

Corporate Social Responsibility Unbound: Renewable Energy, Climate Justice, and the Paradox of Free-Market
Environmentalism

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Abstract: Growing concerns about climate change are leading many to call for a transition away from fossil fuels and towards more renewable energy. Through an emerging framework known as climate justice, renewable energy is presented as a clean alternative to fossil fuels, and as a panacea for a wide range of both environmental and social problems. As renewable energy industries expand, will they be able to differentiate themselves from their peers in fossil fuel and other extractive industries?

Scholars have contested the use of corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs in extractive industries as a strategic business tactic used to obscure or even justify their environmentally and socially harmful behavior. However, little is known about the use of CSR in industries that are not known to cause harm. This dissertation is a case study of a small renewable energy company that is implementing CSR initiatives. The CEO of this company has also been advocating for the widespread use of CSR within this small industry. On the surface, the use of CSR by a renewable energy company challenges many assumptions in the CSR literature. How does the use of CSR in this renewable industry compare to the use of CSR in extractive industries such as mining, oil and gas?

This exploratory study draws on two years of ethnographic fieldwork conducted at three sites: 1) a renewable energy project in a remote region of South America where the company is enacting CSR programs, 2) the company's offices in South America and Washington D.C. where the CEO is trying to integrate CSR as a core business practice, and 3) industry conferences where CSR is discussed, but has not emerged as an industry-wide standard. I found that while the use of CSR at the project site closely resembles the use of CSR in extractive industries, there are barriers to the integration of CSR within the company and the industry. By studying a small renewable energy company, I provide an alternative to the dominant model that is presented in the literature.

My major finding is that the ideology of "free-market environmentalism" works on both the micro and macro-level to marginalize the work of CSR. While individuals believe that renewable energy development is a morally just cause, a staunch belief in neoliberal principles such as deregulation and self-reliance is at odds with the progressive ideals of CSR. Sociologists have many critiques of neoliberalism, however, free-market environmentalism is a unique ideological stance that places private renewable energy industries in a double bind. Unlike the extractive industries, they are increasingly dependent on political and economic support doled out by governments and development agencies through climate justice programs, but they believe that these public agencies are not working in their best interests. The ways in which renewable energy industries negotiate this double bind could provide a new avenue of research for scholars. More broadly, the global climate justice movement has united a broad range of actors, but it remains to be seen if it can accommodate the needs of both the public and private sectors.

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Abbreviations

CSP	Corporate social performance
CSR	Corporate social responsibility
DAPL	Dakota Access Pipeline
EEC	Exploration, Education, and Community
EITI	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
GCF	Green Climate Fund
ICMM	International Council of Mining and Metals
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRA	International Renewable Agency*
MNC	Multinational corporation
NGO	Non-governmental organization
RET	Renewable energy technology
SAEC	South American Energy Corp*
SIA	Social impact assessment
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SOE	State-owned enterprise
U.N.	United Nations
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USRA	U.S. Renewable Agency*

*Denotes a pseudonym

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This dissertation is the product of a long and unpredictable journey, and of many fortunate opportunities. I began graduate school with the intention of studying higher education policy, but instead chose to pursue my lifelong interest in the environment. I know that I eventually ended up on the right path with much help along the way.

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To my dearest sweet baby niece, Amelia: You have been born into strange times. I dedicate this dissertation to you and the hope that your future is everything you deserve.

I will end with a timely quote from a most unlikely source, Republican Senator Mitch McConnell:

“Nevertheless, she persisted.”

A Note on Ethical Considerations

I decided at the beginning of this research that I would have to conceal many identifying pieces of information in order to protect the identity of my participants, the companies involved, and details of specific renewable energy projects. I have provided pseudonyms for the two major companies I worked with, Smith & Associates, and South American Energy Corp (SAEC), and for individuals who play a prominent role in the analysis. All individuals named have provided written or oral consent to be included. I have chosen not to identify the particular renewable energy industry that is the focus of this dissertation. I realize that this may be unconventional, however, it is necessary in this case because of the small size of this industry. By identifying the industry, I would put the identities of individuals and the companies involved at risk. For the same reasons, I am also not revealing the location within South America that is the site of the proposed power plant that I refer to in Chapter Three.

I am disclosing that I was employed by Smith & Associates from the fall of 2013 through the fall of 2015, during which time I was also allowed to conduct this research independently. I will discuss my methodology in the Background and Methods chapter. Travel, lodging, and research related expenses for the ethnographic fieldwork were funded independently of Smith & Associates through research grants. The outcomes and products of my employment are independent from any outcomes of this research, and I terminated my relationship with Smith & Associates following the completion of my short-term contract.

Introduction

“Any harm done to the environment, therefore, is harm done to humanity.”

-Pope Francis, 2015 address to the United Nations

On June 18, 2015, Pope Francis released an encyclical titled *Laudato Si’: On Care for Our Common Home*. In it he made history by unambiguously accepting the scientific consensus on the man-made sources of climate change and characterized it as a growing humanitarian crisis. He writes:

There is an urgent need to develop policies so that, in the next few years, the emission of carbon dioxide and other highly polluting gases can be drastically reduced, for example, substituting for fossil fuels and developing sources of renewable energy. Worldwide there is minimal access to clean and renewable energy (21).

On September 25, 2015, he followed it up with an address to the United Nations General Assembly and made a similar plea for global action on a range of environmental issues. This address came ahead of the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP21, held in November, which led to the historic Paris Agreement on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The fact that Pope Francis has become one of the most influential activists in the global fight against climate change also signals an important shift. While environmentalists have long lamented the ecological impacts of climate change, there is a growing recognition of its mounting social and economic costs.

Climate justice has emerged as an umbrella term used to frame climate change as an issue of social and political inequality. Harlan et al. (2015) write:

Climate change is a justice issue for three reasons. First, its causes are driven by social inequalities: mostly politically, culturally, and economically marginalized communities and nations use vastly less fossil fuel-based energy. Second, the rich and poor feel its impacts unequally; this is true locally, nationally, and globally.

Third, policies designed to manage climate change - including renewable energy sources, adaptation measures, and geoengineering schemes -- will have starkly unequal impacts within and across societies (127).

I use the term climate justice to describe a number of intersecting social movements that focus on mitigating climate change through a lens of both environmental and social justice. I have identified three in the literature which I call a) mainstream climate management, b) radical climate activism, and c) free-market innovation. Chatterton et al. (2013) use the term “mainstream climate management” to refer to formal alliances between governments and development agencies, the most notable of which is the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The second branch is what I refer to as “radical climate activism,” consisting of grassroots organizations that believe that governments, development agencies, and corporations have failed to protect the populations most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

The final branch is what I refer to as “free-market innovation.” This approach is epitomized by Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, and other high profile businessmen and women who have created the “Breakthrough Energy Coalition” to fund private sector renewable energy programs and research.¹ They are motivated by a belief that the public sector is not moving fast enough, and is not facilitating the growth of private industries. These three movements share the same underlying goal of preventing widespread human suffering and environmental disaster caused by climate change, but they differ radically in their political orientations and the methods that they use.

¹ See: <http://www.b-t.energy/>

All three movements advocate for a transition away from fossil fuels towards more renewable energy sources. Radical climate change activists condemn the use of fossil fuels on environmental grounds, but also condemn the socially and environmentally destructive behaviors of fossil fuel companies that represent the failures of global capitalism. Mainstream climate management and free-market innovation, meanwhile, focus on the benefits of renewable energy as a means to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and provide other social, political, and economic benefits to the developing world. They claim that renewable energy can promote economic independence, provide jobs, and increase access to reliable electricity (Kaygusuz 2011; Del Río and Burguillo 2008).

Increasing renewable energy development has recently risen to the top of the global international development agenda. Despite their central role in combatting climate change, little attention has been paid to the behavior of private renewable energy companies. By definition, there is a fundamental distinction between non-renewable fossil fuel industries and renewable energy industries, based purely on a literal definition of renewability. There is also a normative and symbolic distinction grounded in the belief that fossil fuel industries are inherently harmful or “dirty” while renewable energy industries are “clean.” All three branches of climate justice rely on this unspoken assumption in their support of renewable energy, without a critical examination of what this means in practice.

The harmful behaviors of fossil fuel and related industries such as mining have received decades of public and scholarly attention, and these industries have responded by creating corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs to address their most egregious environmental and social abuses. While there are many definitions of and types

of CSR, the focus of this dissertation is on voluntary programs and policies implemented by companies that are intended to address social and environmental issues. Extractive industries have become leaders of the global CSR movement by creating standardized frameworks that are adopted by virtually all of the major extractive companies.

CSR is also a fast-growing field of academic research. The vast majority of scholarship in the social sciences is highly critical of the use of CSR in controversial industries, characterizing it as “window dressing” (Cai et al. 2012) or a “ceremonial” (Lim 2012) attempt to conceal or even justify harmful behavior. The underlying logic of this critique is that these industries developed a well-deserved negative reputation, and were pressured to create CSR programs or face economic consequences.

So why would an industry or a company with a “clean” reputation engage in CSR? An association with the global humanitarian agenda of climate justice could provide an alternative way to demonstrate a commitment to social and environmental responsibility. This dissertation is a case study of a small renewable energy company I call Smith & Associates, which has implemented CSR programs at the site of a proposed renewable power plant in a remote area of South America. The CEO, a man I call Mr. Smith, has been attempting to incorporate CSR as a company policy, and has also been advocating for the widespread use of CSR within the industry. CSR has not yet taken hold as a company-wide practice or policy, nor has it been adopted by the industry on the same scale that is seen in extractive industries. I will explore both why Mr. Smith chooses to engage in CSR, and why it has not yet become institutionalized in his company or within the industry. I argue that the reasons involve both personal

motivations as well as the necessary conditions and resources that are needed to create and implement CSR programs.

I conducted a multi-sited ethnography over the course of two years at three primary sites: the site of Smith & Associates's renewable energy project in a remote South American location, the offices of Smith & Associates, and five industry conferences. At each site, I explore the conditions under which CSR does or does not emerge using the extractive industries as a frame of reference. This research design addresses two main holes in the CSR literature. First, this literature has suffered from a preoccupation not only with extractive industries but also with large multinational corporations. Both this type of industry and this type of firm are not representative of a wide range of institutional contexts in which CSR *might* occur. The second gap is that the literature has relied on case studies of existing CSR initiatives, rather than viewing CSR as an emergent process of institutional and collective change.

When looking for models to explain why and how CSR is implemented, the management literature uses a rational choice framework known as "the business case." Through this lens, the implementation of CSR is shaped primarily by strategic business decisions focused on a company's bottom line. This often unspoken assumption underlies much of the literature in the social sciences, and is often used as a critique to divorce CSR from any substantive or genuine effort to provide social or environmental benefits. I explore the limitations of this argument during my time spent with Smith & Associates employees and others industry members.

During this time, I explored both why Mr. Smith chose to engage in CSR as well as why it was not fully adopted by the rest of the employees in this small company or by

others in the industry. I discovered that they use an ideology described in the literature as “free-market environmentalism” that is distinguishable from the more common “progressive environmentalism” (Anderson and Leal 1991). Mr. Smith and others in this industry firmly believe that renewable energy is beneficial for society and the environment, but are frustrated by the barriers to more private, commercial, renewable energy development. Politically and ideologically, they oppose government intervention, regulation, and radical forms of activism that threaten private development.

On a micro-sociological level, the ideological framework of free-market environmentalism does not facilitate the use of CSR because CSR is seen as a form of progressive activism. I am also interested in how this same ideological divide between free-market approaches, such as that of Mr. Smith, and progressive environmentalism plays out on a global scale. The major actors in the branch of the climate justice movement that I call “mainstream climate management” are agencies such as the United Nations and the World Bank. These actors can access both the economic resources and the political power needed to increase renewable energy development. Unlike extractive industries, renewable energy industries are increasingly dependent on these resources. I conducted participant observation at industry events where I witnessed intense and collective frustration. Industry members believe fervently that promoting renewable energy is a just cause, but they feel that governments and aid agencies slow down commercial development. Their frustration reflects the deep-seated political and ideological divide between the private and public sectors that is a common theme in the literature on CSR and international development more generally. Rather than view it as a

divide, however, it is more useful to think of it as a continuum as the boundary between the two is becoming more permeable.

Returning to the three branches of the climate justice movement, radical climate activism and free-market innovation are at opposite ends of the spectrum, while mainstream climate management is more moderate. I will argue that renewable energy industries are in a unique position because they must negotiate the tensions between these three movements. The very idea of climate justice was only born within the last decade, and it remains to be seen if the three branches can find innovative solutions to use the private sector to solve a very public – and global – problem. If they can do so, it would challenge many assumptions in the CSR literature and generate new questions about the role of private corporations within the broader sphere of international development.

An Outline of the Dissertation

After an outline of the literature and a description of methods, Chapter Two examines the implementation of CSR at a renewable energy project site led by the CEO of Smith & Associates, Mr. Smith. Much of the CSR literature involves case studies of projects in extractive industries. Scholars focus on the environmental and social harm of extractive projects as the main reason why extractive companies are forced to implement CSR. Do renewable energy projects cause any environmental and social harm? If they do not, this begs the question of why Mr. Smith would implement CSR in the absence of public pressure to do so. Based on two months of fieldwork conducted at the site and extensive desk research of similar renewable energy projects, I do find some evidence of social and environmental controversies that resemble those in extractive industries. I then describe the CSR initiatives implemented by Mr. Smith and conclude that they are also similar to those used in extractive industries. These findings in some ways reinforce the argument that CSR is a strategic business decision, and suggest that renewable energy industries might eventually follow a similar path to extractive industries as they become more publicly visible. They also suggest that there is a disconnect between the idea that renewable energy is beneficial for the environment and society as a whole, and the reality that renewable energy projects might have some negative impacts at the local level.

In Chapter Three, I delve deeper into the motivations of Mr. Smith and explore his efforts to integrate CSR into his growing company. Mr. Smith articulates that generosity is a core business value which demonstrates his commitment to social responsibility. He also articulates a framework of free-market environmentalism and dismisses those CSR activities that he sees as progressive forms of activism. His

employees have little involvement in CSR initiatives and express the same free-market ideology. They draw clear boundaries between the core technical side of the business and the work of CSR. These boundaries are manifested partly as political differences but also they also reinforce the entrenched divide between “hard” and “soft” work (Faulkner 2007). In Chapter Four, I expand on Chapter Three by arguing that these divides are inherently gendered and that stereotypical gender roles and norms work to further marginalize CSR as feminine work within an industry that is already male-dominated.

In Chapter Five I draw on participant observation at five industry conferences to explore why CSR is not widely used in this renewable energy industry. I focus on the structural conditions and resources that would be needed to enact collective change. The adoption of CSR by extractive industries has been described as a process of “institutional isomorphism” (Jamali 2010; Pederson et al. 2013). This process is facilitated by the fact that extractive industries are homogenous and highly competitive. By contrast, this industry is heterogeneous, includes many small businesses, and has a relatively high degree of collaboration. This finding is significant for CSR scholars, who have given very little attention to the industry-level contexts in which CSR may or may not emerge.

In Chapter Five, I also return to the concept of free-market environmentalism and explore its consequences on a more global scale. Beyond being a personal ideology or political leaning, it is enacted in the boundaries between private developers and governmental and development agencies. This particular renewable energy industry is struggling for economic resources and political support. I witnessed intense frustrations as industry members encountered the inefficiency and bureaucracy of governmental agencies that they believe are not working in their best interests.

Finally, Chapter Six concludes by envisioning the way forward for both renewable energy industries and the climate justice movement. It also reflects on some of the overarching questions with which I began this dissertation. Are renewable energy industries distinguishing themselves from their extractive industry peers? Are CSR and climate justice really two separate paths? More importantly, there are many unanswered questions of growing importance as climate change becomes an increasingly important global concern and the climate justice movement unfolds. This dissertation is an exploratory study of what are likely to become questions of growing urgency. It has generated new data that expand our knowledge base about the issues. Clearly, however, more research is needed. Hopefully, this and subsequent studies can illuminate ways the principal players can shape renewable energy so that it keeps the wheels turning in a less planet-damaging way than non-renewable energy while not hurting the people in its path.

Chapter One: Literature Review, Background and Methods

The academic literature on CSR is vast, spanning a wide range of fields from management studies and business ethics, to the social sciences and humanities, to environmental sciences and beyond. Instead of a full and comprehensive review of the literature, I am focusing specifically on the areas of research that are most relevant to this research. I provide a brief history, an overview of the use of CSR in extractive industries, and common critiques and theoretical frameworks used in the CSR literature. Finally, I turn to the gaps in the literature that make renewable energy an ideal case study for this dissertation.

History

Other scholars have offered a more complete history of CSR beginning in the 1950s (see Carroll 1999). There is general agreement that the modern CSR movement has its roots in the corporate philanthropy movement of the postwar period in the United States. The prosperity of this period fueled the growth of large corporations, which began to implement charitable initiatives (Mitchell 1989; Marinetto 1999). Corporate philanthropy continues to be a recognizable and common form of “mainstream” CSR. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is the world’s largest private foundation, providing almost \$35 billion in grant money since its inception in 1997², and countless

² See: <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/Who-We-Are/General-Information/Foundation-Factsheet>

other companies have committed to “giving back” through donations and other philanthropic efforts.

While philanthropy is common, the evolution of CSR beyond philanthropy began with global political and economic shifts that occurred throughout the second half of the 20th century. The spread of global capitalism and neoliberal economic policies that facilitated the growth of global commodity chains (Quark and Slez 2014) and the emergence of large multinational corporations (MNCs) coincided with the social movements of the 1960s and 70s, including environmentalism, feminism, labor movements and a growing awareness of poverty and inequality in developing countries. Large national and multinational corporations saw windfall profits during this period (Cable and Vibbert 1983), but attracted the attention of critics and social justice advocates who threatened their legitimacy. Highly publicized corporate scandals such as the Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989, and Royal Dutch Shell’s alleged human rights abuses in Nigeria that came to light in the late 1990s (Lambooy 2008; Manby 1999), intensified pressure on corporations to improve their practices.

Soule (2009) points to anti-corporate activism beginning in the 70s and 80s in the U.S. that evolved into an influential social movement that mobilized against everything from Nike sweatshops to animal testing of cosmetic products. The emphasis for corporations shifted from responsibility towards responsiveness (Makower 1994) and a more strategic type of philanthropy addressing obligations to workers, consumers, and the general public. The 1980s also saw an explosion of non-governmental organizations, transnational advocacy networks, and a growing importance of large development agencies, such as the World Bank (Reimann 2006; Yates 2006; Fox 1998), that had

grown out of the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944 (Helleiner 1996). The creation of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000 set the stage for a new international development agenda focused on global humanitarian issues such as poverty, education, women's empowerment, maternal health, and the environment.

The UN has been a leading actor in both international development and the modern CSR movement. In 2000 it launched the UN Global Compact (UNGC), the world's largest voluntary CSR initiative. The UNGC illustrates the "second wave" of the CSR movement that is focused on development principles such as environmental sustainability, human rights, and transparency. Countless other organizations have sprung up to meet the growing demand to legitimize CSR, including the Equator Principles, The Global Reporting Initiative, Business for Social Responsibility, The International Institute for Environment and Development, and The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (Meyer et al. 2015). These organizations are centered on the voluntary adoption of environmental and social standards through membership or certification.

Even within the last decade, some scholars are pointing to an emerging third generation of CSR that reflects "the complex network of organizational relations across sectors" (Stohl et al. 2007: 38) and the permeability of public/private boundaries. In addition to public-private partnerships, we have begun to see a shift in rhetoric from responsibility towards the new and popular concept of "corporate sustainability."³ The concept of CS reflects the push towards "sustainable development" within the sphere of

³ I use the term CSR throughout this dissertation to include all related concepts, including corporate sustainability.

international development. The UN Global Compact in fact brands itself as a “corporate sustainability initiative,” and many companies now issue “sustainability reports.” The Dow Jones launched its Sustainability Index (DJSI) in 1999, providing the most widely recognized corporate global sustainability benchmark, using factors such as corporate governance, risk management, and climate change mitigation while rejecting companies that violate sustainability or ethical criteria (López et al 2007).

CSR in Extractive Industries

CSR can refer to a wide variety of practices and policies. This dissertation focuses on the practices and policies that are most relevant to extractive and renewable energy industries.⁴ First, it is necessary to define what “extractive” industries are, and why I use them as an umbrella term to refer to a set of industries. The literature uses the term “controversial” to refer to an even broader category of industries referring to those thought to be inherently harmful to people and the environment including tobacco, gambling, alcohol, weapons, oil, and cement (Cai et al. 2012). Extractive industries are a subset of controversial industries. Extractive refers to the physical act of extracting natural resources, mainly oil, gas, coal, and minerals. Natural resource extraction carries with it both the literal and metaphorical meaning of “extraction.” Scholars sometimes use the metaphor of “plundering” (Collier 2010; Broad and Cavanagh 1993), evoking the way pirates or Vikings might plunder a village before abandoning it entirely. Some suggest that very idea of “sustainable mining” is an oxymoron akin to advertising “safe”

⁴ See Carroll (1999) and Dahlsrud (2008) for useful discussions about how to define CSR.

cigarettes (Benson and Kirsch 2010). When these resources are extracted from third world countries by large multi-national corporations (MNCs) based in the first world, extraction is often equated with the exploitation of both natural resources and local people (McKern 1993). I group extractive industries together because they are based on “non-renewable” resources, and thus make a useful comparison with renewable energy industries.

There is a vast amount of literature documenting cases of social and environmental harms caused by mining, oil, and gas projects. Mines use hazardous chemicals that have contaminated water and soil (Fréry et al. 2001; De Echave 2005; Rico et al. 2008). Mines have also generated social conflicts including violation of indigenous rights, displacement, direct mistreatment by company employees, and an unequal distribution of jobs, profits, and other resources (Lawrie 2011; Whiteman and Mamen 2002; Newbold 2003; Bury 2007; Bebbington et al. 2008). Mines are also problematic because they rely on a finite resource. In the short term, they may provide an influx of jobs and cash that is unsustainable leading to social and economic instability associated with mining “boom towns” (Godfrey 1990). After the resource is depleted, communities are left in poor conditions (Littlewood 2014).

In the oil and gas industry, there have been high-profile oil spills such as the Exxon Valdez in 1989 and the British Petroleum Deepwater Horizon in 2010. Oil and gas companies have been involved in many cases of environmental and social conflict in the developing world. The Niger Delta has been the site of decades of conflict between foreign oil companies and local people (Frynas 2000; Omeje 2006). Royal Dutch Shell is perhaps one of the most notorious companies that have been accused of human rights

abuses and corruption (Okonta 2003; Holzer 2007). Appel (2012) describes “infrastructural violence” inflicted by oil and gas companies, referring to the stark inequalities between luxurious oil company enclaves and surrounding poor communities. Appel argues that the literal walls work to exclude community members and allow the companies to abdicate their responsibility for everything outside their walls.

Oil and gas, and mining industries and companies have responded to these accusations through highly coordinated CSR campaigns. These include activities enacted during individual projects, explicitly stated company-wide practices and policies such as publishing sustainability reports, and the creation of industry-wide frameworks and organizations. Starting with the activities enacted during projects, I have categorized CSR activities into three categories: impact mitigation, stakeholder engagement, and community development. Chapter One will focus on these activities. Companies explicitly state their policies and approach on their websites and in annual sustainability reports. Most companies’ policies focus on their commitments to “communities” and hire “community relations” teams (Humphreys 2000; Kemp 2013). Because the approach of the leading mining, oil, and gas companies are similar, I describe their approach as the “community relations” model.

Extractive industries have also mobilized collectively to create CSR organizations. The most important for the oil and gas industries is the International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association (IPIECA). Mining has the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM). These are membership-only trade organizations that purport to have rigorous admissions and accountability standards. These organizations facilitate the standardization of CSR practices, and also provide

companies with a way to legitimize their commitments. The mining industry has also created a concept called a “social license to operate” (SLO) that has been voluntarily adopted by most companies (Prno and Slocumbe 2012). Companies are expected to receive an SLO from the local community through participatory (rather than coercive) means before a project is approved, and the concept is similar to the idea of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) that is used by development agencies such as the World Bank (2004). In addition to the internal industry-wide frameworks, many large MNCs in mining, oil and gas have also participated in global CSR initiatives such as the UN Global Compact.

Critiques

Extractive industries have received a disproportionate amount of attention from the public and from scholars, and they seem to have become the de facto face of CSR for both proponents and critics. They have become more visible targets for critics in the wake of public scandals such as oil spills and growing concerns that fossil fuels contribute to climate change. While this research does not seek to engage with normative debates over the morality or the effectiveness of CSR, the vast majority of the academic literature, especially in the social sciences, remains skeptical. Any study that seeks to counter an a priori dismissal of CSR must acknowledge these critiques. In this dissertation I will also explore the logical assumptions that are made in these critiques in an effort to increase our empirical and theoretical understanding of how and why CSR is enacted in some contexts, but not in others.

The first assumption is that the practices of companies in “controversial” industries are inherently harmful. At best, CSR is commonly dismissed as “window dressing” (Amazeen 2011, Cai 2012), used to hide harmful practices. A similar critique is the concept of “greenwashing,” referring to unsubstantiated and misleading claims about the environmental or social benefits of products and services (Bazillier and Vauday 2013; Hamann 2004; Alves 2009; Cherry and Snierson 2011). At worst, scholars accuse companies of using CSR to legitimize harmful behavior. Banerjee (2008) and others (Mitchell 1989; Shamir 2004, 2005) argue that despite the emancipatory rhetoric and the positive public image of CSR as an ideological movement, it is intended to deflect criticism, circumvent stringent regulations and consolidate the power of large corporations. Corporations may form strategic partnerships with NGOs to lend legitimacy to their CSR programs, however, these partnerships may result in little more than the co-optation of NGOs’ human rights agenda by corporate interests (Baur 2012; Kirsch 2007). Publicized commitments on the part of corporations can mask the inherent tensions between the profit-driven nature of corporate development and a morally driven human rights agenda (Lim 2012).

Frynas (2005) found criticism of CSR from within the ranks of oil company staff and company consultants who themselves had been part of CSR practices. Complaints included that CSR is a waste of time, is about managing perceptions and making people feel good, and is a red herring of development projects. Frynas also found that public relations priorities may overtake development priorities, as when companies choose media-friendly, but poorly-planned projects that can be used for glossy brochures or promotional videos. He argues that company executives responsible for CSR programs

rarely include trained development professionals, and so these programs can be poorly implemented with few mechanisms for accountability.

On a more global scale, the actions of large MNCs in the developing world may exacerbate existing inequalities both within and between countries. In the post-colonial context, harmful activities, exploitative acts, and failed CSR initiatives may amount to a form of neocolonialism, and also act as a scapegoat for the failure of local governments (Vertigans 2011). Even seemingly successful projects may result in companies taking on the role of providing social welfare that was once seen as the role of the state (Kapelus 2002; Bebbington 2010; Himley 2010), thus decreasing investments by the state and also creating a vicious cycle of dependency. Shamir (2008) perhaps best describes the discomfort that many social scientists have with CSR when he writes that “Looking at the underlying ‘market rationality’ of governance, and critically examining the notion of ‘corporate social responsibility’ ...the moralization of markets further sustains, rather than undermining, neo-liberal governmentalities and neo-liberal visions of civil society, citizenship and responsible social action” (1).

Rational Choice Models of CSR

This dissertation does not engage fully with rational choice theory, but it does reference a subset of rational choice theory used in the management literature called “the business case” (Carroll and Shabana 2010) which is related to the well-known “stakeholder theory” (Freeman 1984). A very brief overview of the origins of rational choice theory is warranted. Many scholars now associate rational choice theory with behavioral economic theories of instrumental rationality (Simon 1955; Harsanyi 1977;

Posner 1998). Broadly speaking, rational choice theory posits that individuals make calculated decisions based on a cost-benefit analysis and make a self-determined choice of action. While rational choice theory is not widely used by sociologists (see Hechter and Kanazawa 1977), it remains an important theme in CSR studies. In the management literature, the “theory of the firm” perspective envisions firms as fundamentally rational economic entities that make strategic and profit-oriented decisions (Cyert and March 1963; Jensen and Meckling 1976). In 1970, the economist Milton Friedman famously declared that “the social responsibility of business is to increase its profits.” This statement has been repeated ad nauseam both by proponents and critics of rational choice theory.

