

Corporate Ideas in Global Guidance Documents

Globalization and political perspectives in
Documents of The Global Compact and ISO 26000

Abstract

Corporate social responsibility has become something of a buzzword over the last decade-and-a-half. Companies apply CSR-documents to their operations in seek of an ethical guide that can lead the way through complex situations and steer away from misconduct. Globalization has lead to especially multinational corporations experiencing difficulties in navigating among different contexts. A large number of documents, referred to as Global guidance documents, try to define general guidelines that can provide common ground for ethical conduct in the global market. This thesis analyzes two of these documents; the United Nations Global Compact and ISO 26000 Guidance on social responsibility.

As the literature on global governance expands, theorists increasingly look for private actors to take part in global governance networks. But is this of any interest of business? Are we witnessing a political, globalized understanding of corporations in the twenty-first century? This thesis asks whether global guidance networks regards corporations as political actors, and what their perspective on globalization is. The analysis implies there is a potential political reading of political actors, and that the perspective on globalization correspond to the transformationist perspective.

Key words: CSR, The Global Compact, ISO 26000, Idea analysis, Governance.

Words: 9924.

List of Abbreviations

CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CC	Code of conduct
GC	United Nations Global Compact
GC10	United Nations Global Compact Ten Principles
HRBLT	Human Rights and Business Learning Tool
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
UDHR	Universal Declaration on Human Rights

“It is justice, not charity, that is wanting in the world.”

Mary Wollstonecraft, 1792.

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1 Introduction

Globalization, it is said, poses new challenges for the future. An increasingly integrated world economy is challenging the Westphalian system of nation states and causing negative outcomes for environment as well as society. Many states lack well-functioning institutions and legal systems to protect their societies from the negative externalities of multinational corporations' operations. In particular the poorest states lack the sufficient legal framework – and they do not have equivalent incentives to provide it, as this would put the state in a less competitive position for international investment and production¹. Theorists, of course, try to reply to this development in, for example, the vast and expanding literature on global democracy and global governance. Often, solutions include private actors, such as civil society in general, NGOs and corporations in the process. Being core actors of economic globalization and accounting for a large share of the world economy, multinational corporations should help address the problems they take part in creating. But can there be a way of achieving corporate responsibility or even accountability for ethical standards without global regulation?

Such questions, regarding the character of organizations, have been discussed since at least the antiques². "The battle in Seattle"³ often symbolizes the starting point for the intensified and diversified interest for the question over the last 15 years. The demonstrations indicated a newborn need to address the question. Part of the anti-globalization movement, the demonstration concerned what was seen as the (multinational) corporations' increasing and uncontrolled power over the world economy reacting to economic globalization⁴. This led on a quest for better control mechanisms on the global market, in other words; finding a way to make corporations responsible.

An answer to this is the body of documents on *Corporate Social Responsibility* (CSR). Companies often create CSR-frameworks that address social issues (in a manner the company chooses itself), preferably including a more concrete policy document, a *Code of Conduct* (CC). Doing this enables communication and information between society and the company, providing an overview over the company's impacts as a starting point for dialogue. Why then, should companies take on such a task? A range of arguments has been put forth for this spanning from profit maximization, to ethical pureness and doing "right".

¹ Koenig-Archibugi, Mathias 2005:133f.

² Dicken, Peter, 2007:4.

³ "The battle in Seattle" was an anti-globalisation protest activity taking place at the WTO Ministerial Conference of 1999, including around 40.000 demonstrators.

⁴ Danaher & Burbach, 2000:Introduction.

The ethical argument however, is contested since laws differ between societies and, in addition, this motive is all too often too weak to even be considered by companies in a competitive context. Despite these challenges, many companies *have* developed documents on CSR, codes of conduct, and also report their impacts in different reporting systems.

Notwithstanding this progress, it is seen as a feeble victory. Codes are neither designed nor implemented in a perspicuous way, leading to calls for homogenization of codes. Companies choosing themselves what to report, how to do it and where to do it, challenges the promise of transparency and dialogue. At the same time, this flora of different initiatives is regarded a resource, allowing contextualization of codes. Since operations are undertaken in the global market, companies face a plethora of societal diversity, making place-specific guidelines much-needed.

Global guidance documents⁵, can be regarded as role models for CSR-documents. This is the stance of Ulf Henning Richter, who also means global guidance documents can be “*standard setting and learning initiatives*” within a “*global regulatory framework*” to achieve “*new governance mechanisms*”⁶.

Global guidance documents then, acting as norm-setting catch-all networks, try to identify the least common denominator in the field of CSR. While providing this reference of values, they allow place and context to influence the companies’ implementation of individual codes, although demanding the common values to be represented. There is a range of global guidance documents and standards⁷ and this thesis analyzes two of the global guidance documents, namely the United Nations Global Compact and the ISO 26000.

These global guidance documents are regarded as norm-setting documents, containing several functions. They claim something about reality (make *ontological statements*), take *normative standpoints* (e.g. human rights) and provide *policy implications* on what companies should do. Since the documents provide these functions, an analogy is drawn between them and ideologies⁸, not claiming that the documents constitute such. The thesis takes on a descriptive task, analyzing values and statements in global guidance documents.

⁵ The term *Global guidance documents* is used to describe documents that provide guidance on corporate social responsibility for (possibly amongst others) multinational corporations. For further elaboration on this term, see section 1.2.

⁶ Richter, Ulf Henning, 2010:641. Italics added.

⁷ E.g. UN global compact, OECD guidelines for multinational enterprises, ISO 26000, SA 8000, AA 1000.

⁸ For further elaboration on the characteristics of ideologies, see for example Teune, Henry, 2009:2f.

1.1 Purpose and research questions

Ulf Henning Richter claims the literature on, and traditions regarding, CSR, are based on the nation as the main framework and the liberal market economy as the main system⁹. Further, he rejects this as a correct framing of the conditions, suggesting that globalization has imposed such major changes to society that we can no longer continue to address questions of CSR, nor view the multinational corporation, in an apolitical way. Richter seeks further research on:

*“to which extent is there a paradigm shift toward a political, postnational understanding of the way how CSR strategies, programs, policies, and tools of MNCs are designed?”*¹⁰

The literature on corporate social responsibility, corporate citizenship and sustainability is under growth, containing an abundance of research topics.

This thesis joins in on Richter’s questions, but from a slightly different perspective. Implicitly, Richter assumes an equality sign between *post-national* and *political*. A conclusion I regard understandable (especially when discussing global governance), but nonetheless questionable. There is of course the possibility of something being political without being post-national, and vice versa. Therefore, I will disassemble the question into two parts. Starting off from a general interest of global governance and global democracy, private actors’ possible part in governance is a particularly interesting matter. The idea of the corporate role that is displayed in global guidance documents could have some influence on the CSR discourse in general. The perspective on globalization in the studied documents can be assumed to exist in a context beyond the state. We should not, however, take for granted what perspectives on globalization are displayed. As different perspectives consider actors and structures in different ways, it is relevant step back and consider the views on globalization itself. It is therefore well motivated to structure a description of the ideas of these matters in global guidance documents and to analyze whether they respond to the views within the literature.

. This thesis seeks to provide a description and analysis of the two documents. The research questions are:

Which perspective of globalization is presented in documents of The United Nations Global Compact and ISO 26000?

Is the corporation presented as a political actor in documents of The United Nations Global Compact and ISO 26000?

⁹ Richter, Ulf Henning, 2010:642

¹⁰ Ibid. Italics added.

1.2 Conceptual definitions

This thesis deals with contested concepts that are used and defined in an array of ways. For clarity, some elaboration on the terms I choose to describe these concepts is needed. The subjects of research are referred to as global guidance documents. These are published by, and part of, larger structures often referred to as multi-stakeholder initiatives, private-public networks or transnational norm-building networks¹¹. The documents are not to be confused with these networks as such. That is, I do not claim to analyze the entire Global Compact or ISO 26000, but documents that are issued by them. These documents contain recommendations for actions and guidance for implementation. I have chosen the term “global guidance documents” over other possible terms to underline that they are not to be regarded as international codes of conduct, nor are they judicially binding as such. This definition is important to make, not least since documents of this kind has earlier been called international codes¹². The term also emphasizes that it is the specific documents that are studied, not the entire networks they are a part of.

1.3 Research design and Demarcation

This thesis will conduct a descriptive, qualitative study of the Global Compact and ISO 26000. Descriptive studies aim to classify observations. To appropriately do this, it is important to access an analytical tool for structuring the observations in the material. For descriptive approach studies, it is even regarded necessary for researchers to develop such a tool by their own¹³. Literature regarding globalization, corporate social responsibility and politics constitute the theoretical framework. This enables me to distinguish three perspectives on globalization and a characterization of the political in the form of dimensions. This is also reflected in an analytical schedule, used as a tool to distinguish different perspectives in the text¹⁴. A selection of documents from the Global Compact website and the ISO 26000 standard constitute the primary material of the analysis. Further elaboration on the methodology of the thesis is provided in chapter four.

¹¹ For other definitions, see for example Fritch, S. 2008:14 and Mueckenberger, U. & Jastam, S., 2010:223f.

¹² Kline, John M. 1985, s.3.

