



## *Corporations and Citizenship*

It is widely accepted that corporations have economic, legal and even social roles. Yet the political role of corporations has yet to be fully appreciated. *Corporations and Citizenship* serves as a corrective by employing the concept of citizenship in order to make sense of the political dimensions of corporations. Citizenship offers a way of thinking about roles and responsibilities among members of polities and between these members and their governing institutions. Crane, Matten and Moon provide a rich and multi-faceted picture that explores three relations of citizenship – corporations as citizens, corporations as governors of citizenship and corporations as arenas of citizenship for stakeholders – as well as three contemporary reconfigurations of citizenship – cultural (identity-based), ecological and cosmopolitan citizenship. The book revolutionizes not only our understanding of corporations but also of citizenship as a principle for allocating power and responsibility in a political community.

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# Corporations and Citizenship

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## *Foreword*

Andrew Crane, Dirk Matten and Jeremy Moon have provided business thinkers and scholars a great service. They have systematically analyzed the idea that we see corporations as citizens. While both ‘corporation’ and ‘citizenship’ have been problematic terms for political theory, Crane, Matten and Moon identify a discrete number of important interpretations of these ideas, and they show how the resulting ‘theories’ can be linked into a systemic whole.

Their starting point is that in the 21st century we need a more robust understanding of the political role of corporations in society. They propose the idea of ‘corporate citizenship’ and ‘global corporate citizenship’ as ways forward. As the world gets even ‘flatter’, understanding how corporations play a political role, as well as economic, social and moral roles, is central to the dialogue of how we govern civil society. Citizenship is simply at the heart of the global debate on societal governance, and the main institution that we use to create value for each other, business, must be nearby. Alternatively, seeing corporations as citizens lets us understand ‘citizenship’ for people in more interesting terms. For instance, Crane, Matten and Moon suggest that we need to see the corporation–stakeholder relationship in citizenship terms. Corporations become places where people can engage in the citizenship process. Such a view is much more interesting than the usual debate about the limits of corporate power, and the constant griping of ‘too much’ or ‘too little’ government.

In short, Crane, Matten and Moon have proposed a new starting point for an important debate about the role of capitalism and its sister institutions: government and the rest of civil society. By focusing on ‘citizenship’ they give us a way to tie these ideas together and to pave the way for meaningful reform. Crane, Matten and Moon have given us a complex and multi-layered argument that continues to set the direction for a new conversation about business and its role in society. Indeed, it is a perfect volume for the series on *Business, Value Creation, and Society*.



The purpose of this series is to stimulate new thinking about value creation and trade, and its role in the world of the 21st century. Our old models and ideas simply are not appropriate in the ‘24/7 Flat World’ of today. We need new scholarship that builds on these past understandings, yet offers the alternative of a world of hope, freedom and human flourishing.

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## *Preface*

The seed for this book was sown shortly before Andy and Dirk joined Jeremy at the International Centre for Corporate Social Responsibility (ICCSR), Nottingham University Business School. Between panels, meetings and socials at the 2002 Academy of Management Annual Meeting in Denver, we discovered a shared interest in the uses and abuses of the term ‘corporate citizenship’. We then explored and extended this interest through several papers looking at how corporations and citizenship came together. At some point we recognized that in order to do justice to these ideas, and in order to respond to the numerous objections and refinements that had been suggested by others, a book length treatment was called for. Thus the book both synthesizes and expands upon the different papers we have also published in the area (see below).

Though the book has taken rather longer than intended we feel that it has benefited from the journey. Our papers on corporations and citizenship have been subjected to a variety of commentaries, challenges and criticisms at conferences and workshops, and through journal review and discussion. We are immensely grateful to all those too numerous to name, and some anonymous, who took the trouble to engage with our ideas.

We would also like to thank Ed Freeman, Stuart Hart and David Wheeler, the series editors, the Cambridge University Press staff and our research assistants Judy Muthuri (Nottingham), and Jesse Brodlieb (York) for all their support.

Finally, we would like to thank our students and colleagues at the ICCSR for providing such a fertile environment for our ideas to develop. We dedicate the book to you.

Andy Crane and Dirk Matten, Toronto  
Jeremy Moon, Nottingham

## *Acknowledgements*

Several of the core ideas presented in this book were first published in a substantially different form in the following publications:

Chapter 2 draws from material first published in Moon, J., Crane, A. and Matten, D. (2005). ‘Can corporations be citizens? Corporate citizenship as a metaphor for business participation in society’, *Business Ethics Quarterly*, vol. 15 (3): 427–51.

Chapter 3 draws from material first published in Matten, D. and Crane, A. (2005a). ‘Corporate citizenship: toward an extended theoretical conceptualization’, *Academy of Management Review*, vol. 30 (1): 166–79. See also Crane, A., and Matten, D. (2005). ‘Corporate citizenship: missing the point or missing the boat? – A response to van Oosterhout’, *Academy of Management Review*, vol. 30 (3): 681–4.

Chapter 4 draws from material first published in Crane, A., Matten, D. and Moon, J. (2004). ‘Stakeholders as citizens: rethinking rights, participation, and democracy’, *Journal of Business Ethics*, vol. 53 (1/2): 107–22.

The synthesis of our three relationships in Part A was first suggested in Moon, J., Crane, A. and Matten, D. (2006). ‘Corporations and citizenship’, *Revue de l’Organisation Responsable*, vol. 1 (1): 82–92.