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DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE AS AN INTEGRAL ELEMENT OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND THE PRINCIPLE OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Abstract

The moral climate of economical activity has special impact on forming a new management philosophy – Social Corporate Responsibility (CSR). Classical capitalist establishment used to be responsible on behalf of its owner, with achieving its main goal – maximizing profits. Now it is more often emphasized that the corporation should be responsible for the needs of different groups – stakeholders. Distributive justice is one of the main elements of being responsible in business activity.

The idea of sustainable development is an attempt of answering the problem which appeared at the end of XX century connected with global threats of consuming natural resources, environment devastation, excessive demographic growth and inappeasable needs of people. The notion of distributive justice, written into the definition of sustainable development has got special meaning, because it refers to intergenerational and between generational dimension.

Key words: Corporate Social Responsibility, sustainable development, distributive justice, environment, wealth.

Introduction

The aim of the article is to present the role of distributive justice for corporate social responsibility and for the idea of sustainable development. It is often pointed that firms and corporations should take an responsibility for a lot of local community, global society and natural environment. Some international corporations often becomes more powerful than some countries, where they are in business and they have bigger opportunities to make changes in a global scale. Creating moral climate in an economical activity promotes a new philosophy of management – Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The moral standards in business generally comes out of:

• simple fairness, which means as the same as considering honesty and fair behaves (paying debts, rewarding workers, respecting contracts and agreements etc),
• distributive justice, which postulates coherence between growth of wages and labour efficiency as well as sustaining an adequate proportion between strict economical goals of corporation and natural resources plus social environment which is effected by economical activity of business.

The principle of sustainable development is an answer to a global threats appearing at the end of XX century, which are connected with: the waste of natural resources, inordinate demographic growth and inappeasable basic human needs. Great deal in popularizing the idea of sustainable development played the Brundtland Report of the World Commission for Environment and Development Affairs in 1987. The document stated that the condition for the global order in social, economical and environmental spheres requires such a development.
which satisfies the needs of present generations, without cutting off possibilities of supplying the needs of future generations (Nasza .., s. 67).

The definition was used by the authors of The Declaration of Environment and Development during the World Submit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, where in one of 27 principles stated directly: The rights of development must be enforced in such a way to make justly consideration for a development and environmental needs of present and future generations [Dokumenty ..., s. 14]. It seems that justice is the value which plays special role for corporate social responsibility and for achieving the idea of sustainable development.

Just corporation

In early modern capitalism the corporation used to be responsible only before the owner. Its main purpose depended on multiplying profits to those people who invested their money in the business. Nowadays, the active social assisting of the corporation becomes a necessity. There are different groups (stakeholders) that corporation is responsible for, like: workers, boards, local and national governments, pressure groups (ecological movements), human rights organizations etc. It becomes impermissibly not only to bring loss in the business but also not to take an advantage to act positively.

Contemporary corporation and also traditional considered institution have to respect the expectations of different sets of partners. The stage of achieving their goals depends on factual social responsibility of single organizations, which are characterized by certain sensibility of simple facts in the outer world and the ability of upholding the sustainability between clients’ interests, workers and investors (Zemigala, 2007, s. 51).

Robert Spaemann pointed five basic areas of social business responsibility:

- excluding or weakening interests inconsistency having been the result of diastase subjective and objective aims of the actions;
- guaranteeing workers the satisfaction of the work they bring off;
- caring for own society;
- protecting natural environment from its devasting and leaving it in the same condition as now to future generations, to make sure the human life will be respected;
- Caring for human welfare (Filek, 1999, s. 118).

It would be unthinkable to talk about aforementioned areas of business responsibility without reflection on justice. The market can not be left for its own, but as each instrument it should be subjected to human’s welfare and from here managed by justice. In order to prevent of creating the idolatry of market <...> we should use it and led by it, to make it more justice than free (Moreda de Lecea, 1994, s. 13). In those days and age the notion of justice becomes one of the most important terms of social life. It plays the role of the fundamental element of social structure. John Rawls is right, when he writes: (... ) justice is the first virtue of social institutions. (…) The truth and just institutions, it is not important how efficient and how well organizes they are, they have to be reformed or taken down, if they last unjust (Rawls, 1994, s. 13).