¹³ Esaiasson et al 2007, p. 155

¹⁴ Dimensions, see section 2.2 and 3.4. Schedule, see appendix 1.

1.4 Disposition

This opening chapter (1) has introduced the field of research established the research questions. The methodological approach of the thesis has also been briefly discussed. The following two chapters will present the theories on globalization and the political. The question of post-nationality, or globalization, is addressed in chapter two (2), identifying three globalization perspectives and dimensions that constitute one part of the analytical framework. The question of the political role of the corporation is addressed in chapter three (3) where dimensions of the political are established. Chapter four (4), presents methodological discussion on case selection and the pros and cons of qualitative studies. The cases are presented in more detail in chapter five (5). The dimensions of chapter two and three constitute the analytical framework and form the foundation for an analytical schedule that will structure the analysis that is accounted for in chapter six (6). The closing chapter seven (7) of the present the conclusions of the study. The coda of the thesis consists of a list of references in chapter eight (8) and an appendix in chapter nine (9).

2 Globalization

To assess the perspectives of globalization in global guidance documents, a theoretical framework of dimensions will be developed, based on different perspectives on globalization. Globalization literature is explored to identify key perspectives. Sustainability, development, economic growth and poverty alleviation are words that thrive in the minds and mouths of the public, the media and the academia of today. These words often connect to one of the most used, perhaps misused word of the latest decades: globalization. Common ground seems to exist that this is not the first time the world has witnessed globalization¹⁵ Although the concept has been employed in academia for over a century (for example, it was part of Karl Marx's ideological vocabulary), its meanings has not settled around any generally agreed-upon definition. Rather, the concept has become even more differentiated and hard to grasp. Definitions of globalization are probably as many as people ever hearing about the concept, using it, or being subjects to it. For example, it has been defined as:

*“the widening, intensifying, speeding up, and growing impact of world-wide interconnectedness”*¹⁶

*“A historical process involving a fundamental shift or transformation in the spatial scale of human social organization that links distant communities and expands the reach of power relations across regions and continents.”*¹⁷

*“.. the growth of ties that span space”*¹⁸

The lowest common denominator seems to revolve around the aggregated global demos, economies and societies being increasingly interconnected.

However, the nature and merits of globalization is an even harder question to answer; is it good or bad? Old news or worthy of headlines? The next section provides divisions between different perspectives.

¹⁵ The present globalization is often referred to as the third wave of globalization. The first two waves occurred between approximately 1500-188 and 1800-1919 (see Lechner, Frank 2009:17).

¹⁶ Held, David & McGrew, Anthony. Introduction of chapter *Globalization* in Held et. Al 1999.

¹⁷ Baylis et al. 2008:16.

¹⁸ Lechner, Frank, 2009:1.

2.1 Perspectives on Globalization

The definitions of globalization and the issues that are put into focus in the study of globalization are both many and diverse. Behind these positions, lie fundamentally different assumptions on the *quality and quantity* of globalization. Put in other words; is globalization an *old* or a *new* process? These different perspectives on globalization suggest fundamentally different ontological explanations on how we should perceive the world. It has been said to alter “*epistemological assumptions*” and to be “*redrawing ‘discursive boundaries that have defined corporate organizations’*”¹⁹. These assumptions, in turn, have been discussed to function as a legitimizing backdrop for theorists of global democracy²⁰, making it of fundamental interest to seek a further understanding of the perspectives on globalization. An understanding of the basic perspectives on globalization can help us navigate among ideas and statements by providing a theoretical contextualization. Held et. al.²¹ outlines three schools of thought in the globalization debate, separating *hyperglobalist* from *transformationist* and *skeptic* perspectives²².

The *skeptics* argue that there is nothing particularly new about globalization and claim levels of globalization have been equally high during earlier historical periods. References are made to empirical evidence in nation-based quantitative data, for example that the world was even more integrated in terms of trade, investment and migration in the 40-year period preceding the World War I²³. Globalization’s starting point, from this perspective, could well have been the period of European colonization. Emphasizing that business is still mostly tied to national territorial entities and that there are few truly global corporations, the skeptics consider recent levels of interconnectedness merely as history repeating itself²⁴. Management implications for corporations are simply ‘business as usual’ since the world has not changed. Instead, it is still considered an international place, where state is understood to be the main actor²⁵.

The *hyperglobalists* on the other hand, consider globalization to be a force that is fundamentally reshaping society. The increased interconnectedness between economies and societies is creating a global market that drives for social and economic change²⁶. The influence of the nation-state is therefore seen as

¹⁹ McMillan, Jill J. 2007:25.

²⁰ Karlsson, Johan 2008:9, 19, 32-44.

²¹ Held, David & McGrew, Anthony. Introduction of chapter *Globalization* in Held et. Al 1999.

²² These are no way absolute divisions, why we must keep in mind the possibility of conceptual overlapping. Making crude definitions will however serve the methodology of this thesis.

²³ Dicken, Peter, 2007: 8

²⁴ Parker, Barbara, 2005:15.

²⁵ Parker, Barbara, 2005:16.

²⁶ Fariclough, Norman & Pete, Thomas 2004:1.

eroding, but the reasons and consequences for this is a question that divides the hyperglobalists. Two main strands of thought can be defined. These have been defined as *neo-liberal* and *neomarxist* by Fairclough and Thomas²⁷, or, respectively *organicist* or *mechanist* by Desai²⁸. The former is individualistic and profit-maximizing, while the latter is strongly critical, sometimes conspiratorial according to Parker (2005)²⁹. I will refer to them as the *hyperglobal left* and *hyperglobal right* perspective.

The hyperglobal right perspective regards globalization to be mainly positive. The global market is regarded as a self-organizing process³⁰. Considered isolated actors corporations strive only for profit increase and survival in the global market. Due to the high levels of competition, companies will look for the cheapest production factors, implying relocation to production to low-wage countries³¹.

The hyperglobal left perspective, on the other hand, claims globalization is taking advantage of the inequalities in resources. Capitalism is the wrong recipe for addressing social issues like inequality, and corporations are driving globalization. Corporations will exploit and oppress people in low-wage, less developed countries. Therefore, even if globalization increases wealth in total, this will be at the expense of the least wealthy. The poor will be poorer and the rich will be richer.

The *transformationists* take the appealing, although complex, ‘third way’ between the two previous perspectives. Globalization is considered diffuse, and is therefore more vaguely described. It is regarded to strain the Westphalian world order of states and alter the locus of power in the world³². There is no single label to be put on globalization since it is not one, but several processes occurring simultaneously. Globalization is taking place within different networks which has to be assessed in terms of *extent, intensity, speed and impact*³³. The outcome differs between networks, resulting in various globalizations that Held et al (1999) calls *thick, diffused, expansive and thin*^{34,35}. This is not to say that transformationists do not think globalization has a serious impact on society. Globalization, from a transformationist view, is not understood as an isolated phenomenon, but as a multifaceted process that has not, and probably will not, come to an end. Civil society, NGOs, INGOs and corporations, as well as states

²⁷ Fairclough, Norman & Pete, Thomas 2004:1.

²⁸ Desai, Meghnad, 2001: introduction.

²⁹ Parker 2005:18f. The anti-globalist movement is acclaimed to house part of the conspiratorial hyperglobalists.

³⁰ Desai, Meghnad, 2001. Chapter “Globalization; the latest phase of capitalism”. This process is described as the “*resurgence of capitalism in its global phase*”.

³¹ Dicken, 2007:106f.

³² Held, David 2003:163.

³³ Held, David & McGrew, Anthony. Introduction of chapter *Globalization* in Held et. Al 1999.

³⁴ Held, David & McGrew, Anthony. Introduction of chapter *Globalization* in Held et. Al 1999.

³⁵ For example, Knorr Cetina (2007:65ff.) uses the term microglobalization to describe structures that are global in span and scope and argues globalization appears in different ways and result in different outcomes.

and international institutions, are actors that are understood to exist within transnational networks³⁶. Further, policies could be developed within issue-related networks rather than by international institutions (such as the UN). However, others call for precisely this; global institutions that can authorize and legitimize decisions and hold actors both responsible and accountable. Transformationists can also be seen as placed not only between hyperglobalists and skeptics, but between the hyperglobal left and right as well³⁷.

To sum up, transformationists derive different implications from their basic common view on globalization. The transformationist stance to globalization is commonly displayed in (critical) democratic theory. While skeptics disregard the concept of globalization and hyperglobalists deem it either a free-market-utopia or an oppressive, exploitive dystopia³⁸, the transformationist view does not pass any final judgement, thus leaving, in comparison, a much more open field for policy debate. While many discuss global governance, some focus on institutionalization, pondering on global institutional design. Both latter perspectives agree (to varying extent), however, that globalization “*changes what the state does, and how the state does it*”³⁹.

The merits of globalization are heavily contested within the overarching perspectives shown here. Some argue that globalization spurs economic growth and thereby promotes development. Others object to this, pointing at the inequalities in global economic distribution and in part blame globalization for world poverty. Within this thesis these globalization perspectives are considered meta-perspectives, ontological and epistemological backdrops for various ideologies. As such they will serve as dimensions in the analytical framework, accounted for in the following section.

