# Privatizing Development: Corporate Social Responsibility in the Developing World

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## Introduction:

The engagement of multinational corporations (MNCs) in development practices is constantly increasing, yet remains insufficiently understood. In particular, the effects of corporate social responsibility programmes (CSR) on development have remained largely unexamined. Most CSR research tends to focus on the industrialized world, while within development studies, scholarly attention retains a strong theoretical and empirical emphasis on the state. Consequently, the impact of CSR efforts, more broadly understood, and of CSR development projects (such as the building of schools, hospitals, etc.) more specifically, on developing countries remains "profoundly under-researched" (Visser, 2008: 494). Simply, we do not have an answer to the question of "What does CSR do" in developing countries (Sharp, 2006: 220).

As a result, there have been some calls for setting a critical research agenda to study the relationship between CSR and development, including a special edition of the journal *International Affairs* (2005). While this has led to some interesting and fruitful responses and re-evaluations of this relationship (see Sharp, 2006, Prieto-Carron et al., 2006, and a special issue of *Third World Quarterly* (2007), dedicated to the relationship between business, poverty, and social justice), problems with this research agenda remain.

This paper considers some of these problems, arguing that there is still insufficient analysis of what corporations actually do, and of how CSR policies are formulated, particularly in the context of the developing world. The paper then briefly sets out an interdisciplinary research agenda, which places debates on CSR within key debates in the field of development studies, focusing in particular on relating CSR to the work of Karl Polanyi, as well as arguing for a need to draw on the insights of postcolonial theorists in an effort to steer away from applying overly Eurocentric understandings of both CSR and development. Finally, the paper calls for an empirical, ethnographic approach, which builds on the work of sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, to study CSR practices in the developing world, the relationship between business, the state, and other non-state actors, and finally, the impact of CSR on development practices more broadly. As such, this paper is a prelude to a larger, empirical research project.

**Corporate Social Responsibility and Development:**

During the last two decades, the concept of corporate social responsibility has gained increasing attention. Large-scale corporate scandals such and Enron and Worldcom put a spotlight on the behaviour of corporate actors. As a result, corporations have increasingly sought to show that they strive to behave ethically and in a socially responsible manner. CSR has thus become an umbrella term designating corporate concerns with sustainable growth, social and environmental well-being, and fair employment practices (Williams and Conley, 2005). This has precipitated a growing literature on CSR, particularly within management studies, but also within law, economics, political science, and sociology (Crane et al., 2008). Nonetheless, there is still no consensus on a single definition of CSR (Dahlsrud, 2008).

While CSR may be a more recent term, it is simply a newer manifestation of older debates about business ethics and the need for business practice to be grounded in moral principles and 'controlled greed' (Blowfield and Frynas, 2005: 500). A concern with the social impact of the market is by no means a novel one. Nonetheless, the more global character of CSR, and its connection to discussions of human rights, the environment and development, lends a distinguishing element to today's debates.

The lack of a single definition of CSR does not only reflect this multitude of influences, but also the fact that institutions and individuals can change their interpretation of CSR in response to changing circumstances. It also outlines the fact that defining CSR is ultimately a normative exercise. CSR contains ideational elements, and "what we mean by CSR and its consequences for the role of business and development will differ significantly depending on whether the goals, instruments and agents of CSR conform with, for instance, social democratic, libertarian or neo-conservative development agendas" (Blowfield and Frynas, 2005: 504). As such, CSR can also be understood as having specific (and in various contexts differing) cultural roots. CSR today is widely regarded as having roots in Anglo-Saxon countries, but as Blowfield and Frynas (2005) so aptly point out, the discovery of more 'social' business concerns in these countries may stem from their more rigid division between the social and economic spheres, and their roots in more individualistic rather than communitarian values. Some Asian, African and Continental European societies have historically had a longstanding social contract between business and society, which spelt out more specific social obligations of businesses (e.g., Japan). Consequently, once CSR starts to be applied in various other societies, despite its Anglo-Saxon roots, it is bound to have a different meaning to members of other communities, who may have a different understanding of what businesses owe societies in which they operate.

