprehensive understanding of what economic activities are about: speaking pathetically, they had been seen as means to an end other than profit maximisation. (i) The economic actor has been seen as individual being responsible not (only) for generating profit but also for a wider field in which s/he had been acting; and (ii) it had been about seeing the economic acts as part of a wide socio-environmental setting.

This had been a paradox with respect to the question of individual and social responsibility: one could see all this as process of individualising the social. And it had been also a matter of voluntarising this process: the structural dimension had been left very much one of segmented decision making, the claim for socio-political orientation had been one of holistic orientation. However, it had not

been a paradox insofar the reality of the need to reintegrate segregated realities had been more or less accurately reflected.

Determining the Actor Perspective

Individualisation had been defined as major overall determinant or even goal of the design of the current system. Individual development is in itself and for itself seen as means and end of development. The other way round the economy is not considered as being condition of soci(et)al development nor is the development of individuals seen as condition and contribution to economic development. As such, individualisation appears to be a socio-economic process. However, hand in hand goes another – though parallel – view, namely the reinterpretation of the enterprise as economic actor not as individual but as corporation. Taking a standard definition of Wikipedia, we can refer to a corporation as

a legal entity separate from the shareholders and employees. In British tradition it is the term designating a body corporate, where it can be either a corporation sole (an office held by an individual natural person, which is a legal entity separate from that person) or a corporation aggregate (involving more persons). In American and, increasingly, international usage, the term denotes a body corporate formed to conduct business, and this meaning of corporation is discussed in the remaining part of this entry (the limited company in British usage).

(Governance, 2009)

It may be worthwhile noting that reference is made to the British tradition – we will come back to this at a later stage.

It is important to note an ambivalence of the argument that is arising from the perspective outlined above: It is on the one hand the individual that is seen as independent and self-sustaining actor – this is the core of ‘individualised society’ (a contradiction in itself). Then individuality – in terms of sustenance, development and satisfaction – has as well a norm-setting role. This suggests that subsequently social norms are secondary and remaining external and

abstract. One can go a step further and say that the social is bereaved from its actor perspective.

On the other hand – and in contradiction – the social is constituted by ‘immoral actors’, i.e. actors that are in actual fact inhuman (mind: not inhumane). This follows in a way from the same pattern: It suggests that subsequently social norms are secondary and remaining external and abstract. Corporate social responsibility remains a logical impossibility, as a corporation cannot have any responsibility. Edward Coke a legal scientist rejects in 1612 corporations as they

cannot commit treason, nor be outlawed or excommunicated, for they have now souls.

(quoted in: Guide, 2009)

Its reference for responsibility is its own functioning, the maintenance of self-reference. In a perspective from systems theory, corporations as systems can include the environment only as reference for maintenance, and this means to include other systems in three ways:

- * other systems may present a demand factor: they deliver their products to the environment without, however, allowing the environment to determine the character of the product;
- * other systems may present a supply factor, i.e. the corporation depends on the conditions in which it can actually produce – the most important factor is surely the availability of factors of the productive process;
- * finally, other systems may present a disruptive factor and source of irritation – reaching from being a background noise to appearing as acute intervention;

The interesting point is that it is indeed obvious that social factors are appearing within the corporation itself, i.e. the system, (i) as external factors that are (ii) defined in subjective forms. This external character may define and redefine to some extent the conditions for the functioning of the corporation. And it may also define and redefine to some extent as well the internal frame of reference. However, it does not define or redefine the

[f]ive common characteristics of the modern corporation ... :

- * *delegated management, in other words, control of the company placed in the hands of a board of directors*

- * limited liability of the shareholders (so that when the company is insolvent, they only owe the money that they subscribed for in shares)*
 - * investor ownership, which Hansmann and Kraakman take to mean, ownership by shareholders. ...*
 - * separate legal personality of the corporation (the right to sue and be sued in its own name)*
 - * transferrable shares (usually on a listed exchange, such as the London Stock Exchange, New York Stock Exchange or Euronext in Paris)*
- (Corporation, 2009; reference to Kraakman/Hansman et altera, 2004)*

And this supports again the interpretation of corporations as non-responsible actors – in this way even less than being irresponsible actors.

