GOVERNING CORPORATIONS: CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND THE EXPANDING ROLE OF BUSINESS IN SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the evolving role of business in society and the recent development of corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs, in order to form a greater understanding of the changing nature of contemporary capitalism and the potential for new forms of corporate power. By analyzing the growth of the modern corporation and the discursive construction of its responsibilities to society over the course of the past three centuries, this study provides a historical framework to foreground a critical examination of one specific corporation – Starbucks. Applying both situational and critical discourse analyses, the study uses data collected from Starbucks CSR reports and press releases to illustrate the way in which many companies are acting out their social responsibilities today. Specifically, I ask: How does Starbucks frame and conduct its efforts? Who and what are being addressed? How does this serve to further the interests of the company? In answering these questions, the thesis illuminates the capacity for CSR to serve as a tool for corporations to gain control in areas such as global governance and sustainable development, as well as to improve their position in the market. It also discusses the various changes that have occurred

alongside shifting conceptions of the corporation and its responsibilities as well as the importance of CSR in the current political climate.

APPROVAL PAGE

The faculty listed below, appointed by the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, have examined a thesis titled "Governing Corporations: Corporate Social Responsibility and the Expanding Role of Business in Society", presented by Kathryn Hamel, candidate for the Master of Arts degree, and certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is an umbrella term used to refer to a wide range of efforts by corporations to take more responsibility for the effect of their actions on society and the environment. It includes everything from corporate philanthropy to renewable energy investment to community volunteering programs, and it is often thought to include internal benefits to employees as well, such as healthcare insurance and a living wage. Once perceived in the business world as “a joke, an oxymoron, and a contradiction”, CSR has evolved to become “universally sanctioned and promoted” as an aspect of successful business (Lee, 2008, p. 53). In fact, about 90% of companies today incorporate CSR into their operations, promoting themselves as “ethical” actors in the economy (Lee, 2008). This is a new trend within business, given that corporations have historically been aimed at a singular goal: the production of profit. Throughout most of U.S. history, companies were exclusively responsible for providing maximum dividends to their shareholders, even as they came to occupy an increasingly prominent role as social institutions. However, as capitalism has rapidly expanded around the world, large companies have often been blamed for the problems that arise in its wake: environmental devastation, human rights violations, wealth inequality, poverty, and more. During the past century, people began to take notice of these issues and to hold companies more accountable for the actions that caused them. In response, corporations had to adapt: they began to incorporate “socially responsible” practices into their operations in an attempt to mitigate their social and environmental impact, and to justify themselves to the public.

Through the proliferation of CSR programs, business is reaching into realms such as governance, development, and welfare, and adopting new roles in society that were previously occupied by other institutions. While multinational corporations promote these efforts as attempts to positively impact the communities in which they operate, it is unclear how effective the initiatives actually are in terms of improving quality of life and preserving the environment. Instead, claims to CSR may be unsubstantiated, and may in fact ultimately reproduce power dynamics and allow for greater corporate control in society. In this project, I critically examine CSR and the role of business in society as they are discursively constructed throughout history to form a greater understanding of how companies have deployed concepts of CSR over time. Then, I use this historical framework to understand the CSR efforts of one specific company – Starbucks, a multinational corporation that establishes its business as conducted "through the lens of humanity" (Starbucks, 2018a). Specifically, I ask: How does Starbucks frame and enact its efforts?, Who and what are being addressed?, and How does this serve to further the interests of the company? By studying Starbucks CSR reports and relevant press releases, I seek to answer broader questions about the function of CSR and its capacity to serve as a tool for corporations to gain control within the modern capitalist system. I aim to contribute to a greater body of knowledge about "the various ways in which corporate power is rendered, exercised, limited or resisted through the discourse and practice of CSR" (Dolan & Rajak, 2016). Furthermore, this kind of critical study of CSR provides insight into various changes in the modern capitalist system that have occurred with shifting conceptions of the corporation and its responsibilities.

In this chapter, I explore some of the existing relevant literature concerning the social responsibility of business to introduce a discussion of its importance in the field of sociology. Then, in chapter 2, I provide a history of the growth of CSR alongside the birth and development of the modern corporation in the U.S. I identify salient events, theories, and iterations that have contributed to the construction of CSR, and highlight how corporations have come to expand their role and power in society. In chapter 3, I outline my methodological approach for the case study on Starbucks and its limitations. In chapter 4, I discuss the specific ways in which Starbucks performs CSR and the communication strategies it employs to publicize its efforts, arguing that Starbucks acquires various forms of power and control through CSR. Finally, in chapter 5, I situate my discussion of Starbucks in its historical and sociological context, highlighting the ways in which the development of CSR reflects changes in contemporary capitalism, and how conceptions of the modern corporation interact with the current political climate.

Sociological Perspectives on CSR

CSR, as it demands the increasing involvement of business in addressing social problems, is of interest to sociologists and anthropologists because of its implications for the structure and functioning of society. The corporation has been a topic of discussion within a variety of classic sociological works. Emile Durkheim, for example, wrote about the role of corporations in *The Division of Labor in Society*, reflecting on the purpose they had served in the past and their potential for providing solidarity. He believed society was plagued by increasing disconnection and decline in "public morality", and his conception of the corporation as a "professional group", consisting of like-minded individuals trained in the same industry, was meant to provide a solution. In his mind, these groups would serve as social units, through which people would construct morality together, and create bonds that would prevent anomie. Taking on this view, Durkheim suggested that “the corporations of the future will be assigned even greater and more complex functions” with “an ever more central and preponderant place in society” (1893, p. lii-liii). Although his prediction was accurate in this aspect, corporations did not arise throughout the following years as Durkheim may have imagined, instead becoming centered around manufacturing and factory labor and further alienating wage workers from corporate executives, two groups who did not necessarily share a sense of morality.

Since Durkheim’s writing, corporations have become primary actors in development and de facto regulatory entities through the espousal of “socially responsible” behavior, drawing the interest of current social scientists. Newly-adopted corporate practices have global ramifications not only for governance but for inequality as well. Dolan and Rajak (2016) suggest that corporations use CSR to respond to adversity - from public criticism to risks concerning supply chain sustainability - in order to maintain a position of not only economic but social control. The authors argue that “the politics of CSR create domains for the exercise of corporate power”, and that the language of CSR along with its standardized codes of ethics “solidify, if not deepen, hierarchical relations between CSR agents and their ‘beneficiaries’” (p.13). For this reason, it is important to critically examine how companies deploy CSR – through various practices, processes, and partnerships – in order to understand how power and inequality play out in the modern capitalist economy.

CSR is often seen as a “reified set of global structures, principles, or frameworks, rather than a constantly evolving range of practices that corporate actors deploy in pursuit of particular goals” (p. 16). Thus, academic attention has primarily been given to the impacts of

CSR in local contexts, leaving a significant lack of research on the corporation's active role in defining and producing it. However, anthropologists and sociologists alike have attempted to unpack the way in which companies utilize CSR as a "functional resource" for acquiring power, citing the ambiguity of the term and its "Darwinian capacity to adapt to and exploit" social values (Dolan and Rajak, 2016, p. 11). As history demonstrates, CSR is perpetually reinvented by companies as they attempt to deflect new social and political challenges and pursue new markets (p. 4). Kirsch (2016) argues that CSR and its related terminology serve as "strategically deployable shifters…that lack standardized lexical meanings and…allow people to communicate across social boundaries and political vantage points" (p. 49). Accordingly, companies mobilize CSR discourse in different ways in different contexts to fend off critics, manage reputational risks, and convince consumers that they are addressing whatever issue is relevant at the time. Employing the "virtuous language of responsibility, sustainability, and transparency" garners public approval and allows companies to evade the imposition of governmental regulations (p. 50). CSR - a term with effectively no concrete meaning - thus provides companies with a way to conceal the contradiction between their alleged desire to address social problems and their capitalist goals for the accumulation of wealth.

CSR discourse is largely acted out in public spaces like conferences, policy forums, and award ceremonies, which serve as "theatres of virtue" where companies can extol and honor themselves as moral actors (Rajak, 2016). The power dynamics that have always existed in the corporate sphere (dating back to Marx) are paralleled in this ritualized world of CSR, which tends to marginalize dissenting voices (p. 45). By putting forth an impression of consensus among previously conflicting interests, companies and other included entities can use these “theatres” to reinforce “particular ways of seeing and understanding” CSR within the industry. Corporations are thus able to maintain control of the way in which CSR is articulated and performed more broadly, representing a “new and significant dimension of corporate power” (p. 31). In addition to these “rituals”, companies exercise their discursive power by partnering with non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Foster (2014) discusses this phenomenon as “connected capitalism”, a system in which corporations link themselves to widely recognized non-profit institutions in order to legitimize themselves and establish a positive image among consumers. Non-profit partners, in return, gain access to resources that would otherwise be unavailable to them, particularly financially speaking, which they can use to further their social agenda. Many progressive business leaders, such as former Coca-Cola CEO Neville Isdell, believe that this kind of cooperation reflects a “post-political governance” (Foster, 2014) system that is mutually beneficial to the corporation and to society (Hanlon, 2008).

For “liberal communists" (Zizek, 2006) like Isdell, this new method is a congruous one: it maximizes shareholder profits while simultaneously improving social welfare. Proponents argue that this new manner of CSR is a step away from the “charity approach” of corporate philanthropy, and that it instead provides citizens with tools for self-sufficiency. In fact, the argument for collaboration between NGOs and big business is a compelling one for many: NGOs need funding to continue fighting for their respective causes and these partnerships can provide them with the resources they need to make an impact. Reciprocally, NGOs can serve as expert middle men in the arbitration of development and environmental conservation practices. Indeed, there is a “growing recognition that marrying the local knowledge of the nongovernmental organization with the global reach of the multinational firm can create unique and sustainable solutions" (Prahalad, 2010, p. 5). After all, both kinds of organizations claim to have the same goals: "stable societies, income generation, healthy and educated populations" (Rajak, 2011, p. 15). However, like the vague discourse of CSR, this kind of "harmony ideology" can be dangerous because it implies consensus and resolve among organizations with highly divergent goals, and affords power to corporations in realms outside of business, particularly in vulnerable communities that may not be provided the opportunity to voice their concerns (Foster, 2014; Dolan & Rajak, 2016). Additionally, non-profit organizations are often more dependent on corporations than vice versa, which may make it difficult for them to assert their agenda over the company's self-interest. In this way, seemingly altruistic partnerships may simply "replicate older forms of patronage, dependency, and asymmetrical reciprocity" (Foster, 2014, p. 254).

CSR practices may also serve to significantly alter social relationships between various entities in a number of ways. De Neve (2016) argues that CSR codes of conduct create a new form of hierarchy in which "societies are classified according to their ability to comply", transforming so-called ethical standards into "yardsticks of modernity" (p. 106-107). He suggests that CSR represents a remnant of colonialism in which large Western corporations impose their values on the poorer countries where their suppliers are located, thus maintaining and further constructing longstanding power inequalities (de Neve, 2016). Additionally, "ethical" business behavior also provides a basis for the discussion of the increasing humanization of the corporate form. Corporations often draw upon anthropological "notions of the gift, social contract, and even reciprocity" in their CSR efforts (Dolan & Rajak, 2016). For example, Hardin (2016) suggests that corporate partnerships with environmental conservation organizations employ Mauss' concept of the

Gift (1990), which “entails social responsibility and makes actors responsible to one another in new ways” (p. 180). By structuring themselves as participants in partnerships and referring to themselves in personified terms, corporations attempt to soften their image and invoke a more empathic interaction with consumers (Dolan & Rajak, 2016, p. 11). Furthermore, the way in which legal proceedings (see *Citizens United v. FEC*) have established companies as having human characteristics “makes it seem plausible that a company can act as a considerate partner and good citizen” (Foster, 2014, p. 253).

While it may benefit some, CSR does not ultimately resolve matters of exclusion, disempowerment and exploitation in the ways that it may claim, and it may in fact contribute to their continuation. By involving themselves in “socially responsible” activities, corporations have taken up new roles in society and have come to occupy a position of authority, often next to or above government, in terms of development, environmental governance, international labor standards, and more. However, there are systems in place to hold governments accountable for their actions, whereas corporations have taken up equivalent forms power without such accountability. Analyses of the specific ways in which companies are framing their CSR initiatives, and how CSR serves to further the interests of the corporation are largely absent in the literature. Further investigation may bring to the light the potential for CSR to perpetuate existing power dynamics, reproduce inequality, and expand corporate control in various realms (Dolan & Rajak, 2016), which is the jumping off point for my project.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORY OF THE CORPORATION AND ITS SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The social responsibility of the corporation has a long history of ambiguity. Durkheim (1893) stated that "if we attempted to express in somewhat more precise terms contemporary ideas of what should be the relationship between...industrialists and the public, how imprecise would be the statements!" (p.xxxii). The standards to which corporations have been held and the duties they are required to perform have continuously adapted based on social needs and values as well as historical context. More specifically, over the past 50 years, the discussion of the social responsibilities of business has shifted with development of the modern corporation and the global expansion of the capitalist economic system, encompassing a wide range of meanings and practices discursively constructed by various actors. These evolving definitions of CSR demonstrate that the role and conception of business in society have indeed changed over time. Some claim that CSR is simply a public relations effort, used by business to manage its reputation and legitimize its actions in the eyes of the (moral) customer, thereby promoting the ultimate goal of creating profit. CSR may be a reflection of the ethics of a given society, with companies abiding by the norms and expectations valued by its members, or it might represent a more fundamental structural change in which corporations adopt roles as political entities, participating in activities that have historically been controlled by the government or NGOs (Scherer & Palazzo, 2008). Nonetheless, the amorphous nature of the term has allowed companies to employ it inconsistently, obscuring its real meaning and its potential consequences for corporate control. As Votaw (1972) states: “corporate social responsibility means something, but not always the same thing to everybody” (p. 25). In order to critically analyze the sociological significance of this highly variable discourse, it is important to understand CSR as it is situated in history and the various theories that have formed concerning the expanding role of business in society. Although there are a number of articulations of the business community’s concern for society prior to the modern era, the most important context for a discussion of CSR starts around the turn of the 20th century (Carroll, 2008). Generally speaking, CSR took root in philanthropy and subsequently moved to include a broader recognition of the role of business in community affairs. Soon thereafter, businesses started reactively targeting certain problems (discrimination, pollution) in their CSR efforts, culminating in the current, more strategic approach in which companies are taking explicit, publicized actions toward addressing social issues as they arise.