2.2 Dimensions of globalization

Main world actors: This dimension concern which actors are focused on when describing how the world works. This corresponds to which actors are regarded to have the most power. Where the skeptics focus on the state, the transformationist and hyperglobalist consider other actors to be relevant as well.

Organizational patterns: Views on territorial and political organization ranges from concerning exclusively the state, to discussing network patterns and blurring of boundaries, to ‘one world’-arguments.

³⁶ For a discussion, see Archer, Margaret S 2007:237ff.

³⁷ For an example of this positioning, see Osland, Dhanda and Yuthas (2002).

³⁸ The Utopia-Dystopia metaphor is derived from Desai, Meghnad, 2001: introduction.

³⁹ Neumann, Iver B. & Sending, Ole Jacob 2010:1.

Character: This dimension focuses on the effects globalization is seen to have and what is its core functions. How globalization is regarded ranges from 'nothing new' to 'fundamentally changing how we think of the world and how the world functions'.

3 The Political

This chapter will make use of theories and definitions of politics, government and governance, to end up with an analytical framework to identify when corporations are presented as political actors. I choose to close in on the question of the political through an abstract approach, seeking to provide a general theoretical framework that is as comprehensible as possible from many perspectives.

To answer the question of whether and how corporations are regarded as political actors in global guidance documents, we must first define what the word “political” means. Concepts such as politics and political are continuously contested, making it important to be clear about which definitions are used to build the categorizing analytical framework. Here, the political actor refers to *an actor being involved in politics*. This, of course, is a broad definition, as different actors can be involved in politics in various ways. Aware of this, I argue it is important to not restrict the analysis by excluding some types of involvement, which is also methodologically emphasized - the analytical framework should strive to be as comprehensive as possible⁴⁰. We move on then, to the slightly daunting task of defining politics. A reservation should, however, be made: achieving perfect accuracy when defining concepts is an impossible mission. Keeping this in mind, we should not be discouraged to strive for conceptual clarity. The etymological meaning of politics, “statecraft”⁴¹, stems from the Greek word polis, meaning city-state⁴². However, we shall not rest on ancient oars. Instead, three common definitions of the political derived from Lundquist (1993, my translation)⁴³ will be introduced:

The institutional definition: Behavior, ideas and institutions related to the *public affairs* (actions stemming from, or directed at public institutions).

The functional definition: Behavior, ideas and institutions related to the authoritative allocation of *values* in a society (public or private).

The expressionistic definition: Behavior, ideas and institutions related to the exercise of *power* (any actor able to affect its surroundings).

⁴⁰ Teorell, J. & Svensson, T. 2007:36-42

⁴¹ Andréén, Nils, 2011. Nationalencyklopedien: <http://www.ne.se.ludwig.lub.lu.se/lang/politik>

⁴² Malcus, Bengt, 2011. Nationalencyklopedien: polis. <http://www.ne.se.ludwig.lub.lu.se/lang/polis/285038>

⁴³ Lundquist, Lennart 1993:27-29. *Det vetenskapliga studiet av politik*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.

The three definitions displayed as spheres; the institutional definition being the narrowest, while the expressionistic⁴⁴ definition is the widest, encompassing all parts of society (e.g. the state, the family). See appendix 2 for an image.

Politisation increases as the criteria of each definition are increasingly met. Simultaneously, the possibility to influence the next sphere increases. For example: more power means more politisation (increase in intensity). More power also renders a greater possibility to influence values (increase in extensity). The most central point, where all spheres co-exist, will here be referred to as the political core. In its most intensive and extensive appearance, the political core is equivalent to the state. The state and its organization are regarded the central area of political studies.

To establish a tool for analyzing the political, we must explore the values that laden these definitions. A brief elaboration on power, values and the public will thus follow, introducing considerations of these concepts that are regarded well-fitted for our analytical tool.

3.1 Power

There is a vast quantity and diversity of theories of *power*; investigating the concept is in itself a considerable research contribution. A dichotomy in definitions of power is that between *power-over* and *power-to*. Representing the former, Robert Dahl has explained power over as when “*A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do*”⁴⁵. This classical definition has been labeled somewhat one-dimensional, but also praised for capturing the essence of power⁴⁶. According to this definition, power can only be identified when visible – when exerted. The antagonizing tradition defines power as *power-to* and underlines that power can exist without being exerted. Instead, we should speak of power as *the ability or capacity to achieve something*. Within this thesis, a joint perspective is taken. This perspective sees power as a particular ability, the ability to “*impose one's will on other... power-over is a derivative form of power-to*”⁴⁷. Closing the brief discussion on power, we conclude that power is a concept that moves along/amongst the dualism of ability and action.

To be political, it is not regarded sufficient merely to have power, but there has to be a relatively large intensity of power. Any corporation for example has power over its employees, but it is only based on contract; the corporation and

⁴⁴ This translation differ the most from the original word (“style”) used by Lundquist. I have interpreted Lundquist’s description as trying to explain how politics manifests itself through power and vice versa. The many ways in which power can be displayed lead to a parable to art.

⁴⁵ Dahl 1975:202f. quoted in Allen, Amy, 2011:1.

⁴⁶ Allen, Amy, 2011:1. (Here quoting Lukes 1974, p. 30. (Steven Lukes uses a three-dimensional concept of power, but means it shares ” the same underlying conception of power” (as Dahl))

⁴⁷ Allen, Amy, 2011:1.

employee are interdependent. A big enough corporation (relative to its context) however, has some power over its surrounding society, although this is also an interdependence. A big enough multinational corporation is characterized by flexible production factors (e.g. location, labour) on a global scale. This creates a weighted interdependence, the corporation being rather independent on the context, whereas the local community is highly dependent on attracting corporations. The multinational corporation is therefore likely to be a powerful actor in any given society, its power depending on the possible impacts (power-to) and to what extent this creates leverage for the corporation at the bargaining table (power-over).

3.2 Values

Values are understood as ethical values. Ethics stems from moral philosophy, which tries to answer the questions on what is good and right. Ethical systems provide us with moral guidance on the normatively preferred course of action in any given situation. Two (crudely defined) ethical doctrines are used, to distinguish the different foundations that determine what is right. *Consequentialism* claims ‘the end justify the means’; the morally good action is that which produces good outcomes (e.g. utilitarianism, egoism⁴⁸). The *deontological* doctrine instead refers to *core moral principles* that always apply (can be based on rules or duties⁴⁹) and focuses less on outcomes. These doctrines will be used in the analysis to determine the ethical foundations that are invoked.

To be political, it is likewise a matter of extensity. Having private values need not be political. It is when an actor is able to set norms that are applicable for many others (e.g. laws) that it is a political action.

3.3 The public

The word *public* most commonly refers to the state, the administrative system around it and the associations states form with each other. The system of states had its starting point in the peace of Westphalia in 1648 where European countries agreed on principles of territorial integrity and sovereignty based on self determination. In the hundred years following the peace of Westphalia, theorists

⁴⁸ Utilitarianism and egoism are diverse doctrines. A common feature for utilitarianism is that it seeks to *maximise the good*. Egoism grounds its ethical imperatives in what is *best for the individual*.

⁴⁹ Whereas rules are based on different sets of rights (e.g. human rights or ownership rights), duties focuses on universal sets of duties (e.g. not to kill, lie or steal).

of the enlightenment⁵⁰ pondered on the relationships between state and society and the social contract between the two⁵¹.

The role of the state was later regarded more separate from society, perhaps best exemplified by Max Weber's definition of the state as "...a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given community"⁵². The rule of the state through government can be performed in several ways⁵³. Similarly, the government's roles are differently defined, for example the minimalist night-watcher's state and the welfare state. Within this thesis, a definition by Rotberg will be used. Rotberg claims the state's role is to efficiently provide political goods, existing in a hierarchy⁵⁴: the *provision of security* enabled by the state's monopoly on violence is the primary good. Once security is established, *adjudication* (consisting of a judicial system with a set of legitimate values) and *political participation* are the possible, secondary political goods. Thereafter, a range of political goods are possible, including: *health goods* (e.g. medical care), *knowledge goods* (e.g. education system), *infrastructural goods* (ranging from physical ones, such as roads and harbors, to communicational, such as banking and fiscal systems), *promoting civil society* and a *regulatory system for (rivalrous) environmental goods*⁵⁵. The public goods are provided through state-run institutions or by state-regulated enterprises.⁵⁶ The public-private division is blurred by such new forms of partnerships. When the state rolls back from providing the public goods, leaving instead implementation of policies to private actors, it is simultaneously surrendering some of its power, lacking full control of the transaction of politics. This move from public to private implementation of policies is commonly labeled governance. Governance systems consist of multiple actors, horizontal networks and voluntary rules. The (traditional) political core fades, as politicians become engagers and steerers of policies and execution and detail control is left to other actors⁵⁷. On state level, the so called New Public Management (NPM) politics became increasingly popular during the 1980's and 90's. The ideal state of NPM was considered slim effective and deregulated⁵⁸, translated into extending implementation to private actors. The state's prime duty was effectiveness, and to achieve this it should mimic the market.

