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business participation in society
(2nd Edition)**

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Can corporations be citizens? Corporate citizenship as a metaphor for business participation in society (2nd Edition)

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Abstract

This paper investigates whether, in theoretical terms, corporations can be citizens. The argument is based on the observation that the debate on 'corporate citizenship' (CC) has only paid limited attention to the actual notion of citizenship. Where it has been discussed, authors have either largely left the concept of CC unquestioned, or applied rather unidimensional and decontextualized notions of citizenship to the corporate sphere. The paper opens with a discussion of the nature and role of metaphors for business and of the contestable nature of the political concept of citizenship. It considers corporations as citizens in terms of (a) legal and political status; and (b) participants in civic processes. These issues are addressed through a four-dimensional framework of democratic citizenship offered by Stokes (2002). The analysis suggests that corporations do not easily fit the *liberal minimalist* model of citizenship. It finds, however some possibilities for fit with the three more participatory models. There is fit with the most important of these, *civic republicanism*, through the activity of participation in social affairs. The paper finds that corporations can share in two levels of participation (by acting as pressure groups and by participating in governing). There are also possibilities of corporations sharing the characteristics of *developmental* and *deliberative* citizenship, though these raise particular evaluative issues. The paper concludes by refuting the notion of corporations having citizenship by virtue of legal and political *status*, but maps out specific criteria by which we might determine whether corporations could be considered as citizens by virtue of their participation in *processes* of governance.

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[A] totally uncontested and uncontestable concept of citizenship appears to be particularly problematic.'
(Parry 1991)

Introduction

The term 'corporate citizenship' (CC) has been used increasingly by corporations, consultants and scholars to echo, underscore, extend, or re-orient certain aspects of corporate social responsibility. However, the introduction of this terminology raises important questions about the role of corporations, particularly at a time when there are growing demands for a critical review of the institutions of business and society. As van Luijk 2001 suggests, the usage of this new terminology was chiefly practitioner driven – and as such not without some pragmatic justification. The term first began to be used by corporations and the business press in the US in the 1980s, and has since become a popular way of labeling the social responsibilities and behaviors of corporations (Altman and Vidaver-Cohen 2000). To give just a few examples: Ford claims that 'Corporate citizenship has become an integral part of every decision and action we take'¹; GlaxoSmithKline suggests that it 'makes substantial investments in its ... corporate citizenship programmes'²; and Siemens contends that 'dialogue with society and responsible corporate citizenship are more vital than ever before.'³ Indeed, the language of CC is now as much a feature of the discourse of European companies, as it is their US counterparts.

Usage of the term CC is also certainly no longer confined merely to the practitioner discourse. It has been enthusiastically embraced by academics, consultants, government units, NGOs, and others, raising serious doubts for some about its content and justification. Matten et al (2003) for example suggest that the application of CC terminology by both academics and practitioners has been inconsistent, unclear, and at times arbitrary. Their analysis of the more academic literature on CC suggests two particularly significant results in this respect. First, the overwhelming majority of users employ CC chiefly as just a new label for elements of corporate philanthropy or social responsibility that have been discussed for more than thirty

¹ <http://www.ford.com>

² <http://www.gsk.com>.

³ Siemens Corporate Citizenship Report 2001.

years. Under this aspect, CC seems to offer nothing substantially new apart from a new brand for a re-launch of quite dated concepts. Second, only a minority of commentators have yet attempted to address the fact that this re-invigoration of the CSR discourse makes use of the term 'citizenship' and challenges the connotations, implications and – potentially – innovations linked to the usage of this terminology.

Among the few contributors to have deliberately addressed the notion of 'citizenship' are Donna Wood and Jeanne Logsdon (Wood and Logsdon, 2001; Logsdon and Wood 2002). Wood and Logsdon share some of our anxieties about the uncritical use of the term CC, but also identify some reasons to attach the term citizenship to, for example, business rights and duties, and stakeholder relationships. Their analysis focuses on three views of citizenship: the "minimalist" (i.e. liberal) view; the communitarian view; and the universal rights view.

We share Wood and Logsdon's dismissal of a simple interpretation of CC in terms of a liberal minimalist view. We also share their recommendation to those considering the application of the citizenship model to business that they move 'from the minimalist to a communitarian view' (2002: 95). Their view of citizenship is basically dichotomous, differentiating into a liberal and a communitarian view. Their study continues by adding a third, namely territorial, dimension and the implications of shifting from the level of the 'local polity' to the global community for what they refer to as 'business citizenship'. Notwithstanding the importance of globalization both for the practice and the theorization of business citizenship⁴, our present intention is to interrogate more closely the appropriateness of different conceptions of citizenship for corporations, territory apart.