1700 – 1950: Historical Development of the Modern American Corporation

Although it is ubiquitous today, the modern multinational corporation did not fully develop until around 1950. In the U.S., throughout the 18th and 19th centuries a corporation could only be formed for a specific purpose, which was preceded by a long and arduous process to obtain a state incorporation charter. In 1819, Chief Justice John Marshall defined the corporation as “an artificial being…it possesses only those properties which the charter of its creation confers upon it” (Winkler, 2017, p. 85-86), highlighting the existence of the corporation as an exclusively legal entity (Beets, 2011). The first “giant” corporations formed within the railroad industry during the mid 1800s, permitted to do so because of their contribution to U.S. infrastructure. Then, at the end of the 19th century, prior legal restraints on corporate mergers were lifted, resulting in the proliferation of large corporations as they acquired more and more small companies. Furthermore, in 1882, Roscoe Conkling, former senator and Supreme Court nominee, made a convincing case in court for the extension of 14th Amendment rights to corporations. Although there was technically no ruling in the case, the justices trusted Conkling's argument based on his expertise in the field, and subsequent legal proceedings reflected the notion that corporations were "persons" under the law. Invoking those corporate rights allowed for the invalidation of "numerous laws governing how businesses were to be run, supervised, and taxed" (Winkler, 2017, p. xiv). Thus, an expansion of the corporation occurred not only in terms of size but in terms of legal rights, and had significant implications for the social responsibility of business, which did not go unrecognized at the time. As Beets (2011) argues, these kinds of historical events served to expand the "ethical distance" between business executives and those affected by business operations. This separation makes it easier for leaders to make decisions that are questionable in terms of their negative impact on the external environment.

In response to public concern about the growth of "giant" corporations, the federal government passed several anti-trust laws (most notably, the Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890), which acknowledged the existence of monopolies but were largely unsuccessful in punishing them (Beets, 2011; Owens 1951). At the same time, concern for workers' safety and rights drove a labor movement to improve industry conditions, which resulted in various corporate attempts to manage discontent. These attempts primarily took the form of personal donations by business owners, such as Cornelius Vanderbilt of the New York Central Railroad and John D. Rockefeller of the Standard Oil Company. Although these men and other business magnates of the 19th century became widely known as philanthropists, they also held a staunch belief in the accumulation of wealth through competitive capitalism. In 1889, Rockefeller outlined his faith in monopoly, saying: "The growth of large business is merely a survival of the fittest…not an evil tendency in business…merely the working-out of a law of nature and a law of God" (Murolo & Chitty, 2001, p. 112). Andrew Carnegie, of the Carnegie Steel Company, similarly naturalized the process of accruing ever-increasing profits in his "Gospel of Wealth". Published in the North American Review in 1889, Carnegie's declaration stated that:

> …present laws of competition, accumulation, and distribution are the best obtainable conditions; that through these the race receives its most valuable fruits; and therefore, that they should be accepted and upheld. Under these it was held that great wealth must inevitably flow into the hands of the few exceptional managers of men. The question then arose, What should these do with their surplus wealth?... (1889, p. 682)

Carnegie answers his own question, claiming that this excess profit is a "sacred trust, to be administered…by them as trustees, for the best good of the community in which and from which it had been acquired" (p. 682). Carnegie also explicitly outlines the "best fields for philanthropy", identifying specific causes "to which a millionaire can devote the surplus", including the founding of a university, the establishment of a free library and art gallery, and donation to medical institutions (p. 682). This articulation of philanthropy represents the key formulation of the social responsibility of business throughout early stages of the development of the modern corporation, in which individual businessmen defended themselves against public concern for their extensive accumulation of wealth by praising the capitalist economic system and claiming the redistribution of individual fortune to social causes. The way in which these so-called "robber barons" participated in philanthropic activities in an attempt to manage their public image foreshadows parallel actions of corporations in more recent history.

Although much of the "social responsibility" of business during this period existed in the form of individual monetary donations by corporate executives, in some cases, it was more formally incorporated into company operations. For example, the R.H. Macy Company included charitable donations as expenses in its budget reports, contributing to various social agencies "to document a sense of relationship to the community that extended beyond the walls of the company" (Carroll, 2008, p. 22). Alternatively, some business owners attempted to demonstrate greater concern for the wellbeing of their workforce. George Pullman, owner of the Pullman Palace Car Company, created a "town" just for his employees in Chicago. Within the town, the company constructed the manufacturing plant as well as churches, parks, a hotel, and other various amenities. Pullman and his company outlined the purpose of the town in a public statement in 1895:

> The main object was the establishment of a great manufacturing business upon a substantial and money-making basis. Efficient workmen were regarded as essential to its success, and it was believed that they could be secured, held in contentment, and improved as such for their own sakes and for the benefit of the company by the accommodations and surroundings that were provided. (U.S. Strike Commission, 1895, p. XXI)

This statement, however, was part of a larger government report regarding a strike within the company that occurred the previous year issued by the United States strike commission to document their investigation of the causes and potential outcomes of the event. The report concludes with a discussion of the problematic nature of capitalist industry, acknowledging "the progressive perversion of the laws of supply and demand by capital and changed conditions" and "the wisdom of unity for legislative and protective purposes among those who supply labor" (U.S. Strike Commission, 1895, p. XLVIII). However, the commission follows this recognition by extoling the positive aspects of the system: "The growth of corporate power and wealth has been the marvel of the past fifty years. Corporations have undoubtedly benefited the country and brought its resources to our doors" (U.S. Strike Commission, 1895, p. XLVIII). The document then goes on to outline the myriad remedies that could be undertaken to resolve labor disputes and address the social problems faced primarily by wage earners, but does not take a particular position, reflecting the continued ambiguity of "social responsibility". Moreover, the way in which these statements deflect public criticism by putting forth an air of transparency and declaring the positive actions of business is a common trend even in CSR today.

In 1916, Henry Ford attempted to limit the excessive profits of those who owned stock in the Ford Motor company in favor of practices that took a more holistic approach to business activities, such as building a new manufacturing plant and providing better conditions for employees. This resulted in the famous court battle in which the Dodge brothers, stockholders in Ford's company at the time, sued him for neglecting his obligation to provide maximum dividends. In court, Ford stated that his company was created "to do as much good as we can, everywhere, for everybody concerned" (Winkler, 2017, p. 244), and declared his ambition not for wealth but for the provision of positive social improvement to the greatest extent possible. Conversely, the Dodge brothers argued that "helping employees and the larger public were goals 'worthy in themselves but not within the scope of an ordinary business operation'" (Winkler, 2017, p. 245). The Michigan Supreme Court ultimately ruled in favor of the Dodge brothers, stating that while "corporations might make 'an incidental humanitarian expenditure of corporate funds'…could not commit to 'a general purpose and plan to benefit mankind at the expense' of stockholders" (Winkler, 2017, p. 247). By explicitly asserting the legal boundaries of corporate behavior, the court officially articulated the widely held belief that the responsibility of the corporation was to provide profits to shareholders, a ruling that prevented corporations from taking on significant duties in external realms for most of the early 1900s. The primacy of stockholder value continued to be a prevalent notion throughout the second half of the 20th century and early 21st.

As demonstrated by these limited assertions of "social responsibility", up until the 1930s, business remained in a "profit maximizing management" phase. Furthermore, between 1900 and 1930, public and governmental concern for the proliferation of large corporations and their potentially damaging effects largely died out as the economy boomed and the standard of living remained relatively high (Beets, 2011). However, the 1930s ushered in the stock market crash and the Great Depression - the devastating result of a system of concentrated economic power and unlawful business activities – and the relationship between business and society began to change. During the 1920s-30s, on top of creating wealth for stockholders, companies began to take on responsibility for "creating and maintaining an equitable balance among other competing claims, such as claims from customers, employees, and the community" (Carroll, 2008, p. 23). Corporations were increasingly conceptualized as social institutions, akin to government entities, with societal obligations. During World War II, the government paid large corporations to use their manufacturing facilities to produce war materials, such as ammunition, rather than consumer goods. Although it was not necessarily recognized as such at the time, this was a significant moment in terms of the integration of corporations into politics, and it served as an initial blurring of the line between business and government. Corporations and their shareholders were satisfied with this system because of its profitability, and U.S. citizens began to see giant corporations as positive because of their critical role in the war (Beets, 2011).

Due to this wartime success, corporations continued to thrive as WWII concluded in the 1940s, setting the stage for their global expansion in subsequent decades. Meanwhile, there was a general belief among the public as well as among business leaders that business was, and should be, good for society. Fortune magazine conducted a survey of business executives in 1946 demonstrating that 93.5% believed it was the responsibility of a company to manage the consequences of their actions beyond their legal mandates concerning finance and that this was a growing notion among their colleagues (Carroll, 2008). However, it wasn't until the 1950s that scholars, executives, and others began to define exactly what consequences must be managed and what responsibilities fell to corporations.

1950s - 1990s: Defining and Theorizing CSR

The 1950s-60s were characterized by significant *discussion* of CSR and much less *action*. During the next three decades, the economy underwent considerable changes, particularly in terms of globalization and the movement out of Fordism (Hanlon, 2008). During this transition, corporations became increasingly involved in political affairs and governance both locally and internationally. Furthermore, when U.S. corporations expanded their business operations into other countries, they "invariably and often unintentionally exported their customs and ethics", and the "ethical distance" within corporations stretched across not only physical borders but cultural ones as well (Beets, 2011). Throughout this time, individuals and organizations began to formally observe the expanding role of the corporation and continued to construct the meaning of social responsibility through a wide range of terminology. They argued for the inclusion of various constituents as recipients of “ethical” business behavior - from suppliers to local communities to the general public - demonstrating the way in which CSR discourse tends to eschew concrete definitions in favor of a vague concept open to interpretation based on time and place.

Modern literature on CSR can be traced to Howard R. Bowen’s *Social Responsibilities of the Businessman* (1953), in which he was the first person to formally ask, “What responsibilities to society may businessmen reasonably be expected to assume?” (p. xvii). Bowen foregrounds his investigation into potential answers to this question with a statement of the already-significant role of business, arguing that the “businessman occupies a position of great influence and leadership” (p. 3). The “businessman” makes decisions about the production of goods and services, has a critical role in the economic development of the country, and is in charge of the provision of income to workers and owners – but he is still beholden to the pressures of his constituents and the government and thus does not ever truly have complete control. As the “Father of Corporate Social Responsibility” (Carroll, 1999), Bowen’s ideas are important to keep in mind in tracing the proliferation of CSR literature that has occurred since 1953.

Another important contributor to early discussions of CSR was Keith Davis, who wrote that social responsibility refers to “decisions and actions taken for reasons at least partially beyond the firm’s direct economic or technical interest” (1960, p. 70). Davis argued that companies will not be successful in the long-term if they do not use their “social power” to contribute positively to the general welfare of the public (p. 71). Others suggested that “production and distribution should enhance total socio-economic welfare” (Frederick, 1960, p. 60), and argued that business should have an interest in politics, local community, education, and employee satisfaction, “as a proper citizen should” (McGuire, 1963, p. 144).

This articulation of the company as a member of society lays the theoretical groundwork for notions of corporate citizenship, as well as a discussion of the "relationship" between business and society and the importance of maintaining that relationship (Walton, 1967).

In 1970, famous economist Milton Friedman published his pivotal doctrine, "The Social Responsibility of Business Is to Increase Its Profits" in the New York Times, arguing against the increasingly common postulation by businessmen that they have a "social conscience" (Friedman, 1970). He stated that if corporate claims to "social responsibility" were taken seriously, they would be "preaching pure and unadulterated socialism" (p. SM17). With this declaration, Friedman highlights the way in which cultural context has played a significant role in the discussion of business responsibilities throughout history. During the 1970s, the United States was deep in the midst of the Cold War, and anti-Russia patriotism became synonymous with anti-communism and anti-socialism. The majority of Americans subscribed to this sentiment, and the fear of a war with Russia further embedded an aversion to alternatives to capitalism. Capitalism thus became a national symbol of patriotism, and the pursuit of profit was the basis for the "American dream". Drawing upon these cultural ideals, Friedman argues that expanding the responsibility of business in society would demonstrate a perversion of capitalism that was altogether un-American. Furthermore, the fact that he had to defend profit-making shows that public perception of capitalist business had perhaps already begun to shift toward a more inclusive definition of "responsibility".

Friedman also emphasizes that, regardless of inaccurate interpretations of the 14th Amendment, corporations are not humans - they are artificial entities, and can therefore not have responsibilities. In discussing responsibility, he largely speaks of corporate executives, stating that it is their duty as individuals “to conduct the business in accordance with their desires, which generally will be to make as much money as possible while conforming to the basic rules of the society, both those embodied in law and those embodied in ethical custom” (p. SM17). In voicing this idea publicly, Friedman popularized a neoliberal economic view that had previously been considered fairly extreme (Feldman, 2007) and affirmed the court’s decision in the Ford-Dodge case. However, although Friedman is usually associated with the idea that companies should not be participating in social activities - and that was likely his intended point - it is important to look at the specific language Friedman uses. Carson (1993) points out that there are conditions embedded in Friedman’s statement that are not negligible, particularly in terms of the limitations placed on business activity by “ethical custom”. For example, Friedman states:

> …it may well be in the long-run interest of a corporation that is a major employer in a small community to devote resources to providing amenities to that community or to improving its government. That may make it easier to attract desirable employes [sic], it may reduce the wage bill or lessen losses… (1970, p. SM17).

Friedman thus allows for certain social contributions, as long as they have an economic justification. He states that by referring to these kinds of activities as “social responsibility”, corporations can “generate goodwill as a by-product of expenditures…in its own self-interest” (p. SM17). However, he expresses disdain for this practice of “hypocritical window-dressing” because it is “approaching fraud” and because it implicitly furthers the idea that “the pursuit of profits is wicked and immoral and must be curbed and controlled by external forces” (1970, p. SM17). Friedman instead favors a perfectly free, efficiently operating market – without added “corporate social responsibilities” - arguing that it will provide the conditions for improved living standards on a universal level.

Friedman's views provide the basis for shareholder value theory, which remains one of the predominant philosophies of business, holding companies accountable only to their investors, who expect to receive the maximum dividends possible from their investment. Proponents of this view suggest that corporations have no duties to the larger society, but should be required to adhere to governmental regulations concerning the management of the environmental and social impact of business (Carson, 1993; Mele, 2008; Scherer & Palazzo, 2008). As in the Ford-Dodge court ruling, there are corporate governance laws that enforce shareholder value theory – companies can be penalized if they conduct business in a way that does not provide the most profit. However, just as Friedman suggests, shareholder value theory has been used to understand CSR in the "business case", which argues that social responsibility programs ultimately result in financial benefit, which I will discuss further in the next section.

Despite a broad acceptance of Friedman's views and shareholder value theory, definitions of CSR continued to proliferate throughout the 1970s and beyond, suggesting shifting conceptions of business in society. In 1971, the Committee for Economic Development (CED) published a report stating that businesses were increasingly being required to answer to humanity as a whole, and suggested a three-tiered definition of the responsibilities of business:

> The *inner circle* includes the clear-cut basic responsibilities for the efficient execution of the economic function – products, jobs and economic growth. The *intermediate circle* encompasses responsibility to exercise this economic function with a sensitive awareness of changing social values and priorities: for example, with respect to environmental conservation; hiring and relations with employees; and more rigorous expectations of customers for information, fair treatment, and protection from injury. The *outer circle* outlines newly emerging and still amorphous responsibilities that business should assume to become

> more broadly involved in actively improving the social environment. (For example, poverty and urban blight). (as cited in Carroll, 1999, p. 275)

Since the CED was composed of business people, this report demonstrated that individuals and organizations within the corporate sphere were coming to the same conclusion as scholars and others in suggesting that corporations had duties outside of profit-making. An article in the Chicago Defender states that, in its report, the CED called for businesses to “formulate their goals and evaluate their performance on the basis of social as well as financial criteria” and that it encouraged partnership with government “to help solve the nation’s social problems” (Business responsibilities, 1971, p. 6). However, the article also concludes with, “Let’s hope this formulation is not a mere paper commitment” (Business responsibilities, p. 6), providing an insightful glimpse into the skepticism surrounding the issue of corporate involvement in social welfare and foreshadowing the public backlash of the 1980s.