Trying to find out the connections between the notion of distributive justice and corporate social responsibility, it would be advisable to define the meaning of first term. According to the Oxford Philosophical Dictionary it depends on formulating the principles characterizing distribution of goods and burdens, <...> that all participants of them might received the portion belonging to all. At the starting point we all assume that each single person should be treated equally as the rest once, except that there are another reasons of inequality; the next questions should be answered, what might justify inequalities, what role does the government play in reducing inequalities and what kind of relation takes place between distributive system and maximizing welfare (Blackburn, 1997, s. 376).
The formula the portion belonging to all played fundamental meaning in Aristotle understanding of distributive justice.

Though it should be pointed that the category – the portioned belonging to all – requires widely comprehended credits of rewarded people such as; work contribution, education etc. Distributive system is treated as just in connection with supposed conception of just. Yet, independently of the situation we assume, it always happens that in social community there are groups of people who would be undeserved of reward, because they have not done anything to get something.

Sometimes the set of events, affection and other factors make certain people unable to take a job, in this way they can not work. The lack of required qualities puts those people out of the group having chance to get goods.

As a matter of fact it is possible to create the qualities enabling support to those groups of people, there is income redistribution system, which helps to allow additional benefits. But there is a question – is it just? Making those benefits available, it is necessary to function in a working tax system which is a result of the collected duties of those who put some efforts to get a certain estate. In another words, some money have to be taken from those who worked them out and given to those who did not do anything to possess them.

Such a procedure of course is right and in most of the countries it does not cause any moral objections. In a certain way it actually invades system of justice, because having full respect and acceptance to it, we have to admit that it brakes basic principles of justice. It obviously requires an application to another base, that will be proper to set up distributive justice.

One of the most interesting propositions is John Rawls’ the idea of justice as fairness. According to American philosopher justice should be expressed in a set of principles discussed behind the veil of ignorance in the original position. The author of A Theory of Justice describes hypothetical history of a shipwrecked group of people finding themselves out on a desert island. They have to make some decisions together in order to survive. After a certain time of debate, with one accord, they establish a law which must be respected and obligatory. Though they all must be sure that all decisions were made freewill and with a certain reflection.

In the hypothetical position behind the veil of ignorance our shipwrecks, as rational individuals specify two principles:

1. Each person should get an equal guarantee to as many different liberties, and as much as those liberties as can be guaranteed to everyone else at the same time;
2. Inequalities in society are okay only if they are arranged so that the inequalities: a) actually help out the least fortunate persons in society, and b) the inequalities are connected to positions or offices or jobs that everyone has an equal opportunity to attain (Rawls, 1994, s. 73, 87 – 89).

First principle assumes, that basics civic freedoms such as: political freedom, liberty of speech and association, civil liberty including property rights, protection against arbitrary arresting and execution, should be equal to all citizens. The company functioning with the reverence to the first principle will:

- respect human rights and promote them where it is possible;
- promote peace, safeness, heterogeneity and social integration;
- support integrity of local cultures;
- respect material and intellectual property rights;
- regard local community as a very important partner, whose needs will be taken into account together with business projects;
- promote competitive maintenances, which are advantageous to the community and natural environment.
Second principle stands that institution of social and economical inequalities should assume the biggest benefits to those who the least privileged and those possible inequalities would be connected with positions and governments available to all in situation equally obtainable (Rawls, 1994, s. 119). According to second principle a company will:

- respect standards concerning employment and conditions of work;
- tend to elaborate issues profitable to poor workers or those whose family’s situation is problematical;
- declare to people of a local society such a level of earnings which would secure just conditions of life and assure that those promises would be addressed to those who are the least rewarded;
- avoid to apply practices depending on discrimination in: employing, discharging an employee, accessing to trainings, abilities of promotion, national or religious background etc.
- make sure of safe and healthy place of work and do all the best to protect against unreasonable accidents, harms of life which might happen during the time work.

The essential to Rawls’ concept of distributive justice is presupposition of the first principle over the second one and elimination opportunities of swapping liberty through economical or social profits.

Summing up, it should be emphasized that organizers of economical activities ought to own special competence of conciliation the needs of their own firms and corporations with the respect to people, local communities, nations and natural environment. Justly considered corporate social responsibility in practice means that leaders will be:

- sensitive in matters having impact on people who work and live with them;
- able to understand the conditions obligating in the community, trying to have a positive impact on them at the same time;
- conscious not only of that what the company fabricates but first of all how it is produced.

