

Mapping Stakeholder Landscapes: The Influence and Impact of Global Stakeholders

Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship with the Global Education Research Network (GERN)

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Objective:

“This study maps a group of key business stakeholders according to 1) their overall attitude toward corporate citizenship, and 2) their respective influence on corporations “adoption of corporate citizenship practices. Here we will see to what extent these “stakeholder maps” help to explain differences in the practice of corporate citizenship in different nations. The study also explores how specific stakeholder groups, say government or consumers, exert influence across nations.”

Methods:

This study was conducted through in-person interviews with the leaders of institutions who are members of the Global Education Research Network (GERN), as well as in-person focus groups with “the same country experts engaged in mapping the stakeholder landscape of each country and identifying and validating patterns.” A literature review was also conducted.

Key Findings:

- There are commonalities in the relative positioning of high influence stakeholder groups such as governments (generally positive) and investors (generally negative)
- Many stakeholders are “on the fence” due to a lack of awareness about corporate citizenship
- Developing countries differ from developed countries in the influence of certain stakeholder groups such as socially responsible investors and ethical consumers

Though there are some differences among nations, stakeholder groups can be grouped into the following categories globally based on their level of influence and support: corporate citizenship drivers, corporate citizenship resisters, and neutral stakeholders. While the distribution of these groups into each category varies by country, a generalized listing of these groups, by category, is below:

- Drivers
 - Government
 - NGOs
 - International organizations
 - Business networks
 - Academia
 - Socially responsible investors
- Resisters
 - Financial investors
 - Labor unions

- Neutrals
- Employees
- Consumers
- Media

Conclusion:

Global stakeholders have a number of common traits across the countries in this study. Interestingly, despite claims by companies that the views of employees and consumers held the highest influence on decision making, this study found that governments are actually the most powerful force on corporate citizenship--typically in a positive way. Some countries have companies which are consistently rated as comparatively high on CSR but where that is not a "strong predictor of corporate reputation"--these firms are located in India, Japan, the United States and South Africa (among others). Other countries have firms that do not seem to be maximizing their CSR performance, and therefore, their reputation. These countries include Denmark, France, South Korea, Finland, Argentina, Chile, and Australia.

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