University of ZurichUZH

Department of Business Administration

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Seminar MOEC0287
CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
Spring Term 2021

Lecturer
Dr. Florian Überbacher (Email: florian.ueberbacher@business.uzh.ch)

Seminar Objective
The course assesses the landscape of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in theory and practice. The aim is to bridge theory and practice of CSR as well as of its flip- or dark-side which is typically referred to as 'organizational wrongdoing'. The course sensitizes students for ethically critical issues and highlights aspects of responsibility on the organizational level and the individual level. The students will develop and present relevant topics of this field. The class sessions will be interactive, with emphasis on discussion. Students will be expected to write a seminar paper and prepare a presentation.

Seminar Application and Registration
A maximum of 20 Master students will be admitted to the seminar. To participate, please send an email to florian.ueberbacher@business.uzh.ch with your CV and grades record by 1 February 2021. Participant confirmations will be send out by 8 February 2021. Students accepted for the seminar have to book this seminar through the module booking system (Deadline: 19 March 2021).

Seminar Dates
- Wednesday   03 March 2021   8.00-12.00 a.m.
- Wednesday   24 March 2021   8.00-12.00 a.m.
- Wednesday   31 March 2021   8.00-12.00 a.m.
- Wednesday   14 April 2021   8.00-12.00 a.m.
- Wednesday   21 April 2021   8.00-12.00 a.m.
- Wednesday   05 May 2021   8.00-12.00 a.m.

Seminar Mode
This seminar takes place online (via Zoom) on the indicated dates. All sessions will be recorded. The Zoom Link will be sent to seminar participants on 8 February 2021 via email (The link will be also available on the OLAT page of this seminar).

OLAT Page
The OLAT page for this seminar will be available in February 2021. Seminar information, materials (e.g. readings), and the recordings of the Zoom sessions will be available there. The link to the OLAT page will be sent to seminar participants on 8 February 2021 via email.

Administrative Details
In the first session (3 March), the course outline will be presented and students have to sign up for a topic. As we will focus in class on a total of 10 topics, between one and two students will be assigned to one topic (depending on the size of the class) and are expected to work in team in the latter case.

Version: 8 Dec 2020

Grading

In order to get credit for the course, students have to write a seminar paper, present their findings to the class, and participate in the seminar meetings. The successful completion of the seminar accounts for **3 ECTS-Points**, which can be credited to MA: BWL 5.

Grading Weights:		
	Seminar Paper	45%
	Presentation	45%
	Attendance and participation in class discussion	10%

The deadline for handing in the **seminar papers** is **June 1, 2021**. The papers have to be written in English and are related to the assigned overall topic. The specific subject of the seminar papers' topics has to be coordinated with the lecturer (for example, after the corresponding presentation of the overall topic). The **seminar paper** constitutes **45%** of the final grade. The main text (without title, list of references, figures, tables, etc.) of the seminar paper should be **between 2,000 and 3,000 words** long (based on 12-point font size, Times New Roman, 2.5cm margins on all sides, and 1.5 space lined spacing). Further guidelines will be provided at the beginning of the seminar. In one session of the seminar, each student will be able to discuss his/her seminar paper topic in class.

The **seminar presentation** constitutes **45%** of the final grade. The presentations on assigned topics are held in teams of two students (or else by a single student if the total number of students is below 20). Presentations are graded, amongst other, along the ability of the student/team to convey the content in an understandable and interesting manner to the audience. The **presentation** should not exceed a maximum time of **45 minutes**. A draft version of the presentation has to be send to the lecturer latest Wednesday in the week before the presentation for feedback. All teams are asked to facilitate **class discussions up to 45-60 minutes** after their presentation. The organization of an appealing and creative discussion format is equally important to the seminar presentation. Discussion formats could include for example role plays, panel discussions, focus groups, case study discussions, competitions, among others. The discussants are encouraged to involve all class participants as well as the lectures (as participants). The creativity and usefulness of the chosen discussion format will be acknowledged in the grading.

Finally, active **oral participation** in class constitutes **10%** of the final grade. Each session will be highly interactive. Students must carefully prepare some lectures if announced (e.g., read a text, read a case study).

The following **research questions** can guide you in preparing your presentations as well as your papers:

(1) What is the theoretical/scientific relevance of the phenomenon you study?
(2) What is the practical relevance of the topic you analyze?
(3) What are the challenges for companies in relation to the topic you analyze?
(4) What are possible solutions?
(5) What are theoretical and practical implications that can be derived from these solutions?