We argue that a dichotomous view of citizenship based on liberal versus communitarian views is theoretically flawed and limits the insights that the metaphor can offer to the analysis of corporations. We would rather argue that contemporary political theory suggests a continuum comprising various aspects of liberal and communitarian citizenship, and in which the liberal element is present throughout,

⁴ Although globalisation raises important issues for individuals as citizens (see Held 1993) as well as potentially for corporations as citizens, our discussion does not address questions of geo-political context (see Matten et al 2003; Wood and Logsdon 2001; Chapple and Moon forthcoming).

though in different intensities. As Abbey argues, there is an ambition in much contemporary political theory ‘to both go beyond and conserve the liberal tradition’ (2002: 151). This is because political theorists recognize both the richness and complexity of the liberal heritage as well as the critical insights that communitarianism has brought to liberalism. So too in the narrower subject of citizenship, political theorists increasingly take a more nuanced view which recognizes the debate within and among conceptions of citizenship. This is well illustrated in Stokes’ (2002) discussion of models of *democratic citizenship* which informs our own analysis.

Drawing on Stokes’ models of citizenship, our analysis of the possibilities of ‘corporate’ citizenship focuses on a range of forms and norms of *participation* rather than on the traditional dichotomy between liberalism and communitarianism. Hence, although we see no argument for according corporations legal or political status, we contend that by sharing in the key process of democratic citizenship, participation, corporations may be said to exhibit certain citizenship-like behaviors.

The starting point of our analysis therefore is the hypothesis that if there is anything innovative in the present discourse on CC, it could be a re-invigoration of the corporate role as a *member* of society (next to individual citizens) that *participates* in social and political affairs in the broadest sense. A quote from a more recent practitioner text on CC illustrates this view succinctly:

Corporate Citizenship [...] involves corporations becoming more informed and enlightened members of society and understanding that they are both public and private entities. [...] They are created by society and derive their legitimacy from the societies in which they operate. They need to be able to articulate their role, scope and purpose as well as understand their full social and environmental impacts and responsibilities.

(McIntosh et al. 2003, p16)

The purpose of this paper is therefore to analyze the extent to which notions of membership and participation are conceptualized by views of citizenship in political science. Such an analysis then provides a reasonable basis for the claim that ‘*corporate* citizenship’ actually offers distinctly new features to the debate on business-society relations. We will do so by analyzing three distinct sets of questions.

First, we will analyze the conditions of the usage of political terminology and metaphors in business. Such a cross-disciplinary 'import' of concepts is by no means unproblematic and large parts of the literature in business on CC clearly reveal considerable insensitivity to these issues. Second, we then provide a detailed analysis of the meanings and prerequisites of the citizenship concept utilizing Stokes' (2002) typology of citizenship, which delineates four normative models of citizenship and democracy, three of which, *civic republicanism* and *developmental* and *deliberative* citizenship entail different forms and norms of participation. We make further distinctions in forms of political participation which lie at the interface of minimalist and civic republicanism conceptions and which arguably have special relevance for the consideration of corporations as citizens. Third, and as a last step, we consider the relevance of these conceptions of citizenship as participation to corporations' social and political relations. We conclude with a more general discussion of the opportunities and responsibilities that would attend the increased attribution / assumption of citizenship roles to / by business.

CC as a political metaphor in business

The introduction of 'citizenship' terminology from politics, and its application to corporate actors, represents a move to the metaphorical. Alluding to corporations in terms of citizenship does not literally mean that corporations *are* citizens or *have* citizenship, but that their substance or their actions can be understood as being in some meaningful way *similar to* that of citizens or citizenship. As such, the term CC is metaphorical, and is one of many metaphors used in the analysis of organizational life and in the projection of business images and brands.

As Morgan (1980) argues, the metaphors of the machine (e.g. Weber, Taylor) and the organism (e.g. Spencer, Parsons) have been at the heart of organizational analysis. However, since the 1960s other metaphors have been used in order to understand organizations in new, and specifically non-functionalist, ways. Importantly, Morgan notes that:

The most powerful use of metaphor arises in instances in which the differences between the two phenomena are seen to be significant but not total...the logic of

metaphor... suggests that no one metaphor can capture the total nature of organizational life...[d]ifferent metaphors can constitute and capture the nature of organizational life in different ways, each generating powerful, distinctive, but essentially partial insights ... new metaphors may be used to create new ways of viewing organizations which overcome the weaknesses and blind spots of traditional metaphors, offering supplementary or even contradictory approaches to organizational analysis (1980: 611–612).

This signals that the facet of business behavior in question should not be expected to be synonymous with the metaphor being applied. However, in an era in which corporate branding is both a central strategy for many businesses and a source of suspicion among critics of business (see Klein 2001) it behoves analysts to have regard to the conceptual and analytical possibilities and limitations of metaphors in business.

