



# Stakeholder Influence on Decision Making: From e-Movements (#metoo) to Corporate Social Responsibility Policy

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## INTRODUCTION

The fourth industrial revolution, Industry 4.0, has shifted organizational dynamics by placing individuals and organizations in the midst of a new environment, one in which the Internet of things (Atzori, Iera, & Morabit, 2010) has significantly changed nearly every daily activity and task, as well as decision making. Data and information are at the tip of everyone's fingers, and anything and everything can be researched and done online and be saved to the cloud. Organizations can establish direct and simultaneous communication via social media with current and potential stakeholders; furthermore, the latter take to social networking sites to voice their thoughts, opinions, praises, and grievances, and even become active participants in social movements.

Protest activity and social movements are carried out in order to mobilize agents, change structures and systems, resist change and, in general, influence key decision making that may lead to desired outcomes. Social

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movements, whether focused on political or social issues, are driven by the same intent to converge objectives and interests; that is, their aim is to persuade the majority that the minority group's interests and objectives are, in fact, elemental to the collective. Throughout the years, there have been numerous social movements around the world; although it is true that not all have attained the change desired, those that have, have certainly impacted the manner in which both countries and organizations are governed. The power of protest and civil disobedience, for instance, has a significant impact on corporate decision making, particularly, on organization design and execution of policies, standards and norms. Therefore, social movements have been, par excellence, the strongest determinants in social growth and development.

Organizations engaging in corporate social responsibility take a firm stance on the protection of human rights, dignity, and equality, which begs the question, are organizations that state to be socially responsible advocating for the terms of their policies and standards? Is it possible to be effectively engaging in corporate social responsibility when action is taken only upon public embarrassment? Moreover, what is the role of the organization's corporate governance in the apparent leniency of unethical and questionable practices that deem the engagement in corporate social responsibility misleading and deceptive? The main objective of this study is to understand the effects of stakeholders' power to influence organizations' decision making through social media communication. In this endeavor, propositions have been framed along with a conceptual model on the basis of the analysis of previous literature and current cases to provide insights for managerial implications.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Corporate Social Responsibility*

The manner in which social growth and development and business growth and development converge is by engaging in corporate social responsibility (CSR). The concept has been defined as an organization's practices aimed at social well-being that go beyond legal requirements and obligations (McWilliams, Siegel, & Wright, 2006). Corporate social responsibility has a positive impact on an organization's reputation (Galbreath, 2010), organizational performance (Sun & Yu, 2015; Surroca, Tribó, & Waddock, 2010), collaborators' moral (Utting, 2005) and motivation and

satisfaction (Mozes, Josman, & Yaniv, 2011), consumer satisfaction (Xueming & Bhattacharya, 2006), competitive advantage (Kim & Scullion, 2013), financial performance (Schatzberg, Gupta, & McCandless, 1997; Simpson & Kohers, 2002), innovation (Rexhepi, Kurtishi, & Bexheti, 2013), and stakeholders' overall satisfaction and loyalty (Isa, 2012; Lindgreen, Swaen, & Johnston, 2009), amongst others.

Organizations have an important responsibility toward their stakeholders (Ismail, 2011), both current and potential, and CSR is an important means for effective stakeholder management (Khan, Khan, Ahmed, & Ali, 2012). According to Homburg, Stierl, and Bornemann (2013), CSR is described as the organization's voluntary practice of taking internal and external stakeholders' interests and concerns into account; thus, it is a business concept oriented toward stakeholders (Maon, Lindgreen, & Swaen, 2009) as well as driven by stakeholders. It is not enough for organizations to engage in corporate social responsibility, they must also be proactive in the communication of their practices (Liston-Heyes & Ceton, 2009; Panapanaan, Linnanen, Karvonen, & Phan, 2003) to current and potential stakeholders in order to achieve desired outcomes. Therefore, maintaining direct dialogue with stakeholders regarding their CSR efforts is essential to the latter's satisfaction. Furthermore, stakeholders demonstrate a preference for establishing relationships with organizations that demonstrate a greater involvement in social issues, such as the community (Amato & Amato, 2007), at least that surrounds them, and environmental issues (Bird, Hall, Momentè, & Reggiani, 2007). As such, the achievement of stakeholder satisfaction is no longer fulfilled by the mere attainment of profit (de Camargo, Mendonça, de Oliveira, Jabbour, & de Sousa Jabbour, 2017) and quality products and/or services (Stigson, 2002).