Seminar Readings

The readings will be distributed on 8 February 2021 via email. They will also be available on the OLAT page.

For each of the 10 themes that we will cover in the five sessions after the introductory lecture (25 Feb), **one reading, marked with** *****, **is mandatory for all students**. Yet, in order to facilitate group discussion in class, students are strongly encouraged to read (or to at least browse) also some of the other readings listed.

The **students preparing the presentations are requested to cover all readings** and potentially do further literature research.

A Note on Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as the use of another person's ideas, knowledge, or language without appropriate crediting of the source. Plagiarism is theft of intellectual property, and therefore is a serious offense. It cannot be tolerated in academic work. Any evidence of plagiarism in a student paper will result in a failing grade for the course. It is also inappropriate to use very long quotes from an author even if the material is properly cited and enclosed in quotation marks. Such a practice raises the possibility that students do not really understand the material they are quoting. Ideas should be expressed in the students' own words except for the occasional use of quotations from other sources to highlight or support specific points. For further information see the *Harvard Guide for Using Sources* and its guidelines on avoiding plagiarism: https://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/avoiding-plagiarism

Handbooks Related to the Seminar Topics:

Brenkert, G.G., & Beauchamp, T.L. 2010. The Oxford handbook of business ethics. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

Crane, A., McWilliams, A., Matten, D., Moon, J., & Siegel, D.S. 2008. The Oxford handbook of corporate social responsibility. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

Doh, J.P., & Stumpf, S.A. 2005. Handbook on responsible leadership and governance in global business. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Scherer, A.G., & Palazzo, G. 2008. Handbook of research on global corporate citizenship. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

THEMES AND DATES

In the following you will find the themes we will address during the course. The readings listed under each theme provide you with a preliminary introduction to the literature in that field. The course instructor will provide the references to you.

Introductory lecture (given by lecturer) (3 March)

a) Introduction and Theoretical Foundations of CSR. In an ongoing globalization process, organizations are faced with changing environmental conditions and growing demands of internal and external stakeholders. This in turn enhances the pressure on firms to engage in corporate social responsibility initiatives in order to address these challenges. The expanding role of the business corporation in society is discussed in the scholarly literature under the umbrella term of corporate social responsibility (CSR). CSR is becoming a broad field within management research. Its scholarly roots can be traced back to the 1950s. Yet, it gained momentum in the 1990s and evolved into a concept that is discussed from very different theoretical perspectives and that is defined in multiple ways. The seminar will start with a general introduction into the field of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and its related theories.

b) How to Conduct a Good Presentation/ Write a Good Seminar Paper. In the first session, you will get an additional introduction on how to conduct a presentation in our seminar. We will examine the structure and content of a presentation and highlight the important aspects you need to consider when preparing it. We will review what a good presentation is and we will discuss how you can increase the interactivity with the audience during your presentation.
In this session, we will also discuss how to write a good seminar paper. We will examine the structure and content of a scientific paper and highlight the important aspects you need to consider when preparing your paper. This session is also useful to discuss the ideas for the topic of your seminar paper. You will be able to work with your peers on your ideas and we will discuss your research questions in class.

References (not included among the reading documents):

Bänsch, A., & Alewell 2009. Wissenschaftliches Arbeiten, München: Oldenbourg.

Huff, A. S. 1999. Writing for scholarly publication, Thousand Oaks, USA: Sage.

Huff, A. S. 2009. Designing research for publication, London: Sage.

Theisen, R. 2012. Wissenschaftliches Arbeiten: Technik-Methodik-Form, 15. Auflage, München: Vahlen.

For further guidelines on how to write scientific papers, please refer to the download box on our homepage: http://www.business.uzh.ch/professorships/as/themenliste.html

Theme 1: Corporate Wrongdoing: The Dark Side (24 March)

Before looking at CSR, it makes sense to focus on the flip-side of the CSR concept and thus on the dark side of corporate behavior. I refer to it here as "corporate wrongdoing" but there are other related concepts around (e.g. corporate misconduct, crime, etc.). The purpose of the according presentation is to answer the following questions: What is wrongdoing in a corporate context? What does it involve? In how far is "wrongdoing" different from related concepts? Why and under which conditions does wrongdoing come about on different levels (e.g. individual, organizational, or industry-level)? *(Please do not focus on how it can be prevented or controlled. This will be covered in the three subsequent themes and sessions)*

References:

Coleman, J. W. 1987. Toward an integrated theory of white-collar crime. American Journal of Sociology, 93(2): 406-439.