One of the new sorts of metaphor for business organizations that Morgan cites is the political system, which he sees as highlighting the social dimensions of business. This has been used to draw attention to conflicts of interest and the role of power in organizations (e.g. by Crozier 1964). In addition to the metaphor of 'politics' itself, other political concepts have been deployed as metaphors in economic and organizational analysis including 'democracy' (as in stakeholder democracy) and 'sovereignty' (as in consumer sovereignty). Again, whilst these are metaphorical in essence, their selection is generally intended to convey some substantive meaning or value to the organization or activity in question. In the case of CC, this meaning is ostensibly one of community membership and participation.

What is important to recognize here is that the metaphorical use of concepts from politics does not necessarily mean that the concepts are 'givens'. In their political context, they are frequently the subject of considerable contestation concerning their definition, scope, and operation, and this contestation can transfer to the organizational context. Indeed, the meaning of citizenship within political debates has been transformed in the space of the twentieth century alone. This has been due to, for example, women's enfranchisement, growth in multiculturalism, and changes in political boundaries and institutions. Thus, as Parry notes, '[A] totally uncontested

and uncontested concept of citizenship appears to be particularly problematic' (1991: 168).

But what is it about concept of citizenship that lends it to such dynamics? Gallie (1956) distinguished a class of *essentially contested concepts* whose meaning is always part of debate about their application. Connolly (1983) gives three reasons why concepts are essentially contested⁵: because they are *appraisive* (or that they are considered as valued); *internally complex*; and their rules of application are relatively *open*. We argue that, by parity of reasoning, the concept of CC is also essentially contestable.

The concept of citizenship is *appraisive* in that no one covets a reputation for being 'uncitizenly' or a 'poor' corporate citizen. Thus, CC would not be a value-free description and its meaning can change. Secondly, CC is *internally complex* in a number of respects. It is often difficult to extricate from such other corporate activities as reputation building; marketing; knowledge acquisition; and human relations, for example. Hence there are difficulties in accounting for CC's discrete social contribution or its financial value and in settling on an understanding of its relationship to for-profit activity. Thirdly, CC is *open* as its different advocates attach particular importance to its different facets. CC is not just a matter for individual firms to pronounce upon. Governments, business associations, business consultants, NGOs, shareholders, employees and consumers have all shown a propensity to attempt to define CC as they seek to endorse, encourage or criticize it. There is no single authority on its definition, a feature underscored by its relationship to stakeholding.

There will always be debate about CC's meaning, merits, and appropriateness. There is an internal dynamic to this debate as new models of CC are developed against which practices are judged. As Marshall said of the political concept of citizenship:

⁵ Gallie, who devised the term, provides seven criteria for essentially contested concepts but for present purposes we will content ourselves with Connolly's three criteria.

Societies in which citizenship is a developing institution create an image of an ideal citizenship against which achievement can be measured and towards which aspiration can be measured (1950: 29)

The nature of these debates reflects social and business contexts within firms, among firms, within countries and among countries. Recognizing that, like its related political concepts, the metaphor of CC is essentially contested does not, of course, obviate the need for closer investigation into its theoretical appropriateness.

What is citizenship?

We now turn to considering the appropriateness of the concept of citizenship for corporations and the appropriateness of corporations for citizenship. We are concerned here with two key issues: do corporations metaphorically conform with the *status* and with the key *process*, namely participation, of human citizenship?

In order to do so, we draw from, and build upon, Stokes' (2002) four main models of democracy and citizenship – *liberal minimalist*, *civic republicanism*, *developmental democracy*, and *deliberative democracy* – to elucidate different modes of participation. As Stokes himself observes, this is a process of 'historical and conceptual simplification' but it 'serves to isolate the key characteristics and normative principles... and enables their comparison' (2002: 27). He evaluates these models with reference to two variables, *civic engagement* and *capacity for [self] critique* to which we will turn in our concluding discussion.

Four views of citizenship and their appropriateness for corporations

Liberal Minimalism

Liberal minimalist theories see citizens as in need of protection from arbitrary rule and oppression by government (Stokes 2002: 27-31). These are either rights- or utilitarian-based. Rights-based conceptions of citizenship owe most to John Locke (1690) who assumed that citizens have natural rights to 'life, liberty, and property' that these are the duty of government to secure and the basis for citizen protection from government. When government fails to uphold these, the citizens have the right to withdraw their consent. The utilitarian view is premised on similar expectations of government but in the absence of rights as normative guides. In his application to

politics of Adam Smith's assumption of the relationship between the free expression of preferences in markets and public goods (the 'invisible hand'), Bentham argued that the only conception of public good is as an aggregation of individual goods.

Schumpeter (1976) developed a minimalist (and utilitarian) theory of citizenship for the democratic age (i.e. in which there is political as well as legal equality). He prized systems of representation in which citizens participate merely by selecting among elites who contend for office. The elites perform the basic functions of governing. He assumed that the very desire of the elites to secure and retain office would make them responsive to citizens' preferences as expressed by their choice of representatives at periodic elections (or, by extension, through opinion polls in between elections). Although Marshall's (1950) version for the age of welfare accorded a wider set of rights to citizens, his model was still premised on the primacy of individual rights and the political division of labor between citizens and government which are both central to the liberal minimalist model.

