

Employees' Perception of CSR in a Specific Post-Socialist Context: The Case of Serbia*

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Abstract

Perception of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) forms relating to perception of company performance was analysed for Serbia. Questionnaire-based research was conducted with employees from public, private and multinational companies. Employees' age was indicator of socialist experience. Different perception of CSR forms from those in Carroll's pyramid was observed, as well as between endogenous CSR forms of the socialist period and exogenous from the open market economies. Results indicate economic and legal forms are perceived more expressed, regardless of companies' management, than ethical and discretionary. Endogenous ethical CSR are perceived less expressed than exogenous. Unexpectedly, socialist experience did not significantly influence perception, regardless of companies' management and CSR forms.

Keywords: social responsibility, employees, company management, experience from the socialist period.

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1. Introduction

According to Carroll (1979, 1991) who provided one of the first comprehensive and undoubtedly most cited definitions of corporate social responsibility, "Corporate social responsibility (CSR) encompasses economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary (philanthropic) expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time". Carroll depicts CSR in a pyramid where economic responsibility is its base as the most important one, followed by legal, ethical and discretionary CSR forms. With the development of the CSR theory numerous, more or less different definitions of CSR have been suggested. There are comprehensive reviews of CSR definition constructs since CSR emergence in 1950s. Dahlsrud (2006) identifies and analyses 37 different definitions of CSR. Wan-Jan (2006),

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based on analysis of CSR definitions used by scholars and practitioners, concludes that CSR can be defined as “treating the stakeholders of the firm ethically or in a responsible manner”. Revising the CSR definition and CSR pyramid, Carroll (2016) admits it was developed on the basis of American-type capitalistic society and refers to authors who point out that a definition might not be fully applicable and suitable in different contexts. Thus, contributions from different contexts to perfecting of the CSR meaning and definition continue to emerge in literature.

First ideas of corporate social responsibility (CSR) appeared in highly developed, market oriented economies at the middle of the twentieth century, as a response to demands of the public and the society for companies to have, beside their own economic interests, the obligation to contribute to the society. Retrospection of CSR development in practical and theoretical frameworks recently published by Lee (2008) and Jamali (2007) provides insight into the process of CSR development. Since the first emergence of CSR, accompanied with neglecting of its necessity and denial of its economic justification, CSR developed in terms of both practical application and theoretical framework into a widely accepted concept, applied and researched all over the world. Nowadays CSR presents a widely accepted win-win model of corporate behaviour, with strategic goals integrating both company benefits, including its corporate financial performance (CFP), and its image of socially responsible entity, and benefits for all stakeholders, including the society and the environment in general.

Campbell (2007) points out that corporate socially responsible behaviour might, in different occasions and circumstances, for different people and in different periods, have different meaning. Thus, the term CSR, depending on the place, time and context it is used in needs to be carefully used. According to Mattem and Moon (2008), based on the study of CSR in different countries, different social norms and cultural values result in different assumptions regarding the interests of diverse stakeholders. Aguilera et al. (2007) point out that the form of CSR to be adopted by a company depends on many different actors that express different demands and expectations in their interaction with the company.

Consequently, as confirmed by the research of Williams and Zinkin (2008), consumers' perceptions of CSR activities of a company which affect their reactions and decisions regarding a company's offer, are also highly dependent on the cultural context in which a company operates. Bondy and Starkey (2014) state that implementation of CSR strategies adopted by multinational companies on the basis of CSR expectation in developed countries from which companies originate usually marginalize real needs of local stakeholders. Research and considerations provided by authors from diverse developing countries (Dobers / Halme 2009; Amaeshi 2011; Idemudia 2011) support this statement.

Based on the statement that stakeholders might approve or disapprove of the same CSR activity depending on socio-economic or cultural contexts (Aguilera / Rupp / Williams / Ganapathi 2007), we must bear in mind that direct application of CSR forms, strategies, and activities developed under one cultural and socio economic context may in another compromise responsibility toward the local community and local stakeholders, and also affect the results of CSR programs on CFP.

A large number of research articles elaborating different aspects of CSR and their consequences for the companies and the economy in general was analysed (Jamali 2007), while most researches and published results are from developed countries with a long history of open markets.

In developing countries of Central and South East Europe, due to socio-economic and cultural legacy from the socialist period, CSR concept and practices face different challenges, in comparison to developed open market economies. Research related to CSR practices in post-socialist countries started with their transition toward acceptance of open market economy principles. Researchers dealing with CSR issues in the post-socialist context (Stoian / Zaharia 2009; Koleva / Rodet-Kroichvili /David /Marasova 2010) point out that the development of CSR in the countries with a long history of socialist/communist social system and administrative/state governed economy is quite different from that in open market economy countries where CSR concept was born, widely studied and practically developed. The question is whether theoretical frameworks conceptualized based on the CSR development path in open market economies can be used to understand the CSR expressions and outcomes in countries which were socialist countries for a long time.

Almost all authors studying CSR in post-socialist countries state that certain forms of CSR, although they were not termed social responsibility, did exist in corporations in the socialist period (Iankova 2008). Koleva et al. (2010) points out, while Stoian and Zaharia (2012) further elaborate, that in contrast to the forms of socially responsible behaviours which characterized corporations in the socialist period were marked as endogenous CSR, while other, exogenous CSR forms were transferred from open market economies, or emerged as a hybrid combination of endo- and exogenous CSR forms.

Serbia is a post-socialist country with a specific socio economic context, not only in comparison to open market economies, but also in comparison to other post- socialist countries. Self-management socialism, rather than state governed socialism in the socialist era, followed by the period of wars, economic isolation and economic sanctions, postponed privatisation and arrival of multinational companies -these are some factors which contributed to creation of the specific socio-economic and cultural environment of Serbia. However, the CSR concept, its expressions and effects, have not, until now, been researched in depth in Ser-

bia. This is the reason for the lack of data which would indicate directions for companies increasingly appearing at Serbian market, concerning how to successfully apply the CSR concept, not only with regard to the society's demands and expectations, but also as a driver of the company performance. Research conducted by Čurčić et al. (2016) and Vuković et al. (2016) confirm the incoherence of public presentations of CSR activities and consumers' expectations in Serbia.

