

## THE ROLE OF HETEROGENEOUS CONTEXT SHAPING CSR PRACTICES IN RUSSIA

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**Goal:** this paper investigates the diversity of corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices in the Russian context. The purpose of this paper is to study how a heterogeneous context, commonly found in rising economies, shapes the emerging CSR practices of business organizations operating in Russia. **Methodology:** an institutional perspective that draws on the contextual multilevel approach guides our study. In our theoretical framing we assume that organizational fields play a key role in shaping CSR practices. This is applied to empirical investigation of organizational CSR practices. To inform our analysis we used desk research and an empirical dataset that consists of interviews with local business owners and managers representing a wide range of business organizations operating in Russia. **Findings:** based on an exploratory qualitative inquiry, we distinguish between four types of organizational CSR practices co-existing in Russia: global, crossvergent, authentic and irresponsible. Our findings demonstrate that business organizations populating one organizational field share homogeneous characteristics of CSR practices. **Originality and contribution:** the distinctions among CSR practices of business organizations belonging to different organizational fields are explained by the markets where they operate, core stakeholders, response mechanisms to prevailing institutional pressures and the dominant legacy of CSR.

*Keywords:* CSR practices, institutional theory, organizational fields, context, Russia.

*JEL:* M14, M16.

### INTRODUCTION

With the growing number of publications on corporate social responsibility (CSR) in rising economies [McKiernan, Purg, 2013] of countries in transition to market economy and developing countries over the last three decades [Jamali, Karam, 2018], researchers in this emergent field discovered the shared features and specific manifestations of CSR within national boundaries

and compared their findings with CSR in developed countries [Blowfield, Frynas, 2005; Gugler, Shi, 2009; Idemudia, 2007; Jamali, Neville, 2011; Moon, Shen, 2010; Okoye, 2012; Prieto-Carryn et al., 2006; Visser, 2008]. This literature shows the common characteristics of CSR in rising economies as being less formalized, more embedded and driven by multiple actors

[Jamali, Karam, 2018; Jamali, Neville, 2011; Visser, 2008].

The importance of understanding the context dependence of CSR has been accentuated with calls for closer attention to the peculiar institutional settings, inside and outside of the national business system (NBS) [Whitley, 1999], which may ultimately lead to different expressions of CSR [Jamali, Neville, 2011; Okoye, 2012]. Country of origin is also relevant [Gjølberg, 2009] to the development of CSR within organizations, and there is a need to contextualize CSR in research [Chapple, Moon, 2005; Halme, Roome, Dobers, 2009].

In search for explanations of the differences in the emerging CSR practices and in particular contexts we acknowledge that one of the prevalent themes in international comparative CSR research is a debate about the patterns of CSR's convergence or divergence [Jamali, Neville, 2011; Turkina, Neville, Bice, 2017]. In other words, it remains unclear whether in the rising economies national CSR forms are emerging through diffusion of extant forms from developed countries as a result of globalization and the reproduction of the CSR practices, or whether these national CSR practices are mostly shaped by the local NBSs, and the path-dependent development represented in history, culture and societal hierarchies. Given that there are significant local variations in CSR in the world [Carroll, 2008], there are very few studies providing a sound theoretical basis to these variations. Most commonly it is argued that hybridized forms of CSR practices are prevailing in the developing countries [Jamali, Karam, 2018]. Even less is known about the factors that determine hybridity of CSR in non-Western contexts. We assume that CSR needs to be conceptualized in a particular institutional context [Campbell, 2007]. Single country studies focusing on CSR can refine the existing theoretical framing by focusing on the uniqueness of institutional settings that shape prevailing CSR practices.

In comparison with other rising economies, especially China, Russia remains under-stud-

ied in relation to the CSR practices [Fifka, Pobizhan, 2014]. However, over the last two decades, the concept of CSR has proliferated into business and academic discourses in Russia [Blagov et al., 2008; Crotty, 2014; Fifka, Pobizhan, 2014; Kuznetsov, Kuznetsova, Warren, 2009; McCarthy et al., 2012; Preuss, Barkemeyer, 2011; Settles, Melitonyan, Gillies, 2009; Turkina, Neville, Bice, 2017]. The model of capitalism [Whitley, 2007] that Russia as a rising economy most closely resembles is a segmented business system [Wood, Frynas, 2006], where the state has a strong impact on CSR development [Settles, Melitonyan, Gillies, 2009]. According to [Fifka, Pobizhan, 2014] two major factors contribute to the growth of CSR in Russia: the neo-liberal driven reshuffling of responsibilities from government to the private sector and an increasing awareness of CSR as a global phenomenon in emerging and existing markets.

In this study we contribute to the understanding of how organizational CSR practices are emerging outside the Western environment. In order to gain new insights into the phenomenon of CSR in Russia in a contextualized way, we theorize CSR using a multilevel approach by drawing on the institutional [Jamali, Neville, 2011] and segmented NBS [Wood, Frynas, 2006] perspectives. Our key aim is to study how a heterogeneous context, commonly found in rising economies, shapes the emerging CSR practices of business organizations operating in Russia. In our study we combine desk research with a qualitative dataset collected from business organizations operating across Russia. In examining these, we draw on a well-established range of organizational CSR practices shaped by the institutional environments.

The article is structured as follows. Section 1 presents an examination of the theoretical framework that informs our analysis. The methodology is introduced in Section 2. In Section 3, we describe the findings. The final section presents discussion and conclusions.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### Making sense of CSR in the context of rising economies

There is wide-ranging and persistent definitional ambiguity in both literature and practice as regards the major constructs determining the meaning of CSR [Moon, Crane, Matten, 2005]. The problem with CSR is that it “means something but not always the same thing to everybody” [Votaw, 1972, p. 25]. We adopt the definition of CSR provided by [Aguinis, 2011, p. 855]: “Context-specific organizational actions and policies that take into account stakeholders’ expectations and the triple bottom line of economic, social, and environmental performance”. CSR is a dynamic concept, in which business serves the interests not only of its shareholders, but also of a wider group of other stakeholders. These include traditionally recognized groups such as shareholders, employees, consumers, business partners, civil society, and governments [Freeman, 1984; 1994], as well as those more recently recognized as stakeholders, such as the natural environment and future generations [Barnett, Henriques, Husted, 2018].

We refer to a general contextualized model of CSR [Matten, Moon, 2020, p. 13] that points out key CSR actors (core stakeholders, societies where companies operate and regulators), and distinguishes between implicit CSR (embedded, e.g. NBSs) and explicit CSR (emergent, e.g. global institutions) and contributes to legitimacy of business through performance, societal status and regulatory approval. The predominant understanding of CSR in the Western context is based on the Anglo-Saxon tradition, which emphasizes its voluntary nature [Barkemeyer, 2009]. Taking a comparative perspective globally, we know that a model of explicit CSR is typical for the US, where CSR is a distinct and labeled activity in business practice, while Europe and Asia operate within a more implicit CSR

model that perceives responsible business practices as embedded in the institutional and legal framework of society [Matten, Moon, 2008]. In the European Union (EU), the spread of CSR happened as a part of the debate on broader issues of sustainability and globalization [Habisch et al., 2005] and currently shifting towards focus on impact of business activities, more regulation and greater disclosure requirements, according to provisions of the “EU Green Deal”.