Using the theory of the firm perspective, CSR might be a rational choice if it provides an economic benefit to the firm (McWilliams and Siegal 2001). This assumption is made explicit in a subset of the CSR literature known as “the business case” theory or model. It is both an empirical and normative argument. Carroll and Shabana (2010) write:

The business case refers to the underlying arguments or rationales supporting or documenting why the business community should accept and advance the CSR ‘cause’. The business case is concerned with the primary question: What do the business community and organizations get out of CSR? That is, how do they benefit tangibly from engaging in CSR policies, activities and practices? The business case refers to the bottom-line financial and other reasons for businesses pursuing CSR strategies and policies (85).

The “business case” is related to “stakeholder theory,” which is an all-encompassing framework of understanding the behavior of firms and defines to whom they are accountable. Stakeholders can refer to a wide variety of actors beyond shareholders (Kakabadse et. al 2005; Jones et al. 2002). The widest possible definition is offered by Freeman (1984): “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the

achievement of the organisation's objectives" (32). This could include employees, customers, suppliers, local communities, and even competitors. Through this lens, CSR is a rational business decision if it benefits stakeholders. Empirically, this is a very difficult argument to make, given the many definitions of stakeholders, how one measures CSR, and what outcomes are used.⁵ Another related theory includes the concept of "reputational risk" (Minor and Morgan 2011; Spence 2011). If a company is publicly accused of creating harm, it can potentially damage a firm's reputation and lead to financial losses. CSR can be a rational way to try and improve a firm's reputation. The business case theory thus addresses both external and internal motivators that are linked to the implementation of CSR.

Theories of economic rationality are also invoked to explain the spread of CSR at the industry level. Competition can facilitate the spread of CSR through "institutional isomorphism" or "convergence" (Jamali 2010; Pederson 2013). If one company adopts CSR, competition can exert coercive pressure on other companies. Misani (2010) argues that the pressure to conform is stronger than the pressure to use CSR to differentiate oneself from the competition, resulting in "herd" or "bandwagon" behavior. Misani writes that "bandwagons are diffusion processes where organisations adopt an innovation not because it is efficient but because they feel the pressure of the sheer number of organisations that have already adopted it" (6).

Rational choice is used by proponents to make the case for why corporations should engage in CSR, but it is also an underlying theme in many of the critiques which I

⁵ See Waddock and Graves (1997), Wood (2010), and Preston and O'Bannon (1997) for some helpful discussions.

have outlined. If CSR is reducible to a calculated business decision than it is not a genuine effort to act responsibly or ethically. The idea of reputational risk also suggests that corporations will not engage in CSR unless forced to do so under the threat of economic sanctions.

Regardless of one's normative position on CSR, the empirical logic of the business case make sense when applied to extractive industries. These industries have suffered reputational losses, which have justified CSR as a benefit to stakeholders, and CSR has become standardized through competition and institutional isomorphism. The focus both on rational choice and extractive industries are two major shortcomings of the literature that this dissertation seeks to address. The case of a small renewable energy company with an emerging CSR program offers both a new institutional context and an opportunity to explore the creation of CSR as a process rather than an outcome. In my analysis I will explore a range of models to explain whether or not CSR is enacted, drawing from cultural sociology, neoinstitutionalism, and even feminist theory.

Why Renewable Energy?

If extractive industries are inherently “controversial” than the study of a seemingly noncontroversial industry makes an interesting exploratory case study. In Chapter Two I will explore potential local controversies created by renewable energy projects, but renewable energy industries, by and large, have positive public reputations. Very little research exists on renewable energy industries, but they have certainly not been involved in public scandals on the scale that is seen in the extractive industries. I chose renewable energy not only because it has a clean reputation, but because its fate is

intimately connected to extractive industries, especially fossil fuels. As I mentioned, the climate justice movement (including a broad range of actors with differing political agendas) is united behind the cause of decreasing fossil fuel production and consumption, in favor of more renewable energy. The reputation of renewable energy industries is demonstrated not only by the lack of scandal but by the fact that they are hailed as a solution to the negative environmental and social impacts of climate change, many of which are caused directly by fossil fuel industries.

The public and even scholarly condemnation of fossil fuels and endorsement of renewable energy deserve more attention. Sociologists and anthropologists have been highly critical of fossil fuel industries, and to a lesser extent have championed the cause of climate justice (see McCright and Dunlap 2003; Yearley 2009). Even though climate justice and the growth of renewable energy industries are very recent phenomena, a recently released book titled, “Climate Change and Society: Sociological Perspectives” (Dunlap and Brulle 2015), calls on social scientists to focus on issues including climate justice and inequality, adaptation to climate change and mitigating climate change. There is a new peer-reviewed international journal titled, “Energy Research & Social Science,” and many of the articles focus on barriers to renewable energy development. There is also a growing field of research on “energy transitions” away from fossil fuels towards renewable energy (Van den Bergh, Joroen, and Bruinsma 2008; Araújo 2014). Droege (2011) describes the “devastating consequences” (2) of fossil fuel consumption and the growing global consensus that renewable energy is a way of “repairing the damages wreaked by fossil fuel” (12).

This metanarrative serves as the backdrop for the climate justice movement and is why I characterized extractive and renewable industries as appearing to be on divergent paths. The empirical reality of this transition is extraordinarily complex, and the very idea of a transition is problematic because it implies that energy production is a zero-sum game. Energy demands increase along with population growth and urbanization (Asif and Muneer 2005) so you can theoretically increase renewable energy production without decreasing fossil fuel consumption. Even though the idea of an energy transition is an oversimplification, it does shape public opinion, policy, and perhaps even the behavior of firms. The demonization of fossil fuels and extractive industries has led to their CSR efforts, but less is known about how the positive reputation of renewable energy might impact the behavior of renewable energy industries and companies. They might earn that positive reputation by being environmentally and socially benevolent, but it is also possible that their reputation might allow them to conceal harmful behavior under the guise of being “clean.” This possibility will be the subject of Chapter Two.

While the literature is preoccupied with CSR in extractive industries, this is only one model of CSR, and as I mentioned, the CSR movement is still evolving. What will the next generation of “corporate sustainability” look like in practice? There is debate over whether the shift from responsibility towards sustainability is simply a change in rhetoric (Baumgartner and Ebner 2010; Hahn et al. 2010; Montiel 2008), and I have found that some scholars use CSR and CS interchangeably (Van Marrewijk 2003).⁶

⁶ In the empirical chapters, I will mostly focus on activities that are considered CSR. Only one company within this industry explicitly uses the term “corporate sustainability” and issues “sustainability reports.” No companies are members of a CS organization such

When implemented on the ground, it may simply be CSR under a new guise, but a global emphasis on CSR and sustainability is consequential, especially for shaping policy. It is perhaps the most relevant for renewable energy industries. Because sustainability was traditionally used in the ecological sense, renewable energy systems are by definition “sustainable.” Renewable energy companies could use this to their advantage, whether or not they explicitly have CS policies. What is much murkier is defining what sustainability means in reference to social outcomes (Lehtonen 2004; Dempsey 2011).

Besides a shift toward sustainability, some argue that the next generation of CSR emphasizes the interactions between business, the state, and civil society rather than an emphasis on how businesses dominate, control and determine the parameters of their activities (Burchell and Cook 2006). Renewable energy industries are becoming increasingly dependent on public-private partnerships to survive. In my conclusions I will discuss the possible intersections between public-private partnerships and CSR.

Climate Justice

I use the term “climate justice” as shorthand, and it is useful to examine the concept in greater detail. It may have roots in earlier forms of environmental activism, but as a global social movement it has gathered steam and resources in recent years following the creation of the “Paris Agreement” at the Paris Climate Change Conference (COP21) in November 2015. The U.N. has held climate change conferences every year beginning in 1995. The third conference held in 1997 resulted in the treaty known as the Kyoto Protocol, which at the time was a significant global acknowledgment of both the

as the U.N. Global Compact.

man-made causes of climate change and the political and economic policies that could reduce its impacts. It has been controversial (see Victor 2004) and to date the United States has signed but not ratified the treaty. The Paris Agreement is a new treaty that is meant to give countries more flexibility in how they reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It has been hailed by many climate change activists as an historic, if not perfect, event. Manolas (2016) writes, “By itself the Paris climate agreement cannot save the planet nor can it stop global warming. It may also prove ineffective, like any treaty relying on voluntary actions. At the same time the treaty can add momentum to efforts already under way around the world and it can encourage countries to do more” (167).

The U.N. governs the most prominent climate change policies, and is the main actor in the branch of climate justice that I referred to as “mainstream climate management.” A major mechanism of this approach is known as “climate finance” (Buchner 2011). Through this approach, funds from both public and private agencies are used to support climate change mitigation and adaptation programs, focusing mostly on the developing world. The U.N. created the Green Climate Fund (GCF) in 2010, with the goal of raising \$100 billion per year by 2020 (Sierra 2011; Lattanzio 2012). As of September 2016, the GCF reported that it had raised \$10.3 billion from 43 state governments.⁷ Most major global development organizations such as the World Bank, and major development banks such as the Inter-American Development Bank and the African Development Bank, have also created financing options for climate change mitigation and adaptation. A large percentage of climate finance is spent on renewable

⁷ See: <https://www.greenclimate.fund/partners/contributors/resources-mobilized>

energy development, especially in the developing world (Edenhofer 2011; Abolhosseini and Heshmati 2014).

Radical climate activism is often opposed to the approach of mainstream climate management. At the extreme left end of the political spectrum you find concepts such as “eco-socialism” (Pepper 2002) or even “ecological Marxism” (Burkett 1999). Eco-socialists generally believe that the spread of global capitalism is the cause of global warming and related environmental and social problems and advocate for radical political change and grassroots activism in line with other socialist and Marxist movements. Eco-socialism overlaps with existing protests against the socially and environmentally destructive policies of “global elite actors” such as the World Bank (Bond and Dorsey 2010). International coalitions such as Climate Justice Now! have staged protests at the U.N. climate change conventions to highlight the urgent need to “transform our inherited systems of materials, extraction, transport and distribution, energy-generation, production of goods and services, consumption, disposal and financing” (Bond 2012:5).

On the other end of the political spectrum is what I refer to as “free market innovators.” The Breakthrough Energy Coalition is a private renewable energy fund led by Bill Gates and twenty-seven other high net worth investors that was launched during the Paris Climate Conference in 2015. The coalition includes some of the most high-profile corporate philanthropists, including Salesforce CEO Marc Benioff, Sir Richard Branson, and Facebook power couple Mark Zuckerberg and Priscilla Chan. Together they hope to raise \$20 billion for basic and applied research to drive renewable energy innovation. They write, “We can’t wait for the system to change through normal channels... Current governmental funding levels for clean energy are simply insufficient

to meet the challenges before us... The private sector knows how to build companies, evaluate the potential for success, and take the risks that lead to taking innovative ideas and bringing them to the world” (Breakthrough Energy Coalition 2017). While private sector renewable energy companies are the focus of this dissertation, the Breakthrough Energy Coalition is not a commercial developer and is fundamentally motivated by the “urgency” of climate change.

All three movements share a common belief that renewable energy is a just cause, both socially and environmentally, but the tensions between them illustrate the difficult position that renewable energy industries and companies are in. While there is almost unanimous agreement that we need to increase production of renewable energy there are many political and economic barriers to development. The first is that there are political and economic barriers to development. The global politics of climate treaties and policies are very complex, and countries like the United States still face internal political battles over renewable energy. Economically, renewable energy is still generally more expensive and risky to produce and will rely on public or external financing to fill the gap.

If we can overcome these barriers, increasing production that replaces or offsets the need for fossil fuel consumption will be beneficial environmentally on a grand scale. If it can reduce a country’s reliance on oil imports and increase access to electricity in underserved areas it will be beneficial socially on a grand scale. However, scholars and even climate change activists do not know much about the behavior of renewable energy companies and industries. What lessons can we learn from them as they expand? This dissertation is a preliminary exploration.

Background and Methods

In 2013, I was contacted by a small renewable energy consulting firm based out of Washington, DC. that I refer to as Smith & Associates. Founded in 2007, Smith & Associates specializes in surveying potential sites for commercial power plant development in a small subsector of the renewable energy industry. This young company has approximately fifteen full-time employees, and has had a number of small projects in the United States. In 2012, Smith & Associates received its first international contract (referred to as “the project” or the “proposed project” to avoid confusion with this research project) in South America, and opened an office of Latin American operation. Smith & Associates was hired by a client that I refer to as “South American Energy Corp” (SAEC) to survey a potential site for a renewable (non-fossil fuel) power plant in a remote region of the South American Andes. SAEC is a large, partially state-owned utilities company that operates throughout South America, and it has recently expressed interest in developing more renewable energy.

During the initial fieldwork at the site in South America, the owner of Smith & Associates (a man I refer to as Mr. Smith), believed that there would be potential conflicts with the community living in the area of the survey site. Mr. Smith brought me on as a short-term consultant in 2013 to help him assess the social conditions at the project site with the agreement that I would also be given access to conduct this research independently. After my preliminary site visit, Mr. Smith, SAEC, and the lending agency supporting the project decided to conduct a social impact assessment (SIA) for the proposed project. I will discuss this work in more detail in Chapter Two.

After my first reconnaissance trip to the project site in South America and subsequent meetings with Mr. Smith and other Smith & Associates employees, it became clear that Mr. Smith saw himself as a pioneer within the industry, and wanted to set himself apart from his competitors by demonstrating a commitment to the “community” in the survey area. Over the course of two years, I was able to observe Mr. Smith’s attempt to brand himself and his firm as a “socially responsible” company. I will first explore his efforts to integrate CSR internally within Smith & Associates. Then, I will explore how he actively promoted his CSR activities at various industry events and in publications and communications with others in the industry.

The proposed project and the company were chosen as the subject of this research for several reasons. Renewable energy technologies (RETs) are incredibly diverse, ranging from small-scale technologies for individual use to large-scale commercial power plants. Recognizing the diversity, this project and the type of technology used for commercial power generation were chosen because I was looking for a case study that would be comparable in physical scale to large oil and gas and projects. Secondly, this project is in the very early stages of planning and Mr. Smith is still forming his CSR strategy, making it an ideal case to study the conditions under which CSR is not only enacted but also created.

Multi-sited Ethnography

Sociologists and anthropologists have a long history of multi-sited ethnography (Nadai and Maeder 2005, 2009; Marcus 2009; Rahm 2010). Multi-sited ethnography is especially suited to the studies of corporations as globalized workplaces are becoming

more decentralized. There are many ethnographic studies of corporations (see Bashkow 2010; Luring 2015), but even more specifically, there is a growing field of what Dolan, Garsten, and Rajak (2011) call “ethnographies of corporate ethicizing,” focusing largely on controversial industries. Anthropologists have developed an interest in the mining industry (Ballard and Banks 2003), and this dissertation is inspired by two important ethnographies of CSR in the mining industry. Anthropologists Welker (2014) and Rajak (2011) offer remarkable in-depth ethnographic case studies of large multinational mining corporations, detailing the work of CSR both as policies within the companies themselves and as enacted during mining projects. Welker follows the activities of Newmont Mining Corporations from its Denver headquarters to a mine in Indonesia, documenting the failures of community development programs and the internal processes of CSR decision making that work to legitimize harmful practices. Rajak, using the case of an Anglo American mine in South Africa, argues that CSR “plays a much more fundamental role in sustaining corporate capitalism. Not because it provides corporations with ethics, but because it provides them with a moral mechanism through which their authority is extended over the social order” (12). These two works incorporate many of the critiques outlined in the literature review. I have borrowed heavily from their methodological approach and analytical insights.

Corporate life is becoming increasingly complex and decentralized in a globalized workplace, but CSR is often enacted in multiple sites. I will argue that CSR is enacted in several forms: as practices on a local level, as internal policies and practices within organizations, and as industry-wide and even global frameworks and norms. Aguilera et al. (2005) make a similar argument by proposing a multi-level theoretical model of CSR.

Their model “integrates theories of micro-level organizational justice, meso-level corporate governance, and macro-level varieties of capitalisms” (1). This study takes a similar approach, focusing on three main sites: 1) The implementation of CSR at the project site in South America, 2) the implementation of CSR within Smith & Associates, and 3) industry events where CSR-related issues are discussed and CSR might emerge as an industry-wide norm.

Chapter Two focuses on the ethnography, interviews, and participant observation completed during four separate visits to the site of the proposed project in South America over the course of two years. On two of those visits, I was also collecting data to complete a social impact assessment (SIA) for the proposed project. I will discuss in the next chapter that the SIA was one component of Smith & Associates’ ongoing “stakeholder engagement” program. Rather than focus on the data gathering or findings of the SIA report, I will also describe a community engagement event held by Mr. Smith at the project site. Chapter Two also includes a supplementary review of existing ESIA reports from similar projects in this industry. These reports document both social and environmental conflicts and the use of CSR. The general conclusions that I draw from my own data collection and a review of these reports have been cross-validated by discussions with industry experts during industry events where I conducted participant observation and informal interviews.

The second part of the ethnography focuses on the internal dynamics of Smith & Associates at its two offices in South America and the United States. A total of approximately two and a half months were spent at the Latin American office where I lived and participated in the daily activities of the company. Approximately six weeks

was spent at the American headquarters near Washington, D.C. over the course of two years. During those two years I also spent time with Smith & Associates employees informally outside of the office and while attending industry events. I conducted semi-structured individual interviews with employees at both the Latin American and U.S. offices. In the early stages of the research, I conducted semi-structured and open-ended individual interviews with Smith & Associates employees in order to gather background data and to understand if any other CSR policies and practices were in place other than the ones that I observed at the project site. I took ethnographic fieldnotes as Smith & Associates employees interacted both with me, other employees, and eventually other people in the industry, focusing on CSR-related issues that arose. Because this is a preliminary study, I took a more inductive and iterative approach (see Emerson et al. 2011) as themes emerged in the data rather than relying on preconceived frameworks for understanding their behavior and motivations.

Finally, I conducted ethnography and participant observation at five industry events I attended from 2013-2015. The main industry trade association in the U.S. holds several small conferences a year and a larger annual convention. Mr. Smith is very active within the trade association and tries to attend as many of these events as he can. He allowed me to attend some of these as a representative of Smith & Associates, with an understanding that I would be allowed ample time to conduct my research independently. I will discuss the methods I used in greater detail in Chapter Four.

Methodological Challenges

From the outset, I faced some methodological challenges that are common for most ethnographers, but ethnographers who are embedded in the corporations that they

study must be especially careful to manage the boundary between insider and outsider. Fayard and Maanen (2015) distinguish between an “emic” and “etic” perspectives in corporate ethnographies, and managing the boundary between the two is a central difficulty for the researcher. Etic refers to the perspective of the outsider or the observer that might be imposed on the subject while emic refers to the perspective of the subject. I argue that CSR research relies heavily on the etic perspective of the critical social scientist. Ethnographers including myself have used employment to gain an insider’s perspective. Coumans (2011) and Strathern and Stewart (2001) point to the important work of academically engaged anthropologists and ethnographers who gain access through consultancy work and compares them to embedded journalists. Like Coumans, my work involves a “fuzzier” form of embeddedness because I maintained roles as both a short-term contractor and independent researcher. However; like the “embedded anthropologist” (Lattas and Morris 2010), my unique vantage point provided important opportunities for “thick description” (Geertz 1994) and deep contextual analysis that is often missing from the CSR literature.

Given the polarizing nature of the literature, an ethnographer must walk a fine line between humanizing CSR managers and practitioners and sympathizing with them. My aim is not to sympathize with or even villainize the subjects of my research. Sociologists including Smith (2005) and DeVault (2006) acknowledge the role of standpoint theory and lived experience in institutional ethnography as valid epistemological approaches. I have tried to provide a more complete picture of the social context in which CSR is enacted while still maintaining the self-reflexivity required by the social sciences (see

Alvesson, Hardy, and Harley 2008). I argue that this approach is vital to moving the literature forward in a productive way.

The Extended Case Study and Global Ethnography

I have described my case study, but more specifically, this dissertation uses the extended case study method outlined by Burawoy (1998), which he developed during his experience as a personnel consultant in the Zambian copper industry. Burawoy writes that the extended case method “deploys participant observation to locate every day life in its extralocal and historical context” (4) and that it “applies reflexive science to ethnography in order to extract the general from the unique, to move from the ‘micro’ to the ‘macro’”(5). This is a useful approach for attempting to connect the micro and macro and to place phenomena in historical context, but equally important is Burawoy’s call for a more reflexive social science. Rather than viewing the researcher as a “nonintervening observer” (10), Burawoy contends that “where positive science proposes to insulate subject from object, reflexive science elevates *dialogue* as its defining principle and *intersubjectivity* between participant and observer as its premise” (14). In *Ethnography Unbound* (1991), Burawoy and Furgeson emphasize that a dialogue between the researcher and researched deepens and enriches the social sciences. The title of this dissertation is a nod to this approach, while also pointing out that renewable energy industries have the potential to provide a different model of CSR that has not been explored by the literature.

Building on the extended case study method, Burawoy et al. (2000) argue for a new type of “global ethnography.” Gille and Riain (2002) write that “ethnographic sites

are globalized by means of various external connections across multiple spatial scales and porous and contested boundaries... by locating themselves firmly within the time and space of social actors 'living the global,' ethnographers can reveal how global processes are collectively and politically constructed, demonstrating the variety of ways in which globalization is grounded in the local" (271). Again, this approach allows me to think about the interconnected processes that connect my three sites, but it is particularly useful for the study of CSR. CSR is typically envisioned as a top-down process that originates from global anti-corporate activism and is then transmitted through the spread of global CSR frameworks and institutions (Lim 2012). CSR is also often portrayed as an inevitable consequence of the global capitalist system (Sklair and Miller 2010; Shamir 2011). Burawoy counters by pointing to what he calls the "transnational social," or the "transnational public spheres that emerge in the spaces between institutionalized power structures" (139). In these spaces, social relations may be shaped by economic ties, but they are not reducible to them. Scholars rarely envision CSR as a process that is fundamentally shaped by social, in addition to economic, forces, nor do they think about the literal spaces where CSR might emerge or even be contested.

Chapter Two: What is Controversial About Renewable Energy?

“Some things are almost impossible to oppose: Mom, apple pie and renewable energy.”
Stickler (2013)

Using the logic of the business case theory, I locate the origins of CSR in controversial industries in the social and environmental harm caused by their individual projects. When such conflicts attract public attention, they create a reputational threat to the companies involved. These conflicts can escalate to the point of lawsuits, economic sanctions, and costly regulation, and in effect, force companies to respond to allegations of harmful practices through the use of CSR. Extractive industries have created standardized CSR practices that I refer to as the “community relations” model. This model is replicated by almost every leading company. In extractive industries, there appears to be a clear connection between environmental and social conflicts, reputational threat, and CSR, and I have described these in greater detail in the literature review. Do renewable energy projects cause comparable environmental or social conflicts, and if so, do they generate enough public attention that they would pose a reputational threat to renewable energy companies?

My multi-sited ethnography begins at the site of a proposed renewable energy power plant (referred to as the “proposed project”) in South America where I conducted approximately six and a half weeks of ethnographic fieldwork. At the time, I was embedded as an independent consultant in a small renewable energy consulting firm, Smith & Associates, which had been hired by the local client, SAEC, to assist in the planning of the proposed project. This chapter is divided into two parts. First I explore social and environmental conflicts associated with renewable energy technologies, ending

with a discussion about the type of RET that is the subject of this dissertation. I use my assessment of this particular project in South America, and supplement my data with a literature review of similar projects. In this literature review, I also found cases of other companies within this industry that implement CSR initiatives. The second half of this chapter describes the CSR initiatives that Smith & Associates implemented at the project site. I was present for a stakeholder engagement program that Mr. Smith implemented which he called the “Day of the Child.” This event formed the cornerstone of Mr. Smith’s CSR campaign, although the next chapter will explore other ways in which he sought to incorporate CSR as a company-wide policy.

In this chapter I will focus on the following question: Is there the same connection between conflict, reputational threat, and the use of CSR in this industry that is found in the extractive industries? If companies implement CSR programs in the absence of reputational threat or external economic pressures, then this industry does not follow the dominant model of CSR provided by the extractive industries.

Renewable Energy Conflicts

If renewable energy is less harmful than fossil fuels on *both* a local and global scale, then theoretically there would be less of a motivation for companies to engage in CSR. This chapter focuses on tangible and local environmental and social impacts of renewable energy projects. All types infrastructure projects may involve local social and environmental conflicts that are independent of the type of technologies being used. Conflicts over displacement, loss of land and livelihood, environmental degradation, unequal distribution of resources and benefits, and human rights violations are common

not only in extractive industries, but also in industries such as agriculture, timber, and highway construction. However, little academic research exists on the local social and environmental impacts of renewable energy projects. I am distinguishing between the macro-level environmental, social, and economic benefits of renewable energy and the immediate and localized impacts (both positive and negative) of individual projects. While there are small-scale renewable power projects, this research focuses on large-scale commercial non-fossil fuel power plants that are similar in physical scope to extractive industry projects.

Devine-Wright (2014) offers one of the only comprehensive reviews of social controversies surrounding renewable energy power generation projects. He finds a number of case studies, mostly from the wind energy sector, involving controversies that are similar to those found in extractive industries. Most notably, he cites opposition from local communities that allege that they are not involved in the planning process or adequately informed about the details of projects. Similarly, Wüstenhagen et al. (2007) find evidence of local opposition towards wind energy siting that evokes the NIMBYism movement (“not in my backyard”), and Upreti (2004) finds local opposition to the development of biomass power plants in England and Wales. Upreti finds that while residents recognized the environmental benefits, they voiced concerns over the immediate negative local effects on the ecology and landscape. Milos Island in Greece has been the site of a proposed but controversial geothermal power plant, and Manoglou et al. (2004) find that local people are aware of the project but believe that it would be harmful to the local environment. While useful, these studies focus on developed regions such as the United States and Western Europe. It has only been within

the last decade that there has been an explosion of interest and investments in renewable energy in the developing world. The developing world is also the focus of most CSR studies, where conflicts and inequality between companies and local people are magnified.

I have been following two current cases of renewable energy conflicts in the developing world. The first is the case of wind energy development in Oaxaca, Mexico (Simon 2013; Hurtado Sandoval 2015; Wilson Center 2016). The Mexican government has created progressive and ambitious energy policy reforms meant to support investments in wind, solar, and geothermal. Oaxaca has seen an explosion in the development of industrial wind parks over the past twenty years, attracting dozens of foreign companies and approximately \$4 billion in investments. Oaxaca has historically had some of the highest rates of both poverty and indigenous peoples of any region in the country, making wind development a contentious social, political and economic issue between large developers and local communities. In recent years, there have been protests, blockades, community infighting, and alleged human rights abuses that have brought international attention to indigenous groups.

In 2012, Mareña Renovables, a Mexican consortium, proposed the construction the largest wind farm in Latin America with the backing of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and a host of foreign investors. While hailed as an important step towards more renewable energy development, as of this writing it has been successfully halted due to protests from local groups. Indigenous groups allege that there has been a lack of consultation and transparency, which have been hampered by Mexico's complex indigenous rights and land ownership laws, and a lack of

communication between federal and local governments. A number of international human rights organizations and NGOs have stepped in to draw attention to what they see as human rights abuses against indigenous people. The Mareña Renovables project has become emblematic of larger conflicts between private foreign investors, the state, and local communities. Both supporters and opponents recognize the need for clean energy, but the conflicts are largely social, independent of whether or not wind energy is environmentally beneficial.

Another longstanding conflict is between developers of geothermal power plants and indigenous communities in Hawaii (Edmunds 1986; Edelstein 1988; Coe 1991). Hawaii has traditionally relied on imported fossil fuels despite having obvious and plentiful geothermal resources. The Hawaiian government and Hawaiian Electric Company, Inc., a regulated public utility, have long supported the development of geothermal, resulting in the Puna Geothermal Venture, a commercial geothermal plant that has been operating for fifteen years. Efforts to expand geothermal development, however, have faced decades of opposition, mostly from native Hawaiians. Some of the concerns have been environmental following the accidental release of hydrogen sulphide gas from an experimental test geothermal plant in 1989. The plant was forced to close because of local health problems such as headaches, nausea, and stinging eyes. Other concerns have been cultural, including protests from native Hawaiians who worship Pele, the goddess of the volcano, who object to the potential spiritual impacts of geothermal development. Local native representatives allege that they have not been adequately included in the planning process and have made unsuccessful appeals through local legislative processes. Organizations such as the Puna Pono Alliance, Pele Defense Fund,

and the local Sierra Club have supported their cause and eventually lobbied for a psycho-social impact assessment of geothermal development. The study was approved in 2015 and received funding, but as of this writing faces bureaucratic hurdles before it can begin. The future of geothermal development in Hawaii continues to be hotly debated.