With the aim to fill in the information gap regarding CSR perception in Serbia, as a country with a specific transition path, and thus specific socio-economic context, large scale research was conducted of CSR perception of consumers and employees in Serbia. Its findings are presented in this paper, with the aim to contribute to the development, adjustment and structuring of CSR practices of companies in Serbia.

2. Theoretical background

In order to provide the background for interpretation and understanding of CSR perception of employees in Serbia, the main characteristics of development of the Serbian socio-economic context are systematized and contrasted with the circumstances and concepts regarding CSR characterizing developed open market economies, as well as other post-socialist countries.

2.1. Circumstances and concepts in open market economies

At the very beginning of development of the capitalist economy in the last quarter of 18th century, in accordance with Adam Smith's postulates, it was assumed that benefits to the society would be generated as the consequence of capitalists' activities, even though their real and only conscious intention was satisfying their economic and other self-interests (Wan 2006). Thus, in open market economies the exclusive corporate goal is basically of economic character, but their interactions at the market are supposed to result in desirable social and political values (Adižes / Weston 1973).

In a classic open market economy the only clearly recognized and acceptable goal of managements and shareholders was maximization of the sole goal to generate maximal financial return on investments, hence any spending of corporate funds for greater public interest was treated as unacceptable, even objectionable, during a long period of capitalism development in the 18th, 19th, and the first half of the 20th century (Jamali 2007; Lee 2008).

First ideas that companies should think not just about profit, but also about their employees, customers and the public in general, started to emerge in the 1950s (Carrol / Shabana 2010) with Howard Bowen's *Social Responsibilities of the Businessman* (1953) as the first attempt to theorize the relationship between cor-

porations and the society. At the same time, power of corporations was directly challenged by the widespread public prejudice, by movements for civil rights, women's rights, consumers' rights and environmental protection (Lee 2008).

During the second half of the 20th century CSR grew in popularity. Academics attempted to articulate what CSR really meant and implied for business, and brought CSR into the focus of discussions (Carroll / Shabana 2010), with the final goal to establish a link between CSR and CFP (Lee 2008). The assumption that deterioration of the surrounding society results in loss of critical support structure and customer base for businesses was used to justify that support to the well-being of their environment is a long-term interest for corporations (Lee 2008). Based on CSR positioning among practitioners and academics, formal definitions and theories of CSR began to proliferate with the conceptual model of corporate social performance produced by Carroll in 1979, and upgraded in 1991, as the fundamental one that gained wide acceptance. Carroll (1991) differentiated between four types of corporate social responsibilities: economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary.

Economic responsibility is presented as the base of Carroll's CSR pyramid. It includes various aspects of company performance: securing a return on investments to owners and shareholders; creation of jobs, fair wages; discovering new resources; promotion of innovation, technological development, creation of new products and services. Legal responsibility entails expectations of legal compliance and playing by the rules set forth by the society's legal system, while ethical responsibility overcomes the limitations of law and portrays business as being ethical, and doing what is right, just, and fair, like respecting people, avoiding social harm, and preventing social injury. At the top of Carroll's CSR pyramid is discretionary responsibility, where companies have the widest scope of judgment and choice, in terms of deciding on specific activities, or philanthropic contributions aimed at giving back to the society. For companies in classic open market economies this type of responsibility is the most controversial since its limits are vague and its implications could conflict with economic and profit-making orientation of businesses.

The need for a broader theoretical framework which would explain mechanisms that link CSR and CFP resulted in development of the stakeholder model of CSR. Within the stakeholder framework, the difference between the social and economic goals of a corporation is no longer relevant, because the central issue is the survival of the corporation, affected not only by shareholders, but also by various other stakeholders, such as employees, governments and customers (Lee 2008). Instead of a single aggregate category of social responsibility, the stakeholder framework induced creation of many new categories of CSR, to reflect the wide range of stakeholder relations and interests: environmental responsibility, diversity, affirmative action and transparent accounting practices etc.

2.2. *Circumstances and concepts in post-socialist countries*

The state (communist/socialist) economic model, in contrast to open market economies, considers public interest a priority, which is presumed to be known and interpreted by the government (party) that outlines planned directions to be executed by different organizations in the society, in order to fulfil the general public interest (Adižes / Weston 1973).

In contrast open market economies, which, with all their advantages and disadvantages, existed and developed for over a century prior to emergence of the CSR concepts, companies in socialist societies in the second half of the 20th century operated under different circumstances: some of the most controversial aspects of CSR in open market economies, like implementation of employees' rights, or giving to the society without obtaining financial gains, were legally regulated, i.e., were the obligation of companies in general plans for satisfying of public interests.

Socialist systems followed the principles of Marxism and Leninism, and were in theory based on dictatorship of the proletariat, while protection of workers' rights was deeply grounded among both workers and managers (Bradshow / Bredshow / Stenning 2004). Various practices for promotion of workers' rights, like glorification and promotion of hero workers and industrial efforts, rewards for achievement of industrial goals set by political leadership, values within hierarchical organizational systems, and other forms of promotion of workers' central position, contributed to the way in which the management and the labour developed their sense of rationality (Soulsby / Clark 2007). Through educational systems these values were deeply implanted into the minds of upcoming generations. Existence and accessibility of social security and health systems, labour protection and wage controls provided in socialist labour legislation, long-term or 'life-time' employment and step-by-step seniority-based promotion (McCann / Schwartz 2006) contributed to the overall feeling of social security and its high valuation in the socialist period (Martin 2006).

There is a lot of evidence of residue of practices of workers' protection by managers and institutions in post-socialist countries also during the transition period. Managements of post-socialist companies continued to exercise high levels of discretion over strategic decision making (Soulsby / Clark 2006), while among workers a preference for direct management styles (Martin 2006), accompanied with scepticism about organized form of labour resistance (Meardi 2006) remained strong. Protection of workers by managers with experience from the socialist period, in preference to strategic restructuring, with commitment to the wider community and employees' families (Soulsby / Clark 2006) was the practice which postponed unemployment caused by necessary cuts of oversized labour in socialist companies, but also delayed restructuring of post-socialist

companies which was necessary for fulfilment of their economic responsibilities.