There is, therefore, little reminiscent of the corporation in this minimalist conceptualization of citizenship (see also Wood and Logsdon 2001). The justification for the status of an individual as a citizen, whether based on rights or utilitarian perspectives, offers no metaphor for corporations. It could be asked here whether, if there is no strong conformance between corporations and the minimalist definitions of citizenship, there is any point in pursuing this inquiry? We do so on the understanding that whilst there may be limitations in the use of the analogy of citizenship on legal and political status grounds, the metaphor of citizenship as a process may help conceptualize some new aspects of business-social relations and enhance our ability to evaluate these. This emphasis will therefore be more concerned with the key feature of citizenship as a process, namely participation. Hence, our investigation follows Stokes' second, third and fourth views of citizenship which unpack dimensions of participation that are eclipsed in what Wood and Logsdon refer to as 'communitarian' model.

Civic Republicanism

Civic republicanism (Stokes 2002: 31- 34) shares the assumptions of equal legal rights and political equality with liberal minimalism but it also prizes the 'public or civic

good', rather than assuming that the public good is simply an aggregation of individual goods. Civic republicanism is often underpinned by a set of communitarian ties (e.g. McIntyre 1984; Taylor 1992; Waltzer 1983) or 'moral bonds' (Oldfield 1990: 148) that provide a motivational basis for civic virtue. Accordingly, it prizes obligations such as obeying the law, paying taxes, performing jury and even military service. Valuing the civic good and meeting one's obligations is described as 'civic virtue'. In contrast to the political division of labor noted above, in this model citizenship is a political activity which both forms and expresses the will of the people, and which expresses one commitment to the community (Stokes 2002: 32).

Although corporations cannot share in the obligations of jury service,⁶ obedience to the law and paying taxes are clearly criteria of citizenship that they can fulfill.⁷ Broadly speaking, there is evidence that corporations are capable not only of recognizing public goods but also that business success is critically dependent on this and that corporations can contribute to their maintenance and revival. Moon (1995) argues that this recognition informs a shift from concerns with *internal* social pre-requisites of business captured in the managerialism of Coase (1937) and Williamson (1967) to a concern with the *external* social pre-requisites of business.

This recognition of mutual dependency is precisely the sort of sentiment that underpins Stokes' civic republicanism, which not only presumes the recognition of public goods but also expects the citizen to pursue these through civic participation. This raises the thorny question of whether and, if so, how any form of participation beyond the minimalist version of periodic voting can be achieved in modern mass societies, be it by individuals or corporations. A great deal of political science has been devoted to unpacking the concept of participation and, in particular, to thinking about its possibilities in modern, mass societies in which many liberals have thought direct participation either impossible or, in the case of Schumpeter, undesirable. In our further discussion of the civic republican model of citizenship we distinguish two

⁶ Nb the successful operation of the system of jury and civil defence systems does require that corporations cooperate by enabling employees to participate.

⁷ Contrary to Wood and Logsdon (2002) modern communitarian theory is not necessarily characterised by its closed, local spatial character. For example, Charles Taylor's association with communitarianism principally results from his anxiety about such liberal tenets as atomistic ontology, the conception of society as a contract and its emphasis on negative freedom (see Abbey 2002: 152).

levels of participation for individuals and corporations: in the form of pressure group activity; and in sharing in governing.

*Participation through pressure group activity*⁸

It has been argued, most famously by Dahl (1956), that political participation is possible in the context of modern democracy. He extended the liberal minimalist model of citizenship by arguing that through membership of interest groups, citizens can participate in policy debate and decision-making in a far richer way than through periodic voting in elections for representatives or even in periodic referendums on policy alternatives. Dahl assumes that since citizens form and join interest groups that reflect their interests and values, the groups become engaged in policy debates in order to represent their members and, thereby, become effectively surrogate citizens. Whilst Dahl still assumed the political division of labor, he argued that policy-making was enriched as it reflected much wider forms of political participation than that of the elected representatives and permanent bureaucracies alone. Interest groups enable a wide range of perspectives to be brought to bear on policy debates and allow continual political engagement between elections. Participation through pressure groups is therefore seen as a good in its own right rather than simply as a means of 'keeping the bastards honest', to use an Australian expression of the minimalist view. It is a means of forming as well as expressing political opinion.

This raises the question as to whether corporations, severally or collectively (through business associations) can, by extension, constitute part of the interest group world that Dahl presents as acting as a surrogate citizenry. If they were compared with, say environmental or other campaigning groups (usually referred to as 'promotional groups' in the pressure group literature [Smith, 1990]) the answer to this question might be in the negative. This is because members of promotional groups are composed mainly of those who have no functional dependency on the groups concerned, but join because of their shared values. In contrast, corporations individually represent the functional interests of variously their employees, managers, owners, customers, and suppliers. If, however, corporations were compared with the second main form of pressure group, 'sectoral groups' (Smith, 1990) such as trade

⁸ Whereas Stokes places this in the liberal minimalist model we place it under civic republicanism due to its stress on participation and engagement.

unions or professional associations, then the answer might be in the affirmative. Sectoral groups clearly exist only because their members have a collective functional interests yet might nevertheless be considered as surrogate citizens in Dahl's original terms.