Transparency and accountability are two fundamental elements of CSR; together, they lay the foundation for honesty and trust, which are significantly valued by stakeholders (O'Connor & Meister, 2008). Firms engaging in CSR strive to be accountable as well as be held accountable by their stakeholders. However, stakeholders are only able to hold parties and/or organizations accountable if they are duly empowered (Cooper & Owen, 2007) to do so; thus, organizational leaders need to assure their stakeholders that their voice is valuable and taken into account for decision making. In the sense that they acknowledge stakeholders as genuine participants in the ongoing improvement of business dynamics.

Firms engaging in corporate social responsibility are open to listening to stakeholders' needs, wants, as well as grievances because they under-

stand that their loyalty is based on their perception of satisfaction and added value. Stakeholder dialogue is essential in stakeholder management as well as the effectiveness of a firm's CSR engagement (Pedersen, 2006). And, achieving a successful dialogue requires the encouragement of stakeholder voice. According to Singh, Sethuraman, and Lam (2017), stakeholder engagement refers to the dialogue established with stakeholders regarding the firm's CSR practices; such dialogue includes having an actual conversation whereby information, data, and feedback are actively exchanged amongst interested parties. And, stakeholder engagement is achieved when stakeholders are heard (Pedersen, 2006) and perceive their voices to be making a difference; in a sense, they not only want organizational leaders to listen to what they have to say but also want to know that the information shared is being considered for decision making and is, ultimately, making a difference; thus, engagement for stakeholders means proactivity and inclusion. Hence, the proposition has been constructed as:

$P_1$  Firms engaging in CSR foster stakeholder dialogue derived from stakeholder voice.

### *Social Movements*

Whistleblowers, social movements, civil disobedience, protest activity, riots, sit-ins, boycotts, calls to ban, and so on are all different types of demonstrations of opposition to the status quo; however, they do share a common sense of disapproval of how policy is sustained, decisions are made, legislation is upheld, and their overall effects on social growth and development. Individuals, groups, organizations, and collectives use their voices to stand up against unjust behavior and decisions in the pursuit of resolute change. While social growth and development continues to be hampered by inequality, discrimination, war, poverty, famine, and hatred, social movements will rightly persist.

A social movement, a concept coined by Lorenz von Stein in 1850, is considered to be the undertakings of organized groups with the aim to resolve social issues (Rao, Morrill, & Zald, 2000). These movements have also been defined as a collection of people's thoughts and beliefs that stand for specific change in society (Zald & McCarthy, 1980) and a shared "collective identity" that has the aim to "prevent, or undo social, political or cultural change" (Maiba, 2005), and/or contentiously challenge and disrupt others (Tarrow, 2011). Social movements, then, emerge and come to

light because direct and/or one-on-one requests and petitions for change have been ignored and dismissed; in other words, the interests of what is perceived to be the minority are not or have not been converging with those of the majority. Social movements grow in power because they originate from and influence other movements (Meyer & Whittier, 1994; Porta & Tarrow, 2004); therefore, current social movements have precedent, accumulated shared knowledge, as well as motivation and inspiration. In other words, it is clear that, although not in all cases, social movements have the potential for beneficial outcomes, and desired results.

According to Blumer (1995), social movements can take on the form of an organization or a “collective enterprise”, in that they acquire the same attributes; they, for instance, have a shared mission and vision, common goals and objectives, strategies, tactics, and core values, also known as corporate philosophy, collaborators, leadership, and so on in such a way that social movements may influence cultural innovation and even build new organizations (Rao et al., 2000). Moreover, they have the power to impact organizational behavior, because by modifying public opinion, they are able to influence the decision making of policy makers (Lipsky, 1968); and, regardless of whether organizational leaders are responsive to a social movement’s demands and requests for change, they are definitely impacted by them; that is, social movements alter the outcomes of cost-benefit analysis, as well as stakeholder perceptions and attitudes (Zald, Morrill, & Rao, 2005) toward the organization. The latter, in turn, influences decision making, making the relationship between social movements and firms cyclical; therefore, the outcomes of social movements can have a significant impact on business growth and development.

### *Stakeholders and Social Movements*

Stakeholders are any and every party interested and/or affected by an organization’s activities and decisions as well as those that can affect the latter (Werther & Chandler, 2011). There are many stakeholder classifications (Kumar, Rahman, & Kazmi, 2016); for instance, there are project stakeholders (Cleland, 1997), that is, those that can affect and/or are affected by an organizational project, and internal and external stakeholders (de Chernatony & Harris, 2000; O’Shannassy, 2003), that is, those operating inside and outside the organization. And, there are primary and secondary stakeholders (Freeman, Harrison, & Wicks, 2007), the former are those that have a direct impact on organizational decision making and

are more consistent with profit-enhancing interest and, the latter, although with less or no power, may indirectly influence decision making and are more consistent with social well-being interest (Godfrey, Merrill, & Hansen, 2009).

