

THE IDEAL WOMAN
– a case study of the Coca-Cola Company's 5by20
initiative.

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Abstract

Since mid-2000s, a great emphasis of the global development agenda is directed toward women and their participation in society, especially as waged workers and political actors. Hand-in-hand with this emphasis on women's empowerment and gender equality as the 'solution' for development, the involvements of private actors in the development arena have increased as well. The notion of private corporation's involvement in social issues and embracing some form of ethical dimension in their activities is not particularly new, but framing it as corporate social responsibility (CSR) is. The Coca-Cola Company, introduced in 2010, their latest CSR initiative called 5by20. This enterprise is a current example of the conceptual marriage of women's economic empowerment and the business case for CSR. The aim of this study is to frame and shed light on this development debate in a more narrow setting than what current studies provide, and try to account for what happens to the image and perception of a woman from the Global South within the 5by20 initiative. Using a feminist historical materialist standpoint as theoretical backdrop, and conducting a contextual analysis of selected material from the 5by20, the study concludes that the issues of the current discourse is the de-politicized and ahistorical representation of women of which the 5by20 initiative could be considered to be a part of.

Key words: Corporate Social Responsibility, the Coca-Cola Company, 5by20, Women's economic empowerment, Feminist Historical Materialism

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1. Introduction

The ongoing processes of globalization and a strong influence a neo-liberalist framework have since the end of the 1960s, shaped the ideological environment in which different actors now approach development. Since mid-2000s, a great emphasis is directed toward women and their participation (or perhaps lack of) in society, especially as wagedworkers and political actors (Prügl and True 2014:3). Hand-in-hand with this emphasis on women's empowerment and gender equality as the 'solution' for development, the involvements of private actors in the development arena have increased as well. The notion of private corporation's involvement in social issues and embracing some form of ethical dimension in their activities is not particularly new, but framing it as corporate social responsibility (CSR) is (Blowfield and Frynas 2005:500). What is special about CSR is the current emphasis that is placed on the business case for it (Vogel 2005:18). There is a conviction that adopting a CSR approach in your business profile is not only beneficiary for the world's marginalized and poor, but in the long run for the company as well (Vogel 2005:19).

In many ways it seems that states are behaving more like private corporations and corporations are behaving more like states. The idea that the market is a critical vehicle for tackling issues of poverty and inequality is (now) a standpoint taken on by the major global actors and institutions, for example the World Bank, the United Nations (UN) and the International Monetary Found (IMF). The concept of CSR stir up a conceptual nuances within widely diverse fields of academia; economy, sociology, law, international relations, political science, and business ethics, but for some reason the notion of gender has almost been systematically excluded from the debate (Thompson 2008:87).

The definition of the concept differ and so does the opinions on whether CSR is a positive contribution to addressing developmental challenges or if it is, simply put, a promotional tool for corporations to continue and expand their activities with a 'stamp of approval' from the global community (Newell & Frynas 2007:670).

The focus of this study is on the potential effects and consequences of private actors and their CSR involvements, particularly on the perception of women and their economic empowerment.

The Coca-Cola Company, introduced in 2010, their latest CSR initiative called 5by20 (5by20 2014). This enterprise is a current example of the conceptual marriage of women's economic empowerment and the business case for CSR.

The framing and contextualization of what a woman is, and what her role in society should be, that occurs within this initiative, and in the general CSR discourse, could pose issues that need to be addressed in the global debate starting perhaps with academic research. It is the intention of this study to explore and analyze how women are represented within this CSR initiative, and how this framing and contextualization of women potentially construct ideas on what a woman is and what her role in society should be.

Before continuing such an exploration some clarification is needed.

As mentioned earlier there is a lack of consensus on the definition of CSR and the 'free' adaptation and interpretation of the concept restricts its potential and clouds the impacts of arguments from both scholars and policy-makers (Blowfield and Frynas 2005:503). In this study I will use the definition of CSR provided by Michael Blowfield and Jędrzej George Frynas:

[But their]...it may be more useful to think of CSR as an umbrella term for a variety of theories and practices all of which recognize the following: (a) that companies have a responsibility for their impact on society and the natural environment, sometimes beyond legal compliance and the liability of individuals; (b) that companies have a responsibility for the behavior of others with whom they do business (e.g. within supply chains); and (c) that business needs to manage its relationship with wider society, whether for reasons of commercial viability or to add value to society. (2005:503)

With this definition in mind, this study tries to contribute to the understanding of how and what consequences the current CSR discourse have on the development of women's empowerment. Using a feminist historical materialist standpoint as my theoretical foundation, I will conduct a contextual analysis with focus on visual and textual representation of selected material from Coca-Cola's 5by20 initiative on female economic empowerment.

1.1 Outline of the Study

Following this first part of the introduction, it is in the best interest for this study to further frame and contextualize the debate on CSR and women's economic empowerment in the development discourse. As mentioned in the introduction a multitude of studies have been conducted on the topic of CSR and its relation to the development agenda, the same goes for women's involvement in the economy and their empowerment but there is a deficit of studies that address the two topics together and explore that relation. The second half of this chapter will therefore focus on such studies and compare different views that reflect the debate within academia today. It will also address the research question for this specific study and what the specific aims are.

Chapter two is dedicated to the 5by20 initiative. Looking more closely on the history, structure and other components of this specific CSR initiative will help contextualize and deepen the aim of this study.

The third and fourth chapter will account for the theoretical and methodological framework, which provides the basis for the analysis. The fifth, and final chapter, includes the analysis and conclusions of this study.

1.2 Literature Review

The purpose, or maybe rather need, for a literature review on this topic comes from the discussion on the nature of CSR as a concept, and how it is considered to be multidimensional and cross disciplinary. Therefore it is crucial for the validity of any discussion on the topic of CSR to at least try to define and narrow the span of it. The same goes for the topic of 'women's empowerment', the definitions and applications of the concept differ widely depending on whom the source is, and this needs to be addressed further in order to situate this study in the right context. To conclude this review, some of the academic contributions on the topic of CSR and the Coca-Cola Company will be discussed.