According to a literature review of CSR in developing countries [Jamali, Karam, 2018] the term CSR became used in non-Western contexts more than 30 years ago. This is long enough to see how CSR has already established itself in practice and the academic literature. Unlike developed countries where CSR emerged in an evolutionary way within non-interrupted capitalism, in rising economies CSR is taking shape in a more chaotic way along with the rapid transformational processes that national economies and societies are dealing with in the aftermath of colonialism and communism. CSR in rising economies has taken its present forms within a relatively short period of time and is connected with the incorporation of CSR into existing institutions. The literature on CSR in developing countries pays close attention to the peculiar institutional settings, or NBS configuration, which may ultimately lead to different expressions of CSR [Jamali, Neville, 2011; Okoye, 2012; Whitley, 1999]. We use institutional and NBS perspectives with a focus on organizational fields [Jamali, Neville, 2011]. We apply a multilevel contextual approach that allows us to reflect upon the evolution of a complex system in which different elements occur at different paces in parallel to existing (or missing) vertical and horizontal connections [Aguinis, Glavas, 2012].

## A multilevel institutional framework for emergence of the contextualized CSR practices

Institutional theory emphasizes that contextual factors are responsible for the legitimacy of organizations in a given institutional environment [Suchman, 1995] and describes how organizations attempt to become isomorphic with these environments, in response to three types of pressures — coercive, mimetic and normative [DiMaggio, Powell, 1983]. In this paper, we follow a NBS perspective, which emphasizes the context of the institutional environment within which business organizations operate, in order to demonstrate divergence of managerial practices and existence of distinctive national varieties of capitalism and NBSs [Whitley, 1999]. This perspective assumes that an ongoing divergence of managerial practices with respect to CSR is path-dependent and shaped by the set of national institutions, legal frameworks and inherited

culture within which business operates [Halme, Roome, Dobers, 2009]. Entrepreneurs and corporations exist in different contexts with varying legal rules and social norms, which leads to vastly different forms of CSR practices with varying dominant legacies and logics found in different countries [Brammer, Jackson, Matten, 2012].

As our theoretical framework, we use an embedded multi-layered institutional lens for research in CSR which has been developed and empirically tested in the context of Lebanon [Jamali, Neville, 2011]. Assuming that Russia is a large rising economy irreversibly integrated in the global trade and a country with its own distinctive NBS [Whitley, 1999; Wood, Frynas, 2006] shaped by the historical and cultural legacies, and path-dependent development we have modified this model.

As shown on Figure, our modifications are based on the following set of assumptions from an institutional perspective:

- 1) we distinguish between the macro-level that breaks down into the global (envi-

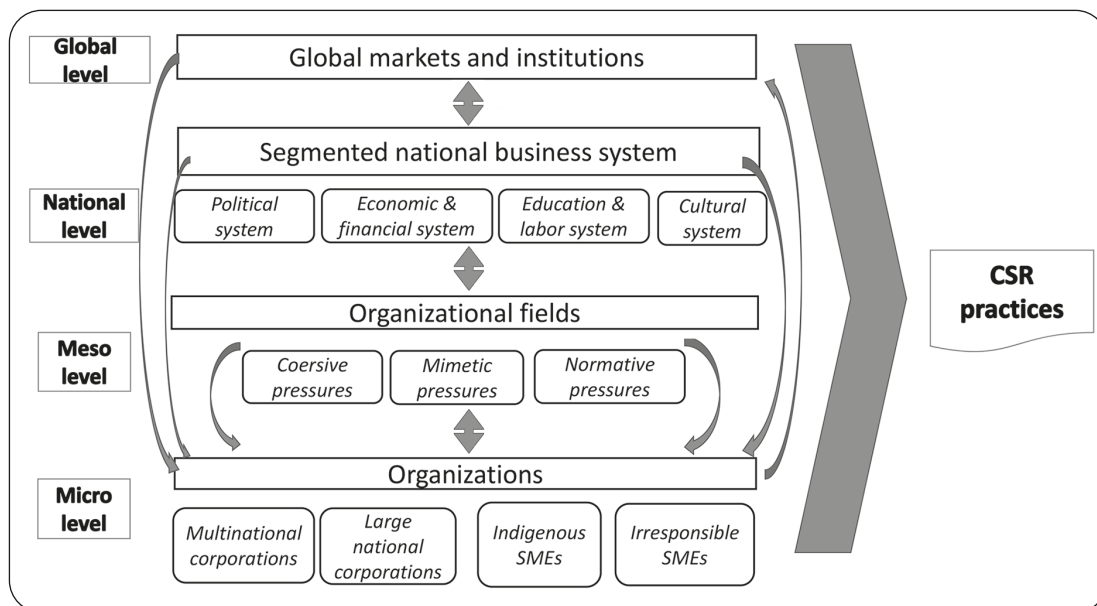


Figure. A Multilevel institutional framework for emergence of the contextualized CSR practices

Based on: [Wood, Frynas, 2006; Jamali, Neville, 2011].

ronment and institutions) and the national (segmented NBS) components, meso- (organizational fields) and micro- (organizations) levels, reflecting a multilevel institutional framework;

- 2) we argue that organizational fields are the major organizing units responsible for the emergence of the variety of CSR practices;
- 3) we assume the contextual heterogeneity of the organizational fields, taking into account the multi-layered structure of the segmented NBS;
- 4) we acknowledge the interdependence and open loop nature of interactions in the institutional factors shaping CSR practices;
- 5) we differentiate between MNCs, large national corporations, indigenous SMEs and irresponsible SMEs that constitute the key actors within a NBS.

Even though many researchers point out the complex character of NBS in the rising economies [Hall, Soskice, 2003; Wood, Frynas, 2006], the dominant Anglo-Saxon frame of reference in the literature is that NBS is taken as a homogeneous business centric phenomenon [Jamali, Karam, 2018; Whitley, 1999]. In the context of East African countries authors of study [Wood, Frynas, 2006] have coined a term “segmented business system” as a new variety of capitalism, which is characterized by rigid internal divisions between different areas of economic activity. Given domestic institutional weaknesses and vulnerability to external pressures, segmented business systems are operating to generate “revenue for specific actors and maintaining the existing power relations” [Wood, Frynas, 2006, p.242], while remaining “locked in a cycle of poor performance” [Wood, Frynas, 2006, p.271]. The authors propose that segmented business systems may exist in a large number of the successor republics to the former Soviet Union.

In this paper we assume that segmented NBSs are typical for the rising economies, particularly for Russia. However, it is beyond

the scope of this paper to describe the segmented nature of the Russian NBS. In the theoretical framework proposed by [Jamali, Neville, 2011], the notion of the organizational field is the central organizing unit of analysis and serves as a locus of interaction of the macro- and micro-level institutional pressures for any given context. We highlight such features of organizational fields as dynamic, richly contextualized and interactive relational spaces in which organizations engage with one another in order to develop a collective understanding of matters and issues that are important to them, act upon their environment and are simultaneously acted upon by the same environment [Wooten, Hoffman, 2008]. We use the definitions of organizational fields centered around firms with a common technology, products, services, or market [DiMaggio, Powell, 1983], and sharing some other common qualities (e.g., size, ownership), which can be assumed as the basic characteristics of the organizational fields.

In the literature the issue of heterogeneity of context is not thoroughly addressed. This leads to the co-existence of multiple expressions of CSR practices in the business organizations that belong to different organizational fields within one country. In rising economies, as in any national economies, three distinct forms of ownership are present within segmented business systems: multinational, state, and indigenous, i.e., locally owned [Wood, Frynas, 2006, p.250]. In our theoretical framework we identify organizational fields with different populations of business organizations: subsidiaries of the MNCs, large national corporations (state- and privately-owned); indigenous local small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and irresponsible SMEs. The latter illustrates practices of irresponsible business and irresponsible CSR which are caused by the institutional voids and gaps taking place in rising economies [Boudier, Bensebaa, 2011; Whiteman, Cooper, 2016].

