

BEYOND THE BOTTOM LINE: Corporate Diplomacy & Human Rights Responsibility within the Context of SDG 16

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

This dissertation project explores how multinational enterprises (MNEs) engage in corporate diplomacy on United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 and their human rights related responsibilities when they do so.

Through case studies in the mining, pharmaceutical, garment and technology sectors in Ethiopia, this project aims to generate theory from empirical observation (Eisenhardt, 1989), and contribute to extant theory building on the human rights related responsibilities of MNEs (Rawls, 1999; Hsieh, 2009; Wettstein 2010, 2012).

MOTIVATION

- Although the responsibilities of MNEs have been widely debated (Hsieh, 2009, 2015, 2017; Wettstein 2010, 2012; Cragg, Arnold & Muchlinski, 2012; Santoro 2015), corporate diplomacy on the SDGs presents a novel context, particularly in conflict affected settings.
- Defined by Li and colleagues as the nonmarket (social and political) strategies of firms that respond to and shape country diplomacy and relations within the international arena (2022), corporate diplomacy plays a critical, yet often underrealized role in the realization of human rights, as well as within global governance (Westermann-Behaylo, Rehbein & Fort, 2015).

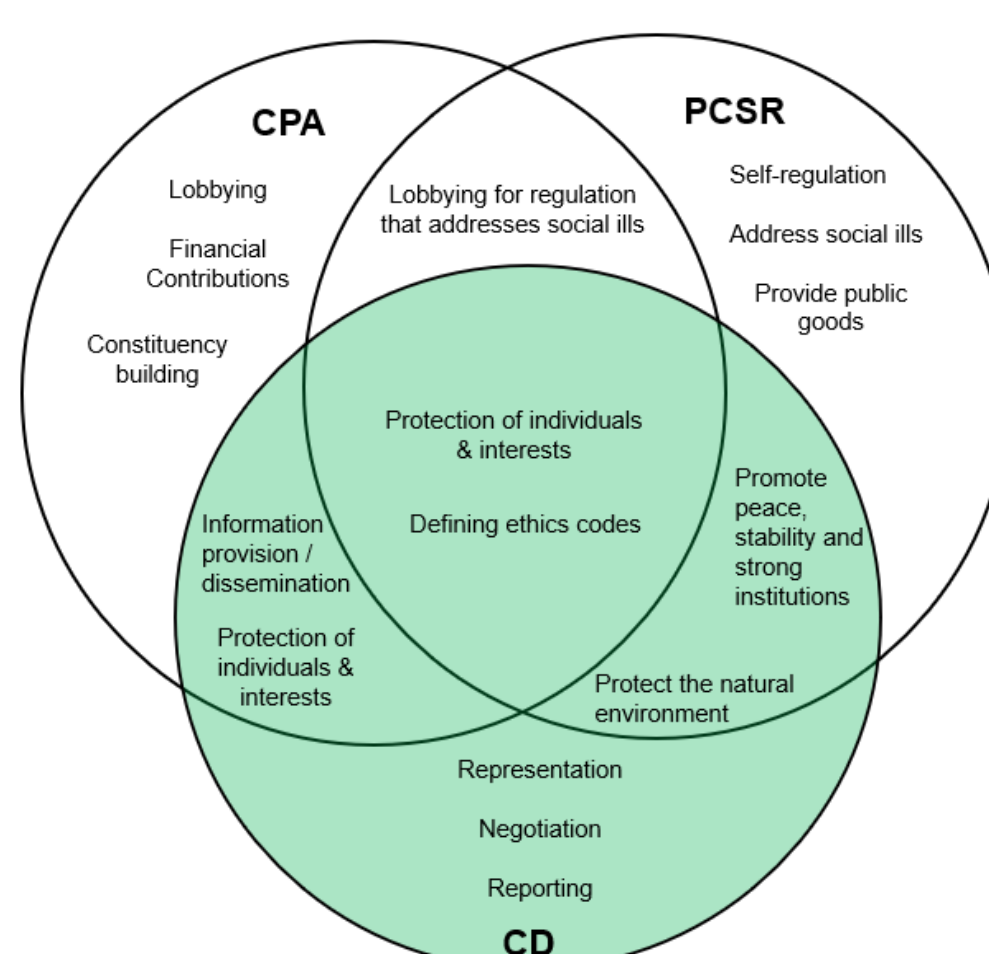
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

- Proactive political engagement can occur through corporate political activity (CPA) (Hillman, Keim & Schuler, 2004), political corporate social responsibility (PCSR) (Scherer & Palazzo, 2011), and corporate diplomacy (CD) (Bolewski, 2018).
- MNEs engage in corporate diplomacy to build trust and legitimacy, however, can also engage normatively through activities such as peace-making and peace-building (Westermann-Behaylo et al., 2015).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