* Greve, H. R., Palmer, D., & Pozner, J. E. 2010. Organizations gone wild: The causes, processes, and consequences of organizational misconduct. Academy of Management Annals, 4(1): 53-107.

Palmer, D. A. 2013. The new perspective on organizational wrongdoing. California Management Review, 56(1): 5-23.

Schnatterly, K., Gangloff, K. A., & Tushke, A. 2018. CEO wrongdoing: A review of pressure, opportunity, and rationalization. Journal of Management, 44(6): 2405-2432.

Theme 2: Corporate social responsibility (CSR) (24 March)

Now that we have covered the dark side of corporate behavior, we can attend to its brighter and more responsible side. First, however, we need to better understand what CSR is about. Hence, in this session, the following questions should be covered: What is CSR? What are different types of CSR? Why do companies engage in CSR? How is CSR different across countries? What is the relationship between globalization and CSR?

References:

Matten, D., & Moon, J. 2008. "Implicit" and "explicit" CSR: A conceptual framework for a comparative understanding of corporate social responsibility. Academy of Management Review, 33(2): 404-424.

Scherer, A. G., & Palazzo, G. 2011. The New Political Role of Business in a Globalized World: A Review of a New Perspective on CSR and its Implications for the Firm, Governance, and Democracy. Journal of Management Studies, 48(4): 899-931.

* Wickert, C., & Risi, D. 2019. Corporate social responsibility. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (only Chapter 1: "What is corporate social responsibility…")

Wickert, C., & Risi, D. 2019. Corporate social responsibility. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (only Chapter 2: "Why would business firms…")

Theme 3: The role of governments (31 March)

From this theme onward, we take a look at various stakeholders and investigate what they can do to (1) prevent companies from engaging in wrongdoing and (2) motivate companies to engage in CSR. We start with governments. As such, the purpose of this session is to answer the following questions: What are the tools and mechanisms available for governmental authorities in order to make sure that companies refrain from wrongdoing and rather comply with laws and regulations? How and when do they work? When are they used? What is the relationship between governments and CSR? Which tools and mechanisms can states use to motivate companies to engage in CSR? How and when do they work?

References:

* Gunningham, N. 2010. Enforcement and compliance strategies. In: Baldwin, R., Cave, M., & Lodge, M. (Eds.): Oxford Handbook of Regulation. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Kagan, R., & Scholz, R. T. 1980. The "Criminology of the Corporation" and Regulatory Enforcement Strategies. In: Blankenburg, E., Lenk, K. & Rogowski, R. (Eds): Organisation und Recht: Organisatorische Bedingungen des Gesetzesvollzugs. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag.

Moon, J., & Vogel, D. 2008. Corporate social responsibility, government, and civil society. In: Crane, A., Matten, D., McWilliams, A., Moon, J., & Siegel, D. S. (Eds): Oxford Handbook of Corporate Social Responsibility. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Schneider, A., & Scherer, A. G. 2019. State Governance Beyond the 'Shadow of Hierarchy': A social mechanisms perspective on governmental CSR policies. Organization Studies. 40(8): 1147–1168.

Theme 4: The role of the media (31 March)

Believe it or not, but the media are one of the most powerful stakeholders for companies! Sometimes, they are even referred to as the "fourth power" ("Die vierte Gewalt") after government, parliament and the courts. As "infomediaries", they aggregate and evaluate newsworthy corporate events and shape not only public opinion more generally but importantly also the judgments and actions of those stakeholders that companies are more directly dependent on (e.g. investors, suppliers, buyers, regulators, etc.). Hence, bad media evaluations tend to have bad consequences for corporate wrongdoers. Overall, in this presentation, one could cover the following questions: What are the media? How do they differ? What are the social control functions of the media? In how far do they fulfill these functions? How do the media respond to, or let us rather say: how do they "construct" corporate wrongdoing? What are the consequences of bad media evaluations for companies (both for the targets and for similar others)?

References:

* Clemente, M., & Gabbioneta, C. 2017. How does the media frame corporate scandals? The case of German newspapers and the Volkswagen diesel scandal. Journal of Management Inquiry, 17: 1-16.

Tang, Z., & Tang, J. 2016. Can the media discipline Chinese firms' pollution behaviors? The mediating effects of public and government. Journal of Management, 46(6): 1700-1722.