What these cases point to is a central paradox between the positive public perception of renewable energy as an idea, and real opposition to its implementation. Van der Horst argues that:

renewables are perhaps different to [sic] some other types of facilities as ‘green’ is seen by most people as a good thing in principle, i.e. as a moral issue. Most people would find it politically incorrect or socially unacceptable to express opinions that are the opposite of green, as it would imply that they do not care about future generations or that they are happy to contribute to pollution and environmental degradation.... (2711).

Other scholars refer to this as the “value-action gap.” Individuals may self-report pro-environmental beliefs while not engaging in pro-environmental behavior or action (Blake 1999; Barr 2004; Flynn 2009). Wüstenhagen et al. (2007) point to the “apparent contradictions between general public support for renewable energy innovation and the difficult realization of specific projects” (2683).

While I have addressed the most common social controversies, it is also possible that renewable projects can have adverse environmental impacts. A full comparison of environmental impacts relative to fossil fuels and other types of infrastructure projects cannot be offered here because of the complexity and diversity of RETs, but I will mention one significant study. Using a review of biomass, solar, wind, ocean thermal, and geothermal commercial power projects, Abbasi and Abbasi (1999) conclude that there are significant negative environmental impacts including water and air pollution,

and loss of habitat. While greenhouse gas emissions may be considerably smaller than fossil fuel power plants, they may still be significant enough to have a negative impact. Importantly, Abbasi and Abbasi also address the “clean” or benign image of renewable energy as a panacea for global climate change. They recommend that renewable energy industries be proactive in order to prevent the backlash that other industries receive. While the authors are not explicit, being “proactive” may refer to CSR activities. The existing literature says very little about the use of CSR as a proactive, rather than reactive, measure.

The South America Project

This central character in this dissertation is the CEO of Smith & Associates, Mr. Smith. I have provided some background on Smith & Associates and on this project in the previous section. Mr. Smith contacted me regarding the social problems he was encountering at the site where his team was doing preliminary surveys for a client, SAEC, in South America. He suggested the use of social impact assessment (SIA), a technique that I was familiar with. After consulting with Mr. Smith and doing initial research, I discovered that there were no legal mandates for SIA in this case, from either the client or the local government. Mr. Smith was in the process of applying for funding from a U.S. federal lending agency to extend his contract with SAEC, and he expressed hope to me that including an SIA as part of his proposal would improve his chances. It was at this point that I was hired as a short-term consultant, and it was agreed that I would also have access to the site and Smith & Associates employees to complete this research independently.

Mr. Smith did eventually secure funding from the lending agency for his work after I began this research, and I asked for more details about the contract:

We did it through a reverse trade mission where companies came to the US sponsored by the US government. I sent an employee to go to that meeting. And they were a bit reluctant. And they didn't really see an opportunity and I did. I came back and through a series of phone calls and contacts after we ended up talking to a company in South America, and coming to an agreement that we would do some work for free, gratis, to see what resources could exist and then they could make a decision as to whether or not it was worth their time and money to proceed with exploration and development.

This process seemed a bit unusual compared to the way that most large infrastructure projects are developed. I will discuss in Chapter Five that renewable energy industries differ from other industries because they often rely not only on traditional investment banks, but also on aid agencies like we see here. The fact that Mr. Smith agreed to do some of the work for free is certainly unusual, and I believe has to do both with Mr. Smith's tenacity as it does with the state of the industry. I will discuss in Chapter Five that the industry is struggling for resources, and so doing work for free may actually reflect Mr. Smith's desperation to keep his business afloat.

SIA and CSR

The use of SIA as a form of CSR is up for debate. Mr. Smith initially conveyed to me more practical reasons for conducting an SIA. He hoped that by doing so, his project would be more attractive to potential investors. However; Mr. Smith's insistence on also using the SIA to brand himself and his newly formed company as socially responsible is what initially motivated this research. After reviewing research and talking with others in the industry, I found that companies are almost universally required to conduct an environmental impact assessment (EIA). Many companies add on a social component and

produce joint ESIA (Environmental and Social Impact Assessments). Adding on a voluntary social component is in itself a form of CSR by some definitions (see Carroll 1999 for a full discussion of how to define CSR). While only one ESIA report explicitly used the term CSR, these documents also include detailed descriptions of stakeholder engagement initiatives, which closely resemble CSR programs implemented in the extractive industries.

SIA is required by many lending agencies, but it was not in this case. The reason that Mr. Smith sees himself as a pioneer and is making SIA the cornerstone of his CSR campaign is because in this industry there is very little precedent for SIA, nor are there any legal requirements to conduct it for this project. Mr. Smith believes that by conducting an SIA independently of an EIA he is demonstrating his commitment to the community by going above and beyond the industry and legal standards.

Traditionally, CSR includes charitable acts such as building schools and hospitals, but SIA is a technocratic approach that is perhaps more palatable both for developers and lending agencies. SIA has the advantage of being cost effective if it overlaps with the data gathering required for the EIA and it can be incorporated into the budget of a project. SIA and ESIA (whether mandatory or voluntary) are also used within the framework of risk mitigation. Risk mitigation is important not only during the planning process, but also for securing funding. Mr. Smith justifies the use of SIA not only as a way to differentiate himself from his competitors, but also as a way of attracting future funding for projects. Financiers and insurers may be wary of projects that are deemed risky because of the threat of social conflicts. Risk mitigation focuses on weighing the costs and benefits of a potential project. The language of the ESIA reports also reflects a

cost-benefit mentality. One states that: “The main conclusion is that the benefits that are likely to accrue in the area as a result of the [name redacted] Project tend to outweigh the negative impacts.”

Li (2011) describes the use of CSR by a mining company in Chile. Chile, like other countries in Latin America, experienced a “mining boom” in the 1980s and 90s both because of its rich natural resources and economic liberalization policies. One of the most socially and environmentally controversial projects was Barrick Gold Corporation’s Pascual-Lama gold mine. Barrick was accused of depleting water resources, destroying glaciers, and destroying agricultural production in the region. In response, they engaged in CSR initiatives that the company characterized as “environmental mitigation.” She argues that their use of CSR through the framework of risk mitigation reflects a “logic of equivalence” or “commensuration” whereby outcomes are given measurable values so they can be compared using common quantitative metrics. She writes “commensuration enables companies to balance their economic interests with their ethical responsibilities, and to restrict their social and environmental commitments to the mandates of the law while emphasizing their adherence to CSR principles” (63). In Edelstein’s (1995) account of native Hawaiian opposition to geothermal development, he describes a lack of cultural relativity in the dominant Western paradigm of impact assessment that rationalizes development and change under the cloak of objectivity and hard science.

Greenwood (2007) argues that the use of the term, “stakeholder engagement” and the process of identifying stakeholders have moral connotations, but are in fact morally neutral practices. She writes, “it is morally neutral in that it may underpin exchange relationships based entirely on rational factors and devoid of moral factors” (320). I will

discuss the differences between “hard” (technical) and “soft” (social) work. Welker also discusses this division, and the process by which the soft work of CSR is transformed into hard technical work that is more easily understood within the engineering-focused mining industry. The use of SIA is a more technocratic approach to CSR than initiatives that are presented as charitable work.⁸

In Chapter Five I will describe the participant observation that I conducted at industry events. At these events I observed conference presentations and interacted with industry members through informal conversation. One common theme that emerged was that when CSR-related issues were discussed they were most commonly discussed within a framework of risk management or impact mitigation. For example, a presenter pointed to the high cost of protests that could potentially delay or halt construction. A 2014 study titled, “Conflict Translates Environmental and Social Risk into Business Costs” (Franks et al. 2014) describes the high costs of community conflicts in mining and hydrocarbon industries. Mr. Smith cited this article in presentations on his use of SIA and also posted it to social media to demonstrate his concern for social issues. The article also refers to the term “sustainability science,” a new concept that has spawned research at some of the world’s top universities including Harvard and MIT (Komiyama and Takeuchi 2006). The quantification of sustainability may be understood as a process of rationalization whereby basic human needs are transformed into scientific concepts. Whereas earlier forms of CSR may not have been reduced to technical or rational terms, the increasing

⁸ See Pereira and Quintana (2002) for a more general discussion of a technocratic approach to environmental management. Technocratic decision-making is controlled by technical experts and scientific evidence.

use of ESIA/SIA as both CSR and risk mitigation reflects a growing trend towards quantitative data and data-driven analysis that may be found in many sectors (LaValle et al. 2011).

Social and Environmental Conflicts in This Industry

For confidentiality reasons, I can only provide general details about Smith & Associates' renewable energy project in South America. All general conclusions from this project and from the ESIA reports that I reviewed have been verified when possible by industry experts that I have been in contact with, many of whom have worked on or visited similar sites. Smith & Associates hired a separate firm to conduct the EIA, however, I included an assessment of environmental impacts that could impact community members in my SIA. The use of heavy machinery, land disturbance, and waste from construction workers, for example, may be disruptive in the short-term but may also have long-term environmental impacts such as contamination of water and soil. These would be considered social impacts if they negatively impacted health or livelihood. After a review of the project design, a review of other ESIA reports, and consultation with industry experts, I concluded that environmental impacts from construction are predictable, limited, and relatively easy to mitigate. The major differences between this type of project and extractive industries are in scope, and in the environmental impacts from maintenance and operation. This project has a relatively small footprint, and the power plant, once operational, has very few permanent negative impacts to the environment. There are documented cases where the operation of the plant can, in fact, have local environmental benefits. For example, byproducts and waste

products from development have been used by people, or have been used to benefit local plants and animals.

Socially, however, there are many sources of potential conflict that are similar to those you find in extractive industries. Construction of any infrastructure project has the possibility to create displacement and land use conflicts. Homes might be permanently displaced depending on where projects are sited, but there may be temporary and more widespread displacement from the use or construction of access roads. Big dams and mines displace millions of people worldwide (Szablowski 2002; Tilt et al. 2009). In contrast, this type of RET has a much smaller geographic footprint, which means that it typically displaces a small amount of people. Rationally, from the perspective of developers I have spoken to in this industry, displacing a small number of people is acceptable given the many other benefits of renewable energy projects. Displacement of even a few homes may cause a local dispute. In some cases, there are local regulations regarding displacement, and many agencies, including the IFC, provide their own guidelines. However, in this industry it is typically at the discretion of individual companies to compensate landowners on an as-needed basis. I have only heard of one project that necessitated displacement and resettlement on a larger scale. This project involved negotiations with an indigenous tribe, and by all accounts this appears to have been a cooperative agreement that avoided the type of public conflict over displacement that you see in the extractive industries.

As discussed earlier, problems of inclusion, participation, and transparency in the planning process are common areas of conflict in extractive industries, and a handful of cases have been reported in this industry. These conflicts are exacerbated in areas with

high concentrations of indigenous communities such as Latin America, Africa, and New Zealand. Few of these conflicts have attracted attention outside of the local area, and only in one case that I found have any companies been publicly accused of mistreatment or human rights violations. I also found one advocacy group that works with indigenous communities affected by this type of RET. This is in stark contrast to the numerous and well-publicized conflicts between mining, oil and gas companies and indigenous communities.

Smith & Associates's and SAEC's CSR Initiatives

Aside from conducting the SIA, both Smith & Associates and the local client, SAEC, participated in other types of CSR activities. During my time on-site, I paid careful attention to interactions between Smith & Associates employees and local people both during daily operations and during Mr. Smith's CSR program, which I will describe in detail. SAEC employs a team of social workers who visited the site and conducted what they characterized as "community outreach" programs for this and other projects. I spent approximately four days shadowing SAEC social workers and sat down for two interviews and one focus group. The ethnographic fieldwork of mining and oil and gas projects by Rajak (2011), Appel (2012), and Welker (2014) reveal deep inequalities in interactions between employees and community members that are emblematic of the inherent problems with the "community relations" model of CSR. At the extreme end, Appel (2012) writes of "infrastructural violence" committed by private oil companies in Equatorial Guinea, which created enclaves to physically exclude the local community. This renewable project is only a preliminary exploration of the relationship between

renewable energy developers and local people, but this could be a fruitful new area of research.

One farmhouse located in the vicinity of the project served as a residence for Smith & Associates employees during approximately six months of geological fieldwork. The field staff included four young American men, one American woman, and a rotating crew of local students and geologists. An extended family with an eight year old girl ran this farmhouse, taking care of the house, food, and horses for the workers. The workers had become quite fond of the girl and the family, although the family spoke no English and the workers spoke very little Spanish. While the relationship between the workers and the family was generally cordial, and even mutually beneficial in some respects, there were several moments of discomfort.

The house contained a small heated swimming pool that was used often by the workers. At one point they asked the young girl why she would not swim in the pool to which she responded, "I'm not allowed, it's only for the rich people." The workers recounted this story to me, which I interpreted as a small amount of self-awareness when confronted with stark inequalities and boundaries based on race, class and gender. Critics of CSR have pointed to the problematic paternalistic patron-client relationships that can develop through CSR work (Crossley 1999; Iyer 2009). This type of relationship can breed dependency and sustain structural inequalities. By local standards, this family was receiving generous wages as a result of the project, but these benefits were time-limited and unsustainable. My colleagues reported that it had also begun to generate some jealousy and resentment within the community from other families. One of the local landowners in fact advised Mr. Smith that he was paying them too much and feared that

it would upset the local economy, which depended on dairy production. If the farmers were enticed by the prospect of higher wages that they believe they could gain via employment from Smith & Associates or SAEC, it could be disastrous for local landowners. I was told by both companies that there would be few permanent jobs available, and most of them would go to skilled laborers from outside the community.

Both SAEC and Smith & Associates had conducted CSR activities that resemble the CSR activities implemented by large mining and oil and gas companies. SAEC has a well-established presence in the region both because they are a public utility and because they conduct community outreach programs. A staff of approximately twenty-five social workers oversees community relations programs across the region. SAEC allowed me access to their social workers in various capacities. On my first site visit, I shadowed two of their social workers in order to conduct a preliminary survey of the project area. During the second site visit, I was also accompanied by these same social workers while I conducted my first round of interviews and focus groups. The second and third rounds of fieldwork were conducted without a chaperone. On subsequent trips I was allowed to visit other sites to observe existing social programs and to do a group interview with five social workers.

The majority of SAEC's business comes from large-scale dams and they operate over twenty with several currently under construction. They allowed me to visit one dam that is approximately twenty years old, and that they believed was a successful example of their CSR programs which included:

- The creation of a trout farm to compensate for loss of livelihood that also served lunch for visitors touring the dam.
- The maintenance of the main road, including safety education programs.
- Contributions of supplies and sponsorship of projects at local elementary schools.

At the corporate level, SAEC appears to have a very robust CSR policy that is explicitly stated on their website. They cite stakeholder engagement, environmental conservation, and education as their priorities. SAEC social workers and managers with whom I engaged were quite proud of their efforts. Through informal conversations and the formal interviews with community members, I inquired about the reputation of SAEC, which was almost unanimously positive. SAEC was well known for activities such as decorating the city during holidays. SAEC advertisements promoting their social initiatives were ubiquitous throughout the city.

Social workers provided various services to residents and schools, and were well known and liked by the community members I spoke to. In interviews with the social workers themselves they stressed the importance of maintaining good relations with the community that would be mutually beneficial in the long-term. The implication was that SAEC might need their “cooperation” if the community might be impacted by a future project, and it would be easier if there were a personal relationship already in place. SAEC employees remained adamant almost to the point of defensiveness that they were committed to stakeholder engagement and communication with residents as the project moves forward.

When the social workers accompanied me, we would often visit schools together, and it was clear that both teachers and students were familiar with the social workers and were aware of the presence of SAEC in the area. SAEC sponsored educational programs in the area to teach the students about energy and environmental conservation. Because this particular area features a popular national park and abundant natural resources,

SAEC also co-sponsored some tourism and conservation initiatives separate from their work on this particular project.

As harmonious as the relationship appears currently, the region has a history of political instability that SAEC employees acknowledged. SAEC itself has been the target of protests for other (non-renewable) projects. Because this research is a preliminary study and the project itself is in the early stages of development, there are many possibilities as it moves forward. As I mentioned, most of the short-term and direct social and environmental impacts were predictable and could easily be managed. However, the threat of protest was very real and SAEC employees were sensitive to it. What struck me throughout my time spent with SAEC employees and community members was that most people recognized the need for renewable energy in the abstract, but that was considered separately from the concrete impacts of the project.

I have described the activities of SAEC to provide some background. For the purpose of this project, I am mainly interested in companies that exclusively produce renewable energy to differentiate them from fossil fuel and mining companies. While SAEC is investing in this renewable project, and dams are considered to be renewable by some, SAEC is not a renewable energy company. It is also unique because it is a partially state-owned entity (SOE). There is a small body of literature on SOEs and CSR (see Roper and Schoenberger-Orgard 2011), and SAEC would provide an interesting case study for further research. SAEC employees are sensitive to conflict because SAEC has been the target of political protesters who direct their protests at the government, and by extension, SOEs.

During a discussion with SAEC employees, I inquired about the possibility of providing “extra” community development programs as part of this particular project -- ones that might improve living conditions and contribute to the sustainable development of the community. Employees, especially upper level management at SAEC, explained that it was too early in the process to allocate funds for these expenses without firm justification that they were necessary. I do not interpret this as a lack of generosity or goodwill on the part of the company; rather, they explained that it was not an economic necessity in the feasibility phase, before funding or approval for the project had been secured.

Mr. Smith, however, was interested in community development programs. During my initial site visit, I observed an event that Mr. Smith called the “Day of the Child” at a local elementary school, which he said was inspired by the United Nations Universal Children’s Day. Mr. Smith had personally paid for a South American children’s book illustrator and his son to travel from the U.S. to provide an educational program for the students. In addition, he paid for a professional video crew to attend and document the event.

During that initial trip I stayed with the rest of the Smith & Associate crew in a local farmhouse, and it was a short ride by horseback to the school where the event was being held. When we arrived, we met with some high-level managers and social workers from SAEC who were attending. Some of the materials that were handed out were branded with the SAEC logo, but Mr. Smith would later tell me that their involvement in the planning and implementation of the day’s event was minimal.

There was a small group of children present at the school, but children began arriving from other elementary schools in the valley. I would learn that there were very few schools in the region and they only served students through the equivalent of sixth grade, and they were quite far apart. Students arrived in groups with their teachers on foot, and I was told that some of them had walked several hours to get there. In total there were approximately forty students from three different schools, ranging from approximately five to twelve years old. Many of the student's parents and grandparents had also traveled to attend the event.

The students were enthusiastic about interacting with the Smith & Associates field crew despite the language barrier. While some of the young engineers had seemed ambivalent about attending the event, they joined in the games, much to the delight of the children. I observed, however, that they were receiving a noticeable amount of attention from a group of teenage girls who seemed quite smitten with them. The men later admitted that the teenagers might have been opportunistic at the thought of attracting a wealthy American man and felt uncomfortable. They would later laugh that some of the girls' mothers and grandmothers were in attendance and seemed to be encouraging the girls' flirtations. The age of the young students was an obvious problem; however, one of the workers would later engage in a serious relationship with a housekeeper during his fieldwork.

The school building was comprised of two small classrooms, a kitchen, and living quarters for the teachers. The teachers worked for the public school system, and were required to rotate their assignments every couple of months. Most of the teachers chose to live at the school because the location was too remote to commute from the city. The

classrooms were relatively bare with some educational material, but no computers and no internet or cellular service. The small kitchen was clean and well equipped.

The students trickled inside where the children's book author and his son had set up a presentation. With the students and all of the other guests, the small room was filled to capacity. The author led the students through an interactive story in Spanish as he drew on a flipchart and brought out colorful masks. Some of the younger children grew antsy and wandered outside during the activity, but most of the children were excited and attentive. At the end of the activity, the author presented the school with children's books in Spanish and English.

Next the students gathered outside where SAEC had provided lunch for all of the students. I learned that the SAEC social workers often did this when they visited schools as a gesture of goodwill. Lunch was followed by musical and dance performances. Some of the students wore traditional clothing while they played instruments or performed choreographed dance routines. One of the teachers was quite musically talented, and I was told that he was well known as a music teacher. During his lively performance, the audience members cheered loudly and some began dancing. Following the performances, the children were given more free time to play in the large open field in front of the school.

I watched while Mr. Smith and SAEC employees assembled colorful backpacks for each student. The backpacks were embroidered with the Smith & Associates logo, and were filled with school materials. I looked through the materials, and it included a coloring book and crayon with the SAEC logo. The coloring book featured a superhero and an educational mission to teach the students about the need for electricity. Mr. Smith

made sure that his professional camera crew was in place as he had the students line up in a single line to receive their backpacks. Each student shook his hand and posed for a picture. Some of the very young students appeared shy in front of the camera, but most of the students enjoyed the attention. As the day wrapped up, the teachers and parents were very enthusiastic, and made sure to express their gratitude to the Smith & Associates and SAEC staff.

An uncomfortable moment occurred as we (the Smith & Associates staff, the children's book author and his son, and the film crew) were leaving the school. There was one narrow path that all of the day's attendees had used to travel to and from the school. We had travelled by horse, but as we approached the path there were some students on it who were also leaving the school. One of the young girls was traveling to nearby house, and so a Smith & Associate's crewmember recognized her and picked her up so she could ride on the horse with him. The rest of the children, however, had to step aside to let the line of horses pass. I was not the only one who felt uncomfortable. Other people in our group remarked on the moment later that evening at the house that we were staying at. They laughed, but all agreed that it was an unfortunate situation. Chambers (1983) critiques short-term consultants and aid workers as "development tourists" who are shielded from the real experience of poverty in the areas that they visit. Others, including Hancock (1989) offer a similar critique. In this case, some of the guests of this event were literal tourists who had been flown in at the expense of Mr. Smith. Later, after I had visited many homes in the area, I was struck by the poor living conditions in which most of the community lived. There were no water or sewer treatment services in the valley, and so people relied on water that was piped in from nearby streams. Their houses

were in stark contrast to the pleasant accommodations that were provided to Smith & Associates staff and guests.

Despite this moment of recognition, the general feelings about the day were very positive. Mr. Smith gathered the group to thank them and ask how they thought the day had gone. Everyone agreed that it was a great success and that it was a reflection of the currently harmonious relationship between the two companies and the community. Of course, there are obvious reasons why the rest of the staff would agree with their boss that it had been a success. I stayed overnight at the farmhouse before traveling back down the mountain to the city where I would stay before returning back to the United States. After my return I was in frequent communication as we discussed the possibilities for my employment and research. Because the Day of the Child seemed like such a significant event, I sat down for an in-depth interview to discuss it not long after Mr. Smith returned to his office in Washington, D.C. The planning for the event had occurred prior to my involvement with the company, and so I began by asking Mr. Smith about where the idea for the Day of the Child came from.

It was my idea because I saw all these kids, and I saw their parents, and I thought I could sponsor something that would help them, and at the time I wasn't even concerned about helping the client, helping the utility company. I just saw it as a way to bring them into the process and uh I suppose pay them back for the hospitality that they'd shown to us and to the field crews. So that quickly grew into the day of the child when the client realized there was great propaganda to be had from it. And uh I ended up paying for the whole thing and the client did not pay for any of it. But nonetheless they participated and that was a great thing.

Mr. Smith emphasized several times throughout our conversation that he had paid for the entire event, even though he felt that the client, SAEC, had ultimately benefited from it. This was one of the many ways in which Mr. Smith sought to distinguish himself from others through his generosity.

I asked him to elaborate on his initial interactions with the community members on the mountain that led him to implement the Day of the Child. He explained that the people were surprisingly enthusiastic about the project, and even about his presence there.

They not only were enthusiastic about the project, but they were exuberant. And they saw it as a way for new infrastructure to come to the community. For schools, roads, hospital facilities. For them to be less isolated from the local municipalities and for their kids to have a future. Jobs were important to them as well as access. It was a very different, very different atmosphere. But with that sort of evidence, I wanted to encourage, I didn't want to discourage their excitement. I wanted to encourage their education because they really didn't understand what they were enthusiastic about. They were enthusiastic. So we had the Day of the Child. We sponsored a big event to try to educate the youth on the mountain... and their families. It was a day of classroom participation. Music, dance, some sports, I actually brought in an author, two authors of children's books from the United States down to [location redacted] to participate in the event. The whole thing, the actual event lasted a whole day but there were a number of events before and after so, we were there with the community for about a week I guess.

I inquired further about the initial interactions that he and other Smith & Associates staff had with community members. He replied:

Um. It was, it was fine. They didn't really know who we were. Except for some gringos to come down and do some work and um they quickly realized we were going to hire them to do the work if they wanted to work. And many of them chose to and once they saw us as a source of revenue and that we weren't evil uh they were extremely friendly and invited us into their homes. And many of the guys maintain, in fact, I maintain many friendships with the people up there.... They were all amicable. They had no hostile relationships with anybody up there. Nor did any of us feel threatened or at risk for the entire time we've been there. I guess now it's going on almost 6 years of involvement.

One should of course be cautious of taking Mr. Smith's statement at face value. It is possible that he could be downplaying or unaware of hostility or conflict, and I cannot say what happened in the time before I arrived on-site.

Mr. Smith was very sensitive to the possibility of conflict. This project was the first international contract for Mr. Smith. He described a project in New Mexico where he and his crewmembers were attacked and shot at by local community members who also destroyed some of his equipment. He also mentioned:

I've got a friend who develops projects in Mexico, for example, and he has a whole different philosophy. He is truly evil, and he chose to not perform environmental and social impact assessments before he began to drill, and in Mexico the laws don't require that you do perform those studies beforehand, and the community shut down his entire operation. I don't think even to this day they've reopened that possibility. And it's a real shame because it's a great prospect. It's just the wrong company. The guy that I'm talking about is just a complete and utter despicable person. But nonetheless, it can happen.

In these quotations we see Mr. Smith trying to articulate his motivation for engaging in CSR, which will be the topic of the next chapter. Here it is worth noting that he chose to engage voluntarily in a CSR initiative in the absence of external pressure to do so.

Discussion and Conclusions

This dissertation is a preliminary study, and this chapter points to many potential new areas of CSR research. I began this chapter by examining the logic of the business case for CSR as it is generally applied in the extractive industries. As I discussed in the literature review, the business case model includes both external motivators and internal decision-making that lead to the implementation of CSR. In the extractive industries, the focus is typically on external economic pressures that are exerted when a company's harmful practices are exposed. CSR activities implemented during projects should, in theory, be related to cleaning up these harmful practices.

Do projects in this industry create social and environmental harm? If so, are they egregious enough to cause reputational threats to individual companies? I have attempted to answer these questions using a comparison between this renewable energy industry and extractive industries. Projects in this industry are undoubtedly less harmful environmentally compared to those in extractive industries because they generally have a smaller environmental footprint. Construction can have temporary environmental impacts, but these are relatively easy to manage. One important aspect of extractive projects is that they are designed around a finite resource. When the resource is exhausted, the project site is abandoned while leaving behind environmental hazards. By contrast, renewable energy projects are designed to be integrated into the local environment on a more long-term basis.

Because projects in this renewable industry have a smaller physical and environmental footprint, the social impacts are generally less severe than in the extractive industries. However; there are still potential social controversies that can occur independently of the type of technology that is used. I have described cases of renewable energy conflicts (wind energy in Oaxaca, Mexico and geothermal energy in Hawaii) that appear similar to social conflicts that you see in extractive industries. The major difference is that these conflicts have largely been localized. Local conflicts can still put pressure on companies to respond, but not to the same extent that you see when extractive companies gain international notoriety.