CSR – American versus European Dream?

The American dream is defined by James Truslow Adam, 1931 as

that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement. It is a difficult dream for the European upper classes to interpret adequately, and too many of us ourselves have grown weary and mistrustful of it. It is not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position.

(Adam, 1931)

Milton Freedman stated in 1962

Few trends could so thoroughly undermine the very foundations of our free society as the acceptance by corporate officials of a social

responsibility other than to make as much money for their stockholders as possible.

(Friedman, 1962)

At the end, all this points on fundamental questions concerned with two issues:

- * the actors and
- * the guiding values.

We may find a more or less fundamental difference between the American and the European dream, importantly starting from the definition of the actor perspective – though it may be disputed how far it actually it is really a fundamental difference. In both cases we see a radical individualism – as had been shown, the social is somewhat externalised, confronting the individual as ‘external entity’. However, on the one hand we see this as abstract set of values. It is not surprising that the American Declaration of Independence refers in some way to a theocracy. Then, the paradox of American individualism is actually an exceedingly strong emphasis of individual responsibility and on the other hand, however, it is responsibility towards God rather than the individual’s responsibility towards him/herself or/and society as such. Doesn’t it follow logically that the entire concept of individualism is subsequently undermined? At least it is striking that in America

as a nation dedicated to the free pursuit of private property ... the legal protection bestowed to contracts and the transaction they represent has been extended to the corporation. In many countries at many points in history corporate charters have been frivolously rescinded and companies nationalized or seriously manipulated by government to the detriment of many and the benefit of a selected elite. However, the Supreme Court case Santa Clara v. Southern Pacific Railroad Co. – where the court overturned a local tax law of significant cost to the railroad and of dubious justification – set the precedent that a corporation is entitled to the same legal protection as are private citizens, and it expanded American companies’ freedom for general practice and from undue regulation

(Olowski, without date: 5)

On the other hand we see an however abstract ‘social’ – the ‘good society’ – derived from people living together: making reference to this ‘social’ as point of departure for determining origin and objectives of togetherness. We can see it in the fundamental values guiding the French revolution of the 18th century: Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité. But we can also see this when looking at various strands of conceptualising the state. The European understanding is strongly linked to individualism and the fostering of this individualism. It is also strongly based on the confirmation of the right ‘to the free pursuit of private property’ as it had been mentioned before with reference to the American dream – all major theories from Hobbes, over Locke to Rousseau, to name but a few are arguing in this line. However, because of this even the enlightened understanding of European Christianity cannot easily be interpreted as the hatching a theocracy. This is surely an idealtypical confrontation; and the European dream is equally individualist as the American dream (see on the fundamental individualism for instance Herrmann/Dorrity, 2009; Herrmann, forthcoming (c); Herrmann, forthcoming (a)). Nevertheless, pointing on such difference is of crucial importance when it comes to understanding the problematique of applying the concept of CSR in a European context. The concept is definitely a child of American thinking – and its application in Europe has to be seen in this context: marking limitations for its applicability is one strand of the argument; and another strand of the argument can be made by pointing on how far we actually find patterns of Americanisation flooding Europe.

But the actual problem is a different one, namely the fact that the concept of CSR is falling short of dealing properly with borders of systems. Rather than fundamentally reconceptualising the actor-system it is maintained as self-referential system. The only change is happening in the following regards.

(i) To a smaller extent we find a shift of borders, slightly moving the external border more to the outside. This is for instance reflected in the following definition.

CSR involves a business identifying its stakeholder groups and incorporating their needs and values within the strategic and day-to-day decision making process.

(Guide ..., op.cit: 1)

The existing structure, however, remains the untouched. This is very much reflected for instance in the European Commission's Green Paper which

calls on the European business community to publicly demonstrate its commitment to sustainable development, economic growth and more and better jobs, and to step up its commitment to CSR, including cooperation with other stakeholders. More than ever Europe needs active entrepreneurs, positive attitudes towards entrepreneurship, and confidence and trust in business. Europe needs a public climate in which entrepreneurs are appreciated not just for making a good profit but also for making a fair contribution to addressing certain societal challenges.