The proliferation of social activism during the 1970s, including movements for labor and civil rights as well as environmentalism, drove the rapid development of CSR, which remained a highly nebulous concept with perpetually divergent definitions. In response to social movements, the U.S. government created three agencies aimed at the regulation of corporate activities in terms of environmental issues (Environmental Protection Agency), employee safety (Occupational Health and Safety Administration), and product safety (Consumer Product Safety Commission). However, the reciprocal influence of corporations on legislation became clear as companies quickly responded to regulation by creating organizations to lobby against policies that would adversely affect them. Politicians in turn, considering their potential for financial gain, passed the Federal Election Campaign Act in

1971, which allowed corporations to contribute funding to campaigns. This became an important tool for companies to fend off unfavorable regulation and avoid implementing policies that would limit their profits or significantly alter their operational procedures (Beets, 2011). In subsequent decades, regulatory legislation that had been initiated to manage the negative impact of corporations and limit their influence became relatively lax and enforcement waned, ultimately affording companies even more power.

While the corporate and political spheres became increasingly intertwined throughout the 1970s, academics continued to speculate about the "social responsibility" of business. Sandra L. Holmes conducted interviews with corporate executives in 1976 to examine the perception of CSR within the business community. She revealed that the leaders were "optimistic about the ability of businesses to alleviate social problems and believed that the level of corporate social efforts was only partially determined by general economic conditions" (p. 40). In 1979, prolific CSR scholar Archie Carroll suggested his model of corporate social performance (CSP). CSP refers to "the principles, practices, and outcomes of businesses' relationships with people, organizations, institutions, communities, societies, and the earth" resulting from both intentional and unintentional business activity. CSP is essentially equivalent to CSR, but entails a more "systematic attempt at fleshing out the social issues that are of most interest to the firm" (Jamali, 2008). Wood (2010) argues that CSP centers specifically "on the impacts and outcomes for society, stakeholders and the firm itself" and that these outcomes were missing from other models (p. 50). In this view, corporations are the "locus of actions that have consequences for stakeholders and society as well as for itself" (p. 54). Carroll outlined four categories of responsibility in his model: economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary (philanthropy). Economic and legal responsibilities were considered mandatory, whereas ethical responsibility was socially expected and discretionary activities were desired (1979). CSP continues to exist in more current discussions of social responsibility, but has widely been accepted to exist underneath the umbrella of CSR. Although there were various other scholars writing about CSR in the 1970s, Carroll's was the most prominent theory set forth to account for the increase in CSR activities. This increase occurred alongside the process of deregulation as a means to distract from the more unpalatable activities in which corporations were engaged, and corporate power in the realm of government swelled through subsequent decades.

1980s – 2018: From Shareholder to Stakeholder

During the 1980s, the role of business in society continued to expand, and CSR went through a process of institutionalization, marking a transition from primarily add-on philanthropic activities and community relations efforts to integrated environmental and social practices within corporations. This was in part because of the receding intervention of the state, and in part because society at large became more attuned to the problems created by the rapid development of global capitalism. President Reagan, elected in 1980, "urged cuts in federal and state funding of social service programs" and encouraged the private business sector to subsume comparable duties through CSR (Carroll, 2015). This reflects a broader trend toward the privatization of governance as a result of the economic changes of the late 20th century, which "created a structural imbalance between the size and power of global firms and markets, and the capacity, willingness, and ability of governments to regulate them" (Moon & Vogel, 2008, p. 310). This lack of regulation was particularly salient in terms of globalization, which occurred without the formation of a universal governing body. Although there are various agencies whose responsibility it is to moderate among the world polity (the World Trade Organization, the United Nations), organizations such as the UN Centre for Transnational Corporations have repeatedly tried and failed to “create a binding code of conduct for multinational corporations” (Levy & Kaplan, 2008, p. 434). Thus, the rapid growth of CSR over the past 30 years can be seen as a response both to public opinion as well as to the aforementioned governance deficits (Scherer & Palazzo, 2008).

Throughout the 1980s, ethical scandals on the part of large multinational corporations, along with stagnant wages at the employee level, brought into focus issues of greed, power, and exploitation that came with the global expansion of capitalism. Furthermore, the invention of the Internet and the information revolution allowed for more efficient monitoring of corporate behavior, resulting in the rapid development of CSR as companies worked to avoid public criticism. This criticism was “initially fed by scandals concerning defective products, political misbehavior, executive corruption, and labor abuses” and was further fueled by environmental crises such as the Exxon Valdez and Amoco Cadiz oil spills, the Bhobal chemical spill, and the Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster (Stiles & Galbraith, 2010). Given the ubiquity of these kinds of events, a “crisis management” industry was forming, creating experts on managing public relations after such reputation-damaging events. A New York Times article criticized Exxon Valdez for its response, or lack thereof, after one of its oil tankers spilt 750,000 barrels of crude oil into the ocean off the coast of Alaska, saying it failed to “establish itself as a company concerned about the problems it had caused” (Holusha, 1989, n.p.). This invocation of a discourse of “genuine concern” reflects the increasingly common conceptualization of business as having the capacity for human emotions, and a growing theme of CSR in which corporations are not entities outside of society, but citizens within it, which further emerged as a theory in the 1990s.

While a growing number of companies were entangled in attempts to address the detrimental impact of their questionable activities through crisis management and public relations, some also discovered the prospective correlation between CSR and financial success, highlighting the continued prevalence of shareholder value theory as a potential explanation for CSR. During the 1980s, many studies attempted to examine the correlation between CSR and financial performance (Cochran & Wood, 1984; Aupperle et al., 1985), which might exist in some intrinsic cost reduction (i.e. energy efficient operations or reduction in waste), long-term sustainability of operations, or in a manner of "enlightened self-interest" in which companies use CSR marketing as a way to increase their profits by improving their reputation and legitimizing their actions to consumers (Mele, 2008). However, as Garriga and Mele (2004) point out, this kind of research has "to be read with caution" because "correlation is difficult to measure" (p. 53). This hesitance to accept the business case for CSR reflects a resounding notion throughout the literature: that concrete evidence for the economic benefit of CSR programs is highly elusive.

Given the inconclusive nature of this type of research, it is unsurprising that the 1990s brought with it a variety of other theories concerning the popularity of CSR, what it means, and how it actually plays out within corporations and the various sites where it is being implemented. While some of these ideas remain inside the bounds of the shareholder framework, others suggest that CSR has taken on a new form in which the relationship between corporations, their constituents, and society as a whole has changed significantly. Waddock (2009) suggests that the proliferation of CSR is a matter of the definition of "value", which may be different for shareholders today than it was in the past: "for traditional investors, responsibility is simply assumed to mean wealth maximization within the constraints of the law, while for social investors…it means investing in alignment with one's values" (p. 38). In other words, owners and shareholders may seek to have their money invested in socially responsible activities and practices and may be willing to forego some monetary value if it means reinforcing their personal sense of morality. However, more compelling theories, supported by changes in CSR practice and discourse, provide better insight into the development of CSR and the expanding role of corporations in society.

One of these new approaches, termed stakeholder theory, provides a more precise articulation of the previously abstract idea that corporations are responding to specific constituents in their enactment of CSR. Drawing on the existing "shareholder" terminology, the term "stakeholder" was coined in 1963 at the Stanford Research Institute to refer to parties whose support is required for the corporation's existence, including employees, customers, suppliers, and society, in addition to shareholders themselves (Freeman and Reed, 1983). Just as the term "social responsibility" has always been vague, "stakeholder" is likewise ambiguous. Jamali (2008) argues that "while CSR aims to define what responsibilities business ought to fulfill, the stakeholder concept addresses the issue of whom business is or should be accountable to" (p. 228). It may include, in a broader sense, "any identifiable group or individual who can affect the achievement of an organization's objective or who is affected by the achievement of an organization's objectives", or in a narrower sense, only those "on which the organization is dependent for its continued survival" (Freeman & Reed, 1983, p. 91). By the end of the 1980s, stakeholder terminology had become common among business practitioners in discussing and enacting CSR. In an article in the journal *Business,* Aggarwal and Chandra (1990) present a case in favor of stakeholder management, directed toward corporate managers:

> …since the success of a corporation depends on willing contributions by its various stakeholders, a corporation is best managed when it creates value and furthers the long-term interests of all its stakeholders…many U.S. managers are realizing that SM [stakeholder management] is rooted in smart business strategy and in behavior that is widely accepted as ethical and socially responsible (p. 49)

By 1990, many major companies, such as Deere and Company, Johnson & Johnson, McDonald's, and Wal-Mart, had already adopted this approach, highlighting a trend that would only grow more popular over the turn of the century. As companies began to "manage", "engage", and "respond to" stakeholders, scholars attempted to pinpoint the definition and explicit nature of the "stakeholder". Research by Mitchell, Bradley and Wood (1997) argues that firms prioritize investment in various stakeholders based on their power, legitimacy, and urgency, suggesting that companies attend first to stakeholders who have a more direct impact on financial performance. In this way, "some claims and some relationships are legitimate and worthy of management attention" while others are not (Mitchell et al., 1997, p. 882). This emphasizes the fact that the adoption of a stakeholder approach does not guarantee an equal and fair distribution of socially responsible activities. On the contrary, companies can use the stakeholder terminology to maintain the impression that they are attending to the needs of a variety of constituents while simultaneously filtering those needs to suit their own interests.

The 1990s saw the addition of executive positions devoted to the management of CSR as well as the increasing conception of corporations as "citizens". Job titles such as "social responsibility manager" and "senior vice president of CSR" became more common, and sustainability or environmental departments were established. Meanwhile, corporate citizenship draws upon the idea of corporate personhood to construct companies as members of society, beholden to the same ethical norms as human beings. As humanized “corporate citizens”, companies are expected to contribute positively to their community, to reduce their environmental harm, and to be considerate of all other members of society. In this theory, if corporations do not abide by these normative regulations, they will encounter resistance, just as humans are ostracized when they deviate from the norm. This ideology suggests that companies should be addressing broader social problems - whether they are related to their business operations or not - because they do not stand alone. They are embedded in society, without which they would be unable to function, and they should be required to maintain a reciprocal relationship with that society, by responding to the expectations of its people and abiding by a form of “social contract” (see Donaldson, 1982). Thus, in order to manage the expectations of the public, companies increasingly not only *react* to criticism, but proactively attempt to avoid it through voluntary CSR actions that gesture toward the corporation’s adherence to ethical norms (Mele, 2008).

Throughout the 21st century, business literature has continued to draw upon stakeholder theory and ideas of corporate citizenship to encourage and instruct leaders toward the effective implementation of CSR programs. Legitimacy theory has similarly been applied to understand the proliferation of corporate social reporting, suggesting that “as societal bounds and norms may change over time, the organization continuously has to demonstrate that its actions are legitimate and that it behaved as a good citizen” (Hooghiemstra, 2000, p. 56). Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) draw on organizational theories of social identity to examine “why and under what conditions consumers enter into strong, committed, and meaningful relationships with certain companies” (p. 76). Their usage of the term “relationship” demonstrates how companies are perceived as having the capacity to involve themselves in human-like interactions. As corporations are increasingly humanized, seen as “citizens” or “persons”, particularly in legal terms, they are imbued “with the moral virtues of people committed to others” (Foster, 2014, p. 248). And they increasingly act as such, as they try “to become identified with symbols, values or institutions which have a strong base of social legitimacy” (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004). In this way, corporations engage in a form of impression management - just as humans work to mold their actions to societal norms, to be seen as moral, to “save face” when they act outside of these rules, companies work to manage their corporate image to suit societal standards for “appropriate” or “responsible” behavior and to establish a positive “identity” among consumers.

At the turn of the 21st century, CSR was burgeoning across the Western world. Consumers, employees, activists, and other “stakeholders” have taken a more active role in outlining how companies should behave, and corporations have in turn shifted their CSR models and practices to address a greater range of issues and constituents – or so they claim. Skepticism and cynicism still pervade much of the writing about CSR, and Carroll (2008) suggests that “CSR can be sustainable only so long as it continues to add value to corporate success”, making it a competitive business issue. Today, there is an entire marketing industry devoted to greenwashing and misleading public relations campaigns, which work to portray an inaccurate account of the extent to which companies are actually enacting CSR activities in a legitimate manner. Nonetheless, according to Carroll, “the public will continue to expect companies to integrate social concerns into their everyday business practices and CSR ‘will continue to grow in importance’” (Mohn, 2017, n.p.).

Over time, the corporation has evolved from a limited artificial entity to a “citizen” with human-like features, capabilities, and rights, shaped by historical events. As the corporate form developed and expanded, the public increasingly held it to higher standards, forcing companies to not only abide by legal standards, but ethical ones as well. In order to fulfill these new expectations, corporations rapidly adopted CSR policies and practices, from philanthropy to strategic stakeholder management, all the while expanding their role in politics and society. Social scientists tend to argue that, despite the promotion of CSR as a win-win solution to largescale economic, environmental, and social problems, its enactment may not actually resolve these issues and may in fact ultimately be another path to corporate domination. Furthermore, these changes in conceptualization of the corporation serve to tell us something about the way that value is produced in modern capitalism. In light of the long and complex history of CSR, I chose to conduct an in-depth analysis of one corporation, in order to identify how some of these ideas play out in a concrete case of modern CSR discourse. Starbucks' relatively robust CSR program provides a site through which to further illuminate the changing nature of "social responsibility" and its implications, and to illustrate these issues with specific examples.

CHAPTER 3

DATA AND METHODS

Data

To address how Starbucks frames and enacts corporate social responsibility and to investigate the major actors involved in this process, I conducted a Situational Analysis (Clarke 2005) and Critical Discourse Analysis (Van Dijk, 1993) of the company's published social responsibility reports, in addition to press releases and web pages published by Starbucks. Social responsibility reports are common among businesses in the modern era, and they are the clearest way in which a company itself can document the details of its CSR programs. Ocler (2009) called these reports "instruments seeking to praise the actions of the companies…which one could describe as propaganda" (p. 184). Given this claim, it seemed reasonable to begin addressing the issue at hand by examining these documents. Starbucks began producing these reports in 2001 and each annual report is available through the fiscal year 2016. The reports are largely similar for the first 5 years – approximately 70 pages of detailed information about Starbucks' general attitude toward CSR (its "mission statement" and "principles") as well as its specific actions in terms of ethical coffee sourcing, investment, environmental responsibility, community service, diversity, and workplace safety. In 2008, the reports became much more condensed, including more quantitative information about selected key efforts, and outlining and measuring progress toward particular goals. These reports, published by the company each summer for the previous fiscal year and verified by a third-party agency, helped me develop a comprehensive understanding of Starbucks' CSR activities over the course of the past 16 years. For the critical discourse analysis, I compiled a sample of 17 press releases, the 16 available CSR reports, and five pages on the Starbucks website, for a total of 35 data points. I collected the press releases using the search bar on the Starbucks website to look for key items from the initial analysis (i.e. "Conservation International", "award", "investment", etc.). I only cite nine of the 16 CSR reports directly in the second phase of analysis, but I use the others for context in the initial situational analysis.

