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Forward-Looking Responsibility and Political Corporate Social Responsibility

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This paper contributes to the literature on political corporate social responsibility (PCSR) by considering the forward-looking, political responsibilities of corporations in relation to structural injustice, based on a critical engagement with Iris Marion Young's Social Connection Model (SCM) of responsibility. Although Young's SCM serves as a key reference point in the PCSR literature, engagement with her work tends to be superficial and lacks critical engagement. By offering a more developed engagement with Young's SCM, this paper addresses several themes that have been highlighted as being insufficiently developed in the PCSR literature. In particular, this paper considers (i) the *grounds* for corporate political responsibility in relation to structural injustice rather than globalization; (ii) the *scope* of corporate political responsibilities vis-à-vis other actors; and (iii) the role of *power* in relation to deliberative processes and in relation to scope.

Introduction

Over the past two decades, political corporate social responsibility (PCSR) has emerged as a distinct, significant and influential body of work within the broader field of CSR. Motivated by the perceived diminishing regulatory role of the state in the context of globalization, along with the recognition that corporations are increasingly assuming roles traditionally associated with the state, the literature on PCSR has sought both to understand these developments and to delineate normative theoretical frameworks related to the democratic legitimacy of corporations as actors in global governance (see, for example, Matten and Crane, 2005; Reinecke and Ansari, 2015; Scherer and Palazzo, 2007, 2011; Scherer *et al.*, 2016; Scherer, Palazzo and Baumann, 2006). According to Scherer and Palazzo (2011, p. 901), as a result of globalization, states have less steering capacity or ability to exercise state authority; the 'Westphalian world order', where states have exclusive sovereign authority over their territory, has given way to a 'post-national constellation'. According to this view, globalization is accompanied by a process of 'deterritorialization' whereby 'social, political and economic… activities are taking place beyond the power and influence of the nation state' (Matten and Crane, 2005, p. 171).

In a move that is central to much of the PCSR literature, the perceived loss in the regulatory capacity of the state as a result of globalization is considered to be 'partly compensated by the emergence of new forms of global governance above and beyond the state' (Scherer and Palazzo, 2011, p. 903)[1]. That is, as a result of governance gaps that have emerged in the context of globalization, private actors such as corporations have begun to voluntarily address these gaps, along with other economic and social actors. However, in another move that is central to PCSR, such voluntary participation in rule-making gives rise to questions of democratic legit-

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[1]While the context of globalization is emphasized in the PCSR literature, it is important to acknowledge that some PCSR perspectives refer to the possibility of a more local/regional application of PCSR. For example, Scherer *et al.* (2016) acknowledge that previous PCSR contributions 'over-emphasiz[e] the global dimension of business regulation' (p. 275, emphasis added) and that 'existing research on PCSR has been criticized for viewing relevant corporate engagement *exclusively* as a consequence of globalization' (p. 276). In response to this criticism, they acknowledge that 'the political nature of CSR also relates to gaps in local or regional governance' (p. 276) and that corporations may 'turn into providers of public goods because local institutions do not work sufficiently [or] local governments fail to enforce relevant regulations…'. Similarly, in an earlier contribution to the PCSR literature, Matten *et al.* (2005, p. 440) suggest a more local/regional application of PCSR: 'corporations increasingly administer the citizenship rights of their employees and their families … [this] is especially likely to be the case where government regulation is weak, or where the welfare state is fragile'.

imacy. As Scherer, Palazzo and Baumann (2006, p. 519) argue, the 'legitimization issue arises because business firms and their managers are neither elected nor democratically controlled'.

Drawing on the work of political philosopher Jürgen Habermas, Scherer, Palazzo and Baumann (2006, p. 520) argue that securing legitimacy in relation to processes of self-regulation requires corporations to participate in 'discursive processes of public-will formation'. Scherer and Palazzo (2011, p. 918) suggest that this involves corporations cooperating with state and civil society actors in order to address political problems. As Djelic and Etchanchu (2017, p. 657) point out, a number of other prominent contributions to PCSR have similarly identified 'mechanisms aiming at stakeholder participation and empowerment as necessary conditions for the legitimacy of corporate political involvement' (see, for example, Frynas and Stephens, 2015; Harrison and Freeman, 2004; Matten and Crane, 2005; Matten and Moon, 2008; Matten, Moon and Crane, 2005; Rasche, 2015).

The PCSR literature in general, and the work of Scherer and Palazzo in particular, has made a significant contribution to the CSR literature in terms of developing a more nuanced understanding of CSR within the contemporary political and economic context, as well as driving a critical and normative agenda related to the political responsibilities of business (Scherer *et al.*, 2016). Moreover, the PCSR literature provides an important challenge to economic/instrumental theories of CSR that are premised on 'a strict division of labour between the private and public domains' (Scherer, Palazzo and Baumann, 2006, p. 511).

Nevertheless, the core features of PCSR have been the subject of criticism. For example, Whelan (2012) raises concerns about conceiving PCSR as a consequence of globalization. While Whelan (2012, p. 715) points to the 'limited empirical support' for the phenomenon of globalization or for the diminished role of the state, one does not necessarily have to agree with Whelan's reasons to acknowledge that there are potential difficulties for making corporate political responsibility contingent upon globalization. First, globalization and the concomitant diminishing capacity of the state is not a clear justification for an enlarged political role for corporations (Makinen and Kasanen, 2015; Schrempf-Stirling, 2018). Second, the responsibilities of corporations may be contingent upon factors that are not related to globalization, or that are separate and distinct from the relative capacity of the state.

A further concern that has been raised in the literature relates to the emphasis accorded to legitimacy in the deliberative 'Habermasian PCSR perspective' associated with Scherer and Palazzo (Gond *et al.*, 2016, p. 331). In particular, according to the deliberative approach, 'the management of moral legitimacy takes on *central*

importance', with corporations participating in stakeholder processes in order to legitimize their political power and democratic accountability (Gond *et al.*, 2016, p. 332, emphasis added). As Tempels, Blok and Verweij (2017, p. 94, emphasis added) point out, 'Scherer and Palazzo's approach… *zooms* in on the question of legitimacy'. As a result of this perceived overemphasis in their work, 'the nature and scope of [corporate] responsibility are insufficiently elaborated upon' (Tempels, Blok and Verweij, 2017, p. 95). That is, beyond participating in democratic processes, the extent to which corporations have 'a responsibility to remedy social and environmental harms and what can be reasonably expected of them' is less clear (Tempels, Blok and Verweij, 2017, p. 95; see also Tempels, Blok and Verweij, 2020).