There is certainly an extensive literature on corporations, individually (e.g. Grant 1984, Useem 1985) and collectively (e.g. Coleman 1988) participating in politics in which, like other interests, they combine expression of private interests with engagement in collective processes of decision-making (Vogel 1996, Getz 1997, Lord 2000). There is also evidence that corporations individually and collectively have acted as pressure groups when governments have been reviewing the role of regulation in matters pertaining to the social and environmental responsibilities of business. A recent example is the Global Climate Coalition which was built by about 40 US companies and industry associations of the fossil fuel industry in order to fend off potential tighter legislation based on global treaties, such as the Kyoto Protocol (Levy and Egan 2003).

Participation in governing

Whereas Dahl identified political participation through and by pressure groups as constituting a modern equivalence of classical direct participation, more recent debates in democratic theory have led to the identification and valorisation of more direct forms of political participation in governing itself. Ironically perhaps, some of these arguments initially drew on experiences of participation in industry (e.g. Pateman 1970). However, there have also been more thoroughgoing attempts to retrieve for modern times the classical assumption that citizens rule as well as being ruled. Often these attempts have been associated with an increased individual level of participation in local politics and in national politics through the increased use of referendums or participation in public hearings on environmental matters, for example. In these cases, the political division of labor between government and citizens is maintained but the citizens avail themselves of increased opportunities to inform agendas and the definition of issues.

There is also an interest in collectivist opportunities for increased participation which do not assume a political division of labor. Hirst, for example, argues for associationalism, contending that:

... human welfare and liberty are best served where as many of the affairs of society as possible are managed by voluntary and democratically self-governing associations (1993: 112).

Once again, we find evidence that corporations are participating in this more direct form of citizenship. We identify two broad ways in which corporations can participate in governing: (i) sharing in new governance in developed *political* systems; (ii) assuming neo-government roles within the corporation's usual *economic* activities.

The first form is in the complex relationships that arise in 'new governance' in developed political systems. Moon (2002) argues that this is in the context of governments seeking to share responsibilities and to develop new modes of operation, whether as a result of overload or of a view that they do not have a monopoly of solutions for society. This is often in the form of 'social' partnerships with non-profit and for-profit organizations (Waddock 1988; Moon and Sochacki 1998). Though some of these are premised on market and contractual relations (Cashore 2002; Earles and Moon 2000), others (which fit into citizenship models) are based on reciprocity and consensus-building (Moon and Willoughby 1990; Orts 1995; Renn, Webler, and Wiedemann 1995; Ronit 2001). These have brought non-profit organizations such as NGOs, pressure groups, or societal associations into governance roles (e.g. in the delivery of social services which governments retain legislative and fiscal responsibility). They have also brought corporations into aspects of the delivery of programs in such areas as economic development, environmental improvement, or education, for example.

For Drucker this sort of activity precisely links corporations to citizenship:

As a political term citizenship means active commitment. It means responsibility. It means making a difference in one's community, one's society, and one's country. (1993 quoted in Andriof and McIntosh 2001: 14)

Birch (2001) argues further that there is a link between corporations and citizenship when business sees itself as *part* of the public culture rather than seeing the public culture as something external to the company.

Secondly, corporations participate in governing by sharing in the administration of individual citizens' rights, both within companies, and more broadly within the boundaries of companies' external economic relations. For example, Matten et al. (2003) argue that corporations increasingly administer the citizenship rights of their employees and their families, such as in the case of pay and working conditions, health, and education. This is especially likely to be the case where regulation is weak, or where the welfare state is fragile or in retreat, and corporations might be expected to assume some of the burdens of ensuring that basic rights are met. Similarly, they argue that consumers, investors, and others might rely on the actions of corporations to ensure that their fundamental rights to property and basic services are protected. In extreme cases, particularly in developing countries, multinational corporations are increasingly expected to participate in governing where there was previously a governance vacuum, thereby undertaking to institute and enforce entirely new rules and norms to safeguard individual rights.

We can therefore see that corporations are able to participate in ways that are also assumed of citizens in civic republicanism. This extends from their propensity to operate like pressure groups in raising and defining issues and pressing claims through to participating in decision-making and to sharing responsibility for governing. We have suggested two ways in which corporations share in governing: first by contributing to societal governance issues *outside* the firm, often in partnerships with governmental or non-governmental organizations; and second, by administering rights *within* the normal operations of the firm.

