

The limits of corporate responsibility standards

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I explore the limits of corporate responsibility standards – for example Social Accountability 8000 (SA 8000), the Global Reporting Initiative, the Fair Labor Association workplace code – by looking at these initiatives through Derrida's aporias of justice as set out in 'Force of Law: The "Mystical Foundation of Authority"'. Based on a discussion of SA 8000, I uncover the unavoidable aporias that are associated with the use of this standard. I contribute to the literature on corporate responsibility standards in general and SA 8000 in particular by showing (a) that attempts to standardise corporate responsibility can only be successful insofar as we recognise that compliance with SA 8000's rules requires a 'fresh judgement' every time they are applied, (b) that SA 8000 should not be pushed down the supply chain as such coercion does not require a truly responsible decision by suppliers and eventually leads to moral mediocrity and (c) that the necessarily time-consuming reflections about the singular contexts within which SA 8000 is applied challenge the urgent need for implementing this standard. I discuss the implications of my analysis of SA 8000 for corporate responsibility standards in general.

Introduction

Driven by the growth of governance gaps in the global economy, a global institutional infrastructure for corporate responsibility has been proliferating in recent years (Göbbels & Jonker 2003, Leipoiger 2003, Paine *et al.* 2005). As argued by Waddock (2008), corporate responsibility standards (for example Social Accountability 8000 [SA 8000], the Global Reporting Initiative and the Fair Labor Association workplace code) are part of this new institutional infrastructure and are being increasingly adopted by corporations. Although these standards differ in detail, they all represent voluntary predefined norms and procedures for organisational behaviour with regard to social and/or environmental issues and usually claim to be valid on a global level (Smith 2002, McIntosh *et al.* 2003, Gilbert & Rasche 2007, Rasche 2009).

Despite their widespread use, we know very little about the limits of applying standards to enhance

corporate responsibility and thus miss insights about what we cannot expect from their application. Discussing the limits of these initiatives is crucial because managers often treat standards in a rather unproblematic way to swiftly respond to growing stakeholder pressure without considering the margins of standardisation. Regrettably, the academic community has not yet started to discuss the limits of standardisation to reveal the 'problematic' side of these initiatives. Corporate responsibility standards are usually offered as a set of quick answers rather than a way of grasping the numerous aporias that underlie the notion of corporate responsibility as such. Following Derrida (1993: 12), an aporia describes an undecidable situation in which we cannot turn to or justify one side of an opposition.

Considering this research deficit, the objective of this contribution is to explore the limits of corporate responsibility standards by relating these initiatives to Derrida's (1992a) discussion of the aporias of justice. Applying Derridian thinking is particularly

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The Limits of Corporate Responsibility Neil Wolverton Chamberlain,1973 [The Limits of Corporate Power](#) Ira M. Millstein,Salem M. Katsh,1981 *Business and Human Rights* Florian Wettstein,2022-03-24 The first of its kind this comprehensive interdisciplinary textbook in business and human rights coherently incorporates ethical legal and managerial perspectives This path breaking textbook will be a valuable introductory resource for students instructors and researchers in business public policy and law schools **The Market for Virtue** David Vogel,2007-05-01 In the highly praised The Market for Virtue David Vogel presents a clear balanced analysis of the contemporary corporate social responsibility CSR movement in the United States and Europe In this updated paperback edition Vogel discusses recent CSR initiatives and responds to new developments in the CSR debate He asserts that while the movement has achieved success in improving some labor human rights and environmental practices in developing countries there are limits to improving corporate conduct without more extensive and effective government regulation Put simply Vogel believes that there is a market for virtue but it is limited by the substantial costs of socially responsible business behavior Praise for the cloth edition The definitive guide to what corporate social responsibility can and cannot accomplish in a modern capitalist economy Robert B Reich Brandeis University and former U S Secretary of Labor Vogel raises a number of excellent points on the present and future of CSR Working Knowledge Harvard Business School A useful corrective to the view that CSR alone is the full answer to social problems Business Ethics The study combines sound logic with illustrative cases and advances the sophistication of the CSR debate considerably John G Ruggie Harvard University co architect of UN Global Compact [Morality and the Movies](#) Dan Shaw,2012-05-17 Morality and the Movies presents the ideal introduction to philosophical ethics for film lovers Dan Shaw uses a series of sixteen popular films including Hotel Rwanda Casablanca Citizen Kane A Clockwork Orange Dead Man Walking and Full Metal Jacket to illustrate all the major ethical theories and key contemporary moral issues The book provides a brief summary and philosophical interpretation of each film with reference throughout to primary philosophical sources A unique pedagogical feature is that each chapter begins with a five step summary of the theoretical position in question and a critical evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses through a specific film Topics covered include divine authority the social contract moral relativism virtue ethics freedom and determinism euthanasia capital punishment war and terrorism abortion business ethics Ideal for undergraduate students coming to philosophical ethics for the first time this book utilizes popular film to introduce a central topic in the study of philosophy [A Companion to Applied Ethics](#) R. G. Frey,Christopher Heath Wellman,2008-04-15 Applied or practical ethics is perhaps the largest growth area in philosophy today and many issues in moral social and political life have come under philosophical scrutiny in recent years Taken together the essays in this volume including two overview essays on theories of ethics and the nature of applied ethics provide a state of the art account of the most pressing moral questions facing us today Provides a comprehensive guide to many of the most

significant problems of practical ethics Offers state of the art accounts of issues in medical environmental legal social and business ethics Written by major philosophers presently engaged with these complex and profound ethical issues

Corporate Accountability in the Context of Transitional Justice Sabine Michalowski, 2014-06-23 Corporate Accountability in the Context of Transitional Justice explores how corporations can be held accountable for their role in past human rights violations when a country is making a transition from conflict or repression to peace and democracy It breaks new ground in theorizing the linkages between the areas of transitional justice and corporate accountability and analyzing problems frequently arising where the two fields meet in practice for example where the role of corporations in past human rights violations is examined by truth and reconciliation commissions or in the course of litigation The book provides an overview of the current trends in law and in legal and political discussion relating to both areas as well as in depth analysis of how tools of corporate accountability and transitional justice can complement each other in order to achieve the best outcomes for bringing justice to victims and lasting peace to societies The authors bring extensive experience from diverse professional backgrounds and jurisdictions to provide the first sustained attempt to address this link The book will be of interest to scholars practitioners policymakers and activists working in the areas of transitional justice corporate accountability and business and human rights

Principles of Environmental Management Rogene A. Buchholz, 1998 Now in its second edition Rogene Buchholz's text offers a managerial perspective of the principles of environmental management rather than focusing on ecological aspects

Business, Religion, and Ethics Donald G. Jones, 1982 **Pittsburgh Legal Journal**, 1887 Containing reports from Pennsylvania judicial districts and other leading decisions **The Overland Monthly**, 1897

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