To be political is equated to providing public goods, but also here it is a question of intensity. Digging a ditch can be regarded a provision of a (public)

⁵⁰ E.g. John Locke 1632-1704, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau 1712-1778

⁵¹ Liedman, Sven-Eric 2007:114, 138.

⁵² Weber, 1946,:78. Italics added.

⁵³ E.g. democracy, theocracy, monarchy.

⁵⁴ Rotberg, Robert I. 2003:2-4

⁵⁵ Public goods is a term widely used in political economy, referring to non-excludable, non-rivalrous goods. Many (although not all, e.g. not air) environmental goods are non-excludable, but rivalrous, thus in need of regulation.

⁵⁶ Rotberg, Robert I. 2003:2-6,

⁵⁷ Pierre, J. & Sundström, G, 2009 chapter 1 & 11.

⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 8.

good⁵⁹ (infrastructure), but it is when an actor is responsible for providing public goods that it is the most political. Governments are at the height of the public political, as they can also be made accountable for their actions.

3.4 Dimensions of the political

We have defined politics as processes taking place within three spheres; the sphere of power, the sphere of values and the public sphere. These three can vary in intensity, but also in extensity, leading to overlapping.

Power has been discussed as power-over, power-to. We conclude that values are based on ethical doctrines, which in turn contain different foundations invoked to determine what is right. The concept of public has been discussed, as well as what constitutes public goods. We have also considered the conceptual blurring that is related to shifts in provision of public goods from public institutions to private actors (governance).

Now that we have discussed, and made further definitions on the Lundquist model of political spheres, this can be used to create an analytical framework for the analysis of political actors. The framework, built on these broad definitions, consists of the following dimensions:

Normativity. The dimension seeks to identify the key normative features present in the documents. Should documents appeal for primarily profit-maximizing, the ethics will be regarded consequentialistic. Should documents instead appeal to universal norms or values, they will be regarded deontological. This is a crude way of defining ethical values, but since the purpose of the analysis is not restricted to ethical values, this broad dichotomy will do to paint an overall picture. This dimension strives not to make precise definitions of ethical standpoints. Rather, the purpose is to draw attention to the fact that the “good” is based on different ethical foundations.

Influence / stakeholders. The dimension seeks to identify how the document portrays its possible influence (an analogy could be drawn to possible stakeholders). On one side, possible influence and stakeholders are seen as internal to the corporation, restricted to for example stockholders and employees. On the other side, possible influence and stakeholders are external from the corporation – for example existing within societies or nations.

Provision. The dimension seeks to identify whether, and to what extent, corporations are regarded providers of political goods. Examples of political goods are given in Rothberg’s hierarchy (see above) and range from provision of security to for example health-, knowledge- or infrastructural goods.

⁵⁹ At least, this is a good that the public can possibly use.

Responsibility – whether, and to what extent the corporation is responsible for its actions beyond national jurisdiction.

All four dimensions include an imaged dichotomy between two values. On one side is the corporation as a private actor, seeking profit, not involvement. On the other side is the corporation as a political actor, implementing universal values onto many stakeholders, providing public goods and being responsible for all of them.

4 Method

The following section will provide a thorough account for the methodology of the thesis. Here, methodology implies accounting for the ensemble of methodological choices that are made and positions that are taken. This includes recounting for the philosophy of science that permeates the thesis, in addition to discussing research design, material, validity and reliability⁶⁰.

4.1 Qualitative and descriptive analysis

The analysis undertaken is a qualitative text analysis, here referring to the thorough reading of the text, regarding its entirety as well as particular parts and context, in search of its significant meanings⁶¹. I regard the results of the analysis inevitably affected by the researcher's persona, not least because of how we choose to address problems largely depends on our own perspectives. A subjective epistemology still demands for the researcher to strive for clarity on the choices that are made along the way. Making the theoretical underpinnings of the analytical tools visible will enable the reader to better understand the interpretations of results.

Descriptive research has been accused of not making sufficient contributions to science. However, we would be mistaken to believe that description does not contribute to explanation. Rather, by classifying and characterizing the object of research, we also make interpretations of it. In the end, conclusions are drawn from the molding together of theory and material⁶². An idea analysis is used to describe and interpret political messages⁶³. To be able to scientifically take on such an operation, we must use an analytical tool, which is derived from the theories. Descriptively designed research is, perhaps more than other research designs, required to develop this analytical tool or framework⁶⁴. With it, we are able to address the material in a systematic and comprehensible way, using the dimensions presented in the two previous theoretical chapters. It is crucial that the analytical framework is comprehensive, enabling clarity in the analysis while

⁶⁰ Cf. Beckman, Ludvig 2005:11.

⁶¹ Esaiasson et. al. 2007:237.

⁶² Beckman, Ludvig 2005:48f.

⁶³ Beckman, Ludvig 2005:14.

⁶⁴ Esaiasson et al 2007:155.

focusing and structuring the interpretations of the material. Precision in the analytical tool will make results more graspable.

The theoretical framework consists of two parts. The question of postnationality or globalization will be answered using the dimensions shown in section 2.2. The question of the political reading will use the dimensions created in section 3.4. Dimensions are normally used when we aim at describing what something is. To understand the text, and where it fits according to the dimensions and the perspectives, an analytical schedule is used (see appendix 1).

The analysis will concern two cases (see 4.3, 5.1 and 5.2) that are chosen because they are regarded influential, or “heavy”⁶⁵. It does not, however, aim to generalize from these cases. Instead the thesis presents a way of systematically sorting material built on political readings that could be relevant for future analyses to build on.

4.2 Validity and reliability

Validity means the congruence between what we are analyzing empirically and what we theoretically claim to analyze⁶⁶. Achieving validity thus means the lack of systematic errors⁶⁷. The concepts considered in this thesis are both abstract and contested, why it is even more important to be very explicit about the conceptual definitions made. The theories that are explored must be elaborated on, and in a manner as clear and open as possible, the arguments and reasoning that lies behind the chosen definitions should be exposed. This thesis strives for not only conceptual clarity, but also intersubjectivity. By clearly explaining the theories that has been used, and choices of definitions, the inevitable impression that the researcher has on the subject of research is unraveled and thus made visible.

Reliability, equally important, means the lack of unsystematic errors⁶⁸. Several readings of the material have been made to avoid such faults, although the difficulties of identifying reliability flaws should be discussed. References are frequently made to primary and secondary material. As discussed in the previous section, it is unlikely for a researcher to ever completely liberate him- or herself from the material of the study. Appendix 4 provides a table of content over the web-based material for the overview and clarity needed when dealing with online material.

⁶⁵ Teorell, J. & Svensson, T. 2007:152.

⁶⁶ Esaiasson et al 2007:63.

⁶⁷ Teorell, Jan & Svensson, Torsten 2007:57.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

4.3 Material

The primary material will be global guidance documents, both of intergovernmental origin (The United Nations Global Compact) and developed by multiple actors (ISO 26000). The motive behind choosing these two documents is that they are regarded heavy, or relevant cases⁶⁹. The Global compact is regarded as a heavy case because it is a UN institution and claims to have the network on CSR with the largest number of participants. The United Nations, being a major global institution, can have substantial ability of setting the tone for similar networks and corporations' perception on what should be in a code of conduct and what can be regarded the role of corporations. The ISO-series are internationally acknowledged as standards. The guidelines that an ISO-document provides can therefore achieve a similar impact as a UN document. The comparison is interesting because the UN is an intergovernmental organization, whereas the ISO standards were developed by a variety of actors. Will they exhibit different or similar perspectives?

The documents of the GC are derived from its official website. First, an overview of the website is done to identify the relevant documents for the analysis and to label them (in chapters, sections and subsections). The documents that are identified as relevant are analyzed regarding *perception on globalization and political reading of the corporation*. The GC website holds a vast number of subpages, and a multitude of links within them. The webpages are categorized in chapters, sections and sub-sections. Due to the vast majority of documents on the GC website, a selection of material has to be made to answer the research questions within the scope of this thesis. The GC ten principles (GC10) is regarded the key document of this analysis, as it presents background, values and implications. To introduce the GC, other documents, functioning as statements on purpose are also referred to. An additional document included in the analysis provides guidance on implementation. It was included to cross-check the imperatives between the GC10 and guidance material, which is likely to be read by corporate leaders and provide practical guidelines. The guidance material chosen is the Human rights and business learning tool (HRBLT), an on-line an online course in human rights for business managers. It is developed by the GC and the OHCHR⁷⁰. The HRBLT, the GC10 and additional documents were copied from the website. They are referred to according to the schedule in appendix 4. A further description of the two cases is given in chapter five.

The scope of action and responsibility is more thoroughly discussed in the business and human rights learning tool. The BHRLT primarily regards principle one and two, but principles three through six can be regarded represented more

⁶⁹ Teorell, J. & Svensson, T. 2007:151-152.

⁷⁰ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, in more detail p. 22

generally⁷¹. The learning tool is based on the UDHR, as well as the PRR-framework. The GC10 is designed by the Global Compact (GC), a subdivision of the UN. While the GC10 is designed for business implementation, the GC consists of a multitude of different participants, including businesses but also civil society, the public sector and others⁷². The ISO 26000 document is one, printed and cohesive document that is analyzed in full and referred to according to printed chapter numbers.

