

***Corporate Social Responsibility as a link between individual representations and  
organizational changes:***

***an exploratory research of the social sector***

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**Abstract:**

From the corporate citizen to the ethical firm, the governing idea developed in the 80's aiming to reconcile economic growth with environmental protection and social cohesion, leads us to the concept of CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility). Even though research works on the subject are numerous (Perez R., 2005), few deal with them in a dynamic perspective. Is it in CSR's nature to bring about a change? In order to respond to this question, the authors highlight, in the first part of their work, the role of representations as a privileged element of analysis of organizational changes. Subsequently, the methodological choices and the context of the case are presented. The study thus deals with a sector undergoing complete mutation, in which the stakes of transformation are considered as being vital in nature by the players. Finally, the results of the research study reflect the roles played by CSR in the renewal of the organizational model. They are located at two levels: awareness, adherence to a corporate project and the activation of change through CSR's operationalistic approach.

## **Introduction**

From the corporate citizen to the ethical firm, the governing idea developed in the 80's aiming to reconcile economic growth with environmental protection and social cohesion, brings us gradually to the concept of sustainable development and social responsibility. What has now come to be known as "sustainable development" or "social responsibility" originated in the Rio Summit in 1992. At that time this movement was only concerned with the environment and has, ever since, widened in scope to encompass salaried employees, suppliers, non-commercial associations with a vocabulary used around the term corporate responsibility, which offers numerous realities with respect to the concept: ethics, corporate citizen, sustainable development, societal behaviour, a sense of civic responsibility...

The emergence of CSR in a social sector undergoing complete mutation stands on three basic principles: employees' expectations *vis-à-vis* the organization in terms of management practices and modes of production; the obligation to maintain a long-term outlook and the guarantee insofar as the organization's relationship with its overall environment (networks) is concerned; the constant surveillance of the organizations by this very environment (Estay C. and Tchankam J-P., 2004). But given the contextualization of the concept which impels us to not isolate CSR from the evolutions of the social branch (Perez R., 2005), it should be seen as being heavily impregnated by the axis of shared values: values linked to organizational performance (innovation, excellence, etc.) or constitutive values; values linked to relational performance (trust, loyalty, respect towards people, users, etc.) or values pertaining to behaviours (Mercier S., 2001).

However these various approaches do not raise the issue of the construction of social responsibility and its analysis in terms of interaction and dynamic perspective. This organizational dynamics can nevertheless enable the implementation of the various levels of social responsibility on a relatively freshly emerging terrain: the whole set of principles,

management processes of stakeholders and societal results .... It can also bring to the fore retroactive processes between these various levels and simultaneously participate in the construction of CSR and the appropriation of change. Last but not least, and through the phenomenon of learning of the processes of change and retroaction, CSR, through the representations that its players have of it, can in itself be a source of organizational changes: this is the main issue which has directed our research study.

In order to take up the study of the dynamic magnitude of CSR with this approach, the first part highlights the role of representations as a privileged element of analysis of organizational changes, and in particular their role in the regeneration of organizational practices. Subsequently, the methodological choices and the context of the case are presented. The study thus deals with a sector undergoing complete mutation, in which the stakes of transformation are considered as being vital in nature by the players. Finally, the results of the research study reflect the roles played by CSR in the renewal of the organizational model. They are located at two levels: awareness, adherence to a corporate project and the activation of change through CSR's operationalistic approach.

## **I      What is the relationship between representations and organizational change?**

The cognitive approach of organizations (Weick K, 1979; Johnson G., 1988; Laroche H. and Nioche J-P., 1994) emphasizes the role of representations in organizational processes. It strives to understand how and why decisions are taken, such as those pertaining to adhering or not to a project, getting mobilized and promoting it. These decisions are not therefore founded on an objective environment exterior to the player but depend on the sense that they hold in his mind. As Weick (1979) points out, there is a certain circularity that exists between the subject (the player) and the object (for example the change). In this way, support extended to a project aiming at change does not deviate from the sense that the subject gives to events. It can only exist by putting it in perspective with its object, with which the subject constantly

interacts. In order to ensure this putting in perspective, this mediation, the subject equips himself with a cognitive structure: the representations.