The following research question is addressed in our study: *which features of or-*

*ganizational CSR practices in Russia are typical for business organizations belonging to different organizational fields?*

## DATA AND METHODS

In order to thoroughly address our research question we used methodological triangulation in data collection and interpretation [Lincoln, Guba, 2000]. We started with desk research to describe a particular national contextual background and institutional setting that shapes emergence and current state of CSR practices in Russia. We collected textual data from diverse publicly accessible sources, such as newsletters, official reports and statements by the business organizations operating in Russia, corporate media and nonfinancial reports available online. Such an approach enabled us to capture an enriched picture of the local context. Then we conducted an empirical study and analyzed qualitative data collected from the Russian business organizations to discover how CSR practices are taking place (or not) in the organizational context of this rising economy.

Empirical research was conducted over a 2-year period in Russia, in cooperation with 4<sup>th</sup> year students of a bachelor program in business management. As part of their undergraduate program assignments, students were supervised by the second author to carry out semi-structured interviews on CSR practices in participating companies. To ensure a consistent approach to data collection, all students undertook a 90-minute training session on how to conduct a face-to-face interview and use the interview guidelines developed by the second author. In communications with participants, it was clearly specified that interviews were part of a research study. Study participants gave their consent to participate in a face-to-face interview on CSR and confirmed their status as a manager with no less than two subordinates.

Gaining access to respondents is generally not easy in Russia, especially in corporate and entrepreneurial settings. Our re-

search team had to be very creative in dealing with gatekeepers. A mix of convenience and snowball sampling approaches were used to gather data. In reaching out to potential respondents, students were advised to rely on Internet research and a range of personal contacts and networks, including their own friends, parents, faculty members and members of the alumni association. One in three potential respondents expressed interest in research and took part in the study. Interviews took place at the companies' premises or at a neutral location. Five interviews were held via Skype. Students uploaded original audio files, transcripts and contact details of interviewees to the learning management system (LMS). After uploading the files, they were deleted from the LMS and students' IP storages, so only a team of authors had access to collected data. To ensure respondent confidentiality, all interviews were anonymized (Appendix). Respondents' accounts on CSR activities reflect actual practices as they are anchored in the language, they use to depict them. Such an approach helped us to avoid wishful thinking and common CSR managers' biases about the state of CSR development in Russia. We focused on the organizational level of analysis with respect to investigated CSR practices.

For the purposes of data quality control, additional random checks were made by the second author. Unconfirmed and fake interviews were excluded from the dataset. The data was collected in 2016 and 2017 using the same interview guidelines. In total, 87 interviews were analyzed by the coauthors. The majority of the respondents held positions at the manager (38%) or middle manager (25%) level, a little over a quarter of participants were senior managers (28%) and the smallest group of our informants included business owners (9%). The organizations under investigation represented both small and medium sized businesses (53%) and large firms (47%). The organizations where interviews took place were located in the Central (90%), Ural (6%), North (2%),

South (1%) and Far East (1%) Federal Districts of Russia. Areas of business activity covered services (80%), extractive industries (17%) and processing industries (3%).

Interviews were scheduled to take up to 60 minutes. Depending on how much time was available and how talkative respondents were, interviewers had the freedom to adjust the sequence of questions and skip some questions closer to the end of the interview. Interviews were between 45 minutes and 2 hours long. The average duration of an interview was 55 minutes. All interviews were audio recorded and fully transcribed. Interviewers used a system for simple transcription which was sufficient for the thematic content analysis [Braun, Clarke, 2006]. Analysis was conducted on the basis of the original Russian transcripts. All interview material was imported into the ATLAS.ti software for coding purposes. Parts of the interviews quoted in this article were translated by the first author into English and proofread by a native English speaker. These verbatim quotes are indicated by quotation marks.

A team of authors both sequentially after each other and jointly analyzed the collected data. In conducting our data analysis, we undertook three steps. At the beginning, we divided our sample into four subsets following our theoretical proposition about existence of four distinctive organizational fields with organizations which express different CSR practices. Then we used informant-centric concepts derived from the interviewees and tried to grasp the characteristics of CSR practices for further data-driven theorizing. We carried out open coding of the data to crystallize the general themes of CSR practices. We identified CSR practices initially by separating text fragments in which informants drew a line between different types of CSR practices, and secondly, by analyzing the practices used in these fragments. In order to control and validate our understanding after reaching sufficient consistency in the initial categories, we coded the rest of the text fragments that did not

differentiate between various CSR practices, following respondents' orientations as a key criterion. As a next step in our circular analysis, we went over the data multiple times to check the categories against the added data and update them where necessary.

The codes generated were then refined and written into the findings of this article. We re-checked and coded all data by applying the resulting coding scheme. Preliminary findings were thoroughly discussed with peers at internal meetings and international academic conferences and workshops. Research results were also triangulated with previous work, participatory observations and fieldwork that qualify all co-authors as insiders on CSR practices in the Russian SMEs, large businesses and multinational corporations. Finally, the first-order concepts were then regrouped into the second-order themes for the comparative analysis of the organizational CSR practices and identifying differences between them. Characteristics of organizational CSR practices were identified inductively from the dataset. As an outcome of our analysis, we were able to categorize the CSR practices from our dataset and delivered a theoretically saturated typology of organizational CSR practices in Russia.

## FINDINGS

### Multilevel institutional context shaping CSR in Russia

The literature on CSR practices in the global context typically evaluates the level of CSR practices in Russia as relatively low [Crane, Matten, Spence, 2007, p.12], but more recent assessments give a more positive view. In brief history of CSR in Russia, authors of the study [Settles, Melitonyan, Gillies, 2009] claim that it developed as a result of historical and political changes the country faced after the fall of communism, which led to the adoption of more CSR practices, particularly in large companies with an international profile and companies influenced by government to engage in

responsible behavior. It means that for large businesses in Russia there are different legacies of CSR.

There is little evidence of successful cross-sector partnership strategies [Kuznetsov, Kuznetsova, Warren, 2009]. Regional and federal authorities prefer normative control and coercion, but also foster cooperation in areas affecting policy, to compensate for the inadequate performance of formal institutions [Kropp, Schuhmann, 2016]. Among the factors that had the biggest impact on development of CSR in Russia, scholars identify “the need to rebuild infrastructure, the impact of foreign trade and investment, the adoption of contemporary management methods, the development of philanthropy and the work of international and domestic organizations” [Settles, Melitonyan, Gillies, 2009, p. 93].

The government of Russia is taking an active role in creating an institutional framework for responsible business. The government’s official endorsement of both the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development<sup>1</sup>, and the Paris Agreement<sup>2</sup> are signs of the country’s commitment to introduce global sustainability policies at the national level. Some of the important policies include an anti-corruption legislation<sup>3</sup> and a draft law on compulsory non-financial reporting for large businesses in Russia. However, in comparison to the EU, the level of governmental engagement with business and civil society on tackling the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)<sup>4</sup> and addressing climate change is relatively low. One of the biggest problems in Russia remains the lack of active involvement by civil society

in shaping CSR [Fairbrass, Zueva-Owens, 2012]. However, corporate volunteering is becoming a common element of CSR practices that stimulates civic engagement at the individual level and enhances civil society infrastructure in Russia [Krasnopolskaya, Roza, Meijs, 2016]. Russia’s hosting of a number of high-profile international sports events, such as the 2014 Winter Olympic Games and the 2018 Football World Cup, have stimulated a massive surge in volunteering throughout the country.