Contrary to the illusion of privileged workers' position, in socialist countries economic CSR aspects, positioned at the base of Carroll's CSR pyramid as primary ones in open market economies, were largely neglected. Building of physical capital and institutions based on political will without economic consideration, development of industrial structures that were, due to their energy and resource intensity, economically and ecologically unsustainable, resulted in abuse and destruction of resource base and widespread environmental pollution (Bradshaw et al. 2004) without due of consideration of economic CSR aspects, as well as the aspects of legal and ethical CSR related to the Environment.

Based on these considerations it is obvious that the starting point for CSR development in post-socialist countries was significantly different in comparison to open-market economies.

In elaboration of CSR characteristics in post-socialist countries, some authors, like Stoian and Zaharia (2009) in Romania, or Koleva et al. (2010) in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria, pointed to the fact that companies' behaviour in the socialist period may be categorized as a socially responsible behaviour, although it was not articulated with the term CSR. These aspects of CSR are marked as endogenous CSR, i.e. CSR originating from the socialist period (Stoian / Zaharia 2009, 2012; Koleva et al. 2010).

Based on this, priorities, expectations, but also objections of stakeholders, including employees, customers, suppliers and managements, inevitably differ in post socialist countries in comparison to open market economies. For example, in Slovenia, according to findings of Podnar and Golob (2007), people above all expect companies to be legally responsible and to comply with ethical-philanthropic expectations, while economic dimension appears to be less important. These results suggest that respondents make a distinction between economic and other types of responsibilities, which means that Carroll's concept may not be fully appropriate to explain CSR expectations in post-socialist contexts.

Another important thing that has to be considered when CSR in post-socialist societies is researched is that all post-socialist countries during 1990's passed through the period of transition from the planned, state economic model to the open market economy model. Iankova (2008) notices that during the transition to democracy and market economy enterprises had to cut down their extensive social programmes in order to secure survival in an emerging competitive market environment. Pucetaite and Lamsa (2008) presented a historical-cultural analysis of Lithuania as the country where work ethics and trust in the society tended to be rather low in the socialist period. They point to organizational practices, particularly those related to people's management, which may be needed in such

a post-socialist context to facilitate development of work ethics, and trust in organizations operating in a post-socialist context. Kooskora and Kujala (2008) noticed that global trends toward greater corporate social engagement put increasing pressures on companies and discuss the link between corporate ethical development and stakeholder relations during rapid and radical changes occurring in the past two decades in the Estonian business community. They presented a framework of the changes of stakeholder relations in five stages of corporate ethical development in the Estonian business community during the transition period.

Stoian and Zaharia (2009) researched trends, drivers, challenges and opportunities for implementing corporate socially responsible behaviour in Romania. They state that CSR awareness started to emerge in Romania in the transition period. Stoian and Zaharia (2009) state that CSR behaviour is driven both by multinational and local companies, with increasing role of the civil society and legislation. The paper by Koleva et al. (2010) proposes a framework for studying of the CSR phenomenon in Central and Eastern European Countries based on the research conducted in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria. A variety of responsible practices in the observed countries were identified, pointing out that analysis of CSR forms in the context of transition economies should take into account interactions between elements dependent on the past, as well as imported standards and practices which have themselves been subjected to change.

Stoian and Zaharia (2012) researched channels through which corporate social responsibility (CSR) is developed in post-communist economies. They focused on employee background factors which shape employees' expectations with regard to corporate socially responsible behaviour, and identified channels through which exogenous and endogenous CSR developed: employees with work experience in multinational companies mediated exogenous CSR, employees with CSR knowledge mediated exogenous CSR, while employees with experience in the socialist system mediated endogenous CSR.

2.3. Development and characteristics of Serbia's socio-economic context

Since the beginning of the twentieth century Serbian society has passed through three developmental phases with expressed discontinuity (Njegovan 2016).

In the first phase, before the Second World War, Serbia was regulated as a parliamentary monarchy with a capitalist system (Njegovan 2016). The differences of the Serbian socio-economic context from those in developed countries cannot be ascribed to this period and thus it will not be further elaborated.

In the second phase, from the end of the Second World War until the breakdown of the former Yugoslavia, Serbia, as one of the Republics of the former Yugoslav

federation, developed under conditions of state-collectivist and quasi-market oriented socialism, and was widely open for the influence of open market economies from western, developed countries (Njegovan 2016). Such social arrangement, (including other republics of the former Yugoslavia), was different from that of other countries of Central and East Europe, which developed under conditions of a rigid state socialism with strictly administrative-led economic development.

The characteristic of the second part of this period was a specific socialist society – self-management socialism. Economic reforms which began in Yugoslavia in 1965 introduced self-management as a never-before-seen attempt to combine socialist principles and market mechanisms in economy. It was established with two main corner stones of the society: social ownership of the means of production and self-management mechanisms in economy

(Bešlin 2015). As the consequence, development of the socio-economic context in Serbia is grounded in decennial functioning of companies under conditions of self-managing socialism, where companies' priority task, in addition to satisfying the public interest, was satisfaction of employees. In self-management system employees were proclaimed the main driving force of the social environment. At the same time, they had the status of decision-makers and owners. Consequently, equality, well-being, satisfaction, safety, social and political engagement and other employees' rights, were proclaimed companies' priority. As a result, differences in starting points, perceptions and reasons of socially responsible behaviour, in relation to both open market economies and other socialist/communist countries, were inevitably generated.

However, the chasm between theoretically established society of well-being and equality and the real situation grew and widened throughout the development of the self-management socialist society. Thus, in the nineties, at the time of disintegration of the former Yugoslavia, the fall of socialism and the beginning of transition of the society were accompanied by numerous economic, political, cultural and other inequalities (Petrović / Marković-Savić 2018).

The third period, from the beginning of the last decade of the twentieth century till present day, is characterized by stages of ups and downs in the process of economic and political liberalization (Njegovan 2016). The transition period during which CSR forms characterizing open market economies in Western countries penetrated into the society lasted much longer and began much later than in most post-socialist countries, with a number of differences in comparison to other post-socialist countries.