Relatedly, it has been suggested that the perceived emphasis on legitimacy overlooks the considerable power that corporations can wield in deliberative stakeholder processes relative to other actors (Gond *et al.*, 2016; see also Edward and Willmott, 2013; Levy, Reinecke and Manning, 2016; Reinecke and Ansari, 2015; Willke and Willke, 2008). For example, as Gond *et al.* (2016, p. 331) note:

'critics tend to describe the Habermasian PCSR perspective as "naive" if not "utopian"… because of its limited appreciation of the differential powers attached to the stakeholders involved in these negotiation processes'.

Rather than serving as 'public-minded actors collaborat[ing] in finding rational, technical solutions' as part of deliberative stakeholder processes, it has been argued that corporations are dominant actors who may participate in such processes in order to maintain their structural advantage (Levy, Reinecke and Manning, 2016, p. 368).

By offering a critical engagement with the work of Iris Marion Young, this paper draws attention to features of Young's (2011, p. 95) Social Connection Model (SCM) that are relevant to contemporary debates in PCSR. While Young's work serves as a key reference point in the PCSR literature (see, for example, Scherer and Palazzo, 2011, p. 901), her work tends to be taken at 'face value' (Phillips and Schrempf-Stirling, 2022, p. 322). According to Phillips and Schrempf-Stirling (2022, p. 324), while Young's work has gained traction in the PCSR literature, 'what is missing in these discussions is a systematic internal critique of [SCM] specific to the context of business' (see also Tempels, Blok and Verweij, 2017). Drawing on Young, this paper offers an interpretation of PCSR that identifies the political responsibilities of corporations in relation to their connection to structural injustice, rather than to globalization per se. In addition, rather than emphasizing the role of legitimacy, the paper outlines several parameters for considering the *scope* of corporate political responsibility vis-à-vis other actors – that is, parameters

that provide some guidance on 'who has to do what' in the context of structural injustice (Neuhäuser, 2014, p. 242). Finally, the paper offers a critique of Young's SCM in order to develop a more 'integrated' version of the SCM that can accommodate a consideration of blameworthiness in relation to the forward-looking political responsibilities of corporations.

The paper is structured as follows. The following section, 'Young's Social Connection Model', introduces some of the core features of Young's model, focusing on her understanding of structural injustice, the distinction between forward- and backward-looking responsibility, and her four 'parameters of reasoning' for considering the scope of forward-looking responsibility. The next section provides a critical engagement with Young's SCM in order to develop a more integrated approach that brings together aspects of the backward-looking liability model with regard to the distribution of forward-looking responsibility. This is followed by a discussion of the implications of Young's SCM, along with the integrated framework outlined, for the PCSR literature. The final section provides conclusions and some consideration for future research along Youngian lines.

Young's social connection model

According to Young (2011, p. 95), when we assign responsibility 'in law and everyday moral life', we seek to identify 'who dunnit'; that is, when we hold someone responsible for a harm, we must demonstrate that they have caused the harm through their actions. For Young (2006, 2011), this standard form of assigning responsibility has inherent limitations when applied to issues of structural injustice – for example, access to affordable housing, poor working conditions in global supply chains, global health inequality etc. – as such issues do not lend themselves well to establishing a causal connection. As Young (2011, p. 96) observes, while it is relatively straightforward to identify persons who *contribute* to structural processes, 'it is not possible to identify how the actions of one particular individual … has directly produced harm to other specific individuals'. In order to address this difficulty, Young (2006, 2011) developed what she refers to as the SCM. Rather than focusing on blame, the SCM instead 'makes responsibility out to be a matter of being morally charged with – responsible for – bringing about a state of affairs which we … consider to be better' (Smiley, 2017, p. 49).

Structural injustice

According to Young (2011, p. 52, emphasis added), 'structural injustice is a kind of moral wrong *distinct* from the wrongful action of an individual agent'. In developing her account of structural injustice, 'Young focuses specifically on the way that individuals are socially constructed by social structures' (Hope, 2022, p. 5). More specifically, Young (2003, 2011) argues that the actions of individuals are differentially enabled and constrained as the result of *structural processes*; according to Young (2003, p. 7), structural injustices are the 'harms that come to people' in terms of their vulnerability to deprivation, domination or oppression, 'that are the result of structural processes in which many people participate' (see also Haslanger, 2015; McKeown, 2021).

Young's (2003, 2006, 2011) understanding of structural processes is complex and variously informed by the work of Bourdieu, Giddens, Sartre, and Rawls. She identifies four elements to structural processes: (i) objective constraint; (ii) social position; (iii) structures produced in action; and (iv) unintended consequences (see also Powers and Faden, 2019).

In terms of *objective constraint*, Young (2011, p. 53) identifies two ways of considering the 'constraining facticity of structures'. First, drawing on Sartre, Young (2011, p. 54) refers to how the material things we encounter in our daily lives 'bear the marks of past praxis' and that we often 'experience this praxis passively'. For example, as Young (2003, p. 6) explains

> 'Housing options … are constrained by the practico-inert in this way. Past planning decisions have put highways and rapid transit rail lines in particular places, for example, and these are now part of the physical environment with significant influence on the housing market as well as home to work quality of life issues'.

Second, objective constraint can take the form of 'institutional and social rules', which can take the form of legal rules and regulation, as well as of social rules/norms – for example, the clothes that are deemed appropriate in certain social situations (McKeown, 2021).

In terms of *social position*, Young (2011, p. 58) takes a more macro or 'large-scale point of view' and considers how individuals' social positions are related to each other. Informed by Bourdieu, Young (2011, p. 58) explains that 'locating positions in a structural field' is important in terms of identifying 'inequalities that are far-reaching in their implications for people's life courses' – for example, social positions pertaining to class, gender, race, sexuality etc. (see also Haslanger, 2015).

Drawing on Giddens, Young (2003, p. 5) also argues that 'social structures exist only in the action and interaction of persons'; that is, *structures are produced in action*. Drawing on Bourdieu, Young recognizes that individual tastes and preferences are shaped by their social position and that 'individuals' actions based on those preferences reproduce [structures]' (McKeown, 2018b, p. 4). Finally, in terms of *unintended consequences*, Young (2011, p. 63) highlights how the

accumulated, uncoordinated actions of individuals pursuing their own ends often leads to 'outcomes not intended by any of the participating agents'. For example, the 'tragedy of the commons' or 'financial crises' tend to take this form, according to Young (2011, p. 63).