⁷¹ The BHRLT is based on the UDHR that includes labour rights.

⁷² GC:4/1.

5 Cases

5.1 Documents of the United Nations Global Compact

When reaching the United Nations Global Compact's (GC's) website, it is described as a "*strategic policy initiative for business*" that are willing to adopt ten principles (GC10) regarding human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption.⁷³ With over 8700 participants, it is stated to be the largest corporate responsibility initiative in the world, combining the UNs moral authority with the private sectors strengths⁷⁴. Companies that take part in the GC are asked to "*embrace, support and enact, within their sphere of influence*" a set of core values (the principles) that "*enjoy universal consensus*".

The GC is a network initiative that by including not only corporations, but a variety of participants⁷⁵ seeks to establish a platform for collaboration among different societal actors⁷⁶. The global compact rejects that its principles should be regarded a code of conduct, underlining it is a learning initiative that strives for improvement⁷⁷. The documents are in this thesis labeled global guidance documents. Its purpose and design has led to the GC being characterized as an "*institutional arrangement within the emerging system of global governance*"⁷⁸. In addition to the GC10 and in line with its learning ambitions, the GC provides guidance material including learning and reporting tools, as well as information and elaboration on a range of topics, including (but not limited to) the ten principles. This battery of knowledge is not, however, combined with control mechanisms. The GC is not legally binding, nor does it demand anything from its participants, other than to provide information on their work and progress on CSR and the ten principles. This could be done in various manners, and it is up to the company to choose what to report on. Failing to report annually will lead to a non-communicating remark on the website. After not reporting for two consecutive years, the participant will be expelled and has to reapply to join the GC network again⁷⁹. The GC has because of its lack of monitoring or enforcement been called

⁷³ GC:1/1.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ GC:4.

⁷⁶ GC:1/8 (no. 6).

⁷⁷ GC:1/6/2.

⁷⁸ Rasche, Andreas 2009:31.

⁷⁹ GC:3/3.

toothless. Its purpose is however not to control corporations, nor other participants, but to inspire and educate. Rather than expecting the GC to function as a watch dog, it defines its function more like that of a guide dog⁸⁰. It exists to assist the private sector in an increasingly complex world, and to implant universal values within the societies and markets of the world, that will benefit all⁸¹.

5.2 The ISO 26000 Guidance on social responsibility

The international organization for standardization (ISO) is the world's largest developer of international standards. It is a non-governmental organization, which uses both public and private consultation for standardization development striving for broad consensus on its standards⁸². The ISO 26000 standard, published in 2010 provides standards for all types of organizations on social responsibility⁸³. While providing guidelines, it is not a certification standard and clearly denounces that it could be regarded an international standard or "evidence of the evolution of customary international law"⁸⁴. The five-year long development of the standard involved hundreds of experts⁸⁵. The document's seven chapters and sections provide an overall stance on the subject of social responsibility, ranging from definitions to principles and guidance on subjects and implementation. The document does not concur with any additional learning material or networks, but provides an annex referring to a multitude of initiatives⁸⁶.

⁸⁰ GC:1/8 (no. 12).

⁸¹ GC:1/1.

⁸² ISO 2011a.

⁸³ For clarity, "organization" is referred to as "corporation", when it is evident that the former word, among other organizations, refer to the later. Quotes will of course be accurate.

⁸⁴ ISO 2011b.

⁸⁵ Sandberg, Kristina, 2010. 450 experts and 42 international organisations from 99 countries.

⁸⁶ ISO 26000: Annex A, p. 85.

6 Analysis and results

6.1 Perspective on globalization

The non-disputable role of the state is emphasized throughout the Global Compact⁸⁷. Business is named the primary driver of globalization⁸⁸, putting focus on the economic globalization on first place. Economic globalization has an impact on all societies. Analogously, economic, social and political changes in the world are now more than ever substantiating the need for cooperation between various actors. “Globalization has changed the business environment dramatically.”⁸⁹ The global compact functions as a network for collaboration on issues and streamlining values. The merits of globalization are dual, as it holds both promises, such as economic growth, and pitfalls, such as large global inequalities. Discrepancies between corporate economic influence and varying state capacity has created governance gaps. To over bridge them, collaboration among different actors is important⁹⁰. Globalization is changing society, but its merits and outcomes are varying and the creation of networks is the main focus.

The ISO 26000 document introduces the concept of globalization as a recent trend in social responsibility. Entailing increased communication and accessibility, globalization means organizations’ actions are more reviewable for larger amount of actors⁹¹. Globalization has also brought an increase in the impact of organizations, which have in some cases provided “services usually offered by government”⁹². The state’s role is simultaneously underlined. Standards can never supersede national legislation and social responsibility can never replace the obligations the state has to its inhabitants.

⁸⁷ HRBLT:1/0.

⁸⁸ GC:1/1.

⁸⁹ HRBLT:1:5 (Changing International Landscape).

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ ISO 26000:3:2.

⁹² Ibid.

6.2 Corporation as political

The global compacts ten principles constitute the key document for the analysis of the compact. The principles cover four areas, and each area is introduced in an overall informative text. The ten principles are designed in a similar, but not identical way. Most principles⁹³ open by delivering information on the goal, such as background, objectives and definitions of key concepts. After this introductory note, arguments for why corporations should achieve the goal (adhere to the principle) are made. The “business case” argument is consistently mixed with ethical arguments⁹⁴, for example:

*“Forced labour does not only constitute a violation of fundamental human rights... forced labour lowers the level of productivity and results in less secure investments...”*⁹⁵

*“Child labour is damaging to a child’s physical, social, mental, psychological and spiritual development“ “Association with child labour (...) can damage a brand image and have strong repercussions on profit and stock value.”*⁹⁶

*“Investing in production methods that are not sustainable (...) has a lower, long-term return”*⁹⁷

These two lines of argumentation represent two sets of values. Business-case reasoning grounds its values in the consequentialistic tradition, seeking to maximize the good. The ethical arguments on the other hand, correspond to the deontological tradition, appealing to universal, intristically good norms.

The principles are derived from four key external norm-setting documents regarded to enjoy universal consensus⁹⁸. Business participants are asked to enact the core values in their operations (within their sphere of influence). It is continuously clarified that companies must first and foremost adhere to and respect national laws. While emphasizing the importance of respecting the laws of the state in which operations take place, the UDHR is proclaimed to be considered international law, regardless of national ratifications⁹⁹. Therefore, companies should always respect UDHR, even if legislative contexts that do not demand it. If doing so would mean violating national law, companies should find other ways to promote international standards such as the UDHR¹⁰⁰.

⁹³ GC:1/2/1 opens with the business case, before delivering information.

⁹⁴ Exception being GC:1/2/8.

⁹⁵ GC:1/2/4. Italics added.

⁹⁶ GC:1/2/5. Italics added.

⁹⁷ GC:1/2/7. Italics added.

⁹⁸ GC:1/2. The documents are: *The Universal Declaration on Human Rights, The International Labour Organizations Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* and *The United Nations Declaration on Corruption*.

⁹⁹ GC:1/2/1.

¹⁰⁰ GC:1/2/2.

The normative argumentation is followed by guidance on what course of action corporations can take to implement the principle into their operations. This is divided into two parts; internal action, and external or collective action.

Internal action concerns a variety of measures, ranging from adapting, defining or changing policies, selecting different materials¹⁰¹, not interfering with worker representatives¹⁰² to “*providing access to basic health, education and housing for the workers and their families, if these are not provided elsewhere*”¹⁰³. The suggestions for internal action thus concerns more than for corporations to develop a code of conduct that corresponds to the GC10. It also suggests concrete action that corporations can take on location. This involves ensuring values are protected (a political good in itself) and also to, if needed, provide certain political goods for the company’s employees.

External action consists of a range of approaches. Communicating to the public on what measures the company has taken to implement the guidelines¹⁰⁴. Collaboration with corporate peers within the same industry¹⁰⁵, stakeholders¹⁰⁶, and investing in research¹⁰⁷ are other steps that are encouraged. To encourage or support education on the issue¹⁰⁸ or establishing or participating in a taskforce to promote it¹⁰⁹ could be relevant, as well as to provide political goods (e.g. medical care for children, preventing displacement) when needed¹¹⁰.

The GC thus implies that political goods, even beyond national law could well be something for companies to consider.

The question of corporations’ responsibility is directly addressed only in one of principle the GC10 where it is stated they have a “*responsibility to respect human rights, that is, not to infringe human rights.*”¹¹¹ The responsibility to respect is derived from the PRR¹¹²-framework launched in 2008 by the SRSG¹¹³. Responsibility concerns human rights principles directly, but also labour related questions indirectly, as both the UDHR and the PRR-framework includes principles on labour¹¹⁴. The responsibility to respect is proclaimed in principle one and further discussed in the Human Rights and Business Learning Tool (HRBLT).

The HRBLT primarily regards principle one and two, but as the UDHR addresses labour-related freedoms as well, principles three through six can be

¹⁰¹ GC:1/2/9.

¹⁰² GC:1/2/3.

¹⁰³ GC:1/2/1. Italics added.

¹⁰⁴ GC:1/2/7, 3, 2, 1

¹⁰⁵ GC:1/2/10, 9, 8, 7, 5, 4.