The reasons for the slower transition are multiple. First, initial period of transition was accompanied by the period of economic sanctions imposed by developed countries during the nineties, hence real transition started much later than in other post-socialist countries, according to some authors not before the

beginning of the twenty first century (Obradović / Fedajev / Nikolić 2012). Contrary to other post-socialist countries, including other former Yugoslav republics in which governments at the beginning of the nineties more or less embraced open market-orientated reforms, Serbian leaders used nationalism as the instrument for labour pacification (Stanojević 2003), pushing Serbia into a civil war with other Yugoslav nations, which resulted in international economic sanctions. Due to the war and sanctions, as well as disintegration of the Yugoslav market, Serbian enterprises in the nineties experienced serious setbacks (Hollinshead / Maclean 2007). Additionally, large Serbian companies, especially petrochemical complexes, were in 1999 hit by NATO bombs, which resulted in their physical devastation. During the war and the sanctions the government kept companies working with more or less passive workforce in spite of economic problems, in order to maintain social peace and support for the regime. Such situation coupled with the inability to maintain a social benefits system, resulted in deterioration of the living standard of the Serbian population (Jovanović / Nedović 1998) and produced feelings of insecurity, isolation, fear and anxiety among the citizens. Resistance to the reforms toward an open-market economy and ethno-nationalism grew especially among the less educated and less urban older citizens (Hollinshead / Maclean 2007).

Due to the described situation of the nineties, large scale entry of multinational companies, which characterized the period after the fall of communist regimes in Central and East Europe (Djankov / Murrell 2002), did not happen in Serbia (Ratković 2014). Consequently, introduction of exogenous CSR practices had to be less expressed.

In the year 2000 democratic parties finally took over leadership from retrogressive elements ruling in the nineties who transformed Serbia into a traditionalist, xenophobic, isolated and prospect-less entity (Hollinshead / Maclean 2007). Unfortunately, democratic forces did not succeed in abandoning the tendencies of authoritarianism and ethno-nationalism and putting Serbia at the level of a modern European state (Vujadinović 2004). One of the most challenging issues was privatization (Hadžić 2002) which resulted in radical restructuring of ownership in Serbia in early 2000 s (Ristić 2004).

Privatization of both state and public owned companies in Serbia was characterized by a number of specific aspects. Primarily, it happened later than in other post-socialist countries (Nikolić / Kovačević 2014). Therefore, self-management system, promoting endogenous CSR forms with regard to employees' rights, remained in companies for a longer period of time. Additionally, many companies were privatized by employees or managers (Dondur / Komatinia / Brkić-Spasojević 2010), and the consequence was preservation of values which characterize endogenous CSR, but these trends did not sustain.

Final outcome of the prolonged transition in Serbia, characterized by a neoliberal development strategy (Mitrović 2010) with restoration of peripheral capitalism, was transformation of ownership, which ended up in a complete cut of employees' participation in managing of companies. Though conceived as neoliberal, the applied model of transition and privatization and institutionalization of the society did not essentially provide liberal conditions of equal opportunities. It was rather largely adapted to create benefits for the pseudo-reformer economic elite (Drašković 2005). In addition, the experience of working and participating in managing of companies in the self-management socialist period resulted in the problem that employees did not accept the role of workers without managerial powers.

The consequence of such a prolonged and non-specific transition, characterized by the absence of appropriate business strategies which would lead to fulfilment of companies' economic responsibilities, was the economic collapse, or at least difficulties to sustain operation, which many companies sooner or later faced (Dondur / Radojević / Veljković 2007). Based on this situation, it was supposed that, among CSR activities, the ones related to fulfilment of economic obligations lag behind other CSR forms.

Privatization in Serbia was conducted in the circumstances of the lack of an appropriate legal framework and defined political environment. This resulted in creation of a fertile ground for strengthening of the newly formed economic elite, including corporate and business elite that, together with political mafia, took over formal and informal power. Economic processes in the first decade of the twenty first century, including privatization which was conducted in the way that could be categorized as socially irresponsible at the least, led to serious disturbances in political and economic relations. In 2012, the European Commission published a list of 24 large companies and 600 small state-owned enterprises with controversial privatization in Serbia (Njegovan 2016). Neither the state, nor employees as small shareholders, had significant benefits from privatization and restructuring of state and public enterprises.

According to the statements of Unković (2010) small shareholders earned several tens of times less than intermediaries from sales during the privatization process. Total value of all small shareholders' stocks sold was roughly worth the present value of a single big privatized company. On the other hand, in ten years (2000–2010) of privatization in Serbia, consultants and financial advisors earned huge commissions for unrealistic assessment of value of Serbian companies. Privatization process in Serbia is also characterized by a huge number of broken sales, with more than one third of new owners not fulfilling the obligations stipulated by privatization contracts.

Socially irresponsible behaviour in the privatization process undoubtedly reflected on both employees' and the general public's perception of social responsibili-

ty of new owners of privatized companies. During the long-lasting transition period many socialist companies collapsed, many people lost their jobs, worked for minimal wages, or even without compensation. People who in the socialist period were employed in socialist companies which offered a high level of workers' rights, security and diverse benefits, faced severe deterioration of their position, and loss of many privileges from the socialist period. In many cases, they ended up jobless, worked illegally at the black market, or for minimum wages for new businessmen, who in many cases had insufficient managerial experience and appropriated economic benefits of their companies. In many cases companies did not respect even minimal legal obligations.

During the transition period citizens of Serbia experienced several additional changes. Former Yugoslavia was through a long painful period transformed into national states, with Serbia being the last one legally transformed into a national state. In addition to transforming the socialist economy with central planning into a capitalist market-oriented economy, transition also involved processes of transforming a one-party system into a democratic pluralist one.

Unprepared for new management practices, disappointed with privatization outcomes, resistant to change, Serbian workers remained disorganized and marginalized, feeling powerless at work (Hollinshead / Maclean 2007), while values of collectivism and egalitarianism remained strong (Pejović 2004).

Thus, as stated by Hollinshead / Maclean (2007), Serbia presents an extreme variant of a post-socialist context, institutionally volatile and politically charged, and accordingly undergoes through an extreme variant of post-socialist restructuring.

3. Research

3.1. Research problems

In contemporary research, as well as among practitioners, the topic of CSR contribution to overall company performance and its financial effects is among the issues in focus (Williams / Zinkin 2008; Ćockalo./ Đorđević / Besić / Bogetic 2015).

As stated by Porter and Kramer (2002), it is widely accepted that CSR should become a business strategy which would lead to companies' better financial performance. Starting from this viewpoint, companies undertake initiatives to link CSR to broader organizational goals, like reputation and stakeholder management. Positive relation of CSR and company performance has been proven in the majority of researches (Margolis / Walsh 2003; Orlitzky / Schmidt / Rynes 2003). Based on the results, managers believe that in practice CSR can have positive effects on company performance (Lee 2008). In this context, CSR is considered more as a strategic resource, which can significantly contribute to

overall company performance, than as a mere moral obligation (McWilliams./ Siegel / Wright 2006).

