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HR Governance

A Theoretical Introduction

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Preface

There can be no doubt that HR governance is a highly important topic for corporations, public institutions, and other organizations alike. Positioned between the fields of corporate governance, management, and human resource management, it may well be considered the missing link between them. However, it has been widely ignored by both scholars and practitioners. Given its substantial organizational impact, it must certainly play a major role in theory and practice, as the international norm “ISO 30408” on human governance underlines convincingly. Unfortunately, while the dominating literature sources never fail to stress its importance, they describe the concept rather vaguely and fail to precisely establish how it relates to adjacent concepts.

Indeed, HR governance is no intuitive matter. In our attempt to clarify and theoretically integrate the concept, we were surprised as well as intrigued to realize that well-known and familiar concepts, like corporate governance, general management, and HR/leadership, reveal their actual vagueness during the attempt to integrate them. So, as we went, first these concepts had to be specified before we could integrate them into a coherent definition of HR governance. We are convinced that our theoretic solutions, developed during many long discussions, will prove useful to scholars as well as practitioners as they provide necessary conceptual clarity that has been lacking. The constructs treated are of paramount relevance for various lines of current discussions including the very role of management or managerial positions in modern organizations.

The aim of this first edition is to quickly define the freshly emerging topic and allow for its coherent future development. This is our aim by introducing our thoughts into the debate. It is our hope that our new definition will stir the debate on HR governance and help the concept gain momentum. Future publications will certainly be more extensive as emerging literature and research, as well as illustrative corporate examples, are integrated. We hope this approach will find the reader’s approval and look forward to any kind of constructive feedback.

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