### **1.1 The representations: nature and roles**

A cognitive structure is a pattern of interpretation and action which makes it possible to render the reality intelligible (Cossette P., 1994). It is generally defined as general frameworks that an individual uses in order to impose coherence to information or to situations and thereby facilitate the comprehension of them. It thus plays a role of reducing complexity and incertitude (Cyert R-M. and March J-G., 1963). The cognitive paradigm represents the basic structure of knowledge, liable to formalize the complex hypotheses of the individual (Allard-Poesi F., 1996). It is in this fashion that the individual develops artefacts for acting in the environment. *"An artefact aims at the design and simulation of new applications enabling to produce fresh knowledge for acting on the environment. It is made up of systems of symbols (finalized systems for processing information) enabling to represent the environments to which the system of symbols is striving to adapt itself"* (Lauriol J., 1995).

Though the individual equips himself with a cognitive structure for comprehending his milieu, the latter is not independent of an organizational cognition. Thus the cognitive paradigm<sup>1</sup> gets formed. *"The paradigm is seen as a constellation of beliefs, of values, of techniques, etc., shared by the members of a given community"* (Lauriol J., 1995). In organizational cognition, the concept of ideology, belief or interpretative patterns rests on the principle that the system of ideas is organizational in nature and that its mode of perpetuation and transmission is considered in a unilateral fashion, that of the organization towards its members.

Representations thus have an individual and social cognitive component: they concern

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<sup>1</sup> *"The paradigm is the set of beliefs and hypotheses, relatively commonly prevalent in the organization, considered as being self-evident, and perceptible in the sayings and explanations of the managers, which plays a central role in the interpretation of environmental stimuli and in the configuration of organizationally relevant strategic responses"* (Johnson G., 1988, in Laroche H. and Nioche J-P., 1998).

personal experiences (individual cognition) and are linked to ideological and cultural systems of thought (organizational cognition) corresponding to the shared representations. Ehlinger (1998) emphasizes that the notion of shared representation merits a few precisions, *"the notion of sharing does not signify that all the members of the organization adhere to collective representations. For certain of them, only the managers adhere to them. In the case of others, it is more about a consensus or mutual understanding which render decision-taking and collective action possible"*. According to the author, organizational representations would be made up of a central core of shared labels and differentiated peripheral elements. *"Far from being made up of shared beliefs, organizational representations would be rooted around themes to which the members of the organization are attached"* (Ehlinger S., 1998).

*In fine*, mental, individual and collective patterns, constructed in an incessant interaction between the individual and the organization, serve as an interpretative basis. However, they are also guides for action. In other terms, they are stored in the mind and are activated subsequently, when the conditions of the environment revive them. Cyert and March (1963) have pointed out the weight of the organization through the patterns that it generates. Applying old patterns for the interpretation of information, the decision-makers cannot analyze current problems and therefore find an appropriate decision (Schwenk C-R., 1984). These patterns are characterized by a strong level of stability, which can prevent the player from being aware of and correctly interpreting the changes which arise in the environment. March and Simon (1991) have formalized the link between the cognitive framework and decision through programmes of action, which are specific representations on what is the proper thing to do or not to do in certain situations. The authors speak about resolute activities for qualifying the decisions which do not come within the scope of repetitive activities related to execution, and therefore of the procedures which are at their origin. The cognitive framework is not therefore used only for interpretation purposes; it is the bearer of

representations on what should be done. It couples with action.

As guides for the interpretation as well as for action, both individual and collective, the representations play a pivotal role in organizational changes. Certain models of change management have thus highlighted their importance in the processes of organizational transition.