Situational Analysis

I used Clarke's situational analysis (2005) as a foundation for this first phase of data collection and analysis. Situational analysis is based in grounded theory, which is a methodology that involves continuous interaction between theory and data (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). After the initial data is coded for themes, more data is collected to continue to form concepts and broader categories. Situational analysis incorporates this process through "mapping" – a method in which the "situation of inquiry" is laid out in terms of the major elements involved. This allows the researcher to see how the project is situated in the world and who/what is participating in its construction, and to shed light on the social relations that exist within it. Furthermore, it helps the researcher to make sense of a large volume of data and to "think systematically" through "decisions regarding future data to collect" (Clarke, p. 85).

Using the information in the reports, I created a situational map of Starbucks' CSR programs based on the text in the 16 reports (see Table 1).

Table 1: Situational Map

Individual human elements/actors Coffee farmers Partners (employees) Shareholders Consumers CEO Howard Schultz (and his dad) Celebrities (as partners)	**Nonhuman elements/actants** Coffee farming technologies (conservation techniques) Green building and recycling technologies **Implicated/silent actors/actants** Coffee farmers Partners (employees) Shareholders Consumers The environment (soil, trees, climate, wildlife) Activists (labor and environmental)
Collective human elements/actors Starbucks Corporation Emerging Issues Council Frameworks for CSR: Global Reporting Initiative, Fair Trade standards, GHG Protocol Corporate Standards Social investment/philanthropies: Starbucks Foundation, Calvert Community Investments, the Ford Foundation Environmental organizations: Conservation International, U.S. Green Building Council, Earthwatch Institute, Recycle America Alliance, African Wildlife Foundation Development organizations: USAID, Oxfam, CARE International, Mercy Corps, Coffee Kids Certification institutions: TransFair USA, Eco-Logica Forums/coalitions: BSR Clean Cargo Group, Business for Innovative Climate and Energy Policy (BICEP), Climate Group Publications: Business Ethics magazine, Fortune magazine Awarding organizations: Coffee Quality Institute, “EPA Green Power Partnership”, Ethisphere Unions	**Discursive constructions of individual and/or collective human actors** Climate change Universal Declaration of Human Rights Voluntary collaborative initiatives: RE100, Corporate Renewable Energy Buyer’s Principles, UN Global Compact, 100,000 Opportunities Initiative “Opportunity Youth” Awards: social indexes (i.e. Down Jones Sustainability Index), “Humanitarian Award”, “World Summit Business Award for Sustainable Development Partnerships”, “Fifth most admired company worldwide”, “Most Ethical Company” , “100 Best Corporate Citizens” **Discursive constructions of nonhuman actants** Environmentally-friendly practices **Related discourses and other key elements** Globalization Sustainable development **Major issues/debates** Climate change
Political/economic elements Climate change Globalization Fiscal responsibility Labor standards Human rights	**Sociocultural/symbolic elements** Consumer construction of corporations: “Big business” as “the enemy” or destructive to the environment; capitalism as an exploitative system
Temporal elements (U.S. national historical frame) 2001-2016 Recession of 2008	**Spatial elements** “Global South”/coffee-growing regions: Southeast Asia, South and Central America, Mexico “Global North”/Starbucks corporate offices and primary retail market: Seattle, United States, Canada, Europe Recycling infrastructure/building design

This allowed me to understand, on a basic level, what "socially responsible" actions the company has taken, the context in which these initiatives played out, what other entities were involved, and to get a general sense of the way in which the company chose to present its efforts. By conducting this kind of analysis in the preliminary stages, I was able to recognize "what is going on" with Starbucks corporate social responsibility. After mapping out the relevant actors, their discursive constructions, and other contributing human and nonhuman actors, I was able to identify overarching themes concerning the way in which Starbucks *frames* and *enacts* CSR– what forms it takes on and through what methods the company conducts their CSR activities. Largely, the information in the reports showed that Starbucks CSR is carried out and demonstrated in terms of the following: partnership with other organizations, reaction to the public/consumer, awards, forums/coalitions, investment, and community service. I also identified the broader realms Starbucks has entered through its CSR programs: environmental governance standards, development, politics, and welfare.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Through this initial data collection and analysis, I noted that much of what Starbucks does positions itself comfortably within the anthropological and sociological literature cited in Chapter 1, and provides evidence for Foster (2014) and Rajak's (2016) arguments about the power dynamics involved in CSR. Given that I was interested in examining whether and how Starbucks ultimately expands its role in society and increases its control, I chose to use a critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach for the second phase of data collection and analysis. Discourse is, essentially, the way in which certain people or entities talk about a subject, creating systems of meaning that serve to shape how we organize ourselves and society. Society constructs some discourses as more important or more valid than others, which reinforces existing power dynamics and contributes to the reproduction of inequality (Foucault, 1971). Critical discourse analysis, then, focuses on how societal power relations are established and reinforced through language (Van Dijk, 1993). Specifically, it looks at the way in which "the elites and their discursive strategies" further inequality, particularly through the use of "strategies that aim at the concealment of social power relations" (Van Dijk, 1993). As highlighted in Chapter 1, the discourse of CSR is often used to justify the potentially harmful actions of companies by imbuing them with a sense of goodwill and morality. In other words, companies use specific strategies in their presentation of CSR to "convey an appealing impression to shareholders and other stakeholders" (Ocler, 2009).

To analyze the language Starbucks uses to present its CSR initiatives, I expanded my data set to include press releases produced by Starbucks, which are available in an archive on the Starbucks Newsroom website, as well as the Starbucks company website itself. For this analysis, I started by teasing out general ideas, identifying commonly-used phrases, intended audience, and concepts that consistently showed up in the data. Next, I condensed this into a more organized list of categories in an attempt to understand what broader themes existed in the way Starbucks discussed its CSR efforts. Finally, I looked at these themes in terms of the way they reflected power – how does Starbucks use public communication about its CSR initiatives to serve the company's interests? The themes from this analysis are outlined in Appendix A.

In the next chapter, I present this research by identifying the specific communication strategies Starbucks uses and their implications. Then, I discuss how Starbucks' enactment of CSR reflects broader trends in modern capitalism and interacts with the existing sociological literature. I argue that this data provides specific evidence for previous arguments about the acquisition and maintenance of various forms of power through corporate social responsibility.

Limitations

This research was limited in a couple of ways. First, while I believe in the power of case study, I have only critically examined the CSR programs and communication of one corporation in this thesis. I believe it could be beneficial to compare multiple corporations' efforts in order to get a better sense for the way that CSR discourse is being utilized in the modern era, and to understand the broader state of the social responsibility of business today. Second, I work at Starbucks. While I do not believe my employment at the company affected my research in any way, it is entirely possible and in fact likely that unconscious biases creeped into my work. In one sense, I receive a paycheck from Starbucks, and enjoy working there. However, I have had my share of issues and conflicts with the company, and do not always agree with the way the business is run. In either case, my own personal experience may have cast a certain light on my research, limiting it in some way.

CHAPTER 4

"THROUGH THE LENS OF HUMANITY": ENACTING CSR

The Story of Starbucks

Starbucks, as it exists today, was founded in 1971 as a coffee bean store in Seattle's Pike Place Market. In 1982, Howard Schultz, long-time CEO and face of the company, became director of retail operations and marketing, and the company began providing coffee to restaurants and espresso bars. The next year, Schultz traveled to Italy, fell in love with its coffee culture, and returned with the goal of developing a similar concept in the States. Schultz convinced the founders of Starbucks to test this idea in downtown Seattle, a successful experiment that led Schultz to found Il Giornale. Il Giornale, which owned cafés that served coffee and espresso drinks made from Starbucks beans, acquired Starbucks in 1987, recruiting local investors for the coffeehouse concept, and the Starbucks Corporation was established (Starbucks, 2018a).

Schultz claims that his ideas about the way in which Starbucks would operate were influenced by his father's disappointing experience as a lifelong wage laborer. Schultz said that, from the outset, he wanted to build "a different kind of company" – one that first and foremost valued its employees and abided by certain principles in its pursuit of profit. Thus, Starbucks says that it is "performance driven, through the lens of humanity" and that its mission is not only to create wealth but to "inspire" and "connect". Starbucks refers to the members of its workforce not as "employees" but as "partners", implying their equal status within the company. In its mission statement, Starbucks places profitability last on its list of principles, preceded by goals to "contribute positively to our communities and our environment". This was intentional – the company professes its belief that financial success is predicated upon its commitment to other principles (Report, 2001). As a demonstration of its values, Starbucks began offering full health benefits to eligible full- and part-time employees the year after it was incorporated. It continued to develop its efforts toward social responsibility with the establishment of the Starbucks Foundation, the company's affiliated non-profit, in 1997, and the initiation of a monumental partnership with Conservation International in 1998 (Starbucks, 2018b).

By including these kinds of CSR practices from the beginning, Starbucks proactively constructs social responsibility as an integral part of its regular operations. Each annual social impact report begins with a statement about the embedded nature of the company's CSR efforts within the business model. Starbucks reinforces the idea that CSR is not an add-on but is incorporated into "all areas" of the business in its publications about various efforts. For example, Starbucks published a press release about its sustainability bond, which will be used to fund its coffee sourcing efforts. In this article, the chief financial officer is quoted saying: "issuing a bond focused on sustainable sourcing, demonstrates that sustainability is not just an add-on, but an integral part of Starbucks, including our strategy and finances" (Starbucks, 2016). Starbucks suggests that CSR is a "natural extension" of its regular day-to-day operations, and that it takes a "comprehensive approach" to its efforts – that it conducts each aspect of its business with "humanity" in mind (Starbucks, 2018a). Through this kind of language, Starbucks tells a story about the nature of the company and builds for itself a persona based on morality and justice.

Starbucks also uses this kind of strategically constructed narrative in its discussion of CSR programs, drawing on the emotional ties of farmers and partners - childhood memories, family, lifelong passions, or hardship - and connecting those feelings to Starbucks actions. Within the CSR reports and press releases I analyzed, I coded 22 examples of this narrative theme. In its most recent CSR report, Starbucks includes "From Our Farmers" and "From Our Partners" sections, highlighting the stories of specific individuals to illustrate its efforts at sustainable coffee sourcing, "greener retail", educational support, and community involvement (Report, 2016). For example, in Figure 1, Starbucks recounts one partner's experience in order to lead into a statement about its FoodShare program, one of the company's local CSR endeavors:

FROM OUR PARTNERS

Helping to End Hunger in the Community

As a seven-year-old girl, Esther Ortega-Johnson often woke up early on weekends during cold weather, bundled up in warm clothes and made her way to downtown Los Angeles with family members. Their journey was for a special purpose: to provide a hot meal to anyone in need on the streets.

"My dad would organize my extended family to make tacos and hot chocolate and pass the food and beverages out to anyone looking for something to eat," said Ortega-Johnson, a store manager and Navy spouse now living in San Antonio, Texas. "That was my first experience with homelessness and hunger."

Soon more family members and friends learned about the effort and joined in.

"We weren't working for any particular organization, we were simply helping people in need," she said. "That's how my parents raised me and my siblings. If you're able to provide for other people, then it's your responsibility to make sure that you do."

That experience as a child had a decided impact on Ortega-Johnson, who is one of several Starbucks partners supporting the company's effort to expand its FoodShare program in San Antonio and Houston.

Through a strategic alliance with Feeding America, Starbucks has set a goal to rescue 100 percent of food available to donate from their more than 7,000 U.S. company-operated stores. When the program rollout is complete, Starbucks estimates that partners in company-operated stores will be able to provide 50 million nourishing meals each year.

Figure 1: "Helping to End Hunger in the Community" (Report, 2016, p. 18)

In this excerpt, Starbucks connects Esther's relationship with her father and her impactful memories about serving the homeless to Starbucks' participation in the Feeding America alliance, touting statistics about the company's programs. Similarly, in a press release entitled, "What makes Starbucks one of the world's top 5 most admired employers? Ask these partners", Starbucks writes about a partner who is participating in the company's College Achievement Plan, a benefits program in which Starbucks has partnered with Arizona State University to a provide a free online four-year degree to eligible partners. The article highlights the emotional aspect of her involvement with Starbucks – she was thrilled to be named to the Dean's List, let alone to attend college at all. The article shares how the partner came from humble roots and was able to fund her education and become successful in life through her employment at Starbucks (Starbucks, 2018d). This is one instance of many that reflect the company's use of stories of struggle, which resolve in uplifting ways as a result of Starbucks' efforts – in this case, the partner's success is attributed to Starbucks' College Achievement. There are other examples of the helpful impact of the company's extensive benefits program, including partners who used their stock options to finance positive growth and changes in their lives. For example, in its 2003 CSR report, Starbucks said:

> Domingo Olvera never imagined that one day he'd own 75 acres of agricultural land and have a three-bedroom house built in his homeland of Jalisco, Mexico. But that's exactly what he and his wife, Mariana, managed to do after cashing in some of Domingo's Bean Stock grants that he accrued by packaging coffee at Starbucks roasting plant in Kent, Washington. The house is 'a nice place; not so big, but nice,' describes Domingo of the home where his family stays when they return to Jalisco for vacations. 'Next, I'll use my Bean Stock to expand the house,' Domingo explains. 'This has been real good for me. I value all the benefits that Starbucks provides for me – the stock options, the 401(k) and S.I.P. (stock investment plan).' (Report, 2003, p. 70)

In this case, Starbucks implies that Domingo would not have had the opportunity to accomplish this dream without the aid of the stock provided to him by the company. Starbucks also used a press release to tell the story of a leader at its Farmer Support Center in Colombia in order to illustrate its investment in the coffee industry and its farmers, drawing on the emotional aspect of warfare and unrest in the country – even citing the number of people who have died in the conflict – to foreground a discussion of its efforts toward sustainable coffee farming. In narratives like these, Starbucks highlights tales of struggle in which the company's CSR efforts are the resolution. In its account of the Colombian conflict, Starbucks follows a discussion of political insurgency and violence with a description of the company's initiatives to help Colombian coffee farmers:

> Colombia ended the more than 50 years of violence and insurgency last year when its main rebel group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), inked a peace agreement. Since the agreement was reached, farmers now have more freedom to make the choice to turn from coca leaves to coffee growing. Nuno and Starbucks are committed to helping them become successful. (Starbucks, 2017a)

Thus, within Starbucks' use of story-telling, the company does not only become sympathetic to the plight of various communities and individuals, it draws upon ideas of corporate personhood and inserts itself as the hero, a recurring theme identified during the critical discourse analysis. Starbucks suggests that it has somehow "rescued" these people and communities by donating money or contributing resources in other ways. In doing so, Starbucks constructs itself as a benevolent savior with a soul, and its efforts become instilled with a sense of empathy, softening the company's image and making the corporation appear increasingly human. These stories construct the company as having a compassionate nature that drives it to help those less fortunate, and further imbues the company with a moral character.