¹⁰⁶ GC:1/2/10, 9, 7, 2.

¹⁰⁷ GC:1/2/9, 7.

¹⁰⁸ GC:1/2/6, 5, 4, 3.

¹⁰⁹ GC:1/2/5, 4.

¹¹⁰ GC:1/2/5, 1.

¹¹¹ GC:1/2/1. Italics added.

¹¹² Protect, Respect and Remedy: a Framework for Business and Human Rights.

¹¹³ Special Representative of the Secretary-General / Special Representative on Business and Human Rights (J. Ruggie).

¹¹⁴ See, for example HRBLT, UDHR.

regarded represented more generally within the first principle. The learning tool is based on the UDHR, as well as the PRR-framework. Corporations are regarded responsible to respect human rights in both the principles and the learning tool. In the later document, the imperative for business to respect human rights has extended from “should” to “must”¹¹⁵.

The scope of action will depend from one company to another, as they cannot be separated from their particular context, in terms of for example what country and industry they are operating in¹¹⁶. The scope of action is elaborated on in the BHRLT, where it is discussed in terms of the company’s sphere of influence. This spans over all levels of societal context; from the workplace to the supply chain, marketplace, community and government. The model (see appendix 3) encourages the company to rethink its possible impact on society¹¹⁷. Rather than action being restricted to the company’s own operations, it is possible to consider corporate impact on society in other scales. The arguments behind this are, similarly to the GC10, presented as both ethical case and business case. Further, the additional objective of remedy, also found in the PRR-framework is elaborated. Here, corporations’ impact can function as a complement or substitute also for judicial functions. By providing dialogue with stakeholders and resolving disputes in a more gentle way, costly trials can be avoided. The business environment will function more smoothly when there is room for dialogue and it is also a way of risk management¹¹⁸.

The BHRLT marks the outer boundary for action further from the corporations’ core operations. While underlining the importance of context, it puts potential influence and action in society at large. The responsibility to respect being regarded a baseline assumption, the discussion for action moves on to complex complicity and the possibility for further support and remedy¹¹⁹.

The step between respect and support is lessened, as it is stated they often overlap¹²⁰. The possibility for remedy is put forth as a business case, making good sense not only for pleasing the public opinion, but actually creating a smoother environment for the company, keeping costs down¹²¹. The interest of society moves closer to the interest of the corporation:

“If business thrives where society thrives, it is in the interests of business to be proactive and encourage good governance. As the international political landscape evolves, it is becoming increasingly clear that companies both have a responsibility to respect human rights, but also have an important role to play in supporting human rights.”¹²²

¹¹⁵ HRBLT: 3:5, 5:2 .

¹¹⁶ HRBLT: Supporting human rights: Sphere of influence and the global compact principles.

¹¹⁷ HRBLT: Supporting human rights: How to support human rights / Your own company.

¹¹⁸ HRBLT: 1:4(changing international landscape).

¹¹⁹ HRBLT:4 .

¹²⁰ HRBLT: 3.0, 3:4.

¹²¹ HRBLT: 5:2.

¹²² HRBLT: 1:4. Italics added.

The ISO 26000 is a cohesive document, which provides guidance on social responsibility ranging from fundamental definitions to suggestions on action. Chapter six of provides guidance in terms of imperatives within the seven core areas that are defined. Chapter four is also crucial in defining seven values¹²³ that should permeate the implementation of the seven core areas. As for the normative foundations, they are diverse. The business case for social responsibility is made throughout¹²⁴, but it is paired up with universal, deontological values derived from the UDHR and the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development¹²⁵.

As for the course of action that is recommended, considerations mainly concern internal provision of goods. The organization should always strive to arrange its own operations in line with the core values, even if this is not demanded by national law. For example by observing at least minimum provisions according to labour standards, in particular where national legislation is not adapted to this¹²⁶. Organizations should also “*provide equal health and safety protection for part-time and temporary workers...*”¹²⁷ and “*implement policies and practices that promote respect for property rights*”¹²⁸. The document encourages corporations to take these actions beyond legal compliance, but consistently underlines the unique abilities of the state, and the obligation corporations have to first and foremost obey national legislation¹²⁹. The standard is “*... not intended to replace, alter or in any way change the obligations of the state.*”¹³⁰ Sometimes, provision of societal goods will expand further into society. For example, organizations should:

“*in setting prices and charges, offer, wherever permitted, a tariff to those that are in need*”¹³¹.

“*ensure that, when necessary, workers being made redundant are helped to access assistance for new employment, training and counseling*”¹³².

“*where feasible and appropriate, participate in market mechanisms to internalize the cost of its environmental impacts.*”¹³³

The ISO standard thus reflects some political goods. Provision of them will depend on context, scope of influence and who is defined as a stakeholder. This is discussed in some detail in section 5.2. While societal expectations can differ from stakeholder’s interest, the organization is not isolated from either of them¹³⁴.

¹²³ Responsibility, Transparency, Ethical behavior, Respect for stakeholder interests, Respect for the rule of law, Respect for international norms of behavior and Respect for human rights.

¹²⁴ E.g. ISO 26000: 3:2

¹²⁵ ISO 26000:6. Sustainable development could also be regarded a consequentialistic argument, as it seeks to maximize the good.

¹²⁶ ISO 26000: 6:4:2:2.

¹²⁷ ISO 26000: 6:4:6:2. Italics added.

¹²⁸ ISO 26000: 6:6:7:2.

¹²⁹ ISO 26000:1, 3:2, 3:3:2, 3:4

¹³⁰ ISO 26000:vi. Italics added.

¹³¹ ISO 26000: 6:7:8:2. Regarding organizations that supply essential services. Italics added.

¹³² ISO 26000: 6:4:7:2. Italics added.

¹³³ ISO 26000: 6:5:6:2. Italics added.

¹³⁴ ISO 26000:5:2:1

The responsible organization should look into the core subjects as well as its own operations to identify the relevant areas to involve in and relations to consider¹³⁵. The organization is responsible for the influence over which it has formal or de-facto control¹³⁶. This sphere could be significant as it is not restricted to the value chain, but could include any actor to which the organization has a relationship. The responsibility to act therefore depends on the extent of negative outcomes if it failed to act. These broad definitions of influence necessarily underline contextuality¹³⁷. The particular organizations influence depends on contextual resources such as “*physical proximity, scope, length and strength of the relationship*”¹³⁸. Following this argument, the organization could have influence over not only its economic relations (e.g. subcontractors) but also over public opinion. The possible influence is not always limited to core operations. The document does not provide specifics on what groups that constitute relevant stakeholders, but suggest some guiding questions to determine stakeholders¹³⁹. Stakeholders should be involved in dialogue to inform, mediate and increase transparency¹⁴⁰.

6.3 Results

The analysis of the Global Compact and ISO 26000 has shown there are large similarities between the two codes. First, regarding the perspective on globalization, both documents underline the importance as the state. While non-state actors are considered a potential complimentary to the state, their actions can never assume the same quality and character of the state. Postnationality of the hyperglobalist perspective can therefore be outruled. Both documents however consider globalization real, and causing significant changes to society. The Global Compact, itself a network-based learning platform that seeks to streamline values and create collaboration in issues, corresponds well to the transformationist view. Although the ISO 26000 puts less focus on globalization, outcomes such as diffuse boundaries between public and private are taken for granted. The perspective on globalization in the ISO document could therefore not be regarded a skepticist one, rather a more state-centric transformationist one. The transformationist perspective is a broad one and encompasses various judgments on globalization. Both the global compact and ISO 26000 are regarded to portray the *transformationist perspective on globalization*.

¹³⁵ ISO 26000:5:2:2

¹³⁶ ISO 26000: 5:2:3. De-facto control can roughly be described as informal influence.

¹³⁷ ISO 26000:5:2:3.

¹³⁸ ISO 26000:7:3:3:1. Italics added.

¹³⁹ ISO 26000:5:3:2

¹⁴⁰ ISO 26000:5:3:3.

Concerning the political role of the corporation, both documents put forth similar arguments. They mix business case-arguments with arguments that appeal to universal norms similar to natural laws, such as the Universal declaration on human rights. The sphere of influence is defined in a similar manner. The workplace, the corporations' core operations, is the center of control. This is where universal values and international norms should apply, where the respect of human rights is a responsibility, a baseline expectation regardless of whether national legislations demands it or not. This could in some contexts prove to be problematic. In places where work ethics are reduced to competitiveness, having high standards and strong ethical values can be provocative, especially if the corporation tries to impinge its values on suppliers or others in its surroundings. It is therefore key to arrive at operations prepared. To practice due diligence, and making risk assessments on beforehand is regarded a necessary step. Identifying stakeholders and the sphere of influence is an ongoing progress, why assessments needs to be made regarding to context. The sphere of influence is not regarded limited to core operations or the closest economic relationships. It can involve dialogue with the local community, or even society at large and government, again depending on the specific issue and context.

The provision of goods can move beyond employment and paying taxes. It can even move beyond ensuring workers enjoy fundamental standards. External provision can take on many forms, ranging from lobbying to supply of medical care, promoting societal dialogue, making sure people are not displaced or adapting prices to markets are just some of the examples that are given in the codes.