## **1.2 The representations at the core of organizational changes**

Representations therefore make up a reference framework (Perret V., 1994), which enriches the fact observed by a signification. These ensure the understanding of the situation and supply a guide for the appropriate behaviour to adopt. They are therefore partly at the origin of behavioural patterns in the face of organizational changes. Thus, the existence of homogeneous systems of representation, shared by one and all, leads people to select the information conforming to their past knowledge and to eliminate that which goes against it. Within this perspective, the homogeneous system of representation would play the role of an "integrator" bringing about a "standardization" of behaviours (Perret V. and Ehlinger S., 1995). The system of representation proves to be a strong process of preservation, by structuring perceptions, attitudes and behaviours.

As an extension of the same logic, two models explicitly highlight the necessity to integrate the representations into the approaches to change.

Pichault (1993) explains this perfectly. Among the identified models of change, the author raises the interpretative model, a model which places representations at the very core of his analysis. This approach leads us to consider the organization as a system that is socially constructed by collective significations. This perspective is mainly devoted to highlighting the importance of processes of perception and attribution of sense that the players resort to in order to comprehend situations of change. For Weick (1979), a change attracts the attention of the players because it is dissimilar to whatever the individuals and the organization have

experienced prior to it. The latter will give it a meaning based on the mental operation, known as enactment, which is a staging of the change. But this enactment does not operate in all the circumstances. People are most tempted by the idea of doing a selection, i.e. of confirming the significations that they give to the situations. This confirmation enables to increase the intelligibility of already experienced situations. *"Selection consists precisely of the application of various structures to the ambiguous signals in order to improve their intelligibility. These structures are made up of inter-related variables, constructed at the time of earlier experiences which, superposed on the signals, will either make things even more confusing and therefore be rejected, or supply a rational interpretation of them"* (Pichault F., 1993). This can be summed up as saying that individuals have a tendency to choose explanations, interpretations and significations which confirm old practices of interpretation (enactment). These are stored as per a process of retention, i.e. memorization of modes of thought (patterns). The conduct of change is therefore founded on the production of sense by the managers; the collective signification that they will give to the change conditions the reactions of the employees. This approach shows that change always brings to the fore processes of creation of sense and significations. A mechanical relationship never does exist, thus the same context can be perceived in a highly different manner and generate unexpected changes.

As a continuation, Perret (1994) proposes the model "demarcation/support". Founded on the idea that representations condition the processes of regeneration of organizational practices<sup>2</sup> (Perret V. and Ehlinger S., 1995), this model emphasizes the role of the reformer and

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<sup>2</sup> Though these representations are at the base of the processes of regeneration, they can also participate in the reproduction of the organizational model. *"We speak of the reproduction of the organizational model when the organization functions on pre-established modes of thought and conducts and perpetuate them over the years. On the other hand, we speak of the regeneration of the organizational model when the organization is brought about to profoundly modify its modes of thought and its behaviours"* (Perret V. and Ehlinger S., 1995).

highlights the fact that he must function as per the logics of demarcation and support. He should "*make do with*" the ambivalence of the representations. Right at the outset, the manager demarcates the project from day-to-day actions and makes himself the spokesperson of the creative and innovative aspect of the change. He thereby creates the legitimacy of the project. At a later stage, the leader in charge of the change cannot act without "leaning on" the organizational context perceived as being the harbinger of constraints weighing down on the process. The objective is that the project should be accepted and adopted by the people. The idea is the conservation of a few constraints or links and the necessity to adopt a random or emerging conduct considering the uncertainty and unpredictability of the results of the action within a complex system.

The models highlight, on the one hand, the importance of analyzing the representations dating back prior to the initiation of the project because they can modify it and, on the other hand, the necessity to act on them. The central hypothesis is that the degree of convergence of the representations with respect to the change determines the adherence of the players as regards the deployment of the process.

Basing ourselves on this approach of the literature, we have emphasized the role of representations as a privileged element of analysis of organizational changes, and in particular their role in the regeneration of organizational practices. The choice of the social sector, as the area of field studies, allows us to observe a sector undergoing complete transformation through a methodology of the exploratory kind.

## **II Scope of research and methodology**

The case context and the methodological choices are presented in this second part, and point to a sector undergoing complete mutation, in which the stakes of transformation are considered as being vital in nature by the players.