Aside from the actual harm caused by projects, reputation is at the heart of the business case model of CSR. Reputational threats are economic motivators for companies with a public image to protect to engage in CSR. This is a common assumption in the

CSR literature because of its focus on controversial industries. There is little research to suggest that companies with a generally positive reputation (or a company that is trying to build a reputation) might use CSR proactively rather than reactively. There are many important questions both for scholars and renewable energy companies. As renewable energy industries expand into developing regions, and it remains to be seen whether they will distinguish themselves from their counterparts in the extractive industries.

Chapter Three: A Peek Inside the “Black Box”

While the previous chapter focused on the implementation of CSR activities at the project level, this chapter explores the internal dynamics and culture of one specific organization, Smith & Associates. I have argued that CSR is defined by both concrete practices and policies. At the level of the firm, CSR can take many possible forms including adopting an explicitly stated company-wide CSR policy, hiring CSR practitioners, publishing sustainability reports, and becoming a member of a CSR organization. Unlike most case studies that sample from companies with well-established CSR initiatives, this case offers unique insights into a young company whose CEO is in the process of trying to create his company’s CSR strategy. Mr. Smith founded the company approximately eight years ago, but he only began to engage in CSR within the last two to three years. This was just before I became involved in the proposed project in South America, when he began planning his “Day of the Child” event. I spent a considerable amount of time with Mr. Smith and his employees. At any given time, he employs between fifteen and twenty individuals. I will focus specifically on two of his senior employees, Mr. Wilson and Mr. Rodriguez with whom I spent the most time and who had the most influence within the organization.

There is little CSR literature to draw from that focuses on the internal and interpersonal dynamics of firms. There is a small literature on organizational culture and managerial decision-making in the management literature; however, Dolan et al. 2011 write that, “despite the growing orthodoxy of corporate responsibility, and the web of standards, auditors, and certifiers that make up the burgeoning ethical industry, our knowledge of how ethics are practiced in the everyday routines of organizations and

differentially grounded in particular social and material realities remain undeveloped” (4). In essence, this chapter is about demystifying the “black box” (Howard-Grenville 2006; Perrini and Manojha 2008) of organizational culture. The connection between organizational culture and CSR is undertheorized both by management scholars and by social scientists..

I have offered some initial findings regarding the motivations of Mr. Smith in the previous chapter based on my time spent at the project site. During my initial site visit I also gathered descriptive data on individual employees and began to observe how the organization functioned. During my subsequent visits, I focused on whether or not CSR was integrated into the business beyond the activities that I had witnessed at the site. The project in South America was Mr. Smith’s first and only large international contract, and so his substantive CSR commitments thus far have been limited to implementing and advertising the activities presented in the previous chapter (conducting a social impact assessment and a community engagement program that I referred to as the “Day of the Child”). Mr. Smith believes that corporate social responsibility was a core personal value that shaped how he ran his company. This will be the focus of this chapter. Within this small company, however, I discovered that the actual work of producing the SIA, implementing the Day of the Child, and promoting CSR was not fully integrated throughout the company. Other employees saw it as Mr. Smith’s personal project, and were happy to keep it separate from the core technical aspects of running the business.

Some CSR scholars (Hemingway and Maclagan 2004; Vives 2005) define the objective “values,” including religious and ethical beliefs, which might motivate individual managers to engage in CSR. Rather than take this approach and assume that

there was a clear causal link between values and actions, I borrow from the concept of institutional logics, which is a more holistic way of understanding how individuals shape their own worldview and understand their own actions. How do employees feel about the work of CSR? Are they indifferent, or perhaps even resistant to it? Why is it marginalized within this organization rather than being integrated as a core value?

Organizational Culture, Values, and CSR

The study of large corporations leaves little room for studying individual motivations or values. In his classic study of corporate managers, Jackall (2010) describes occupational ethics as “moral rules-in-use that managers construct to guide their behavior at work, whether these are shaped directly by authority relationships or by the kinds of experiences typical in big organizations” (2). The bureaucratic nature of large corporations provides publicly agreed upon rules, hierarchy, and behavioral guidelines that cause people to “bracket the moralities that that they might hold outside the workplace or that they might adhere to privately and to follow instead the prevailing morality of their organizational milieu” (599). Rajak (2011), Welker (2014), and most ethnographers of CSR tend to use this model and assume that both managers and CSR workers in large corporations constrain an individual’s own moral frameworks in favor of the firm’s publicly agreed upon rules, hierarchy, and behavioral guidelines.

On the other end of the spectrum, the handful of studies of small to medium enterprises (SMEs) focus almost exclusively on the belief systems of individual managers. Hemmingway and Mclagan (2004) argue that by doing so they “counter a tendency to view the corporation as the agent” (33). Perrini and Minoja (2008) studied a

medium-sized family-owned Italian company and conclude, “the entrepreneur’s beliefs and value system, as well as his past experience, appear to have had a fundamental role in shaping a responsible corporate strategy...” (59). Similarly, Vives (2005) writes, “the single most consistent reasons given for engaging in CSR practices were ethics and religious values” (8).

Cultural sociologists have tried to articulate the link between values and actions and have pushed back against simplistic models like the ones used above. Swidler (1986) is among the most well known and may have applications for CSR studies. She rejects the narrow argument that culture “shapes action by supplying ultimate ends or values toward which action is directed, thus making values the central causal element of culture” (273). Cultural sociologists tend to agree that individuals rarely give consistent reasons for their behavior. People tend to “trim their philosophy loosely to fit their action commitments” (Swidler 2001: 148). Other scholars refer to the “value-action gap,” which is a disconnect between values and actions (Kollmuss and Agyeman 2002). This is relevant to CSR studies because most of the research in this area is on the weak link between environmentalism as a value and pro-environmental behavior (Kollmuss and Agyeman 2002; Barr 2006; Flynn 2009). There are applications for CSR studies if you conceptualize CSR as involving pro-social and pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors. For example, a manager might espouse pro-environmental values while engaging in environmentally unfriendly practices or policies.

Only two studies explore the internal social dynamics of implementing CSR within SMEs. Howard-Grenville et al. (2006) explore the cultures, subcultures, and other factors that influence corporate environmental practice in a high-tech manufacturing

company. Internal factors could include management style, personal attitudes, managerial incentives, and mission and value statements. Likewise, van Aaken et. al (2013) explore internal factors that influence individual managers' "pro-social" behavior such as CSR. Using Bourdieu, they highlight not only individual managers' socially shaped dispositions, but also their stock of different types of capital, and view pro-social behavior as a means that managers use to attain social and organizational power. These two studies may provide some insights, but this dissertation seeks to fill a gap in the literature by providing a more in-depth account of CSR within a small company.

Morality and Rational Choice: The Straw Men of CSR

Swidler (1986) argues that to replace values with rational interests is an equally flawed model. I argue that the CSR literature promotes this false dichotomy between rational choice and morality. García-Rodríguez et al. (2013) write that "CSR has gradually taken root in the business environment, not in the sense of a merely 'altruistic' approach to company activity but from a global perspective premised on the fact that, in the long run, strategies that engage the ever-broader range of stakeholders in decision-making... improve a company's chances of creating and maintaining competitive advantage" (372). Lantos (2002) discusses "the morality of altruistic CSR—philanthropic CSR activities that are not necessarily beneficial to the firm's financial position" (1). There is often an unspoken assumption in the literature that moral values such as altruism are incompatible with rational choice. When thinking about the behavior and motivations of individuals, the juxtaposition between morals and rational choice reflects the long-standing philosophical and psychological debates between altruism and egoism (Batson

1987; Petman 1991). Egoism in this case stands in for rational choice or other forms of self-serving motivation.

CSR research often falls under the umbrella of “business ethics” in management studies, but here management scholars tend to run into the same trap. Joyner and Payne (2002) write:

Businesses will in fact engage in ethical business practices for one of two reasons, one ethical in nature and one more machiavellian. The ethical motivation guiding business is related to a desire to do the right thing, without external pressure or governmental constraint... The more machiavellian approach that businesses espouse in their use of ethics has its roots in a desire to convince the stakeholder that the firm is doing the right thing. The firm’s end here is either to avoid legal consequences of its actions or to convince the stakeholders that the firm does have their best interests at heart and seeks to serve their interests rather than their own (298).

“Ethics” are also used by critics of CSR to point to the “ethical failures” of large corporations (Sims 2003; Kemper and Martin 2010). This dissertation does not directly explore whether or not the behavior of my subjects is altruistic or egoistic, or even ethical. Rather, I am simply highlighting the false dichotomy between morality and rational choice that has plagued the literature. This chapter does not focus on the questions of whether or not CSR is a moral or rational choice, although Mr. Smith presents an interesting case study. I do try to delve deeper into his motivations, but I also focus on the organizational culture within Smith & Associates.

Institutional Logics and Normative Frameworks

Rather than focus on rational choice or morality, the concept of institutional logics may have some uses for thinking about why individuals do or do not choose to engage in CSR. Thornton and Ocasio define institutional logics as "the socially

constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality" (1999: 804). This idea is similar to Swidler's concept of "strategies for action," or even more specifically, her use of the term "ideology" to refer to "a highly articulated, self-conscious belief and ritual system, aspiring to offer a unified answer to problems of social action" (1986: 279). I use the term, "normative framework" to capture the idea that individuals do create worldviews, or frameworks, that guide their actions in a way that makes sense to them, regardless of whether or not they are rooted in ideas of morality or ethics, or even rational choice.

There are several possibilities that could be relevant to this study and to CSR studies more generally. CSR might itself be an institutional logic, if an individual uses social responsibility as a guiding principle. Firms that have well-defined corporate CSR policies that are integrated into their business practices could be an example of an institutional logic. On a larger scale, there are explicitly defined CSR frameworks, or "normative institutions" (Brammer et al. 2012) that may be industry-wide, provided by development agencies such as the IFC, or even provided by global CSR organizations (Lim 2012). It is also possible that there could be competing institutional logics within one organization. Jackall (1988) argues that large corporations have a dominant institutional logic that individuals must conform to, but this may not always be the case. In a smaller organization, the small size might promote social cohesion and consensus or it might provide individuals with more freedom to create their own institutional logics.

I also began this dissertation by defining the social movement (or set of social movements) called “climate justice.” Besio and Pronzini (2014) write:

The public debate on climate change is filled with moral claims. However, scientific knowledge about the role that morality, ethics, and values play in this issue is still scarce. Starting from this research gap, we focus on corporations as central decision makers in modern society and analyze how they respond to societal demands to take responsibility for climate change. While relevant literature on business ethics and climate change either places a high premium on morality or presents a strong skeptical bias, our sociological model depicts morality as an indeterminate force: it can lead to both workable solutions or merely reinforce the status quo, depending on what different corporations make of it (287).

This dissertation, and this chapter specifically, is motivated by this research gap. Like Besio and Pronzini, I bracket morality as an indeterminate force. The justice-oriented framework of climate justice implies that renewable energy companies take responsibility for a host of both social and environmental problems related to climate change. In other words, CSR may fit within a justice-oriented framework, but we should not assume this to be the case.

Background

A key contribution of both Welker (2014) and Rajak (2011) is their time spent with mining company employees. I was afforded more access than they had to employees and to opportunities to observe the day-to-day workings of the business. Smith & Associates also differs in other important ways from the two large mining companies they studied not only because of its small size, but because Mr. Smith is still in the process of trying to define his brand and his CSR strategy. Smith & Associates’s staff fluctuates frequently, but has a total of about fifteen to twenty full-time employees spread out between the main office in Washington D.C., the South American office, and other

locations. Some of the employees work independently from places as far flung as Montana and St. Petersburg, Russia. I have never met some of these employees, except for the rare occasions when I attended staff meetings where we conference-called with employees in other locations.

Over the course of two years, I spent approximately two and a half months at the office in South America and four months at the Washington D.C. office conducting participant observation and interviews, not including the five conventions I attended with Smith & Associates staff. At the South American headquarters, Smith & Associates rents an office building that also doubled as temporary housing for me and other American employees who rotated through the office. During my four field visits I was allowed to stay at the office and was given a temporary workspace. I was also given workspace at the headquarters in D.C. when I visited. In between trips to these two offices, I was in constant contact via phone and email with Smith & Associates staff. I conducted multiple semi-structured interviews with Mr. Smith and senior staff, and also used informal conversations as a way to follow up about recurring themes.

Mr. Smith, Mr. Wilson and Mr. Rodriguez

I will provide in-depth biographies of Mr. Smith and two other individuals I got to know well and who play a central role in the company. Mr. Smith received a Ph.D. in geophysics from a top engineering school in 1987. He has had an unusual career path ranging from a high-ranking government job in the U.S. to founding a successful telecommunications company in post-Soviet Russia to investing in a costume jewelry distribution company. One thing that has remained constant, according to him and his

staff, is his entrepreneurial drive. While not all of his businesses were successful, I came to realize that he genuinely enjoys the thrill and the risk of starting his own ventures. He would often remark on the benefits of working for himself and for a small company. He set his own hours, was able to travel quite a bit for both work and pleasure and also gave his employees flexibility to work convenient hours and take time off. He remarked to me several times “if you’re not having fun, it’s not worth doing.” In an interview with me he said of his current job, “It’s great. I don’t think of it as a job. I retired three times now so you know, it’s not a job, it’s a vocation. An avid vocation.”

Mr. Smith had worked for about twenty years in various businesses, some of which were related to energy. I sat down for an interview with Mr. Smith to learn more about his background. He began by explaining:

I spent a lot of time doing environmental research and development. Mostly for the government. And a lot of time in Russia and in other parts of the world. Not just in the United States. One thing that I chose not to do however is work for oil and gas companies, hydrocarbon industries. I never was into coal mining, was never into oil or gas. I spent a brief time when I was in college working for an exploration company that concentrated in hydrocarbons, and I chose not to do that., I could’ve. Easily. I could have made a lot more money in hydrocarbons if I had chosen to go that route. I chose instead to concentrate my efforts and my talents in renewable energy.

Later I asked him what led to him founding Smith & Associates. He responded:

Smith & Associates? Well that’s interesting. I’d retired several times. I was still fairly young. I was fairly bored. I was tired of watching Jerry Springer on TV at noon and, uh, a colleague of mine from school actually contacted me and asked if I would like to create a proposal for some work in Utah and I chose to do that. And I ended up getting the job, and it was a huge job. Uh for a large, the largest energy and water concern in the Western States. And I had a good time. It was a lot of fun. So I not only enjoyed it, I made a little bit of money. And I decided that this could be something that I could do longer term. Smith & Associates was born... Well it was not a company. I was basically a consultant for a while. And

for a short period of time and then I realized I needed some structure in order to do what I really intended and that was to build this into something that was real. And I formed an LLC and had that structure in place. I had created, sold, divested myself probably for 7 different companies before I came up with Smith & Associates. So how to form companies and how to do that, I already knew how to do all that. So how to form Smith & Associates was not particularly hard. One of the things that I had absolutely learned over the course of time was that I do not play well with others. So the Smith & Associates was solely owned by me. So I had no partners, no one else that I needed to depend upon except for myself. So success or failure is entirely my doing.

Mr. Smith had chosen to name his company using his own last name. While he explained to me that this was simply because of a lack of creativity, it became clear to me early on that his identity was closely tied to his work and the way that he ran his businesses over the span of his career. He did not use the term, but I believe that he saw this company as his legacy as he neared retirement age.

Before establishing the South American office in 2013, Mr. Smith had pieced together a scientific team of geologists and engineers from the U.S., Russia, and New Zealand. When the project started, he had a field crew of five young men, four Americans and one from New Zealand. His field crew now travels back and forth from the U.S. as needed. One fieldworker, a civil engineer, I will refer to as Mr. Wilson. A single man in his early thirties, Mr. Wilson has worked for Mr. Smith since the company was founded, doing everything from geological fieldwork to writing reports to new business development. Because this is a small company, employees fill multiple roles. He is very close with Mr. Smith, and often spends holidays with him and his family. Mr. Wilson and I spent a considerable amount of time together, both in D.C. and South America.

In the summer of 2014, Mr. Smith hired a Director of Latin American Operations, whom I refer to as Mr. Rodriguez. He had been working for a competing firm. Mr.

Rodriguez grew up in Los Angeles, but his parents emigrated from South America (from the same country in which the Smith & Associates project is located). He is a structural engineer by trade and had worked in the oil and gas industry before deciding to transition into this industry. Because he is bilingual and has roots in the country, Mr. Smith hired him to head the office in South America and oversee the local workers. The local team included two full-time employees and anywhere from four to eight student employees from a nearby university, in addition to an office manager and housekeeper who cooked and cleaned. Mr. Rodriguez also started an educational podcast to promote the company's brand. I had met him several times at conferences before he started working for Smith & Associates, and spent a month and a half working with him during my trips to South America. He was very enthusiastic and energetic and very open about his political and moral opinions, making him an interesting subject for this research. Surprisingly, Mr. Rodriguez had spent time as a Hollywood actor to put himself through college, and he did not lack for charm or confidence. I think both Mr. Smith and Mr. Rodriguez admired each other for being hard-working, self-made men. Mr. Smith explained that he hoped Mr. Rodriguez would be a valuable asset as he tried to expand his business in the region.

I sat down for semi-structured interviews with each of these three men multiple times, and spent a considerable amount of informal time with them over the course of two years. At the site, we were working and living in close quarters, allowing ample time for observations and reflection. I began by exploring their motives for working in this industry. Mr. Smith has had connections in this industry for almost thirty years beginning in graduate school, but Mr. Wilson and Mr. Rodriguez had chosen to join the industry relatively recently. Both had degrees in engineering that could easily be transferable to

other industries. Mr. Rodriguez had, in fact, come from oil and gas, as I mentioned. In talking with Smith & Associates employees and individuals at industry events, they often acknowledged that they could apply their same skill sets in other more lucrative industries. Mr. Smith and others sometimes viewed their jobs as a labor of love, so to speak. Several times, he said with exasperation, “I must really love what I do.” He commented that “there are other companies that do oil and gas... but it’s not the same, you know, reward. You don't make as much money doing this.” He maintained adamantly that this particular industry is superior to fossil fuels, hydroelectricity, and mining both environmentally and socially. I will discuss in Chapter Five that he and many others in the industry do believe in the “cause” of promoting this type of renewable energy over fossil fuels.

Mr. Smith’s CSR Frameworks

Mr. Smith created a concept he called the “EEC formula,” short for exploration, education, and community. On brochures and signs that he used at conventions he wrote: “E+E+C= Development.” He promoted this concept through articles in trade publications, mostly highlighting his commitment to “the community.” Exploration referred to the technical services he offered, which were the core of the company’s revenue. The educational component referred to the fact that he had hired a number of local South American geologists and many student interns from the local university. He held a number of “knowledge transfer” sessions at the university, lecturing on technical topics. The community portion referred to his use of SIA and community development as

abstract concepts documented by pictures and videos taken during the SIA and the Day of the Child.

I sat down several times with Mr. Smith to talk not only about his EEC philosophy, but also about how his approach to CSR evolved. He explained to me that:

When I first started, I really didn't give it [CSR] a whole lot of thought. But then the first few experiences we had in the United States were so adversarial, and so awful that if anything, it would have made me more resistant to being socially and environmentally conscious. And then it changed, everything changed once we got to South America. So there has been an evolution, that's no question.

In the previous chapter, Mr. Smith described his initial impressions when he met the residents on the mountain, and felt compelled to help them. He described wanting to “pay them back for their hospitality.” It is interesting that here he says that he might be resistant to being socially and environmentally conscious after facing hostility from local people. I believe that he might see a difference in engaging with protesters out of necessity versus engaging with people out of generosity. The reality is of course that most cases of CSR in extractive industries arise out of necessity after companies face hostility from local communities.

Yeah, it's basically an initiative to encourage developers to follow a path, which includes a community involvement, social issues as well as technology. Most developers of power plants, oil and gas or whatever are more into just trying to think of it as technical problem rather than a social problem. So we've got a plan to incorporate social issues, environmental issues as well as exploration... EEC is the only way to build a power plant in a place like South America. Or even Africa. They've had huge problems, for Kenya for instance. When the whole community is making unreasonable demands and the companies are using hardball tactics to suppress the people. It never works. It's a whole different approach... Rather than considering it an adverse relationship, it brings the community into the project and makes it much more participatory.

This statement certainly sounds as if Mr. Smith is trying to articulate a new institutional logic. I asked if he could replicate the EEC model for other projects.

Absolutely, so we've got a contract now with the country to forge a policy to evaluate and approve projects and to evaluate applications by developers, and I would say that 90 percent of the work is going to be environmental and social and not only will it go to the local state, but it will go to other places in the country where [this renewable energy resource] exists... We can go to Africa and do the same sort of thing. I've got a colleague working in Kenya, working on similar policies for the local government-controlled power company.

I was curious to know if he had modeled his EEC idea after CSR programs in other industries. I asked him if he was familiar with CSR programs in mining or oil and gas, and if he thought that what he was doing was novel.

Mining's been peppered with a lot of failure and disasters. Oil and gas similarly. I'm familiar with a few of these things. What we've tried to do is avoid some of the pitfalls that mining in particular has encountered. I think if anything we've tried to divorce ourselves from those things that they've tried and failed at. And that's the beauty of having, of not having shareholders and not having partners. I can basically engage in whatever I feel is right.⁹

Throughout my time at Smith & Associates, I introduced Mr. Smith to many other CSR frameworks, either borrowed from extractive industries or from global CSR initiatives. At the time that I joined Smith & Associates, I had an individual membership in a development organization based out of Washington, DC. This organization caters mostly to non-profits, NGOs, and humanitarian organizations, but has topical working groups that cover topics related to renewable energy development. Companies can

⁹ He emphasized here and in previous interviews that he does not have shareholders because he prefers to work alone. Studying CSR in this context is a dramatic departure from the CSR literature, which in the management world is still closely tied to stakeholder theory. Some scholars would in fact argue that there is no CSR without stakeholders. This is a worthy debate, but I have aimed for this to be an exploratory study that expands the conversation about CSR to include a broader range of activities. Whether or not one calls it CSR, Mr. Smith offers a valuable and unique case study, and I have provided a richer description than what is presented in other studies of SMEs.

become institutional members, and there is only one other energy company that has done so. Mr. Smith was very enthusiastic about Smith & Associates signing up for membership and has been a member for the past two years. While I have been active in this organization in my role as an independent researcher, it is a relatively minor commitment on the part of the company. He keeps up with their newsletter, but has attended only two events. I overheard one of the student employees ask him what he thought set Smith & Associates apart from his competitors and he replied “well first of all, we’re the only member of [development organization] so that’s certainly a discriminator.” He advertises his membership in brochures and conversations with potential clients.

I had compiled a list of international CSR organizations while writing this dissertation, including the UN Global Compact and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development. Mr. Smith knew that Smith & Associates did not have the resources to join these, but he was very enthusiastic about finding CSR-related organizations that he could join. There are no CSR organizations or frameworks that I know of that are specific to renewable energy, but there are many in the mining industry, and some specific to the “extractive” industries. I sent Mr. Smith information about the International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association (IPIECA), and he asked if I could look into membership even though we did not technically meet the requirements for membership. While conducting research for the SIA, I referenced a number of international CSR frameworks commonly used for infrastructure projects. The most widely cited are the IFC Environmental and Social Performance Standards. Mr. Smith felt that citing these would lend him some legitimacy both from potential lenders

and clients. In short, Mr. Smith was attempting to build an institutional logic while borrowing from other existing frameworks where possible.

Moral Boundary Making and Normative Frameworks

Despite the “EEC” framework mentioned above, it became clear to me as I began this work that the other employees of Smith & Associates did not share Mr. Smith’s enthusiasm. Mr. Smith made it mandatory for the available crewmembers to attend the Day of the Child, but beyond that their involvement in any CSR-related work was minimal. When I was brought on to the team as a short-term consultant, and the employees learned about my background as a social scientist, I believe it signaled to the employees that someone else would be handling any work related to social issues or community outreach. I did not encourage or discourage this notion. Mr. Smith has a PhD, but most of his employees hold Bachelor’s degrees. They may have respected me for having an advanced degree (and would occasionally ask for my advice about applying to graduate school), but my work seemed very mysterious to them and I was happy to keep it this way.

Only on rare occasions would they inquire about my work. During a conversation, Mr. Wilson inquired about why I thought that sociology was useful to this work. I gave an example by mentioning that I was interested in gender inequality in the community and discussed some of my observations. As I began to describe academic research on gender inequality that I thought might be relevant to the project, I noticed that he and another employee were both staring at me with quizzical and amused expressions. When I asked, they explained that they were not making light of it, but that it never would have

occurred to them. In an interview with Mr. Smith, I asked him if he thought that all of his employees were on board with his EEC philosophy and his community outreach work.

It's my company. I don't need anyone's approval. I think once we got into it, they did. But, for instance, Mr. Wilson was fairly, oh resistant. I don't think he saw any particular advantage to it. I think he just went along with it until... Well I think even to this day I don't think he's fully on board with any kind of social engagement program. Doing these kind of projects. I think he sees it as a necessary evil. Umm, some of the others see it in kind of, the same light as I do. I think the locals see it much like I do.

I then asked about Mr. Rodriguez.

Mr. Rodriguez? Um he's totally on board with it. Yeah. But he comes from a different perspective too. Being a dual citizen, but I think he sees it from, and he comes from a pretty poor background and he's kind of worked his way through. And now he's an engineer and he's really been a success. But he sees the social aspects as being critical just as I do. I'm sure of that. Whereas Mr. Wilson just sees it as something that needs to happen. But not necessarily of key importance.

CSR scholars have written about the organizational consequences of this division of labor. Welker (2014) interviewed an operations executive at Newmont's Denver headquarters who preferred to keep a distance between hard (engineering) and soft (social) issues. She writes, "CSR's ideal role, from his perspective, would be that of forming a protective bubble around the technological sphere of mining so that engineering crews could get on with their work without being distracted by social issues" (216). In Li's (2011) study of a gold mine in Chile, she writes that the company's cost-benefit approach to CSR using quantitative measures is "an attempt to separate the 'technical' work of engineers from 'social' and 'ecological' considerations" (64). The boundary between hard and soft, long recognized by sociologists (see Gieryn 1983), is an important theme that I will return to in the next chapter. All three men cited not only the boundary between hard and soft science, but also the boundary between academics and practitioners as reasons for keeping our work separate. Mr. Wilson was not overtly

dismissive of my work, but I think he found it amusing.

The hard and soft boundary is an overarching theme, but other boundaries emerged throughout the study that had the effect of marginalizing the work of CSR within the organization. Politics were a common topic of conversation among employees, with Mr. Smith and Mr. Rodriguez being very outspoken about their political views during both work-related and personal conversations. Mr. Smith took pride in his relatively progressive social views. I think hiring a sociologist, and a female of color no less, and conducting the SIA were political statements that he used to distinguish himself from his peers. He would sometimes refer to himself as a pioneer in the industry for promoting social issues. When politics did come up, however, he described himself as a libertarian who had voted for George W. Bush. I asked him to elaborate.

Politics? Well I guess I would be a fiscal conservative and a social liberal. You know I believe that healthcare is a right I think that everyone should be entitled within the country. I think the government needs to provide that. At no cost. I think education is important and should be provided to every citizen at no cost to its citizenry. So I'm pretty liberal. I spent a lot of time in Russia, in the Soviet Union so I'm not that influenced by politics so much as I saw the benefit of that and I also saw that the harm that it could do too. I spent a lot of time working in Norway um some time in Iceland. Places where universal healthcare really does work to some advantage um I don't understand why we don't have it in this country. It's just ludicrous, to be honest with you.

Mr. Smith's views on healthcare and education may differ from most "fiscal conservatives," but Mr. Rodriguez was much more open about his conservative views on both social and economic issues. It became a running joke around the office not to engage with him. Mr. Rodriguez and I knew that we disagreed on most political issues and we acknowledged it frequently. In private conversations, we would debate about topics from immigration to Marxism, but we had a good working relationship and I did not take

offense. Welker and others have observed this same political divide. Welker (2014) writes that environmental department managers in Newmont were referred to as “hippies” and “treehuggers,” and CSR practitioners were seen as having alternative “and politically progressive ideas, identities, and lifestyles” (42). In Morris’s (2010) history of Newmont, he remarks on the “leftist orientation of the CSR fraternity” (327).