All of the CSR definitions, however, commonly hold that a distinguishing feature of CSR is its voluntary nature. This in effect puts into question the role of government. That is, a key argument in favour of CSR is that if businesses can act in socially and environmentally responsible ways, this reduces the need for governments to regulate corporate behaviour. However, beyond the question of regulation, CSR also has further implications for the role of government in society. When corporations take on the task of providing certain public goods, they are in effect taking over a key role of governments.

As Sharp (2006) notes, since businesses may be targeting CSR interventions in spaces where there is a clear gap in the state's efforts, they have both the reason and the ability to criticize the state and highlight corruption. This provides businesses with an avenue of action less open to development agencies, which have historically had to operate in cooperation with, or through, government agencies. Businesses may nonetheless choose not to challenge government bodies as this may jeopardize their economic operations.

In similar fashion, defining development is no easy task. Development has historically been, and remains, a contested concept. While many definitions of development have tended to strongly link the concept to economic growth, more recent definitions have sought to move beyond this focus. International agencies involved with development, including the UNDP and the World Bank, have sought to move towards models of sustainable human development, a more holistic approach which includes commitments to poverty reduction, gender equity, human rights, and increased participation and partnership. Many of these definitions, nonetheless, continue to retain a strong emphasis on economic growth.

Broader, and perhaps more useful conceptualizations of development, more explicitly recognize that development is one form of social change. However, more than the concept of social change, development has connotations of progress and improvement. According to Dudley Seers (1979: 10), "'Development' is inevitably a normative concept, almost a synonym for improvement. To pretend otherwise is just to hide one's value judgments." This normative content of the term is partly responsible for the fact that, as Olivier de Sardan notes, most of what is written on development takes the perspective of either a valorisation or a criticism (e.g., post-development critiques).[1] Olivier de Sardan argues for the need to take a more neutral stand when studying development. Rather than simply valorising or criticising, we need to understand the complex set of social practices, or "set of actions of various types which define themselves as constituting development in one way or another (whether in the ranks of 'developers' or of 'developees'), notwithstanding the variations in their definitions, meanings and practices" (Olivier de Sardan, 2005: 2).

There is also the question of the utility of terms such as 'developing countries' or the 'developing world'. Another term commonly applied to developing countries is the Third World. The application of the terms First World, Second World and Third World first emerged during the Cold War, and referred to the United States and its allies, the Soviet Union, China, and their allies, and finally the non-aligned countries, respectively. Following the end of the Cold War, the term Second World fell into disuse, and First World and Third World came to roughly correspond to the terms developed and developing countries, or the Global North and the Global South. Economic criteria (particularly per capita income) have primarily been used to differentiate between developed and developing countries, though with recent efforts to broaden the definition of development, the United Nations Human Development Index has also become used to make the distinction between the two. The fact remains, however, that these are by no means clear-cut categories, and the application of this terminology often masks the heterogeneity

[1] Post-development critiques, notably the work of Arturo Escobar (2005), question the utility for the people of the Third World of the entire development enterprise. Describing development as a monolithic apparatus, Escobar argues that rather than benefiting the people of the Third World, development serves to regiment and control them.

between different developing countries. Countries as diverse as Bosnia and Herzegovina and India fall into one category, which obscures fundamental differences between their respective sizes, historical trajectories, and other characteristics. Moreover, as postcolonial theorists have so aptly pointed out, the use of these terms can imply the existence of a hierarchical binary, and a fundamental ontological and epistemological distinction between developed and developing countries (Banerjee and Prasad, 2008). While the former are characterized as civilized, modern and scientific, within this binary, the latter are characterized as undeveloped, tribalistic and superstitious. There is therefore an inherent danger in adopting these terms wholeheartedly and in using them without a sufficient appreciation and questioning of the very Eurocentric roots of this terminology.

Nonetheless, the distinction between developed and developing countries remains a widely used one, and retains analytical relevance, but caution in its application, and the adequate contextualization of different cases, is needed. For instance, many of the discussions of CSR in developing countries usually refer to the behaviour of foreign multinationals. Some countries such as India, however, though still falling within the developing country category, also have a growing number of home-grown multinational corporations. Interesting questions can arise then, when one looks at the impact of CSR, as practiced by foreign multinationals, on understandings and practices of CSR of domestic multinationals.