Addressing the Consumer

Another pattern in Starbucks CSR is its response to consumers; many of the company's CSR efforts are linked to the customer's desires:

> Our customers expect us to conduct our business responsibly…while enjoying their favorite Starbucks® coffee beverage, they want to know that we paid the farmers a fair price for the beans; that the coffee was grown in an ecologically sound manner; and that we invested something meaningful in the farming communities where our coffees are produced. (Report, 2003, p. 23)

The company exerts significant effort to respond to the shifting values of its customers and other potential consumers. Foster (2007) argues that this is essential within the new economic system, drawing on the concept of the "voicy consumer". The voicy consumer is an "efficacious agent of subversion and resistance" who presents an unpredictable risk to corporate reputation. Their criticism threatens to destabilize the system on which companies depend for survival, which is why they "need to be actively engaged…for purposes of competitive advantage" (Foster, 2007, p. 719). In its CSR reports, Starbucks puts this into practice by responding directly to what it sees as threats put forth by voicy consumers. For example, in its early CSR reports, Starbucks reacted to customer concerns about genetically modified ingredients and the health of the company's products:

> Starbucks tracks customer comments to identify areas needing attention and to keep abreast of emerging issues. On a monthly basis, Starbucks sends customer comment reports to key internal contacts and senior managers. Most contacts pertain to customer service in our stores, rather than broader issues. Last year, however, we received numerous requests from customers for nutrition information about our products as well as a few questions regarding genetically modified ingredients in foods and rBST milk. (Report, 2003, p. 44)

To quell these concerns, Starbucks states that it analyzed its food and beverage products for genetic modification, stating: "we estimate that less than 1% of Starbucks food and beverage products would require labeling as containing GM ingredients" (Report, 2003, p. 45), apparently taking responsibility for consumer health. Further examples of this type of direct response show up in the 2004 Starbucks CSR report, in which Starbucks quotes and replies to three individual customers (see Figures 2 and 3):

Q: "I heard that when a U.S. marine stationed in Iraq asked Starbucks for a donation of coffee, your company refused because it doesn't support the war or the troops. Is this true?"

– Louis Hampton, Clovis, California

A: Starbucks donates to nonprofit organizations that are designated as public charities under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code. The U.S. military and individual military personnel do not qualify as a public charity, and therefore we do not make corporate donations to them. However, in times of major conflict, as we are now experiencing in Iraq and Afghanistan, we are proud to give coffee to U.S. troops through our partnership with the American Red Cross. In November 2004, we announced a donation of 50,000 pounds (22,680 kilograms) of coffee to the American Red Cross for distribution to troops serving in Afghanistan, Iraq and Kuwait. We believe it is important to support those who are willing to risk their lives and preserve our freedoms and security. Moreover, on an individual, grassroots level, many of our partners have made personal donations to military personnel or military units, including their weekly pound of free coffee they receive as an employee benefit. We are very proud of the many donations our partners have made.

Figure 2: Starbucks Q&A – Supporting the Troops (Report, 2004, p. 39)

Q: "My wife and I were in one of your stores and heard the barista tell a customer that they did not recycle. I found this disturbing and hope it isn't true of all your stores."

– Greg Smith, Starbucks customer

A: Local recycling programs vary from community to community and from residential to business locations, especially in terms of what is recyclable. Many of Starbucks company-operated stores throughout North America participate in recycling programs, mostly done behind the counter. There's a 70% participation rate among the Starbucks stores where we oversee the waste and recycling services. However, the lack of outside storage space for recycling containers is a challenge. In our stores where the landlords manage the waste and recycling, participation is significantly lower. In 2004, Starbucks contacted all of our landlords in North America and asked them to support our commitment to recycling. The early response has been encouraging, but it's too soon to see any results.

Figure 3: Starbucks Q&A - Recycling (Report, 2004, p. 55)

In Figure 2, a customer doubts Starbucks' support of the U.S. military; in Figure 3, a customer expresses concern about the company's recycling practices. In choosing these specific quotes from customers about recycling and support of the military, Starbucks has provided itself an opportunity to respond to common (and controversial) public criticism directly, but in a humanized context that doesn't make its CSR initiatives seem like public relations efforts, and in a manner favorable to its interests. In each of these examples, Starbucks provides the "official" information concerning the question or concern, including some relevant statistics, and moves on to detail positive facts about the issue or the company's efforts. For example, Starbucks eludes a response to the idea that the company doesn't "support the war or the troops" by citing legal restrictions on donations. It then goes on to describe the ways in which it is contributing to those in the military (through its hiring practices), including actions not taken by the company but by its individual partners. In the other example, Starbucks presents somewhat misleading statistics about its recycling efforts to dissuade "Greg Smith" from believing that Starbucks doesn't recycle. It continues to displace blame, in this case for the highlighted waste management problems, and suggests that if a problem does exist, it is by no fault of the company – instead, the solution lies in the hands of landlords. By responding to consumer concerns throughout its CSR reports, Starbucks reinforces the idea that the company cares about its customers, and that it is including them in its construction of CSR and other decisions. Furthermore, this direct form of response allows Starbucks to control the way in which certain issues are discussed, to convey favorable information surrounding controversial topics, and to protect itself from damaging public criticism by "voicy consumers" (Foster, 2007).

Starbucks also engages its customers by creating CSR programs that are actually *carried out* by customers. A significant number of its initiatives involved the donation of a certain portion of various promotional products to organizations or causes. For example, in 2005, Starbucks acquired Ethos, a company whose mission is to provide clean water to children. For each Ethos Water bottle sold in Starbucks stores, 5 cents are donated to integrated sustainable clean water programs (Starbucks, 2008). In 2010, Starbucks launched a Conservation International Starbucks Card, donating 5 cents each time a customer used the card to pay (Starbucks, 2010a). Starbucks also began the Tree for Every Bag program in 2015, in which the company pledges to “ensure that a tree is planted for every bag of coffee purchased in a participating U.S. store” (Starbucks, 2015a). These are examples of an overarching practice in which Starbucks places the impetus for contributing to CSR causes on customers, predicating the success of an initiative upon their Starbucks consumption. Furthermore, in its publication of these efforts, the company traces a direct line between the consumer action and the solution of a largescale social problem. For example, in the press release concerning the CI Starbucks Card, it says: “With a simple swipe, Starbucks customers can join Conservation International to help protect forests and the life that exists within them - as well as fight climate change” (Starbucks, 2010a). Starbucks is thus explicitly conveying to its customers that, by shopping at Starbucks, they as individuals are playing an active role in solving, in this case, environmental problems - and in other cases, social ones as well. In this way, Starbucks transforms the consumption of its product into a virtuous act – and it is certainly not the only company to accomplish such a transformation. In fact, one of the dominating trends in CSR today is cause-related marketing, in which companies have begun to advertise their branded goods as “tools of global development” - or solutions to the problems of climate change and poverty. By constructing their products in this way, companies are "parlaying the mundane purchase of consumer goods into a political act", suggesting that components of ethics are not only incorporated into business in the form of "social responsibility", but into the consumption of goods as well (Dolan & Rajak, p. 8). Modern society is already largely predicated on consumption – it is the way we perform much of our identity, it is a way to satisfy emotional needs, and it can be seen as the ultimate goal of Western life (Goodwin, et. al, 2008). Starbucks takes this even further by setting up a system where customers can enjoy their $6 cup of coffee and simultaneously affirm their morality every morning on their way to work. In various ways, Starbucks engages its customers to construct and enact ideas of "ethical" business behavior.

What's at Stake?

The previous section highlighted the ways in which Starbucks involves its customers (and the consumer public more broadly) in its CSR programs, by responding to their "voicy" concerns and making them agents in the enactment of cause-related marketing. Starbucks clearly constructs customers as important "stakeholders", and the specific ways in which they are addressed provides a glimpse of how Starbucks as well as other companies have begun to "manage" their constituents through/within CSR. Given the prevalence of stakeholder theory in current business literature, I sought to identify some of the other key constituents to which Starbucks responded through CSR. To whom does Starbucks seem to consider itself responsible – and not just to *whom* do they respond to, but how and in regards to what issues? Officially, according to Starbucks, the company is "accountable to Starbucks stakeholders – our partners, customers, shareholders, suppliers, community members and others" (Report, 2001, p. 2), sometimes including governments, environmental groups, activists, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on this list (Report, 2002). It created an Emerging Issues Council (EIC) to investigate the concerns of these various stakeholder groups, bringing them together at stakeholder sessions and other meetings to gather feedback and identify their interests (Report, 2004). In doing so, Starbucks is engaging in stakeholder management, proactively collecting information about the concerns of its constituents in order to ensure their satisfaction and avoid potential criticism. By filtering these concerns and packaging them into CSR programs, Starbucks communicates and demonstrates two brand values of inclusiveness and transparency. Starbucks has outlined explicitly that it attempts to respond to nearly every potential stakeholder, but how does it act this out?

Topics of Focus

Generally speaking, Starbucks draws on trending public concerns, such as unemployment/job creation and the marginalization of certain populations. Starbucks often discusses its "positive impact" (Starbucks, 2016), especially for the "next generation" (Starbucks, 2017c) or "youth" (Starbucks, 2017d), and repeatedly implies its investment in the future and the young people who will be inheriting it. The Starbucks Foundation, the company's affiliated non-profit, focuses on funding programs that benefit youth in terms of education and employment – both within the U.S. in low-income, underserved communities as well as in coffee-growing countries (Report, 2001, p. 21). By centering its attention on efforts that benefit children and young people, Starbucks takes a position that few would contest: even in the most divisive of politics, children are constructed as an innocent population deserving of protection and aid. Furthermore, by suggesting the impact of its CSR programs for the "long-term" (Report, 2004), Starbucks expands the range of people it claims to help by incorporating not only current generations, but also "generations to come".

"Economic development" (Starbucks, 2017d) was one of the most common responsibilities that Starbucks took on through CSR - in the form of job creation, particularly for vulnerable communities like "Opportunity Youth", women, minorities, veterans, and especially coffee farmers. "Opportunity Youth" are defined as young adults aged 16-24 who come from a disadvantaged background, are not in school and are unemployed. Starbucks is a founding member of the 100,000 Opportunities Initiative, which is a commitment by a collection of companies to hire one million "Opportunity Youth" by the year 2021. In 2013, Starbucks announced its commitment to hire 10,000 veterans and military spouses by 2018 – it surpassed that goal and set a new one of 25,000 for 2025 (Starbucks, 2018c). Starbucks also highlights its intentionality in working with women and minority-owned businesses, particularly in the supply chain, and supporting women working in coffee-growing regions (Starbucks, 2017d). Through each of these efforts, Starbucks emphasizes its responsibility for the provision of jobs and economic opportunity, and its greater responsibility for underserved populations. Given the contemporary emergence of the recognition of these marginalized groups and the increasing popularity of addressing inequities in race, class, gender, and veteran/disability status, the fact that Starbucks has focused its efforts on these particular groups provides an excellent example of the way in which CSR and the role of the corporation shifts based on trending "ethical" values.

Coffee Farmers and Employees

One of the key areas of focus for Starbucks is the development of coffee communities and the sustainability of their farming practices, including a set of policies for ethical coffee sourcing (C.A.F.E. Practices). The C.A.F.E. Practices are the result of a joint effort with Conservation International that was motivated not only by concern for the environment – the ecosystems within which coffee is produced – but also by concern for the livability of those working in the industry. At the turn of the 20th century, Starbucks began to guarantee pricing structures that would support its farmers and enable the company to reinvest in their farms and communities (Report, 2001, p. 20). Starbucks has since continued to pursue this effort by providing Farmer Support Centers and financial investment that help coffee farmers be more productive and get a better price for their coffee (Starbucks, 2017be). However, what's interesting about Starbucks' inclusion of coffee farmers is that it is somewhat provisional and draws primarily upon ideas of maintaining its supply chain: "the sustainability of their farms is intrinsically linked to our success" (Report, 2001, p. 4). Furthermore, although Starbucks contends that it does interact with its coffee farmers directly, much of its CSR efforts geared toward farmers are carried out by Conservation International and other development agencies (Report, 2001). This suggests a disruption in the image put forth by Starbucks that it is directly engaging with and responding to the concerns of its coffee farmers as stakeholders, and instead choosing methods through which to filter the voice of the farmers and create programs that more adequately align with its own interests.

Starbucks includes its employees as important stakeholders as well, by providing extensive benefits and cultivating open communication with management. Throughout the first several CSR reports, Starbucks states that it encourages its "partners" to provide feedback and accountability about the company's actions, particularly in terms of its adherence to the mission statement (Report, 2001). There is a 24-hour "Standards of Business Conduct Helpline" that partners can call to voice any complaints they have about the company's behavior to objective third-party responders (Report, 2005, p. 66). The company has also been conducting Partner Satisfaction Surveys since before they began publishing CSR reports, and continues to collect this type of survey from its employees today. Furthermore, Starbucks claims to "place our greatest emphasis on creating a workplace environment that engages, inspires and rewards our partners" (Report, 2001, p. 25). The company provides stock shares to partners after they have been employed with the company for at least 6 months, because it "believes partners should share in the company's success" (Report, 2002, p. 21). Starbucks states that it "has and will always look to create opportunities for our partners and customers in the communities we serve" (Report, 2016, p. 11).

Environment

Just as many other companies have begun to do, Starbucks includes the environment as a form of stakeholder, putting forth programs to address potentially harmful impacts. Starbucks contends that "the planet is our most important business partner" (Starbucks, 2018e) and thus has a range of environmental sustainability efforts. In its 2004 report, Starbucks addressed climate change directly in order to introduce a discussion of these endeavors:

> Climate change is a result of increased carbon dioxide (CO2) and other gases caused by 'human activities, primarily from the burning of fossil fuels and from deforestation,' according to the World Resources Institute. [...] These changes could alter forests, crop yields and water supplies, which will affect human health, animal life and many types of ecosystems, including the tropical ecosystems where coffee is grown. (Report, 2004, p. 53)

Starbucks uses the idea of global warming caused by the burning of fossil fuels and other human activity as a basis for which to establish protocol regarding environmental sustainability efforts:

> A wealth of scientific evidence suggests that climate change could be an enormous threat to the future of our planet. The cooperation of governments,

> corporations and individuals is needed to address this issue. Starbucks has voluntarily taken action to assess our contributions to climate change and develop a strategy for reducing our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. (Report, 2004, p.53)

The company "took action" by conducting a climate inventory in which it sought to evaluate the company's contribution to global warming and to identify ways in which it could address that impact. It was at this time that Starbucks began implementing largescale programs to reduce its emissions, such as renewable energy investment and construction of LEED-certified stores. Three years later, even as the economy was suffering, the company announced a set of goals aimed toward furthering these initiatives as well as decreasing water and energy consumption and reducing waste (Report, 2015). In 2016, Starbucks issued the first corporate sustainability bond in the U.S., worth $500 million, in order to fund its environmental programs (Starbucks, 2016). Over the course of its history, however, Starbucks has dedicated significantly more effort to highly visible, highly impactful endeavors, by signing the RE100 agreement to invest in renewable energy and focusing on the sustainability of the coffee supply chain. In doing so, it neglects to mention its unmet goals to reduce energy consumption, promote the use of tumblers, and implement front-of-house recycling (Report, 2015). Starbucks also largely ignores its effects in terms of daily operations, such as back-of-house waste management and packaging. Although some Starbucks stores, particularly on the West coast, have put recycling programs into practice in order to reduce waste from paper cups and other materials, most stores in the Midwest lack the infrastructure, sending a huge volume of recyclable plastic to the landfill. Small scale endeavors, like store recycling, although significant in terms of environmental impact, do not provide as much incentive because they are largely hidden, out of view of the public, and may not result in a significant financial return to the company.