Developmental Democracy

Thus far we have seen that, whereas the classical view of political participation entails citizens ruling and being ruled, liberal-democracy and mass society have combined to yield a political division of labor, such that Schumpeter assumes the only appropriate form of participation to be periodic voting. This minimalist view has been extended within civic republicanism, which envisages wider opportunities for

citizen involvement in informing or even participating in policy-making and in governing. We have seen how corporations can be drawn into such forms of participation.

Conceptions of citizenship within developmental democracy (Stokes 2002: 34-39) offer the view that to flourish, democratic polities require citizens who are highly participatory and who have very close bonds with one another. This is because advocates of developmental democracy, such as Alexis de Tocqueville, J.S. Mill and G.D.H. Cole, see participation as the principal means of personal and intellectual development as well as for societal flourishing (another illustration of the possibility of individual benefit being consistent with social benefit). Indeed Cole sees such increased societal capacity as an alternative to state administration (see Hirst 1989). Thus, participation is not merely a manifestation of citizen obligation, or a prerequisite of good government, but also as a basis for individual human and societal improvement.

Interestingly, Stokes expressly identifies this developmental model of citizenship with corporate citizenship because it entails fulfilling obligations to society rather just to government (2002: 38). There is much in the use of the term sustainability by corporations which gestures in this direction. In particular, we suggest that 'triple bottom line' thinking, with its commitments to social justice, environmental responsibility, and economic development is predicated on an assumption that business can and should provide a major contribution to society through a long-term commitment to social participation (Elkington 1999). This is illustrated in Hewlett-Packard's conceptualization of itself as an organization which 'is helping people overcome barriers to social and economic progress' and as 'learning to compete 'better in the region (south Asia) and around the world' as a result of its engagement in the Kuppam region of India. This is not only described as the company's responsibility to the Aids infected area but also in terms of the value that the Kuppam community will contribute to Hewlett Packard. (Dunn and Yamashita 2003). It is also evident in the way in which the carpet manufacturer, Interface, describes its aim:

... to engage every person in the Interface family worldwide in a collaborative discussion to develop a common understanding of our vision and mission, to identify and explore values throughout the company ... [which] ... can influence

the success of Interface's business objectives and build a company based on these [its associates'] values. (www.interfaceinc.com/getting_there/future.html)

We will return to the questions of whether the assumption of human flourishing within the developmental model offers a metaphor for corporations, and the compatibility of this with wider assumptions about societal flourishing.

Deliberative Democracy

Stokes' fourth view of citizenship is in the context of deliberative democracy (2002: 39 - 44). This not only emphasizes citizen participation in public affairs but also assumes that they participate in a deliberative fashion enabling them to better address issues of complexity, pluralism, and inequality in decision-making. Reference to the reality of pluralism constitutes skepticism about a single moral view uniting the polity, which civic republicanism tends to assume. Cohen (1997: 73) suggests that the outcomes of deliberative democracy are only legitimate 'if and only if they could be the object of free and reasoned argument among equals'. This is in greatest contrast to the representative model, which is incapable of involving the citizen in the resolution of the complexities of decision-making. Adherents argue that deliberative participation constrains the articulation and pursuit of self-interest as well as contributing to individual flourishing. The citizen would become used to and good at listening to and understanding other perspectives (see Boman 1996; Dryzek 1990; Fishkin 1995). This model emphasizes equality, which raises the issue discussed above of the significance of corporation-specific resources in political processes.

The model of deliberative democratic citizenship does not principally add another level of engagement to the three dimensions adumbrated above; rather it specifies a style of engagement which emphasizes a problem-solving approach rather than a show of hands or a meeting of wills. The emphasis is less on the resolution of competing interests and more upon the identification of solutions through deliberative participation. In the literature on business and society relations, such a concept has been discussed for some time, though under different labels and assumptions. For example, in application of Habermas' (1983) concept of discourse ethics, Steinmann and Löhr (1994) have proposed corporate dialogues, mediation processes, and other fora, to both involve citizens in corporate decisions as well as making corporations

active and accountable members of their respective communities. As befits a deliberative democracy model, discourse ethics prescribes rules for a process of participation in governance. As such, the main criteria for those taking part in participative discourses are impartiality, non-persuasiveness, non-coercion, and expertise (Preuss 1999), thereby underscoring the appreciation for individual freedom and autonomy in the deliberative model.

The idea of discourse participation has been used quite widely especially in environmental disputes, for example by the US-EPA in regulatory negotiations (Fiorino 1995). One major challenge for such discourses though is in overcoming conflicts about values. On the positive side, they have the potential to enable collective decisions which are informed by the expertise and values of all those who are affected by a decision. The proximity of deliberative citizenship and discourse ethics from a business perspective lies in the fact that both specifically envisage the direct involvement of citizens in the governance of public affairs.