Departing from these definitions, it needs to be noted that one of the effects of global neoliberalism in recent decades has been to increase the role of private business, and particularly of foreign multinationals, in developing countries. While in some cases this has also brought economic growth, the market deregulation that has been part and parcel of global neoliberalism has in many cases had a devastating human, environmental, and financial impact on developing countries (Sandbrook, 2011). Market liberalization has been accompanied by growing inequalities within countries (Wade, 2004), meaning that growth has had only a limited impact on poverty reduction (Sandbrook, 2011). The deregulation of financial markets has produced several financial crises (such as the Asian financial crisis between 1997-8, the Argentinean crisis in 2001-2, and the recent global financial crisis, to name a few). Though we have now moved from the era of the 'Washington consensus' to the 'Post-Washington Consensus', the emphasis on promoting market-friendly reforms remains, and the spread of multinational companies around the globe continues.

Proponents of CSR argue that it provides a means of ameliorating some of these negative effects, with CSR being increasingly touted as the bridge between business and development (Blowfield and Frynas, 2005). The increasing power of multinationals, including their growing influence in developing countries, proponents argue, can allow them to have a positive social impact. Through their role as investors, manufacturers, employers, etc., MNCs can affect employment conditions, the environment, and media (Williams and Aguilera, 2008). Corporations are not only the ideal agents for promoting economic growth, they are also the prime candidates for dealing with potential fallouts from that growth. In addition to ameliorating the effects of foreign direct investment, CSR is seen as also accelerating such investment by improving the business environment, particularly in the poorest countries. This had led to some interesting developments, such as the Indian government's current legislative efforts to require corporations to implement CSR programmes.[2]

As Blowfield (2005) aptly points out, however, there are risks in basing a discussion about social and environmental justice on economic arguments. One of the troubles with promoting voluntary CSR is that issues ignored by businesses may not be addressed in other ways (particularly if other corporate efforts, including lobbying, have the effect of reducing government regulations and regulatory capacity). Some of these concerns may be less applicable at a more global level, where state regulatory capacity does not exist in the first place. CSR is argued to have the capacity to be a new source of global governance, widely understood as "mechanisms to reach collective decisions about transnational problems with or without government participation" (Levy and Kaplan, 2008: 433). International economic integration is having a growing impact on environmental and social conditions, producing often unintended consequences. This has created an increasing demand for coordinated responses, with proponents of CSR arguing that corporations have the capacity to provide the coordination and leadership necessary to deal with those consequences. Through CSR efforts, corporations are expected to respond to societal pressures from non-state actors, while also exerting moral authority in their own right. Through global supply chains, companies may ensure, for instance, higher food standards across jurisdictions.

According to Levy and Kaplan (2008), this capacity for greater democratic accountability is also accompanied by a tendency toward privatized, unaccountable power. In the absence of formal state structures to regulate corporate behaviour, the main enforcement mechanisms may be auditing or inspection by other private authorities, as well as concerns with protecting a company's brand and reputation. Once again, one way of viewing corporate voluntary behaviour can be as an effort to influence emerging forms of national and international governance, which could curb the freedom of corporations to act (Blowfield, 2005). The issue of accountability within CSR operations has been insufficiently examined. However, as Blowfield notes (2005: 517), "there is little sign that accountability is being extended to headline social development indicators such as employment, gender equity, income levels and poverty reduction." This therefore raises the question of what we can learn from critical perspectives on CSR, and whether those lessons can likewise be applied to developing countries.

## Critical Perspectives on CSR and Development:

Critical theorists writing on CSR tend to operate from a 'discourse of suspicion,' contending that things are not as they seem (Kuhn and Deetz, 2008: 174). Critical theorists have sought to identify how so-called socially responsible activities can obscure deeper contradictions and

[2] The India Companies Act 2011 (Asian Philanthropy, 2012), which is currently still being discussed in the *Lok Sabha* (the House of Commons in Parliament), along with other changes, requires every company with a net worth of Rs. 500 crore or more, or turnover of Rs. 1,000 crore or more, or net profit of Rs. 5 crore of more, in a financial year, to form a CSR committee, consisting of three or more directors (at least one of whom must be independent). The Act also requires that the company spends at least two percent of its profits on CSR activities, and makes it compulsory for the company to specify reasons if it fails to spend this amount.

power relations which unevenly benefit corporations, while anaesthetizing citizens who might otherwise demand change. According to Shamir (2010: 531), “the emergent field of CSR shows capitalism’s ability to transform critique into commercial and managerial assets.”