1.2.1 CSR and the development debate

The growing CSR activity in the past ten years, could lead to the assumption that it is expanding both as an area of interest but also as a challenging trend to the traditional development actors and business practices. With this in mind, Hanlon (2008:157) regard this trending outlook on CSR as something that needs to be

approached with caution. When diving deeper into the concept of corporate social responsibility contradictory meanings and definitions emerge, and therefore it is necessary for the sake of this study to expand and clarify the stances in the development debate, and how they more or less in different ways lack in applying the variable of gender in the discussions. In a study by Lindsay Thompson (2008) this deficit is addressed through an examination of major CSR initiatives and how they frame and tackle issues connected to (the lack of) gender equity. She presents an argument that could be used as explanatory for the lack of focus:

In the intervening years, as the business world has grown increasingly conscious of corporate citizenship and social responsibility, the moral claims of economic and social justice for women have been obscured and incorporated into a broader agenda of wide ranging issues such as diversity, integrity, transparency, child labor, poverty and the environment. (2008:87)

Thompson continues this argument with a discussion on the non-neutrality of institutions and their norms and how these norms and structures imposed by them creates a systemic and structural gender bias in the modern business model, which in turn not only burdens women but has a greater damaging effect on society as a whole (Thompson 2008:96).

One of the reasons as to why CSR is addressed in such a large scope of perspectives has to do with, as mentioned earlier, the lack of consensus on the definition of the concept, but there is also a divide in opinions on what the actual purpose, or maybe rather function, of CSR should be (Newell and Frynas 2007:670). The idea of CSR activity raises a lot of questions, for example, why are private actors taking a stance in public questions? And to whom are these initiatives responsible? There also is a clear distinction between those who regard CSR as a business tool, and those who see it as a potential instrument for development (Blowfield and Frynas 2005:500).

Whether or not there is a business case for CSR is discussed in a large scope of academic literature. One of the most prominent scholars, David Vogel, claims that there is. Vogel (2005) argue that CSR, or as he calls it *business virtue*, are practices that improve the workplace and profits society in ways that go past the

traditional legal responsibilities of a company, but CSR is only sustainable if this “virtue pays off” (Vogel 2005:3). The growing interest and importance of CSR is a reflection of two modern movements: the growth of the neo-liberal view take on world trade and investment on an international level, and the nationally based trend of increasing privatization and economic deregulation (Vogel 2005:8). Never before has the claim that corporate participation in issues related to the social and civil sphere of society *can* and *should* be profitable enjoyed so much focus and influence in the global community (Vogel 2005:24). There are also those who argue that CSR, or industry self-regulation, has the potential to encourage significant improvements needed on the global arena, but only in concert with the traditional political process that are already in place (Haufler 2001:122). Levy and Kaplan (2007) frame the political struggle in their article on CSR and its relation to multinational corporations (MNCs). For them CSR demonstrates the multi-layered struggle that global governance face, and that this increased global competitiveness constrain resources and have during the course of time eroded the welfare state (Levy and Kaplan 2007:4). The call for MNCs to take on greater forms of ‘responsibility’, ‘transparency’ and ‘accountability’ also constrain and shape the behavior of MNCs. They therefor emphasize that the concept of CSR entail a political struggle that actually extends beyond particular business practices to include the very nature of corporate governance (Levy and Kaplan 2007:17).

The critical perspective on CSR is something shared by other scholars; two of them are Michael Blowfield and Peter Newell. The former have in a multitude of articles and books emphasized the need for a more critical perspective on CSR in order to fully understand the impact of it, with this said it does not mean that he takes a completely negative stance toward the potential possibility CSR might have in the development agenda.

The discussion on the impact of CSR should rather be directed toward a debate on how ‘we’ should *value* business involvement in society and as apart of the development goals that are constructed by the global community (Blowfield 2007:694). Peter Newell address, among other things, the fact that the majority of CSR initiatives are not intended to tackle the big issues of poverty, climate change or social exclusion (Newell 2005:555). To regard CSR as business tool, where the

notion of addressing poverty directly actually entails some sort of a profit, differs distinctly from relating CSR as a development tool (Newell and Frynas 2007:670).

1.2.2 Women's empowerment and development

Social reproduction in the post war-era was organized around the idealized male-breadwinner, a gender order where the man was privileged in the political and economic sphere and the woman was assigned to domestic labor and responsibilities of care. But this view on women and their capacities changed at the turn of the last century. Gender and development (GAD) approaches have during the past two decades highlighted the need to increase women's agency and empowerment, which in turn have resulted in a changed outlook on females in general but especially on poor and marginalized women living in the 'Global South' (Wilson 2011:317). Women are now regarded as crucial and effective 'tools' for breaking poverty traps and negative development cycles. The consequence of framing women in such a matter does not only affect women but also men.

As Kalpana Wilson effectively frames it:

The moralistic overtones of the development literature's of cited contrasts between women's 'good' spending (on food, children's clothes, etc.) and men's 'bad' spending (on alcohol, cigarettes, entertainment, etc.) are distinct echoes of the Victorian discourses of the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor and, like them, are also deeply radicalized in their re-inscription of essentialized constructions of men in the global South as inherently 'lazy', irresponsible and preoccupied with sensual pleasure.(2011:319)

Andrea Cornwall, address the concept of 'empowerment' in a larger discussion and study on the impact and influence of buzzwords in the development agenda (Cornwall 2000:16). The words used in developmental policies shifts accordingly to the current model that is in fashion. The popular policy words used today are for example: 'empowerment', 'participation' and 'poverty reduction' (Cornwall & Brock 2005:1043).

The mainstream institutions, such as the World Bank, use these words to create a feeling of optimism and to legitimize their policies (Cornwall & Brock 2005:

1044). The question that we all need to ask ourselves is whether or not the usage of words has an effect on the outcomes of development projects conducted by these actors, and how this in turn effect 'our' conception of the world and its structures (Cornwall & Brock 2005:1044). Are the new buzzwords the latest version of promoting the neo-liberal ideology, which emphasizes on economic growth and reinforces the idea of the 'rational economic (wo) man'?