(European Commission, 2006: 2)

(ii) This means in a more fundamental view as well that the problem of defining and producing externalities remains very much the same – a generic and factual integration cannot be found.

As far as we follow this argument, the first hurdle to be overcome when dealing with CSR is how to deal with accountability, i.e. how do we actually calculate production. The traditional understanding only deals with issues on the level of exchange and to some minor extent with issues of distribution. And it possibly deals with issues from other areas by isolating them from the overall process of production. In other words, it tackles social questions of manufacturing, consumption, distribution or exchange in isolation.

All this actually fits well into the thesis of re-feudalisation of society – a thesis which should not be understood as only an repetition of certain apparent patterns of execution of power but more fundamentally as shift in the foundation of power (see in this context already Herrmann, forthcoming (b); Herrmann, 2009 (a)). Importantly it is about the shift within the economy from a production-based system to an exchanged-focused system. As such we see that the political economy changes itself to a somewhat voluntarist basis. Capital that does not and cannot return into the productive process may temporarily be invested in good-doing but remains outside of a process of building a new formational pattern.

In this context it is important to look at the fundamental limitation of any CSR-perspective that remains in the traditional veins of thinking responsibility and accountability on a self-reflexive manner. As much as it may show positive effects in individual cases, it remains very much on a symbolic level – to the same extent as the focus of exchange remains outside of the actual economic process which can only be understood as process of production.¹ Symbolic power is set within this context and finds its objective reason in the shift of the economic system. Important is that this shift away from the actual productive process means not least that the power structures are as well undertaking an important shift – away from the systems that grew out of enlightenment.² Rather than maintaining and elaborating these systems we find a return of charismatic leaders and the increasing meaning of symbolic power. It is not least the completion of the original liberal idea of the free individual, only responsible to him/herself, without the existence of any society, and in its sociability solely depending on the good will: the moral sentiments (Adam Smith) and the generalised trust (Robert D. Putnam). However, such view does of course not acknowledge the social character of the formation of the habitus and moreover the meaning of social practice. In his discussion of Pierre Bourdieu's work, Martii Siisiäinen states:

Practices are the result of the co-influence of 'objective structures' as manifested in the forms of prevailing alternatives at a certain moment in history, and the 'subjective structures' inside the habitus, manifested as dispositions directing the choices of the actor toward alternatives that are homological with the structures that have produced the habitus (causalité du probable) (Bourdieu 1977; 1974). Bourdieu stresses that the habitus cannot be reduced to structures because it is born as practices. It is creative and thus the reproduction of social structures is never one-to-one reproduction but extended and creative reproduction

¹¹ This is even the case in today's systems where some see it as justified to speak of service economies. Even these service economies are production dependent and related: on the one hand they are services directly related to productive processes (e.g. transporting produced goods); on the other hand they are productive though not producing tangible goods.

² The limitations of these enlightened systems of modern democracy and their link to the "bourgeois state" have not to be discussed here. Some interesting insight is given not least by Boccara, 1973; Jessop/Sum 2006

by the habitus (Bourdieu 1977). Bourdieu does not deny the existence of 'objective' structures and their influence on the formation of habitus, which, for its part, becomes the structuring structure leading via practices to the development of new structures.

(Siisiäinen, 2000: 15)

The reason for this lengthy quote is simple – though the matter itself is anything else than this: whereas CSR refers to abstract normative systems of some kind of general character, the reference to Pierre Bourdieu makes obvious that we are dealing with a contradicting field of practice. If we emphasise, different to Bourdieu, structures as strong framing condition rather than seeing it as more or less vaguely defined set of fields we can see the systemic limitations: any re-formation of habitus needs to secure the re-formation of these structures and can be only successful if it can actually build on such changed structures.