For instance, Banerjee (2008) argues that the discourse of CSR, and the related discourses of sustainable development and corporate citizenship, are defined by narrow business interests and serve to curtail the interests of other stakeholders. In discussing arguments that have been put forth in support of CSR, Banerjee (2005:58) notes that debates on the role of corporations have centred on two assumptions: “that the corporation was inherently guided by self-interest or that a corporation has an ‘enduring capacity to operate on the basis of civic virtue’ (Regan, 1998: 305).” While the former is reflected in economic theories of the firm where the focus is on efficiencies required to maximize rent-seeking opportunities, the second notion refers to the legitimacy of a corporation and its role in society. Various theorists have argued that corporations have the ability to balance these potentially competing goals (Carroll, 1979; Wood, 1991). Since the managers of corporations are themselves moral actors, they have the ability to use moral discretion within their operations. Banerjee, however, questions this conclusion, employing the Foucauldian notion of subjectification, “a mode that reveals how managers become constituted as subjects who secure their meaning and reality through identifying with a particular sense of their relationship with the firm” (2005: 58). That is, the behaviour of individual managers, and their role in accommodating the interests of various stakeholders, is predefined “at higher levels and practices at this level are governed by organizational and institutional discourses” (*Ibid.*: 58).

There are, broadly speaking, two problems with the critical literature on CSR from the perspective of this paper. Firstly, many of these critical analyses have not been applied to the context of developing countries. One of the largest problems in trying to understand the relationship between CSR and development is the fact that the actual role of CSR in developing countries remains under-researched (Blowfield and Frynas, 2005). This refers to research coming from both management and critical theory. It is only within recent years that CSR in the developing world has received more serious inquiry. An overview of the state of research on CSR, in the form of the *Oxford Handbook of Corporate Social Responsibility*, published in 2008, dedicates only one of its twenty-eight chapters to the role of CSR in developing countries. In this overview chapter, Wayne Visser (2008) notes that the research that has been done has found two important differences in how CSR is practiced in the developing world versus the developed world. Firstly, in the former, CSR tends to be even less formalized and institutionalized in terms of benchmarks commonly used (and hence studied) in industrialized countries. Secondly, making an economic contribution through CSR is seen as the most effective and important way for businesses to make an impact on developing countries, while CSR in developed countries mostly focuses on businesses’ ethical and legal responsibilities. Consequently, much of CSR research dealing with those responsibilities cannot be easily applied to our analyses of CSR in the developing world.

Since CSR in developing countries focuses less on businesses’ ethical and legal responsibilities, while emphasizing the potential role of business in helping to bring about developmental goals, this further problematizes the very question of who are the stakeholders of CSR. Particularly in the case of more concrete CSR projects (e.g., the building of a school or hospital), the relationship between the corporation as an agent of development, and those identified as recipients of development, is essentially a quasi-contractual one (Sharp, 2006). Those who are not members of the communities concerned are not directly entitled to any of the development projects being provided by the corporation. This is markedly different from how states are expected to approach development, since a state's stakeholders are, at least in theory, all of its citizens.

It is this lack of critical engagement with the relationship between CSR and development that has prompted special journal editions dedicated to the topic. This includes a 2005 edition of *International Affairs*, edited by Blowfield and Frynas, which calls for the development of a new critical approach to the study of CSR and development. While this call has generated some new research (for instance, a 2007 edition of *Third World Quarterly*, edited by Newell and Frynas), the impact of CSR on development remains under-researched.