Socially responsible treatment of consumers and employees by managements, and the society in a smaller degree, can result in positive effects for companies and their performance (Hammann / Habisch / Pechlaner 2009). Based on extensive research which involved a large number of companies worldwide, it was concluded that, regardless of socio-economic contexts in which they operate, companies can define appropriate CSR strategies that will have positive effects on their performance (Tang / Hull / Rothenberg 2012).

The relation between CSR activities, how they are perceived by employees, and the consequent influence on employees' performance, as one of the factors significantly influencing company performance, has been widely studied. Gupta and Sharma (2016) evaluated a cross-section of academic studies, reports and surveys, and demonstrated that the role of CSR is widely recognized as an important driver of employees' engagement.

Interaction of CSR and company performance is also culture-dependent. Wei et al. (2009) examined the effects of a cultural context in predicting the impact of CSR on company effectiveness, based on comparison of Eastern (Asia) and Western culture (Canada), and pointed to the stronger relationship between employee-oriented CSR and employee commitment of the Eastern cultural context.

Stoian and Zaharia (2012) conducted a study in which the role of employees in shaping corporate social responsibility forms was researched in post-communist economies, with regard to inherited employee-related factors based on which employees' expectations of CSR are formed. Three channels of endogenous and exogenous CSR were identified: employees with experience from multinational companies, employees with advanced CSR-related education, mediating exogenous CSR forms, and employees having experience from the socialist period, mediating endogenous CSR.

Ćurčić et al. (2016) investigated consumers' expectations in Serbia regarding CSR and identified extended care for consumers, extended care for employees, and environmental protection to be social responsibility issues for which consumers have significantly higher expectations, in comparison to other CSR forms. They further contrasted identified priorities of consumers' CSR expectations with CSR presentation by 500 largest companies in Serbia on their web pages, and confirmed that self-presentations of CSR programs are in a large degree in collision with consumers' expectations. This disproportion must obviously reflect on undesired diminution of effects of CSR on CFP. Self-presentation of CSR programs by companies is a source from which information about priorities in CSR programs can be obtained. Information about CSR activities in companies can also be obtained from employees.

Bearing in mind the above mentioned results which point to the relation between employees' perception of CSR and employees' performance as the factor influencing company performance, information about employees' CSR perception should be highly appreciated by companies in the process of preparing their CSR programs.

Based on the emphasized observation it is obvious that both employees' experience record, concerning experience from the socialist period, and company managing forms should be taken into account when employees' perception of CSR is considered.

3.2. Research context

This research was conducted in Serbia in 2015 and 2016. At the time transition process was quite progressively advancing. Almost all companies, except public ones, were privatized; alignment with the rules of open market economy was broadly promoted. Multinational companies entered Serbian economy through green-field investments and acquisitions, and a large number of domestic entrepreneurs started and more or less successfully conducted their business.

Among employees two major groups could be identified. Older generations who experienced all adversities and difficulties of the transition period on one hand, and young people who mainly had the opportunity to begin their careers in companies which already accepted open market economy principles and had to comply with the main legal obligations on the other hand. In order to capture the differences between these two groups of employees, similarly to Stoian and Zacharia (2012), we grouped respondents based on their age, those with experience from the socialist period (age over 45) and those without such experience (age up to 45).

Bearing in mind the proven influence of multinationals on development of CSR in post socialist countries (Koleva et al. 2010), but also the specific position of public institutions (Urošević / Milijić / Đorđević-Maljković / Karabašević 2016), additional factor that was considered to influence the expression of CSR forms as perceived by employees was managing of companies. In order to capture the differences in perception of CSR forms depending on company managing forms, we included employees from: 1. Public companies, owned by the state, with managers appointed by the state; 2. Private companies, owned by domestic entrepreneurs and managed according to the rules defined by the owners, and 3. Subsidiaries of multinational companies which apply rules set by multinational companies operating for a long time in open market economies.

Differences in perception of economic, legal, ethical and discretionary CSR forms, in terms of Carroll's (1991) classification, as well as differences between

endogenous and exogenous CSR forms, in terms of classification proposed by Koleva et al. (2010) and Stoian and Zaharia (2012), were captured.

3.3. Research hypotheses

As explained in the theoretical part, circumstances in which CSR developed in Serbia differ from both open market economies of developed countries and other post-socialist countries in which socialist socio-economic system was quickly replaced by open market economy. Starting from the viewpoint that long transition period, wars and multiannual economic isolation of Serbia resulted in forming of a specific employees' perception of CSR, the research hypotheses were defined targeted to capture the differences among employees depending on their experience from the socialist period, and among companies depending on their managing forms.

The first assumption that we started from was that companies' CSR activities will be differently perceived by employees with experience in socialist enterprises, than by those without such experience. Based on statements of Carroll (1991), and considerations of Koleva et al. (2010), Iankova (2009), and Stoian and Zaharia (2012), we assumed that economic CSR is the CSR form of primary importance in open market economies, while different forms of ethical CSR were of primary importance in the socialist period.

On the basis of statements of Pucetaite and Lamsa (2008), Iankova (2008), Drašković (2005), Unković (2010), and Njegovan (2016), we assume complying with legal CSR forms was of less importance in the socialist society and the transition period in comparison to open market economies, while discretionary, the most questionable CSR forms in open market economies (Lee, 2008), were in socialist times approved of and desirable. Based on these assumptions the first set of hypotheses was formulated:

H01-1 There is a difference in perception of economic, legal, ethical and discretionary CSR forms of employees with experience from the socialist and transition period in comparison to employees without such experience.

H01-2 Perception of differences between economic and legal CSR forms, on one hand, and ethical and discretionary CSR forms, on the other hand, will be more expressed for employees with experience from the socialist period in comparison to employees without such experience.

