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***Implementing Global Justice: A Critical View on International CSR Standards***

International Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) standards can be seen as a new, global “institutional infrastructure” (Waddock, 2008) designed to help Multinational Corporations to put into practice principles of global justice in their worldwide operations. CSR standards have various forms and nature, including normative codes (e.g. The UN Global Compact, The Caux Principles, etc.), reporting frameworks (e.g. GRI, AA1000, etc.), certification schemes (e.g. SA8000; ISO 14001) and guidance standards (e.g. ISO 26000). Despite these differences, every CSR standard aims at codifying some aspects of individual behavior within organizations. In this paper we undertake a critical examination pointing out the benefits and the limitations in the effectiveness of CSR standards, both from a theoretical point of view and in the light of empirical evidence. We formulate and discuss a Paradox of CSR standards, analyzing three problems that might underlie this—namely the problem of deceptive measurements; the problem of responsibility erosion and the problem of blinkered culture. We apply the philosophical tradition of American Pragmatism to reflect on the Paradox in relation to different types of existing standards, and conclude by suggesting a number of considerations that could help both CSR standards developers and users to address the Paradox.