These four elements, therefore, form the basis of Young's social ontology of structural processes that pertain to her account of structural injustice (Barry and MacDonald, 2016; Hope, 2022). The structural approach provided by Young brings to the fore a consideration of 'the constraints under which agents act' (Zheng, 2019, p. 121). However, given that Young's SCM is a model of *responsibility*, the structural approach she adopts gives rise to questions about individual agency. As Zheng (2018, p. 876) succinctly puts it, 'responsibility requires agency … the more that structures are thought to determine individuals' choices, the less agency they seem to possess'. However, for Young (2011, p. 18), a structural approach can still 'leave plenty of room for understanding individuals as agents who respond to … structural conditions in different ways'. These issues will be taken up further in the following sub-section, where an overview of the SCM is provided.[2]

Limitations of the 'backward-looking' model of responsibility

Young (2006, p. 103, 2011) contrasts her SCM with the classical 'liability' model. The classical liability model is characterized as 'backward-looking' insofar as it considers responsibility to be 'a matter of having caused an existing – morally problematic – state of affairs' (Smiley, 2014, p. 1; see also Fahlquist, 2009). While Young (2011,

p. 174) acknowledges that the liability model of responsibility is entirely appropriate where such a causal connection can be identified, she argues that there are many contemporary examples of injustice where establishing such a connection is difficult. For Young (2011, p. 174), structural injustice cannot be sufficiently addressed by appealing to the liability model and instead needs to be 'supplemented' with the SCM.

To illustrate, Young (2004, 2006) provides a rich account of how structural social processes in the global apparel industry generate injustice in the form of 'sweatshop' labour conditions. Young (2006, p. 116) acknowledges that it is entirely appropriate to assign blame for certain violations in the apparel industry along the lines of the liability model – for example, 'when factory owners and managers violate local labor laws … they ought to be punished'. However, the original and influential contribution that Young develops is that the structure of the global apparel industry adds a layer of complexity that often '*diffuses* responsibility for sweatshop conditions' (Young, 2006, p. 110). That is, while lead brands, suppliers, managers, governments etc. contribute to sweatshop conditions in different ways, each of these actors may appeal to plausible factors in order to mitigate blame.

It should be noted that for Young (2011), structural injustice does not merely give rise to practical problems regarding the allocation of responsibility/blame; rather, Young (2011, p. 104, emphasis added) maintains that structural injustice gives rise to a '*different concept of responsibility altogether*' – namely a collective, political responsibility that is forward-looking in orientation. That is, a conception that is not simply an 'attenuated' or modified version of responsibility as blame, but a concept that is 'different in kind, rather than degree' (Young, 2011, p. 104).

Social connection and the political responsibility for structural injustice

For Young (2011, p. 96), *contributing* in some way to structural injustice gives rise to 'an obligation to join with others who share that responsibility in order to transform the structural processes to make their outcomes less unjust'.[3] Therefore, responsibility under the SCM is forward-looking, in the sense that it is orientated towards the reform of unjust structures, but also *political*, because 'responsibility can be discharged

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[2]In addition to questions of agency, Young's social ontology also gives rise to questions of an epistemological nature. For example, it is one thing to consider the responsibilities that arise in the context of structural injustice, but another to identify the occurrence of structural injustice in the first place. Such epistemological questions are not explicitly addressed by Young. One could infer from Young's articulation of the core elements of structural injustice that its occurrence might be identified by considering social scientific analyses that provide an empirical, macro account of differential social positions. For example, as Powers and Fadden (2019, p. 86) acknowledge, 'Political philosophers must lean heavily on the empirical foundations supplied by the social sciences, at least in broad strokes, in order to construct theories of structural justice. Political theorizing depends on empirically based assumptions about the key components of social structures that create and sustain differences in power and advantage among differentially positioned social groups'. In addition to identifying the occurrence of structural injustice, other epistemological questions relate to 'identifying the relevant boundaries of the social system into which a given agent is connected' (Barry and MacDonald, 2016, p. 112; see also Browne, 2023). While addressing such epistemological concerns is an important consideration in relation to the operationalization of the SCM, it is beyond the scope of this paper to address this issue in a developed way.

[3]It is worth emphasizing that the primary focus of Young's SCM is *structural injustice*. Therefore, the concept of political responsibility outlined in this body of work, along with the collective action she advocates, pertains specifically to structural injustice. It is, therefore, worth acknowledging that collective decision-making processes may pertain to other considerations that are not necessarily related to structural injustice.

only by joining with others in collective action' (Young, 2011, p. 111)[4]. This responsibility falls to 'all those who contribute by their actions to the structural processes that produce injustice' (Young, 2011, p. 109).[5]

The political, shared collective action dimension to Young's SCM is also reflected in Scherer and Palazzo (2011, p. 913), who, drawing on Young (2008), acknowledge that

'Problems of responsibility in globally expanded value chains demand collective action embedded in processes of democratic deliberation in order to change existing processes and institutions that produce the observed cases of harm and injustice'.

However, this is as far as Scherer and Palazzo (2011) go with Young's SCM. From this point on, they emphasize the need for corporations to establish moral legitimacy through processes of democratic deliberation (Phillips and Schrempf-Stirling, 2022). However, in doing so, they fail to engage with an important aspect of Young's SCM that provides consideration of the *scope* of corporate political responsibilities vis-à-vis other actors.

Scope

According to Young's SCM, all actors who contribute to structural injustice should take responsibility for remedying the injustices to which they contribute. However, this still leaves the question of how responsibility should be assigned and distributed amongst actors. Young (2006, p. 125) acknowledges that participants will not share responsibility to the same degree and asks, 'what are the grounds for differentiating kinds and degrees of responsibility?' However, her answer to this question was never fully developed and only delineated in 'sketch' form (Young, 2006, p. 125). In order to consider who is best placed to take responsibility, Young introduces 'four parameters of reasoning': power, privilege, interest, and collective ability (Young, 2006, p. 125).

In terms of *power*, the degree of responsibility an agent has in relation to injustice depends on how much power they have relative to the social structural processes that produce injustice (Young, 2006, 2011; see also Gould, 2009; McKeown, 2018b; Tempels, Blok and Verweij, 2017). For example, one might expect that the CEO of a clothing retailer might have considerable power in terms of deciding from which factories clothes will be purchased (McKeown, 2018b), or that large global clothing retailers have more power than local retailers (Tempels, Blok and Verweij, 2017).

