



Corporate Social Responsibility

Track Chair

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Keywords: CSR, Governance, Institutionalization processes, National Business Systems

The purpose of this track is to explore the conditions under which Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) can efficiently contribute to the advent of a new form of societal governance in replacement of the waning "Fordian compromise".

To most researchers, CSR is still conceived as a voluntary initiative by business firms, driven by the traditional profit-seeking motive ("CSR pays"). This approach rests on the so-called "Business Case" for CSR, which holds that corporations can do well by doing good.

Our view is different. We contend that for most corporations, CSR and profit maximization often come into conflict. We therefore dispute the capacity of self-regulation to work out alone the necessary trade-offs that the pursuit of the common interest requires. With the demise of the "Fordian compromise", only new institutional arrangements can ensure a responsible working of the economy at the societal level.

A more assertive governance system is therefore needed. We assume it can only find legitimacy and efficiency if it brought about by a collective effort involving all levels of society. New rules, rulemaking procedures, strategies and modes of operation have to be developed, tested and implemented. This transformation also calls for fundamental changes in individual mindsets. CSR initiatives are an important, but in themselves insufficient, element of this dynamics.

Our question is thus the following: To what extent can CSR significantly contribute to a sustainable new mode of governance—a new, "post-Fordian" compromise—that is both efficient and fair, in what form, and under which conditions?

The objective of our track is to bring together scholars from various fields of the social sciences (management, law, sociology, economics, political science, social psychology), but sharing a common interest for institutionalization processes, in order to explore the diverse dimensions of this question.

Papers (*drawing on theoretical and/or empirical research*) that address one or a combination of the following issues are particularly welcome:

- The theoretical and methodological frameworks that allow to capture the dynamics of CSR, and to evaluate its potential as a new form of sustainable social regulation.
- The construction of the CSR field through the emergence of new actors, the evolution of conventional actors, and the linkups that develop among them.
- The construction of the CSR field through the issues, the strategies, the organizational logics, the interactions and the practices of the actors as they relate to various settings.
- The influence of national business systems and global institutional pressures on CSR.
- The new rulemaking modes through which actors define CSR standards and establish control norms.
- The new types of articulation between *soft law* and *hard law*, and the conditions for their efficiency.
- The potential linkups and oppositions between public goods, public service and CSR.
- The resource and idea contexts in which CSR actors operate, that legitimate or restrict them and that they reproduce or modify.
- The end-products of CSR initiatives defined either as norms (internalized by individual actors or objectified in explicit rules), management instruments, or demonstrable results, and cast either as resistance or as learning processes.
- The differences between how the “social” and the “environmental” dimensions of CSR are brought into play.
- Scenarios for the evolution of CSR.