Key elements in stakeholder management include stakeholder voice (Van Dyne, Ang, & Botero, 2003), stakeholder dialogue (Kaptein & Van Tulder, 2003), stakeholder engagement (Greenwood, 2007), stakeholder satisfaction (Strong, Ringer, & Taylor, 2001), and stakeholder added value (Hillman & Keim, 2001), all of which are attainable by being proactive in the effective management of organizational-stakeholder relationships. Successful organizations, amongst other factors, create value for their stakeholders (Freeman, 2009), that is, for both those current stakeholders and those that may potentially become the organization's stakeholders. Therefore, high-performing organizations ought to unwaveringly listen to and adopt their needs, requirements, and wants, in order to effectively add value, satisfy them, and maintain an effective relationship.

Meeting stakeholder demands may seem a complex task, as it might be argued that organizations simply cannot make all interested parties happy with their results; the latter is true, however, organizations may strive to satisfy their current and potential stakeholders with their business dynamics, that is, the manner in which they approach business: their corporate governance, corporate philosophy, engagement in corporate social responsibility, backstage operations, management, and overall achievement of strategic goals and objectives. By doing so, satisfaction with results will follow; in fact, stakeholder satisfaction by means of socially responsible business dynamics may lead to added value (Hillman & Keim, 2001), commitment (Mory, Wirtz, & Göttel, 2016), loyalty and, eventually, co-creation of value.

Since it is clear that organizations may not survive without stakeholders, it is vital that organizational leaders be proactive with their interests and concerns. On one hand, stakeholders have significant power and influence, especially today, on organizational decision making; on the other hand, legitimacy, which is the perceived appropriateness of action on the bases of social canons (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997), is granted by stakeholders to the firm (Deegan, Rankin, & Vogt, 2000). An organization's engagement in socially responsible practices, for instance, is essential to the provision of legitimacy (Boyle & Boguslaw, 2007; De Quevedo-Puente, De la Fuente-Sabaté, & Delgado-García, 2007). In such way that stakeholders have high expectations of organizational business dynamics and their alignment with society's needs.

Stakeholders are constantly surveilling organizational behavior, which influences their decision making and attitude toward the firm. They do so because they are not only interested in the quality of the products and/or services they offer but also because they are interested in how they conduct their business operations. Increasingly, stakeholders need to know that the organizations they associate with not only do well, by achieving profit-enhancing objectives, but also do good, by comporting themselves ethically and engaging in socially responsible practices. In contrast, stakeholder preference to not associate with organizations that engage in unethical practices, or even questionable practices, has gradually increased as well.

According to Fernández-Guadaño and Sarria-Pedroza (2018), society continues to increase their demands for organizations to be both sustainable and responsible in their pursuit of economic, social, and environmental development; these demands are often expressed in the form of social movements. An organization's stakeholders are the very same people taking part in social movements; as such, no distinction should be made in the ethical management of stakeholders (Goodpaster, 1991), both current and potential. According to Porter and Kramer (2006), there are four aspects that compel the engagement in CSR: moral appeal, sustainability, authorization to operate, and reputation, which are all perceived, approved by, and granted by stakeholders. For instance, in order to maintain the right to operate, the firm must ensure that social expectations are being met (Moir, 2001). Therefore, when stakeholders, who expect a firm to be socially responsible, perceive an organization and/or members of an organization comporting themselves unethically, they vocalize their opinions through protest, social movements, boycotts, bans, amongst other manners, and vice versa.

Activism tends to be associated with consumers rather than with other stakeholders; however, there is a growing number of shareholders utilizing their rights to motivate organizations to promote social and environmental development (Wagemans, van Koppen, & Mol, 2013). For example, Nike's most recent ad campaign depicted Colin Kaepernick which instigated uproar; while some stakeholders are praising the decision, others have taken it upon themselves to boycott the organization, protest by burning sneakers, and so on. Despite the initial backlash, Fortune reported that there has been a 5 percent rise in Nike's stock since the firm announced the endorsement of Kaepernick (Kelleher, 2018). Granted, there are current and potential stakeholders that object to firms taking a stance such as

Nike did, however, more often than not, stakeholders' actions and demands are associated with the exhortation of organizations to stop engaging in bad, questionable, or unethical practices, for instance: price fixing, sexism, racism, animal cruelty, and environmental destruction, amongst others. The above discussion prompted to develop the following research proposition:

$P_2$  Stakeholders engage in social movements to voice their dissatisfaction with firm behavior

### *Social Media and Social Movements*

The manner in which social movements are carried out has undergone significant change in itself, that is, the very activity's stage has, although not entirely, shifted from the streets to social media. One of the primary characteristics of the fourth industrial revolution, which justly differs from previous eras, is the scope of its social impact. For instance, it is the attributes of the Internet of things (Atzori et al., 2010) that has systematically altered the dynamics of communication which have, in turn, significantly influenced behavioral and attitudinal changes. The ever-growing use of social media, particularly social networking sites (SNSs), has, amongst other aspects, shifted stakeholders' power of influence on organization's decision making. Said influence has been increasingly visible with the viralization of social movements.