To an extent, we can identify this dimension of power in deliberative/Habermasian approaches to PCSR; that is, owing to the potential or actual power that corporations possess, they are considered well positioned to fill the governance gaps left by the diminishing role of the state. However, Young (2006) articulates a further dimension of power that is not captured in deliberative accounts of PCSR. In particular, she outlines how a consideration of power is relevant to the responsibilities of weaker actors in relation to more powerful actors; that is, less powerful actors, according to Young, have a responsibility to exert pressure on more powerful actors. Young (2006, p. 128) states

'Because the agents with the greatest power within social structures often have a vested interest in maintaining them as they are, however, external pressure on the powerful is often necessary to move these agents to action, and to prevent them from taking superficial steps rather than making serious changes'.

Hence, power is relevant in two distinct ways for Young (2006, 2011):

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[4]Young's concept of *political responsibility* is informed by a reading of Hannah Arendt (in particular, Arendt 1977, 1987). For Young (2011), Arendt usefully distinguishes between moral/legal responsibility on the one hand and political responsibility on the other – while moral/legal responsibility seeks to 'blame individuals for their causal contribution' (McKeown, 2018a, p. 485), political responsibility is a responsibility *without guilt* and, for Arendt, 'derives simply from a common membership in a nation' (Young, 2011, p. 75). Further, on this account, political responsibility is collective and 'involves the active participation of citizens'; in this respect, it is '*public…* and aimed at the possibility or goal of *collective action* to respond to and intervene in historic events' – which, in the context of Arendt's work, refers to the exercise of political responsibility in relation to the Nazi party (Young, 2011, p. 89, emphasis in original). Young's SCM builds on Arendt in a number of important ways. Most notably, Young takes issue with Arendt's restriction of political responsibility on the basis of membership of a nation state; instead, Young's model extends beyond the borders of the nation state because many instances of structural injustice occur *across* borders. In this respect, Young's SCM 'offers a compelling redefinition of the body politic as having its foundation not in shared political institutions but in shared social and economic systems' (Johnson and Michaelis, 2013, p. 8). Political responsibility, on Young's account, is, therefore, the responsibility to challenge the structural processes that lead to unjust outcomes. This responsibility is derived, 'not from living under a common constitution, but rather from participating in the diverse institutional processes that produce structural injustice' (Young, 2011, p. 105).

[5]Young (2004, p. 368) claims that the relevant agents for assigning responsibility 'can be a collective entity, such as a corporation', adding that 'when it is [a collective agent] that entity can be treated as a single agent for the purposes of assigning responsibility' (Young, 2004, p. 368; see also Young, 2006, p. 116; Young, 2011, p. 97). Young's reference point is French's (1984) *Collective and Corporate Responsibility*, where French argues that moral responsibility can be ascribed to corporations. For French (1984), it is possible to attribute intentions to corporations based on the Corporation's Internal Decision Structure (CID). See also Pettit (2007).

(i) in relation to scope – in terms of the potential or actual power that actors can draw on to address issues of structural injustice;

(ii) in relation to participation in deliberative processes – in terms of the responsibilities of weaker actors to challenge and pressurize more powerful actors.

Therefore, compared with the deliberative PCSR approach, a Youngian account of power both is more developed and gives rise to different implications for considering the political responsibilities of corporations. Rather than requiring companies to simply exercise their power by, for example, offering technical solutions to structural issues, a Youngian account also considers the power of corporations in relation to other actors. For Young (2011, p. 147), power also has implications for the deliberative forums in which actors participate, which are characterized as forums for contestation whereby 'differently positioned agents struggl[e] with one another'. On this account, Young's (2011) perspective of power more closely resembles the neo-Gramscian position of PCSR favoured by Levy, Reinecke and Manning (2016, p. 369) whereby 'value regimes' are conceived of as 'political arenas in which civil society and business interact'. Where Young differs from Levy, Reinecke and Manning (2016) is in the emphasis she places on the need for less powerful actors to exercise *their* responsibility by making demands on more powerful actors such as corporations. Further consideration regarding the responsibilities of less powerful actors in Young's SCM is provided below – under the parameter of *interest*.

In relation to *privilege*, Young (2006, 2011) is concerned with the disparity of benefits that accrue to agents within structural processes. For example, Young (2011, p. 144) observes

'middle-class clothing consumers in the developed world … stand in a privileged position within the structures of the global apparel industry. They *benefit* from the large selection and affordable prices that retailers offer them'.

When considered with respect to the responsibilities of corporations, Young's outline of the parameter of privilege tends to emphasize the role of consumers, or other agents, who may be well positioned to place pressure on corporations –'because they are able to adapt to changed circumstances without suffering serious deprivation' (Young, 2006, p. 128). While not explicitly considered by Young, the account of privilege she provides would also seem to apply to corporations in a more direct sense. That is, given that corporations benefit from structural processes (for example, by virtue of their connection to supply chains) and are, at least to some extent, able to act without suffering deprivation, then this parameter might also give rise to 'special moral responsibilities' for corporations to correct structural injustice

(Young, 2006, p. 128; see also Barry and MacDonald, 2018).

The third parameter that Young provides, somewhat controversially, is *interest*. For Young (2011, p. 145), the victims of structural injustice have a 'unique interest' in overcoming injustice. In the case of sweatshops, for example, one would expect that factory workers have a particular, and urgent, interest in addressing the structural injustices that arise in the global apparel industry. However, it is important to recognize that Young's point is not merely that factory workers have an interest because they are victims, but that they 'share a responsibility' for social injustice and 'ought to take responsibility' for overcoming it (Young, 2011, p. 145).[6] In relation to the responsibilities of corporations, this parameter is more directed towards other actors, focusing on *their* responsibility to engage with, and pressurize, actors such as corporations. Again, while credit should be given to Young for incorporating different dimensions of power into the SCM, including the relative power held by different actors connected to structural injustice, the parameter of *interest* is not without some difficulties. For example, as Gunnemyr (2020, p. 580) notes,

'workers in the global garment industry who face harassment, unemployment, and poverty if they broadcast their situation or join a union lack a forward-looking responsibility to challenge the structural processes of the global garment industry. Because of their situation, their responsibility is disabled, silenced, or overridden'.

In other words, victims' circumstances may mean that they are unable to act upon their responsibility. It is worth noting that Young's insistence on victims taking responsibility is not simply underpinned by the idea that less powerful agents should exert pressure on more powerful agents in order to address structural injustice, but that victims have an 'epistemic advantage' with regard to their own situation and the solutions that may be required (Gunnemyr, 2020, p. 577). That is, victims 'know the most about the harms they suffer', and, without their input, 'well-meaning outsiders may inadvertently harm them in a different way' (Young, 2011, p. 146).