The literature on gender and economic development focuses almost exclusively on the link between women's economic rights and women's empowerment (DAC Network 2011:3) The traditional capitalist conviction that having access to economic resources 'automatically' mean that 'you' are empowered and have access and ability to partake in the market, and therefore 'investments' in women are essential to social and economic development (DAC Network 2011:3), and many of the reports from the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Organization for Economic Development (OECD) make such claims. In the 'Women's Economic Empowerment – Issues paper' from 2011, the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Network's standpoint on the topic can be summarized with this argument: "*We stress that investing in women and girls have multiplier effect on productivity, efficiency and sustained economic growth.*" (DAC Network 2011:30). The DAC Report recognizes the fact that political and social factors have significant influence on women's capacity to participate in the economy, but following the neo-liberal capitalist over-reliance on the market, the solution to these problem are to increase women's access to employment trough vocational training programs (DAC Network 2011:26). Merging together the non-governmental organization (NGO) community with the private sector could efficiently help to expand these programs and conclusively lead to an increase in women's economic empowerment (DAC Network 2011:29). Little to nothing is mentioned in these studies about the historical and structural oppression of women, and this gives an oversimplified and normative view on how women's empowerment should be attained.

The data and statistic presents in these reports and studies are all validly conducted, but some claim that these figures are not enough to use as bricks for the international development agenda, since the reality of these women in the Global South includes multiple influencing variables which generate the situation

in which they find themselves (Prügl & True 2014:21).

In the World Development Report (WDR) from 2012 three factors are highlighted as leading causes to the current economical gender segregation. Only one of these factors draw on the differences between men and women as a result of structures that has been in place over a longer period of time (World Bank 2012:198). In a study by Adrienne Roberts and Susanne Soederberg, the 2012 WDR is critically analyzed and the aim is to shed light on what the possible social implications could become (are becoming) from this increased emphasis on corporate involvement (Roberts & Soederberg 2012:951). The concept of 'Smart Economics' used in the WDR 2012 amongst other claims from the World Bank as to how gender equality and development should be achieved is scrutinized within this study from a feminist historical materialist perspective (Roberts&Soederberg 2012:955). The emphasis of their study is on contextualizing the World Bank's interpretation of gender equality in a broader framework in which the historical, social and political structures are taken into account (Roberts & Soederberg 2012:951). In the report the so-called 'payoff' from breaking the current productivity trap, which in-capsules gender issues, through women's empowerment are plenty. Increased productivity will emancipate women and give her greater control over the household economy, which in turn will strengthen women's agency, and as an end result this will benefit children, thus generate stronger, equal human beings in the future (World Bank 2012:236). So, women in this case are seen as an "untapped pool of resources" (World Bank 2012:237). Nailia Kabeer (2011:38) and her co-authors frame the women's empowerment debate in an interesting and refreshing way, they regard empowerment not as a single, linear process but rather a multilayered process in which the recourses (material, cognitive and relational) of women's lives interact and overlap. Women's participation in the labor market has increased significantly over the last 20 years, but gender patterns within the labor market (and outside of it) are still unbalanced. Depending on what ideological and theoretical standpoint the involved scholars and policy-makers represents a variety of different factors are reflected; variations in how the concept of empowerment is understood in itself; variations in the social acceptability and cultural meanings of paid work for women across different contexts; and the nature of the available work opportunities for women within particular contexts (Kabeer et al. 2011:7).

The aim of this study is not to prove the World Bank ‘wrong’ but rather to shine a light on the fact that these studies have a tendency to portray women, their backgrounds and life activities in a normative and non-holistic framework, and argue for a more historicized and politicized examination of the power relations in development.

1.2.3 The Coca-Cola Company and CSR

The CSR concept have, during the last two decades, evolved into a key componenten of the corporate decision-making process of many multinational corporations (Torres et al. 2012:52). Founded in 1886, in the United States, the Coca Cola Company is one of the, if not *the*, leading beverage company in the world and the company is one of the frontrunners of including sustainability approaches and policies in their organization (Raman 2007:106). Partnering up with the United Nations (UN) and signing the Global Compact agreement in 2006, the company publicly took a stances in favor of CSR and claimed that ensuring a sustainable future for its business equates to ensure a sustainable future for the entire planet (Raman 2007:107). As mentioned before (but cannot be said to many times) one of the potential issues with the CSR approach is that the interpretations, and therefore the use, of the concept differ amongst the actors applying it into their framework (Torres et al. 2012:52). As a result of a huge environmental scandal in India involving groundwater supply and some of the most marginalized communities, at the end of the 1990s, the Coca-Cola company became severly scrutitized by different actors in the global community (Raman 2007:109). Due to the lack of public reguluations regarding corporate practices, reporting on sustainability and the overall impact of a company’s involvement have become increasingly relevant (Torres et al. 2012:53). Perhaps as a result after the environmental scandal in India, Coca-Cola has since 2001 published a report called ‘The Coca-Cola Company Sustainability Review’ in which they account for the different CSR programs and policies within the company framework (Torres et al.2012:54). The other parts of the company’s CSR approach are, apart from a clearly stated environmental policy and goals, a large number of health and education programs aswell as social projects addressing HIV/AIDS (Raman 2007:109). Two years after the water conflict in India, Coca-

Cola adopted the guidelines of Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) and reports on sustainability are now presented annually (Torres et al. 2012:56). This image of corporate philanthropy, Ravi Raman argue, is one of the globalizing corporations' 'favorite' because it assume responsibility by the company's through out all levels of their activities (Raman 2007:109).

The academic studies on the relation of Coca-Cola and CSR are primarily focused on two things; the structural process in which the company has developed its approach and adopted CSR into their business framework, and examinations of the Indian case from an environmental activist perspective and the processes which took place in relation to that specific incident.

Although many studies and reports on the company recognize the company's involvement in the social sphere of the Global South there is a definite lack of research done on the topic, especially subject of women of the Global South and how they are framed within the 'empowerment' programs conducted by the Coca-Cola Company.