Apart from discussions specifically about Smith & Associates’s CSR work, social issues did come up fairly often. One morning on the way to a conference in D.C., Mr. Smith asked me about the possibility of creating a crowd-funded charity to donate money to the local primary schools. I asked him what purpose it would serve him and he replied, “to stay ahead of the competition,” with a laugh. He seemed self-reflexive that this was not what I was expecting. He continued, almost as if to provoke me, “can you imagine? [Name of competing company] comes in and we already have our name in all the schools. The peasant farmers would have to be loyal to us.” I was often surprised at how candid he was, but was unsure if comments like these were meant to be provocative or genuine. Because he had asked about creating a charity, and had inquired on several occasions about finding funding for community development programs, I mentioned that mining companies would sometimes partner with NGOs or non-profits to demonstrate their commitment to social and environmental issues (while leaving out my own opinion that such partnerships could be highly problematic). He responded, “non-profits are the enemy because often their goal is to shut down projects entirely.”

I would occasionally find news stories from the industry or related industries on social issues and email them to him, asking for his thoughts. Sometimes he would respond with something along the lines of, “this confirms that social issues are important

and the industry should take notice,” and would even post to the company’s Facebook page. We had talked about conflicts with indigenous people and there were a few cases from within the industry, even within South America, that he was aware of. He agreed that these conflicts could be very costly to developers, but expressed in an email conversation with me that indigenous rights groups were known to spread propaganda. There was a fine line between bringing attention to an area of social conflict, and inviting protest and opposition that would be a threat to the entire industry.

Another Smith & Associates employee had sent me an article about indigenous conflicts with a proposed project, so I did some research because it seemed like an unusual case. I discovered that the local government had commissioned a \$300,000 study to assess the social and cultural impact of the project. The study was being conducted by an environmental psychologist from an American university. I searched for him online and contacted him to ask if he could provide more details about the study, and also found a book he had written about the psychological harm caused by environmental destruction. I sent this information to Mr. Smith, unsure of how he would react. He was interested in the case and encouraged me to keep looking for information. He also ordered a copy of the book for me to read, but after reading a synopsis he warned me that “he sounds like an angry liberal.”

Mr. Rodriguez had the most professional experience in this industry out of the people who I interacted with. While other people in the company saw my work as mysterious and did not engage with me, I actively sought his opinions and feedback I had compiled the list of possible negative environmental and social impacts and mitigation strategies from other ESIA reports and asked for a meeting to discuss these with him.

When I brought up lack of employment as a common area of conflict (and one that I thought was an issue at our site) he replied:

Do you know what it's like to work with a 30 year old man with a 5th grade education? You get what you pay for. At what point do you sacrifice the quality of the project for the superficial appearance of social appeasement? They're taking away the job from someone else who is totally deserving. I've seen it happen. There's a reason these people don't live in the big city and it requires these projects to make big cities. It's a shitty thing to say but it's the reality of the situation.

I recall many similar conversations with Mr. Rodriguez where he drew a firm line between idealism and realism. He referred to me often as an idealist, an accusation that I was careful not to respond to and that I did not interpret as mean-spirited. Many of my recommendations for working with the local people and contributing to the community were dismissed as idealistic. Mr. Smith, Mr. Rodriguez and Mr. Wilson also valued self-reliance, entrepreneurship, and free-market capitalism, and so they questioned at times whether it was their responsibility to help the community instead of forcing them to adapt to the situation. They were also wary of community members taking advantage of any benefits that might be offered to them.

It was an inside joke among employees that Mr. Rodriguez loved to mock non-profits. He explained that he knew people who had started non-profits who he thought were incredibly naïve or maybe even lazy. He mocked the idea that non-profits were the “answer” to every problem and that they seemed to be popping up everywhere. In a meeting with me, he stated, “privatized companies work because they're efficient. It's a cash game.” While this single statement may be reducible to a rational choice mentality, I see it as part of a larger matrix of overlapping ideological boundaries that form a coherent normative framework.

Another issue that is often overlooked by the literature is that CSR is comprised of both environmental and social responsibility and the two are not always correlated. By conducting an independent social impact assessment separate from an environmental impact assessment, Mr. Smith believes that he is a pioneer for emphasizing and even elevating social responsibility. Ironically, he is allowing his employees to bracket social concerns, thus reinforcing the idea that they are not equipped to handle them. This reflects Welker's assertion that having separate CSR staff allows engineers to conduct their business without being distracted by social issues.

Progressive versus Free Market Environmentalism

One still has to reconcile the fact that championing renewable energy is a seemingly progressive cause that is most often associated with the Democratic party. The unapologetically conservative political views of Mr. Smith, Mr. Rodriguez, and others in the industry whom I spoke with, seem paradoxical at first glance. Scholars, however, have made a distinction between "liberal environmentalism" and "free market environmentalism." Anderson and Leal (1991) introduced the term free market environmentalism (FME) that at the time was seen as a radical, fringe idea. While liberal environmentalists remained wedded to the use of government regulation and policy, Anderson and Leal advocated for the use of the free market and deregulation in line with the more familiar ideology of neoliberalism or even libertarianism. Since 1991, their theory has gained as much traction as it has criticism. Neoliberal think tanks have funded research on FME and proponents have helped to shape a wide range of environmental policies (Beder 2001).

I will focus on the larger importance of free market environmentalism in Chapter Five. This political boundary is enacted on both a micro and macro-level scale. While Mr. Smith engaged in and even promoted CSR at this project site, he drew the line at more progressive forms of activism. Both he and Mr. Rodriguez espoused a commitment to neoliberal principles that are not simply reducible to rational choice or pure self-interest. The result is that CSR is marginalized on both practical and ideological grounds.

Altruism Revisited

I also observed that Mr. Smith believes that the way that he treats his employees is a form of social responsibility and he believes it is integral to the way he runs his business. I have already described his close relationship with Mr. Wilson. Mr. Wilson lived in Mr. Smith's house for almost six months before eventually moving into an apartment with another Smith & Associates employee. Mr. Smith had even hosted Mr. Wilson's parents, who were visiting from New Zealand. This sense of intimacy extended to most of his employees. When describing the work environment of his South American office he said: "I think it's great. I try to treat everyone like a family and I feed them breakfast and lunch and we have meetings. It's based out of a large house, as you know. So you people can stay there. It's kind of a hostel. I think it's a good work environment."

He later reiterated:

I think I'm pretty generous how I treat them. I mean I feed them. Sometimes I house them. You don't see very many complaining about their income. I give them holidays and presents. I sent [Smith & Associates employee] and his wife to a very expensive resort in Cancun for a week because he was doing such a great job. So I think rewarding the employees is important. Bringing them into the decision-making is something I like to do too. I provide healthcare to all my employees. I provide social assistance when they need it. And that even extends to their family members at times. So if a family member, well, I can give you an

example, one of the grandmothers. She just had quadruple bypass surgery. I picked up the tab for the hospital stay. Out of my own pocket. To help with, uh, that process. They couldn't make ends meet and the woman needed the operation so I helped them out. So within my own company I go I think I go the distance. I try to make, whatever we make serve, not just me but serve the employees. That's not a free exercise. That costs me real money. So within the company I try to use the assets that I have at my disposal to help everyone.

Before he found the location for the current office, he and his employees rented out a local hostel and Mr. Smith became quite friendly with the female staff. Over time, I would see that women often found him quite charming. The women, and indeed all of the local South Americans, appreciated his efforts to speak Spanish and communicate with them. Mr. Smith took a particular interest in one of the cooks, whom I will call Manuela. After the Smith & Associates employees left the hostel, the hostel closed. Mr. Smith eventually hired Manuela to cook and clean at the new office, and I had many interactions with her during my trips. From my perspective as an American, it was a rather strange arrangement for a professional office. The office had four bedrooms, a full kitchen, and laundry facilities. The bedrooms were used by the rotating cast of American employees, including myself. Manuela would come mostly every day to cook breakfast and lunch for all of the employees, would take care of the laundry, and clean. Mr. Smith rented a separate apartment during his visits, and Manuela would personally cook and clean for him as well. She took great pride in her cooking, for which I was very appreciative.

I spoke with Mr. Smith at great length about his relationship with Manuela. According to him, she was very poor and suffered from alcoholism, which was why he initially took an interest in helping her. I would discover that she suffered from a number of serious and chronic health problems as well and was frequently hospitalized. Mr.

Smith not only offered her employment, but he also gave her extra money and gifts, some of which went to her family and friends. While not currently married, she had a daughter, grandchildren, and other family members, many of whom I met when they visited the office. Mr. Smith confided in me that Manuela's friends and neighbors had also begun to ask him for money. He admitted that he had given them some money, but was not happy about being taken advantage of. He explained that there are cultural differences, and that South Americans are more openly opportunistic than Americans. For the most part, he seemed happy to support them and spent a lot of time picking out gifts to bring from the States. One Halloween he brought costumes, bags for candy, and decorations for Manuela's grandchildren and neighbors. He explained to me that it was a sign of poverty and shame for children not to have costumes.

He had hired dozens of student interns from the local university's geology department, which I believe he did out of generosity more than actual need. This was in line with his EEC formula, and could be considered a form of CSR. While most companies bring in foreign skilled workers, and he had no shortage of those, he believed that training local workers was a benefit for the common good and had even donated some money to the department. Of the interns, he hired six of them full-time upon their graduation. I talked to Mr. Smith about their situations, because I was unfamiliar with the South American university system. I had gathered that the local university, which was state-run, was very high quality, but that many students there were very poor. He was very generous towards the students, and paid them a very good wage by South American standards. He paid for four of his student interns to travel to Las Vegas for an industry conference that I also attended. They had never been to the United States before, and

were very excited about the trip. While there, however, Mr. Smith ended up unexpectedly paying for almost all of their meals, and he complained to me that he often felt taken for granted. I recall one time he invited the employees out for dinner, and they arrived with a group of uninvited guests.

At the very end of my last trip to the South American office, Mr. Smith called a staff meeting one afternoon. This was not uncommon, however, he asked all of the students and Manuela to join us. Manuela was surprised and appeared to be very nervous. In fact, I noticed that all of the South American employees seemed concerned and the mood quickly turned very serious. No one, including myself, knew what he was going to say but we knew it was something serious. He explained, with the help of one of the English-speaking employees, that his contract with SAEC was coming to a close, and he was uncertain about the future of the South American office with no new business coming in. He could maintain the office for the next several months, or as long as he could. The business was run on a project-by-project basis, in unpredictable locations, and so he would not be able to keep the local student employees. Without the physical office, he would not be able to employ Manuela and the local office manager. It was particularly uncomfortable because the office manager was translating, and he realized the implications for his own employment.

Mr. Smith was very earnest and apologetic, referring to them as family and stressing how much he regretted having to make this announcement. He emphasized that this had nothing to do with the quality of the work. The employees, especially Manuela, were visibly shaken, and there was a moment of intense silence until finally one of the students spoke. With emotion in his voice, he thanked Mr. Smith for all of the

opportunities he had given them and said that he understood the difficulties of running a business. I attribute the outpouring of emotion and adoration partly to practical concerns like the thought of his job, and partly to the type of charismatic leadership that Weber and Parsons (1947) describes. On this and many other occasions, Mr. Smith's confidence inspired his followers to believe that he had everything under control. The meeting eventually ended, and the mood was very somber as the employees returned to their desks. Reflecting on the situation, I felt like his generosity had created a paternalistic relationship that had benefited his employees in the short-term but was not sustainable. Later, I talked to Mr. Smith about the meeting, and he was genuinely sympathetic but optimistic that the students would be able to find other jobs. I am not sure if he would continue to support Manuela in some way. As of this writing the office is still open, but Mr. Smith has let a few of the employees go. I describe these interactions not as a defense of Mr. Smith, but because they were such a salient part of Mr. Smith's character. Because this was a preliminary study, I tried to allow the participants the space to talk freely. When Mr. Smith talked about social responsibility, he emphasized these activities as much if not more than his efforts such as the Day of the Child. Most scholars would not consider Mr. Smith's "generosity" as a form of CSR, and I do not necessarily present it as such. However; it was clear in Mr. Smith's mind that how he treated his employees was a demonstration of his social responsibilities. Mr. Smith estimated that he spends 30 percent of his resources annually on "social impact concerns." I believe that this number includes many of his own internal efforts to support his employees.

Conclusions

This chapter has made an important methodological contribution to the small body of literature on CSR in SMEs. The few existing studies have focused on the direct connection between values and actions, because it is assumed that individuals have more agency than their counterparts in large corporations do. Using Swidler's concept of settled and unsettled cultural periods, large corporations are generally "settled" (barring significant events such as a change in management or public disaster). During these times, as Swidler suggests, there is a "loose coupling" between culture and action and people naturally "know" how to act (280).

On the other hand, the process of trying to build a company can be a period of profound social transformation. Swidler (1986) writes "ideologies — explicit, articulated, highly organized meaning systems (both political and religious) — *establish* new styles or strategies of action" (279). She makes a distinction between ideologies, traditions, and common sense. An ideology is "a highly articulated, self-conscious belief and ritual system, aspiring to offer a unified answer to problems of social action" (279). Unsettled times can lead to bursts of "ideological activism" where people try to formulate new strategies for action from competing ideologies. Their independent causal influence is limited because individuals still have a taken-for-granted understanding of the world and it is "the concrete situations in which these cultural models are enacted that determine which take root and thrive, and which wither and die" (280).

Mr. Smith's actual capacity to act is very limited at the moment. The company has struggled financially, and there have been very few new projects that would provide opportunities to enact CSR. I interpret many of his comments to me that seem contradictory as bursts of ideological activism where he tries on different ideologies to

see which ones make sense to him while he is trying to define his company. I also argue that during an unsettled cultural period, his employees are less constrained and so are free to construct their own institutional logics. Even if the entire company was unified around a single institutional logic, for example one that valued CSR, Swidler (1986) points out that in the long run, new strategies would need to be supported by sufficient structural resources in order to survive. At the moment, Mr. Smith needs all of his resources to keep the business running.

Aside from my interest in the process of creating CSR, in this chapter I also explored whether or not individuals believe in the cause of climate justice. The climate justice movement (all three branches) assumes that renewable energy companies share a commitment to social and environmental justice, and if they do, then a justice-oriented framework could extend to the work of CSR. I found that employees believe that renewable energy is a just cause, however the idea of “justice” is associated with a more familiar and mainstream form of progressive environmentalism. Even on a micro-level, I witnessed some of the tensions inherent in free-market environmentalism in the sometimes-contradictory behavior of Mr. Smith and in the paradox that it presents for the work of CSR. Some forms of CSR were acceptable, but some were not. Deciding where that boundary lies highlights a double bind for CSR workers that I believe is not unique to this industry. CSR workers are tasked with promoting social and environmental responsibility, but by doing so they risk crossing the line into more progressive forms of activism that are viewed as hindrances to development.

Progressive versus free-market environmentalism is only one of several dichotomies which I have described in this chapter, and I argue that they work together to

create clear boundaries between the core technical work of the business and the work of CSR. These include:

Hard \leftrightarrow Soft

Conservative \leftrightarrow Progressive

Realism \leftarrow \rightarrow Idealism

Egoism \leftrightarrow Altruism

In the next chapter I will further explore how these boundaries are maintained and enacted to marginalize the work of CSR within Smith & Associates and within the industry at large.

Chapter Four: The Feminization of CSR

In the last chapter I described the overlapping boundaries that work to marginalize CSR within Smith & Associates, mainly the boundaries between hard and soft work, conservative and progressive political leanings, and realism and idealism as character traits. Using a gendered theory of organizations, in this chapter I argue that gender roles are a key mechanism by which these symbolic boundaries are enacted as social boundaries. I draw on my experiences with Smith & Associates employees, and also my participant observations at industry events to demonstrate that these boundaries are pervasive in an industry that has traditionally had a hypermasculine culture. Very few studies specifically address the link between gender roles and CSR, and the literature itself perpetuates the myth that corporations are gender-neutral organizations. I draw on several different literatures, making connections between feminist theories of organizations and an important study of female workers in the oil and gas industry (Miller 2004). I use the concept of emotional labor first proposed by Arlie Hochschild (1983). Emotional labor in the workplace is inherently gendered and defines appropriately feminine behavior and roles. The result is that both the work of CSR and the people who do it are marginalized within a male-dominated industry. I also call attention to the intersections between gender and racial inequality that affect not only workers in this industry, but the people who are impacted by renewable energy development. This finding has implications for the study of gender and organization as well as for CSR studies.

Gender, Symbolic Boundary-making, and Gendered Institutions

In the previous chapter I described “normative frameworks” which manifested themselves as moral boundaries. Boundaries have been a central topic of social theory since its inception, beginning with the classical works of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim. More recent scholarship has focused on racial, ethnic and class backgrounds and processes of boundary work. Boundary work is the process by which moral and symbolic boundaries are transformed into social boundaries or what Pachucki et al. (2007) call “durable and institutionalized social differences” (331). Lamont and Molnár (2002) distinguish between symbolic and social boundaries. They write:

Symbolic boundaries are conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, practices, and even time and space. They are tools by which individuals and groups struggle over and come to agree upon definitions of reality... Social boundaries are objectified forms of social differences manifested in unequal access to and unequal distribution of resources (material and nonmaterial) and social opportunities... Only when symbolic boundaries are widely agreed upon can they take on a constraining character and pattern social interaction in important ways (168).

There is a substantial literature on gender-based social boundaries predicated on the concept of “doing gender” (West and Zimmerman 1987). Masculinity and femininity that are culturally appropriate for one’s sex category are performed through interactions. Doing gender means conforming to “gender roles” which are reproduced in the family, workplace, and other social institutions (Miller and Harrison 1982; Reskin 1993; Lindsey 2015). Doing gender in these social institutions creates not only gendered boundaries but is the basis for gender inequality (West and Fenstermaker 1993; Fenstermaker and West 2002).

Acker (1992) uses the term “gendered institutions” to mean that “gender is

present in the processes, practices, images and ideologies, and distributions of power in the various sectors of social life” (567). The workplace is one of the most important institutions where gender inequality is reproduced. Acker (1990) argues that workplaces are presented as gender-neutral organizations and assume a “disembodied and universal worker” (139). This obscures the fact that masculinity is embedded in organizational processes such as the division of labor and norms of behavior. The field of management studies has also traditionally taken a gender-neutral approach (Martin 2000), taking for granted the “implicit conflation of men and masculinity with management and authority” (Collinson and Hearn 1994, 4). Kanter’s classic work, “Men and Women of the Corporation,” (1993) highlights the many ways in which gender inequalities are reproduced, including the growth of a masculine management ethic. I mentioned the use of rational choice theory in the CSR literature, and feminist scholars have also pointed to the problems with glorifying a disembodied rational actor. Women are seen as less capable of making a distinction between emotion and reason (England 1989).

Because of this women are assumed to be more suited for nurturing roles and emotional labor (Hochschild 1979). Specifically, women’s maternal instincts are often equated with altruism (Browner and Lewin 1982; Bahr and Bahr 2001). This association carries over into the workplace. Jackall (2010) writes that “women, specifically because of gender, adopt moral stances fundamentally different than men’s. In this view, women’s morality is marked by a particularity and responsibility emerging out of the nurturing social roles traditionally assigned to women” (251). Scholars have also used the term “reproductive labor” to refer to labor that is needed for the maintenance of the productive economy (Glenn 2001; Duffy 2007). Traditionally, this referred to women’s

unpaid labor in the home, but it has evolved to include paid labor typically found in service and care industries.

Gender and CSR

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the mainstream CSR literature has also neglected gender. Rational choice theories of CSR, including the business case and stakeholder theories, rely on the image of the rational businessman while ignoring the fact that this person is implicitly coded as male. The leading public advocates of CSR, including Marc Benioff, Charles Koch, and Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz, reinforce the stereotype of the successful, rational businessman. Benioff's influential concept of "compassionate capitalism" (2004) might have gendered implications because compassion is a traditionally feminine characteristic, but Kavan (2005) writes, "I wonder whether many women will relate to the book's implicit calls to be less selfish; in my experience women's faults are more likely to involve a lack of service to themselves than a lack of service to others" (208).

A handful of CSR scholars have brought attention to the role of gender. Some researchers suggest that more gender egalitarian workplaces are more likely to engage in CSR, but they conclude that this is because women may be assumed to be better suited for CSR-related work (Soares, Marquis and Lee 2011; Babcock 2012). The structure of large organizations may enforce gender roles by designating appropriately feminine CSR-related work to women. Hopfl (2007) finds evidence that CSR managers in leadership positions are more likely to be men, while practitioners, especially those focused on philanthropic giving, are more likely to be female. Welker (2014) observes that even

within the ranks of CSR executives, men are given the more charismatic and public roles, while women are assigned to more routine work (45). The work of implementing CSR at the project level may also require a more “feminine” touch. Shever (2010) describes Shell Oil Company’s CSR programs in Argentina that replaced “a philanthropy program that was rooted in patronage and paternalism with a CSR program that used nurturing, education, and empowering techniques to manage disruptive neighbors” (42). Female CSR practitioners were used as the “face” of the company to soften the company’s public persona. This finding is similar to my own observations in Chapter Three that SAEC’s team of social workers with which I worked at the project site was almost exclusively female while most of the senior management I encountered were male.

Hypermasculinity in Controversial Industries

Mining, oil and gas, and other industries that are targets for CSR scholars are also not coincidentally male-dominated. Welker uses the term “gender-conservative” (104). Scholars have long recognized that the American West occupies a place in the popular national imagination as a land of untamed wilderness and natural resources that have been conquered by iconic masculine heroes (Quam-Wickham 1999; Gibson 2014). The image of the cowboy hero is perhaps a precursor to the philosophy of “rugged individualism,” first coined by Herbert Hoover in a presidential campaign speech (1928). In his speech he argued that rugged individualism and self-reliance are core American values. Rugged individualism has endured in American popular culture and as a neoliberal political ideology (Hammerback 1972; Engel 1998). The rugged individual, like the cowboy hero of the American West, is implicitly male (Hirschman 2003).

Miller (2004) describes how a hypermasculine culture of “frontier masculinity” permeates the Canadian oil industry, drawing on the experiences of women engineers and professional geologists. The historical roots of the oil industry, based on a frontier myth that encourages the rugged individualism, self-interest and competitiveness embodied by the cowboy hero, continue to permeate the workplace culture that women in these industries must assimilate into. The women in Miller’s study, while successful, are a visible minority in their companies and within the industry. She identifies three primary processes that reinforce the masculine structure of the industry: “everyday interactions which exclude women; values and beliefs specific to the dominant occupation of engineering which reinforce gender divisions; and a consciousness derived from the powerful symbols of the frontier myth and the romanticized cowboy hero” (47). She finds that the women deny the salience of gender and use strategies such as not showing emotion, and not dressing in an obviously feminine manner. They are forced to walk a fine line between accepting masculine values and avoiding accusations of not being feminine enough. These strategies are a double-edged sword that ultimately uphold, rather than subvert, deeply entrenched gender inequalities.

Welker (2014) observes a similar culture of frontier masculinity during her work with the mining company, Newmont. She writes, “much talk of exploration work among CSR officials revolved around the figure of the rogue geologist, a reckless and culturally insensitive cowboy” (47). Newmont is based in Denver, Colorado, which has been the center of the American mining industry since the founding of the Colorado School of Mines in 1870. LeCain (2009) points to the hypermasculine culture of the School of Mines (as it is known) in his book titled “Mass Destruction: The Men and Giant Mines

that Wired America and Scarred the Planet.” Incidentally, many of the leaders of this industry that I have met come from the School of Mines.

Gender, Race, Politics and Environmentalism

This dissertation explores whether or not renewable energy is both structurally and culturally distinct from mining and other extractive industries. If an environmentalist ethos is something that makes the industry unique, then the literature on gender and environmentalism may be applicable. Evidence consistently shows that women report stronger environmental attitudes and behaviors than men (Zelezny et al. 2000), presenting something of a paradox for a male dominated, but presumably environmentally friendly, industry. Braun (2015) finds that women participating in a green entrepreneurship training program demonstrate stronger environmental attitudes and commitment than men. Consistent with the rational choice theory of CSR and the altruism versus egoism debate, Braun finds that “male entrepreneurs tended to look for bottom-line and competitive advantage, whereas women tended to lean towards broader ethical concerns in terms of benefiting the greater good” (7). Dietz et al. (2002) also report that women are more likely to have altruistic attitudes towards environmentalism than men.

Kalof et al. (2015) point to the importance of the intersectionality of gender, race, and environmental beliefs. In a study using a random sample of U.S. residents, the authors find that men place less importance on altruism and are less likely to endorse pro-environmental beliefs compared to women, holding race constant. However, they find a relative lack of gender difference among Blacks and Hispanics and hypothesize that these results are rooted in the historical disadvantage of women and minorities in the U.S. They

write, “white men may have atypical values and beliefs because they are not constrained by survival concerns” (9). There may also be a link between patterns of global migration (see Vickerman 2007), and environmental changes (Hugo 1996). These are underexplored areas of the literature.

Gender differences in political views may also play a role in the feminization of CSR because, as I discussed in the previous chapter, CSR practitioners are often characterized as politically and socially progressive. The partisan gap on environmental issues such as global warming is increasing (Dunlap, Xiao, and McCright 2001; Dunlap and McCright 2008), and women are consistently more likely to identify politically as Democrats or progressives than men are (Edlund and Pande 2002). While there is little research on political leaning and CSR, some evidence suggests that the more Democratic corporate stakeholders a company has, the more the company will invest in CSR and that companies with higher CSR ratings tend to be located in Democratic or “blue” states (Rubin 2008; Di Giuli 2014).

Background

This chapter is based on participant observations and interviews completed over the course of two years embedded in Smith & Associates as an independent consultant. I observed the salience of gender in everyday interactions with other Smith & Associates employees, during formal interviews, and while attending industry-wide events, which will be described in more detail in the next chapter. I have described that the Smith & Associates staff fluctuates between fifteen and twenty employees. During my time there, there have only been two full-time female employees, not including the housekeeper,

Manuela, or myself. Mr. Smith has employed a number of female student interns, and has included independent female contractors for individual projects and proposals.

At the five industry events that I attended, I kept records as best as I could of the demographic makeup of the attendees. Near the beginning of the fieldwork, I attended the annual convention organized by the major industry trade organization. This event typically attracts several thousand attendees over the course of three days, making it quite difficult to assess the demographic makeup. During the trade show portion of the convention, it was a very diverse crowd based on gender, race, and even age. I attended several breakout sessions and noted that the panels of speakers were considerably less diverse. I confirmed at other conferences and by researching the makeup of industry trade-associations and leading companies that the core group of leaders in this industry is made up of white men. At the four other conferences, both the audiences and speaking panels were on average 75 percent male and overwhelmingly white. The few non-white individuals I met at industry event were largely representatives from foreign countries in Latin American and Africa. I met several representatives from European companies and investment banks as well, all male.

These demographics are very similar to descriptions of mining and oil and gas, and this industry has similar historical roots in the United States. Like mining, this industry has thrived in the American Southwest for several reasons. The geographic features needed to develop the technology are found in this region, and the region is also a hub of universities that teach technical skills like geology and mining. The domestic hub of the industry is based in Reno, Nevada, and as mentioned, the Colorado School of

Mines, based in Golden, Colorado produces many graduates who work in the industry. Golden is also home to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL). The ties to the American Southwest and to well-established mining and engineering schools evoke many elements of the “frontier masculinity” culture described by Miller (2004).

Moral Boundaries as Gendered Boundaries

I have already described my interactions with Mr. Smith, Mr. Rodriguez, and Mr. Wilson, and the moral boundaries that I identified manifested themselves as real boundaries between their work and mine. While the men are not consciously enacting them as gendered boundaries, I argue that they are implicitly gendered and are thus made to feel more natural. While they may have respected me in some respects, their characterization of me as naïve, idealistic, progressive, and studying a “soft” science all reflect appropriately female traits. The boundary between soft and hard is perhaps one of the most enduring gendered boundaries that structure the organization of workplaces and the division of labor. Faulkner (2007) writes of the boundary between hard and soft even within the engineering profession. The technical “nuts and bolts” aspects of engineering are coded as masculine, while the more socio-technical aspects are coded as feminine. This technical/social dualism permeated almost every aspect of my work, from the actual work that I did with the community members all the way to the presentation of social issues at industry events. Our client, SAEC, had a staff of about twenty social workers. Of the eight that I met, only one was male. The community itself is highly gender stratified. Most women earn no income and are economically dependent on men. There are few educational or job opportunities for girls, and teenage pregnancies are quite common. When I inquired, most of the day-to-day work of the social workers involved

visiting homes and working with women. I attended a workshop run by a local women's charity that was supposed to teach women entrepreneurial skills. It was assumed that women are naturally better at dealing with people, especially when most of that work was spent dealing with "women's issues."