A second, more significant problem relates to the nature of the critical agenda that has been taken up by researchers. As Carron et al. (2006) note, the agenda set out by Blowfield and Frynas pays insufficient attention to the question of who participates, and who holds power. They note:

> CSR is an arena of political contestation 'both in the "macro" sense of defining relations between the market and the state, and between different actors and social groups, and in relation to participation in decision-making'. Who has the power to make decisions, what power structures are implicit in CSR, and who has a voice in the debate are all questions that we need to consider. (Carron et al., 2006: 984)

It should be noted that some authors, such as Banerjee (2005), do pay attention to relations of power. Banerjee draws on Foucault and his notion of subjectification (see above). His analysis is not without its problems, however, since Foucault's writing mostly refers to the state. Banerjee's arguments in favour of applying a Foucauldian discourse to corporations is not entirely convincing.

Overall, we lack a clear understanding of how CSR operates within firms, and consequently, of who participates in shaping CSR discourse and practice. We also lack an understanding of who holds power to decide towards whom, and for what, the corporation has responsibilities. Thus, while critical perspectives such as those posed by Banerjee pose important normative questions, they, in Kuhn and Deetz' words, "tend to overlook corporate decisional *processes*"[3] (2005: 174). Kuhn and Deetz argue that what is needed within critical studies of CSR is an investigation of whose values become represented in corporate decision-making and how those representations then influence reasoning.

## Establishing a New Research Agenda:

To better understand how CSR operates in the developing world, and the relationship between CSR and development, a new critical research agenda is needed. This paper argues that this research agenda must accomplish two goals: firstly, it must place the debates surrounding CSR

[3] The italics are the original authors'.

within the wider field of development studies theory; and secondly, it must focus on understanding how CSR programmes are implemented by corporations, focusing on power structures which shape the practices of CSR, both within corporations, and in their dealings with the state and other social actors. For purposes of brevity, this paper only briefly outlines some preliminary steps towards the development of such a research agenda.

While the field of development studies is vast, drawing on the work of Karl Polanyi is particularly helpful in trying to understand the impact of CSR. First published in 1944, Polanyi's seminal work, *The Great Transformation*, is considered one of the most important works in development studies literature. Polanyi's writing is striking: he paints a disquieting picture of the effects of free market capitalism, which, particularly since the recent bout of recessions, continues to be relevant, both in the developed and the developing world. He writes:

> To allow the market mechanism to be sole director of the fate of human beings and their natural environment, indeed, even of the amount and use of purchasing power, would result in the demolition of society…. Robbed of the protective covering of cultural institutions, human beings would perish from the effects of social exposure; they would die as the victims of acute social dislocation through vice, perversion, crime, and starvation.... But no society could stand the effects of such a system… even for the shortest stretch of time unless its human and natural substance as well as its business organization was protected against the ravages of this satanic mill. (Polanyi, 2001: 76-7)

Polanyi argues that the emergence of the free market system should not be understood as an example of humanity's natural progress. His approach is rather non-evolutionary; he does not believe that the industrial western countries are the model of an advanced system which the less developed countries should attempt to replicate (Sandbrook, 2011). According to Polanyi, the economy, which he understands as the "arrangements by which people fulfil their needs for material goods and services" (Sandbrook, 2011: 418), has historically been embedded in social relations. He argues that when the self-regulating market began to emerge, land, labour and capital became commodified (that is, they became commodities to be bought and sold in markets). He argues that this commodification was an assault on nature, and has produced a disembedding of the economy from society, including an assault on mutual ties and communal structures. He therefore likens the operations of the self-regulating market to those of a satanic mill. Real markets, "once disembedded from society, tend toward unstable booms and depressions, and impose massive social and environmental costs" (Levy and Kaplan, 2008: 443). This disembeding, argues Polanyi, produces societal pressures to once again re-embed the economy. Part of this response includes attempts by market actors to lessen the negative impacts of the self-regulating market on their employees, and more generally, on their societies. Contrary to classical economics, Polanyi argues that, "laissez-fair was planned; planning was not" (Polanyi, 2001: 147). That is, while the state was an active actor in planning and implementing the self-regulating market, the societal responses are much more spontaneous.

