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Editorial

Issue 65 March 2017

David F. Murphy

Institute for Leadership and Sustainability (IFLAS), University of Cumbria, UK

The world of corporate citizenship is diverse and growing in scope and scale. Often still used interchangeably with corporate responsibility, corporate sustainability and other related concepts, the diversity of terminology in this wide field of inquiry and practice continues. For example, the world's largest oil and gas corporation Exxon-Mobil headquartered in Irving, Texas, USA publishes an annual *Corporate Citizenship Report* which in the words of the company's former Chairman and CEO Rex W. Tillerson "provides a view of how we work to help power the world's progress."¹ In comparison, the world's largest hotel company by revenue² InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) with its headquarters in Denham, Buckinghamshire, UK produces an annual *Responsible Business Report*,

which includes a stated commitment "to ensuring a positive impact on the lives of all people that interact with IHG."³ Other leading companies in different industries and cultural contexts publish reports under many different titles, for example *Sustainability Review*, *Report to Society* and *Sustainable Development Report*, broadly covering similar kinds of issues. Differences in terminology aside, as David F. Thomas, Michael Kimball and Diane Suhr of the University of Northern Colorado reminded us in *JCC* 63, corporate citizenship and related concepts "point in the same direction: throughout the industrialized world and in many developing countries there has been a sharp escalation in the social roles corporations are expected to play" (p. 17).

Looking wider afield than the global business context noted above, there is a growing diversity of theoretical development and practical application of corporate citizenship in various milieus around the world. *JCC* 65 is an Open Issue that brings together

1 See *ExxonMobil 2015 Corporate Citizenship Report*. p. 3. Retrieved from <http://corporate.exxonmobil.com/en/community/corporate-citizenship-report>

2 In 2015, IHG generated \$24bn in revenue. See Statista (2017) Revenue of selected leading hotels worldwide in 2015 (in billion U.S. dollars). *Statista*. Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/273064/revenue-of-the-largest-hotel-groups-worldwide/>

3 See *IHG Responsible Business Report 2015*. p. 3. Retrieved from <https://www.ihgplc.com/responsible-business>

an array of such diverse voices with six contributions covering emerging corporate citizenship themes, namely family businesses and corporate citizenship; the integration of CSR into Italian undergraduate education; the potentials and limits of CSR measurement for consumers; market reactions to corporate irresponsibility; senior management decision-making on corporate citizenship investments in diverse contexts; and an exploration of the approaches and motivations of industry associations that work with member organisations on sustainability matters.

We begin with Clare Seaman who, in our turning point article, sheds light on the relatively unexplored role that family businesses play in corporate citizenship. The paper provides encouraging evidence of the often significant involvement of such businesses in philanthropy and community engagement, whilst calling for further research into the way that family values shape corporate and social practices. We may yet see a *JCC* Special Issue on this topic in 2018.

Moving from family business to the education sector, Cecilia Chirieleison evaluates the extent to which corporate social responsibility (CSR) issues are incorporated into the Italian education system. The author includes a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the teaching activity of the Department of Economics at the University of Perugia, followed by a survey of undergraduate students, in order to assess the effectiveness of CSR education. Her conclusions highlight the challenges involved in integrating CSR within the curriculum, particularly with regard to the choice between offering standalone CSR courses, and

CSR embedded in courses on a variety of topics.

Whilst Chirieleison investigates CSR within a pedagogical context, Ellis Jones turns our attention to the ongoing effort by scholars to bridge the gap between ethical consumers and corporate social responsibility. Comparing the four most popular consumer-oriented CSR measurement systems, Jones identifies a lack of consistency in these ratings as a critical barrier to directing consumer spending toward responsible companies and away from their less responsible counterparts. Despite this, benefits of such measurement systems are reported, along with positive avenues for future research.

From the benefits of effective CSR measurement to the consequences of corporate irresponsibility, Bruce Klaw and Tricia D. Olsen investigate investor reactions to previously undisclosed reports of corporate malfeasance, in an effort to improve our understanding of policies and practices surrounding its public disclosure. The authors' conclusions add clarity to the subject of the materiality of illegal corporate behavior, and propose viable solutions for future policy makers.

Moving towards the conceptual, Joel Bolton and Frank Butler's 'Top Management Teams and Corporate Citizenship: Re-examining the Place of Worldviews, Governance Conditions and Incentives' identifies the important practical mechanisms required for top management teams to effectively and successfully invest in corporate citizenship activities within radically different cultures. Their hope is that an enhanced understanding of these decisions will help organizations improve performance

while contributing to a better world for the stakeholders of the firm, both in the home and host countries.

Finally, Margaret Flaherty and Ann Rappaport examine how and why industry trade associations engage their member companies on sustainability. The study includes a diverse group of associations representing industries ranging from fertilizers to pharmaceuticals, and comes to the positive conclusion, amongst others, that such coalitions “have the capacity to attract resources to tackle larger challenges than companies can address on their own”.

Novelist Toni Morrison’s invitation to new writers everywhere is a clarion call that welcomes more diverse voices to the table: “If there is a book that you want to read, but it hasn’t been written yet, you must be the one to write it.”⁴ By contributing different ways of

thinking about corporate citizenship, the authors of the six articles in *JCC 65* and we the readers, as blogger Grace Wynter reminds us, “are not all looking for the same experiences ... and that’s ultimately a great thing.”⁵

4 See Joe McCarthy (2016, February 18). Happy birthday Toni Morrison – 11 of her quotes to celebrate. *Global Citizen*. Retrieved from <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/10-toni-morrison-quotes-to-celebrate-her-birthda-2/>

5 Grace Wynter (2015, July 19). Introducing WU’s diverse voices series: Why diversity in publishing matters. *Writer Unboxed*. Retrieved from <http://writerunboxed.com/2015/07/19/introducing-wus-diverse-voices-series-why-diversity-in-publishing-matters/>