I recall at least three separate occasions when employees explained that men, (ostensibly referring to the male engineers) simply "aren't good at dealing with people." Said in this self-deprecating and patronizing manner it is meant to appear as a compliment even though the individuals saying it had no reason to assume that I have superior communication skills other than by virtue of the fact that I am a sociologist. Miller (2004) describes "an attitude of condescending paternalism" (50) shown towards female geologists in oil companies, who are treated as novelties and child-like people in need of protection. While I am roughly the same age as the male fieldworkers, I did have less experience in the industry. My inexperience was equated with naiveté and idealism, and indeed I was sometimes mocked by my Smith & Associates colleagues as an idealist.

At the first event, a large annual convention and trade show, I was allowed to make observations from Smith & Associates's booth. My knowledge of the company was quite limited, and so I avoided conversations with other attendees unless invited into conversations. The main team consisted of six white men and myself. I noted that there was a remarkably diverse crowd of approximately 1,500 to 2,000 people. On the occasions when my colleagues were elsewhere or engaged in conversation, occasionally attendees inquired about who I was. Interactions ranged from outright dismissal (in one case a man waved his hand in my face and stopped me midsentence before walking

away), to polite but condescending paternalism. I would become very familiar with these types of interactions between older white men and even older women and myself, especially when I would disclose that I was a sociologist interested in CSR.

Mr. Smith decided to send me to a conference in Colorado because he had to back out at the last minute. He was scheduled to talk about his CSR programs associated with the South American project, so he asked the conference organizers if I could attend in his place. During my first phone call with the organizer, I was informed that “[Mr. Smith] told me to take very good care of you.” He had arranged for someone to meet me at the airport, and upon meeting me, the man remarked that he was quite surprised that I appeared so young. The speakers were invited to an informal dinner at the home of the organizer of the event the evening before the programs began. I counted three other women in a crowd of approximately twenty guests. All but one of the guests were white.

This particular two-day conference turned out to be quite small and intimate, featuring approximately fifteen speakers and an audience of less than fifty people. While approximately one third of the attendees were female, only two out of the fifteen presenters were women. During breaks, I socialized with participants and found that people were curious about my work, but also about my very presence, which in many cases highlighted the lack of diversity in the industry. In rare cases I witnessed or was the target of blatant acts of sexism, as when men dismissed me mid-sentence, but I became attuned to the “subtle, apparently caring, and protective paternalism” (49) that Miller describes. I witnessed similar treatment towards other women, two of whom worked on Smith & Associates projects.

Carol and Beth

During my time there, Mr. Smith hired, then fired a year later, a female engineer from California named Carol. I met Carol on three separate occasions, but I also paid careful attention to how she was treated by the other employees. For the South America project, Mr. Smith also contracted some chemical analysis to a young American woman named Beth. Beth and I met at the project site in South America and a year later at an industry event. Carol is an American woman, in her forties, who received her PhD from Stanford and received a Fulbright Scholarship to work in South America. It was there that Mr. Smith recruited her as the first head of the Latin American office. She was teaching in the geology department at the local university and had mentored some of the students who would eventually work for Mr. Smith. In my first few interactions with her, she was far more sympathetic towards my work than anyone else in the company besides Mr. Smith. On my first visit to the site, most of the men had gone to the field early in the morning. She was going out with some of the interns, and asked if I would like to tag along. I think she was conscious of the fact that I might feel excluded.

We both attended the annual meeting of the industry trade association in the fall of 2014 as part of the Smith & Associates team. The team included mostly young employees, and she confided in me that she felt out of place being older and in a supervisory role. I think she took an interest in me, and I was happy to get to know her better. One afternoon she complained to me that there was an organization for women in the industry that had advertised a networking reception. She had tried to attend, but there was a mistake in the schedule and it had been moved to a room very far away from the main conference hall. When she arrived there were only a handful of people there and so

she left. We talked on several occasions about the difficulties of working in a male dominated industry. She gave me several indications that she could mentor me if I chose to stay in the industry.

She was based out of the South American office, and so I did see her again after the trade show. Unfortunately, she began to unravel shortly after. She had been vocal about her messy divorce with her same-sex partner back in California. Over the course of several months, there were reports that she was becoming emotionally unstable, and her behavior was increasingly erratic. I heard accounts second hand from Mr. Smith and the other employees that she had failed to show up for work for weeks at a time, and would say inappropriate things when she was there. Mr. Smith was sympathetic at first, and tried to keep her on for as long as he could. Eventually he was forced to fire her, and by all accounts it resulted in a public shouting match. Personally, I believed it was unfortunate because she was clearly very bright. While I know that the male employees did not attribute her behavior solely to the fact of her being a woman, it certainly did not make them more inclined to work with women in the future.

Another woman employed by Mr. Smith was Beth, a young woman in her mid-twenties, who worked for a company specializing in geochemical analysis. Mr. Smith needed a geochemist for the South America project, and found Beth through his alumni network. I met Beth for the first time during my first site visit. She was remarkably pretty, and I could tell immediately that the men found her very charming. I tried to engage her in conversation, asking how she liked the School of Mines and if she found it difficult to be a woman there, as I knew it had a reputation for its masculine culture. I

sensed that she did not take much interest in me, so I did not engage further with her. She was much more comfortable talking and hanging out with the young men, and later I would hear rumors that she had briefly dated Mr. Wilson. The guys were very happy to include her, and during her weeklong visit I learned that she had attended a bachelor party of one of our South American employees that had become quite rowdy. She seemed very self-aware that her presence was a novelty to the men, and especially to the local community members whom we interacted with at the site. She remarked to the group one evening that she had caught one of the local men staring at her. She may have enjoyed the attention of being a novelty as much as she enjoyed being “one of the guys.” Her experience seems very similar to the females in the oil industry, who, while highly visible, learned survival skills necessary to assimilate into a masculine working environment. Not all women are able or willing to do this. Carol, an older gay female who had been mocked for her masculine appearance, had struggled to be accepted socially by the group. These two women demonstrate some of the double binds that women face in this industry.

Rogue Geologists

Mr. Smith had partnered with a company based out of Montana, and there were two men in their early thirties whom he occasionally contracted to do fieldwork. I met them briefly at the site, and would occasionally hear about them from Mr. Smith and other employees. They had reputations that would be familiar to Welker (2014) as the “rogue geologist... a reckless and culturally insensitive cowboy” (47). They loved guns, drinking, and other similar hobbies, and seemed very well suited to the type of fieldwork required in the industry, including riding horses and all terrain vehicles (ATVs), and

working with potentially dangerous but exciting equipment. Mr. Smith had bought large drones that carried cameras specially equipped to shoot aerial footage. I heard an account that one of the men was operating the drone as a demonstration for a potential client, but had forgotten to check if the batteries were fully charged. The drone crashed midflight, narrowly missing the client and a company truck. While this was a serious and costly error, the story was recounted a few times with a laugh. The men, both the ones from Montana and the ones from the D.C. office, would occasionally make clumsy mistakes like this. This classic “boys will be boys” mentality allows men a degree of irresponsibility that is not afforded to women. In this scenario, women are considered to be naturally more responsible and thus suited to the work of CSR.

CSR as Emotional Labor

Hochschild’s (1979) concept of emotion work and the wealth of organizational literature on emotional labor and gender are useful here. As I have discussed, the boundary between emotionality and rationality is an important distinction. CSR is inherently emotional when it is seen to be driven by purely moral or even compassionate motives. The emotional aspects of CSR are even more pronounced when CSR workers are females working within a male-dominated setting. Hochschild is especially useful here for her concept of “emotion management,” which employs an interactive approach inspired by Goffman (1978). CSR becomes emotional labor not only through the “emotional” aspects of people-centered work, but also through interactions where it is juxtaposed with other types of work. Within a technically oriented workplace, emotions must be managed appropriately. Hochschild is careful to differentiate emotion work from emotion “control” or efforts “to stifle or prevent feeling” (561). Some emotions are

appropriate, for example when the young male employee tearfully expressed gratitude towards Mr. Smith in a meeting.

When I discussed my work with my colleagues and it came time to write and present reports about the possible social impacts of the project, it became very clear that displays of emotion could be a liability. I might privately express sympathy towards the community members by commenting on their poor living conditions or the stark gender inequalities that I witnessed. In informal discussion with colleagues, these feelings might be understood as my own personal ideological opinions given my role as a sociologist or, as Mr. Rodriguez called me, an idealist. Publicly, there were two ways in which I was aware of the importance of emotion management. The first was the basic challenge of being a young woman trying to gain professional legitimacy in a male-dominated workplace. Carol served as a stark reminder of the consequences and stigma for women who are not able to manage emotions in an appropriate manner, while Beth was more successful in using her gender to her advantage.

The second was that the emotional aspects of CSR-related work, namely empathy, had to be managed to fit a more rationally oriented framework. Because my job was ultimately to make recommendations about how SAEC should manage their project, I was often challenged when I made recommendations that seemed to be based on a charitable or sympathetic motive. Very rarely would they reject a recommendation outright. Usually I was asked for more justification or I simply reframed it in more technical language. In Chapter Two, I described the use of technical frameworks used to justify CSR in more detail. I refer to them here because I believe they are relevant to the

management of emotions on an interpersonal level. These two struggles to gain legitimacy both for myself and for the work of CSR are closely intertwined and are bound by gender norms.

I argue that female CSR practitioners are caught in a double bind where their emotional labor is seen as both an asset and a liability. Women's emotional skills are valued because women are perceived as being better at the people-oriented work of CSR. Those same skills are devalued or challenged when they do not match the dominant technical framework. It should also be noted that emotional labor, especially in the form of care-work, is often devalued in the labor market (England 2002). There is no available data on the wages of CSR practitioners (across all sectors), but it is likely that they are paid less than their peers with hard technical skills. In Welker (2014) account, CSR practitioners are both a) female, and b) excluded from upper management positions within their respective companies. Blumberg (1984) argues that control over the means of production and the allocation of surplus is the major independent variable affecting gender inequality at a variety of micro- and macro levels. It is not simply the wages of CSR workers that matters, it is also their relative economic power and position within these organizations. This is an avenue for further research.

Intersectionality

While I think that gender norms and roles are a fundamental explanation for why CSR is marginalized, there is also a potential overlap with race, class, and other dimensions of inequality. Kalof et al. (2015) and a handful of other studies (Mohai and Bryant 1998; Salleh 1993) examine how race, class, and gender influence environmental

beliefs. One theory is that disadvantaged groups may be more exposed to environmental risks and thus are more likely to express concern about the environment (Baldassare 1992). Krauss (1993) found that African American and Native American women were more likely to link environmental justice to other social justice issues than white women. At conferences, I noticed that the both the American and international “elite” of the industry were largely white and male. The American side of the industry, as I have mentioned in the previous chapter, is dominated by a Western cowboy culture of white men. Internationally, important hubs of this industry are located in Germany and Iceland. This may shift as more companies look to expand into emerging markets in Latin America and Africa.

As I mentioned previously, Kalof et al. (2015) describe “the atypical values and beliefs of white men” (1) who occupy a privileged position in most societies. Marginalized groups are bearing a disproportionate cost not only of climate change, but of the negative consequences of infrastructure development led by large multinational corporations. Scholars refer to this as “environmental racism” (Cole and Foster 2001). I suggest that environmental racism occurs not only at the level of the immediate impacts of development on oppressed groups. In Chapter Five, I will address two situations in which social issues were discussed. One was a presentation given by an African woman representing her local community, and another was a situation in which a group of men from an undisclosed island nation representing their indigenous community posed a question to a panelist. I will discuss the significance of these two events in greater detail, but the presence of these minority groups and the reactions of industry members suggests that there is an intersection between environmental racism, gender inequality, and CSR.

These links are made more apparent in controversial sectors, but may be hidden by the clean and benevolent image of renewable energy.

Conclusions

There are many overlapping processes at work that serve to marginalize CSR related issues within Smith & Associates and within the wider industry. This chapter has focused on how these processes overlap with gender norms, roles, and inequality. This chapter is both about the treatment of women in the industry and about the broader implications of defining CSR as feminine work. A central finding of this chapter is that the industry fosters a hypermasculine culture similar to the “frontier” masculinity found in mining and oil and gas. Few scholars have addressed the fact that the work of CSR is implicitly coded as female, creating a double bind for female CSR practitioners in male-dominated industries.

Miller (2004) writes about the survival strategies that women develop, and I saw similar strategies invoked by women, like Beth, in my study. Miller writes, “generally, however, the strategies adopted by the women, although successful on a short-term, individual basis, served only to reinforce the masculine system, leaving little hope for long-term change to a cultural framework inclusive of both masculine and feminine values” (55). You can extend her argument to think about CSR as involving traditionally “feminine” values. What this also suggests is that the problem is not simply a matter of representation if workplace cultures continue to reinforce the idea that women are naturally better suited to the work of CSR. Bear et al. (2010) report that increasing the number of women on corporate boards increases the likelihood that companies will

engage in CSR. Increasing the number of women on corporate boards would address some elements of gender inequality, but would not necessarily alter gender norms and gendered divisions of labor.

Dismantling gender norms would involve addressing the various ideological and political boundaries through which gender is enacted. The dichotomy between hard and soft work is an enduring gendered boundary that is built into the very fabric of most corporation's practices and policies, and is even more defined in engineering-focused industries. Hierarchies that marginalize "soft" work such as CSR redefine the boundary as a matter of power, not gender. For those in positions of power, such as Mr. Smith and Mr. Rodriguez, overt sexism is replaced by a more unintentional or non-reflexive practice of doing gender (Martin 2006), which nevertheless devalues "feminine" work. For those not in positions of power, gender dynamics and the practice of doing gender are more visible, as we see in Beth's attempts to use her femininity to her advantage.

On a larger scale, there are consequences of the feminization of CSR that have been neglected by the literature. Given CSR scholars' preoccupation with rational choice theory, there are obvious applications for feminist critiques (see England 1989). Theories of "pure" or "bounded" rationality rely on the dichotomy between rationality and emotionality that is inherently gendered. Much of the CSR literature relies on this same assumption. Mumby and Putnam (1992) write, "a poststructuralist feminist rereading of the construct suggests that both the organizational practices linked to bounded rationality and the theorizing that surrounds it contribute to patriarchal modes of organizing" (466). This is important not only for bringing attention to forms of patriarchy within

organizations, but also for understanding how to move the entire professional and academic field of CSR forward.

Another way of thinking about the gendered dynamics of CSR are the processes of production and reproduction. Acker (2004) writes that “the division between commodity production in the capitalist economy and reproduction of human beings and their ability to labor has long been identified by feminists as the fundamental process in women’s subordination in capitalist societies” (7). Reproductive work includes both biological and social reproduction and the emotional labor usually associated with the family. Pearson (2007) suggests that the social responsibility of CSR practitioners extends to a concern for “families, communities and society at large” (738). In the same way that women’s reproductive labor in the home frees men to more easily pursue productive labor outside the home, the reproductive labor of CSR could free businessmen to conduct their “productive work” without the constraints of worrying about the consequences of that work.

Pearson argues that corporations should acknowledge that they profit from the reproduction of labor and the subordinate role of women workers in global supply chains (see Blumberg 1979). In the case of the renewable energy project that I studied, the women in the community are economically dependent on men and perform all of the reproductive labor in the household. In the best case scenario, SAEC would offer employment to male workers for construction or plant maintenance as a gesture of social responsibility. Men’s ability to provide this labor would depend on the unpaid labor of women, thus perpetuating the cycle of production and reproduction that extends from the

global to the local. CSR is one part of the complex process of globalization that purports to be gender neutral but is in fact rooted in deeply entrenched and unequal gender relations (Freeman 2001; Acker 2004).

While I have painted a picture of the industry as gender conservative in important ways, I do believe that the industry and the people in it are qualitatively different than other male-dominated industries. The fact that Mr. Smith has been a vocal champion of CSR is meaningful, even if a) the implementation is potentially problematic, b) it has not been fully incorporated into the policies and practices of Smith & Associates, and c) it has not yet been widely accepted by the industry. In the next chapter I will discuss the larger moral agenda for promoting renewable energy that is unique and sets it apart from the “controversial” industries. I describe the culture as an “enlightened frontier masculinity” that is more flexible than the hypermasculine culture described by Miller and others. Even in the two years that I have been involved in this project, I have witnessed an increase in the number of women in both the hard and soft sides of the industry. The culture within Smith & Associates and the few interactions I have had at industry events where my gender was a salient issue may not be indicative of the ability of the industry as a whole to be more accepting of a wider range of gender norms and roles. Having only attended a handful of industry conferences in the U.S. it is possible that the industry overall is more diverse than what I have observed.

Chapter Five: “We’re All Advocates Here”- CSR and Industry Cultures

In Chapter Two, I identified individual companies in this industry that enact CSR programs on par with those of large mining companies. Mr. Smith and a handful of others in the industry have also championed the cause of CSR. Unlike in mining, however, it is not yet standard practice or even well known throughout the industry. At present, there are no industry-wide CSR initiatives, and the industry has yet to tap into the resources of the global CSR movement. A very simple explanation for why this industry has not yet done so would be that there are no external pressures or reputational threats, and making the case for more proactive forms of CSR is difficult from a rational business perspective. The argument might end there, but in the future, there could be a public scandal that would eventually force the industry to enact the same kind of reactive CSR that is seen in mining. However, instead of preemptively applying rational choice theories including the business case and stakeholder models, I focus instead on the process of adopting CSR (or not adopting as the case may be) as a process of institutional change.¹⁰ The field of neoinstitutionalism has many applications for the study of CSR by expanding the range of factors that guide institutional behavior beyond simply economics.

Furthermore, despite a preoccupation with extractive industries, there is surprisingly little CSR research that focuses explicitly on *industries* as the central unit of analysis. The CSR literature generally focuses on individual firms as the unit of analysis,

¹⁰ I have provided a full discussion of the use of rational choice models of CSR in the literature review. Also see Werther and Chandler (2011).

and even more specifically, I have argued that there is a preoccupation with large MNCs. Because extractive industries are dominated by a small number of MNCs, it makes sense that they should be the focus of attention, given the resources that they control. In most analyses, the “industry” itself is often not well defined and plays a secondary role. Industries may provide an internal infrastructure, which can facilitate the spread of CSR. Moreover, rather than solely focus on the economic and political structures of industries, this chapter will also take a more cultural turn, borrowing the useful concept of “industry cultures” (Phillips 1994). Drawing on participant observation conducted at six industry conferences and conventions over the course of two years, I explore the macro-organizational settings that either hinder or facilitate the collective emergence of CSR.

The adoption of CSR in the mining industry is most commonly cited as a process of institutional isomorphism, which I argue is more of a description than an explanation. Few scholars have addressed the substantial variation between industries or provided a critical examination of the conditions that make convergence possible. Furthermore, overly structural theories obscure the role of social relationships and the cultural contexts in which resources would need to be mobilized to order to enact change. Institutional isomorphism depends on a rational choice perspective of organizational behavior that focuses almost purely on external political and economic motivators for CSR. Few scholars have acknowledged that the creation of industry-wide norms is also a collective decision-making process that does not occur in a social or cultural vacuum. In a small industry such as the one I chose to study, these social relationships and dynamics are made more visible, but are only revealed through in-depth and sustained ethnographic research. This rare glimpse into the inner workings of a small and relatively young

industry provides an opportunity to explore the conditions that are necessary to support the collective adoption of CSR.

Convergence and Institutional Isomorphism

A common theme in the CSR literature is that CSR norms are spread through the process of convergence (Jamali 2010; Pederson 2013). Convergence is a variant of the larger literature on “institutional isomorphism” (DiMaggio and Powell 1983), which identifies the normative, coercive, and mimetic forces that lead to convergence of practices and policies. Dashwood (2012) describes the development of industry-wide CSR initiatives in the mining industry, such as the Global Mining Initiative and later the International Council on Mining & Metals (ICMM). She writes:

by the early 2000s, most major mining companies had converged around the norm of sustainable development... macro-level, or systemic, factors were therefore key to the explanation of why, starting in the late 1990s, mining multinationals came to adopt CSR policies framed as sustainable development. Certainly, the global normative weight of sustainable development provided the context within which mining multinationals came to frame their CSR policies (8).

She focuses on the “shifting global normative context” (271) created by global CSR initiatives as the impetus that led mining companies to adopt their own policies. Other scholars have also argued that corporations tend to act in socially responsible ways if normative or cultural institutions are in place that create the proper set of incentives for such behavior (Blasco and Zølner 2010; Yin and Zhang 2012). Campbell (2006) gives the example of business associations and organizations that constrain and shape institutional conditions, cognitive frames, and worldviews. These normative institutions can influence what managers consider appropriate behavior.

The global standardization of CSR frameworks is an example of institutional isomorphism that some scholars believe is disseminated from the top down (Lim 2012; Dashwood 2012). Data show a significant increase in the number of companies globally adopting CSR policies for the first time beginning in the late 1990s. This coincided with the rise of global CSR frameworks such as the Global Reporting Initiative in 1997 and the United Nations Global Compact in 2000.¹¹ These “normative institutions” play an important role in shaping institutional logics. For example, membership in CSR organizations could instill a set of values and beliefs about the virtues of CSR that is then spread through peer pressure (Galaskiewicz and Burt 1991).

Other factors like competition can also cause convergence around shared CSR standards (Misani 2010). Misani argues that the pressure to conform is stronger than the pressure to use CSR to differentiate oneself from the competition, resulting in “herd” or “bandwagon” behavior. Misani writes, “bandwagons are diffusion processes where organisations adopt an innovation not because it is efficient but because they feel the pressure of the sheer number of organisations that have already adopted it” (6). Misani’s argument is based on observations of convergence in the steel industry. Like Dashwood, this seems more like an observation than a theory. At the very least, CSR scholars can be accused of sampling from industries with existing convergent CSR practices.

Neoinstitutionalism and Institutional Change

In Chapter Three, I cited neoinstitutional theories, including institutional logics,

¹¹ See: <http://database.globalreporting.org>

but in this chapter I specifically focus on processes of institutional change. Because the CSR literature relies largely on post-hoc case studies, it ignores the possibility that adopting CSR (making a purposeful decision to engage in CSR, rather than passively enacting it) may be an emergent process. If one considers the adoption of CSR to be a process of institutional change, then convergence is only one possibility that can be used to explain why and how CSR is enacted in an industry. Greenwood and Hinings (1996) write, “institutional theory is not usually regarded as a theory of institutional change, but as usually an explanation of the similarity (‘isomorphism’) and stability of organizational arrangements in a given population or field of organizations” (1023). Importantly, they distinguish between convergent change and radical change. Convergent change occurs when firms adopt CSR within an existing “template” or framework, while radical change involves moving from one template to another, or “the breaking of the mold” (1026). They write, “the theory is silent on why some organizations adopt radical change whereas others do not” (1023). Radical change is easy to identify after it occurs, but it is more difficult to identify the conditions under which it may or may not occur. CSR as radical (rather than convergent) change is rarely considered.

Industries as Organizational Fields

Greenwood and Hinings (1997) also argue that neoinstitutional theory is concerned not only with individual organizations, but also with networks of organizations and the placement of individual organizations within institutional fields and contexts. The study of organizational fields, or what Phillips (1994) refers to as “macro-organizational settings,” is an important subset of the organizational literature, and I will summarize only the concepts that are relevant to this dissertation. Corporations are typically

envisioned as relatively autonomous entities, and industry contexts are often analyzed only to the extent that they influence the behavior of individual firms (O'Shaughnessy et al. 2007; Moura-Leite et al. 2012). A common weakness in the literature is the reification of the term "industry" without paying enough attention to what constitutes an industry in more than an abstract sense.

Scott (1995) writes that an organizational field is "a community of organizations that partakes of a common meaning system and whose participants interact more frequently and fatefully with one another than with actors outside the field" (56). Hoffman (1999) further clarifies that fields are centers of dialogue and discussion and can bring together various field constituents with disparate purposes. In other words "a field is formed around the issues that become important to the interests and objectives of a specific collective of organizations" (352). Using the literature on organizational fields allows one to think about the ways in which fields vary, and how those variables shape the possibility for organizational change.

Powell and DiMaggio (1991), for example, point to loose and tight coupling within organizational fields. They note that organizations which are tightly coupled to a prevailing archetypal template within a highly-structured field are more unstable in the face of external shocks than those which are loosely coupled. Tight coupling assumes institutional consensus around a consistent and focused set of expectations and mechanisms for the dissemination of and compliance with CSR frameworks. The mining industry, for example, can be described as tightly coupled and organized around a group of core firms. The literature focuses on tightly coupled industries, and does not consider

how tight or loose coupling may influence the spread of CSR norms and practices.

Micro- and Macro-Organizational Theory and Industry Cultures

Industries may vary structurally, but industries must also be thought of as social networks which can produce their own internal dynamics. There is a body of research on “corporate cultures” (see Dahler-Larsen 1994), but the application of the concept at the industry level is limited. Using a comparison between two industries (fine arts museums and California wineries), Phillips (1994) describes “industry cultures” and “distinct industry mindsets” (384) that transcend any one organization. The concept of industry cultures is important because it challenges the common conception of single organizations as discrete and monolithic entities and the only setting for decision-making and organizational change.

Industry cultures are defined in several ways. The first is the extent to which “industry members identify themselves and other group members in terms of *why their industry exists*” (395). Phillips finds that museum workers express loyalty to the industry based on shared passion and the importance of the educational mission of museum work. In the wine industry, workers identify themselves primarily with their own company and secondarily with a regional sense of group, but like museum workers they may also share a common interest such as educating the public about quality wine. Industry cultures are also shaped by competitiveness. Phillips finds that museum workers use terms such as a “fraternity of interests” and “friendly interdependency” to describe a more collaborative sense of competition even though museums may compete for resources such as financial support from donors and acquisition of art. In the wine industry, workers perceive

competition from other firms, but also from other alcoholic beverages. A broader understanding of competition as a social rather than simply economic relationship between firms is important as is the observation that industries vary in their level of competitiveness. In contrast, rational choice theories of CSR rely on the assumption of competition as a chief motivator to engage in CSR.

Industry cultures are useful, but vastly understudied. Phillips lays the groundwork for more research, but there is surprisingly little research on the relationship between industry cultures and organizational change. We can envision CSR being driven from above (from external pressures or simply the spread of global norms), or below (from a grassroots effort within an organization), but industries are often portrayed as passive, driven by market forces, or as an abstract concept with little analytical use. Scholars point to industry-wide standards, organizations, and practices as if they are removed from the social context that created them.

In essence, I am changing the question from why would a firm behave in a socially responsible way, to why would an *industry* behave in a socially responsible way? Most research bypasses this important question. Dashwood, for example, focuses largely on the global CSR movement and the internal dynamics within individual mining firms. I believe that she neglects an important level of analysis, namely the role of the mining industry itself. She does make some attempts to think about the dynamics of the industry; for example, she writes, “the process of transformation in industry thinking has been neither smooth nor linear” (47). However, I find that she refers to the industry and even to “industry thinking” in the abstract and her unit of analysis is heavily focused on

individual firms and the firm-specific factors such as organizational processes and managerial leadership.

In order to bridge this gap, I argue that we need a theory of organizational change that accommodates both micro- and macro-sociological dynamics and that does not assume a “top down” or “trickle down” model. Phillips (1994) points out that in the organizational literature, culture is considered to be either nationally or organizationally based and that most studies are either overly broad or too narrow. A small industry is thus an ideal case study. Bridging the gap between the micro- and macro-sociological level of analysis is difficult theoretically and empirically, but it is essential to Burawoy’s concept of global ethnography and to the larger goal of this dissertation.

Background

As part of the multi-sited ethnography, I attended six separate industry events over the course of two years. While I was employed by Smith & Associates at the time, I was also able to conduct independent ethnographic fieldwork through observations and informal conversations with individuals in the industry outside of Smith & Associates. Attending industry events is an important methodological contribution because virtually no CSR studies include qualitative data gathering at the industry level. Neither Dashwood (2012), nor Welker (2014) nor Rajak (2011), the three major works that have inspired the framing and methods of this dissertation, include this level of analysis. It is remarkable how little ethnographic work there is generally on industry conferences, given how ubiquitous they are in the business world.