Most of the available academic research overlooks the important role of institutional infrastructure in promoting business ethics, CSR and sustainability in Russia. The United Nations in Russia, especially the UNDP office<sup>5</sup>, the UN Global Compact Russia<sup>6</sup>, the UN Information Center in Moscow<sup>7</sup>, as well as a handful of European civil society organizations, such as British Charities Aid Foundation (CAF)<sup>8</sup> and German Konrad Adenauer Foundation<sup>9</sup> have played an important role in raising awareness about business ethics, CSR and the UN Millennium Development Goals<sup>10</sup> since the beginning of the 2000s. Currently this leadership role has been taken on by the UN Global Compact Russia and a number of local Russian civil society organizations.

At the beginning of the 2000s, CSR initiatives and reporting practices were strikingly underdeveloped among Russian companies in comparison to their counterparts from OECD countries and even to similar companies from developing economies [Baskin, 2007]. Only a few years later, the largest 20 Russian multi-

<sup>1</sup> United Nations. URL: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals> (accessed: 01.12.2022).

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Climate Change. URL: <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement> (accessed: 01.12.2022).

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Digital Development, Communications and Mass Media. URL: [https://digital.gov.ru/ru/documents/3419/?utm\\_referrer=https%3a%2f%2fwww.google.com%2f](https://digital.gov.ru/ru/documents/3419/?utm_referrer=https%3a%2f%2fwww.google.com%2f) (accessed: 01.12.2022). (In Russian)

<sup>4</sup> United Nations. URL: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals> (accessed: 01.12.2022).

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Development Programme. Russian Federation. URL <http://undp.ru/> (accessed: 01.12.2022).

<sup>6</sup> United Nations Global Compact. URL: <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/engage-locally/europe/russia> (accessed: 01.12.2022).

<sup>7</sup> United Nations in the Russian Federation. URL: <http://www.unrussia.ru/en/agencies/un-information-centre-moscow-unic> (accessed: 01.12.2022).

<sup>8</sup> CAF. URL: <https://www.cafonline.org/> (accessed: 01.12.2022).

<sup>9</sup> The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung. URL: <https://www.kas.de/en/about-us> (accessed: 01.12.2022).

<sup>10</sup> Millennium Development Goals <https://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/> (accessed: 01.12.2022).



nationals already demonstrated the second strongest intensity of CSR communications among the BRIC countries, after Brazil [Li et al., 2010]. Around the same time, a comparative analysis of non-financial reports produced according to the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)<sup>11</sup> framework revealed that Russia occupied a middle position between developed and developing economies [Preuss, Barkemeyer, 2011]. Among the top 200 largest Russian corporations, perceived as national CSR champions, with regular CSR disclosure, sophisticated codes of ethics and non-financial reports are produced as a result of external pressures from foreign stakeholder expectations, guided by international standards and frameworks [Barkemeyer, 2009]. Thus, both MNCs operating in Russia and large national corporations, under the prevailing institutional pressures of global market and international organizations in CSR and sustainability are already actively involved in CSR practices.

Since the beginning of the 2000s, the local responsible business agenda has been shaped and promoted by national professional and business associations, most actively by the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (RUIE)<sup>12</sup>, the Russian Managers Association (RMA)<sup>13</sup> and the Russian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI). Members of these associations who have been actively involved in influencing public discourse on CSR and sustainable development include some of the largest Russian companies, representing primarily fossil fuels and processing industries (oil, gas, energy, metallurgy), state-owned enterprises (transportation, banking) and multinational corporations (FMCG, alcohol and tobacco) with operations in the country. All of these business associations have designated committees on CSR, business ethics, sustainability and ESG, which form a community of CSR professionals,

advocate interests and produce valuable services, such as annual conferences on CSR, sustainability and ESG, an annual ranking of CSR managers (RMA), awards for the best sustainability reports (RUIE) and People Investor practices (RMA). The initiative of RUIE and the Moscow Stock Exchange on sustainability indexes launched in 2019 signals that Russian business is improving the transparency and quality of disclosure on CSR in line with the ESG criteria. Major players in the establishment of the field of CSR and sustainability in Russia included the big four international accounting consulting firms, as well as the leading international management consulting firms with specialized sustainability departments. Most recently, the National ESG Alliance became a new institutional player consolidating efforts of responsible business in Russia in its transition to net-zero economy.

Alongside these initiatives from the private and nonprofit sectors, the academic community is also playing an important role in fostering CSR practices in Russia. Among the higher education institutions, the oldest is the Center for CSR at the Graduate School of Management (GSOM) of the St Petersburg State University, with its track on Business and Society at the GSOM's annual conference on emerging markets, followed by the Financial University's annual conference on CSR and an annual track on CSR and sustainability management at the April Yasin conference of the HSE University. All of these universities have been successful in advocating the inclusion of core courses on business ethics, CSR and sustainability as compulsory elements for undergraduate students majoring in management. They are actively developing textbooks and teaching resources on CSR and have the highest number of PhD students. In 2016, CEE chapter of the UN Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME)<sup>14</sup> was founded. As of 2021, 12 Russian business schools are active UN PRME signatories. In 2022 a number of master's programs on sustainable man-

<sup>11</sup> Global Reporting Initiative. URL: <https://www.globalreporting.org/> (accessed: 01.12.2022).

<sup>12</sup> Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs URL: <https://rspp.ru/> (accessed: 01.12.2022). (In Russian)

<sup>13</sup> The Russian Managers Association. URL: <https://amr.ru/> (accessed: 01.12.2022). (In Russian)

<sup>14</sup> PRME. URL: <https://www.unprme.org/> (accessed: 01.12.2022).

agement have been successfully launched by the PRME members in Moscow.

CSR practices at the micro level in business organizations operating in Russia are still often associated with corporate philanthropy [McCarthy, Puffer, 2008]. CSR within SMEs often takes form of social entrepreneurship [Blagov, Aray, 2019] which is supported by the “Our Future Foundation” and Russian corporations from the fossil fuel industries [Moskovskaya, 2011]. There are some positive and some more negative aspects to this. With respect to corporate sustainability, the cases of Shell [Ray, 2008] and Gazprom [Villo, Halme, Ritvala, 2018] indicate that fossil fuel intensive corporations show little concern for taking stakeholder’s interests into account. Although awareness of the UN Global Agenda 2030 is high among the largest Russian corporations, recognized as national CSR champions, SMEs are lacking even a basic understanding of the 17 UN SDGs. In less than two decades CSR became fairly established concept in the Russian business community. However, the segmentation of CSR practices is evident at the organizational level, and different organizational fields produce different CSR practices at the micro level.

### Organizational CSR practices in Russia

Based on a qualitative exploratory study, we developed an empirically grounded typology of four organizational CSR practices in Russia, represented in our sample as global, crossvergent, authentic and irresponsible.

#### Global CSR

One of the organizational CSR practices can be described as reflecting the penetration of CSR from the global markets to the local ones, as MNCs are expanding their operations across the world [Habisch et al., 2005; Crane, Matten, 2016]. The dominant legacy of the global CSR practices is rooted in neoliberal values and globalization, in line with the Anglo-Saxon model of capitalism [Matten, Moon, 2008]. The

prevailing logic in this practice is compliance with the international and internal norms of good business conduct. For example, an executive of a multinational professional service provider based in Russia explains:

*“We are a representative office of a Western company in Russia. It means that we have clearly stated corporate rules” (2:17).*

The MNCs’ approach to CSR is publicly acknowledged as the benchmark in Russia. Understanding of CSR is manifested in voluntary practices that go beyond meeting legal obligations. MNCs in Russia claim no tax avoidance and justify their tax optimization by legal boundaries. Key stakeholders include shareholders, employees, customers, business partners in the supply chain, local communities, government and nonprofit organizations. Importance of employees as stakeholders is taken for granted, as a senior manager from a construction industry points out:

*“One of the core values of the company is people who work for this company. In order to make people feel comfortable, the company strives to create favorable working conditions for them, seeks to develop them, improve their professional level, and also make their work as comfortable as possible. Of course, in turn, people who receive both new professional skills and more comfortable working conditions bring companies much greater returns” (46:69).*

Existing management tools are formalized and structured according to international norms and best practices. They include risk management, compliance and due diligence for transactions, anti-corruption clauses in contracts with business partners, product terms and conditions, codes of conduct for business partners in supply chains, human rights policies, ombudsmen, stakeholder mapping and stakeholder dialogs. Organizational structures for CSR include specialized global CSR / sustainability departments, local Human Resources (HR) / Public Relations (PR) / Government Relations (GR) / legal departments entrusted with CSR / sustainability and cross-func-

tional teams on CSR / sustainability projects. We acknowledge that the concept of CSR is formally integrated into MNCs' business practice and clearly articulated for stakeholders.