Ultimately, deliberative democracy also comes close to ideals developed in stakeholder theory, especially in relation to the term 'stakeholder democracy' (Freeman 1984). The actual extent to which corporations engage in the various participatory forms of governance in a deliberative way is an empirical question. Interestingly, the model does have a strong resonance with the call for increased stakeholder participation and dialogue. Even though this is advocated for strategic as well as ethical reasons, Freeman's expectation is that stakeholder relations should be on the basis of voluntary negotiation of corporations with multiple stakeholders on critical issues to secure voluntary agreements and, more broadly, that corporations should serve stakeholder needs (1984: 78–80).

Discussion and Conclusions

This relatively brief foray has provided a range of perspectives about citizenship of people in democracy. This has been used as a basis for considering the appropriateness of citizenship models for corporations. Table 1 provides an overview of the discussion so far.

	Liberal Minimalism	Civic Republicanism	Developmental Democracy	Deliberative Democracy
Nature of citizenship	Citizenship as a bundle of rights or utilities, administered by governing elites	Citizenship as participation in a community, involving obligations towards the public (or 'civic') good	Citizenship as a dense network of interpersonal relations in society for individual and social flourishing	Citizenship as free deliberation over public decisions in a community
Basis for citizenship	Legal and political status	Legal and political status Process of participation	Legal and political status Process of participation	Legal and political status Process of participation
Nature of participation by citizens	Extremely limited; mostly by electoral choice of governing elites	Obligation to governments and sharing governance with elites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pressure group activity ▪ Direct participation in governing 	Fulfillment of obligations to society (rather than just to government) and enactment of direct relations to fellow citizens	Direct involvement in collective problem-solving on basis of equality and plural values to address complex problems
Potential as metaphors for 'corporate' citizenship	Offers no space for CC: Corporations do not share status of citizens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Corporate lobbying of government ▪ 'New governance': business as partner of civil society actors ▪ Governance through every-day economic activities 	Corporate involvement with all stakeholders beyond the bottom line rationale for societal and corporate flourishing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Corporations assume deliberative role in societal governance ▪ Corporations enable and open up to processes of deliberation by members of society; development towards 'stakeholder democracy'

Table 1: Four models of citizenship and their potential as a metaphor for corporate citizenship

All political models of citizenship share the assumption that citizens stand in some sovereign relationship to the government and the direction of the activity of governing or 'governance'. This raises immediate questions about the appropriateness of the term for corporations. We have seen that there are no strong grounds for applying the minimalist conception of citizenship to corporations as they fail the legal and political *status* test. They are manifestly not bearers of the political rights that are characteristically seen as fundamental to liberal citizenship.⁹ On this issue, we are in agreement with Wood and Logsdon (2001). Thereafter our analysis differs from theirs in that we focus closely on the issue of citizenship as constituting a range of forms and norms of participatory processes.

⁹ This conclusion is consistent with Wood and Logsdon (2001: 94) nb this also goes for utilitarian-based models which, notwithstanding their view that natural rights are 'nonsense on stilts', still presume a basic entitlement to legal and political status.

As we move through the different models of citizenship, it is clear that roles and responsibilities, corporations aside, become more blurred. In the minimalist view, it is taken for granted that the political division of labor operates (between elections governments rule and citizens are ruled). In modern variants of civic republicanism, governments do not disappear but there is still an expectation that representative bodies participate in decision-making, be they defined as organized interests (Dahl) or societal associations (Hirst). The legitimacy of these participants is principally functional. The developmental and deliberative citizenship models both assume that participation combines individual and social benefits, although the deliberative model assumes that the former are suppressed in the activity of engaging with substantive approaches to problem solving rather than continuing to assert particularistic ones. This all suggests that, corporations apart, lines of responsibility and issues of legitimacy are in flux.

However, these supra-minimalist models of citizenship emphasize not only *status* but also *process*. We suggested that in their engagement in new governance, particularly through partnerships with governments and societal organizations, and in their role in the administration of rights, corporations are sharing in the *doing* of government. Corporations can *participate* in governance issues (ruling as well as being ruled). There are no *a priori* reasons why they should not aspire to do so in a *developmental* fashion: like individual citizens, they may have an interest in benefiting from participation. Similarly, there are no *a priori* reasons why they should not do so in *deliberative* ways. The stakeholder approach is (or can be) consistent with this.

However, a number of evaluative issues remain for corporations to be recognized as acting in citizenly ways, participating in debates, sharing in decision-making, and sharing the responsibilities of governing. The first evaluative issue concerns the significance of the *status/process* distinction. It could be argued that this is inappropriate and citizenship is essentially a status question; those without the requisite legal and political attributes should not be accorded citizenship status. The problem with this move is that in order to accommodate the notion of increased participation in modern liberal polities, other organizations have been recognized as conforming to citizenship processes and accorded the status of surrogate citizens. This is true of pressure groups, societal associations and new social movements.

The question therefore arises as to the basis for excluding corporations but not other collectivities. It is an empirical question as to the closeness of the bonds that develop among corporations and between them and other participants, which the developmental view of democracy would presume. There are, however, other theoretical questions which follow.