The global conference industry has exploded in recent years (Rogers 2013), and

physical meeting spaces are important despite the apparent ease of global communications. In an article separate from her book, Rajak (2011b) supplements her ethnography of a mining corporation by attending CSR conventions, policy forums, and award ceremonies. Participants at these events include corporate executives, representatives of global NGOs, CSR consultants, small firms, and nonprofits. At these gatherings, she finds “highly ritualistic theatres of virtue” (11) set in upscale London hotels. She juxtaposes the rhetoric of societal consensus and inclusion with the exclusivity of the CSR industry and the elites who control it. While Rajak’s scathing critique of the CSR industry is useful in its own right, methodologically she points to the importance of the social and performative experience of CSR that is only made visible by physically attending events. Like Rajak, I argue that industry events can serve as a crucial space where collective identities and rituals are created. On a more basic level, industry events are important sites where both material and non-material resources can be mobilized.

A more detailed discussion of my methods is included in Chapter One. While the previous three chapters have used a combination of participant observation and semi-structured interviews, in this chapter I did not conduct any formal or informal interviews. This is in part because of the logistical difficulties that it would take, given the hectic nature of conferences, but mostly because here, unlike at my other ethnographic sites, I was able to take a more passive role to allow for more observation than participation.

Five of the events were conferences conducted in public spaces, without the expectation of privacy. While these five were formally organized by industry

organizations and required registration and payment, all were all open to the public and thus exempt from requiring consent. In cases where I engaged in informal conversations with individuals, I disclosed my role as an independent researcher. The sixth event included activities within a private residence, and there I received oral consent from attendees.

Scholars repeatedly point to the importance of industry-wide frameworks in the mining industry that have facilitated the standardization of CSR practices. The International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM) has 23 member organizations and 34 regional and commodities associations, and is “an international organisation dedicated to improving the social and environmental performance of the mining and metals industry.”¹² The ICMM lists ten guiding principles covering ethical business practices, transparency, sustainable development, and human rights. According to the ICMM, there is a competitive admissions process and member companies are required to obtain annual third-party assurance of their adherence to the ICMM principles. Anglo American, Barrick, and Newmont are all listed as members. Another influential organization with similar goals is the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) which covers mining, oil and gas. The University of Queensland Australia houses the Centre for Social Responsibility in Mining. The Centre is a multi-disciplinary team of social scientists, engineers, and natural scientists. According to its website, it conducts research, provides strategic advice, develops policy, and delivers education and training.¹³ The Centre also

¹² See: <http://www.icmm.com/en-gb/about-us>

¹³ See: <https://www.csr.uq.edu.au/about>

hosts an event called the International Conference on Social Responsibility in Mining.

The creation and maintenance of industry-wide initiatives require a great deal of material and non-material resources. The mining industry not only has organizations such as the ICMM, but it also has a vast infrastructure of other industry associations that can mobilize and facilitate change, such as the International Organization of Materials, Metals & Minerals Societies. Some of these suborganizations are country- or region-specific while others are specific to types of minerals. These networks can be mobilized to facilitate the spread of CSR norms.

The renewable industry I studied has two major trade associations. One is based in the United States and represents American companies, while the other is an international association based in Germany. I will refer to the U.S. trade association as USRA and the international association as IRA. USRA is a trade organization based out of Washington, D.C. composed of U.S. companies that support or develop this particular type of RET. USRA serves several functions, including advocating for public policies, providing a public forum, encouraging research and development, and conducting education and outreach projects. With a small staff of six employees, it releases a weekly newsletter and regular social media updates through various outlets. The general consensus among industry members is that it is useful, but vastly underfunded and understaffed. The industry as a whole has seen a slowdown in domestic production that has left many companies with fewer resources to invest in USRA. Attendance and sponsorship of USRA events have declined sharply in recent years, and Mr. Smith receives regular solicitations from them for money and support.

I am less familiar with its international counterpart, IRA, although IRA did co-sponsor an event that I attended in D.C. IRA describes itself as a scientific, educational and cultural organization with over 5,000 members. It hosts events on a regular basis, but its biggest event is the international congress held every five years. Most of its members are local or regional trade associations. I am not aware of how well it is funded, but it is very active and has regional branches in Europe, Africa, and Asia. From speaking to others in the industry and finding materials online from past international congresses, it appears to be well attended. Industry associations provide the necessary infrastructure to support the spread of CSR. While the national association suffers from a lack of funding, at the international level the industry does appear to have some resources and infrastructure that could in theory support the spread of CSR norms.

The Annual Convention

USRA typically hosts three annual events, the largest of which is an annual trade show and convention held in major cities along the West Coast, which is the hub of commercial development. The annual convention in the fall of 2013 was the first industry event that I attended. This three-day event typically draws a very diverse crowd of about 1,500 people. The tradeshow format is especially useful for exploring the overall structure and types of companies that make up this industry. The most remarkable finding at the trade show was the number and diversity of small companies represented. I was able to spend a considerable amount of time walking around the convention hall and visiting different booths. Whereas large mining companies are vertically integrated, that is clearly not the case in this industry, making it possible and even necessary for companies to specialize in a specific type of technology or service as in the case of Smith

& Associates. Eighty-eight different vendors were represented, and of these only a handful were recognizable as large corporations. Brief chats with booth presenters, a review of brochures, and follow-up research on the companies revealed a wide range of services from chemical analysis to suppliers of steel pipe fittings. As of this writing, USRA lists 148 member organizations, and 59 of these are listed as “small business.” By contrast, the National Mining Association website features 361 members.¹⁴ The NMA does not provide categorizations, but a search of the companies listed reveals that many of them are large national or multinational corporations. While the mining industry is tightly coupled and relatively homogenous, this industry is much smaller but far more heterogeneous and decentralized.

During the two days while the exhibit hall was open there were also workshops, field trips, networking events, a charity golf tournament, and technical breakout sessions. I did not attend events that required payment, but I attended several technical breakout sessions and networking events, taking careful note of whether or not CSR-related issues were discussed, and if so how they were received by industry members. I was careful to take a more passive role, but would introduce myself when necessary and identify myself as both a consultant and academic researcher. Because sessions were being held concurrently, and I was also making observations in the convention hall, I had to be strategic in picking sessions to attend. A review of the schedule revealed that most of them were on very specific technical and engineering-related topics, and I gathered that many of these had an educational focus geared towards a more general audience. I

¹⁴ See: <http://www.nma.org/index.php/member-list>

counted 124 different workshops and breakout sessions, only three of which made mention of social issues. Of these I was able to attend two.

The first talk was given by a young African woman representing her local community. She served as a liaison between them and a company that had developed a nearby power plant. This particular plant was well known within the industry and was considered a great success financially, environmentally, and socially. The company implemented extensive CSR activities through negotiation with the local community. The woman appeared nervous, but she gave a thoughtful account of the stakeholder engagement process. She concluded with a call for the industry to learn from the example of this plant and praised the company for their efforts. Unfortunately, the individual talks were quite rushed, and there was not much time for questions or discussion. Only two audience members, who stayed afterwards to ask her questions, and I waited in line to thank her for her presentation. She seemed genuinely taken aback at my enthusiasm and interest in her work.

I attended another presentation because the description mentioned a case study involving conflicts with a local indigenous tribe. A charismatic young graduate student who had received funding to create a documentary based on his research gave it. A potential source of energy was discovered nearby, and he feared that the local tribe would be harmed because they had a spiritual connection to their environment. He showed a clip from his documentary, and it was very well received by the audience. He had already received a number of prestigious grants, and I have since followed his successful career as an environmentalist and advocate for indigenous people. Within the industry, he is

well known but very controversial. Mr. Smith and others believe that his activism and advocacy for native communities is fundamentally anti-development and anathema to the goals of the industry. Mr. Smith expressed the fear of negative publicity he might generate.

The major takeaways from this first annual convention were that I observed the heterogeneity of the industry, and that remarkably little attention was given to social issues. The presentation given by the African woman was the only use of explicitly CSR-related terms like stakeholder engagement and community development. Audience members at the two talks appeared sympathetic, but they seemed to generate little serious discussion beyond polite conversation. I received a similar polite but slightly patronizing reaction on the rare occasion when someone inquired about my research and I offered a brief introduction. The tradeshow format serves many purposes, but I believe it would be a difficult place to mobilize resources without a formal mechanism to discuss CSR-related issues. Mr. Smith proposed to me and other Smith & Associates employees that he wanted to hold a session on social responsibility at the next annual meeting, but he did not follow up on it.

Policy Events

I attended four other conferences in Washington D.C., which were also hosted by USRA. All of the events were co-sponsored by government agencies interested in renewable energy, and two were also co-sponsored by USRA. These events were much smaller than the annual convention, typically attracting a few hundred people. While all of the events required registration and payment, they were not limited to USRA or IRA

association members. They attracted mostly private developers, policy makers from government agencies, journalists, and a handful of students and freelance consultants. I mentioned that the attendees of the annual convention were remarkably diverse. By contrast, the policy events attracted a smaller and less diverse crowd. The industry is small to begin with, but as I observed, it was controlled by an even smaller group of influential individuals, most of whom were older, white men.

As at the trade show, the format typically included panel discussions based on different technical topics. However, there was a significant difference in the breakout session format of the trade show and the panel discussions of the policy events. As I mentioned, many of the breakout sessions had a workshop-like feel and were geared towards a general audience. The panel presentations that occurred at policy events could be more in-depth (although still often rushed) with more time spent on discussion. The presentations were often recorded, distributed to attendees, and summaries were posted on industry blogs and trade publications. None of the policy events featured a specific panel dedicated solely to CSR, however, I kept careful note of presentations that included any mention of CSR-related activities. These events did have a stronger focus on policy issues and financing than the trade show and were clearly geared towards a more well-informed as opposed to general audience. Speakers typically used case studies of individual projects, and most were in developing countries. Currently, development has slowed domestically and is now focused on emerging markets in Latin America and Africa. The theme of most panels referred to “challenges” and “lessons learned” from case studies.

Over the course of the four events, I noted only six different presentations that featured substantive discussions of social issues, although only two explicitly used terms such as stakeholder engagement and community development. In Chapter Two, I discussed the rationalization and technocratization of CSR through the use of ESIA and risk mitigation. All mentions of social issues were made within the context of risk mitigation and management and economic cost-benefit analyses. Rarely were CSR-related activities discussed as being intrinsically valuable or within a framework of social justice. Five of these presentations were given by women, while only one was given by a man.

While I have focused on socially oriented CSR-related activities throughout this dissertation, it should also be noted that CSR can also include environmentally-friendly practices. I have pointed to the use of “sustainability reports” by large corporations in the extractive industries. Under the umbrella of sustainability, CSR initiatives may include voluntary initiatives to make a company’s own practices more environmentally friendly. Firms may contribute to “value-added” environmental programs such as funding local conservation efforts. A select few large companies in this industry have also borrowed this concept, including SAEC; however, I did not observe any speakers at any of the events that I attended make explicit mention of environmentally-focused CSR activities.

I attended a one-day conference focused specifically on policy and regulatory issues with Mr. Smith in the spring of 2015 in Washington, D.C. A group of three indigenous men from an undisclosed island territory had flown in for one day to attend the event. It was a freezing cold March day, and the men had attracted attention in their

tropical outfits. I was curious about their presence, but Mr. Smith did not know who they were. During one of the presentations, the men posed a question to a panelist asking how the interests of native people would be considered during development. They explained that they were representing their local city council, which was opposed to the development of this type of RET that had been proposed on the island. The panelists and attendees appeared surprised and even uncomfortable. The men were not openly confrontational, and even made a joke about the weather to lighten the mood. The presenter responded that “of course companies should include local people.” Clearly the presenter was not prepared to give a lengthy response or invite discussion, and the moment passed quickly.

During a break, I approached the men to introduce myself and told them that I was familiar with their case because I had come across it in my research. They expressed concern that they were not being included in the planning process which was already underway. I was the only attendee who showed an interest in their cause. To me, it was a remarkable event that the men had flown a far distance for one day to formally state their opposition. Rajak (2011b) recounts that a group of protestors from Thailand and India who had been adversely affected by pipelines and large dams had flown to London and demanded entry to a CSR conference. They were eventually allowed in and were invited to speak on the podium. Rajak describes a “palpable sense of surprise among the whispering audience” (14). They explained that they had not given free, prior and informed consent and were being forcibly removed from their land. They received few questions, and “the rest of the conference got underway according to the program as if little had happened” (14). The conference report briefly mentioned the confrontation. The

event that I witnessed with the indigenous men was not nearly as dramatic, and yet the end result was the same. The conference proceeded with little acknowledgment or discussion about their case.

I have since followed up with further research. I have had a few very brief conversations with Mr. Smith and Mr. Wilson about the case, but it is not widely discussed in the industry. I follow renewable energy news sites, industry blogs and newsletters, closely looking for discussions of social conflict or CSR-related topics, and I have not seen this conflict mentioned beyond articles in newspapers in the local vicinity of the proposed project. To date, no new developments have been approved, partly because of local opposition. There are indications that there will be negotiations and consultations with native communities as the project moves forward. However, I was most struck by the general apathy, and perhaps even discomfort, when dealing with social issues that I witnessed at the event in Washington D.C.

The Role of the State

While the commercial hub of this industry is in the Western United States, and little development happens on the East Coast, D.C. is an important location politically and economically. This industry is reliant on political support to promote renewable energy policies, and on financial support from governmental and non-governmental agencies such as the World Bank, USAID, Export-Import Bank, and the U.S. Trade and Development Agency. USRA serves as the industry's only lobbying and special interest group, but as I already observed, it is not well funded or staffed. The Center for

Responsive Politics, an independent and nonprofit organization, tracks money spent on lobbying by different industries. Individual mining companies spent a total of almost \$24 million dollars on political contributions in 2015-2016, and the National Mining Association itself spent \$224,500.¹⁵ USRA, by contrast, spent less than \$70,000 on lobbying in 2015 with no contributions from individual companies. While renewable energy has been on the national and international policy agenda, with President Obama's support and the recent Paris Convention, industry members remarked to me on three separate occasions that this particular industry had largely been neglected. They placed blame on USRA, on the general lack of resources needed for lobbying, and on the ineptitude of politicians lobbying on their behalf. I spoke briefly with Mr. Smith about the role of USRA:

I think that our ability to lobby and to advertise and to get the word out has been really poor. It's been dismal in the past. And I think that's because our lobbying group here in Washington is not very well prepared and ill funded and not a lot of money goes into it and that's undergoing a change now, so hopefully in the future, things will get better.

Not only does this industry lack the lobbying power that other industries have, it is also heavily dependent on policy change. Industry members lamented that current policies are not conducive to development because of lengthy bureaucratic processes and the fact that there are more costs and risks compared to fossil fuels. Most projects require substantial funding from governmental and non-governmental institutions in order to make up the difference. The industry has historically had the support of two high-profile

¹⁵ See: <https://www.opensecrets.org/industries/indus.php?cycle=2016&ind=E04>

politicians. The most high profile of the two was scheduled to speak as a keynote speaker at two of the events I attended. At the first policy event I attended, he delivered a pre-recorded video message. At the second, he failed to show up altogether. In a third case, one of his aides attended to answer questions from the audience. It was generally agreed upon that his “support” was symbolic because he had little involvement in the industry.

The second man showed up to speak on two occasions. The first time that I heard him speak, he arrived to give the opening speech early in the morning. He began his speech by joking that he had gotten up early to go to the gym and had squeezed us into his busy schedule. While it may have been meant as a joke, I noticed other attendees rolling their eyes. He proceeded with a ten-minute canned speech about the benefits of renewable energy, stating that he’s “a real believer in the industry,” and that we have his support. Other attendees later agreed that this was disingenuous, patronizing, and typical of the role of politicians in the industry. Mr. Smith joked privately to me later that he had the appearance of a stereotypically “smarmy” politician. The politician also invited everyone in attendance to visit him personally in his office later that day which elicited a few chuckles. In conversations with other attendees later in the day, there was a general consensus that he had failed to say anything substantive. At this same event, politician number one sent an aide, who was in his early twenties, to speak during a panel. The young man also gave a rehearsed speech, but it was clear that he was not an expert in this type of technology and he deflected most of the questions. He elicited more eye rolling from the audience and even an audible laugh from Mr. Smith, who was seated next to me. When I recounted the event to Mr. Wilson, he laughed and described several similar events that he had attended. He called politicians and their aides “useless” and “a joke.”

Another memorable incident occurred during a discussion regarding permitting regulations on federal land. The current regulations in the U.S. are so cumbersome that developers recounted stories of projects being held up for fifteen years or more while they wait for the required paperwork to be processed. The Bureau of Land Management has been very slow to address criticism, and it has taken quite a few years to find someone willing to lobby on behalf of the industry to remove the regulatory hurdles. A senior government official provided an update on proposed legislation to improve the process, and he received a number of hostile questions from the audience demanding straight answers. He admitted that change was slow, and asked for our “continued patience.” Audience members appeared to be increasingly frustrated. He ended his PowerPoint presentation with a quote from the Rolling Stones: “You can’t always get what you want, but if you try sometimes, well, you just might find you get what you need.” At this point, audience members were shaking their heads at each other, incredulous. Mr. Smith would later bring this story up repeatedly, and he mocked the presenter’s use of the Rolling Stones lyrics.

In conversations with Mr. Smith and other industry members, I tried to explore this frustration with the government that was a central theme at policy events. Mr. Smith was very clear about his hatred of the DOE, telling me in one email: “I HATE DOE they waste money and time.” I followed up on this theme in an interview with Mr. Smith. I asked him to describe his thoughts on government officials, and explained that I sensed some frustration with them.

Completely incompetent. I think as an industry there is an honest appreciation of how incompetent the government is when trying to encourage development within geothermal and a frustration with how to change that. I think your observation’s right on target. Uh, we’ve got politicians who pretend that they are. I don’t know

if any of them really are. To be honest with you. [Redacted] pretends that he is but every time you invite that guy to come to a trade show. He phones it in, literally.

I asked him specifically about the Senator whom he had mocked for his “smarmy” appearance. He laughed loudly.

This was the one in Washington. He was completely out of touch with reality. I don't he even knew why he was there. He didn't have any idea what this industry is. Huh, I think everyone was pretty frustrated after that event. But that's not unusual that's sort of the norm that you get from this government. It's just lip service to it. You can't always get what you want and when you think you're going to you're gonna be disappointed. I think Obama actually knew about this industry was but he seemed to be pretty impotent and couldn't really change much. And Joe Biden, I think he was also, I think he could have been much more supportive, but I mean he had a lot of other things going on, too.

Likewise, Mr. Wilson explained “the interests of the government and the industry don't align.” In his mind, the government does not benefit from private commercial renewable power generation or even from innovation, and so has little motivation to invest in it.

I mention these interactions and the role of the government because they are emblematic of much larger problems that the industry is facing. Practically speaking, the lack of political and economic capital in this industry is a chronic problem and source of frustration for developers. Because of this, the domestic industry has stagnated dramatically in recent years. The obvious political and economic constraints placed on this industry make it difficult to justify the investment of resources in voluntary CSR initiatives. The frustration is also, however, born out of important ideological differences that I discussed in Chapter Three, mainly the boundaries between free market and progressive environmentalism. Mr. Smith's unwavering belief in the power of the free market and deregulation is shared by most industry leaders. Extractive industries have an advantage because they have the capital to lobby, and to operate and fund their projects independently. As long as this industry is dependent on public funding and policy

change, the ideological divide will be a source of frustration for private developers like Mr. Smith.

CSR as Activism

I have described in Chapter Three that the ideological divide between free-market and progressive environmentalism marginalizes CSR within Smith & Associates. I argue that this same dynamic is present at the industry level. At the second industry event I attended, I was approached by a man named Hernando, an independent consultant from South America. He was curious about my work because we had similar academic backgrounds and professional interests, and we both work in Latin America. We kept in touch throughout my research and corresponded about our shared interest in CSR, and met on three occasions at conferences. He had been working to promote this type of renewable energy in his own country and believed that there were significant social and political barriers that were hindering development. He had written several papers on the need for social outreach and education to gain more popular support. My relationship with Hernando is significant because he was one of the very few individuals in the industry who sought me out independently, and he showed consistent interest in my work. It was odd to me that he was not attached to any company or agency that I could surmise. It was rare to meet a successful independent consultant. The handful of others I met were either retired or between jobs. He was not only sympathetic to the idea of CSR, but also felt that social issues more generally were not represented or taken seriously by the industry. I believe he saw himself as an outsider and that we had that in common because I was new to the industry and worked for a small company. A key moment

occurred during our second encounter at a policy meeting in D.C., when he confided in me that social issues were not taken seriously because they are usually treated as activism. This resonated with my idea that CSR was marginalized within Smith & Associates because it was dismissed as activism. CSR practitioners by extension can be dismissed as activists.

While I do believe that this same process occurs at the industry level, another key moment occurred not long after this conversation with Hernando. During a break at an event in D.C., I was passively listening to a conversation that Mr. Smith and Mr. Wilson were having with another attendee. They were expressing their disappointment with the day's speakers. The other man, whom I did not know at the time, expressed that "[this industry] is already a niche market." Here the man was referring to the fact that renewable energy is a niche sector of the energy industry, and so this industry is even further removed from mainstream energy markets. Later, I asked Mr. Wilson to elaborate. He replied that everyone in this industry has to take on the role of an advocate. With this in mind, I began to notice how many of the presentations on seemingly technical issues had a common theme. While I noted that most individuals in this industry were passionate about the cause of renewable energy, and this type of RET, technical presentations often included urgent pleas to take this industry more seriously and to recognize the many benefits that it has not only over fossil fuels, but also over other types of renewables.

I remarked to Mr. Smith that I felt that industry members seemed to spend a lot of time advocating for the industry.

It's true. And even when you meet people on the street or when you meet people in airports or whenever you're talking to the guy next to you in the airplane and they ask you what you do and you say that you build [redacted] power plants and they ask what's that and they have no idea and you've gotta embark upon a whole educational process as to what it is. That's true.

I asked him if he thought about the public reputation of the industry.

I think about it all the time but the problem is that public hardly knows this resource exists. It's a big big problem in the industry. And that's because it's a small, it's a small industry even though a country like Guatemala derives almost a third of their energy from this resource. Um most people in the United States don't even know it exists.

I noticed that even during small conferences of industry leaders, presenters spent a significant amount of time trying to persuade the audience about the benefits of this type of RET. At one conference, it became a joke that at least six presenters had used the same infographic to demonstrate the risks that must be overcome to expand the industry. There seemed to be a general air of sympathy that I came to see as almost ritualistic. In Rajak's study of CSR conventions, she writes that "rituals of corporate morality thus play an important role in generating particular ways of seeing and understanding on the part of people involved in the CSR industry" (2011: 10). In a small industry, these rituals become even more important to creating a group identity and shared worldview.

I had been tuning in to frustration because it was so palpable when it was directed towards political speakers or the role of the government. Eventually, I also found a curious mix of frustration, passion, and optimism in the presentations and in many personal interactions. I was reminded of Mr. Smith's remarks that he must really love what he does. During informal conversations and interactions with the core group of industry leaders, however, they expressed what I thought was remarkable loyalty and

optimism. While some people have been driven out of the industry because of a lack of opportunity or the lure of more lucrative jobs, I think that Mr. Smith and others who have stayed in the industry for decades enjoy the role of the underdog as much as they are frustrated by very real challenges.

I argued in the last chapter that CSR is a form of emotional labor in the more traditional use of the concept. While emotion work and emotional labor have spawned a robust sociological literature, I argue that it is often conflated with care- or people-centered work. Another common theme is that workplaces are characterized as spaces in which emotions must be carefully managed (Grandey 2000). Morris and Feldmen (1996) describe the “planning, control, and skill that are required to present appropriate emotional display in organizational settings” (999). Defining emotional labor as impression management is also highly privatized and micro-sociological.

These central themes in the literature on emotional labor are limiting, and a handful of studies have sought to expand on the concept. I found that advocating for renewable energy is also a form of emotional labor, and it fundamentally shapes the work in this industry for all members, not just CSR practitioners. Brown and Pickerill (2009) explore the relationship between emotions and political and social activism in three dimensions: the role of emotions in motivating activism, in shaping the boundaries of activist identities, and the emotional aspects of “burnout” within activist networks. Reger (2004) similarly writes about anger, frustration, and hopelessness in a feminist organization and argues that organizations can “transform personal emotions into a collectively defined sense of injustice” (205).

Two studies specifically point to the emotional dimensions of environmental activism. Wright and Nyberg (2012) specifically point to the emotional dimension of corporate environmentalism and climate change that is expressed as passion, anger, fear, hostility, or even apathy and ambivalence. Fineman (1996) also explores the emotional subtexts of corporate environmental programs. He writes that “pro-environmental organizational changes depend on the emotional meanings that managers attribute to greening” (479). These studies are heavily focused on emotion management within a corporate setting, but they do suggest that we should pay more attention to the role of emotional labor in environmental work.

This dissertation offers only very preliminary findings, but this is one of many avenues for potential research. Whether or not the emotions that I witnessed are unique to the work of renewable energy, the collective sense of frustration defines what Phillips (1994) refers to as the “industry mindset.” Just as the museum workers’ identification with the group creates a cohesive culture, members of this industry have a strong sense of identification with the industry that is at least equal to their identification with their individual firms.

I have tried to make sense of the fact that CSR is equated with activism within an industry that many of its members see as its own form of activism. Initially, I was interested in the idea of burnout, mentioned in the literature on emotional labor and activism. A handful of studies refer to the concept of “moral fatigue” (Figley 1995; Taylor 2002), mostly in relation to carework like nursing that requires a high degree of empathy and compassion. Moral fatigue may have applications in other contexts, but it

could be tied specifically to intensely people-oriented emotional labor. In less dramatic ways, the amount of resources and energy spent advocating for the industry and the constant sense of frustration does take a toll on people. I believe that in this case it crowds out other forms of advocacy such as CSR. While environmental activism and CSR are complementary in some respects, they can also compete for already limited resources.

In Chapter Four, I introduced the idea that CSR is itself a form of emotional labor, which differentiates it from other forms of labor. In this chapter I again explore the role of emotional labor, but in a collective setting. The equation of CSR with activism, and the subsequent attempts of some in the industry to reduce it to a rational process, echo the same distinction that I mentioned in Chapter Four. However, I argue that the collective frustration and even passion that members of this industry share may be another type of emotional labor, which emerges specifically out of the social context of industry events. While it may have been expressed privately, it was intensified by shared experiences. This was most exemplified in the reactions of industry members during the presentations by politicians. I was initially surprised at the palpable reactions of mostly older white men in a professional setting.

Younger industry members, of both genders, had similar frustrations with the failure of politicians. However, they also expressed frustrations with the older industry leaders, whom they blamed for a lack of innovation, the general stagnation of the industry, and the lack of job opportunities. Many were well educated and had received advanced degrees, and yet were unable to find stable jobs. Younger members were

largely pessimistic about their own futures even as they professed to be passionate about the cause of renewable energy and this type of technology. When I briefly described my work, both men and women were more open to the idea of CSR than their older counterparts though they were more concerned with the survival of the industry. One young engineer joked to me that this industry could become “the horse and buggy of the energy industry” because he felt that the “old guard” of the industry were not open to innovation.

What both groups demonstrated was that working in this industry required a great deal of emotional energy. The day-to-day labor may be engineering-focused, but being a leader in this industry requires constant advocacy that is not often rewarded. Industry members do share a belief that renewable energy is a just cause. On the surface, the fact that industry members are motivated by a belief in the intrinsic social and environmental benefits of renewable energy is compatible with the larger goals of the climate justice movement. Mr. Smith remarked to me that “Well, I think renewable energy is socially responsible. You’re not burning fossil fuels or creating climate problems. You’re being able to produce power hopefully at a competitive price point. That’s a big problem in communities where electricity may not even exist.”

To return to the question of CSR, I had thought that CSR might also be compatible with a belief in the cause of climate justice. The equation of CSR as activism is in itself not surprising. This preliminary research, however, suggests two important things. The first is that CSR as activism may not be compatible with the goals of free-

market environmentalism. The second is that CSR as activism competes with, or is crowded out by, the general sense of activism required by members of a struggling industry.

