

Barricades and Boardrooms

A Contemporary History of the Corporate Accountability Movement

Jem Bendell



This United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) Programme Paper has been produced with the support of the MacArthur Foundation. UNRISD also thanks the governments of Denmark, Finland, Mexico, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom for their core funding.

Copyright © UNRISD. Short extracts from this publication may be reproduced unaltered without authorization on condition that the source is indicated. For rights of reproduction or translation, application should be made to UNRISD, Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland. UNRISD welcomes such applications.

The designations employed in UNRISD publications, which are in conformity with United Nations practice, and the presentation of material therein do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNRISD concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

The responsibility for opinions expressed rests solely with the author(s), and publication does not constitute endorsement by UNRISD.

ISSN 1020-8216

Contents

Acronyms	ii
Acknowledgements	iv
Summary/ Résumé/ Resumen	v
Summary	v
Résumé	v
Resumen	vii
Introduction	1
Where Were We Going?	2
Why Were We Going There?	5
Corporate power	7
What Had Been Done About Corporate Power?	11
Civil Society Faces Corporate Power	13
Institutionalizing voluntary responsibility	15
Other reactions to corporate power	16
Corporate Responsibility or Corporate Accountability?	18
A new movement is defined	19
New Impetus for Corporate Accountability	23
A Wave Of Accountability Initiatives	27
Legal analysis of corporate accountability initiatives	29
Corporate Responsibility Grows Up	30
Targeting corporate lobbying	35
What Was Being Achieved?	39
Some Challenges We Faced	41
Countering the backlash	45
The Accountability of the Corporate Accountability Movement	46
Paradoxes of power in social movements	48
Conclusions: Beyond Corporate Accountability	50
Bibliography	55
UNRISD Programme Papers on Technology, Business and Society	63
Boxes	
Box 1: What is research?	2
Box 2: Understanding counter-globalization	7
Box 3: Understanding the corporation	9
Box 4: Understanding social movements	20
Box 5: The 8 “Rs”: A typology of responses to corporate power	23
Box 6: Toward capital accountability	52

Acronyms

AABA	Association of Accountancy and Business Affairs
Accountability	Institute of Social and Ethical Accountability
AFL-CIO	American Federation of Labor — Congress of Industrial Organizations
AGM	annual general meeting
AIDS	acquired immune deficiency syndrome
ATCA	Alien Tort Claim Act
ATTAC	Action pour la Taxation des Transactions Financières pour l'Aide aux Citoyens (Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions for the Benefit of Citizens)
BP	British Petroleum
BT	British Telecommunications
CAA	Civil Aviation Authority
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CCC	Clean Clothes Campaign
CCL	climate change levy
CDP	carbon disclosure project
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CORE	Corporate Responsibility Coalition
CSR	corporate social responsibility
CSWG	Corporate Sunshine Working Group
CUTS	Consumer Unity and Trust Societies
ETI	Ethical Training Initiative
EU	European Union
FDI	foreign direct investment
FLA	Fair Labour Association
FLO	Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International
FOE-I	Friends of the Earth International
FOE-NL	Friends of the Earth Netherlands
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
G-77	Group of 77
G-8	Group of 8
GATS	General Agreement on Trade in Services
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GM	genetically modified
GRI	Global Reporting Initiative
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
IBFAN	International Baby Food Action Network
IBLF	International Business Leaders Forum
ICC	International Chamber of Commerce
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICCR	Interfaith Committee on Corporate Responsibility
ICEM	International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers Unions
ICHRP	International Council for Human Rights Policy
IFG	International Forum on Globalization
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOE	International Organization of Employers
IPPR	Institute for Public Policy Research

IRTK	International Right to Know campaign
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ITO	International Trade Organization
KPMG	Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler
LSE	London School of Economics
MNC	multinational corporations
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NFTC	National Foreign Trade Council
NGO	non-governmental organization
NIC	newly industrializing country
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PACA	Peoples' Action for Corporate Accountability
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PR	public relations
PWYP	Publish What You Pay
S&P	Standard and Poor's
SAI	Social Accountability International
SEC	Securities and Exchange Commission
SME	small and medium-sized enterprises
TGC	transgovernmental corporation
TNC	transnational corporation
ToBI	NGO Taskforce on Business and Industry
TRIPs	Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNCTC	United Nations Centre for Transnational Corporations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNICE	Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederation of Europe
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
UPCA	Unity Platform on Corporate Accountability
UPEB	Unión de Países Exportadores de Banano
WBCSD	World Business Council for Sustainable Development
WEED	World Economy, Ecology and Development Association
WEF	World Economic Forum
WHO	World Health Organization
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WRAP	Worldwide Responsible Apparel Production
WSF	World Social Forum
WSSD	World Summit for Sustainable Development
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWF-I	World Wide Fund for Nature International

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Tim Concannon for research assistance and inspiration, Virginia Rodriguez for encouraging me to persevere with this project, Phyllida Cox, K.B. Ghimire and Peter Utting for comments on a first draft, Suroor Alikhan and Veronica Towler for help on the editing and referencing. Last but not least, Peter Bendall, whose support of my formal education helped me gain the insights I share here.

Summary/Résumé/Resumen

Summary

In the context of a growing debate about the impacts of and resistance to globalization, this paper argues that world development is being undermined by corporate power, yet we are on the cusp of significant changes as societies respond to the challenge. It examines the reaction of civil society in Europe and North America to corporate power, and the emergence of a new corporate accountability movement.