Though Polanyi focused on a different era, and maintained a Eurocentric focus, his analysis continues to provide an important lens for analyzing contemporary problems in the neoliberal era. While many of these studies have focused on industrialized states and global economic issues, as Richard Sandbrook notes, "the human, environmental and financial impact of market deregulation is arguably more devastating in the 'developing' countries than in the core" (2011:415). This is particularly important since corporations have, in recent decades, been touted as the "primary agents of development", displacing the state (Reed and Mukherjee, 2008: xiv). Corporate investment is expected to soon become the main engine of economic growth in developing countries. The removal of restrictions on corporate activities and the strengthening of market discipline is meant to create more dynamic and efficient business structures, thus producing economic growth.

From this perspective, the increasing popularity of CSR can be seen as the market's response to calls to re-embed the market following the disembedding pressures of global neoliberalism. While neoliberalism has produced growth in certain developing countries, it has also resulted in huge income disparities and severe environmental problems. Elements of the corporate world have therefore adopted CSR as an effort to re-embed the market in social relations. This need not mean that corporations are adopting CSR because of altruistic motivations; rather they may responding to both external (and in some cases also internal pressures) to address some of the problems of market capitalism. Taking a Polanyian perspective, with its accompanying emphasis on understanding the normative underpinnings of the market, is therefore a fruitful way of studying CSR within the context of wider debates within development studies literature.[4] Given that many developing countries also experienced periods of external colonial and imperial rule, and given Polanyi's Eurocentric focus, a critical research agenda should also draw on insights from postcolonial writings. Driven by radical critiques of colonialism, imperialism, and neo-colonialism, postcolonial theory seeks to critique and analyze the "complex and multifaceted dynamics of modern Western colonialism and to develop an in-depth understanding of the 'ongoing significance of the colonial encounter for people's lives both in the West and the non-West'" (Banerjee and Prasad, 2008: 91). In the last decade, there has been an emerging number of articles and collections (Prasad, 2003), which have taken up a postcolonial perspective in an effort to reorient critiques in the field of management. Building on the foundations of writers such as Edward Said (1978; 1993), Bhabha (1994), Nandy (1983), and Spivak (1987; 1999), these critiques seek to show how "organization practices, and knowledge become translated into universal categories despite their European origin" (Banerjee and Prasad, 2008: 96). CSR is one such concept. As was mentioned earlier in this paper, CSR has largely Anglo-Saxon roots, and the understanding of what businesses have a responsibility for may differ between different societies.

In addition to directly relating an analysis of CSR to wider debates on development, a new research agenda must focus on developing an empirical analysis of how CSR programmes are created and implemented in the developing world. The method most apt for such a study is that of ethnography. In their article, *Engage, Embed, and Embellish: Theory versus Practice in the Corporate Social Responsibility Movement*, Conley and Williams (2005) produce a first attempt at adopting the method of business ethnography to the study of CSR, with the intent of understanding what actually happens in practice, and of identifying what may be the intended and unintended consequences of CSR programmes. They consider the substance of CSR discourse, dialogue with stakeholders, and the manner in which different actors hold the power over how voice is exercised.

[4] While there are also pitfalls to relying too closely on Polanyi, a discussion of these pitfalls is beyond the scope of this paper.

While their study is a step in the right direction, their analysis of who holds power, and of how this power is exercised in the shaping of CSR discourse and practices, needs to be further developed. A useful approach, I argue, is to adopt the analytical frameworks developed by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. Here, I very briefly outline the relevance of his work for studying the relationship between CSR and development.

Bourdieu's work has already been applied to the study of companies. Moingeon and Ramanantsoa (1997) refer to Bourdieu in their discussion of what they refer to as the French School analysis of corporate identity. This concept of corporate identity extends beyond the more narrow concept of corporate culture, to mean:

> A "set of interdependent characteristics of the organization that give it specificity, stability, and coherence" (Larcon and Reitter, 1979, p. 43), and thus make it identifiable (Reitter and Ramanantsoa, 1985, p. 2). More precisely, "the identity goes back to the existence of a system of characteristics which has a pattern which gives the company its specificity, its stability and its coherence" (Moingeon and Ramanantsoa, 1995a, p. 253). (Moingeon and Ramanantsoa, 1997: 384)