The principle of justice puts on the businessmen the responsibility for the result of economical activity which are recognized especially in social and environmental spheres. Social responsible corporation will contribute to implementation of sustainable development process.

**Sustainable development as a principle of justice**

The idea of sustainable development is the concept of order in a global sense occurring to economical, social and ecological spheres. It was elaborated as a principle of a social wealth distribution in a global scale among particular countries and nations. Generally its implementation suppose to serve reducing an incredible disproportion between North and South. The delegates of the World Submit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 agreed together that all people around the World should cooperate together to achieve the basic goal, which is elimination of the poverty, it is an unnegotiable condition of sustainable development (Zablocki, 2002, s. 34).

During the next Submit in Copenhagen in 1995 it was stated: We are deeply convinced that economical, social development and protection of natural environment are connected together and mutually strengthened elements of sustainable development, which is recognized as the foundation of our efforts aiming at accomplishment of higher quality of life for all people. Just social development, making natural resources permanently for poor people available, is unquestionably important to sustainable development (Zablocki, 2002, s. 34).

In what way individuals, social groups, countries, international organizations might be motivate, and even constrain themselves to keep principles of justice. Again, it returns the question of criterions which play the role of the base in satisfying needs of present and future generations. Accordance with the earlier pointed problem of *effection justice*, the incomes
should be shared only by those who through their efforts are able to offer certain goods or services. It is expected that such a way of distribution will stimulate community members to work for wealth building. In this case it must not be considered any privileges and limitations which might weaken competition.

Yet, if there are some countries in European Union which were able to force certain contracts protecting their “sensitive sectors” in the world markets such as agriculture, textile industry etc., it means that justice invoking to the principle of everyone gets according to his affections was broken, because there are some developing countries, which might be competitive in this case, because those sectors “sensitive” are very important to them.

The sustainable development with the idea of everyone gets according to his affections seems impossible to be defined because such a criteria of justice focuses the attention on the inward stratification of the society (Papuziński, 2005, s. 58), and after all the problem depends on creating such a criteria of actions which will occur as principles of global order building.

Occurring in the history of social sciences another criteria of justice – according to human needs – points out the humanitarian side of the principle, drawing on even closer to the notion of “mercy”. In this assumption there is a thesis which emphasizes common destination of goods, including even those who do not have their own possessions. At this point the fundamental question appears – according whose needs and what kind of needs goods should be distributed? The level of unsatisfied demands are different and they are not always expressed by poor standards of life (Kolm, 1998, s. 588).

The idea of sustainable development considered from this point of view does not seem to be the best solution of the interpretation because basic needs, mentioned above, might be defined only in the boundaries of the culture which creates them. And after all there is no place for objectivity in this statement. It would be really difficult to talk about global just distribution upon the foundation of the concept.

It seems that equal chances criteria is the most reasonable to define the idea of sustainable development as a principle of justice because it looks the most persuasive for the concept of social goods distribution in a global sense. It is impossible to eliminate big disproportions between developed countries and developing ones without presupposition that participation in economical life is reserved only to those who are equipped with required tools such as capital or knowledge.

Unabatedly the most essential principle for the idea of sustainable development is the criterion of ecological justice. For last decades more and more awareness of degradation of natural environment has been taking place in contemporary world. There is a desperate need of common concord that ecosystems of the Earth are necessary wellbeing of the whole human race and making decisions concerning the way of modern economy it is important to consider not only interests of present generations but also those who are not borne yet.

Summary

Definition of justice and settlement of its criterion have been a big need of all generations of political philosophers since the ancient times. The number of theoretical works concerning the problem is a testimony that it is still always returning desire to find out the inside and meaning of the notion.

It was always difficult to define right sense and criteria of justice: act, behavior, person and his/her relation to others and finally just nation or the world.

Aristotle concept of justice as necessity of giving deserved portion to those who own it is not sufficient. The problem especially appears in connection with attempts of applying free market acts to an expectancy of justice. It is impossible to say that market economy is just or unjust.
In relation to market it lasts indifferent. In effect yet the consequences of market functioning such as growth of wealth, development and all bad results of it such as poverty of individuals, countries, whole regions, etc. are not indifferent. It seems that distributive justice is a fundamental both to corporate social responsibility and sustainable development.

**Literature**