Central topics in the global CSR organizational practices are transparent and accountable business operations, adaptation to Russia, management effectiveness, shareholder value, quality and safety of products, legal prevention of corruption through compliance, corporate reputation and citizenship, ecologically sound technologies, resources (e.g., energy and water efficiency, waste management, recycling, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions), diversity and non-discrimination and corporate philanthropy. The best illustration of explicit CSR is provided by a manager from FMCG sector:

*"As a company, we take responsibility for environmental sustainability through the generation which we call "The Sustainability Generation". There are a number of complex tasks that each business unit faces. One of these tasks is "Zero Waste to Landfill", which means that we do not want to take anything from our factories or production facilities for disposal or to landfills. We want all this to be recycled and beneficial. Our task is also to optimize the use of electricity, or any energy, to use heat more efficiently, to use more efficient technologies" (9:132).*

At the same time explicit CSR practices, particularly in HR and PR, are more vocal in the global CSR. Personnel practices are characterized by specialized HR functions, signing alignment with corporate rules and values at the beginning of employment, codes of conduct for employees, salaries equal to or above the market average, annual indexation of salaries, fringe benefits (e.g. corporate health insurance, pension plans, etc.) and bonuses, a corporate culture stimulating professional development of personnel, corporate universities, dress codes, guidelines on behavior in social media and public statements, whistle-blowing through global ethical hot-lines, employee engagement through

corporate volunteering and structured philanthropy practices.

Communication practices include advanced internal (e.g., corporate domain and newsletters) and external (e.g., website and social media) tools, dedicated sections for CSR / sustainability on the global corporate website and extensive outreach activities for good causes. The level of awareness of non-financial reporting is high, with reports prepared in accordance with international standards, but engagement with the process in terms of reading and acting on these reports remains relatively low. Generally, there is no special country non-financial reporting on Russia, except for a few multinationals. We see that implicit CSR practices to some extent inform this type of CSR, as illustrated by the statement of an executive from the hospitality sector:

*"Business is very closely tied to CSR, since any public company is expected to show its attitude towards people, and from a very good point of view. It cannot work otherwise. Of course, there are programs to support orphanages, but all this is done locally" (17:103).*

### Crossvergent CSR

The organizational CSR practices we labeled as crossvergent highlights both trends towards divergence and convergence of CSR [Jamali, Neville, 2011]. The legacy of this practice is rooted in management traditions inherited from the Soviet Union, complemented by modern Western management practice. This continuity in management practice is emphasized by a manager of a large bank:

*"I remember the Soviet Union and how well it [CSR] was organized there. But now it is simply called differently. The motivation is turned around a little bit. But the substance has not changed" (77:27).*

Alongside this Soviet tradition, the importance of learning from the best international practice is stressed, as shown by a manager from the retail industry:

*“In general, an example of socially responsible companies is shown to us by the Western business... They bring their culture to the culture of our companies” (49:106).*

On the one hand, CSR is facilitated and often imposed by the state, on the other hand, it is implemented by following and adopting MNCs’ best practice in CSR and in combination with continuing existing local management traditions. The logics underpinning the crossvergent CSR are both compliance and semi-legitimate coercion. An understanding of CSR is connected with semi-voluntary practices that go beyond meeting legal obligations, paying taxes in full and legally optimizing tax burdens. Major stakeholders include business owners, employees and their family members, future generations, government, customers, local communities, business partners, investors, trade unions, nonprofit organizations, and the natural environment. Consideration of multiple stakeholders is illustrated by a manager from the energy sector:

*“The most important thing is that the business is run in a civilized way. It means that the results of work should be beneficial not only to the management, but to the entire staff. We must think not only about today, but think more about tomorrow and a long term perspective” (56:17).*

Existing management tools are formalized and structured according to national and international norms of responsible business practice and include internal control, audit, security and compliance, mitigating risks of corruption through anti-corruption policies, preventing conflicts of interests (e.g., nepotism, insider information), leadership as a role model, developing and maintaining social infrastructure in local communities and stakeholder dialogs. The importance of anti-corruption procedures is clearly emphasized in Russian business practices:

*“Our company has a set of provisions, which declares that we are against corruption, bribes and other violations of the law... Employees are informed that such actions are prohibited” (49:25).*

Organizational structures responsible for CSR are represented by the specialized functions of chief CSR / Sustainability Officer, traditional functional HR / PR / GR departments, as well as being part of the supervisors’ responsibilities. Awareness of non-financial reporting is adequate. It is applied locally in accordance with international, national and corporate non-financial reporting standards. Non-financial reports are focused on operations in Russia and abroad.

Both explicit and implicit forms of CSR are highly present in the organizational management practices shaping crossvergent CSR. The main topics characterizing crossvergent CSR are doing business in a civilized way, modernization of production, international standards, corporate image, social partnership, company towns, traditions, hierarchy, safety of products, maintaining and developing a collective, relationship management, stakeholder engagement, self-limitations on work with unethical business partners, environmental protection, respect for cultural heritage, and sponsoring local and public policy activities.

Personnel practices are defined through a specialized HR function, job descriptions for employees, codes of ethics and/or conduct, competitive salaries, employment benefits (e.g. additional health insurance, co-financing pensions, ad-hoc material support, corporate loans, subsidizing vacations, etc.) and bonuses, corporate culture facilitating long-term employment, professionalism and corporate traditions, corporate universities, facilitating intergenerational practices (e.g. families, single mothers, pensioners, working dynasties, etc.), dress codes, digital infographics and visuals on behavior in public spaces, local ethical hot-lines and corporate volunteering locally (e.g. culture, religion, sport, etc.). Communication practices are characterized by developed internal (e.g., corporate online and offline media) and external (e.g., website and social media) tools and dedicated sections for CSR / sustainability on the corporate website.