Jonsson, S., Greve, H. R., & Fujiwara-Greve, T. 2009. Undeserved Loss: The Spread of Legitimacy Loss to Innocent Organizations in Response to Reported Corporate Deviance. Administrative Science Quarterly, 54(2): 195-228.

Barkemeyer, R., Faugere, C., Gergaud, O., Preuss, L. 2020. Media attention to corporate scandals: Hype and boredom in the age of social media. Journal of Business Research, 109: 385-398.

Theme 5: The role of social movements (14 April)

Social movements – forms of relatively informal collective action with a focus on ethical, political, or social issues and aimed at promoting social change – are another powerful stakeholder for dissuading corporate wrongdoers and setting them on a different, more responsible path. Just think about the enormous influence that environmental movements ("Fridays For Future", sparked by Greta Thunberg, and the "Extinction Rebellion") have recently been developing across Europe. This presentation could deal with the following questions: What are major types of social movements of relevance to the promotion of CSR, and how do they differ from each other? Why and when do social movements form? How (through what strategies and tactics) can social movements dissuade companies and industries from wrongdoing? How and when does it work?

References:

Bartley, T., & Child, C. 2014. Shaming the corporation: The social production of targets and the anti-sweatshop movement. American Sociological Review, 79(4): 653-679.

* Briscoe, F., & Gupta, A. 2016. Social Activism in and around Organizations. Academy of Management Annals, 10(1): 671-727.

King, B. G., 2008. A political mediation model of corporate response to social movement activism. Administrative Science Quarterly, 53(3): 395-421.

King, B. G., & Soule, S. A. 2007. Social Movements as Extra-Institutional Entrepreneurs: The Effect of Protests on Stock Price Returns. Administrative Science Quarterly, 52(3): 413-442.

Theme 6: The role of multi-stakeholder initiatives   (14 April)

Multi-stakeholder initiatives (MSI) have become a core topic both in CSR research and in CSR practice. Hereby, companies civil society stakeholders (such as NGOs) and potentially also governmental authorities and international organizations come together to jointly address issues of corporate responsibility in more or less collaborative and democratic ways. Frequently, the purpose is also to jointly address grand societal or environmental problems such as global warming, health issues, or inequalities in our societies. To better understand this topic, the following questions shall be addressed: What are MSI? How do different types of MSI differ from each other? How and when do MSIs work? How and when do they fail?

References:

Arenas, D., Albareda, L, & Goodman, J. 2020. Contestation in multi-stakeholder initiatives: Enhancing the democratic quality of transnational governance. Business Ethics Quarterly, 30(2): 169-199.

* Gray, B., & Stites, J. 2013. Sustainability through Partnerships: Capitalizing on Collaboration. Report for the Network for Business Sustainability. https://www.nbs.net/articles/sustainability-through-partnerships-a-systematic-review

Moog, S., Spicer, A., & Böhm, S. 2015. The politics of multi-stakeholder initiatives: The crisis of the Forest Stewardship Council. Journal of Business Ethics, 128: 469-493.

Vogel, D. 2008. Private global business regulation. Annual Review of Political Science, 11: 261-282.

Theme 7: The role of financial markets   (21 April)

Due to the progressing "financialization" of the economy (Davis & Kim, 2015), actors in the financial market (such as investors, banks, fund managers, and financial analysts) have become particularly powerful stakeholders. This presentation should introduce us to the stance of financial market actors with regards to CSR. It could for instance address the following questions: How do actors in the financial market evaluate and respond to responsible/irresponsible companies? Why? How have these evaluations and responses changed over time? Why? What are recent developments and innovations in the financial market that aim at increasing the focus of investors on CSR or sustainability? How do they fare – and why?

References:

Busch, T., Bauer, R., & Orlitzky, M. 2016. Sustainable Development and Financial Markets: Old Paths and New Avenues. Business & Society, 55(3), 303–329.

* Crifo, P., Durand, R., & Gond, J. P. 2019. Encouraging investors to enable corporate sustainability: The case of responsible investment in France. Organization & Environment, 32(2): 125-144.

Desjardine, M., & Durand, R. 2020. Disentangling the effects of hedge fund activism on firm financial and social performance. Strategic Management Journal, article in press.