**HOW DO MNEs
ENGAGE IN
CORPORATE
DIPLOMACY ON
SDG 16?**

**AND WHAT ARE
THEIR HUMAN
RIGHTS RELATED
RESPONSIBILITIES
WHEN THEY DO
SO?**

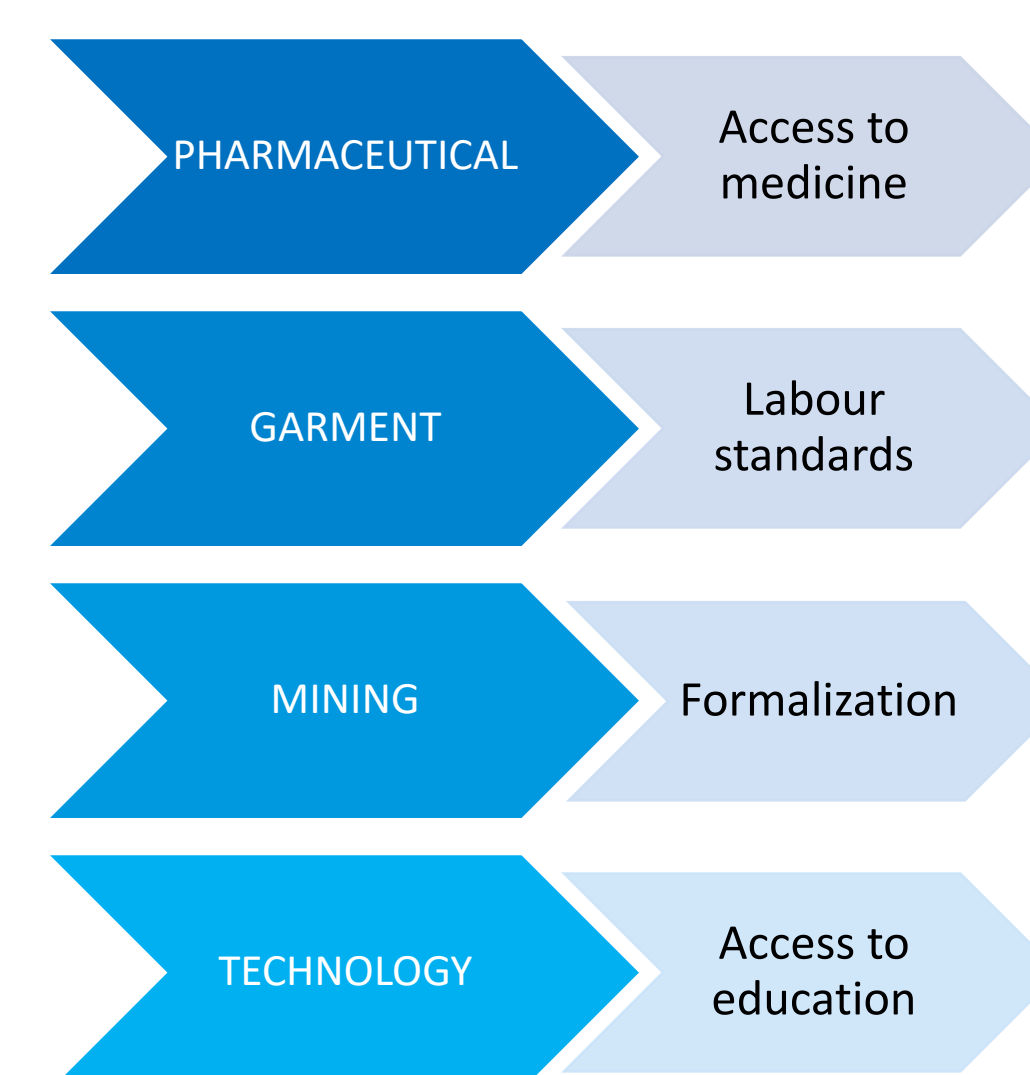


METHODS

- This dissertation project employs a qualitative multi-case study method, in line with the Eisenhardt Method (1989).
- Building upon empirical semi-structured interviews and ethnographic fieldwork in Ethiopia, this dissertation aims to contribute to extant theory on the responsibilities of MNEs (Rawls, 1999; Hsieh, 2009).

CASE STUDIES

- Through four case studies set in Ethiopia, this dissertation aims to contribute to extant theory on the responsibilities of MNEs.



PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

- 'Do no harm' in line with the UNGPS provides the basis for MNEs, however there remain challenges in reconciling operations with proactive political engagement.
- Positive and negative duties may be distinguished by the degree of institutional voids faced and the industry of engagement.
- The voluntary & proactive nature of both CD and the SDGs provides new perspectives on positive and negative duties.

OPEN QUESTIONS

- Literature recommendations?
- Case study suggestions?
- Feedback on the methodology used?

NEXT STEPS

- Fieldwork planned for October / November 2023 in Ethiopia
- Further theoretical analysis using the work of Rawls (1999).