While not developed explicitly in Young's SCM, other aspects of her work point to the development of processes and governance mechanisms that provide opportunities for 'all those affected by problems' to engage,

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[6]Both McKeown (2018b, p. 7) and Gould (2009) point out that, by assigning responsibility to victims in this way, Young (2011) 'verges on victim-blaming'. However, 'without victims' participation, well-meaning outsiders can push for unhelpful reforms, such as shutting down factories, leading to job losses' (McKeown 2018b, p. 7). That is, to ensure that proposed reforms do not further exacerbate the situation of victims, the victims should be involved in, and contribute towards, processes to address structural injustice (Young, 2006).

to exercise voice, and to contribute to 'proposed solutions' (Young, 2000, p. 10). In this regard, the parameter of *interest* may require the development of such mechanisms in order to facilitate the opportunity for victims to exercise their responsibility in relation to structural injustice, as well as the provision of forums of contestation for less powerful actors to challenge more powerful actors (as per the parameter of *power*, outlined above). One could point to contemporary examples, whereby such mechanisms have been developed to some extent. For example, the corporate due diligence and remedy requirements under the United Nations Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) provide an indication of how corporations can develop or participate in processes that provide opportunities for victims and less powerful groups to challenge existing structural arrangements (UN HRC, 2011; see also MacDonald and MacDonald, 2020). This issue will be taken up further in the concluding section of the paper.

The fourth parameter is *collective ability*, which refers to groups of actors that can potentially influence structural processes. That is, by virtue of their position in 'already organised entities', some agents might be in a relatively good position to begin to mobilize and promote change (Young, 2011, p. 147). For example, Young (2011, p. 147) refers to 'unions, church groups, and stockholder organizations' as groups that can potentially mobilize 'significant power not because they can coerce others to do what they decide, but because they have many members who act together'.[7] As 'stockholder organisations', corporations are well placed, through their members, to exercise responsibility in line with this parameter. For example, the growth of responsible investment and the increasing role investors play in relation to environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues suggest one mechanism by which the collective ability of corporations and their members can be exercised in this regard (Boffo and Patalano, 2020).

While the deliberative approach to PCSR emphasizes the need for corporations to gain legitimacy through deliberative processes, the scope and extent of corporate responsibilities under this approach are not sufficiently developed (Tempels, Blok and Verweij, 2017). In contradistinction, the four parameters considered in this section provide some guidance regarding the scope of corporate responsibilities in relation to other actors. A significant point to make here is that the relationships between actors with respect to these four parameters are likely to be dynamic and will depend on the particular structural injustice under consideration (Tempels, Blok and Verweij, 2020; Van Buren, Schrempf-Stirling and Westermann-Behaylo, 2021). As Zheng (2018, p. 879) observes

> 'These parameters are very useful. But one might stand in the same relation with respect to multiple injustices, or in different positions with respect to different injustices … the same agent may be simultaneously perpetrator, bystander, and victim, and hence possess cross-cutting and different degrees of power, privilege, interest, and collective ability'.

For example, if we consider Lu's (2018, p. 46) account of the structural injustice faced by indigenous women in 'settler colonial societies, such as in Canada and the United States', the state, relative to other actors, will be better positioned to exercise their power as part of their political responsibility to address 'the social, economic and political structures that produce the vulnerability of Indigenous women to victimization' (Lu, 2018, p. 46). To the extent that corporations benefit from the structural injustice faced by indigenous women, it is likely that their responsibility would take the form of 'lobby[ing] at state level to move the government to take action to remedy injustice' (Tempels, Blok and Verweij, 2017, p. 103).

Alternatively, if we consider the structural injustice related to working conditions in global supply chains, the responsibilities of corporations are likely to be configured differently. In relation to their power, capacity and proximity to supply chains, the expected responsibilities of corporations are likely to be much greater than those associated with the indigenous women in the example above. For example, given the power of corporations in relation to supply chains, they have the capacity to implement governance processes such as developing supply chain polices, conducting impact assessments, undertaking due diligence and supplier audits, engaging with rightsholders, etc. In addition, corporations can enjoin with other powerful stakeholders, including states, international non-governmental organizations, and transnational organizations such as the United Nations and the International Labour Organization, in order to develop governance and regulatory mechanisms to address supply chain issues (MacDonald and MacDonald, 2020). Finally, given the role they play in establishing and sustaining supply chains, corporations are likely to be the focus of pressure from other relevant actors, such as consumer groups and supply chain workers (Barry and MacDonald, 2018).

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[7]While these four parameters provide a basis for considering the distribution of responsibility, some questions remain. For example, the four parameters are not exhaustive, and other principles and values would seem to warrant some consideration – for example, 'capacity for remedying a problem' (Smiley, 2017, p. 54), fairness (Smiley, 2017; Neuhäuser, 2014), and causation (Isaacs, 2016; Neuhäuser, 2014) have all been considered suitable candidates for ascribing forward-looking responsibility.

The distribution of forward-looking responsibilities: Towards an 'integrated' approach

In drawing a distinction between the backward-looking liability model and the forward-looking SCM, Young is clear that her aim is not to replace the former with the latter and that both models serve their purpose in the appropriate context. While both models may be usefully employed, for Young they are nevertheless distinct, orientated towards different ends and employed separately.

However, the demarcation that Young makes between the backward-looking liability model and the forward-looking SCM has been the subject of criticism and debate (Abdel-Nour, 2018; Barry and Ferracioli, 2013; Barry and MacDonald, 2016; Beck, 2023; Bziuk, 2022; Atenasio, 2019; Goodin and Barry, 2021; Lu, 2018; Nussbaum, 2011; Zheng, 2019). For example, as Goodin and Barry (2021, p. 340) observe,

> 'the social connection model had better have a backward-looking blame/liability conferring aspect to it for it to be morally coherent – you cannot plausibly claim that a person has a stringent responsibility to undertake some course of conduct, but that they cannot be blamed should they fail to do so'.

In addition to this so-called 'free pass' objection, other scholars have highlighted that the demarcation between the two models is perhaps not as clear as it first seems. For example, Zheng (2019, p. 118) draws attention to the 'backward-looking dimensions' of the SCM, stating:

> 'What the SCM does is establish this connection between an individual and an unjust outcome: it asserts that the individual must take up a portion of the collective burden of social transformation because the individual has, in the past, causally contributed to that unjust outcome'.