Bearing in mind the statements of Koleva et al. (2010), and Stoian and Zaharia (2012), that multinational companies have through their subsidiaries introduced CSR forms characterizing CSR programs of companies in open market economies of developed countries, and starting from the assumption that, if any,

public companies have preserved CSR forms characterizing the socialist period, while private companies owned by domestic entrepreneurs developed CSR programs suiting their own companies, the second set of hypotheses was formulated:

H02-1 According to employees` perception of CSR forms there is a difference in CSR forms expression in public, private and multinational companies

H02-2 Economic responsibility will be more expressed in multinational companies in comparison to domestic private and public companies

The additional point of interest in the present research are relations between endogenous CSR forms present also in the socialist period, and exogenous ones characterizing CSR programs of companies operating in open market economies (Koleva et al. 2010; Stoian / Zaharia 2012). Related to this issue the following set of hypotheses was formulated:

H03-1 Differences in perception of endogenous and exogenous CSR forms will be more expressed among employees with experience from the socialist period

H03-2 Differences in perception of endogenous and exogenous CSR forms will be more expressed in public, in comparison to private and multinational companies

Beside the findings pointing to the influence of employees` CSR perception on their performance (Gupta / Sharma 2016), and consequently company performance, alignment of CSR activities with consumers` expectations is an important factor which contributes to overall company performance. Although this research did not study consumers` expectations in Serbia regarding CSR, contrasting of employees` perception of CSR obtained in this research with the already published results of consumers` expectations (Čurčić /Miletić / Bjegović 2016) enable testing of the forth hypothesis.

H04 Expression of CSR forms in companies in Serbia as perceived by employees is not aligned with consumers` expectations

4. Methodology

Questionnaire-based research was carried on employees in Serbia, as part of a comprehensive research of attitudes concerning CSR in Serbia, among consumers and employees.

4.1. Participants

The target group involved in this research were employed Serbian citizens, aged over 18, from urban population of 10 major cities in Serbia. Responses were collected from 359 respondents, out of which 57 % were male and 43 % female. Based on their age, respondents were divided into two large groups, those, based on their age, with experience from the socialist period (aged over 45), representing 39 %, and those with no experience from socialist period, as active work-force (aged under 45), representing 61 % of the total number of respondents. In respect to company management, 41 % of respondents were from public companies, 28 % from private companies owned by domestic entrepreneurs, and the rest of 30 % were employees of subsidiaries of multinational companies.

4.2. Research instrument

Questionnaire was developed on the basis of the questionnaire used recently by Glavas and Kalley (2014), to rate effects of perceived corporate social responsibility on employees' attitudes. Some modifications and extensions of questions were made in order to obtain more reliable composite variables. The questionnaire asked employees to evaluate to which extent different activities characterizing the CSR concept were practiced in their companies. Likert scale with 7 grades was used to rate examined traits. Information regarding respondents' age, as the indicator of experience from the socialist period, and their company managing form were also collected.

In order to test the formulated hypotheses, CSR activities, rated by employees in the questionnaire, were categorized as economic (4 questions), legal (4 questions), ethical (20 questions), and discretionary (5 questions). Ethical responsibilities were further classified into endogenous (11 questions), characterizing also companies in the socialist era, and exogenous (9 questions) (Table 1).

Table 1: Questions used to form composite ratings of observed CSR forms

DISCRETIONAL	My company supports local community projects
	My company is informed of local community problems
	My company supports sports, cultural and other events
	My company is involved in solving of local community issues

ETHICAL	EXOGENOUS	My company promotes environmental protection activities
		My company provides detailed offers to clients
		My company promotes and advertises only in ethical manner
		My company has a transparent price policy
		In my company activities to reduce waste are conducted
		In my company waste is recycled
		In my company care is taken off CO ₂ emission
		My company contributes to improvement of life quality in the environment
	ENDOGENOUS	Operating of my company is transparent
	ENDOGENOUS	My company takes care of employees' personal development
		My company provides good working conditions to me
		In my company reimbursement of employees is fair
		In my company reimbursement of employees is transparent
		Engagement in my company enables good life/work balance
		In my company there are no differences in employment conditions between genders
		My company promotes diversity in respect to gender, age and ethnic status
		My company involves employees in all relevant decisions
		The management of my company cooperates with unions
		My company supports engagement of employees in socially responsible activities
LEGAL	LEGAL	My company takes care of employees' safety
		My company operates according to international safety standards
		My company takes care of its customers safety
		My company takes care not to pollute the environment
ECONOMIC	ECONOMIC	My company collects and uses feedback from clients
		My company collects and analyses clients' complaints
		My company provides education to clients and partners
		My company has the code of conduct
		My company takes care of rational energy utilization

For each group of CSR activities, the composite rating was calculated as (1):

$$CSR_{composite} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{i=n} CSR_i}{n} \quad (1)$$

n – Number of individual CSR activities characterizing each formed group.

4.3. Procedure

Questionnaire was sent by e-mail to 550 participants chosen so as to provide a uniform distribution of respondents by age, sex, education, and income level. With 359 collected responses satisfactory response rate of 65 % was obtained.

The hypotheses were analysed based on the obtained answers and their statistical processing (ANOVA followed by Duncan's test for significance of differences among mean values). For statistical data processing, the software Dell Inc. (2016), Dell Statistica (data analysis software system), version 13. Software.dell.com was used.

5. Results and discussion

Results of the research are presented and discussed from three main aspects: 1. perception of principal CSR forms defined in Carroll's (1991) conceptualization of CSR; 2. differences in perception of ethical CSR forms practiced in the socialist period (endogenous) and the ones in open market economies (exogenous); 3. contrasting of employees' perception of CSR forms with consumers' expectations.

5.1. Perception of CSR forms from Carroll's CSR pyramid

The first aspect is the perception of CSR forms outlined in the widely adopted Carroll's (1991) concept of employees in Serbia. Ratings of perception of economic, legal, ethical and discretionary CSR forms were analysed in general, but also among employees with and without experience from the socialist period, and companies with different management forms, including subsidiaries of multinational companies, private companies owned by domestic entrepreneurs, and public companies. Mean values of composite ratings of economic, legal, ethical and discretionary CSR are provided in Table 2.