According to a manager of a large professional service provider, the role of leadership is crucial in implementing CSR:

*“In Russia, this is probably a tribute to fashion, because the President of the Russian Federation said that business should bear social responsibility... Everything depends, first of all, on the owners and management of the company, on how they perceive it. Some take social responsibility voluntarily and implement certain projects; others do it under coercion from the authorities” (85:22).*

### **Authentic CSR**

In line with E.F.Schumacher’s concept of “small is beautiful”, a further type of CSR could be referred to as describing authentic organizational CSR practices closely connected to their place of origin [Schumacher, 1973]. These indigenous practices are attributed to managers and owners of SMEs operating on local markets. The prevailing legacy in this organizational CSR practice is an emphasis on the value of local development driven by healthy entrepreneurial spirit of the self-made business leaders. Care and inclusion in the life of the local communities are emphasized by a top manager of a small research and development company:

*“Our company is a part of society. We cannot separate ourselves from the needs of society and from its problems” (45:71).*

CSR is understood to encompass meeting legal obligations, creating social impact and paying all taxes. It is perceived as a common sense. CSR practices are tailor-made for local purposes almost without using relevant terminology and PR campaigns. A widespread explanation correlates this type of CSR practice with business size, according to a manager of a bank:

*“Objectively, this [CSR] works only in the case of large companies that have a name, a reputation, or enter Western markets and can receive added value from it. In the case of small and medium-sized*

*businesses in Russia, this does not work” (62:24).*

Major stakeholders, apart from owners, include employees, local communities, and customers, as illustrated by the following statements from the owner of an IT company:

*“We feel a responsibility towards the employees and the local community. We must not regret giving, as it will return with time” (8:154).*

This type of organizational CSR is mostly shaped by implicit practices. Important topics are those concerned with showing respect for working locally, conscious production, arms-length responsibility for employees, clients and local communities, creating real value to society without greenwashing, management by intuition and common sense, learning by doing, the heart values of the business owner, limited accountability, recycling practices, serving as a positive role model of flourishing business for future generations, and giving back to society through philanthropic activities. Existing management tools are semi-formalized and structured according to intuition and values. Management practice is driven by life experience, human dignity and well-being. Both hard and soft tools are characteristic for this type of CSR, including controlling, non-disclosure of confidential information, as well as the owner’s integrity as guiding principles. The owner acts as a major decision-maker and a role model for integrity. The best illustration of this practice is provided by the manager of a small retail business:

*“The way the head of the company behaves, the ethical standards which live in his soul and in his heart, shapes the functioning of his whole company, all his employees” (15:22).*

The importance of explicit CSR is very limited for SMEs. It is believed that there is no need for a specialized CSR / sustainability function. Within an organization, the issues of CSR / sustainability are addressed by the HR department and are part of the owners’ and supervisors’ responsi-

bilities. Most of the SMEs are not aware of non-financial reporting and see no value in it. If non-financial reporting takes place, it is voluntary and sporadic, not in accordance with any external standards. Personnel practices are modeled by the owners jointly with the in-house HR specialist. They consist of job descriptions for employees, basic codes of ethics, market-level salaries with some employment benefits (e.g. material support, transportation, fitness, etc.) and stimulating bonuses, a corporate culture encouraging real value creation for the benefit of local communities, informal conversations and communication of corporate values, dress codes, posters with visual reminders (e.g. turn off the lights), ad-hoc training events, employees' direct engagement in charity work (e.g. supporting orphanages, churches, sport) and indirect engagement through donations to foundations. In comparison with large business in Russia, in SMEs there are almost no outreach campaigns on the charitable activities. It is assumed that not all good deeds should be made public, as this is against locally accepted cultural norms:

*"I really do not like when people do things as box-ticking in order to get recognition. It is important to help. It is important to do social programs. But you need to promote them inside the company in order for your employees to feel something more. That they are useful and do something important for the country and the local community... I think it is wrong to show off about some things" (8:148).*

Communication practices are loosely structured. Corporate documents are for internal use only and are not publicly communicated. There are only few dedicated sections for CSR/sustainability on the corporate websites. The rationale behind this practice is explained by a top manager of an advertising agency:

*"On our company's website there is no such information, since we perceive CSR and ethical norms as something traditional, which is not being documented" (51:44).*

## Irresponsible CSR

The final CSR type depicts irresponsible CSR practices of SMEs that fail to act responsibly and represent instances of corporate social irresponsibility (CSiR) [Lange, Washburn, 2012]. The legacy that shapes this CSR practice is the wild capitalism of the 1990s in Russia that emerged after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and is associated with extreme egocentrism of business owners and their reluctance to stop being part of the informal economy. The dominant logics within such organizations are corruption and survival. This is illustrated by a top manager of a florist shop:

*"... Children of the 1990s, those who are over 45 today, these businessmen make up the largest part of our clients. It is impossible to change them. There is corruption in its purest form. There is anti-ethics of business. These people, the so-called "bold pirates", made their fortunes at that time and today they do not want to change" (27:52).*

One major key stakeholder is the business owner that defines everything in the way organization is operated. The corporate culture reflects the owners' limited responsibility. Their understanding of CSR practices is distorted, since legal obligations are not always met (e.g., no employment contracts or paid sick leave, back door salaries). Optimization and avoidance of tax payments takes place.

Key topics of the irresponsible CSR organizational practices are manifested in notions of private business, profit maximization, hack and slash for money, extra employees as a luxury, poor facilities, pragmatism, situational ethics, the informal economy, corruption, organizational misconduct, bullying, obscene language and philanthropy as an indulgence. There is no specialized CSR function in the organizational structure.

Existing management tools are poorly formalized and loosely structured. They include such practices as probation periods,

informal control, visuals (e.g., posters, reminders) and fines for organizational misconduct (e.g., being late, not meeting deadlines, not respecting subordination). When it comes to personnel practices, there is no dedicated HR manager. Instead, it is the chief accountant who is responsible for keeping personnel files. There are no codes of ethics/conduct. Parts of the salaries are paid under the table. There are no additional employment benefits. Such approaches to remuneration practices are explained by a deep mistrust of owners towards employees:

*“The whole Russian reality is built on the great classic “many a mickle makes a muckle”. Owners are forced to build a business with absolute paranoia in their heads that they will steal, and everyone is a thief. It means that you get, for instance 30.000 [RUB], the rest you can steal” (27:52).*

There are no CSR activities that could be either characterized as implicit or explicit. Unwritten rules not welcoming employees taking sick leave for themselves, or their children are widespread. There are very limited formal training opportunities (e.g., for accountants) and employees are only sporadically involved in charitable activities. There are no structured internal or external communication functions in the organizational routines. These SMEs are not aware of non-financial reporting and its value. The outcomes of business activity are best described as seeking profit at any cost and working as a means of existence. For example, this is how a manager of an SME from the pharma industry explains the dominant trend:

*“Unfortunately, today we have a lot of examples of unreliability, dishonesty and deception in Russian business. Companies are trying to adhere to the norms of business ethics. But so far, few can afford the “luxury” of ethical business. Ethics and profits are almost incompatible on the Russian market” (30:23).*

The global CSR practices represent publicly owned large multinational businesses

(MNCs) with representative offices and operations in Russia. Crossvergent CSR is the practice of the large Russian publicly and state-owned companies. The authentic CSR and irresponsible CSR practices are attributed to privately owned SMEs. Different CSR practices can co-exist, and it would be accurate to say that we were not able to recognize one discourse as dominant in the Russian business community. In the analysis that follows, we systematically compare the four types of CSR practices, taking into account factors responsible for shaping their distinctive characteristics.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Prior to presenting discussion and conclusions from this study, we would like to address its distinctive features and limitations. Our advantage from similar prior studies is that our informants were not CSR managers, but line managers, executives and business owners. We believe this approach provides a more accurate picture of CSR practices in Russia in comparison to self-reporting that prevails in most of the previous studies. Our study uses data collected from businesses of different types and sizes with operations in metropolitan and provincial parts of Russia, including multinationals, large Russian companies and SMEs. However, it should be noted that we did not investigate the evolving phenomenon of social entrepreneurship, sustainable start-ups, digital CSR and B-Corps in Russia, which could have added a new “voice” to the identified polyphony of organizational CSR practices. Even though our study is not a historical one, we were able to distinguish between different international (globalization) and national (Soviet period and transition period of the so called “wild 1990s”) legacies that shape CSR practices in Russia. Another limitation of our study is that the sample does not reflect the structure of the Russian economy, and sanctions imposed on business operating in Russia in the aftermath of the recent events in

Ukraine and it does not embrace all Russian regions, covering primarily urban areas.