1.3 Purpose of study and general delimitations

As shown in the literature review, current studies on the topic of women's empowerment and CSR are, for several reasons, lacking in ways to contextualize the situation which women face in their everyday lives. There are also clear dismissals of gender issues situated within the studies and reports on these three topics. Therefore, the intention of this study is to frame and shed light on this development debate in a more narrow setting than what current studies provide, and try to account for what happens to the image and perception of a woman from the Global South within these types of CSR initiatives. Elisabeth Prügl and Jacquie True (2014:20), address the need for more in depth studies that attempt "to trace the process by which individual companies and international organizations come to adopt gender equality initiatives". Roberts and Soederberg (2012:965) also call for future studies that re-politicize the business case for gender equality, and de-naturalize the dominant narrative of gender power relations.

Thus the intention of this study is to test the theoretical standpoints made by feminist historical materialist perspective (see chapter three), and to hopefully expose even further the need to focus on issues of gender equality and empowerment of women through another theoretical lens, less from a traditional capitalist and neo-liberal standpoint in which women are seen as the solution to all development problems, to a more holistic approach where other variables are included in the discussion as well.

1.3.1 Research question

- How are women represented and portrayed within the Coca-Cola Company's CSR initiative, 5by20?

Since the research question takes on a descriptive form, the intention of this study is merely to highlight the tendencies within this specific case, not to make a claim that all empowerment initiatives that focus on women and are conducted within a CSR approach show or represent similar predispositions, I therefore want to make clear that I am aware of that the material presented in this thesis does not represent all academic literature, studies or reports in the topic. My selected empirical material used in the analysis is made public and published by the Coca-Cola Company, primarily on their webpage (Coca-Cola Company 2014).

2. The 5by20 initiative

“The one common denominator we see among the most successful and prosperous communities we serve is a strong commitment to sustainability. A commitment shared by business, government and civil society.”

(Muhtar Kent, Chairman and CEO, Sustainability Review 2010/2011)

In this second chapter, the CSR initiative 5by20 will be more thoroughly described. The first part will present a historical recap and overview of the Coca-Cola Company’s relation to social responsibility, sustainability approaches and women’s empowerment. And the second section will present and explain the mechanisms and structures of the 5by20 initiative as well as its intended goals.

2.1 Background

As mentioned in the literature review, in the Coca-Cola Company are now perceived as one of the top-player as to what is considered to be a social responsible multinational corporation. The company has in fact during the last twenty years publicly stated clear intentions on what relation they aspire to have with their consumers, producers and stakeholders.

2.1.1 Coca-Cola, Responsibility and Sustainability

In the after match from the water scandal in India the company developed new and expanded old business policies in relation to the environment and communities the company is active in. While, Coca-Cola adopted the GRI Guidelines in 2003, the first report done specifically on sustainability was not published until 2007/08, although a ‘Corporate Responsibility Review’ was published in 2006/07 (Responsibility Review 2007:6).

The focus of these annual reports from the second half of the 00s has a clear direction toward the environment and its carbon footprint. A lot of work from the company’s side is poured into becoming a responsible and *responsive*, since the crises in India brought on a storm of criticism and some claim that the main reason why it ended so badly (from Coca-Cola’s point of view) lies in the ways the company responded to the problem (Torres et.al 2012:56). The company has developed a system wide sustainability framework called LIVE POSITIVELY, which all components of their sustainability approach is carefully accounted for; *Marketplace, Workplace, Community and Environment* (Madhavan 2012:94).

The company reports follow and reflect the business trend of the last ten years with an expanding amount of sustainability projects and goals for the future. Making charitable contributions have been a part of Coca-Cola's business profile since very early on in the company history, and the Coca-Cola Foundation, founded already in 1986, have between the years 2002-2010 donated a sum of \$273 million to different types of programs and projects focused on; healthy and active lifestyles, water stewardship, education and community recycling (Coca-Cola Foundation 2014). The biggest difference between the Coca-Cola Foundation and the company's other CSR initiatives is that the foundation is a registered charitable organization and do not actually conduct any programs itself but rather through sponsorship and grants (Coca-Cola Foundation 2014). Beside the Foundation, and the 5by20 initiative, the company's third CSR 'flagship' is called the Replenish Africa Initiative (RAIN) launched in 2009. The aim of the initiative is to improve access to clean water for 2 million people in Africa by 2015 by focusing on three specific areas; Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Watershed Protection, and Productive Use of Water (Sustainability Review 2010:32). The overall goal of the LIVE POSITIVELY framework is to foster sustainable communities through philanthropy, economic development, and the creation of social and economic opportunities (Madhavan 2012:96).

2.1.2 Coca-Cola and Women

In the Sustainability Review 2009/10, the 'Community' chapter was presented for the first time as a new scope and focus from the company's side. For the first time economic empowerment and women was explicitly addressed as crucial parts of the sustainability framework (Sustainability Review 2010). One cannot help to see a correlation with this emphasis on women's empowerment and the (then) entering Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Muhtar Kent.

In the 'Letter from our Chairman' (Sustainability Review 2010) Kent provide a strong argument as to why economic empowerment and women should be, and now are, a part of the Coca-Cola Company's business plan.

'We have always linked the success of our business to the strength of the communities in which we operate. If they aren't thriving, there is a strong likelihood that our business will suffer.' (Sustainability Review 2010:3)

Muhtar Kent have during the last five years become one of the more well-known private advocates for women's economic empowerment, and in an interview with *Yale Journal of International Affairs* Kent discuss the fact that he calls the 21st century for the 'women's century' (Azemati 2011:9). It is not only a testament of good business ethics, but good business sense to empower and include women more in the business strategy (Azemati 2011:10). In the 2010/11 Sustainability Report, Coca-Cola prompt the inclusion of women by explaining how they are not only the pillars of their own communities, but they are also the pillars of Coca-Cola's business (Sustainability Report 2011:40). By reaching out to and investing in women Coca-Cola aim not only to develop local communities and enhancing the company profit, but also create more female role models in places where economic opportunities have historically been limited (Sustainability Report 2011:40)

'I also think women are incredible people managers - perhaps because I have been managed successfully by women all of my life, first by my mother, and now by my wife of thirty-one years and daughter. I do not take for granted that there are still many barriers to women achieving the same level of parity professionally and economically, but those barriers are constantly being broken down by the tenacity and intelligence of women.'(Azemati 2011:12)

2.2 Structure and goals of 5by20

In September 2010 the Coca-Cola Company introduced the 5by20 initiative as their latest corporate standpoint toward global economic empowerment of women entrepreneurs. The stated goal of the initiative is to under a period of ten years, empower women through the Coca-Cola system and the company's value chain by the year 2020. The initiative does not only aim to help women to become a part of the global system but to break down the barriers preventing them from growing their businesses from the beginning (Sustainability Report 2011:40).