One argument for admitting other collective organizations to citizenship processes but excluding corporations could go that the former are essentially composed of aggregates of citizens and that the latter are composed of special resources and interests. The problem is that many societal organizations whose engagement in governance is valorized by participatory models of citizenship do not reflect participation either in their own operations or, moreover, represent interests which transcend aggregates of individual citizens (e.g. the environment, religious norms, rights claims). Moreover, corporations also represent aggregates of human interests (e.g. of shareholders, consumers, employees, business customers and suppliers).

This leads to a second evaluative question, that of corporations' accountability to the constituencies or stakeholders who represent those aggregates of human interests. The issue of corporate accountability to a broader constituency than shareholders alone has been a strong theme in recent business ethics research (e.g. Cumming 2001; Gray, Dey, Owen, Evans, and Zadek 1997). However, in order to exclude corporations from the citizenship process, one would have to show that other participants, such as governmental and non-governmental organizations, are necessarily more (or more able to be) accountable to individual citizens whose interests they ultimately might be said to represent. Given that corporate accountability mechanisms and tools are currently underdeveloped, there might be some basis for making this claim. Nonetheless, it is evident that many other interest and pressure groups also face considerable deficits in accountability (Ali 2000; Bendell 2000; Hilhorst 2002).

A third issue emerging from the above is that of the private interests that corporations bring with them. Clearly, there is business proclivity for engaging directly in the political process in order to press their case on public policy questions (see Reich, 1998). But it is unclear that this uniquely applies to corporations. As noted, the major

premise of liberal citizenship is self-interest and although this is less a driving motivation in the supra-minimalist models, contributors all point to the individual benefits of participation. Stokes endorses Anne Phillips' (2000) contention that republicanism is capable of providing:

... an insecure resolution of 'that tension between insisting that different groups do have distinct and different interests and nonetheless projecting a vision of politics as something more than looking after yourself' (Stokes 2002: 34)

This suggests that in political theory, as in debates about business, there is an acceptance that participation entails tolerating some overlap between private and public interest.

A fourth and final criterion for excluding corporations from the category of citizenship entirely could be their relative power premised, for example, on wealth, on the structural dependencies that they create (e.g. for work, income), or on their access to other key decision-makers (e.g. in government). Indeed Dahl himself (1985) recognized problems with his own earlier arguments as he came to the view that businesses possessed such economic power that they could not be equated with surrogate citizens. Rather, in the same way as governments need to be constrained for liberals, Dahl argued that firms needed to be subject to democratic processes. It is not clear that Dahl's argument is conclusive. As he indicated in his earlier work (1956, 1961), different sorts of political resources are efficacious in different contexts. In other words, corporate power does not always trump the mobilization of ideas; popular majorities, other coalitions and, moreover, corporations are often aligned against each other in policy debates (see Vogel 1983, 1986). Therefore the issue of power differentials in civic republicanism may not be as straightforward as first thought. However, it may nonetheless be appropriate to consider either the extent to which the powerful, be they corporations or otherwise, have incentives to exercise self-restraint, or the sorts of countervailing powers that need to be institutionalized in participatory models of governance.

In sum, we concur with Wood and Logsdon (2001) that the metaphor of citizenship on grounds of legal and political *status* through the minimalist model is not appropriate for corporations. We do argue, however, that corporations could reasonably claim to act as if they were metaphorically citizens in that their

engagement in society resembles the key *process* of citizenship, participation. We suggest, though, that there are various metaphors for participation, ranging from the indirect in the form of participation as pressure groups, to the deliberative model which entails directs participation in order to resolve problems rather than to press particular interests. These processes of participation are expected of various other collective organizations that participate by informing policy-debate, share in policy-making, and shoulder some of the responsibilities for governing.

We conclude that our interrogation of the metaphor of citizenship is a useful one. With reference to Morgan's (1980) above justification for the use of metaphors for the study of organizations, the differences between human citizens and corporations are significant but not total. Thus whilst the metaphor does not apply to all aspects of corporate activities it has generated powerful insights into different forms and norms of business participation in society.

Those who wish to exclude corporations from a proper discussion of citizenship altogether need to demonstrate that corporations are unique among collective interests in bringing to the participatory process bundles of private interests incompatible with public interests, and have uniquely disproportionate and inappropriate power. Those who wish to encourage the association of corporations with the metaphor of citizenship need to demonstrate ways in which corporations are able to balance individual and social benefits and to participate in deliberative activities. They might also consider how corporations can empirically respond to the evaluative issues sketched above, particularly in the respect of doubts about their power and interest. They would need to demonstrate that through developmental and deliberative citizenship processes, corporations are capable of transforming themselves, a process which Stokes as a concomitant of the ideal citizen. Finally, they would also have to address whether an institutionally grounded notion such as citizenship can be indiscriminately applied to an entire population of corporations when the institutional contexts in which corporations are currently operating are so varied and dynamic.

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