In our study, we have tried to shed more light on the understanding of CSR practices emerging in the context of a rising economy by discussing the features of organizational CSR practices which are typical for business organizations belonging to different organizational fields in the framework of segmented NBS. Our analysis reveals a strikingly manifold manifestation of CSR in the Russian business context. Four types of organizational CSR practices were revealed: global, crossvergent, authentic and irresponsible. We were able to provide a systematic comparative analysis of the Russian CSR practices by identifying characteristics of organizational fields, based on the definitions

of [DiMaggio, Powell, 1983; Wooten, Hoffman, 2008], that shape CSR practices (Table). These characteristics include markets in which organizations operate, core stakeholders, prevailing institutional pressures for CSR and dominant legacy for CSR. Our paper, initially drawing on the multilevel institutional frameworks proposed by [Jamali, Neville, 2011] presents them from a new perspective by applying the concepts of a segmented NBS, multiple organizational fields and institutional pressures which result in the diverse CSR.

The most obvious but not yet documented finding that we were able to trace is that CSR and CSiR co-exist in the Russian business reality. We see both traces of the global market and its institutions, as well as the

Table

Organizational fields shaping CSR practices in Russia

Characteristic of organizational field	Market of operations	Core stakeholder	Prevailing institutional pressure for CSR	Dominant legacy for CSR	Organizational CSR practice
Multinational corporations	Global and local	Shareholders, employees, customers, business partners, local communities, NGOs	Coercive	Neoliberal values and globalization	Global
Large national corporations	Local and global	Owners, employees, business partners, investors, state, customers, local communities, NGOs, nature	Mimetic, coercive, normative	Traditional and neoliberal values driven by internationalization	Crossvergent
Indigenous SMEs	Local	Owner(s), employees, local communities, customers	Formal normative	Local development and personal ethos of owner(s)	Authentic
Irresponsible SMEs	Local	Owner(s)	Informal normative	Egocentric values and staying in shadow	Irresponsible



segmented NBS, in characteristics of CSR manifested in different organizational fields. The combination of the global market and compliance with the national legislation system determine the features of global and crossvergent CSR practices, and in turn, the local market and the informal economy are displayed in an authentic and irresponsible CSR. Therefore, different mechanisms of institutional pressure, including normative (formal and informal), coercive and mimetic shape segmented organizational CSR practices in Russia. A multilevel institutional framework for emergence of the contextualized CSR practices explains hybrid forms of CSR organizational practices and differences in CSR features in organizational fields.

In the case of the global CSR represented by the local representative offices, coercive pressures come mostly from the head-offices. As a result, these practices in Russia are almost identical to the global CSR practices and oriented to shareholders, employees, customers, and suppliers. With respect to the crossvergent CSR, it is the mimetic pressures that are most evident, as large Russian businesses follow the model of best practices in CSR shown by Western companies operating in Russia, the UN Global Agenda 2030, and sustainability policies at the global level. At the same time, this type of CSR practices is also shaped by coercive pressures that come from local business associations and government, as well as by the normative pressures that interaction with civil society produces. The practice of authentic CSR is shaped mostly by the formal normative pressures that reflect the setting of the local living economies. Finally, the irresponsible CSR practices are based on informal institutional pressures that represent informal economy.

We found that MNCs operating in Russia implement CSR mostly in explicit form, fitting to the standards established by their headquarters, particularly, showcasing charity as a voluntary activity in their local communities. This is consistent with the patterns of CSR that MNCs operating in Lebanon showed [Jamali, Neville, 2011]. Global CSR

practices include compliance with local norms, which can be interpreted as a degree of implicit CSR. Despite the assumed convergence resulting from globalization and the weakness of formal institutions in the host environment, MNCs adapt to the Russian context to a high extent [Novitskaya, Brewster, 2016]. National, cultural and institutional features force CSR practices to mutate. Thus, subsidiaries of MNCs implementing CSR in host countries can find themselves under the institutional pressures of the global standards set by their headquarters and in contrast they face problems of the legitimation of their operations from the state and local communities in the markets they are penetrating.

We labeled one of the identified CSR practices as crossvergent, representing the organizational field populated by large Russian companies. It reflects a pattern identified by [Jamali, Neville, 2011, p. 599] as “combining elements of both convergence and divergence and reflecting in complex hybridized CSR expressions”. It is large Russian companies that remain the key organizational actors implementing implicit CSR. Given their Soviet roots, the practices of large companies can be seen as a manifestation of their traditions, in other words these are cases of legacy and path dependency [Crotty, 2014]. This was often pointed out by representatives of these companies. The continuity of these orientations was also confirmed by the fact that HR practices and engagement with the local community became a key component of the CSR practices [Blagov et al., 2008]. On the other hand, we should not underestimate that these implicit forms of CSR are determined by the contemporary configuration of the NBS. Many researchers have drawn attention to such features of rising economies as weak social security systems, high rates of poverty and inequality [Wood, Frynas, 2006; Stiglitz, 2009; Jamali, Karam, 2018].

In Russia, we could add to this list the idiosyncrasy of the federal budget structure. The responsibility for financing social expenses rests with the regional and municipal

budgets which typically are not able to generate a sufficient income base. This determines the charitable activity on behalf of large Russian companies in their local communities and the practice of agreements on social and economic cooperation with the authorities at the regional and municipal levels. As a result of institutional pressures at different levels, manifested in various forms, large companies in Russia engage with the widest range of stakeholders and balance between the use of explicit and implicit forms of CSR.

SMEs still play a modest role in the Russian economy. Their CSR practices contain references to the lack of resources to conduct CSR activities. Due to their limited internationalization and low engagement in national business associations, the impact of the global institutional environment on shaping CSR is hardly noticeable. The emerging implicit CSR forms are rooted in the individual values and ethos of owners and informal organizational norms. We observe similarity with the case of Lebanon where [Jamali, Neville, 2011] saw the specificity of CSR in SMEs in that the drivers are the personal values. In Russia, we were able to identify a high value attached by entrepreneurs to the importance of local development. This is where we saw the authentic CSR organizational practices that emerge in a bottom-up way, giving a sense of optimism but not overestimating SMEs' contribution to shaping national CSR practice.

In the organizational field populated by SMEs there is a high probability of finding representatives of irresponsible businesses, although they exist in other organizational fields, too. This type of CSR is still under-investigated. Its distinctive features are the denial of both explicit and implicit CSR. We assume that the informal economy in Russia, even though its share has been shrinking over the years [Barsukova, Radaev, 2012], may be one of the reasons why Russian companies consider compliance with the requirements of the law as part of their CSR activities, since this has not yet become a norm

for all businesses. At this stage, we can see that the institutional conditions enabling the formation of irresponsible CSR are caused by inadequate law enforcement by the state and a large proportion of small entrepreneurs and micro enterprises striving for survival, due to the lack of institutional environment favorable for SME development [Turkina, Neville, Bice, 2017].

Our study contributes to the contextualized perspective on CSR [Chapple, Moon, 2005; Halme, Roome, Dobers, 2009; Sharma, 2013; Crotty, 2014]. Our findings, with a focus on Russia, reveal both similar and distinctive patterns in CSR practices currently depicted in the scant literature in this field. We find sufficient evidence of CSR in Russia to support claims about its existence [Barkemeyer, 2009; Preuss, Barkemeyer, 2011] and disregard prior ones about its non-existence [Crane, Matten, Spence, 2007, p. 12] and irrelevance [Kuznetsov, Kuznetsova, Warren, 2009] for Russian business. Our typology of organizational CSR practices is generally in line with Crotty's typology of CSR in Russia which demonstrates the diversity of CSR motivations [Crotty, 2014]. The typology proposed in this paper draws a more sophisticated picture by adding organizational CSR practices of MNCs operating in Russia, which was missing in Crotty's analysis, but was identified as an important factor in shaping Russian CSR by authors of the study [Settles, Melitonyan, Gillies, 2009]. We also reflect on CSR practices in the large Russian companies and irresponsible CSR, practiced by some SMEs who have different norms.