Muhtar Kent, addressed 5by20 as a challenge to the internal Coca-Cola system as well as to the governments and civil societies globally, and others who works as

associates with the company, to broaden the dialogue on women's partake in the market and to open up for different kinds of partnerships needed for succeeding the goal. These partnerships are key ingredients, according to Coca-Cola, not only for the impact of the initiative under its lifespan but also for women's empowerment after the 'deadline' of it. Working in collaboration with NGOs, other companies and the governments of the countries involved, the 5by20 implements different programs that help to break down economic and social barriers (Sustainability GRI Report 2013:26).

Before accounting for what the programs actually contain, it is important to clarify what the Coca-Cola's so-called value chain consists of. In Box 1, the components of the supply value chain are displayed and it is within this structure the women selected by the 5by20 are to become economically empowered.

Box 1.



(Source: Coca-Cola 2014)

The Coca-Cola System should not be seen as a 'single entity' neither from a managerial nor legal perspective, and they state clearly the company does not control or own most of the bottling partners that they work with (Sustainability GRI Report 2013:5). The company is in charge of for example the sells concentrates, beverage bases and therefor responsible for the consumer brand marketing initiatives. Then it is the individual bottling partner who determines the processes of manufacture, package, and merchandise and distributes the final beverage, i.e. sell the product. The system is therefor made up by several units, both high up and on the ground level of the company hierarchy, which makes the localized strategies developed through local partnership is crucial (Sustainability GRI Report 2013:6).

The programs of the 5by20 initiative include access to business skills training, financial services, and networks in which peers and mentors meet and exchange experience. Coca-Cola defines the concept ‘entrepreneur’ as “a woman who owns or operates a business connected to the value chain or has the potential to be connected to the value chain” (Sustainability GRI Report 2013:27).

2.2.1 Partners

By the end of 2013, the 5by20 initiative had been introduced in 44 different countries, and three year into the process over 550.000 women have been involved with different versions of the programs. Partnering up with 5by20 to see these activities through and spread them even further, are so-called ‘big players’ in the development field: UN Women, the Bill & Melinda Gates foundation, and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) (Sustainability GRI Report 2013:27). The IFC collaboration started in March 2013, and is a three-year joint initiative. The aim of this partnership is to provide further financing and business skills training for female entrepreneurs (5by20 2014). The UN Women partnership started already in 2011, with focus on women’s empowerment in specific countries; South Africa, Egypt and Brazil.

3. Theory

This increased interest in the woman and her participation in the market raises a lot of different theoretical issues and questions pending on one's ideological, epistemological and ontological standpoint. In the following segment the feminist historical materialist standpoint will be introduced, deconstructed and discussed, in relation to the research puzzle of this study, and it is the theoretical framework for this study.

3.1 Feminist historical materialist

Before getting in to deep in the theoretical conundrums of the feminist historical materialist approach, some clarification is needed on this perspective.

First, this theoretical approach views gender as a social construction, which is intrinsically rooted within the historical development of capitalist society (Roberts & Soederberg 2012:955). This outlook on social constructions is something shared by the Marxian approach. But, as Nancy Hartsock (1983) claim, although Marx's account of class domination has laid the 'foundation', a series of guidelines and important standards for feminist theory, the Marxian account of power relations still operates with 'gender-blind' and therefore gender-biased categories. The structures shaped by history in turn shape the lives of women, and these needs to be questioned and defined in order to identify possibilities for change (Hartsock 1975:36).

Secondly, the capitalist society is also a socially constructed occurrence, which is neither natural nor inevitable (Roberts & Soederberg 2012:955). This in turn mean, that from a feminist historical materialist standpoint, that the capitalist structures are normalized and constructed through class relations and the capitalist state, and, more interestingly for this study, by extension international organization such as the World Bank and the IMF (Roberts & Soederberg 2012:955).

And thirdly, the feminist historical materialism offers a framework that re-politicizes and re-historicizes the framing of gender related issues and women's role in society (Roberts 2012:93).

Deriving from the Marxian critique of the class domination stands as an implicit suggestion that feminists should consider the advantages of adopting a historical

materialist perspective to understand the relation between women's emancipation and the phallocratic domination in the social structures of today's society.

3.2 The Sexual Division of Labor

In order to understand power relations and how they construct the outlook on women's economic empowerment, one needs to contextualize and understand 'power'. In Nancy Hartsock's book 'Money, Sex and Power' (1983), power as a concept is examined from a feminist historical materialist perspective and she raises two concerns in particular:

- How relations of domination along gender lines are constructed and maintained.
- Whether the social conception of domination itself have been distorted by men's domination of women.

Within our Western culture the link between virility, manliness, power and domination are very strong (Hartsock 1983:8). Expanding the theoretical understanding of power and domination (and how they differ) is therefore important and should be done from a feminist standpoint. If politics is about power, and power relations in Western culture have carried masculine gender expressed in a structural domination of power, then a feminist rethinking of power can have important implications for the practice and understanding of politics as a whole. Society is not only structured by a ruling class that is dependent on the division of manual from mental labor, but also by a ruling gender which is defined by and dependent on the sexual division of labor (Hartsock 1983:9). The concept of the 'sexual division of labor' is used instead of the 'gender division of labor' since the division between men and women cannot be reduced to purely social dimensions. This is how Nancy Hartsock frames it:

"Thus, the fact that women and not men bear children is not (yet) a social choice, but that women and not men rear children in a society structured by compulsory heterosexuality and male dominance is clearly a societal choice."(Hartsock 1983:233)

Women's work in every society differs from men's, and an analysis that begins from the sexual division of labor could form the basis for an analysis of the real structures of women's oppression. An analysis that would not require a separation of biology and society, an analysis that would expose the ways in which women both oppose and participate in their own subordination (Hartsock 1983:261). The notion of the ruling gender (or class) shape the material relations in which all parties of a society must participate, the very nature of individuals therefore depends on the material conditions determining their production (Hartsock 1983:232). It is on the basis of these structures that women's activity is defined as contributors to subsistence, as wives and as mothers.