Table 2: Differences in mean values of rating of different social responsibility forms depending on experience from the socialist period and company management

	TOTAL	Experience from the socialist period		Company management		
		With	Without	MNE	PUB	PRI
Discretionary	4.32 ^b	4.21 ^b	4.36 ^b	4.22 ^{ef}	4.74 ^{cd}	4.21 ^{ef}
Ethical	4.39 ^b	4.40 ^b	4.39 ^b	4.52 ^{de}	4.10 ^f	4.45 ^{def}
Legal	5.20 ^a	5.08 ^a	5.25 ^a	5.55 ^a	5.04 ^{bc}	5.18 ^{ab}
Economic	5.13 ^a	5.00 ^a	5.17 ^a	5.49 ^a	4.98 ^{bc}	5.06 ^{bc}

^{a,b,c,d,e,f} different letters indicate significantly different mean values ($p=0,05$)

From the results it is obvious that according to the perception of employees in Serbia legal and economic responsibilities dominate over ethical and discretionary. Although there is no statistically significant difference, it can be noticed that employees with experience from the socialist period perceive in general their companies as less socially responsible than employees without this experience with regard to all CSR forms except ethical. These employees also perceive that the difference between legal and economic responsibility, on one hand, and ethical and altruistic responsibility, on the other hand, is higher.

Public institutions' employees perceive discretionary responsibility more significant and ethical responsibility less significant, while employees of multinational companies perceive economic and legal responsibility much more significant.

Perception of responsibility forms is aligned with Carroll's CSR pyramid in the case of market oriented companies, including both multinational companies' subsidiaries and domestic private companies, but Carroll's pyramid seems not to be applicable to public institutions. Similar findings, pointing to the fact that Carroll's pyramid may not be applicable in post-socialist contexts, were obtained in Slovenia, as another country originating from former Yugoslavia (Podnar / Golob 2007).

In order to prove or disapprove the influence of employees' experience from the socialist period as one factor and company governance form as the other factor influencing perception of different CSR forms, one way ANOVA analysis was conducted (Table 3).

Table 3: Significance of influence of experience from the socialist period and company management on rating of different CSR forms by employees in Serbia

	Past experience		
	Sum of squares	F	p
Economic responsibility	1.867	1.229	0.268
Legal responsibility	1.992	1.291	0.256
Ethical responsibility	0.005	0.004	0.948
Discretionary responsibility	1.618	0.737	0.391
Employment company management			
	Sum of squares	F	p
	13.922	4.765	0.009
Economic responsibility	11.420	3.892	0.021
Legal responsibility	7.561	3.119	0.045
Discretionary responsibility	14.641	3.333	0.037

Regarding experience from the socialist period as the factor influencing employees' perception of CSR forms, the results indicate that this factor does not

significantly influence the perception of any CSR form. This finding is somewhat different from the findings presented by Stoian and Zaharia (2012), who stated that there were differences in employees' expectations with regard to corporate socially responsible behaviour in Romania.

Presented considerations point out that hypotheses H_{01-1} and H_{01-2} , expressing the assumption that CSR perception is influenced by employees' experience from the socialist period, cannot be supported.

On the other hand, company management form has a significant influence on all CSR forms. Back to Table 2, it can be noticed that employees of subsidiaries of multinational companies perceive economic and legal CSR forms as more expressed than in public and domestic private companies, while discretionary CSR forms are more pronounced in public companies, but in public companies expression of ethical CSR lags behind private companies, both domestic and multinational.

Presented considerations point out that hypotheses H_{02-1} and H_{02-2} , expressing the assumption that CSR perception will differ among companies depending on their management form, can be supported, including the statement that economic responsibility is more expressed in multinational companies, particularly in comparison to public companies.

5.2. Contrasting of endogenous and exogenous CSR forms perceptions

Ethical CSR forms, which differ the most between socially responsible practices characterizing socialist period, which are endogenous, and CSR forms characterizing contemporary trends in developed countries, which are exogenous (Table 1) were more profoundly researched and analysed. Multivariate ANOVA with CSR origin in terms of endogenous and exogenous CSR as one factor, and employees' experience from the socialist period (Table 4), or company management form (Table 5), as the second factor, was performed, and differences in perception of exogenous CSR forms depending on employees' past experience and company management forms were evaluated using post hoc Duncan's test (Table 6). According to the results, employees rate expression of exogenous CSR forms significantly higher than endogenous CSR forms in all observed cases, regardless of company management forms and employees' past experience. This statement deserves more in depth analysis. Namely, composite rating of endogenous CSR is the resulting value obtained on the basis of rating of different forms of socially responsible treatment of employees (Table 1). Low rating of ethical CSR forms, with even lower rating of the forms related to employees' rights, may have different explanations: either employees' expectations originating from self-management socialism, as the social system specific for former Yugoslavia in which employees' rights were the primary focus (Bešlin 2015),

are very high regarding this issue, or companies actually treat the responsibility as the least important CSR form.

However, there is also a significant difference between perception of endogenous CSR forms expression in public companies on one hand, and both observed types of private companies on the other hand (Table 6), resulting in the fact that the difference between exogenous and endogenous CSR form ratings is the smallest for multinational companies and the largest for public companies. For subsidiaries of multinational companies there is no statistically significant difference in the rating of exogenous and endogenous CSR forms. This observation indicates that in these companies CSR programs are comprehensive and well planned.

On the other hand, a big difference between exogenous and endogenous CSR rating in public companies may indicate that either employees' higher expectations of endogenous CSR forms related to employees' rights from the socialist period are preserved, or employees related endogenous CSR forms are really practiced at a significantly lower level in public companies. Both assumptions are viable, and the latter may result from budgetary cuttings for public companies characterizing both the transition and the contemporary period in Serbia, which resulted in reduction of employee related responsibilities of public companies.

Table 4: Multivariate ANOVA of the influence of social responsibility form origin with employees` experience from the socialist period on perception of ethical responsibility

	Sum of squares	F	P
Origin social responsibility form	28.37	18.374	0.000
Past experience from the socialist period	0.00	0.002	0.964
Origin x past experience	0.18	0.117	0.733

Table 5: Multivariate ANOVA of the influence of social responsibility form origin with employees` company management on perception of ethical responsibility of employees

	Sum of squares	F	P
Origin social responsibility form	35.57	23.118	0.000
Employment company management	13.74	4.463	0.012
Origin x company management	4.71	1.530	0.217

Table 6: Differences in mean values of rating of endogenous and exogenous ethical social responsibility forms depending on experience from the socialist period and company management

		Experience from the socialist period		Company management		
		TOTAL	With	Without	MNE	PUB
Endogenous	4.20 ^b	4.18 ^b	4.21 ^b	4.37 ^{ab}	3.75 ^c	4.27 ^b
Exogenous	4.63 ^a	4.66 ^a	4.62 ^a	4.70 ^a	4.53 ^{ab}	4.67 ^a

^{a,b,c} different letters indicate significantly different values (p=0,05)

Based on presented consideration related to perception of endogenous and exogenous ethical CSR forms, hypothesis H_{03-1} can be partially supported, while H_{03-2} can be supported.