Our major contribution to the literature on CSR consists in elaborating a theoretical framework which reflects the heterogeneous nature of the national institutional context, its multilevel complexity and segmented nature, and the diversity of organizational fields, with the key role they are playing in constructing CSR practices. This theory applies not only to Russia but is generalizable to other national contexts in studying diverse organizational CSR practices as MNCs, large

and small business and the informal economy that exist in any country. Our findings show that different businesses shape their CSR activities in ways that reflect their response to the global context and best management practices, most clearly seen in the case of global CSR, and on the other hand, complexity and multilayer nature of CSR as a national feature of CSR, as demonstrated by crossvergent CSR and authentic CSR, or in some cases irresponsibility, as in the irresponsible CSR. Our study on CSR expressions in Russia has enriched the literature on CSR in rising economies [Blagov et al., 2008; Jamali, Karam, 2018; Jamali, Neville, 2011; Turkina, Neville, Bice, 2017] and emphasized the role of large companies, both MNCs and national corporations in convergent and divergent transformational processes that shape CSR practices.

We share a concern about a need to produce more indigenous high-quality responsible research in business and management [Tsui, 2004] given the greater emphasis on localization in business practices [Matten, Moon, 2020] and taking into account the fact that management scholarship suffers from a Western bias [Howard-Grenville et al., 2019]. We believe that further studies could refine our understanding of the heterogeneity of institutional contexts with

a greater focus on time and space dimensions, as well as on possible scenarios. We encourage further research of the dynamic character of CSR by studying the reverse influence of a shared CSR meaning created at the meso-level of the institutional context within a given organizational field on the higher level of institutional context. Another fruitful direction for further research could be exploring the diversity of organizational fields from a power perspective. The lens of critical discourse analysis would be helpful in the identification of actors who are making the most important contribution to the construction of dominant CSR practices. Finally, further research is needed to broaden our findings in other national contexts. It would be beneficial to develop an internationally valid theoretical framework of organizational fields shaping CSR practices.

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### **Роль неоднородного контекста в формировании практик корпоративной социальной ответственности в России**

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**Цель исследования:** исследование того, как неоднородный контекст, широко распространенный в странах с растущей экономикой, формирует новые практики корпоративной социальной ответственности в российских компаниях. **Методология исследования:** исследование базируется на контекстуальном многоуровневом подходе. Согласно предложенной теоретической

модели, организационные поля играют ключевую роль в формировании данных практик. Эта модель применена к эмпирическому исследованию организационных практик корпоративной социальной ответственности. Анализ основан на проведенном кабинетном исследовании и собранных эмпирических данных, включающих интервью с владельцами бизнеса и менеджерами, представляющими различные компании, работающие в России. **Результаты исследования:** основываясь на поисковом качественном исследовании, в работе выделены четыре типа данных организационных практик, сосуществующих в России: глобальная, кроссвергентная, аутентичная и безответственная. Результаты показывают, что компании, принадлежащие к одному организационному полю, имеют схожие характеристики практик. **Оригинальность и вклад авторов:** различия между практиками компаний, принадлежащих к разным организационным полям, объясняются рынками, на которых они представлены, интересами основных стейкхолдеров, механизмами реагирования на преобладающее институциональное давление и доминирующим наследием корпоративной социальной ответственности.

*Ключевые слова:* практики КСО, институциональная теория, организационные поля, контекст, Россия.

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## Appendix

## Characteristics of anonymized respondents separated by types of CSR practice

No	Year of interview	Anonymized company by industry	Position of respondent
<i>Global CSR</i>			
2	2016	Professional Services	Manager
6	2016	Automobile Industry	Senior manager
9	2016	FMCG	Mid-level manager
12	2016	Retail	Manager
16	2016	Property Management	Manager
17	2016	Hotel & Hospitality	Manager
20	2016	Retail	Senior manager
31	2016	Extractive Industry	Senior manager
32	2016	Extractive Industry	Manager
33	2016	Processing Industry	Manager
37	2016	Finance	Mid-level manager
41	2016	Finance	Mid-level manager
46	2016	Construction	Senior manager
48	2017	Extractive Industry	Senior manager
52	2017	Extractive Industry (Energy)	Manager
63	2017	Extractive Industry	Mid-level manager
64	2017	Retail	Manager
65	2017	Retail	Mid-level manager
67	2017	Retail	Manager
86	2017	IT	Manager
3	2016	Extractive Industry	Manager
4	2016	FMCG	Senior manager
5	2016	Processing Industry	Mid-level manager
22	2016	Extractive Industry	Senior manager
24	2016	Extractive Industry (Energy)	Senior manager
28	2016	Extractive Industry	Mid-level manager
38	2016	FMCG	Manager
39	2016	Finance	Manager
44	2016	Transport	Senior manager
49	2017	Retail	Mid-level manager
50	2017	Transport	Mid-level manager



No	Year of interview	Anonymized company by industry	Position of respondent
53	2017	Property Management	Mid-level manager
54	2017	Extractive Industry	Manager
55	2017	IT	Senior manager
56	2017	Extractive Industry (Energy)	Mid-level manager
57	2017	Transport	Mid-level manager
59	2017	Finance	Manager
70	2017	Extractive Industry	Manager
71	2017	IT	Mid-level manager
76	2017	Extractive Industry	Manager
77	2017	Finance	Senior manager
79	2017	Professional Services	Mid-level manager
82	2017	Retail	Senior manager
84	2017	Extractive Industry	Mid-level manager
85	2017	Professional Services	Manager
<i>Authentic CSR</i>			
1	2016	Retail	Manager
7	2016	Retail	Senior manager
8	2016	IT	Owner
15	2016	Retail	Manager
19	2016	FMCG	Senior manager
21	2016	Professional Services	Manager
29	2016	Retail	Mid-level manager
35	2016	IT	Manager
36	2016	Finance	Owner
40	2016	Wellness Services	Owner
43	2016	Professional Services	Mid-level manager
45	2016	Research & Development	Senior manager
51	2017	Professional Services	Senior manager
58	2017	Retail	Senior manager
60	2017	Retail	Mid-level manager
61	2017	Retail	Mid-level manager
62	2017	Finance	Mid-level manager
66	2017	IT	Senior manager
68	2017	Professional Services	Mid-level manager

*End of the appendix*

No	Year of interview	Anonymized company by industry	Position of respondent
69	2017	Transport	Owner
72	2017	Retail	Owner
73	2017	Professional Services	Owner
74	2017	Retail	Senior manager
75	2017	Professional Services	Senior manager
80	2017	Professional Services	Manager
81	2017	FMCG	Senior manager
83	2017	Retail	Owner
87	2017	IT	Manager
<i>Irresponsible CSR</i>			
10	2016	Retail	Senior manager
11	2016	Professional Services	Manager
13	2016	Retail	Manager
14	2016	Retail	Mid-level manager
18	2016	Professional Services	Manager
23	2016	Utility Services	Manager
25	2016	Retail	Manager
26	2016	Retail	Manager
27	2016	Retail	Senior manager
30	2016	Processing Industry	Manager
34	2016	Retail	Manager
42	2016	Retail	Senior manager
47	2016	Retail	Manager
78	2017	Construction	Owner