3.3 Transnational Business Feminism

The idea of corporate involvement in development is, as mentioned earlier in this study, more than ever a part of shaping the structures in which women and female emancipation is addressed. When claiming such a business case for gender equality a certain business-oriented and market-based knowledgebase is constructed of gender relations and about women (Roberts 2014:2). The result is the emergence of a politico-economic notion called 'transnational business feminism' (TBF), which some feminist scholars argue that TBF and its practices have contributed to a continuation of the understanding that gender and women are ahistorical and apolitical (Roberts 2014:2). This in turn, cloak the growing power of multinational corporations and how they contribute in the process of "shaping gender relations in the broader context of neo-liberal-led development" (Roberts 2012:86). TBF is an ideological coalition in which constructing women as 'untapped resources' and good investments and other neoliberal conceptions are promoted (Roberts 2012:92). An example of this is the WDR from 2012 on '*Gender Equality and Development*' where the World Bank combines the argument that gender equality is important for both instrumental and intrinsic reasons (Roberts 2014:4). The promotion of women's empowerment from a business perspective, as TBF does, is what is needed to 'cure' the market from its structures of hegemonic masculinity and the legitimization of patriarchy (Roberts 2012:85). However, from a feminist historical materialist perspective, the roots for gender inequality are not found in women's exclusion from the market per se, but rather in the ideological and material separation of production from social

production. It is found in the sexual division of labor that this separation contributes to the solidification and devaluation of the work of social reproduction that is primarily done by women (Roberts 2014:11).

TBF tend to consider the labor market as key to female emancipation, but from a critical feminist perspective, the capitalist labor markets themselves are built on unequal power relations between men and women (Roberts 2012:94). As

Adrienne Roberts and Stephen Gill argue:

“While the market society gives ontological primacy to the individual – homo economicus – this view ignores socially and historically constructed gender variations in norms, values and behavior.”(Gill & Roberts 2011:164).

The integration of women from various geographical regions and socio-economical backgrounds into the labor market thus does not automatically translate into their empowerment.

3.4 Feminism Seduced

Hester Eisenstein is one of the leading feminist theorists in academia today and she talks about the ‘Seduction of Feminism’. Her claim is that during the course of globalization, under the neo-liberal leadership of institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank, the concept of women’s liberalization and feminism has been ‘hijacked’ (Eisenstein 2010:421). Looking into the relationship between globalization and mainstream feminism, Eisenstein (2010) finds that the use of ‘gender’ as a category in development literature and rhetoric has led to the idea that women and women’s education and empowerment are being used as a substitute for genuine economic state led development (see also Prügl & True 2014:6). Globalization has brought on a mixed interpretation of female emancipation to the rest of the world (Eisenstein 2005:511). If the goal of globalization is to create market and investment opportunities, and therefore acceptance of Western norms along with Western products, then in this context the image and ideal of a liberated and strong Western woman becomes a part of the sale (Eisenstein 2010:425). This is an example of how Eisenstein frames it: *“ The propaganda of globalization has mesmerized us, making us feel that the only real engine of women’s liberation is the expansion of corporate capitalism to every corner of the world.”* (Eisenstein 2010:426)

After the first and second world war, Western social reproduction was organized around the idealized male-breadwinner gender order but despite the attempts to return women to domesticity women (mainly in the US and Western Europe) stayed in paid employment (Eisenstein 2005:491). The public understanding of wives and mothers underwent a transformation during the 1950s and 1960s, women became 'acknowledged' as *workers* as well, and similar change in perception is happening today toward women in the Global South (Eisenstein 2005:497). But Eisenstein (2005:511) is critical toward this legitimization of feminism, since it tend to mask the restructuring of the world economy which in many ways intensifies gender inequality and poverty for the vast majority of women. The aim of critical feminism, according to Eisenstein, is to place class and gender at the center of the analysis and then examine the how structural and policy changes under neoliberal globalization have shaped the new international division of labor (Eisenstein 2005:512).

4. Methodology

Now that the theoretical framework has been established, this chapter will introduce the methodological approach for this study.

4.1 The feminist perspective

Before accounting for the methodological outline, I find it necessary to address the feminist epistemological and ontological perspectives on methodology and the use of methods, because of the ongoing debate on what role methodology should take in feminist studies (Ackerly & True 2010:6). The approach toward a specific research method depends on which stance in feminism the study derives from (Punch 2005:136). The concept of method in feminist research could be problematic, both in a practical sense but foremost as an epistemological issue. Within social studies, including those of feminist nature, the boundary between method and methodology is rather unclear. For this study I will use the definitions made by Sandra Harding, where an epistemology is considered as a “theory of knowledge”, methodology as “a theory and analysis of how research does or should proceed”, and a method as a “technique for (or a way of proceeding in) gathering evidence” (Harding 1991:2-3). From a feminist epistemological standpoint, knowledge is something that is (socially) produced and thus the interest of research should be on highlighting and exposing the conditions and relations of the production process (Ackerly & True 2010:27).

The research processes conducted by feminist scholars are processes in themselves that [re]produce power differences. There is also a discrepancy when it comes to the concept of ‘feminist methods’ within academia, which potentially pose a larger theoretical problem (see Ackerly & True 2010:162).

With all this in mind, it is important to recognize and remember that feminism is a highly contested terrain, so this study engages with these topics with caution due to the adequacy of feminism itself as a theoretical and methodological guide.

4.2 Research Design

The research design of this study is constructed in a way that will make it possible to gather and analyze the data needed to answer my research question it is: a qualitative, single case study of selected material from the 5by20 initiative, in which I will be working deductively from a feminist historical materialist perspective (Ackerly & True 2010:121; Bryman 2012:24).

