

Abstracts

When firms make sense of the ecological agendas of society

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Abstract

The aim with the paper is to argue for the need to obtain knowledge about how firms make sense of ecological agendas of society. Further, I shall use a theoretical approach based on newer, organizational theory and highlight some empirical examples and findings. This calls for a broadening of concepts to the firm to include the socio-cultural dimension and the dimension of relations to external actors, as well as the material dimension. Moreover, it calls for a need to broaden environmental thinking about how to regulate / motivate firms to act in an environmental manner.

In the first section, I characterize environmentalist ideals for firms environmental friendly behaviour as based on a concept of firms as rationalistic actors. In section II I discuss empirical and theoretical reasons for rejecting the rational approach, while I in section III discuss organizational theoretical perspectives that challenge the rational actor approach. In section IV, I suggest an analytical model that include non-rational actions and non-materialist dimensions and I define some analytical questions to be raised at an empirical level. In section V I present general conclusions from a case study of 9 Danish firms, by using the above mentioned model. Also, I discuss two of the conclusions more. In the conclusive section VI, I argue for the need to include a wide range of organizational theory in studies and for a discussion of what kind of qualifications is needed to add on to our environmentalist knowledge.

This paper is based on my Ph.d thesis: Firms organizing of environmental improvements - when the ecological agenda of society are interpreted and managed in practices, but is developed in further research since then.