The corporate responsibility is defined in a slightly different manner. The Global compact establish corporations are responsible for respecting human rights. The exact meaning of respecting human rights is discussed in detail in the learning tool. Respecting human rights also mean avoiding complicity¹⁴¹. Complicity comes in various forms¹⁴², which corporations should consider in their due diligence process. Passively acting as a bystander in a community where human rights abuses occur will possibly not be disregarded by consumers or shareholders. Therefore, there is reason (beyond the ethical argument) for corporations to take action even when they are not directly involved. There are reasons to consider the decision to enter societies where human rights abuses take place long and hard. If corporations decide to do so, there is a reason to be prepared; the business case. The ISO document defines responsibility as something that exists in situation where the organization has formal or de-facto control. This definition also puts responsibility beyond the direct actions of the corporation itself. If another actor - over which the corporation has de-facto control - abuses human rights, the corporation has a responsibility to use its

¹⁴¹ HRBLT: 4:7.

¹⁴² HRBLT: 4:4 Direct, Beneficial and Silent complicity.

control, whether or not it is formalized. This is however dependent on the severity of the abuse. To avoid being in a position of being responsible by proximity and severity, it is essential to undertake due diligence¹⁴³.

Summing up, both documents present the corporation as a *potential political actor*. They suggest action that includes exerting values and providing political goods, both beyond national legislation and internal operations. Responsibility is differently defined, but in both cases can extend beyond national legislation and internal operations.

¹⁴³ ISO 26000: 5:2:3.

7 Conclusion

This thesis took off from an interest in global governance and democracy and the inherent tensions between public and private that are evident in discussions on these subjects. Globalization is considered to shift the balance of influence from the governments of the traditional state-centric world to a multitude of actors in the decentralized and shattered global world. Globalization has thus created the need for new forms of norm-setting, beyond national laws. Corporate social responsibility could be one possible form for incorporating norms in the actions of corporations. The purpose of this thesis was to find out whether the ideas of the academic literature on global governance and democracy were correspondingly represented in global networks that involve, among other actors, multinational corporations.

This crystallized into two research questions, concerning what perspective on globalization and what role of the corporation were portrayed in global networks. The study then narrowed in on the documents issued by these networks that contained principles and guidance for action. The Global Compact and ISO 26000 were chosen, being regarded as heavy cases, and documents issued by them were selected. As for the Global Compact, the ten principles and the human rights and business learning tool constituted the main material. The former was chosen because it was seen as the main guidance on norms while the latter was regarded as the most comprehensive guidance on implementation. As for the ISO 26000, their issued standard constituted the material. The analytical schedule and dimensions derived from the theoretical chapters were used to characterize the material.

Both sets of documents suggest corporations should reconsider their societal role. Corporations can influence states. Their stakeholders can be defined in various ways, and the stakes of many people outside the corporation's walls can be regarded affected and therefore deserve a say (and to be informed) on the corporation's actions. Where it is suitable, corporations can provide goods, even political goods for society. Responsibility is strongest at the core operations, where it has de-facto control. The corporation is responsible to respect human rights and to deliver the goods it sets out to do. This could, and should extend beyond national legislation if it fails to guard fundamental rights and freedoms, as long as this does not put the corporation in conflict with the state.

To conclude, and going back to the analytical dimensions of the political from chapter three, this corresponds well to a political actor. However, we need to consider the imperatives. The documents state that corporations or organizations *should* consider taking actions, that action *can* involve political goods, always depending on context. The vague imperatives as such are not surprising. The documents seek to provide guidance for corporations and organizations all over

the world. Real obligations are still exclusive to the relationship to the state, and equaled to abiding the law. This outruled the hyperglobalist perspective on globalization. The documents did not, however, take on the skeptic perspective, as they consider globalization to be changing the stage as well as altering the roles for corporations. Both sets of documents were thereby placed within the broad and perhaps somewhat fluid transformationist perspective.

What then, should we make of these documents? It seems they have a function beyond providing guidelines. They do more than to point out directions in the manner of a guide dog, to make use of the Global Compacts parable. The documents, while drawing up increasingly wide spheres of influence around the corporation, open up a new theoretical space for the corporation to position itself in. The theoretical space of CSR is enlarged, and acting in accordance to international standards is a baseline assumption. The outer boundaries of action moves beyond the walls of the company, to encompass society at wide. In this discourse, or space, respecting human rights is no longer necessarily the final goal. When operating in places of weak governance, corporations can help bridge governance gaps. In the face of societal inequality or abuse, leaving these problems unsolved by claiming it is not a business case could be the wrong judgment. Respecting human rights and assisting society are potential corporate actions that could be based on both ethical values and profit-maximization.

According to the ideas identified in global guidance documents, corporations should reconsider what the corporate in CSR really means. Perhaps we should speak rather of a common social responsibility.

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9 Appendix

9.1 Appendix 1- Analytical schedule

Analytical schedule for Global Guidance Networks

Perspective on Globalization::

When globalization is mentioned, what is considered its function?

Is globalization considered to be changing the way we think of the world?

Is globalization considered to be reshaping the world?

Is the state's position as a primary actor considered threatened?

Is the state's position as a primary actor considered replaced?

What processes are needed in order to address globalization (e.g. none, state remains the central actor, orderly market liberalization, redistribution, governance through networks, global institutions)

Political imperatives:

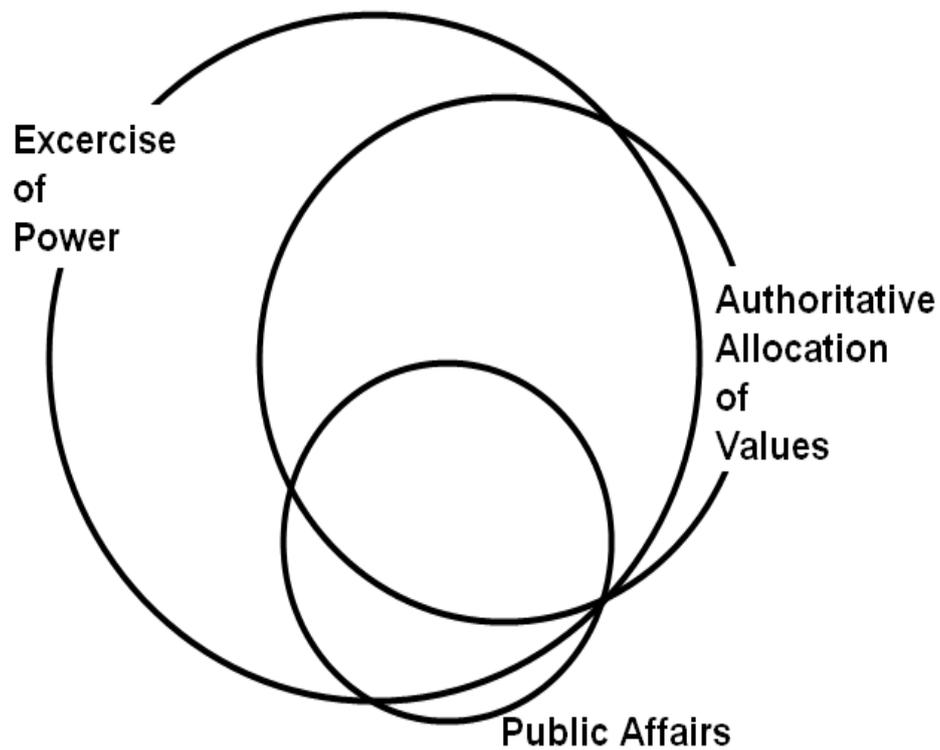
The codes suggest provision of political goods beyond national laws.

The scope of political goods extends beyond national laws and internal operations.

The scope of the corporation's values extends beyond national laws and internal operations.