Social networking sites connect and reconnect people (Mejias, 2010) with similar interests (Boyd & Ellison, 2007) and enable them to read content, produce it, as well as discuss and share it (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011; Shirky, 2011) with other users around the world. Further, the practice of obtaining and disseminating news via social media has significantly increased (Lee & Ma, 2012) in the last years, since stakeholders prefer such platforms and they have become a significant source of information (Westerman, Spence, & Van Der Heide, 2014). Therefore, it makes good business sense for organizations to engage in dialogue with their current and potential stakeholders, regarding their practices, via social networking sites. That is, there is a greater probability that information, once shared with stakeholders, will be reposted and/or retweeted essentially increasing visibility of the original post instantly.

One of the principal activities that foster social movements is the diffusion of data and information to make as many people as possible knowl-



edgeable of the cause, objectives, process to participate, and so on. Technology has always been an important factor in the effectiveness of knowledge sharing such as printing, telegrams, telephones, any form of traditional mass media (Marvin, 1990), amongst many others; thus, the Internet has only increased the effectivity with which information is disseminated. Furthermore, social media and social networking sites have significantly increased the velocity and information quantity that can be shared simultaneously around the world. Online social movements are the mobilization of masses via online platforms with the aim of pursuing social change. They have been defined as the “adoption and use by social movements and community activists of new information and communication technologies (ICTs), such as the Internet and the World Wide Web” (Loader, 2003).

e-Movements (Earl & Schussman, 2002) have not completely eliminated offline, in person, movements. However, today, because of the attributes of social networking sites, the scope of social movements’ impact and influence is boundless. Protest activity, for instance, is traditionally viewed as a group of people that take to the street to voice their opinions, thoughts, grievances, and complaints; it has proven to be an effective tool to mobilize masses as well as decision making. However, social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, amongst many others, have become significant platforms for the mobilization of people and groups for social movements (Carty, 2014); the latter has led, for instance, to online protests, e-protests (Scott & Street, 2000).

There are several advantages to the use of social networking sites for social movements, particularly, scope, anonymity, safety, and convenience. Scope of the social movement is particularly enhanced on social media as the number of potential viewers and participants surpass the millions; for instance, Facebook alone accounts for 2.27 billion monthly active users (Facebook, 2018). This also means that the reach of the effects of a social movement is amplified as well. Social networking sites leave the decision of the degree of online anonymity to each user, as well as the extent of privacy which is manageable by a series of settings. According to Youmans and York (2012), anonymity and privacy are essential for activists as well as social networking site users; therefore, such elements are significant advantages for social movement participants. Granted, anything and everything shared/posted online becomes part of the public domain; however, there is greater sense of identity protection when participation is carried out via SNSs.

Safety has always been a particular issue for participants of social movements and, especially for protest activity; there are over 118 million hits on Google for “protest safety”, about 50 million for “staying safe during a protest”, more than 22 million for “protest safety guide”, and over 13 million hits for “protest safety tips”. Therefore, it is clear that people are concerned about their safety and that of others when engaging in protest activity and with good reason since past experience has demonstrated that even peaceful protests can turn violent in an instant. Furthermore, there is growing fear of repercussion if identified as a protester, either by regulatory authorities or by organizations in which individuals work. Some participants are aware that they may be identified on social media; however, there is less concern than if their faces were to be plastered on the news, they are arrested, or worse. And, there is a considerable reduction of censorship (Isa & Himelboim, 2018), although it is not completely eliminated, as there is less oppression of freedom of speech. In July 2018, the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), during their 38th session, adopted a resolution that declares States must uphold and protect human rights during protests, both offline and online (UNHRC, 2018). Thus, there is a significant safety advantage to the use of social networking sites for social movements and protest activity.

The attributes of social networking sites also enable users to associate and assemble with others without major disruption to their daily lives and activities. In fact, stakeholders may now be active participants in multiple social movements simultaneously without leaving the comfort of their homes, preferred coffee shops, parks, and even offices, amongst others. Furthermore, their participation can go beyond local social movements as they can now be proactive in international movements as well. As such, the processes of captivating an audience and carrying out protest activity become much more efficient.