Similarly, Abdel-Nour (2018) argues that, in accordance with Young's SCM, 'we select as bearers of the burden to correct … an injustice those agents who participate in bringing it about' (see also Bziuk, 2022; Lu, 2018, p. 48). Not only have some scholars drawn attention to the backward-looking dimension of the SCM, but others have developed this line of argument further by suggesting that *blameworthiness* is a relevant consideration for the assignment of forward-looking responsibility and the task of ameliorating injustice (Gould, 2009; Neuhäuser, 2014). This line of argument is closely tied to the parameter of power, whereby powerful agents are considered to be less constrained by structural processes. Therefore, according to this line of argument, some powerful agents have the 'capacity to influence structural processes'; these are powerful agents that possess what is termed 'dispositional power' – that is, they are 'structurally positioned to have the capacity to ques-

tion and change the structures or their position within structures' (McKeown, 2014, p. 118). As Zheng (2021, p. 528) points out,

> 'there are many cases in which we have good reason to judge people blameworthy for structural wrongs – especially powerful agents … Greater power weakens structural constraints, and hence increases the likelihood and degree of culpability'.

By taking the differential exercise of power amongst agents within a structural process seriously, both Gould (2009) and McKeown (2014, 2018a) highlight how the parameter of power can be exercised by some actors in a manner that can be considered blameworthy in a backward-looking sense. However, one could also argue that the exercise of dispositional power, in respect to the consideration of blame, is also relevant to the distribution of forward-looking responsibility. As Isaacs (2014, p. 41, emphasis added) argues, 'agents who are causally implicated and who benefit do indeed *bear a heavier burden of obligation* for alleviating harmful circumstances' (see also Abdel-Nour, 2018; Lu, 2018; Smiley, 2017).

But yet, maintaining the distinction between backward-looking liability and forward-looking political responsibility is central to Young's argument because, as outlined above, according to Young, owing to the complexity of structural processes, 'one cannot clearly determine any backward-looking individual responsibility' (Neuhäuser, 2014, p. 245). However, as Barry and Ferracioli (2013, p. 252) argue, Young 'seems to rely on an unduly narrow conception of liability, based on an account of causation that is widely regarded as problematic', one that requires the identification of a decisive cause of injustice (see also Neuhäuser, 2014). However, one need not take such a restrictive view of causation and can instead acknowledge that 'proving participation in a causal chain' (rather than identifying a definitive cause) is sufficient (Neuhäuser, 2014, p. 243). For example, according to this view, establishing an intent to produce harm would not be required, but merely establishing 'negligence … [would] be enough to ground blameworthy complicity – at least in some cases' (Neuhäuser, 2014, p. 248).

By relaxing Young's restrictive conception of causality, Neuhäuser (2014, p. 247) proposes a more 'integrated approach', which encompasses aspects of both the liability model and forward-looking responsibility. Instead of denying the relevance of blame, as a consequence of the operation of dispositional power, an integrated approach would consider it as a relevant factor in ascribing forward-looking responsibility. A further argument for adopting such an approach is that agents with dispositional power, and who may be considered blameworthy in some sense, are more likely to have the '*capacity* … to carry out the moral projects in question' (Smiley, 2014, p. 9, emphasis added).

Adopting a more integrated approach in this way has implications for the distribution of forward-looking responsibility in terms of scope. That is, by incorporating blameworthiness, in relation to the operation of dispositional power, an integrated approach would consider the parameter of power in two distinct ways:

(i) in a positive sense, in terms of capacity to contribute to the amelioration of structural injustice;
(ii) in a negative sense, in terms of reflecting a contribution to structural injustice in the first place.

While the positive sense is already included in Young's SCM, in relation to a consideration of scope, the negative sense provides an additional aspect of power that is not included in Young's model. The implication of an integrated approach, in terms of thinking about the scope of corporate political responsibilities, is that corporations are 'leading agents' in relation to certain forms of structural injustice (Gould, 2009, p. 204). For example, if one considers working conditions in the global apparel industry, corporations are the driving force behind global supply chains; as major players with dispositional power in relation to the structural injustice that occurs in supply chains, it seems intuitive that the *degree* of corporate responsibility will be greater than the responsibility of other actors – especially those who merely 'participate' in such systems in the sense that they are coerced to do so (Gould, 2009, p. 203).

Discussion

The above discussion provides a critical engagement with aspects of Young's SCM that have, hitherto, received relatively little attention in the PCSR literature. As outlined at the beginning of the paper, the deliberative approach to PCSR emphasizes the need for corporations to establish moral legitimacy through participating in democratic stakeholder processes. While such arguments have been developed with reference to aspects of Young's SCM, the PCSR literature has generally not engaged with key features of her work (Phillips and Sterling, 2022; Tempels, Blok and Verweij, 2017). By offering a more developed engagement with Young's SCM, this paper addresses a number of themes that have been highlighted as insufficiently developed in the PCSR literature. In particular, this paper considers: (i) the *grounds* for corporate political responsibility in relation to structural injustice; (ii) the *scope* of corporate political responsibilities vis-à-vis other actors; and (iii) the role of *power* in relation to participation in deliberative processes and in relation to scope (see Table 1).

Table 1 provides an overview of the key differences, in relation to the political responsibilities of corporations, between deliberative approaches to PCSR and the SCM

Table 1. Comparison between deliberative PCSR and the SCM/integrated approach

	Deliberative PCSR	SCM/Integrated
Grounds for corporate responsibility	Diminishing role of state as a result of globalization.	Participating in processes that give rise to structural injustice.
How corporate responsibility is exercised	By participating in deliberative forums of public will formation.	By exercising political responsibility through joining other actors in collective action to remedy structural injustice.
The scope of corporate political responsibility vis-à-vis other actors	Not explicitly considered – possibly established in the course of securing legitimacy in deliberative processes.	Informed by four parameters: power, privilege, interest, and collective ability. The four parameters are dynamic and will vary in relation to the specific structural injustice under consideration.
Role of corporate power	Relative to the diminishing power of the state. Possibly constrained through deliberative processes.	Corporate power considered in relation to (i) Participation in deliberative forums – whereby powerful actors are challenged and pressurized by weaker actors. (ii) The scope of responsibility (a) in a positive sense, based on capacity; and (b) in a negative sense, based on blame as a result of the exercise of dispositional power.

approach. As illustrated in Table 1, the grounds for political responsibility are different under each model. In particular, for Young (2011), the political responsibility of actors arises because of their contribution to structural injustice. While globalization (or the diminishing power of the state) might be a relevant background factor in relation to *some* processes of structural injustice, it does not provide the *grounds* for the political responsibility of corporations in Young's model. Rather, the political responsibility of corporations is grounded, just as it is for other actors, insofar as they contribute to structural processes that produce unjust outcomes. This is an important distinction, because not all instances of structural injustice are connected to globalization or the diminishing power of states.