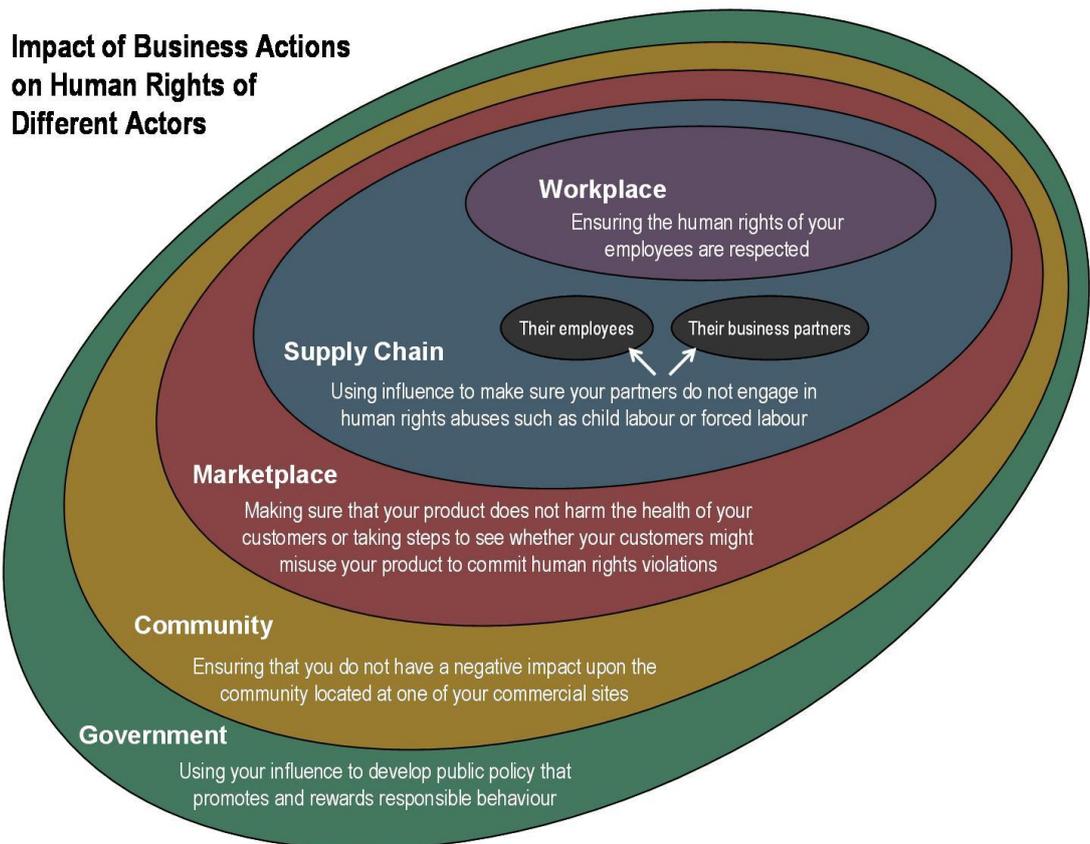
The scope of the corporation's responsibility extends beyond national laws and internal operations.

9.2 Appendix 2 – The political concept.



The relationship between the range of the political concept.
Derived from Lundquist, Lennart, 1993. "Det vetenskapliga studiet av politik"

9.3 Appendix 3 – HRBLT Sphere of influence



Corporation's sphere of influence

Derived from the Global Compact's Business and Human Rights Learning Tool.

9.4 Appendix 4 – Online documents table of contents

The United Nations Global Compact website

The United Nations Global Compact Website is <http://www.unglobalcompact.org/>.

The website consists of eight (8) chapters, sixty (60) sections and one hundred and twenty-five (125) sub-sections, which are numbered and thereafter referred to according to the numbering. The Chapters, sections and sub-sections were last checked on August 8th, 2011. Reference to chapters is done by (GC:Chapter/) to sections (GC:Chapter/Section) and subsections (GC:Chapter/Section/Sub-section). For example: material found in chapter 3, section 2, sub-section 3: (GC:3/2/3). Material found in chapter 6: (GC:6/). Where material has been found in clickable links available in chapters, sections or sub-sections, the material is referred to as (GC:Chapter/Section/Sub-section/Link name-letter).

Chapter 1: “About Us”

Section 1: Overview

Section 2: The Ten Principles

Sub-section 1: Human Rights

Sub-section 2: Principle 1

Sub-section 3: Principle 2

Sub-section 4: Labour

Sub-section 5: Principle 3

Sub-section 6: Principle 4

Sub-section 7: Principle 5

Sub-section 8: Principle 6

Sub-section 9: Environment

Sub-section 10: Principle 7

Sub-section 11: Principle 8

Sub-section 12: Principle 9

Sub-section 13: Anti-Corruption

Sub-section 14: Principle 10

Section 3: Global Compact Governance

Section 4: Government Support

Sub-section 1: General Assembly Resolutions

Sub-section 2: Recognition by the G8

Sub-section 3: Outcomes and Declarations

Section 5: The UN Global Compact Board

Sub-section 1: Board Members

Sub-section 2: Board Meetings

Sub-section 3: Founding and Appointments

Section 6: Integrity Measures

Sub-section 1: Frequently Asked Questions

Section 7: Global Compact Logo

Sub-section 1: Global Compact Logo Policy

Section 8: FAQ

Section 9: Tools and Resources

Sub-section 1: About the Global Compact
Sub-section 2: Human Rights
Sub-section 3: Labour
Sub-section 4: Environment
Sub-section 5: Anti-Corruption
Sub-section 6: Business and Peace
Sub-section 7: Business for Development
Sub-section 8: Financial Markets
Sub-section 9: UN-Business Partnerships
Sub-section 9: Additional Areas

Section 10: Annual Review

Section 11: Internships with the Global Compact

Section 12: Job Opportunities with the Global Compact

Sub-section 1: Administrative Assistant

Section 13: Foundation for the Global Compact

Section 14: Contact Us

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Section 2: Business Participation

Sub-section 1: Blueprint for corporate Sustainability Leadership

Sub-section 2: The Importance of voluntarism

Sub-section 3: Subsidiary Engagement

Sub-section 4: Micro Enterprise Policy

Sub-section 5: Tobacco Company Policy

Section 3: Non-Business Participation

Sub-section 1: Academic Participation

Sub-section 2: Business Associations

Sub-section 3: Cities

Sub-section 4: Civil Society

Sub-section 5: Labour

Sub-section 6: Public Sector Organization

Section 4: Engagement Opportunities

Section 5: Global Compact LEAD

Sub-section 1: Objectives

Sub-section 2: Participation

Sub-section 3: LEAD Activities

Sub-section 4: LEAD Participants

Sub-section 5: Integration

Sub-section 6: Strategic Linkages

Sub-section 7: Leadership Blueprint

Sub-section 8: FAQ

Section 6: Apply Now

Sub-section 1: Business Organizations

Sub-section 2: Non- Business

Organizations

Chapter 3: “Progress and Disclosure”

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- Section 2: Making Progress
 - Sub-section 1: Issue Specific Guidance
- Section 3: Communication Progress
 - Sub-section 1: COP Policy
 - Sub-section 2: Reporting Tools
 - Sub-section 3: How to Submit a COP
- Section 4: Differentiation Programme
 - Sub-section 1: The Learner Platform
 - Sub-section 2: GC Active Level
 - Sub-section 3: GC Advanced Level
- Section 5: Analyzing Progress
 - Sub-section 1: GC Advanced 2011
 - Sub-section 2: Learner Platform 2011
 - Sub-section 3: Non-Communicating Participants
 - Sub-section 4: Expelled Participants
 - Sub-section 5: Notable COPs (discontinued)
- Section 6: Frequently Asked Questions

Chapter 4: “Participants and Stakeholders”

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- Section 2: Participant Search
- Section 3: UN Agencies
 - Sub-section 1: Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
 - Sub-section 2: International Labour Organization
 - Sub-section 3: United Nations Environment Programme
 - Sub-section 4: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
 - Sub-section 5: United Nations Development Programme
 - Sub-section 6: United Nations Industrial Development Organization
- Section 4: Business Associations
- Section 5: Labour
- Section 6: Civil Society
- Section 7: Academic Participants
- Section 8: Public Sector
- Section 9: Cities

Chapter 5: “Local Networks”

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- Section 2: Meetings and Events
 - Sub-section 1: IX Annual Local Networks Forum – Copenhagen
 - Sub-section 2: VIII Annual Local Networks Forum – New York
- Section 3: Guidelines and Recommendations
- Section 4: Network News Archive
- Section 5: Local Networks Report on Activities

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- Section 2: Human Rights

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 - Sub-section 2: Children’s Rights and Business Principles
 - Sub-section 3: UN Framework
 - Sub-section 4: Human Rights Working Group
 - Sub-section 5: Guidance Material
 - Sub-section 6: Business Practice
 - Sub-section 7: Local Networks Activities
 - Sub-section 8: Meetings and Events
 - Sub-section 9 Human Rights and Business Dilemmas
 - Sub-section 10: Global Business Initiative
 - Sub-section 11: Past Initiatives
 - Sub-section 12: Further Information
- Section 3: Labour
- Sub-section 1: Guidance Material
 - Sub-section 2: Meetings and Events
 - Sub-section 3: Global Framework Agreements
 - Sub-section 4: Further Information
- Section 4: Environment
- Sub-section 1: Environmental Stewardship Strategy
 - Sub-section 2: Caring for Climate
 - Sub-section 3: The CEO Water Mandate
 - Sub-section 4: Guidance Material
 - Sub-section 5: Meetings and Events
- Section 5: Anti-Corruption
- Sub-section 1: Guidance Material
 - Sub-section 2: Business Practice
 - Sub-section 3: Collective Action
 - Sub-section 4: Meetings and Events
 - Sub-section 5: CEO Letter on UNCAC
 - Sub-section 6: Anti-Corruption Reporting
 - Sub-section 7: Further Information
- Section 6: Business and Peace
- Sub-section 1: Guidance Material
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- Section 9: UN-Business Partnerships
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 - Sub-section 3: June 2011
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- Section 6: Rio+20
- Section 7: Speeches
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- Section 9: Archive
 - Sub-section 1: Event Archive
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- Section 1: Reset Password

Human Rights and Business Learning Tool

<http://human-rights-and-business-learning-tool.unglobalcompact.org/>

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- 1.2 "Protect, Respect, Remedy: a UN framework for business and human rights"
- 1.3 Some Human Rights Scenarios
- 1.4 Values of the International Community
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