The structure of a single case study suits the purpose of this study, since it is a methodological approach that can be used as a locus of a study that addresses more general phenomenon, in this case the representation of women as development actors and vehicles of change in the 5by20 initiative (Ackerly & True 2010:130). Although, when using a single case study design larger claims of theoretical and epistemological nature one can face critique of being inadequate as research designs go but in this study no larger claims are made and therefore the single case study design is relevant (Ackerly & True 2010:131). A single case study design can open up a world, but it is important for me as a researcher and you as a reader to be aware of the fact that it is this particular world that is scrutinized, nothing more nothing less.

The methods and data used when applying this type of design differ depending on the nature of the study, if it is conducted in combination with fieldwork, through interviews or as a desk study (Ackerly & True 2010:133). Punch (2005:145), highlights three components that make a case study:

- *“Investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, when*
- *the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and in which*
- *multiple sources of evidence are used.”*

4.2.1 Contextual analysis

For this study the analytical technique applied will be that of contextualization. Since the feminist research ethic allow this study to recognize the socially constructed relation in this world, the need to examine and analyze data as a part of a specific context is therefore suitable (Ackerly & True 2010:189). This type of analysis will help in placing my chosen material in a context where the historical, political and socio-cultural features are taken into greater consideration, in comparison to other types of analysis. Using this mode of contextual analysis is perhaps more commonly related to research conducting a discourse or frame analysis, but when applied in smaller case studies, such as this one, the process of contextualization could actually help in pointing out potential factors in need of more exploration (Ackerly & True 2010:192).

4.3 Material and delimitations

The material for the analysis of this study consists of selected documents and videos from the 5by20 initiative, and therefore consists of secondary data. Using secondary analysis has both advantages, such as time and cost reduction, and shortcomings, like lack of familiarity and quality control of my data (Bryman 2012:315). But, since the study has a clear focus on one case in particular, and do not attempt to make any larger policy-making conclusions, this should not pose as an issue.

The Coca-Cola Company provide a plethora of published reports, documents and reviews on the topic of sustainability, CSR and women's economic empowerment open for the public to read on their webpage (Coca-Cola 2014). For this study I have delimited the selection to three; a Twitter-recap accessible on the Coca-Cola webpage, an external report conducted on the 5by20 initiative accessible on the webpage, and finally a compilation of different video interviews with women a part of the initiative called 'Success Stories'. These three, have been specifically chosen because I believe that when put together in an analysis, they provide a more holistic and overall description of the initiative. They also represent three 'dimensions' of how the company works in social media, together with academia and their own way of framing the initiative.

Using films and photographs, or other types of visual materials in academic studies is somewhat of a contested subject (see Bryman 2012; Holliday 2007; Punch 2005). However, in feminist exploration of power and social relations including, adopting a gender perspective when analyzing film, photo or other types of audio-visual media, could help in the exploration of how gender roles are constructed (Järviluoma et.al 2003:97).

5. Analysis

In this chapter, I will deconstruct the material from the 5by20 initiative and account for how women are talked about and portrayed. In chapter six, my concluding analysis and thoughts drawn from this deconstruction will be placed in a larger context with regards to my chosen theoretical and methodological framework. Instead of conducting three separate investigations of my material, I have created the following three categories: the wife, the mother and the entrepreneur. The reason as to why I have created these categories is because in order to conduct a contextual analysis deriving from a feminist historical materialist perspective I need to step out of the normative framework of looking at just one case as one issue, and adopt a more holistic standpoint where all issues and factors are regarded as interlinked. The Coca-Cola Company, itself have used these categorizations when describing the women who take part in the programs of the 5by20 initiative. The rhetoric used by Coca-Cola is ‘commercial language’, in the sense that a lot of the words are positive reinforcements of the initiative and used in a promotional character. The statements from the women are filled with expression of emotions, happy, sad, proud etc., which is supported by the documented images of the community where they live and close-ups on their families. The women portrayed are smiling, looking straight into the camera and in the videos accompanied by background music, which gave me as a viewer a feeling that there is hope for the future.

5.2 The mother

When examining the material from the 5by20 initiative it is clear to me that the role of the mother is a theme that all women are categorized in, with the exception of one. In the twelve different ‘Success Stories’ almost all of the women are mothers or grandmothers. In the video interviews with the women, a great emphasis is placed on the fact that they are mothers and in some cases the sole financial provider of their families.

For example in the case of Doña Martha, from Chimalhucán Mexico, being a ‘good mother’ and being able to provide for her children is the most important thing in her life (Success Stories 2014). And because of the initiative Doña Martha have now, through one of the artisan programs, she has doubled her

family income and been able to send her children to school, pay doctor's bills, and pay off longstanding loans.

Preeti Gupta, a rural shopkeeper from Agra, India, express that before becoming a part of the initiative she used to think very little of herself but now she has realized her own potential and can stand on her own two feet (Success Stories 2014). Now, she is a source of inspiration to her children, especially for her daughter. Beth Jenkins, Kara Valikai and Piya Baptista (2013:37), mention in their study of the 5by20 initiative that other research have shown that women, as mothers, are more inclined to re-invest their additional income into schooling and healthcare for their children than what their male counterparts.

Bessie Mogale, a mother of three and businesswoman from South Africa, is the only provider for her family and for her becoming a part of the 5by20 initiative has helped her to fill the role of the father for her sons, which, expressed in her bibliographical video, makes her feel like a strong, proud and independent woman (Success Stories 2014). In the Twitter re-cap, Bessie is quoted saying; "Every penny, every cent that that I ever earned was for my children" (Success Stories 2014). One of her sons is interviewed in her video, and he express that he is proud to have her as his mother.

The one exception is Laly Mathebula also from Johannesburg South Africa; she is not a mother because her husband passed away before being able to give her any children. This does not however come across as an issue of any sort in her biographical video, because in the interviews with her co-workers she has through her ownership of her business become a person regarded as a mother to the entire community (Success Stories 2014). When analyzing the specific case of Laly, an interesting observation was made: contrary to all of the other women portrayed in the 'Success Stories', Laly Mathebula does not speak. Others in the video speak on her behalf, but these people are not introduced in the video neither with names nor with an explanation for what their relation is to this woman. Some speculations can be made with help of the footage that they are co-workers or/and costumers, but no valid conclusions can be drawn.