Moingeon and Ramanantsoa argue that Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and field can be usefully applied towards analyzing the corporate identity of various organizations. Habitus is a product of conditioning. As we grow up, live, or spend time in any environment, structures such as the "material conditions of existence characteristic of a class condition" produce a habitus, which is understood as "systems, and durable, transposable *dispositions*... principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively "regulated"... collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor" (Bourdieu, 1977: 72). While individuals have the freedom to act, their habitus impacts the conditions under which they act (for instance, past practices influence present and future choices). The habitus therefore functions as a source of strategies. We are often not aware of the characteristics of our habitus, yet it shapes our behaviour. Moingeon and Ramanantsoa (1997: 386) argue that: "In the case of organizations, we can say that habitus is the embodiment of organizational features."

Social space, in turn, is made up of different fields, "which act as markets in which agents endowed with different capitals confront one another… A field is a space of positions on the inside of which an effect of field is exerted" (Moingeon and Ramanantsoa, 1997: 387). That is, each individual occupying a given field also possesses certain properties (e.g., wealth, or extensive education, the right connections, etc.), which may allow him/her to obtain material and/or symbolic profits. In these cases, these properties function as capital. To understand the behaviour of any individual we need to consider not only his/her personal characteristics, but we must also identify the forces acting on him/her within that particular field. Understanding the structure of the field allows us to develop an understanding of where power lies. In the case of an organization, the structure of the field need not correspond to the organizational chart of the company, but is rather a product of power struggles and refers to the distribution of power between different agents.

In a nutshell, the manner in which individuals make decisions within companies depends on organizational features (i.e., how things tend to be done at that company, or the habitus), the capital they possess given their position within the structure of the field of the organization (i.e., their power), the different forces acting upon them within that field, and finally their own individual motivations. In practice, a study of CSR must therefore not only focus on company codes of conduct, or the behaviour of top management, but must consider the behaviour of employees at different levels of the company hierarchy. Consequently, understanding how CSR programmes are implemented will require analyzing how top management develops goals, and how those goals are then operationalized by other employees within the company.

As this paper has shown, many of the CSR projects in the developing world are expected to have a positive impact on development in the communities where companies operate. We need a better understanding of just how different actors within companies understand the term 'development' in the first place, and how they see their projects as benefiting the goals of development.[5] For instance, is the goal of pursuing development through CSR even present, and if so, are the motivations for doing so the same between top management and CSR practitioners? In other words, it is necessary to analyze how ideas about CSR and business ethics held by upper management are then filtered through corporate hierarchies and influence the on-the-ground CSR practices.

Such an analysis, however, must also consider the relationship between companies pursuing CSR, the state, non-governmental actors, and other stakeholders. Does the shift to CSR impact development practices more widely? As Blowfield and Frynas (2005) note, in recent years, business measurement and management techniques have been adopted to address social and environmental issues, indicating that business, and the language of business, is redefining the very meaning of development. Such an analysis should engage with three sets of actors: employees within corporations, individuals and groups targeted by CSR development projects, and non-governmental organizations which may be involved in helping to administer CSR projects. Several important questions need to be asked. Firstly, how do corporations define 'CSR' and 'development', and what normative and practical elements shape corporate definitions of a 'successful' CSR project. Answering this question will require not only engaging with employees working on CSR projects, but also their superiors within the company hierarchy. It is necessary to analyze how ideas about CSR and ethics held by upper management are then filtered through corporate hierarchies and influence the on-the-ground CSR practices. Finally, drawing on Polanyi, and recognizing that the local communities which are designated as the recipients of CSR projects may have a different understanding of the social responsibilities of businesses, calls for a consideration of how different actors also define 'success'. Drawing on Bourdieu allows for the question of how power is exercised to take centre stage in this type of analysis. It allows us to consider whether CSR allows for power to be diffused both within the organization, and outwards towards other stakeholders, or whether it simply serves to reinforce existing power relationships. As Levy and Kaplan (2008) argue, CSR is a point of political struggle centring on the question of where social 'responsibility' lies. A critical empirical perspective must take this political struggle, and the normative arguments underpinning it, as a starting point of research.

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[5] For instance, an important consideration is whether MNC employees hold an evolutionary view of development, and believe that their home countries provide an example to which developing countries should aspire.

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