Shareholders

In addressing each of these stakeholders (consumers, coffee farmers, partners, and the environment) Starbucks shows a primary concern for the potential for profit, both implicitly and explicitly. For example, Starbucks states that by “investing in our partners, through competitive wage and benefit structures, and opportunity for stock ownership, we have an edge in attracting and retaining qualified, productive employees—and that helps reduce our hiring, training and other turnover costs” (Report, 2001, p. 3). Furthermore, Starbucks’ detailed discussion of its efforts to collect partner feedback disappeared from CSR reports after 2007, when Starbucks turned its CSR attention to more quantifiable, on-trend issues such as environmental harm and diversity practices. Starbucks continuously links its investment in coffee farming communities to the company’s dependence on the sustainability of their ecosystems and the ability for the farmers to continue in the industry. If Starbucks does not meet the needs of these areas, both in terms of the environment and the people, it loses a large majority of its business because it cannot provide its primary product. Thus, efforts toward ethical coffee sourcing are tied closely to concerns about the success of the company, just as the voicy consumer, climate change, and partner satisfaction represent threats to stability and future profitability. In other words, listening and responding to certain stakeholders and their interests tends to result in a benefit to Starbucks, which it is not shy about stating outright. In each of its reports, Starbucks foregrounds its presentation of CSR efforts with a discussion of its financial performance. The company links the two, suggesting that the company is consistently successful *because* it adheres to and continues to develop its principles and practices of social responsibility. In its 2001 report, the section "The Business Case for Social Responsibility" states that "there are positive returns for being a socially responsible company" (Report, 2001, p. 3). In this section, Starbucks directly addresses its stockholders, arguing its case for CSR to those with a vested interest in the profitability of the company. By and large, this demonstrates that, even in a company that claims to function differently, the shareholder is still of ultimate importance.

Excluded Stakeholders

Despite its efforts to address every potential stakeholder, Starbucks does not always accomplish this goal. After all, "the promise of inclusion for some almost invariably comes at the cost of exclusion, precarity or disempowerment for others" (Dolan and Rajak, 2016, p. 4). Throughout the reports, while claiming to address their concerns, Starbucks subtly dismisses a number of groups with the potential to threaten the company's business or brand, such as the Colombian rebels mentioned above, as well as activists and unionizers. For example, in a number of situations, Starbucks has encountered resistance to the construction of new store locations. In its 2004 report, Starbucks discusses an incident in San Francisco where lobbyists launched a successful campaign for an ordinance that would prevent retailers with "more than 11 stores and a standardized look" (Report, 2004, p. 36) from building in their neighborhood. In response, Starbucks stated that it "respects the will of local citizens to preserve their neighborhoods" (Report, 2004, p. 36) and launched into a discussion of the positive benefits of having a Starbucks store, citing its financial contributions to the city. In La Mesa Village, California, community members protested Starbucks' arrival because of the district's historic nature. Starbucks addresses this criticism in its 2005 report:

> We believe a situation such as this can only be resolved when a climate of mutual respect and trust exists. We took this to heart in La Mesa and reached out to the mayor, affiliated with the local merchant association and looked for other ways to become immersed and invested in the overall success of La Mesa Village…as a result of these efforts, tensions softened and there was a notable turn in acceptance. To celebrate the opening of Starbucks new store, we held an event that was attended by representatives from the City of La Mesa, members of the La Mesa Merchants Association and many local neighbors. (Report, 2006, p. 38)

In the face of resistance, Starbucks asserts its participation in “open dialogue and community outreach” which “can help to reduce tensions and promote understanding” (Report, 2006, p. 41). It claims its engagement with community leaders and its sensitivity to their concerns, and cites the positive benefits of the store for that neighborhood. However, Starbucks actually dismisses protestors and instead works with the local government, using the company’s powerful influence to impose its will, while putting forth an image of openness, inclusion, and consideration of conflicting interests. The kind of compromise represented here is a prime example of the way in which companies are able to discursively construct consensus among opposing parties and present their actions as beneficial to all, by simply excluding dissenting voices that jeopardize their narrative.

Local anti-corporate activists are one of many potential threats to Starbucks’ inclusive, “ethical” image. Another is labor unions, which Starbucks addresses through another “Q&A”, dismissing the idea that Starbucks partners would want to belong to such an organization and refusing to recognize unions as legitimate and important sources of stability for wage workers. In fact, Starbucks largely ignores their existence and glosses over the potential for unionization of its employees, as demonstrated in Figure 4:

Q: "There's been some recent talk that Starbucks is beginning to have some nasty conflicts with its partners who want to be represented by a union. One of my friends won't go to a Starbucks because of this. As a shareholder, I think Starbucks should acknowledge it rather than ignore the problem."

– Guy Allen, Starbucks customer and shareholder

A: Starbucks respects our partners' right to unionize if they so choose, and it is in this context that we would like to provide the facts about the situation Guy Allen referenced. In May 2004, we were notified by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) that a union believed they had sufficient interest from partners in one of our stores to represent them. As a result, the NLRB scheduled an independent election to determine whether this was what the majority of partners in that store desired. On the day before the election was to take place, the union voluntarily withdrew its petition, and the election did not take place. We believe that the union realized that the majority of partners who were eligible to vote were not in support of union representation.

In addition, the 13 partners in one of our U.S. roasting plants who are currently represented by a union have indicated to that union, and to us, that they no longer want to be represented by the union.

Figure 4: Starbucks Q&A – Unions (Report, 2004, p. 70)

In *Wrestling with Starbucks* (2008), unionizer Kim Fellner claims that Starbucks has, in effect, retaliated against employees who participated in union activities - a number of roasting plant workers were let go for "unrelated" reasons after doing so. However, in Figure 4, Starbucks claims that it "respects our partners' right to unionize if they so choose", emphasizing the partners' lack of desire to explain the tension. Starbucks presents itself as a gracious employer whose workers do not feel they need to have a union represent them. The company encourages partners to participate in direct open communication with management and offers health insurance and other benefits that unions might otherwise provide. This is the narrative Starbucks seeks to present about itself, and unions have the potential to disrupt that image and implicitly construct Starbucks as an irresponsible employer. Starbucks wants to exclude that kind of disruptive implication, and perhaps acts out that exclusion by pressuring its partners not to participate in unions.

Through its inclusion and exclusion of various groups, Starbucks shows that its attention to stakeholders is conditional and unequal, reflecting the broader practice of prioritizing certain stakes above others. Mitchell et al. (1997) suggest that a stakeholder's primacy is based on the power, legitimacy, and urgency of their claim on the firm. Thus, Starbucks places significant emphasis on addressing the concerns of its customers and shareholders because they have the power to provide or withhold financial investment. It responds swiftly to public criticism by the "voicy" consumer, an urgent source of potential destabilization. It also heavily considers the interests of its partners, coffee farmers, and the environment, crucial actors in the success of the company. Finally, Starbucks claims to include other, less salient stakeholders in its list (activists, NGOs, the government), but does not mention the way in which it responds to their interests except when they come into play in some marginal way as part of the enactment of CSR. Although Starbucks has taken up efforts to put forth the image that it is engaging and managing each and every stakeholder, considering even those with potentially conflicting interests, it ultimately excludes those who do not conform to its narrative of responsibility, development, and "ethical" behavior.

"Theatres of Virtue": Partnership and Access

Starbucks has partnered with an extensive number of organizations and individuals in CSR over the past 20 years. The company has worked with environmental non-profits (notably, Conservation International), sustainable development agencies, investment firms, philanthropies, NGOs, governments, and celebrities. Particularly, Starbucks has formed collaborative relationships with widely (often internationally) known entities whose work is largely respected by the general public. By linking its name and efforts to organizations and individuals with recognized legitimacy and benign goals, Starbucks establishes its validity and dedication to public service, neutralizing itself as a potentially detrimental actor in any of these social issues. Starbucks also uses partnerships to acquire access to various communities and to enter into spheres of global influence.

Starbucks partners with development agencies such as USAID, Oxfam America, and Mercy Corps (Starbucks, 2017a, 2018f; Report, 2002) to direct financial support to various programs and efforts, primarily in coffee-growing regions. For example, Starbucks' relationship with Mercy Corps supports tea communities in India, focusing on water quality and access, regional economic programs, and the development of opportunities for youth (Starbucks, 2018f). Since 1991, Starbucks has had an alliance with CARE International, a nonprofit relief and development organization. Over the course of that time, Starbucks has "contributed or helped raise more than $2 million" (Report, 2002, p. 10) which went to programs in Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia. With CARE, Starbucks established the Emergency Response Fund to help provide relief during natural disasters and crises in countries where Starbucks sources coffee and tea. In Tanzania, Starbucks and Heifer International worked together with farmers to introduce dairy cattle for additional income, and to improve access to clean water, sanitation facilities, and renewable energy (Report, 2002). These joint ventures demonstrate how Starbucks enacts many of its CSR programs oriented around "developing" – or improving infrastructure in and sustainability of - coffee-growing areas. By providing funding for certain organizations and efforts, Starbucks uses its financial capacity to significantly influence the way these communities develop.

Starbucks does not only partner with other organizations, but with individual celebrities as well, tying its name to popular icons in an attempt to further acquire influence and access. For example, Starbucks describes its collaboration with NBA player Earving "Magic" Johnson:

> In 1998, Johnson Development Corporation (JDC), a division of Magic Johnson Enterprises, and Starbucks Coffee Company entered into a ground-breaking 50/50 partnership to build Starbucks stores in underserved neighborhoods. The partnership's goal was to create economic opportunity and a stronger sense of community in the neighborhoods it served. (Starbucks, 2010b)

Magic Johnson Enterprises focused on directing resources to “multicultural”, “ethnically diverse urban communities”, a mission that was personal to Johnson because he grew up in such a neighborhood. The partnership with Starbucks led to the construction of over 100 stores, as part of the “Urban Coffee Opportunities” program (Starbucks, 2010b). More recently, Starbucks partnered with Oprah and Lady Gaga to create partner products – Teavana Oprah Chai and Cups of Kindness respectively. For each Oprah Chai beverage sold, Starbucks donated 25 cents to the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy Foundation, which funded youth education through programs like Girls, Inc. and Pathways to College (Starbucks, 2017e). Through the Cups of Kindness initiative, Starbucks donated 25 cents each time a customer purchased a drink from a collection of colorful beverages (i.e. “matcha lemonade”, “ombre pink drink”). Proceeds went to Lady Gaga’s Born This Way Foundation, which supports youth empowerment and mental health support services (Starbucks, 2017f). Lady Gaga was also included in Starbucks’ partnership with Spotify and two other well-known musicians; she was one of three “iconic” artists Starbucks put on a line of limited-edition gift cards, alongside Chance the Rapper and Metallica. Starbucks used these gift cards to market the company’s support of the three artists’ charities: Born This Way Foundation, Chance the Rapper’s SocialWorks, and Metallica’s All Within My Hands Foundation. Chance the Rapper represents the Chicago Public Schools, and his charity “helps empower youth through the arts, education and civic engagement in his hometown of

Chicago" (Starbucks, 2017g). Metallica's charity provides funding for programs that support veterans as they adjust upon return from service.

In choosing celebrities from these varied backgrounds and fields, Starbucks makes its efforts palatable to a wide range of the population and caters to diverse passions in terms of its charity. By partnering with an African-American athlete from a low-income community, Starbucks is reaching out to potential consumers who feel they can relate to such a background. Magic Johnson's participation in the partnership implies his support for Starbucks, signaling that those who feel connected to Johnson in some way should also patronize the company. Through this kind of effort, Starbucks also gains a sense of authenticity – that it is not a company simply coming into communities to which it has no connection and imposing its will. Instead, Starbucks is conveying the message that it is respectful of that boundary, instead using its partnership with Johnson to acquire access to the community (in this case, literally, in the form of Starbucks stores). Other celebrity partnerships, although perhaps less salient, demonstrate a similar attitude. Lady Gaga is often presented as a champion for the LGBTQ community, Chance the Rapper is known for his ties to the South Side of Chicago and the world of hip-hop, and Metallica is popular among military service members. By tying itself to these symbolic individuals/artists, Starbucks communicates to the communities they represent that its CSR efforts are supporting them. Specifically, it demonstrates to those communities that Starbucks cares deeply about their concerns and passions. Since the literature suggests that customers support businesses that they identify with in some way, Starbucks may be attracting new customers or reinforcing relationships with current patrons by enacting CSR through celebrities who represent certain populations and causes.

Perhaps the most salient CSR partnership is the one between Starbucks and Conservation International (CI): it has existed for 20 years and has been continuously touted as a positive cooperative effort by both Starbucks and CI. Starbucks initially began working with CI in 1998 as part of CI's Conservation Coffee Program, which was an initiative intended to promote fair trade, organic, shade-grown coffee in order to protect the environment as well as the future of the coffee farmers and the viability of the coffee industry as a whole (Report, 2003). In subsequent years, Starbucks and CI worked together with coffee growers to formulate a set of standards aimed toward improving farming and sourcing practices to ensure sustainability, called C.A.F.E. Practices. This "leading" framework is now used "industry-wide" (Starbucks, 2015b), to set the bar for the way in which coffee is being grown by "creating a playbook" (Starbucks, 2018g) for other companies to use as well. Recently, Starbucks and CI, along with other coffee purveyors, began another initiative called the Sustainable Coffee Challenge, which aims to "make coffee the world's first sustainable agricultural product by 2020" (Starbucks, 2015b). By disseminating their standards for other corporations and farmers to use across the sector, Starbucks has a heavy influence in the way the entire coffee industry is being run.

As of yet, there is no governmental organization creating or enforcing such aggressive sustainability and conservation standards, so Starbucks is implementing practices that it created for itself. The C.A.F.É. Practices are a prime example of this – they constitute a verification system available for anyone in the industry to use to evaluate their sustainability, labor, and other business operations in terms of social impact. Other instances of Starbucks' participation in the construction of global environmental frameworks abound. For example, Starbucks was a participant in the U.S Green Building Council's retail LEED certification pilot programs, which allowed it to influence the development of LEED standards for restaurants and other retail businesses. It also joined the Business for Social Responsibility Clean Cargo Group, a global committee of multinational corporations that worked to develop guidelines for environmental management of shipping and freight via ocean transportation (Report, 2004). Additionally, it is a founding member of the Business for Innovative Climate and Energy Policy (BICEP) coalition in the United States, where it works with other companies to "use the power of our voice to champion progressive climate policies" (Report, 2005). Starbucks is also a part of Climate Group, a non-profit that brings business and government together to address actions regarding climate change, particularly in terms of renewable energy and emissions (Report, 2005)). In 2004, Starbucks joined the UN Global Compact - "an international network of organizations that supports 10 universal principles" for labor and environmental regulations in industry (Starbucks, 2018i). It is based on a collection of highly esteemed international documents: Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the International Labor Organization's Declaration of the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work; and the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. The compact is a voluntary commitment with no enforcement power and thus very little accountability for its members. However, it is associated with the United Nations, a global governing body that most people see as respectable and significant, giving the impression that someone is keeping its members in check.