One significant aspect of this distinction is that the deliberative approach may overlook potential corporate responsibilities that may arise in a regional or national context. That is, rather than being orientated towards filling regulatory gaps left by the reduced power of the state, responsibility under the SCM arises as a result of an agent contributing to structural injustice – regardless of whether the structural injustice is linked to globalization or not. One of Young's definitive examples of structural injustice can help illustrate this point. Young (2003, 2011) provides a fictional account of Sandy, 'a white single mother' in the United States whose rental property 'has been bought by a developer who plans to convert it into condominiums' (Young, 2003, p. 1). In the example, Sandy faces the threat of homelessness as a result of structural processes related to the rental market, the quality of housing in different areas, safety considerations, property prices, transportation provision, and transport costs. In Young's (2003, p. 3) example, housing insecurity is the result of the actions of a number of actors participating in structural processes, including, for example, 'renters, home buyers, mortgage lenders, real estate brokers, developers, land use regulators, transport planners …' and other state institutions. The interactions amongst these actors contribute to the structural injustice faced by Sandy.

The example of Sandy is not necessarily linked to globalization, nor necessarily related to the diminished capacity of the state.[8] Therefore, it is unlikely that Sandy's plight would be considered under the deliberative PCSR approach.[9] However, a Youngian account

of political responsibility would require all actors who contribute to housing inequality to join with others to rectify the structural injustice. Therefore, it is conceivable that corporations would have a political responsibility in relation to this example; if one were to assume that housing developers and property owners are likely to be corporations, then these corporations would be expected to enjoin with other actors to address the structural injustice related to the lack of sufficient housing (Young, 2011). Other examples of structural injustice that are not obviously connected to globalization might include, for example, gender inequality and the gender pay gap (Parekh, 2011) or the plight of indigenous women (Lu, 2018).

Under the deliberative approach, corporate responsibility is exercised by corporate participation in deliberative forums of public will formation. On this account, corporations participate in pluralist, democratic forums, according to 'principles like public justification, inclusion, and absence of oppression, coercion and threats, as well as the commitment to the general interest' (Baur and Arenas, 2014, p. 160, quoted in Levy, Reinecke and Manning, 2016, p. 367). As discussed earlier, it has been argued that such an account gives insufficient attention to possible antagonistic relations within such forums, or to a consideration of the power dynamics that may arise (Edward and Willmott, 2013; Shamir, 2004). Under the SCM, corporate political responsibility is exercised by joining other actors in collective action to remedy structural injustice. Exercising corporate political responsibility in this way resembles the deliberative approach in some respects; however, there are some important differences between the approaches. In particular, a further aspect of Young's (2006) account relates to the responsibilities of other (weaker) actors in relation to powerful actors; that is, less powerful actors, according to Young, have a responsibility to exert pressure on more powerful actors.

The scope of corporate political responsibility – that is, how much we should expect from corporations vis-à-vis other actors – is not specified under the deliberative PCSR approach (Tempels, Blok and Verweij, 2017, p. 102). One could infer that scope could be agreed, under the deliberative PCSR approach, as the result of securing legitimacy through deliberative processes. That is, in deliberative forums, other actors may express

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[8] Young (2003, p. 3) does acknowledge that 'many European countries have more active policies to mitigate market failures', such as the lack of affordable housing. Nevertheless, she also notes that there are 'many people like Sandy in many advanced industrial societies' (Young, 2003, p. 3).

[9] As acknowledged in note 1, some contributions to the PCSR literature refer to the possibility of a more local/regional application of PCSR (Matten et al., 2005; Scherer et al., 2016, p. 275). Therefore, for these authors, corporations might be identified as

having political responsibilities – in terms of stepping in to fill a regulatory gap or to compensate for deficient state policy. Nevertheless, while such approaches to PCSR may identify a role for corporations in relation to more regional examples (such as Sandy's), the grounds for responsibility would be very different. That is, on Youngian lines, the grounds of political responsibilities for corporations in relation to structural injustice (as per the Sandy example) are in relation to their *connection* to structural injustice – not to fill a regulatory gap.

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expectations about the scope of corporate responsibility in relation to a particular issue; in order to secure legitimacy, corporations would either need to live up to those expectations or persuade other actors that their responsibilities should be otherwise configured.

In contrast, under the SCM, the scope of corporate responsibility is underpinned by a consideration of Young's four parameters of reason: power, privilege, interest, and collective ability. As noted earlier in the paper, while these parameters were only developed by Young (2011) in 'draft' form, they nevertheless provide a more developed platform for considering the scope of corporate responsibility in relation to other actors. Again, unlike the deliberative PCSR model, which is orientated towards addressing governance gaps that result from the diminishing role of the state in the context of globalization, an actor's responsibility under the SCM is grounded in their connection to structural injustice. In this respect, under the SCM, an actor's responsibility will vary according to the structural injustice in question. The implications of this were outlined earlier in the paper, where some reflection was provided on how the parameters would be differently configured depending on the particular structural injustice under consideration (for example, in relation to indigenous women and in relation to working conditions in global supply chains).

Under the deliberative PCSR approach, power is related to the diminishing role/power of the state and the 'growing power' of corporations (Scherer and Palazzo, 2011, p. 907). On this account, power is relevant in terms of corporations attending to governance gaps and exercising 'responsibility for more and more social and environmental externalities' (Scherer and Palazzo, 2011, p. 907). However, the deliberative PCSR approach has little to say about the operation of power in deliberative processes. According to Scherer and Palazzo, moral legitimacy rests on the 'forceless force of the better argument' (Habermas, 1990, p. 185, quoted in Scherer and Palazzo, 2011, p. 907). While they do acknowledge that it is unlikely that the deliberative forums in which corporations participate will 'fulfil the conditions of an ideal discourse, where neither power interference nor rhetoric manipulation takes place', they maintain that 'in the context of political CSR, the ideal conditions of a power-free discourse are rather taken as a normative yardstick for … democratic quality' (Scherer and Palazzo, 2011, p. 916).

Young's SCM, on the other hand, considers power more explicitly. On Young's account, power becomes relevant for corporations in two distinct ways:

 (i) in relation to corporate participation in collective action/deliberative processes;
 (ii) in relation to the scope of responsibility for addressing structural injustice.