Kurtz, L. 2009. Socially responsible investment and shareholder activism. In: Crane, A., Matten, D., McWilliams, A., Moon, J., & Siegel, D. S. (Eds.) Oxford Handbook of Corporate Social Responsibility. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Theme 8: The role of top management   (21 April)

According to the so-called 'upper echelons' perspective (e.g. Hambrick, D. C. 2007. Upper Echelons Theory: An Update. Academy of Management Review, 32: 334-343), it is the top management – especially the CEO but also other members of the top management team – that largely determines corporate strategies and their outcomes. Following this general line of argument, a wealth of studies have investigated how characteristics of the CEO and the top management team affect the social (ir)responsibility of corporations and their actions. Covering this field of research, this presentation could for instance address the following questions: How and under which conditions do top management characteristics shape corporate outcomes? Which top management characteristics may lead to corporate social responsibility and irresponsibility? Why? Which factors may strengthen the effect of certain top management characteristics on corporate responsibility and decrease the effect of other top management characteristics on irresponsibility?

References:

Flammer, C., Hong, B., & Minor, D. 2019. Corporate governance and the rise of integrating corporate social responsibility criteria in executive compensation: Effectiveness and implications for firm outcomes. Strategic Management Journal, 40: 1097-122.

* Gröschl, S., Gabaldon, P., & Hahn, T. 2019. The co-evolution of leaders' cognitive complexity and corporate sustainability: The case of the CEO of Puma. Journal of Business Ethics, 155: 741-762.

Swanson, D. L. 2009. Top managers as drivers for corporate social responsibility. In: Crane, A., Matten, D., McWilliams, A., Moon, J., & Siegel, D. S. (Eds.) Oxford Handbook of Corporate Social Responsibility. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Tang, Y., Qian, C., Chen, G., & Shen, R. 2015. How CEO Hubris affects Corporate Social (Ir)responsibility. Strategic Management Journal, 36: 1338-1357.

Theme 9: The role of employees   (5 May)

Employees are at the core of business activities and often seek identification with the firm they work at. Hence, a moral organization conducting CSR activities might encounter higher employee commitment than a firm that is perceived as unmoral by its members. This presentation should include theoretical concepts of employees' perceptions of CSR activities (e.g., organizational justice theory, attribution theory) and demonstrate how employee perceptions of CSR activities are formed. It would also be interesting to discuss how employee perceptions of CSR activities differ from perceptions of other stakeholder such as consumers or suppliers. For example, do consumers and employees perceive the same types of CSR activities as suitable? While CSR activities often address society or the environment,

CSR activities can also positively affect the employees or even be targeted at employees. What are the (positive or negative) effects of a firm's CSR activities on its employees? Are there even CSR activities that directly focus on employees rather than society and how are they different to 'traditional' CSR activities?

References:

Bode, C., & Singh, J. 2017. Taking a hit to save the world? Employee participation in a corporate social initiative. Strategic Management Journal, 39: 1003-1030.

Rupp, D. E., Ganapathi, J., Aguilera, R. V., & Williams, C. A. (2006). Employee reactions to corporate social responsibility: An organizational justice framework. Journal of Organizational Behavior, 27(4), 537-543.

* Rodrigo, P., & Arenas, D. (2008). Do employees care about CSR programs? A typology of employees according to their attitudes. Journal of Business Ethics, 83(2), 265-283.

Vögtlin, C., Greenwood, M. 2016. Corporate social responsibility and human resource management: A systematic review and conceptual analysis. Human Resource Management Review, 26: 181-197.

Theme 10: CSR Implementation   (5 May)

Last but not least: To effect real change rather than constructing a smoke screen, CSR needs to be firmly implemented in companies. However, as you probably all know from your own experience, formulating strategies or plans is much easier than actually implementing them. Hence, we focus on perhaps the most crucial one: CSR implementation. In this context, we should learn more about the following issues: How can CSR be implemented in corporations? What are the main levers and hurdles – and how can these be overcome? Who – besides top managers, who we have already covered – are key actors in the CSR implementation process, and what can they do promote CSR in the corporation?

References:

Arjalies, D-L., & Mundy, J. 2013. The Use of Management Control Systems to Formulate and Implement CSR Strategy: A Levers of Control Perspective. Management Accounting Research, 24(4): 284 - 300.

* Wickert, C., & Risi, D. 2019. Corporate social responsibility. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (only Chapter 3: "How to implement…")

Wright, C., & Nyberg, D. 2017. An inconvenient truth: How organizations translate climate change into business as usual. Academy of Management Journal, 60(5): 1633-1661.

Wickert, C., Scherer, A. G., & Spence, L. J. (2016). Walking and talking corporate social responsibility: Implications of firm size and organizational cost. Journal of Management Studies, 53(7), 1169-1196.