

Chapter 3

Management of the Political Enterprise in the Service of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Cosmopolitan Society: Integrating Ethical Values–Driven Management in the Politicization of the Corporation

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ABSTRACT

This chapter proposes to analyze the theory of the political enterprise with focus on the concept of ethical values-driven management in the contemporary debate on the politization of business in service of sustainability in cosmopolitan society. By service of cosmopolitan society of the political enterprise the chapter investigates the idea of the political enterprise as being a responsible political, ethical, and social agent with focus on the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that are required to justify its mission and role in society as a political actor that makes a difference for its social and political community. The company is embedded in a social and political order with a diversity of political values, and the discussion about the meaning of the concept of values-driven management is therefore fundamental if one is to analyze the concept of the political enterprise in service of the Sustainable Development Goals.

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary management of business at the service of cosmopolitan society, the concept of the political enterprise with focus on sustainable development and a general politization of business activities have become central to understanding corporate public relations and the relation between business and

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society. Politization means that there is a political and social aim of business with focus on respect for humanity and on the good and happiness in CSR and business ethics (Meyer 2015; Renouard & Ezvan 2018; Chia, Kern & Neville 2020). Referring to cosmopolitan society and cosmopolitan business ethics means that businesses must act in cosmopolitan and global context where business moves beyond local and national boundaries and addresses sustainable development from the point of view of global and cosmopolitan business ethics (Rendtorff 2017). By service of cosmopolitan society of the political enterprise we refer to the idea of the political enterprise as being a responsible political, ethical and social agent with focus on the 17 UN sustainable development goals (SDGs) that is required to justify its mission and role in society as a political actor that makes a difference for its social and political community (Rendtorff 2019a). The company is embedded in a social and political order with a diversity of political values, and the discussion about the meaning of the concept of values-driven management is therefore fundamental if one is to analyze the political enterprise (Scherer & Palazzo 2007). In the political and economic sense, companies can be regarded as organizations and institutions in “turbulent and dynamic environments” and as “systems of interacting individuals with interests and preferences” (March 1962). In this perspective, the company is not only an economic entity, but the market economy is determined by the search for ethical and political objectives of business corporations, which recently has been accomplished in a centered focus on the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

This article proposes to analyze the political enterprise with focus on the concept of ethical values-driven management in the contemporary debate on the politization of business in service of sustainability in cosmopolitan society, with focus on the global responsibilities of business (Driscoll & Hoffman 2000). This debate can be seen as a confrontation between what has been called a positivistic and pragmatic concept of creating shared value (Porter 1980, Porter 1987, Porter 2008; Porter & Kramer 2003; Porter & Kramer 2006; Porter & Kramer 2011) on the one hand and the post-positivistic and deliberative and communicative concept of the political corporation on the other hand (Palazzo & Scherer 2006; Scherer & Palazzo 2007; Scherer & Palazzo 2011; Scherer, Palazzo & Seidl 2013). In their concept of the political enterprise both approaches have a general concept of value without focusing on the ethical dimensions value of the political corporation (Rendtorff 2011a). What has been missing in the debate is a deeper clarification and discussion of the concept of ethics and ethical values-driven management of the political enterprise in service of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in cosmopolitan society (Crane, Palazzo, Spence & Matten 2014). To fill this research gap, I analyze the organizational foundations for ethical values-driven management of the political enterprise which can be said to lie behind the concept of sustainable development.

As core focus of ethical values-driven management of the organization in service of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in cosmopolitan society, we can mention the basic ethical principles of respect for autonomy, dignity, integrity and vulnerability as the foundation of the democratic political values in business (Rendtorff 2009). These principles have been proposed as fundamental principles of European ethical culture (Rendtorff 2002; Rendtorff 2017). Thus, they are essential ethical values for the enterprise at the service of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in cosmopolitan society. Here, it is important to remember that the ethical principles are ideas that do not only apply at the individual level. They also get their basic significance at the organizational level (Rendtorff 2011b). This is the basis for service ethics and ethics in the enterprise in service of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in cosmopolitan society.

The theoretical framework for this research is the concept of business legitimacy with focus on the ethical dimension of legitimate business (Rendtorff 2020). Business legitimacy means that the corporation is becoming an ethical and political actor and that the social and economic activities of business are

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