## **2.1 A relatively less known area of research: the social sector**

The social sector is one that is often relatively less known, as much as regards the services it offers as in its organization and its functioning. However, this branch of services to people accounts for close to 300,000 employees and brings together associative operators fulfilling public interest and social utility missions such as assessment and prevention of social and medico-social hazards, everything which concerns administrative or legal protection of people, educative and therapeutic actions, integration, etc.<sup>3</sup>

These missions operate in six sectors: disabled children and adolescents, disabled adults, senior citizens, children and adolescents facing difficulties, adults and families facing difficulties, early childhood, plus a seventh sector accounting for training centres for personnel working in the social sector.

The latest survey conducted on the sector shows an average of 17 jobs per establishment. One third of the associations operating in the branch were created after 1980 and only 5% are companies administrating more than 40 establishments, at times in several sectors of the branch: small structures account therefore for a large majority<sup>4</sup>. Three main factors currently influence the environment of the branch: the public, (degradation of the employment situation and increased longevity), social policies, and the market logic (situation of competition, search for performance, etc.), which gets amplified without being determining. The main characteristic of the social sector is therefore located in the size and the potential of progression of the establishments, aided by this environment demanding services. The progression of numbers is evident in the case of early childhood (+78%), disabled adults (+66%), families and adults facing difficulties (+62%), senior citizens (+44%), amounting to a constant increase in 82% of the establishments. This progression concerns several

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<sup>3</sup> These missions are governed, among others, by the law dated 2 January 2002, renovating the sanitary, social and medico-social action.

<sup>4</sup> Employment Training Prospective Synthesis, Ministry of Labour, numbers 1999.

indicators: number of establishments (+37%), places (+26%), people taken under care (+36%), employments equivalent to full-time employment (+29%). It may be noted that 85% of the contracts are open-ended contracts, more than two-thirds of the employees are women, one-third of the employees do not have any qualifications; possessing a degree is a condition for exercising medical and paramedical professions.

Between extensive strategy, in order to meet with the public procurement and the user requirements, and intensive strategy, which consists in focusing on a mission and improving its quality, two orientations can be noted within establishments: one, coming within the scope of an economic logic, which is of the opinion that a service be sold to clients who should be satisfied taking into account the competition; the other one coming within a logic of action, which is within the scope that regulates social care. The choices of organization, of projects, of professional practices, are revelatory of the positioning adopted for the future by an establishment or a service on the market.

This positioning can be seen in the branch by the project of the establishment, a term that gives account of the social activism-related values and of an approach which, while being adapted to the economic constraints, differs, on a qualitative plane, from the private firm. The conditions of its development throw light on the management logics adopted in order to face the current developments. When the project, strong and explicit, serves as a common reference to the staff, and describes the organization of the work and the role of each and everyone, it holds good for strategy. Its development is recommended in the social branch in order to strengthen the establishment before the effects of the context. Presently, faced with the various disruptions witnessed by the sectors of the branch, three types of organization can be identified in the matter of strategy: organizations having a strategy of anticipation (project made explicit, competencies developed), organization having a tactic of adaptation (aiming at anticipating) and conventional organizations (highly questioned within the sector). These

three types define the strong and dominating trends in the current structures, as much from the organizational viewpoint as the managerial one. They are placed in tension between two force fields<sup>5</sup>, the one within the scope of a corporate logic versus the professional one and the one within the scope of a legalistic approach versus a strategic one.

In conclusion of this quick presentation, it emerges that the main changes to anticipate for the establishments belonging to the branch are of two types: the changes linked to the evolution of public needs i.e. of the social demand expressed by the users (48% of the establishments identify it) and the changes linked to the evolution of public procurement (33% of the establishments identify it). The sector is therefore in its first phase of transformation.