5.1 The wife

I place the concept of the family under this category of ‘the wife’, because I want to include husband, boyfriend or other family members as well. If the concept of the family would be placed under ‘the mother’ I believe some of the key finding of the analysis could be disregarded. The concept of ‘the wife’ is not as reoccurring in the material (five out of the twelve women are not labeled as wives) as the mother and the entrepreneur is, but I have chosen to include it because it is one of the key words used by the company itself when introducing the women in the ‘Success Stories’.

For example, when Teresita Antiono, a shopkeeper from Palawan in the Philippines, tell her story, the fact that she is a married woman is manifesting itself in several ways. Helping her husband and family by working in her shop increases not only the income of her household, but her self-esteem as well, as she frames it: “As a wife, it is a big thing to be able to help my husband and to earn for my family. It feels good that as a woman I am able to help my husband” (Success Stories 2014). This notion of being the breadwinner and contributing to ones family is crucial, and the correlation between the empowerment of a woman and the empowerment of her entire family is a clear trend in the 5by20 material (Jenkins et al 2013:35). Another woman, Zilda Barreto from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, works as a recyclables collector and before entering the 5by20 initiative she expresses that she felt hopelessness and the lack of employment left her without a solution for providing for her family. But since becoming a part of a larger co-operative, Colectivo Recycling, who are one of the partner organizations of 5by20, Zilda is now able to provide for her entire family and take care of her community (Success Stories 2014).

There is general lack of description of the contribution made by men and husbands in the narrative of these women. It is briefly touched upon in the Twitter re-cap, where Bea Perez Chief Sustainability Officer, gets the question as to how the initiative engages with men and boys. Her answer is rather evasive, but she recognizes that educating boys and men on women’s issues are equally important to make a sustainable difference. However, since the initiative engages with women who will contribute to the larger community that issue is taken care of by the women themselves (Twitter Chat 2013).

5.3 The entrepreneur

In the main goal of the 5by20 initiative, found described in the Jenkins et al. study (2013:7), is to ‘economically empower five million women entrepreneurs within the global value chain by 2020’. The sensation that it is a part of a woman’s nature to work hard for her children, family and community comes across as a rather clear conviction in the initiatives material. The study by Jenkins, Valikai and Baptista (2013) only mentions the word wife and mother once, whereas the word ‘entrepreneur’ is mentioned somewhere on every page in the 46 page long document. The emphasis of the study is on examining and concluding what a strong business-case there is for the Coca-Cola Company and other private actors to invest and empower women. The Twitter re-cap’s focus is also mainly directed to focus on the entrepreneurial and business aspects of why the Coca-Cola Company initiated 5by20.

For example, the story of Bessie Mogale, where she express her self that she ‘was born to be an entrepreneur’. This statement is then reproduced by the company and can be found quoted on several other places on the webpage and other publications. There is a common thread in the ‘Success Stories’, the report, and the Twitter re-cap, and that is the belief that having a business empowers a woman not only financially, but it will ‘trickle’ down into the other spheres of life as it has in the case of Lea de Almeida Rocha Serra. Her story is that she is a mother, wife and working artisan from Rio de Janeiro. She lived in the *favelas* (slums) and after her son’s passing she fell into a deep depression, where she felt like she had nothing to live for. But after some time, in 2006, she realized that she needed to do something for her self and she devoted her self to making handicrafts out of plastic PET bottles. Working started to give her a feeling of satisfaction and in 2010 she was included in Coca-Cola’s Colectivo program (Success Stories 2014). The program not only improved Lea’s level of skills and knowledge as a businesswoman and artisan, but also leads her on the path of new possibilities. As she articulates herself: “Everything improved and changed because of my income increased, not only mine but all my employees” (Success Stories 2014).

Malehlohonolo Moleko, a bakery owner and single mother from Vander Bjiilpark South Africa, participated in the 5by20 initiatives workshop for women in business and after the training, things became much better at home and “everything worked it self out” (Success Stories 2014). By having a job and

acquiring more business knowledge, Malehlonolo is not only passing on the knowledge to her female co-workers but also becoming a mentor and respected leader in her community.

6. Conclusion

Acknowledging and recognizing a woman, and the contributions to society her work bring is a wonderful thing. It has been the intention of this study, not to contest this, since I personally believe it to be true, but rather to shine a light on *how* we recognize a woman's participation. Through the investigation of the Coca-Cola Company's CSR initiative 5by20 I have reached the following conclusions.

Within the current development paradigm, Coca-Cola is 'playing by the rules' and pushing for all of the right changes as to what is considered needed to create a sustainable business approach to issues of gender inequality and hindered economic development. They make a strong case for why the focus is placed on women, and it is clear to me that the company wants to show that women are not the problem but rather the solution to the developmental struggle, but this makes me wonder: who said that women were the issue from the beginning?

There is no denying that all of the stories presented in the 5by20 material, are the stories of amazingly strong and capable women whose lives have improved (financially) from their involvement with Coca-Cola, but throughout the material there is a general lack of contextualization of what the individual women's backgrounds and situations were *before* they were included into the initiative.

From a feminist historical materialist perspective, the issues of the current discourse is that the de-politicized and ahistorical representation of women, and that is exactly what I have found the case of the 5by20 initiative to be a part of. Where are the women who are not mothers by choice and where are the women who are single and not wives nor widows? The stated goal of the initiative is to increase the economic empowerment of women entrepreneurs, but through my analysis of the 5by20 material only a certain kind of woman is represented. What of those outside of the Coca-Cola model? Are they not women deserving of emancipation and economic empowerment as well?

Being a woman is, through the eyes of Coca-Cola, equivalent to being a mother, a role model and an ambitious entrepreneur.

Perhaps, it is so that this way of portraying women suits the company better? It might be so, that it is 'easier' to convey and sell the image of a woman as the selfless mother and the community caregiver. One must remember that although contributing positively to tackling development issues, the Coca-Cola Company is in fact a beverage company, which primary goal is to sell products and make profit. This fact is not in itself problematic, but not contextualizing the potential implications have an impact on how women are perceived and what they considered to be capable of. The social constructions of gender inequality is not addressed enough in the today's development debate, nor is it challenged by this specific Coca-Cola initiative, which makes it difficult for me, as a feminist, to see the potential sustainable contributions to the process of women's empowerment.

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