Intermediaries are no longer required for firms and stakeholders to connect because social networking sites provide ideal conditions; thus, firms can create a direct connection and dialogue with their stakeholders (Baird & Parasnis, 2011) who can now directly interact with brands, organizations, through social networking sites (Koufaris, 2002). While firms are able to gather valuable data and information, stakeholders are able to exert their voices regarding their degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with firms' behavior; that is, both positive and negative word-of-mouth (WOM) are generated via social media which can be viewed in the form of praise or discontent (Bakeberg, 2015) with brands, their firms, and overall

practices. While positive WOM can enhance a firm's image, negative WOM, caused by dissatisfaction with firm behavior, is much more frequent and can cause significant damage to reputations and cause an online "firestorm" (Pfeffer, Zorbach, & Carley, 2014), crisis for the organization (Ndlela, 2010) in question; hence, the research proposition constructed as stated below:

$P_3$  SNSs' attributes encourage stakeholders to participate in online social movements to voice their dissatisfaction with firm behavior.

Social movements, like any other post or tweet, have the potential of going viral. Virality has been defined as the probability with which a tweet or a post will be resent, shared, or retweeted (Hansen, Arvidsson, Nielsen, Colleoni, & Etter, 2011). And, it has also been described as the nature of the message itself (Guerini, Strapparava, & Özbal, 2011), in that a post or tweet's virality is tied to the potential virality of the content and if it does not account for the particular attributes, it will not spread through social media. Social movement viralization is attainable by the combination of four elements: (i) the message, (ii) the diffusion of the message by influencers and non-influencers, (iii) hashtags, which are keywords or phrases created with a pound sign (#) (Wang, Wei, Liu, Zhou, & Zhang, 2011) that are used in order to organize and coordinate groups of people focused on the same topic of discussion (Bruns & Burgess, 2011), and (iv) a cross-over effect by which content is shared in media outlets different from the original source. It is noteworthy that the audience on SNSs' is vast; it not only includes current and potential stakeholders but also celebrities, influencers, religious and business leaders, diplomats, politicians, policy makers, key decision makers, amongst many others.

### *#MeToo Movement*

The term "Me Too" was coined by Tarana Burke in 2006 (Ilinskaya & Robinson, 2018) with the aim of helping sexual violence survivors. In 2017, the term exploded when the hashtag #metoo went viral on social networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, amongst others, as hundreds of SNSs' users took to these platforms to make their voices heard. Women and men around the world were simultaneously united by a hashtag that summed up their experiences. It was the beginning of a social movement against sexual assault and harassment, a move-

ment that has significantly altered the perception of corporate image and business dynamics; it began to exhort organizational leaders to engage internal and external stakeholders in the practice of self-examination and self-reflection (Becker, 2018) for a thorough and purposeful analysis, and adequate decision making.

Stakeholders around the world have joined the movement with greater intentions than merely participating in the conversation. They have been utilizing their power to influence organizational leaders to do the right thing by taking a strong stance against harassment, sexual assault, sexual abuse, violence, and discrimination. This particular social movement has been the center of discussion in almost every industry and sector, which means all organizations have been brought to the conversation regardless of their size and line of business. According to Vanhamme and Grobбен (2009), when negative WOM is associated with a firm, CSR can be an effective means by which the organization can manage crises and restore their image; however, authentic engagement in CSR requires a step further. Firms that fiercely listen to their stakeholders and drive change in their corporate philosophy and corporate governance, do so because they are convinced that being socially responsible is the key to business and social growth and development. Some may argue that engaging in CSR is a mere public relations tactic and they would be right regarding organizations that comply with social demands in the form of answerability rather than accountability, examples of which are abundant.

Firms tend to take one of four positions when stakeholders actively voice their opinions via social media on their questionable or unethical behavior, including dismiss, evade, comply, and take-charge. Figure 8.1 depicts the different approaches taken by firms in response to stakeholder voice regarding firm behavior. When stakeholder voice is inconspicuous and the organization is not engaged in corporate social responsibility, their voice is dismissed; that is, organizational leaders tend to vocally reject their opinions and deem them a non-issue. When stakeholder voice is inconspicuous and the firm states to be engaged in CSR, organizational leaders tend to evade stakeholder requests and demands by remaining on the sidelines of the issue. When stakeholder voice is forceful but the firm is not fully engaged in CSR, organizational leaders tend to merely comply with indications from regulatory authorities; that is, they take action if and when a law is passed and/or they perceive their right to operate is in danger. Finally, when stakeholder voice is forceful, and the organization is engaged in CSR, organizational leaders take-charge, meaning that they

