Track 10: MNEs, institutional environment, corporate social responsibility and sustainable development
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Corporate Social Responsibility in the "New Emerging Countries" –

Business as we know it?

From a western point of view corporate social responsibility (CSR) can be understood as "the continuing commitment by business to contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the community and society at large" (World Business Council for Sustainable Development, 2003, para. 4). Having evolved since the 1950s (Kakabadse et al., 2005) CSR research has mainly focused on advanced countries and firms stemming from North America or Europe (Frynas, 2006). Well aware that the emerging markets are considered to be the driving force of the global economy (Peters, et al., 2015) over the past years an increasing number of scholars have turned their attention to the state of CSR in these economies (e.g., Baskin, 2006; Li et al., 2010; Tan, 2009; Urip, 2010). Here, researchers have investigated CSR practices not only in BRIC countries such as China (e.g., Kolk et al., 2010; Li & Zhang, 2010; Lin & Berkeley, 2010; Vogel, 2007; Zhao et al., 2014; Zhu & Zhang, 2015) or India (e.g., Arora & Puranik, 2004; Chaudhri & Wang, 2007) but also in other emerging markets, including South Africa (e.g., Arya & Bassi, 2011; Malan, 2005; Visser, 2005), Malaysia (e.g., Amran et al., 2013; Ramasam & Ting, 2004; Yusof et al., 2014), Mexico (e.g., Gundermann, 2004; Martínez, 2015; Weyzig, 2006), Chile (e.g., Klerkx et al., 2012) or the Czech Republic (e.g., Trnková, 2004), some of them anticipated to be the "new world of business" (Fortune, 2015, para. 1). The topics covered and methods used in these studies are manifold and scholars have for example explored the antecedents of CSR in MNEs' subsidiaries and their likelihood to adapt to local practices in case of differing institutional environments (Yang & Rivers, 2009), the role of MNEs and NGOs in promoting CSR (Beckman et al., 2009) or the importance of local labor relations for extractive MNEs in bridging legitimacy gaps (Eweje, 2006). Despite the various foci these studies all underline that CSR practices in emerging economies differ from those ones in developed countries (Peters et al., 2015). For example, while in emerging economies companies engage in corporate responsibility more extensively than commonly believed, there CSR seems to be less pervasive and less integrated in corporate strategies and politics (Baskin, 2006). CSR is mainly influenced by economic globalization and local subsidiaries of large MNCs are often considered to be the main force behind CSR initiatives (Frynas, 2006). The studies also show that CSR research has mainly focused on what foreign multinational firms do in terms of CSR and neglected how domestic companies in emerging economies practice CSR (Frynas, 2006). CSR practices are context-dependent, highly issue-specific (Maignan et al., 2005) and developed within a distinct social context (Frynas, 2006), therefore, it comes to no surprise that western CSR theories as defined by Europe and America, including Carroll's (1991) "Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility", have been considered limited in delineating local CSR practices different from a developed economy context (Dartey-Baah & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2011). But does this also apply to emerging economies, in particular, to the "new emerging countries" (Bloomberg, 2015, para. 1), i.e. the new generation of emerging economies after the BRICs?

Descriptive and explorative in nature my research project focuses on CSR practices in emerging economies covering both the BRIC as well as the new emerging markets. Since no comprehensive literature review on CSR practices in the BRICs economies, let alone the new emerging countries, has been conducted yet, I provide a review of past research efforts on this very topic. Moreover, as previous research has largely neglected to study CSR from the perspective of local companies in emerging economies (Frynas, 2006) I further assess the extent to which MNEs from emerging economies practice and organize their CSR activities. Aware of the various ways to distinguish emerging from developing or advanced markets, in this project I focus on local companies specifically from Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Czech Republic, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Russia South Africa, South Korea, Thailand and Turkey. These economies were identified as emerging by Cavusgil, Knight and Riesenberger (2014) and include the BRIC economies as defined by Jim O'Neill in 2001 as well as a selected number of the potential "new darlings" (EIBA, 2015, para. 2) such as the "Next Eleven" (O'Neill, 2005) or "MIST" (O'Neill, 2011). Based on a sample of more than 350 leading emerging market companies from the abovementioned countries I compare a range of generic CSR indicators, such as CSR performance, shareholder rights/policies, CSR sustainability committees or structure of the board of director, of these companies with each other. My dataset includes companies such as Hyundai Motor from South Korea or Tiger Brands from South Africa and is retrieved from Thomson Reuters ASSET4, an environmental, social and governance (ESG) research database, which offers structured and standardized ESG research data of a large number of companies for rich and in-depth socially responsible investment analyses (Thomson Reuters, 2015, para. 1). On the basis of these analyses and comparisons I am able to present insights on the status quo of CSR in emerging markets and detect possible cross-national differences in CSR, CSR practices and CSR governance structures, i.e. how CSR activities are organized within companies (Husted, 2003), between the BRIC and the new emerging countries. In doing so I can both draw conclusions on the abovementioned group as a whole but also assess whether and in which way the acclaimed new emerging economies differ to the BRIC economies in terms of CSR. These insights facilitate the assessment of potential limitations of western CSR theories in explaining CSR practices in the emerging market context and pave the way for possible new or more adequate CSR theories. Additionally, important practical implications for international businesses can be drawn, e.g. whether novel ways of CSR are needed or whether CSR can be practiced 'as usual'. Moreover, these findings are beneficial not only to researchers but also to (socially responsible) investors and (CSR) managers of companies that seek contractual relationships or project-based (non-equity) collaborative ventures with local companies from these specific countries.