This means, of course, that governance has as well a double meaning: on the one hand it is concerned with opening political systems for new actors. On the other hand, however, it means the (re-)introduction of a system of charismatic and more or less uncontrolled and uncontrollable system of power that lacks a proper system of checks and balances. Consequently, assessing voluntary mechanisms – in the same vein as assessing voluntary sector organisations – needs to fully recognise the ambiguity of the respective patterns of limited participation and the limitation of participation (see in this context as well Herrmann, Peter, 2009 b).

However, this necessitates revisiting the entire structure of the political economy: Sure, CSR as voluntary action may occasionally lead to social improvements. However, as concept it is likely to undermine the systematic progress of welfare state developments. This is not primarily due to its voluntary character. More important is the fact that is anchored in a systematic turn of the economic system, systematically ignoring the need of a productive basis of the development of social quality.

Accountability – Economics and Economy

One of the fundamental problems of CSR is its individualist bias. Before this has been explored in a very fundamental way. It had been said that individualisation is nowadays defined as major overall determinant or even goal of the design of the current system and that individual development is in itself and for itself seen as means and end of development. This is also reflected in the microeconomic toehold of the concept. It is important as well in terms of the voluntary and political character into which it is commonly linked. The actual problem, however, is that the basic reference is chosen wrongly. It sees economic processes and decisions – on the micro- and also the macro-level – as independent, neutral and leaving aside that they are fundamentally and genuinely socio-political in character. The question can now be turned around. The problem is not primarily about the responsibility within the system, and looking within this framework for the accountability of the individual actors or at the corporate responsibility. Rather, we have to look at the character of the economy itself, defining the accountability of the system itself. Then the question is far reaching and requires focusing (i) on what and in which way production takes place and (ii) in which way the integrity of the overall economic process is seen.

So it is advisable to look not only at the concept of CSR as such but also at the wider context in order to determine the character of the economic process itself. It had been stated already that the debate on CSR can be traced back a long time, going much further than the debate that directly refers to this term itself. At this stage it is then meaningful to remember not least the White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness, Employment: The Challenges and Ways Forward into the 21st Century. In this paper, the question of the social economy played a rather substantial role – and in the following years it had been fundamentally re-interpreted. Starting from an already limited understanding of the social economy as economic actors in niches, the reading shifted increasingly towards their instrumentalisation as employment providers – the keyword being Third System.

However, in terms of a sound conceptualisation we have to overcome such orientation. So far it looks very much at establishing new and somewhat different corporations, each of them having a wider scope, shifting the borders further, but maintaining the basic functional references of the system. Looking at the debate on the social economy, however, allows developing an understanding that reaches further. Recalling the words from Edward Coke which had been quoted above, we have to work against an understanding of corporations that

cannot commit treason, nor be outlawed or excommunicated, for they have now souls.

(in: Guide ... , op.cit. 5)

So, the starting point is to look for an economy that takes as part of departure not a purely functionalist approach as it is assumed by any orientation on corporate actors. The suggested focus for the further orientation is twofold.

(i) We should be concerned with economy as matter of people working together and producing in this vein their own life and also the respective conditions.

(ii) We are concerned with a perspective on the economic system as such. However, rather than seeing this as a structural entity, guided by functional, value-neutral interests, it is understood as entity structured by different interests, and thus not least power questions and conflicts.

Corporatism is a system of economic, political, and social organization where corporate groups such as business, ethnic, farmer, labour, military, patronage, or religious groups are joined together into a single governing body in which the different groups are mandated to negotiate with each other to establish policies in the interest of the multiple groups within the body.[1] Corporatism views society as being alike to an organic body in which each corporate group is viewed as a necessary organ for society to function properly.[2] Corporatism is based on the sociological concept of functionalism.[3] Countries that have corporatist systems typically utilize strong state intervention to direct corporatist policies and to prevent conflict between the groups.[4]

The word 'corporatism' is derived from the Latin word for body, corpus. This meaning was not connected with the specific notion of a business corporation, but rather a general reference to anything collected as a body.