The examples identified here hardly scratch the surface – Starbucks has created partnerships of varied forms and engagement levels with a nearly endless number of organizations and individuals. Prolific though they may be, each one aims at a certain cause, addressing various populations and issues and providing Starbucks access to them. From environmental activists to military service members to low-income urban communities in Chicago, Starbucks ensures that its CSR programs reach every demographic - every potential market – by partnering with legitimate, respected actors associated with them. Furthermore, through its partnership with global organizations like CI, Starbucks gains access to the realm of environmental governance and impacts the development of the industry on a universal level.

Through the aforementioned partnerships and alliances, Starbucks participates in many publicized attempts to boost the company's value and allow it to expand its role in the global structure. These enactments demonstrate that CSR has a "social life" – it is embodied in various interactions between relevant actors and the ways in which they collectively and publicly express their claims to social responsibility (Rajak, 2016). Awards are also a forum through which companies can make these claims, as "markers of success in this competitive market of social responsibility…the symbolic value of such prizes is significant" (Rajak, 2016, p. 35). These awards are generally presented by organizations who embody societal values, such as the Human Rights Campaign Foundation, which gave Starbucks a score of 85/100 on its 2006 Corporate Equality Index, a nationally recognized measure of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) workplace equality (Report, 2006, p. 72). Below are some other examples of awards Starbucks has received (Report, 2006, p. 14; Starbucks, 2018j):

- 100 Best Corporate Citizens in the March/April 2002 issue of Business Ethics magazine
- One of Ethisphere's "World's Most Ethical Companies"
- 2002 Humanitarian Award by the Coffee Quality Institute
- 100% Rating on the Disability Equality Index
- World Summit Business Award for Sustainable Development Partnerships
- Dow Jones Sustainability Index

- EnviroStars Recognized Leader
- World Environment Center's 2005 Gold Medal Award in recognition of C.A.F.E. Practices
- EPA Green Power Partnership ranked Starbucks 22nd largest purchaser of green power in 2007
- One of Fortune's most admired companies worldwide

Starbucks does not only substantiate its CSR programs by participating in collaborative efforts and providing a list of the awards it has received from external organizations, but it uses them to its advantage in very explicit ways. In its reports and press releases, Starbucks often provides in extensive detail the criteria for these awards to introduce a discussion of one or more of its CSR programs. For example, it cites that the "100 Best Corporate Citizens" award was "based on quantitative measures of corporate service to seven stakeholder groups: shareholders, employees, customers, the community, the environment, over- seas stakeholders, and women and minorities" (Report, 2002, p. 7). Furthermore, throughout the CSR reports and press releases/news articles, Starbucks uses quotes from partnering and awarding organizations that extol Starbucks for its virtuous behavior. For example, in a press release about the C.A.F.E. Practices, Starbucks states:

> 'C.A.F.E. Practices started from a social mindset, and it moved from there to incorporate sustainability goals,' said Bambi Semroc, who oversees corporate partnerships for CI's global coffee programs. 'Starbucks was progressive in terms of taking the standards and principles of sustainability and turning that into principles for good practices.' (Starbucks, 2017b)

By frequently using quotes from participating actors, including not only other organizations but also coffee farmers who represent the "targets of their ethical behavior" (Rajak, 2016), Starbucks explicitly conveys the mutual celebration of multisector partnerships and praises its own CSR actions. The company uses these collaborative, publicized avenues to create a powerful discourse about itself as a business and the impact of its CSR practices. It participates in “rituals of corporate morality”, which promote a narrative of innovation, resolution, and harmony among often formerly competing or opposing parties, instilling in consumers a sense of confidence about CSR as an approach to social problems. Coalitions, awards, conferences, forums, and other forms of ritualized CSR are, however, practices in hegemony and exclusion – they do not often allow “groups with alternative visions, conflicting agendas, or simply smaller budgets…who tell a different story to that of the common interests that the CSR movement wishes to project” to participate (Rajak, p. 36). Paralleling Starbucks’ internal practices, these external “theatres of virtue” selectively shut out threats to the harmonious narrative of CSR and disallow challenges to the validity of corporate claims to morality.

CHAPTER 5

CSR AND THE STATE OF CONTEMPORARY CAPITALISM

Overview

An analysis of the way in which Starbucks frames and enacts CSR reflects greater considerations of expanding corporate control in the modern era. By articulating its efforts in certain ways, Starbucks utilizes the discourse of CSR to acquire and maintain various forms of power. It uses strategic narratives about its actions to give the impression that it is "moral", compassionate even. The company naturalizes CSR as inherent to its functioning, and implants in the public the idea that being a Starbucks customer means contributing to the common good. By responding directly to customer concerns, Starbucks maintains an air of transparency and dialogue, and demonstrates its investment in the consumer. Through its partnership with CI, Starbucks has also legitimized itself as a major constituent in setting up regulations for the coffee industry, dictating rules for itself as well as for its competitors (Weiss, 2014). Taking part in the creation of these and other "ethical" standards allows Starbucks to avoid potentially unfavorable regulations that could be imposed by outside parties and to instead establish itself as a powerful organization that can potentially shape those standards to suit its own interests. It may be true that Howard Schultz established Starbucks as a different kind of company, one with altruism embedded in it, and Starbucks is certainly ahead of the game in terms of its efforts compared to other companies. Nonetheless, Starbucks uses its assertions of socially responsible behavior to its advantage. It claims to heed the interests of all its potential stakeholders, from shareholders to the local community, by considering them carefully as it plans and executes its overall business strategy. However, the methods and language of Starbucks CSR ultimately mask the company's active role in prioritizing and selectively addressing stakeholder concerns in strategic ways that serve to increase its brand value and its influence in global systems.

The actions and discourse employed by Starbucks are situated in the extensive history of the modern corporation and its expansion into various realms outside business. Starbucks is one of many multinational companies conveying its adherence to shifting ethical norms and participating in increasingly decentralized forms of governance. These actions exist in stark contrast to the notion of the corporation in its beginnings, demonstrating how changing ideas about the corporate form and its responsibilities to society have contributed to important shifts in contemporary society. Over the past 150 years, companies have grown from limited, chartered entities to "persons" with extensive legal rights and particular "personalities" (Arnold, 2006). They have contributed to social welfare along the way, first via individual philanthropy, then through more proactive measures toward "ethical" business and the management of environmental harm. The definition of the "social responsibility" of business has shifted from the creation of shareholder value to a broader ideology that incorporates a wide range of "stakeholders", testifying that companies are now beholden to a new set of standards. Companies send messages to their customers and to the wider public that they are behaving morally as "corporate citizens", as members of society devoted to the common good. What are the implications of this kind of notion of the corporation? How has modern capitalism changed alongside the growth of the corporation and the development of CSR? In this chapter I will address these questions, highlighting some key transformations that have come about during this time, which have consequences for economic and social structure and functioning. Finally, I will conclude with some thoughts on CSR in terms of the current social and political climate.

From Legal to Ethical Regulation

Corporate social responsibility has developed as a voluntary way for companies to demonstrate that they are contributing to the social good, and to respond to consumer pressures to act "ethically". The growth of CSR, alongside the loss of explicit state-sanctioned regulation of business, demonstrates how societal expectations of the role and responsibilities of corporations have changed, shifting from legal obligations to ethical ones (Marens, 2013; Lampert, 2016). In the beginning, corporations were created through specific charters that explicitly limited their actions and outlined their responsibilities, nearly always including some service to the public good. Over the last half of the 20th century, laws governing corporate action have dwindled and enforcement of existing laws has become relatively lax. In the absence of legal recourse, business regulation is now largely dependent on ethical norms created by society. Public critique, activism, and ethical scandals replace laws, as corporations swiftly respond to bad publicity and community backlash with new, relevant CSR practices. This follows from and is amplified by the increasing conception of corporate personhood, which suggests that companies are citizens with the same moral duties as individuals. But what constitutes morality? Philosophers have been speculating since the beginning of time about the sources and outcomes of ethical actions. Often, ideas of morality derive from human characteristics that corporations do not possess, such as religious beliefs, the soul or the conscience, or emotional aspects of social interaction. Thus, how do companies decide what is ethical behavior? From where are consumers drawing ideas of right and wrong to impose upon burgeoning corporate “citizens”? Furthermore, how do notions of ethics that derive from laws of human interaction transfer to corporations?

“Ethical” and “moral” are terms generally used to describe actions that are good for individuals and society, or at least do not cause harm to either. Many philosophers have argued for a system of universally applicable ethical principles, or moral realism. Aquinas (2005 [1250]) claimed that innate moral knowledge, expressed through the conscience, regulates ethical decisions; Hume called this the “moral sense” (2007 [1738]). Locke (1997 [1663]) argued for a “natural law”, delivered by a divine God, drawing on religious doctrine in his conception of ethics. On the other hand, others have suggested that “moral” action is not defined by a set of absolute laws, but instead varies with context. Aristotle emphasized the role of virtues and character in ethical action rather than static laws prescribing moral absolutes (2001 [350 B.C.]). He suggested that humans become ethical by creating habits that maintain a “stable equilibrium of the soul” (Aristotle, 2001 [350 B.C.]). Others still (Hegel, Durkheim, Freud) suggest that ethics are a product of social interaction, customs based on participation in society and learned values and agreements, imposed upon us through institutions.

How, then, do these theories of morality apply to corporations in the new normative regulatory system? The vast majority draw upon human qualities in the enactment of ethical principles. Whether it be innate convictions toward moral action, rational thinking, religious doctrine, or social interaction, ethics are largely defined in terms of mechanisms of humanity. Although corporations are considered persons for legal purposes, their capacity for moral agency is significantly more complex (Arnold, 2006). Corporations do not have souls or consciences, and they are not raised in a family in which they learn to abide by social norms through human interactions. Certainly, they are not capable of emotions such as compassion and sympathy (Ranken, 1987), as Starbucks may have us believe. Thus, many have argued that moral philosophy is not an adequate basis for the construction of business ethics and does not serve to sufficiently explain or support CSR activities. For example, Danley (1980) states that "only persons, i.e. entities with particular mental and physical properties, can be morally responsible. Corporations lack these" (as cited in Arnold, 2006, p. 282). Velasquez (1983) refers to these collective properties as a "certain mental and bodily unity that corporations do not have", stating that a "conscious mind" is a prerequisite for moral activity (as cited in Arnold, 2006, p. 283).

In contrast, some theorists believe that morality *can* be effectively applied to corporations, supporting the moralization of corporations, their potential for "ethical" behavior, and the new normative regulations that have replaced formal legal ones. For example, if ethics are simply a set of universal principles, perhaps codes of conduct and regulatory frameworks for ethical and sustainable practices may serve as a form of corporate morality. Standards like these could "build morality in" to the structure of a company, preventing it from taking certain actions deemed unethical. Others go further to suggest that corporations, although they are not fully moral *persons*, can be moral *agents* without specifically human characteristics (French, 1979). Arnold (2006) argues that corporations may be understood in this way if they are capable of acting reflectively, evaluating and modifying past behavior to closer align with cultural ideas of morality. Some business ethicists posit that the ability to respond to complex problems and circumstances constitutes moral agency, suggesting that companies can establish an "internal moral capacity" by addressing the needs of their stakeholders (Shamir, 2010). In other words, to be "ethical", companies must work to create “a joint or social phenomenon where the suggestions, criticisms, needs and interests of others who are affected by one’s judgment inform the creative implementation of moral principles” (Smith & Dubbink, 2011, p. 227). In this view, CSR can represent “moral” characteristics of a corporation if the company adopts a more relational “dialogic” or “participative” approach, in which all constituents’ concerns are valued and responded to equally and legitimately (Maclagan, 1999) – which is, of course, hard to discern.

When companies engage stakeholders in their decisions in this way, they respond to morally-based social pressures, which may result in a collective form of “corporate conscience” – in this sense, the corporations themselves are not moral per se, but they are representative of the moral values of the humans involved in their operations (Maclagan, 1999). In a similar way, it has been argued that so-called ethical activities are not driven by the agency of the *corporation*, but by that of the executives and managers in charge of it. Starbucks’ Howard Schultz is a great example of a CEO who drew on his own personal ideals in the construction of his company, through the establishment of certain workplace practices and CSR programs. There are a range of examples from the current moment that would suggest that the agency (moral and otherwise) of corporate executives plays a significant part in the way in which corporations are participating in society today, which I will discuss in the final section. This makes sense given that, throughout history, the dominant shareholder value theory often attributed the agency of a corporation to its executives, who were held responsible for its success and failure, as with the Ford-Dodge case. Even now, Mark Zuckerberg, founder and CEO of Facebook, is being held more personally responsible for the failings of the social media network with regard to privacy and ethical concerns. Nonetheless, this is not the dominant approach to business ethics as not all CEOs are as symbolic of their companies as Zuckerberg. With increasing ideas of corporations as persons, the agency of leaders and managers is often less noticeable, and actions of a company are more commonly attributed to the organization itself, which is reflected in attempts at ethical regulation of corporate activities.

Due to the use of corporate "citizenship" terminology and decreasing legal regulation, theorists often attempt to map moral philosophy onto the corporate entity in order to understand and justify CSR. However, through this process, the inherent differences in humans and corporations surface, poking holes in corporate claims to morality. Business, regardless of extracurricular social activities, has as its goal the production of profit, while humans have a whole host of other interests that stem from emotional and mental needs. Furthermore, corporations cannot be considered "citizens" next to other individuals because they "possess considerable power over and above the average citizen" (Matten, Crane, & Chapple, 2003). These differences suggest that declarations of morality through CSR may simply serve to "transform a normative commitment into a scientific instrument of business management" that further serves corporate goals and lacks sufficient enforcement power (Shamir, 2010). CSR thus serves as a "discourse of justification, a moral smoke screen to fend off either renewed regulations or public backlash at their repeal" (Lampert, 2016, p. 102), highlighting issues of power articulated by anthropologists and sociologists. Attempting to retrofit morality to artificial beings calls into question new forms of ethical regulation and the potential need for further legal parameters to effectively manage the duties and behavior of corporations. Lampert (2016) argues that we should ultimately try to return to the practice of limiting corporations by charters, through which society could demand socially responsible activities and explicitly and efficiently regulate corporate behavior. However, as we saw with Starbucks, the current movement is not toward greater legal regulation, but away from it, and corporations are actually increasingly prominent actors in the creation of regulatory standards. This points to another significant shift in modern capitalism that has emerged alongside changes in the social responsibility of business: the move from govern*ment* to govern*ance*.