Tight and Loose Coupling and Friendly Interdependency

In addition to the resources that would be needed to invest in CSR, I also argue that there are organizational conditions that must be met in order to instigate the process of collective change. I have described the heterogeneity, or loose coupling, at the annual convention that I believe is reflective of the overall structure and day-to-day business of the industry. Loosely coupled fields are less likely to produce ideological consensus, have fewer mechanisms for the dissemination of new norms, and are thus less likely to undergo radical change. I also argue that when companies specialize in very specific technologies or services, it prevents the standardization of new norms. Greenwood and Hinings (1996) argue that tightly coupled institutional fields are more likely to produce ideological consensus and have more mechanisms for the dissemination, monitoring, and compliance of new norms, and so loose coupling makes such consensus more difficult. This is what I witnessed at the annual conference.

At policy events, however, I became familiar with a core group of leaders who wielded considerable power and influence in the industry. Despite the fact that members of this group may have worked for rival firms, they were more tightly coupled. Phillips (1994) uses the term “friendly interdependency” and a “fraternity of interests” (395) to describe the sense of camaraderie among museum workers. Practically speaking,

individuals and even firms in this industry are highly interdependent and collaborate with each other frequently. Among industry leaders, there is a remarkable sense of cooperation. In fact, I remarked to a Smith & Associates employee after my first event that I had expected to find a more competitive atmosphere and found the sense of collegiality and social cohesion surprising. The shared emotions that I mentioned above reflect a strong identification with the industry at large. Phillips finds that among museum workers, even the word “competition” is distasteful or offensive. Similarly, Mr. Smith mentioned his distaste for several individuals in this industry who have developed unflattering reputations for appearing overly aggressive in promoting their own company’s interests.

Phillips also points to variations in competitiveness within industries. While a sense of collegiality does not mean that there is no direct competition, this industry differs dramatically from the mining industry in the level of competitiveness. The structure of the mining industry is tightly centered around a small number of similar firms; this breeds a high degree of competition rather than collaboration. Competition is an unspoken assumption that most CSR scholars take for granted without acknowledging that not all industries are highly competitive. In short, this industry is unique because it is at once both loosely coupled (heterogeneous) but controlled by a tightly coupled (interdependent) group of industry leaders. I argue that both of these factors hinder the adoption of CSR on a collective level. The heterogeneity makes the standardization of new norms difficult. The tight coupling of industry leaders could eventually promote the adoption of new norms from the top down. “Friendly interdependency” also reflects the fact that many in the industry share a common sense of purpose that is directed outwards

towards the common challenges that the industry is facing. This outward focus contrasts with the common narrative that large MNCs are motivated solely by their own internal success.

Conclusions

This renewable industry varies from extractive industries in important ways. Not only are the structural conditions of the extractive industries conducive to institutional isomorphism, but they have significantly more economic and political capital. This allows them more freedom to enact their own policies and practices. The objective reality is that this industry's lack of resources would undoubtedly make it hard to enact CSR. However, this simple explanation may not be sufficient to explain why CSR emerges in one context but not another. As in Rajak's (2011) study of CSR conferences, I found that the physical act of gathering in a shared space highlights the profoundly social, collective, performative, and even ritualistic aspects of work that are not often captured by scholars. I argue that the importance of shared spaces such as conferences is intensified in a small industry. By taking on the role of an employee in this industry I believe that I have also made an important methodological contribution to the study of corporate ethics. The distinction between an emic and etic perspective has been a guiding principle of this research, and I have tried to talk a careful line between participant and observer in order to gain a subjective understanding of the experience of working in this industry.

By doing so, I have believe that I have new insight into the role of emotional labor. In Chapter Four, I referred to emotional labor relying on the more common use of

the term to refer to people- and care-centered work. In this chapter, I argue that scholars should expand the concept to encompass a wider range of emotions within a wider range of occupational fields. Equally important is to envision that emotional labor can be collective. Sociologists certainly recognize the importance of shared emotional experiences, but rarely do so within the realm of professional work. Jackall's (1988) moral mazes epitomize the common argument that individuals' own morals, ethics, and feelings are structured by institutions. I myself referred to this argument in Chapter Three to demonstrate the individual's moral beliefs are structured by well-defined ideological boundaries that marginalize emotional care-centered labor and that govern the day-to-day work within the industry. However, this does not mean that emotions are irrelevant.

In Rajak's account, she describes collective emotional experiences that are crucial to establishing CSR as "development orthodoxy" and to constructing narratives that "structure the processes of the CSR world" (2011: 10). While she points to celebratory rituals that are akin to Durkheim's collective effervescence (1915), it is also possible that frustration and negative emotions may fulfill the same function of providing a narrative or orthodoxy that binds industry members (or at least the core group of industry leaders) together in a common cause.

I had hypothesized at the outset of this dissertation that renewable energy work was qualitatively different than other industries precisely because it overlaps with environmental activism, which would make it a more natural ally for the activism-oriented work of CSR. I have explored the possible overlap with climate justice and CSR within one specific company by focusing on the values and actions of individuals, and in this chapter sought to do so on an industry-level. I have found that the characterization of

CSR as progressive activism works to marginalize the work of CSR both within one organization and within the industry at large.

This preliminary investigation does suggest that there may be emotions attached to the work of renewable energy. I am not convinced, however, that the emotions I witnessed were specifically and wholeheartedly attributed to the cause of environmental justice. While virtually everyone in this industry believes that promoting renewable energy is a just cause, I leave open the possibility that the emotions are also tied to a more general struggle for legitimacy, recognition, and economic reward. This is certainly an area that deserves more research. Whatever the case may be I suggest that CSR scholars rethink the role of individual industries as more than passive sites of institutional isomorphism. They are an important link between micro and macro-sociological forces and are a primary site in which CSR does or does not emerge.

Chapter Six: Renewable Energy at a Crossroads

The preceding empirical chapters were largely predicated on comparisons between this industry and extractive industries. I want to make clear that my intentions were mainly to draw attention to shortcomings in the literature, not to presume that extractive industries are the gold standard of CSR. This renewable industry is still evolving and is only just beginning to expand into developing countries. Latin America in particular has experienced decades of conflicts with extractive industries, but has very little experience with renewable energy companies or projects. It is possible that there might be a learning process and that there might be cases of conflicts that are publicized enough to pose a reputational threat. I also described that this industry is made up of many small companies that specialize in specific services, which is not conducive to the adoption and standardization of CSR. Perhaps it is inevitable that as industries grow they will consolidate, in which case we may see the rise of large renewable energy MNCs. If they do, will they follow the same trajectory as their non-renewable peers?

A handful of large renewable energy companies do already follow the “community relations” model of CSR that is used by extractive companies, but very little is known about them beyond what is publicly available. A possible critique would be to point to continuing renewable energy controversies and say that renewable energy companies have even more leeway to inflict harm because they can hide behind the clean image of renewable energy. Critics might argue that the fundamental issue with CSR is not the type of technology used but the fact that all private corporations are driven primarily by profits. My observations at the project site and my portrayal of Mr. Smith may in fact support this narrative, but I have sought to provide a richer and more complex

picture than that. Even if it is the case that Mr. Smith is acting in his own self-interest, I invite scholars to think outside the bounds of this dominant model of CSR. I hope that I have also challenged the idea that CSR is a top-down phenomenon that is driven by global pressures and then disseminated by powerful industries and corporations through the inescapable forces of institutional isomorphism.

That is, of course, not to say that the global forces are inconsequential, and it is time to revisit some of the ones with which I began this dissertation. I began with the observation that renewable energy development plays a central role in the emerging climate justice movement. The few development-oriented institutions that I mentioned—the United Nations, the World Bank, and USAID—are only part of the new world of climate finance that grew out of the 2009 Copenhagen Accord (Dimitrov 2010). Climate finance involves the flow of funds from developed to developing nations to help those countries curb their emissions and mitigate climate change (Buchner et al. 2011). The Green Climate Fund (GCF) is the main channel through which these funds are managed. One of the most controversial elements of the GCF is its Private Sector Facility meant to include both private investors and recipients of funds. Friends of the Earth, a well-known global environmental and human rights organization, writes:

Rather than lionize the role of the private sector, our report instead de-constructs ideological notions of “leveraging” private finance and examines the track record of the private sector, private financiers and development finance institutions in developing countries. It concludes that private finance will be especially difficult to deploy responsibly in low and lower-middle income countries, as well as in marginalized communities in all developing countries. Further, private climate finance cannot be a substitute for direct public finance; adaptation in particular is likely to offer few commercially profitable opportunities for private financiers.

While they are potentially problematic, public-private partnerships for renewable energy

projects are a growing trend (Pattberg 2010; Sovacool 2013). Climate finance and other renewable energy partnerships are touted as a way to fill the gap caused by insufficient renewable energy policies and financing structures in many countries, including the U.S. Generally, the U.S. has lagged behind other industrial countries in promoting renewable energy (Laird and Stefes 2009; Mendonça, Lacey, and Hvelplund 2009; Sovacool 2009).

Perhaps one of the most ambitious examples of a public-private partnership is the Masdar Initiative in Abu Dhabi (Luomi 2009). Despite having some of the world's largest oil reserves, in 2006 the government of Abu Dhabi created an aggressive renewable energy policy and a multi-billion dollar development program. The cornerstone is the Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company, which is a private joint stock company that is wholly owned by the government. In 2008, the company broke ground on Masdar City, which will be planned entirely around renewable energy and other sustainability initiatives. This project is remarkable for many reasons, and is being touted as a model, or at the very least, a utopian vision, for the future of sustainable planning and development. This case seems to represent a successful merger between a wide variety of stakeholders, which is why some scholars consider it CSR (Mezhur 2009) even though it is not a typical case. Another case that is touted as CSR comes from renewable energy development in the Baltic States, where private renewable energy developers participated in the UN Global Compact and incorporated development principles such as the UN's Human Development Index (Streimikiene, Simanaviciene and Kovaliov

(2009).¹⁶

Public-private partnerships are a growing trend in a number of fields, including healthcare (McKee 2006) and education (Patrinos, Osorio, and Guáqueta, 2009), and are a hotly debated issue among scholars. In some optimistic perspectives, they represent the positive evolution of CSR and a new era of corporate citizenship (Schwab 2008) or new opportunities to meet humanitarian development goals (Evans 1996). For others, they represent a new form of corporate imperialism and the further extension of harmful neoliberal policies (Dansereau 2005). Mr. Smith and others in this industry might see public-private partnerships as a necessary evil that could support the industry until it becomes commercially viable enough to compete with fossil fuels on its own. Some might argue that the weakening boundary between the public and private sector is inevitable for better or for worse (Wettenhall 2003).

Earlier in this dissertation, I introduced the idea that the broader climate justice movement is composed of three related social movements: radical climate activism, mainstream climate management, and free-market innovation. Mainstream climate management, in the form of climate finance, is essentially a mechanism for public-private partnerships. Pattberg (2010) estimates that there are approximately 323 climate change partnerships that have emerged since the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. He argues that they are effective not only for their impact on climate change mitigation and adaptation, but also for their contribution to “broader political

¹⁶ The Human Development Index (HDI) is measured by three major dimensions: life expectancy at birth, educational attainment, and standard of living. See Anand (1994).

goals such as increased participation and inclusiveness in environmental governance” (279). Because climate finance is a new phenomenon, there are many unknowns, and it will be a fertile ground for more research. One important question for CSR scholars and practitioners will be to examine if projects funded by climate finance and other public-private partnerships are held to a higher standard. Most international financing and lending agencies such as the World Bank have their own internal social and environmental standards. Climate finance is also intended not only to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but also to address social and economic inequalities by investing in developing regions. Within this framework, it seems unlikely that socially and environmentally harmful activities would be funded.

While climate finance and public-private partnerships represent mainstream climate management, there are a growing number of privately owned renewable energy companies. The Breakthrough Energy Coalition that I mentioned at the beginning of this dissertation explicitly cites the failure of existing policies to mobilize resources and increase renewable energy development. There are many other private sector innovators, the most notorious of whom is Elon Musk. Musk is well known as the creator of SpaceX and Tesla Motors, but he is also one of the founding members of SolarCity Corporation, which is now the largest provider of solar energy services in the U.S. He also promotes Tesla Motor’s electric cars as sustainable and emission-free, although this claim has come under question. What is most remarkable about his success is that he is one of the first people to use his brand-name recognition to make a renewable energy technology commercially viable on a national scale. While renewable energy has a positive reputation generally, it has lacked the mainstream appeal needed to attract investors.

Musk has paved the way for more investments in innovative technology. SolarCity is located in Silicon Valley, and RETs are poised to take advantage of the start-up boom (Nanda, Younge, and Fleming 2013).

There are many unknowns about the future of renewable energy industries. Will innovators such as Elon Musk be motivated to make their companies and products both socially and environmentally friendly? CSR has come a long way from its roots in corporate philanthropy and it is rapidly evolving. It is possible that what I have referred to as the “community relations” model, or the “ceremonial” commitments that are the brunt of the most criticism will be succeeded by a new generation of CSR epitomized by young philanthropists such as Mark Zuckerberg. This new generation will be defined not only by new technology. Social media has allowed influential leaders to have a direct relationship with consumers. It has also brought even greater scrutiny to the behavior of corporations by giving high-profile individuals greater visibility and arguably greater opportunities for accountability.

The rise of social media has also facilitated the growth of radical climate activism. The recent protests surrounding the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL), beginning in the spring of 2016, are emblematic of the increasing polarization of environmental politics and the intensity of public distrust in fossil fuel companies. DAPL is a controversial oil pipeline that began construction in early 2016 and which runs through North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, and Illinois. The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe has alleged that the project will cause irreparable environmental harm to the water source of their reservation and that it has already disturbed important cultural artifacts.

There were protesters from the outset of the project, which began construction in early 2016, but this project is remarkable for the speed at which protestors mobilized to form a highly-publicized campaign targeting not only the developers, but also the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which had provided some of the necessary permits. Protesters urged the Obama Administration to take immediate action to halt the project. Using Facebook, thousands of protestors organized on site in North Dakota in support of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, including celebrities and politicians, indigenous groups, and military veterans. Additionally, nearly one million more joined protests online. There were reports of violent conflicts between protestors and law enforcement, generating even more media attention and support for the protest both domestically and internationally.

Radical climate activism has produced grassroots campaigns targeting fossil fuel companies all over the world. The controversy surrounding DAPL, however, is representative of a new type of social movement. Rather than being led by grassroots organizations via traditional means of mobilization, the protests against DAPL reached the mainstream in a matter of days. Some protestors represent the more politically radical political position on environmental and social justice, for example, by calling for the boycott of major financial institutions with a stake in the project. Many more, however, may have less interest in radical politics but are sympathetic to the David and Goliath story of a Native American tribe standing up to a big oil company. Whatever the cause for joining the protest, DAPL seems to be a turning point for the movement against fossil fuels. A headline from the U.K. news outlet, The Guardian, reads, “The world has been electrified by protests against the Dakota access pipeline. Is this a new civil rights

movement where environmental and human rights meet?” (Solnit 2016).

It remains to be seen whether there will be sustained public pressure to reduce fossil fuels production and consumption and whether this new movement will be equally motivated to promote renewable energy projects. The DAPL protests were as much about fossil fuels as they were about the rights of local communities. In March 2016, the Department of the Interior approved a 287 MW solar power generating facility in the Mojave Desert in San Bernardino, California, proposed by a private developer named Regenerate Power. The project was part of President Obama’s renewable energy policy designed to promote renewable energy development on federal lands. The project is located close to the Mojave National Preserve, which is a tourist destination known for its abundant desert wildlife. The project has been hampered by protesters, who allege that it will cause environmental damage, especially to the local bighorn sheep population. In August of 2016, environmentalists and activists successfully lobbied the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors to reject the project. Even though the project had federal approval, the County Board denied the necessary permits and environmental documents required under state law. The fate of the project is still being decided.

The project has attracted local media attention, and the rejection of the environmental permits has largely been hailed as a success. Finnerty (2016) writes:

Silicon Valley is leading the nation’s charge toward renewable energy development by making significant investments and pioneering technological advancements. This is important and commendable. However, in the effort to move toward a sustainable energy future, some companies are failing to seriously consider the size and location of their industrial scale renewable projects. The largest projects can exceed the size of a small city. In some cases, they are being located in places that cause severe environmental harm to our national parks and

wildlife. Such poorly placed solar plants erode public support for a clean energy future.

This reflects the tenuous situation that renewable energy is in. The public supports renewable energy in the abstract, but the fact that the author cites “industrial scale renewable projects” highlights the fear that local communities are at risk from commercial development. The word “industrial” has certain negative connotations associated with the industrial revolution run amok. Devine-Wright (2014) describes other cases of local opposition to renewable energy projects that echo the “not in my backyard” (NIMBY) movement typically targeting projects in controversial sectors.

What is clear following the DAPL case is that the climate justice movement is becoming increasingly mainstream as more members of the public (not simply radical activists) are paying greater attention to the actions of both fossil fuel and renewable energy companies. This may bring greater accountability while it also makes it more difficult for investors and policy makers to promote the cause of commercial renewable energy generation for fear of the financial costs associated with public scrutiny. Regenerate Power, the developer of the Soda Mountain Solar project, has undoubtedly incurred a huge financial loss as a result of protests. It is also possible that the public will not be appeased by traditional forms of CSR if the goal is to halt projects that are believed to be harmful. Finally, it is unclear if the momentum that exists now in the U.S. to protest will extend to the work of large corporations operating in developing countries.

What both the DAPL and Soda Mountain Solar protests reflect is the contentious and divisive environmental politics that have hampered policy change in the U.S. Supporting environmental regulation may be more mainstream than it used to be, but it is

still a highly partisan issue. While the U.S. has been slow to change, and has famously declined to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, other developed and even developing countries have undertaken more aggressive stances on climate change. I mentioned innovative (state sponsored) renewable energy projects in Abu Dhabi (Reiche 2010) and the Baltic States (Streimikiene and Klevas 2005). The European Union has set a target for a 20 percent substitution of fossil fuels by renewable energy sources by 2020 (Krozer 2012). Mexico introduced energy sector reforms in 2013, aimed in large part at boosting renewable energy production (Wood 2014). Kenya is a global leader with 80 percent of its electricity coming from renewable sources (Kiplagat, Wang, and Li 2011). According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (2016), the U.S. currently stands at 11 percent. While governments play a fundamental role in shaping renewable energy policies, the landscape for renewable energy production is increasingly global and complex, with the introduction of international climate change initiatives, new opportunities for public-private partnerships, and interest from foreign investors in developing countries.

I began this dissertation by simply asking why this one particular industry has not adopted the dominant model of CSR, but my eventual aim and the potential for more research is much larger. CSR as an idea at the highest level is more than the actions of any one company or industry; it is about redrawing or at least blurring the boundaries not only between the public and private sectors, but also between the interests of the market and the interests of society. CSR has traditionally been envisioned as the private sector borrowing (or coopting) development principles, but this relationship works both ways as development agencies are increasingly citing the need to leverage capital and innovation

from the private sector. This research has explored how renewable energy industries and companies are uniquely situated along this boundary.

This research has also made important methodological contributions to the field of CSR studies and to the sociological study of organizations and institutions. I have built on two important existing ethnographies of large mining companies. While I have maintained a critical stance towards CSR, I have also tried to expand the boundaries of the literature. The common theories used to explain and critique the use of CSR by large mining companies are not relevant in all contexts. Studies of existing CSR programs are also missing an important opportunity to explore why CSR emerge in some contexts, but not in others. Finally, I also argue that CSR studies should think about global forces beyond the top-down explanation of the dissemination of global CSR norms. Michael Burawoy's global ethnography and extended case study methods have guided me throughout this dissertation. I have tried to move from the microsociological to the macrosociological and in doing so I hope that I have shown that the process of creating and enacting CSR is not simply dictated from above, but may be contested and shaped by fundamentally social (not simply structural or economic) dynamics.

There are also many normative implications of this work. Specifically, I believe that there is an urgent need to promote renewable energy in a socially and environmentally responsible way. I also believe that CSR scholars should do more to accept the role that private industries and companies are playing in meeting humanitarian and environmental development goals in ways that go beyond the traditional means of philanthropy and technological innovation. Large MNCs still hold tremendous power, but there is a growing movement of younger entrepreneurs who are building renewable

energy businesses from the ground up and who will be more accountable simply because they are more visible than the previous generation of corporate leaders who were not subject to the intense scrutiny of social media.

This dissertation is a preliminary exploration of several rapidly evolving social trends. The climate justice movement traces its roots back to the first U.N. Climate Change Conference in 1995 followed quickly by the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol in 1997. In the last twenty years, however, political action on climate change has been slow. The formation of the Green Climate Fund in 2010 and the 2016 Paris Agreement have been major turning points, but it remains to be seen how they will be implemented. While much of the early focus on climate change was on gathering scientific evidence and raising public awareness, the next generation of the climate justice movement will focus on the so-called energy transition. The idea of an energy transition, however, obscures the fact that to succeed, it will take more than the condemnation of fossil fuels and the abstract support of renewable energy. The climate justice movement faces the very difficult but fundamental challenge of reconciling the needs of society with the needs of the market, but I remain optimistic that it is uniquely situated to do so.

Epilogue

The ethnographic portion of this dissertation concluded when I terminated my short-term contract with Smith & Associates in January 2016. While I have followed current events in the industry, it became abundantly clear over the course of the 2016 presidential campaign that climate change and environmental regulation were key issues. Donald Trump was ridiculed by many for repeatedly claiming that climate change was a hoax, while an unassuming man named Ken Bone made headlines during the second presidential debate when he asked the simple question “what steps will your energy policy take to meet our energy needs while at the same time remaining environmentally friendly and minimizing job layoffs?” (Ahmed 2016). While Democrats have traditionally received the support of environmentalists, they have also had a difficult time campaigning in states that have seen the steady decline of coal industry jobs. Hillary Clinton faced harsh criticism for declaring in a town hall event, “we’re going to put a lot of coal miners and coal companies out of business,” referring to her support for renewable energy (Strauss 2016).

In many ways the presidential campaign reflected the predictable partisan platforms regarding energy and environmental policy, but the divide has only intensified in recent years. President Obama’s administration not only adopted the Paris Agreement on climate change, and stepped in to halt the proposed Dakota Access Pipeline, but he unveiled an historic “Clean Power Plan” in 2015, which included significant investments in renewable energy both in the United States and abroad. The Plan included a “Power Africa” initiative meant to spur private sector investments in energy throughout the continent. This initiative focused not only on increasing renewable energy development,

but also on economic and social development. Both during his campaign and during his first weeks in office, Donald Trump has vowed to dismantle the Obama administration's progress on renewable energy beginning with the Clean Power Plan and the United States' commitment to the Paris Climate Agreement (Sneed 2016).

The 2016 presidential campaign and subsequent election of Donald Trump was an unprecedented event in American history that sent shockwaves through the sociological community. It was also a resounding defeat for climate change activists. For these reasons, this dissertation concluded at an interesting and historic moment. The chaotic transition that is unfolding as of this writing is forcing social scientists, climate change activists, and renewable energy practitioners to adapt to a new and uncertain future with many unanswered questions.

I mentioned that Elon Musk has been a very visible figure as he has paved the way for commercial solar development. Prior to the election, Musk generally kept a low profile, but in a November 2016 interview, he was critical of Trump while appearing to support Hillary Clinton. He stated, "I feel a bit stronger that he is not the right guy... He doesn't seem to have the sort of character that reflects well on the United States," while Clinton's economic and environmental policies are "the right ones." He continued, "I don't think this is the finest moment in our democracy" (Ferris 2016). Some of Musk's Silicon Valley peers were vocal supporters of the Trump campaign's pro-business platform, including venture capitalist Peter Thiel, but Trump remains a divisive figure and has had a less than solid relationship with the tech industry. He went so far as to publicly threaten Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos and called for a boycott of Apple. Following his election, he held a technology summit with industry leaders including Bezos and

Musk.

It may be mutually beneficial in some ways for Silicon Valley leaders to maintain a cooperative relationship with President Trump, but doing so has also been a political liability. Immediately following the election, the CEO of Uber has come under fire for his support of President Trump and has faced a widespread boycott by users of the popular ride sharing app. Other tech companies have taken a strong anti-Trump stance in light of his controversial Executive Order on immigration that he signed in late January.

President Trump's background as a businessman and his brash and unpredictable nature have confounded the relationship between the government and the private sector, and have forced many in the private sector to weigh in on political issues (Janjigian 2017).

While much attention has been focused on President Trump's immigration policy, he has continually targeted government agencies as well as employees with connections to climate change in what can be construed as an unmitigated attack on the public sector. Most worrying for climate change activists are reports that he tried to censor communications from these agencies and his appointment of Scott Pruitt, a noted climate change denier, to head the Environmental Protection Agency. His appointee to head the Department of Energy, Rick Perry, once vowed to eliminate that same agency altogether. As noted above, he has also used Executive Orders to approve the Dakota Access and Keystone XL pipelines, two controversial projects that had been blocked by President Obama.

The double bind for individuals such as Elon Musk, and even for Mr. Smith, is that President Trump's agenda to roll back federal environmental regulations may be consistent with the free-market environmentalist ideology, but it will benefit fossil fuel

industries. By promoting cheap fossil fuels, President Trump has assured that the market for renewable energy will be increasingly difficult to navigate. In an informal conversation with Mr. Smith directly following the election, he voiced this concern. Rolling back regulations may also remove incentives for companies to engage in CSR, not only because there will be less oversight but also because corporations may feel empowered by President Trump's precedent to openly dismiss his critics.

In my conclusion, I noted that the DAPL protests had sparked a renewed global interest in the behavior of fossil fuel companies. The momentum that was gained through sustained media exposure may continue to grow in response to President Trump's environmental policies. Many world leaders have denounced his stance on climate change, and have continued to develop their own renewable energy policies. Initiatives such as the Green Climate Fund and climate change mitigation programs implemented by the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the African Development Bank, and other multilateral agencies will continue. Trump has proposed deep budget cuts to the State Department budget, which includes USAID. USAID funds many renewable energy programs internationally.

Throughout this dissertation I have tried to identify some of the many actors who have a stake in the climate justice movement. There are activists who are motivated by the goal of environmental and social justice, renewable energy developers trying to promote their own companies and industries, those who work in the fossil fuel industries who fear their own decline, politicians and lobbyists, investment bankers, development agencies, NGOs, CSR practitioners, and many others. I have argued against the simplistic narrative that climate justice involves a transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy.

As the climate justice movement heats up, so to speak, there will be an urgent need for the sociological perspective that has thus far been narrowly focused on critiques of large MNCs in extractive industries.

As 2016 drew to a close, there was plenty of room for self-reflection in the sociological community. Some scholars saw the rise of Donald Trump as a failure of the sociological imagination, and many others began reimagining the role that they play in shaping public discourse. In the December *Footnotes* of the American Sociological Association, four scholars reflected on the election, with one essay specifically tackling the issue of climate change. Beer (2016) writes:

I'll admit that even though there is this expectation of the objective academic, it is very hard for me to research and teach about the sociology of climate change without it becoming personal and emotional. The predictions of the scientific consensus are dire and our social institutions are slow to take sufficient action. The presidential election and its outcome magnified this emotive response... 2016 will be the hottest year on record with every month thus far setting an average temperature record high. As a discipline, is the span of our engagement in the issue broad enough and deep enough considering the predicted consequences of inaction? Climate change received just six minutes of attention in all three presidential debates. As a discipline, are we giving it more than that?

Dunlap and Brulle (2015) offer a timely and impressive overview in a collection of essays from thirty-eight sociologists, titled, "Climate Change and Society: Sociological Perspectives." Another important work which takes a more cultural perspective is "Living in Denial: Climate Change, Emotions, and Everyday Life" (2011) by sociologist Kari Norgaard.

Sociological research will offer a critical understanding of our collective responses to the growing threat of climate change, but there is much more room for work in the field of renewable energy and for a reexamination of the role of the private sector. While some may view climate change as a failure of the global capitalist system,

sociological inquiry should not end there, nor should it limit itself to the traditional boundaries of social theory and research methods. This dissertation has been a preliminary exploration in what I hope is a growing and interdisciplinary field of research that is urgently needed.

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