Corporatism has been supported from various proponents, including: absolutists, capitalists, conservatives, fascists, progressives, reactionaries and theologians.[5]

(Corporatism, 2009)

The same is actually true within the corporation. If they are seen as 'body' as the etymology suggests, they are entities in which different interests come together and have to find a balance. As much as any body is an entity it is concerned with its own maintenance. And equally it is limited to a functional equilibrium that exists only in a temporary limited span. The environment only functions as background noise, as externality and is as such not genuine part of corporate considerations.

On one level questions around the economic system are surely concerned with values. However, these values are not primarily a matter of subjective valuation but of relation. In this light we have to look at responsibility as matter of responding to reality – and this is not least a matter of acknowledging the changed and permanently changing reality: the existing opportunities as matter of technical and technological development and also the recognition of rights – their 'qualitative extension' and also the acknowledgement of their universality (see in this context as well Herrmann, forthcoming (d)). It is important to note this against the background of the voluntary character of CSR in relevant documents: CSR is suggested as set of additional and voluntary measures. Such interpretation, however, contradicts fundamentally such view that responsibility is about answering an objective reality.

We actually have to move on to a different perspective on economy and the economic system as such. Veli-Matti Poutanen mentions four aspects that are frequently referred to in European debates on the social economy which are as well relevant for our context: (i) the economic and social 'usefulness', (ii) the orientation on well-being within and outside of working life; (iii) the requirement to structure the economic process to support democracy and the

full participation of the various actors; (iv) a certain independence of the operation of the economic entity in order to enable the fulfilment of their genuinely own goals (see Poutanen, Veli-Matti, 2009: 11). He concludes his further discussion by underlining the definition brought forward by Niina Immonen:

The social economy is the economic operation carried on by co-operatives carried on by co-operatives, mutual companies, associations and foundations, the objectives of which is to promote [...] the democratic co-operation and economically and socially lasting welfare of the surrounding community.

(Immonen, 2006: 12)

Though this seems to be a different debate, namely that on social economy, it marks the need of reformulating the reference point not of responsibility but of accountability: it is about accounting the overall internal and external setting. As such it is actually not about the reduction of externalising costs but it is about the reduction of externalities. And this is a process that has to redefine fundamentally the borders of the enterprise but moreover it has to redefine the understanding of the economic process itself. Coming back to the etymological reference that looks at corporations as bodies the challenge is to redefine these bodies rather than redefining the way an existing body acts.

We can come back on the question of the voluntary character of CSR as it is usually suggested. In perspective taken here, the common concepts fall short in answering the fundamental character of the challenge. In many cases they are not much else than (i) means of 'social sponsoring' (though in a wider sense) and (ii) the reduction of costs arising from a temporary externalisation (production of externalities and their later return into the company).

Responsibility versus Organisation?

From what had been said it should be clear that on the other level questions around the economic system are surely concerned with factors that go far beyond including normative factors into the balance sheet. We need to redefine the understanding of the economy and the respective actors themselves; and

with this we have to overcome the individualist orientation of the interpretation of society. Now we can take up the reference which had been made to the social economy and go a step further by emphasising the concepts strong connection to the economy of the social in terms of widening the understanding of social policy. Veli-Matti Poutanen highlights with Ari Nieminen as four

main sectors of the economic sociology ... 1) social and cultural preconditions for the economy 2) consequences of the economy, 3) ... the economy as such 4) and study of the interaction of different institutions

(Poutanen, 2009: 16 f.; with reference to Nieminen, 1996: 104)

However, we have to move a step further and highlight the need to develop the integrity of such a perspective. Any Corporate Social Responsibility will fail as long as it is not concerned with a fundamental change of the corporation and its external borders. And the latter requires as well a fundamental reorganisation of the accountability of the economic system itself.

At an earlier stage the reference to the Anglo-Saxon tradition had been en passant noted and we can come back to this by way of conclusion. This tradition is not least characterised by its utilitarian shift in the interpretation of enlightenment. It is in this way as well that CSR as it is mainly understood in a limiting individualist vein, thus actually opposing the claims of the European Model.

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