## **2.2 Methodology of the study**

Our research study aims at exploring the representations of social responsibility (as a lever of change) in the social sector. The presentation of the sector shows us in fact at the same time a strong culture impregnated with social and societal values, and jointly a branch of activities relatively less developed in matters of innovating practices, or even simply modern ones, in the area of human resource management. As an exploratory survey, we have therefore opened out our questioning to areas located beyond the simple representation of the concept of social responsibility.

Within the scope of the branch of activities of the social sector, we will therefore strive to take a non-exhaustive angle, but aiming at a level of coherence between the field reality and the definitions of the concept of CSR demonstrated in the literature. With this view, we based ourselves mainly on previous works pertaining to the theoretical foundations of corporate social responsibility (Gond J-P and Mullenbach-Servayre A., 2004). Through these, we have retained several axes of interrogation that we brought into the field for studying the representations of the sector.

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<sup>5</sup> These elements have been studied in the Prospective Studies Contract of 2002.

The first one pertains to the evolution of the definitions of social and societal responsibility. Through a summary table, starting from the definition of Bowen in 1953 till that of Clarkson in 1995, we have used the various types of approaches proposed in order to test them on the social sector: approach of exceeding legalities, of responses to the expectations of society ...

The second one is based on the works of Gendron (2000) and Jones (1996), and proposes a typology of CSR resting on three schools of thought:

- a moralistic and philosophical school of thought raising the question that all organizations are subjected to moral judgement (Goodspaster K-E., 1983);
- a contractualistic school of thought raising the theme of an implicit social contract, and an organization liable to act in a responsible fashion towards a society that has created it (Donaldson T. and Dunfee T., 1994) ;
- a utilitarian and strategic school of thought, raising the issue of the interest of the organization in acting in a sustainable manner as regards the theme of being socially responsible (Freeman E., 1984).

Our interest lies in questioning the representation of CSR in the social sector, but also to envisage how this emergence is placed or will be placed. Through a review of the literature, we can question ourselves on the limits of the proposed models which only pay very little heed to the constructed interactions and processes in the organizations. This exploratory survey also aims at throwing some light on this point.

Information was gathered through a questionnaire sent by post to 50 heads of social establishments, operating in all kinds of sectors, for the majority of them located in the Central Region, directors or deputy directors. The intermediary results presented to date concern 15 respondents (March 2006), from whom we received the document (by post or fax), i.e. 30% of the sample surveyed.

The questionnaire that was used is made up of three parts:

- definition of CSR: nature of the concept, position of the organization and brakes and levers of the organization (5 multiple-choice questions);
- personal vision and proposal with respect to CSR and the organization (4 questions);
- exploration of the various facets of CSR, right from the abidance by the rights to new forms of learning through the role of the stakeholders (19 questions on the 5-point Likert's Scale).

The questions were formulated as closed-ended questions with the exception of a free field with personal remarks and an open-ended question: what do you expect from social responsibility for addressing changes? The processing was done with the data analysis software Sphinx. Here, we are only presenting the most pertinent results.

### **III Analysis and discussion**

In this article, a prelude to a far deeper analysis of the sector, we initially present the most conclusive results and directly connected to the issue taken up, and we raise the possible channels for reflection on the matter.

#### **3.1 An awareness of social responsibility**

The first results point to the existence of an overall vision of CSR, covering various domains, marked by a social requirement, which is no doubt hardly concretized in field actions. This representation emerges on a favourable terrain, as a building block towards transformation of the branch, but still blocked by structural and human brakes. Innovation, skills and the network are the torch bearers of future transformation of the branch.

**Table 1: overall conception of CSR (in %)**

Notion covering the entirety of the human and social consequences of the functioning and activity of an organization	80.00%
Moral notion	13.30%
Being at the forefront of technology and practices for standing out in the face of competition	6.70%

**Table 2: representation of CSR for the organization**

<b><i>Representation of CSR</i></b>	No. Cit. (rank 1)	%	No. Cit. (rank 2)	%
A social requirement	6	40.00%	0	0.00%
A new style of management	5	33.30%	3	20.00%
An important strategic issue	2	13.30%	4	26.70%
A change of designation	1	6.70%	0	0.00%

The survey indicates a dynamic and interactive vision of social responsibility. The moral aspect and especially raising awareness to competition only play a slight role, which corresponds at the same time to the role of the respondents (administrative post) and the reality of a sector so far protected by its environment. This representation is upheld through a social requirement and the need for a new style of management. The strategic issue is also present, more visibly like an assertion in the environment than like an advantage faced with competition.