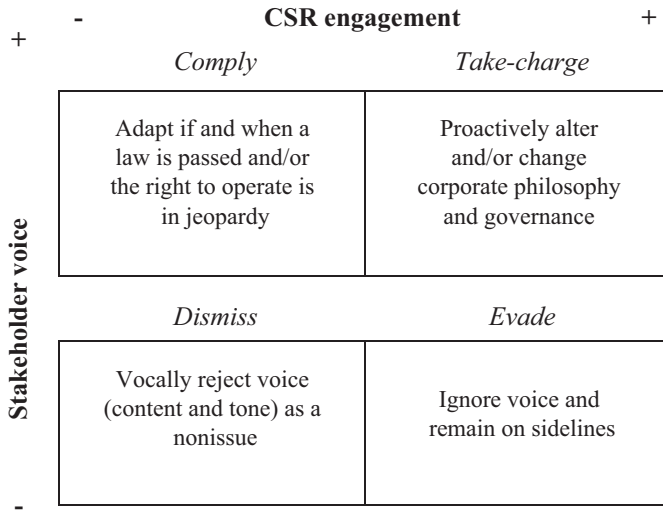


Fig. 8.1 Firm response to stakeholder voice via social media

are proactive in adapting their organizational design as to restructure their corporate philosophy and governance to fit stakeholders' requests in pursuit of both business and social growth and development. Therefore, the degree of responsiveness of firms varies, where those that dismiss are irresponsible, the ones that evade are inadequate, firms that comply are practicing answerability, and those that take-charge are accountable; further, only the latter are genuinely socially responsible and, thus, engaging and satisfying their stakeholders.

There is a vast quantity of examples of firms that, unfortunately, fall short of current and potential stakeholders' expectations, as well as international standards and law. Perhaps the most infamous example is the Weinstein case, which instigated the uncovering of misconduct across industries around the world. Over 80 women have come forward with allegations against Harvey Weinstein, who remains under investigation (Gonzalez, France, & Melas, 2018). The case has demonstrated that (1) current and potential stakeholders have a voice and will use it to demand justice offline and online: #Metoo, #TimesUp!, #NoMore, and so on, and (2) the accusations of men and women that have abused their power has not only exposed individuals but has also exposed organizations.

The latter has shed particular light on the *Weinstein effect* whereby firms not only demonstrate severe lack of proactivity and social responsibility but also reveal organizational illness, meaning that unethical and questionable practices permeate the organization, enabling said behavior; thus, there are issues with the very foundation of the organization, its corporate philosophy, and governance. Merely firing the guilty or alleged guilty party sends current and potential stakeholders the wrong message. It suggests that the organization is complying, giving into the pressure out of fear of further repercussions, their degree of responsiveness to stakeholder demands falls along the lines of answerability.

For instance, recently, Google collaborators around the world staged a walkout in protest of the firm's actions (Weaver, Hern, Bekiempis, Hepler, & Feroso, 2018); male executives, who were accused of sexual harassment, received exit packages of millions of dollars (Wakabayashi, Griffith, Tsang, & Conger, 2018). Collaborators engaged in protest activity aligned with the #metoo movement, as they took to the streets and social media: #GoogleWalkout; their voices filled with outrage and demands were heard worldwide as news simultaneously spread on social networking sites: Times up! Rather than taking-charge and proactively addressing the situation head-on by making significant changes to their corporate policies, organizational leaders tried to evade the situation, and then chose to remain silent dismissing the misconduct; finally, due to global current and potential stakeholder pressure, Google's CEO made a statement where he apologized, confirmed that 48 collaborators had been fired due to sexual harassment of which none had received similar exit packages (Wakabayashi et al., 2018). Therefore, the message to current and potential stakeholders is that their well-being is secondary to profit-enhancing objectives and they have no intention of making significant changes to their corporate policies to ensure safety and a respectful and dignified workplace; thus, they are not genuinely socially responsible.