5.3. Contrasting of employees' CSR perception with consumers' expectations

Finally, it is interesting to compare the rating of CSR forms expression in companies with consumers' expectations in Serbia. Although this research did not include consumers' expectations, this comparison can be successfully made based on the published results of research of consumers' expectations conducted in the same period (2015–2016) by

Čurčić et al. (2016) who stated that presentation of CSR practices by the leading (top 500) companies in Serbia were not aligned with consumers' expectations. Based on findings of Čurčić et al. (2016), extended care for employees, i.e. endogenous ethical CSR, together with fair treatment of consumers and environmental protection, is among CSR forms highly expected by consumers.

Based on high expectations, these CSR forms are probably the ones that may have the highest impact on company performance through targeted promotion of these activities. However, according to our results, the CSR form in all observed cases perceived by employees to be at the lowest level is the endogenous ethical CSR, i.e. extended care for employees. This finding confirms that there is a gap between actual CSR programs of companies operating in Serbia and consumers' expectations regarding socially responsible behaviour of companies.

Presented considerations point out that the hypothesis H_{04} , that expression of CSR forms in companies in Serbia perceived by their employees is not aligned with consumers' expectations, can be supported.

6. Conclusions

The results and observations may contribute to the development, adjustment and structuring of CSR practices of companies in Serbia, in accordance with particularities of the Serbian socio-economic context. Presented results of CSR practice

perception of employees in Serbia provide directions for the companies already operating, or planning to initiate operations in Serbia, for how to apply the CSR concept successfully, not only in respect to the society's demands and expectations, but also as a driver for company performance.

A brief introspection into the key facts that influenced formation of the present socio-economic context of Serbia indicates the following main particularities which influenced the development of the Serbian socio-economic context: self-management socialism, rather than state governed socialism, in the socialist period, the period of wars, economic isolation and economic sanctions resulting in the collapse of socialist companies, postponed privatization, and late entry of multinational companies.

According to the perception of employees in Serbia, nowadays legal and economic responsibilities dominate over the ethical and discretionary. In addition to the low rating of fulfilment of ethical responsibilities, employees in Serbia rate expression of endogenous CSR forms, concerning the rights and extended care for employees, significantly lower than exogenous CSR forms.

Fulfilment of employees' rights was in the period of self-management socialism the primary responsibility of companies. Based on the finding that endogenous ethical CSR is perceived by employees to be at the lowest level, twofold conclusion can be derived: either care for employees is actually at a quite low level, or employees, based on expectations from the self-management socialist period, have too high expectations, and thus perceive actual care for employees lower than other CSR forms. Bearing in mind that already published results point out that extended care for employees is also among highly rated expectations of the consumers in Serbia, these endogenous CSR forms should be considered more carefully by companies in Serbia, both in defining employees related CSR activities and in their positioning in presentation of CSR programs to the public. Adequate implementation and promotion of this form of CSR activities in CSR programs of companies operating in Serbia may have a high potential to contribute to company performance through increased motivation of employees, but also through appreciation of consumers which may reflect on CSR initiated consumers' preferences.

Based on the results we can conclude that there are no statistically significant differences in employees' perception of CSR in Serbia depending on employees' experience from the socialist period. Absence of differences in CSR perceptions which could be attributed to the experience from the socialist period may be the consequence of circumstances characterizing development of the socio-economic context of Serbia: a long period that passed since the socialist period and difficulties characterizing the transition period.

Although there are no significant differences in perception of different CSR forms related to employees' experience from the socialist period, it could be noted that, in general, employees with experience from the socialist period perceive, with the exemption of ethical CSR forms, their companies as less socially responsible than employees without this experience. Employees with experience from the socialist period also perceive the difference between legal and economic responsibility on one hand, and ethic and altruistic responsibility on the other hand, as higher. This observation indicates that employees with experience from the socialist period may be more sensitive to CSR issues and have higher expectations in comparison to younger employees that do not have such experience.

On the other hand, the results indicate that company management form has a significant influence on employees' perception of all CSR forms. The previously stated finding, that there are no significant differences in perception of CSR among employees with different backgrounds, indicates that differences in rating of CSR perceptions may in a large degree be ascribed to the actual responsibility level in companies with different management forms. Based on this assumption we can conclude that public institutions in Serbia emphasize more discretionary and significantly less ethical responsibility in comparison to private companies, while in multinational companies economic and legal responsibilities are at a significantly higher level in comparison to other company management forms. These conclusions may contribute to better understanding of company performance in Serbia depending on their management form.

As for market oriented companies, including both subsidiaries of multinational companies and domestic private companies, perception of responsibility forms is aligned with Carroll's CSR pyramid. However, it seems that Carroll's pyramid is not completely applicable to public companies.

There is also a significant difference between perceptions of endogenous CSR forms expression, which are in public companies perceived to be at a significantly lower level in comparison to both observed types of private companies. Additionally, the difference between exogenous and endogenous CSR rating in public companies is more expressed in comparison to private companies.

Bearing in mind the scarcity of empirical research data from Serbia, not only in the field of CSR, but also in respect to other contemporary management disciplines (McCann / Schwartz, 2006), our research of employees' CSR perception provides valuable insight into the outcomes of the Serbian development path, which is specific in respect to diverse aspects. We have also provided insight into the main phases and milestones in development of the contemporary Serbian society which will provide valuable support to researchers of CSR or other organizational and management aspects of the Serbian society. Our results may pro-

vide valuable information to companies that develop and implement their CSR programs in Serbia.

The research of CSR perception of employees in Serbia highlights only a narrow segment of consequences of Serbia's developmental path. In order to enable creation of a comprehensive insight of its influence on specificities of the Serbian society, further research, not only in the field of CSR, but also other organizational and managerial fields, including not only employees, but also other stakeholders of the Serbian society, should be conducted.

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