**Table 3: adherence to the CSR project (in %)**

The notion of social responsibility is currently the subject of wide discussion	33%
Social responsibility is present through a code of conventional conduct (not entirely formalized)	33%
Social responsibility is not present	13%
Setting in place of elements of social responsibility has been provided for in the planning of the future actions	6%

The presence of CSR is already asserted by the respondents, either in discussion or/and by the

intermediary of the conventional code. Adherence to CSR, through discussion (appropriation factor), and the conventional conduct code, participates in the construction of the beliefs and values shared by the concerned players. The term CSR is therefore not just emerging but it is already rooted in the representation and the reality of the respondents.

We have therefore chosen to explore representations in terms of significations of CSR with interviewees:

**Table 4: personal representation of CSR (in % of responses)**

	Not at all	Hardly	Moderately	I would say "yes"	Entirely
Is CSR an ethical reflection applied to the organization?				20	66.7
Is CSR above all a reflection on the role of the firm in society?			13.3	33.3	46.7
CSR consists in voluntarily meeting with the expectations of society	6.7	26.7	6.7	53.3	
It is in the interest of any organization to act in a socially responsible manner in a medium- or long-term perspective			6.7	20	66.7
CSR goes beyond a simple economic, legal, contractual responsibility				20	66.7
CSR is a social policy favourable to the employees			13.3	53.3	13.3
CSR is at the same time a strategic and ethical management recognizing the need of all the players having an interest in the organization			6.7	33.3	46.7
CSR is an opportunity for the organization to open out to new learning practices			20	40	33.3

The results point to a relatively contractualistic approach, wherein the ethical role, the implicit contract and the principle of responsibility are present. The role of the organization in the

company is vital, the terms action, change and adaptation make up the framework of the system of thought of the concerned individuals. It should be noted that the questions pertaining to profit, stakeholders, etc, only gave rise to hardly conclusive responses (or absence of responses). The areas of change wished for are clearly expressed: CSR is a lever of action for the organizational change wished for by the players.

### **3.2 The fields of activation of change through CSR**

The perception of the context of change is lukewarm in the sector: the survey gives by way of results 53.30% for "my firm is capable of getting quickly transformed", as against 40.00% for "my firm will take some time because in-house resistance is very high". However even though resistance is present, there are no definite brakes against the advancement of projects within establishments, and the majority of them present in principle capabilities for rapid transformation. Table 5 identifies the areas of change wherein CSR can rapidly play a role of lever of action in-house.

***Table 5: priority areas of change to be effected in-house (in %, several responses possible)***

Very low involvement of the staff	53%
Financing	33%
Insufficient qualification of labour	27%
Insufficient competitiveness	7%

Table 6 gives us the priority actions to be carried out, but this time with a view to not change in-house, but to open out on to an environment undergoing mutation.



***Table 6: priority actions to be carried out with respect to the environment***

<b><i>Priority actions that the organization should carry out for opening out to its environment</i></b>	No. cit. (rank 1)	No. cit. (rank 2)	No. cit. (rank 3)
Increase the innovation of practices and services	10	1	1
Increase the overall level of the competencies of the staff	3	4	2
Networking with other organizations	4	6	3
Use the issue of social responsibility with users, partners, etc.	0	3	5

Questions concerning privatization of capital, search for new clients and the effect of the size of the organizations have got no citations. This does not exclude them from the areas of intervention but indicates that these themes do not presently come within the scope of the representations of the people interrogated. Issues related to the staff such as lack of involvement are raised: the presence of a strong Taylorian system (employments, salaries and structure) no doubt plays a role, related with the low level of qualifications (requirements of skills). The need for dynamization is also taken up to a great extent (need for innovation of the practices). The answer is to be found in networking (one can refer to the creation of poles of activities in the hospital sector, for instance). The lack of financial means is also indicated. But is this a problem related to an emerging CSR or to a recurring characteristic of the sector? The table of the following results may be used for conclusion purposes... Through the representation that the players have of CSR, the latter plays an indisputable lever effect for the changes hoped for (or set in motion).