The Governance Turn

With globalization and the receding intervention of the state, the regulation of corporate behavior has not only changed in terms of its source (laws to ethics), but also its form (government to "governance"). While government is considered an aggregate authority existing outside of and above the various aspects of society, governance transcends the divide between public and private entities, pulling multiple types of organizations into the creation of policies (Shamir, 2010). Within the new governance structure, CSR is simultaneously "a field of action that presumably exists outside law and a terrain constitutive of new types of legality" (Shamir, 2010, p. 532). Governance entails more decentralized forms of regulation that incorporate a variety of interests instead of imposing sovereignty from the top down. Frameworks for CSR reporting, environmental standards, and ethical codes of conduct based on negotiation across sectors now make up a large portion of the way in which corporations are managing their social impact, in contrast to state-enforced corporate law. Justified by their new "moral" character and legitimized by their attachments to non-profit organizations, corporations emphasize the success of "private and self-regulation" as an alternative to the failing "command and control regulation" of the state. Business offers up the market as an efficient substitute for ineffective legal mandates in addressing social and environmental problems, claiming that the competitive advantage of socially responsible practices drives innovative solutions to effectively serve “public state functions” (Shamir, 2010, p. 535).

The shift to governance is particularly prevalent in the field of environmental regulation, as various non-state actors step into the arena to help manage the increasingly significant impact of human activity on the planet. Many scholars have suggested that humans have entered a new epoch called the Anthropocene, in which humanity is the dominant geophysical force (Crutzen & Stoermer, 2000). This is primarily due to the effects of mass production and consumption, including the burning of fossil fuels and resulting climate change, as well as plant and animal extinction and deforestation (Steffen, Crutzen, & McNeill, 2007). Legal and environmental scholars alike cite fragmented, collaborative environmental governance structures as an emerging social property of this new geological era (Pattberg & Widerberg, 2016; Ogden et al., 2013). The “polycentric approach to global climate governance” tends to take the form of voluntary practices and coalitions based on “shared values” and a “myriad of new actors” (Weiss, 2014), as demonstrated by Starbucks’ many collaborative efforts. In fact, “partnerships have become mainstream implementation mechanisms for attaining international sustainable development goals” (Pattberg & Widerberg, 2016, p. 42). These new types of legality are often spearheaded by teams of NGOs and corporations, clearly articulated in the partnership between CI and Starbucks that resulted in the influential C.A.F.E. Practices.

Traditionally, international environmental law was grounded in binding agreements, which countries signed at global gatherings and brought back to be implemented within their respective nations. However, compliance rates for these kinds of treaties have historically been low, and enforcement power insufficient, which has led to greater use of non-binding legal instruments, such as codes of conduct, guidelines, and declarations. Weiss (2014) describes this shift as a change from “hard” to “soft” law, which allows for more flexibility in addressing the issues related to environmental governance. New governance structures may thus reflect a more dynamic system that allows for a number of voices to participate in the creation of environmental regulations. However, non-binding legal instruments, like the UN Global Compact, are entirely voluntary and can be shaped to meet the needs of the corporation. There is no unified body to hold corporations and other actors accountable for the commitments they have made through these kinds of codes and standards. Companies can make declarations about their actions toward environmental self-regulation in order to improve their reputations without implementing any substantial changes, a practice called “greenwashing”, while evading the imposition of “hard” law by the state. Therefore, decentralization and fragmentation of authority, in environmental governance and other fields of law as well, may ultimately provide an avenue for increased corporate domination, and demonstrates “capitalism’s ability to constantly transform not only the means and relations of production (Marx 2002 [1848]), but also the means and relations of political authority” (Shamir, 2010, p. 533).

CSR in the Current Political Climate

I wrote this thesis at a particularly intense moment in terms of the political and social climate in the U.S.: Donald Trump led a presidential campaign against political correctness in the 2016 election and won, significantly altering what is expected and appropriate for government officials. His controversial politics served to further polarize American beliefs and helped to create a situation in which the public in general has become more desperate, anxious, fearful, and divided, with declining faith in the effectiveness of the political system.

Corporations rely on this perceived government failure in order to promote policies of private, self-regulation. However, as corporations are responsible for more and more duties formerly held by the state, they are also expected to be increasingly political. In other words, there has been “a broad recasting of the voice of business in the nation’s political and social dialogue” as the country becomes increasingly engaged in “fraught debates over everything from climate change to health care” (Gelles, 2017). This demonstrates that the role of the corporation continues to expand, suggesting that companies must now take on political duties in addition to new social and environmental responsibilities.

CEOs like Marc Benioff of SalesForce agree, stating that “business is the greatest platform for affecting change” (Shephard, 2018). Thus, in response to everything from white supremacist riots in Charlottesville to transgender bathroom bills, business leaders have stepped forward into the political arena to condemn and support various causes. CEOs from companies like General Motors, JPMorgan, and Walmart made public statements about their disavowal of racism and discrimination, not just as individuals but in representation of the company. The practice of businesses making statements for or against various politically-relevant causes took hold relatively recently, but the examples of it are prolific. Divestment from South Africa during the apartheid, hiring refugees (and/or veterans), and the extension of healthcare benefits to partners of gay and lesbian employees, all represent political beliefs expressed through business practices. SalesForce withdrew its events from Indiana amidst the passing of a controversial conservative law while Google, GoDaddy, Facebook and Spotify have begun regulating hate speech and far-right white power-related publications. And President Trump’s business advisory council has dissolved as executives leave in protest of his controversial comments about Charlottesville.

As the number of companies making such statements increases and the country's polarized political situation reflects itself in the business world, employees and consumers have come to expect business leaders to speak out on behalf of their companies about issues that are important to them, suggesting further expansion of the "social responsibility" of business. Not only are companies required to abide by legal, and now ethical, regulation, including addressing various social problems, they are also pressured to take on political ideologies and express those ideologies through their business practices in order to remain in good graces with the consumer public. Political commentator Mike Allen argues that "corporations, under intense social pressure, are filling a void left by governmental gridlock or avoidance" (Shephard, 2018). According to Nancy Koehn, a historian at Harvard Business School, "to keep silent is to jeopardize the reputation of the company" (Shephard, 2018). However, CEOs must tread carefully when making these kinds of statements and gestures, balancing popular public ideals with the political interests of their stakeholders in order to ensure the company's continued success. With "inherently diverse customers and employees, taking a stand can be a no-win situation for chief executives. For every employee, investor and customer they make happy, they may well make someone else unhappy" (Shephard, 2018). Criticism of corporations arrives sharply when they do not endorse the "right" cause, and "voicy" (Foster, 2007) customers express this financially through boycotts and social media. This greater responsibility may have taken shape because "citizens" are expected to participate in their democracy, or because corporations have political power and resources at their disposal. Either way, companies and their executives have become faces of social good, declaring their dedication to resolving glaring societal issues within the U.S. today.

Darren Walker, president of the Ford Foundation and a board member at PepsiCo, argues that "in this maelstrom, the most clarifying voice" has been that of CEOs who have "taken the risk to speak truth to power" (Gelles, 2017). And it is risky - Howard Schultz notes that "not every business decision is an economic one", suggesting that taking a political stance can be potentially detrimental to profits when it doesn't align with consumers' views. Yvon Chouinard, CEO of Patagonia, is another active business leader enacting political beliefs through his company in relatively risky ways. Famous for its environmental sustainability policies, Patagonia is known to employ shock-and-awe actions, such as its practice of donating all Black Friday revenue to grassroots environmental organizations, and repairing jackets for free. In December, in response to President Trump's decision to shrink some national monuments and lands, Patagonia changed its website home page to say: "The President Stole Your Land". It is now suing the Trump Administration in federal court for illegitimately attempting to strip protective status of national landmarks. As a private company, owned entirely by Chouinard and his family, Patagonia does not have shareholders with whom to wrestle about the financial ramifications of these kinds of political actions – but it likely wouldn't matter, given that the company's bold moves have only furthered its profits (Baldwin, 2018). This suggests that social responsibility and political actions are indeed ways for companies to connect with the consumer's sense of morality, to identify the expectations of the public concerning activities outside of profit-making, and to respond to those concerns through business operations. Another example of the politically-active role of corporations exists in the response of companies such as Dick's Sporting Goods and Wal-Mart to the recent Parkland shooting and subsequent protests by students across the country. The two companies have raised the minimum age for purchasing guns to 21, and Dick's will no longer sell assault rifles (Shephard, 2018). Allen's argument about government inaction is particularly salient here given that gun control is an issue that the public has continuously spoken out about, but that the government has not taken steps toward regulating. Although political efforts are often voiced on behalf of, or through, their corporations, CEOs are often the ones actually making these statements, and they are sometimes put forth "as a matter of personal conscience" (Gelles, 2017). This returns us to the idea of moral agency: are companies acting out the moral principles of their executives – is their will that strong? - or do these statements represent a strategy for improving corporate reputation, or both?

It may indeed be the moral conscience of the high-level managers (or even mid-level managers, owners, employees, etc.) that drive social and political endeavors, but these practices nonetheless provide an opportunity to create (or remove) value. As is clear with the success of Starbucks, Patagonia, and other CSR-heavy companies, the maintenance of a "moral" corporate character that responds to ethical issues in society, through socially responsible and politically motivated business practices, is important for remaining competitive in the modern capitalist economy. This suggests that the creation of value has changed: historically, as Marx claims, profit was created in capitalism by exploiting labor and creating surplus value. Now, according to Leal Filho, et al. (2010) the model for profit-making includes social responsibility:

> Increased competition in markets has saturated the possibility of brand differentiation based on traditional attributes such as price and quality (Aaker 2005; Marín and Ruiz 2007); in this context, CSR has proved to be a very effective positioning strategy giving the brand symbolic value, and becoming an attribute of competitive differentiation (Kotler and Lee 2005; Brammer and Millington 2006; Du et al. 2007). (p. 173)

Value is no longer about simply reducing production costs and extracting the most labor, it is about telling a story, creating a relationship with consumers, and boosting the "brand". People will pay extra for the "expectations, memories, stories and relationships of one brand over the alternatives" (Ndzishe, 2016) - this is highlighted in the way in which Starbucks promotes consumption of its product as a moral choice. Although it is difficult to prove that CSR results in improved financial performance, there is a general consensus that maintaining an image of morality, both socially and politically, improves a company's "brand value" and therefore its position in the market economy. This change is particularly salient in the current political climate, as the expression of the character of a corporation takes on new and innovative forms.

Concluding Thoughts and Further Research

I argue that corporations have transitioned from legal entities whose power was limited by law, to ethical ones taking on roles in governance themselves. I suggest that the increasing conception of corporate personhood reinforces the notion that corporations are human-like entities with the capacity to act ethically. They are being treated as members of society - citizens with civil rights, bound to ethical norms – regulated only by the voice of the consumer public, while in reality they are artificial bodies lacking moral convictions. They maintain considerably more power and resources, and have largely different goals, than the individual. A CSR framework that draws primarily on this idea of corporate citizenship actually allows for the expansion of the corporate role and the acquisition of power through allegedly "ethical" behavior. Companies draw on notions of ethics to construct their programs, but lack empathic and interactional mechanisms of human morality, instead acting out these programs in order to create value and bolster the company image. Despite the idea that corporations are capable of maintaining relationships with NGOs and have constructed themselves as moral characters, ultimately, companies cannot be expected as humans in terms of right and wrong, and society must recognize the potential for corporate domination that inhere in such claims.

Furthermore, changing conceptions of the role of business in society point to a change in the way value is created in the contemporary economic system. The idea that corporations are stepping into the political arena at the point of government failure is a recurring theme across the evolution and expansion of the role of business in society. Modern politics have opened the door for corporations and their leaders to step further into the realm of social and political issues in a way that serves to alter the conception of business in society, just as other situational factors have contributed to its evolution over time. Corporate social responsibility has developed as a way for companies to expand their role in a number of ways and to accomplish several goals: to gain a competitive edge in the market, as consumers choose to value various ethical and political business activities; to avoid legal regulation in favor of privatized self-governance; to influence global regulatory frameworks and sustainable development. By contributing to social causes, companies deny their inherent quest for profit and claim their positive benefit to society, which obscures a process that allows for increased corporate domination and serves to “compel consensus while mystifying the dynamics of power at work” (Rajak, 2016, p. 31). In other words, the all-encompassing nature of CSR may ultimately “mollify citizens who might otherwise demand systemic change” (Kuhn & Deetz, 2008, p.). Thus, I believe future research about corporate activities - how they are played out, especially in poorer countries, and resulting power dynamics – are important for identifying the reality of CSR. As we expand expectations of corporations to include ethical and political duties, are we also expanding their potential for social control on a global scale? Further analysis of the discourse as well as the empirical realities of CSR would help ensure that companies are not simply transforming seemingly beneficial practices into an instrument of power and profit creation.

APPENDIX A

CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS THEMES

"Positive impact"

- Economic Opportunity
    - Job creation
        - Underserved populations
            - Opportunity Youth
            - Coffee farmers
            - Women (particularly in coffee-farming regions)
            - Veterans
    - Defense for building stores in certain neighborhoods
- Development
    - Public health (water, sanitation facilities)
    - Education
    - Sustainability of coffee growers and families/communities
- Environment
    - Sustainability of land in coffee-growing areas
    - Climate change
- "Next generation"
    - Youth as primary benefactors of most funding/programs
    - "generations to come"
    - "long-term"

Responding to public concerns

- Customer quotes
- Community resistance to store being built
- Damage control
    - Address public criticism swiftly and strategically emphasize the company's relevant positive actions
    - Citing "official" information regarding concern then changing the subject and touting other efforts

Narratives

- Stories of struggle
    - Starbucks as hero
- Personalization
    - Pictures/names
    - Highlight emotional aspect

Politics

- Coffee growing regions
- Catering to people from various demographics within U.S. political belief systems

Encouragement of others' action

- Providing partners opportunities to participate (community service, cups for kindness chalk)
- "Simple" through consumption
    - Promotional products
    - Creating a direct line from consumer action to solving social problem
        - Ethos
        - Tree for Every Bag
        - Cups for Kindness

Natural extension

- "comprehensive approach"
- long-term "commitment"
- part of all areas of business
- integrated into business model

Collaboration

- Many partnerships with development agencies, environmental organizations, non-profits, investment agencies/funding organizations
    - Information about the partner organization (mission/purpose)
    - Internationally recognized organizations
    - Quotes from partnering organizations
- Celebrities – to address certain populations who those celebrities may appeal to
- Forums/coalitions

Awards

- Criteria for award
    - Information about awarding organization
- Quotes from awarding organizations/their leaders

Verification by third party

- Moss for reports
- CAFÉ practices – SGS or whatever

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VITA

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Following her undergraduate education, Kathryn held a variety of professional positions. She worked as an intern for a non-profit in St. Louis until accepting a Residential Supervisor position at the prestigious Aspen Music Festival and School. Kathryn then served in AmeriCorps for one year in Portland, OR, implementing environmental education programs in low-income Latinx communities. She returned to the Midwest, working as a Residence Hall Director at Grandview University in Des Moines, IA, until deciding to move to Kansas City in July of 2016 to pursue a Master's in Sociology at the University of Missouri – Kansas City. Kathryn presented her research at the University of Illinois in Chicago in March 2018. Upon completion of her degree requirements, she plans to move to Chicago, IL, to work as a User Experience Researcher for Bold Insight.