That said, there are examples such as Tecate, a Mexican brand from the Cuauhtémoc Moctezuma Brewery, which has taken a strong stance on their CSR engagement by publicly announcing their alignment with human rights. In 2016, Tecate launched an ad, which won a Gold Glass Lion at Cannes in 2017 (Expansión, 2017), for their "For a Mexico without violence against women" campaign with a powerful message to their consumers. The ad depicted men engaging in socially accepted masculine activities, while a masculine voice narrated that men are not defined by their strength, image, courage, bravery, or sexual orientation, but by how

they treat women, “If you don’t respect her, Tecate is not for you; we don’t want your business, we hope you never find us, you are not one of us”; the ad ended with the statistic “2 of every 3 women suffer a type of violence in Mexico” and “Tecate: For a Mexico without violence against women” (El Financiero, 2017). The brand Director, Raúl González, stated “we are committed to our consumers in every way, we always seek to innovate and be creative with our products and campaigns, we want them to join our causes” (El Financiero, 2017). Furthermore, rather than participating in Super Bowl LI, Tecate invited their stakeholders to use the hashtag #PorEllasAsiSomos (because of them (women) we are) in order to raise funds to fight violence against women, Tecate donated a peso for every Tweet, and the ad was not used for the event but to raise additional funds (HuffPost, 2017). A year later, Tecate associated with the Red Nacional de Refugios (National Network of Shelters) to inaugurate the Center for the Empowerment and Leadership of Women (Díaz, 2018). Therefore, the message that the firm sends current and potential stakeholders is that they listen to them and take their concerns into consideration for decision making and their actions suggest that they are being proactive in regard to social performance; further, they indicate that they take their engagement in CSR seriously and, therefore, their actions are consistent with business and social growth and development. Hence,

*P<sub>4</sub>* The viralization of stakeholder voice related to social movements, produced by SNSs’ content management features, influences corporate policy.

## MODEL ANALYSIS

The main objective of the study is to understand the effects of stakeholders’ power to influence the organizations’ decision making through social media communication. In order to do so, four propositions were framed and a conceptual model developed to analyze the implications of organizational engagement in corporate social responsibility and stakeholder influence on policy making. Figure 8.2 includes the model framework in which the study’s propositions have been associated with the analyzed constructs. The model describes how a firm’s actions and degree of engagement in corporate social responsibility can cause stakeholder satisfaction or dissatisfaction, and the implications of stakeholder voice as an influence on CSR policy.

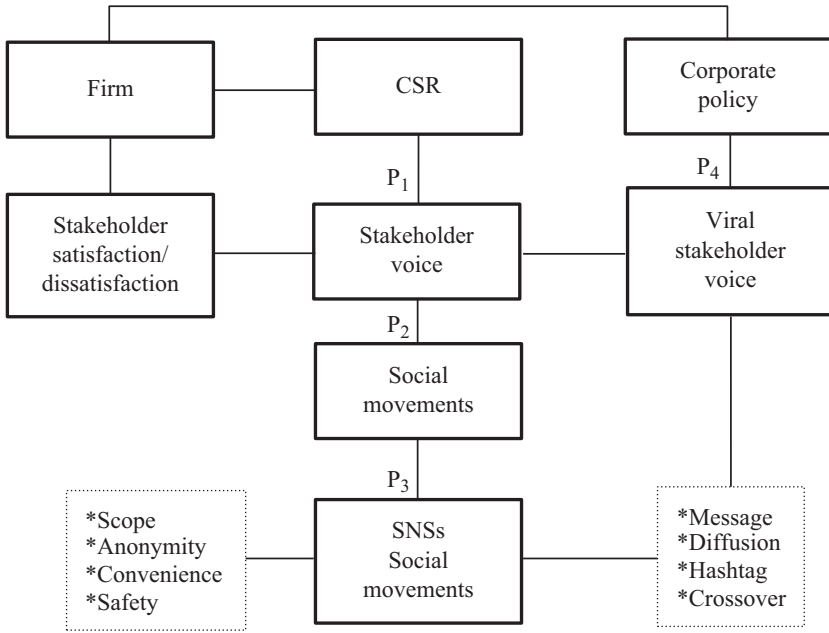


Fig. 8.2 Stakeholder influence and CSR policy model

Many firms say they are being socially responsible; however, a vast majority do so by merely engaging in philanthropic activities, social marketing, greenwashing, and/or social washing. These firms are more consistent with profit-enhancing objectives rather than seeking a balance among financial, environmental, and social performance; further, they respond to current stakeholder voice only when it is accompanied by pressure from regulations, industries, or is simply too forceful to silence. Corporate social responsibility is a stakeholder-oriented practice (Freeman & Dmytriiev, 2017) carried out for society, by society, and because of society; at its very core, its objective is to achieve both business and social growth and development. As such, firms genuinely engaged in CSR actively listen to their current and potential stakeholders and maintain a dialogue with them, and, because they strive to be proactive in the achievement of growth and development, they encourage stakeholder voice ( $P_1$ ) for its consideration in organizational decision making.