***Table 7: Responses to the open-ended question: what do you expect from social responsibility for addressing changes?***

A real social project - An adherence by IRPs (staff representative institutions) and a real social dialogue – A strong link with the communes of implantation - A space for autonomy - A guiding idea – A clear strategy - A reflection on the sector – A development of competencies – A radical change of management.

As a pause, we will add this sentence, posted by a respondent at the end of the questionnaire:

*"CSR, through the principles of responsibility, ethics, sustainable development, observance of human rights, respect of the environment, should be logically the basis of any change".*

Through these initial results, we can already show that the reality of the players has been rendered quite intelligible by their pattern of interpretation of CSR and their capability to make out possible actions. The representations associated with CSR play the role of guide of interpretation and action on the actual. This capability can be analyzed as being a sign of reduction of incertitude for the players, or at the very least as a lever of projection. This cognitive capability is all the more strong since it merges into a cognitive paradigm, made up of shared beliefs (cross-checking of the votes on the items), be it in the shape of adherence or simply as a mutual understanding. CSR is, in this case in point, the theme that the players are attached to. Similarly, the representations of the players come within the scope of the two models of change described previously. In the first one, or the interpretative model, we find a production of sense given by the players, through a CSR which becomes a collective signification that is a bearer of change. CSR is even a means for the players to trigger off the mental operation of enactment, facilitating the awareness generation as regards the necessity to renew the organizational model. The latter in fact seem to instrumentalize CSR for staging the reality and possibly even to fashion it. The relatively new character of CSR but close to

the dominant standards in the sector is a means of renewing the cognitive framework in a gradual manner, of facilitating the enactment and of reducing the risk of selection (of the reproduction of old patterns). The change of the entities should be made easier owing to this, on condition that the reformers refer to the representations associated with CSR for operating transformations. Thus, in the second model, or the demarcation/support model, the identification of the internal and external context is a step for the reformer. In the present case, the representations associated with CSR can serve as support for the reformer-director, in the sense that it does not move too far away from the dominant patterns of interpretation of the social sector. The change of establishments can therefore not abstract itself from the dominant representations shared by the players. The reformer will again use CSR for legitimizing his project of change and for distinguishing himself from the current situation. The representations of CSR (namely as an occasion for innovation of the practices and services...) constitute the elements on which the reformer can use for conducting his actions of changes.

## **Conclusion**

The representations associated with CSR thus have an indisputable dynamic character. In this sense, CSR can become a managerial occasion for bringing about changes, which, in the social sector, are fundamental. Also, the response to this demand for change should come within the scope of pro-activeness and transformation of establishments which is ushered in through an overall approach of organization. CSR should come within the scope of a collective and generic project of organizational change. It is in this sense that we open out reflection on the learning process in the social sector and on the necessity for its opening: seeking support from the experience of other sectors of activities could lead the social branch to use their tools. But organizational learning is above all the capability, for the organization, of increasing, in the course of time, the effectiveness of its collective action. In this case, it is

the logic of societal learnings which can then go beyond the notion of compliance in order to move towards a dynamic approach and a measurement of the degree of the depth of societal responses to the demands of the environment and the expectations of the players. In this sense, the social sector uses CSR (and should continue to use it...) as a lever for transformation and as a means of accommodation. This transformation gives a lot of place for conceptual learning and makes it possible to understand the whys and the wherefores of the existence on which one is acting. From there, directing the social sector towards a constructivist approach seems to be imperative. Success will depend to a great extent on the simultaneous construction between the subject and environment, and the effective presence of dialogue structures.

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