The paper discusses the origin of the modern corporation, and the way that it has shaped various dimensions of modern life through influence over governments and the media. The current notion of world development is argued to have been shaped by corporate power, and thus a critique of it has major implications for development policy and research.

The paper chronicles the failure of various national and international attempts to restrict the growth of this power during the twentieth century, in order to locate a discussion of recent events. It argues that the growth of a global civil society in the last decades has created a new context, and a new opportunity to address the problem of corporate power. A range of relations between corporations and civil society groups are analysed, including the way these have created a renewed emphasis on corporate social responsibility. Bendell looks at the limitations of voluntary corporate initiatives in addressing the systemic problems in the global economy. However, he argues that the emphasis on voluntary corporate responsibility could be an opportunity if it can lead to the re-channelling of corporate power to address those systemic problems.

The various dimensions to this movement are described, including an analysis of various perspectives on corporate power, and a description of a range of corporate accountability initiatives, as well as the possibilities and paradoxes of engaging with corporations to transform the global political economy.

The paper identifies other challenges facing proponents of corporate accountability, including the problematic role of intergovernmental mechanisms and courts in delivering corporate accountability. The growing relationship between voluntary and mandatory rules is described, with one being crucial to the effectiveness of the other in delivering true corporate accountability, defined as the ability of people affected by a corporation to regulate the activities of that corporation. Other challenges include weak relationships between movement participants in the North and their intended beneficiaries in the South, as well as traditional social movements. This weakness is important to address, Bendell argues, as there is a growing backlash to the movement's initial successes.

The paper concludes with a discussion of whether accomplishing greater corporate accountability would address the systemic problems with world development. It introduces a new concept that looks beyond the corporation and to the accountability of capital itself. This concept of capital accountability provides an opportunity for common ground to be found among progressives working in the quite separate arenas of corporate accountability, corporate social responsibility and anti-globalization. To help, the development studies academy and the international community—including the United Nations—is invited to re-engage with fundamental questions about the nature of progress, economic democracy and the role of each individual and organization in transforming capitalism for the benefit of world development.

Résumé

Dans le contexte du débat qui va en s'intensifiant sur les conséquences de la mondialisation et la résistance à cette évolution, cette étude montre que le pouvoir des grandes sociétés fait obstacle au développement dans le monde mais que des changements considérables pourraient avoir lieu à mesure que les pays s'attaquent à ce problème. Elle traite de la réaction de la société

civile européenne et nord-américaine au pouvoir des grandes entreprises et de l'émergence d'un nouveau mouvement militant pour des entreprises comptables de leurs actes.

Jem Bendell traite ici des origines de l'entreprise moderne et de la façon dont elle a modelé diverses dimensions de la vie moderne au travers de son influence sur les gouvernements et les médias. Il explique que la notion actuelle de développement mondial porte elle aussi la marque des grandes sociétés et que, de ce fait, une critique de cette notion ne va pas sans répercussions majeures sur la politique du développement et les recherches dans ce domaine.

Afin de remettre en situation les événements récents, l'auteur retrace l'échec des diverses tentatives qui ont été faites, au niveau national et international, pour restreindre ce pouvoir au cours du XX^{ème} siècle. L'expansion qu'a connue la société civile dans le monde au cours des dernières décennies a changé la donne et a ouvert des possibilités nouvelles d'affronter le pouvoir des sociétés commerciales. Jem Bendell analyse tout un éventail de relations qui se sont tissées entre entreprises et groupes de la société civile, y compris l'importance nouvelle accordée de ce fait à la responsabilité sociale des entreprises. Il étudie les limites des initiatives volontaires prises par les entreprises et leur incapacité à résoudre les problèmes systémiques de l'économie mondiale. Cependant, il fait valoir que l'importance même accordée à la responsabilité sociale des entreprises peut être porteuse d'espoir si elle peut amener leur pouvoir à s'exercer désormais à résoudre ces problèmes systémiques.

Il décrit les diverses dimensions du mouvement militant pour des entreprises comptables, analyse divers regards portés sur le pouvoir des entreprises, envisage un éventail d'initiatives destinées à les responsabiliser, et passe en revue les possibilités d'un dialogue engagé avec elles pour transformer l'économie politique mondiale, ainsi que les paradoxes inhérents à cette démarche.

Jem Bendell signale d'autres défis que doivent relever les partisans de la responsabilisation des entreprises, notamment l'efficacité douteuse en la matière des mécanismes intergouvernementaux et des tribunaux. Il décrit l'interdépendance de plus en plus étroite des contraintes volontaires et des règles obligatoires, les unes étant cruciales à l'efficacité des autres lorsqu'il s'agit d'obtenir une vraie responsabilisation des entreprises, entendue comme la capacité des personnes concernées par une entreprise d'en réglementer les activités. Parmi les difficultés à surmonter, il mentionne la faiblesse des liens entre les militants du Nord et leurs bénéficiaires supposés du Sud, ainsi qu'entre eux et les mouvements sociaux traditionnels. Il est important, pour Jem Bendell, de corriger cette faiblesse car, après les succès initiaux du mouvement, les réactions se font de plus en plus vives.

L'étude se conclut par un débat sur le point de savoir si des entreprises responsabilisées permettraient d'affronter les problèmes systémiques liés au développement mondial. L'auteur introduit un nouveau concept qui déborde du cadre de l'entreprise et confère une responsabilité au capital lui-même. Ce concept de responsabilité du capital pourrait permettre aux progressistes qui travaillent dans les domaines bien distincts de la responsabilisation, de la

预览已结束，完整报告链接和二维码如下：

https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5_21382