Stakeholders frequently utilize their voice to share information and experiences with products, services, and firms offering them; however, a good amount of their voice exertion is ascribed to their dissatisfaction with organizational behavior. Brand image is significant for stakeholder decision making regarding their purchase intentions; in fact, it is a determinant of their attitude toward a given service and/or product (Wu, 2015) and their overall selection of them (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007). And, their behavior is not the exception as stakeholders increasingly base their decision making on the degree with which organizations act in a socially responsible manner. Stakeholder trust is quintessential to fostering a successful relationship with brands (Morgan & Hunt, 1994) and their corresponding organizations. Therefore, if stakeholders do not trust the firm and/or perceive that organizational behavior is unacceptable and/or intolerable, they tend to decide against associating with the firm in question and often take part in social movements ( $P_2$ ); they may join in on protest activities, boycotts, and bans amongst others, in order to have their voices heard with the clear intent to instigate change, make a difference, influence organizational leaders to do the right thing.

Social media and social networking sites continue to grow in popularity (Shi, Hu, Lai, & Chen, 2018) as the number of active monthly users continues to grow on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, amongst many others. SNSs are utilized for a variety of activities because their attributes offer far more advantages than disadvantages. This is the case of social movements carried out on SNSs; as mentioned before, there are four main characteristics that encourage stakeholders to participate in online social movements: scope (i.e. number of participants), anonymity (i.e. identity protection, privacy), safety (i.e. well-being, fear of repercussion, reduction of censorship), and convenience (i.e. comfort, multiple participation, local and international participation). Stakeholders, then, take to social networking sites to participate in social movements to voice their dissatisfaction with firm behavior ( $P_3$ ) because they feel they are generally protected and that what they have to say has greater impact.

Organizations tend to become aware of social movements and their demands only until they are being covered by mass media (McCarthy, Smith, & Zald, 1996) and have made headlines; more and more frequently, firms are becoming aware of social movements when they have spread through social networking sites. The direct and simultaneous communication that may occur between stakeholders engaged in social movements and firms takes a step further because of the nature of SNSs; content

management features of SNSs (i.e. message, diffusion, hashtag, and cross-over), as mentioned earlier, not only enable users to participate in social movements but also set off viralization. Stakeholders influence firms' policy making and decision making by voicing their dissatisfaction with firm behavior by participating in the viralization of social movements via social networking sites (P<sub>4</sub>). For instance, although the immediate effects of the #metoo movement have been the exposure of alleged guilty parties, the secondary effects are revealing of the organizations' governance, as well as their efforts to uphold their position on corporate social responsibility. Moreover, the power of stakeholder voice on SNSs led to the viralization of the social movement which, in turn, has shown the power of influence on organizational decision making in their CSR policies; that is, truly socially responsible firms that take-charge are proactive and are consistently accountable for business and social growth and development.

## CONCLUSIONS

Organizations engaging in CSR display a sense of commitment toward business as well as stakeholders' well-being; therefore, socially responsible firms present a readiness to be responsive to social change as well as, importantly, the proactivity and interest to adopt change and foster social growth and development. The heightened awareness that the #metoo movement has brought has shifted business dynamics, particularly in regard to corporate policy and stakeholder management. The power behind the #metoo movement lies not in the change that occurred immediately, shortly after a movement began, but in a long-term change that entails elevating the standards of operation to meet those declared by law and international organizations.

There are far too many organizations that continue to lag behind; some continue to believe that they can evade the issue or dismiss stakeholder voice, while others choose to comply in an effort to maintain the right to operate. The governance and operations of these firms beg the question, how safe is the workplace? In all likelihood, firms are falling short of true social responsibility because their very foundation, their corporate philosophy, has not been developed in support of CSR engagement; in other words, they lack the proper grounds. It may be perceived that genuinely socially responsible firms are taking a bold stand against unethical practices; however, it is them actually "doing well by doing good" (Kurucz, Colbert, & Wheeler, 2008) which, incidentally, is highly valued by current

and potential stakeholders. Successful organizations adapt to changes in the environment, which also entails listening to the demands that current and potential stakeholders are making in regard to social issues, which more often than not are voiced by means of social movements. Therefore, in the pursuit of business and social growth and development, firms ought to modify their behavior to not only meet stakeholder expectations but to surpass them.

### DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could study particular cases in which stakeholder voice, emerging from social movements, has caused a direct impact on corporate social responsibility policies. It is also suggested that future research could analyze the effects of the viralization of the #metoo movement in organizations operating in different countries as to determine if local legislation is correlated with the adaptation of corporate social responsibility policies. Finally, the reasons why organizations, although stating to be socially responsible, are not taking a strong and proactive stance on sexual harassment and human rights could also be studied.

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