As noted above, in relation to participation in deliberative processes, Young proposes a more agonistic/conflictual model, whereby powerful actors are subject to contestation and pressure from other actors. Again, as noted earlier, this approach is more in keeping with the neo-Gramscian position of PCSR favoured by Levy, Reinecke and Manning (2016). In relation to the scope of responsibility for addressing structural injustice, the integrative approach outlined in the previous section also highlighted how power is considered relevant in both a positive and a negative sense: in a positive sense in terms of a corporation's capacity to contribute to change; in a negative sense in terms of reflecting a corporation's contribution to structural injustice in the first place. In relation to the latter, the dispositional power of corporations will be more relevant to particular occurrences of structural injustice – for example, in relation to working conditions in supply chains; therefore, one should expect more from corporations, in terms of the *degree* of their responsibility, in such contexts.

Conclusions and further work

The implications that arise from the critical engagement with Young's SCM outlined above do share some commonalities with Scherer and Palazzo's (2011) Habermasian approach. For example, the above Youngian account would suggest that participating in deliberative processes is something that would be expected of companies insofar as they contribute to processes of structural injustice – such as working conditions in the global supply chain. Furthermore, establishing legitimacy is likely to be a relevant consideration for corporations in participating in such deliberative processes, reflecting their responsibility to contribute to the remediation of such structures.

However, by critically engaging with Young's SCM, this paper further builds on Scherer and Palazzo's approach in the following ways: (i) by grounding corporate responsibility in relation to a connection to structural injustice, rather than as a response to governance gaps caused by globalization; (ii) by providing consideration of the scope of corporate responsibilities in relation to other actors, guided by the parameters of power, privilege, interest, and collective ability (Young, 2006, p. 127); and (iii) by, based on a critical reading of Young's SCM, outlining a more integrated framework that considers the relevance of the backward-looking liability model and the forward-looking SCM. In doing so, the paper provides a more sophisticated consideration of the dynamics of power in deliberative processes, as well as outlining how the backward-looking responsibilities of corporations are relevant to the consideration of their responsibilities to contribute to the amelioration of structural injustice in a forward-looking sense.

In addition, the paper highlights the potential of Young's work to inform and invigorate debates within the PCSR literature (Phillips and Schrempf-Stirling, 2022; Van Buren and Schrempf-Stirling, 2022; Van Buren, Schrempf-Stirling and Westermann-Behaylo, 2021). Her work on structural injustice, which is informed by a wide range of philosophical traditions along with key debates in sociology and political science, provides fertile ground for CSR scholars to explore. As outlined at the start of this paper, there is much to admire about Young's SCM. She is undoubtedly correct to recognize that the complexity of structural social processes makes it difficult to identify or assign blame. Further, she is also undoubtedly correct to recognize that addressing structural injustice requires a shared responsibility involving many actors taking collective action.

Nevertheless, there are areas of her work that warrant critical engagement and where further development is required. One such area concerns the possible institutional governance mechanism that might be required under a Youngian approach (Heilinger, 2021). That is, further work may contribute to the development of Young's SCM by considering how political responsibility might be administered and organized in a more 'action-guiding' manner (Barry and Macdonald, 2016; Neuhäuser, 2014; Zheng, 2018).[10]

For example, while the four parameters and integrative framework sketched in this paper provide some indication of the expectations around the responsibilities of different actors in relation to structural injustice, it is still not entirely clear how the trade-offs, or relative weightings, between these parameters are to be decided, managed, and implemented. For example, according to Neuhäuser (2014, p. 248), in order to establish and define a fair and reasonable distribution amongst actors, 'the creation of institutions that structures this discourse and organizes the distribution' would be required. If assessing blame was also to be a factor, as per the integrated approach, then such institutions would need to be 'rule-based' and 'quasi-legal' (Neuhäuser, 2014, p. 249).

For Gould (2009, p. 211), Young's approach also requires an institutional solution, one that requires 'more weight placed on the responsibility of global corporations' in recognition of the power they yield (see also Gould, 2004). Instead of an exclusive focus on establishing 'quasi-legal' institutions to adjudicate and provide a legitimate basis for the fair distribution of responsibility, Gould (2009, p. 206) recommends the need for corporations to embed deliberative processes within their own structures, arguing 'for structural transformation in these institutions themselves, such that the workers within them participate in their direction'. While Gould's (2009) proposals are developed specifically in response to limitations she identifies with Young's SCM, similar suggestions have been advanced across the literatures in business ethics (for example, Hsieh, 2005), CSR (for example, Scherer, Baumann-Pauly and Schneider, 2013; Scherer and Voegtlin, 2020; Schneider and Scherer, 2019), corporate governance (for example, Gomez and Korine, 2008; Mayer, 2014; Parker, 2002; Parkinson, 2003), and political science (for example, Dahl, 1985; Ciepley, 2013; Macdonald and Macdonald, 2010) [11].

In addition, drawing on Young's (2000, p. 49) earlier work, a consideration of governance processes within corporations might draw on a 'more "agonistic" model of democratic processes', which recognizes and accommodates conflict and the relative power of different actors (see also Brown, 2009; Mouffe, 1999, 2013). An agonistic approach not only recognizes dissent, but calls for the development of 'institutions through which it can be manifested' (Mouffe, 1999, p. 756). Further engagement with this literature might help address a difficulty with Young's SCM noted earlier in the paper, namely that the circumstances of victims and less powerful actors may mean that they are unable to act upon their responsibility to challenge structural injustice.

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[10]McKeown (2021, p. 8) uses the term 'action-guiding' to describe a prominent critique of Young's SCM – namely that Young's framework could be more prescriptive in terms of prescribing what actors have to do in relation to fulfilling their political responsibility. However, McKeown (2021, p. 8) argues that this critique is 'particularly weak' because Young intentionally keeps the concept of political responsibility 'discretionary and open-ended'.

[11]The literature related to democratic forms of corporate governance is grounded in many different ways, underpinned by quite different motivations and theoretical perspectives – for example, on the basis of political equality (Dahl, 1985); on the basis that corporations owe their existence, in part, to a concession of the state (Ciepley, 2013); on the grounds of fairness (Hsieh, 2005); owing to the exercise of public power (Macdonald and Macdonald, 2010); in order to address grand challenges (Scherer and Voegtlin, 2020) etc. Therefore, how these studies might apply to Young's SCM – which is grounded in relation to actors' connection to structural injustice – would require careful consideration.

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