

Sociopolitical Advocacy and the Role of Public Relations

Theoretical Developments and Emerging Perspectives on Corporate Social Advocacy and Related Constructs

Edited by Holly K. Overton and Nicholas Browning

First published 2026

ISBN: 978-1-032-97295-4 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-032-97296-1 (pbk)

ISBN: 978-1-003-59314-0 (ebk)

Chapter 9

Shaping Public Expectations

The Interplay of Individual, Organizational, and Social Determinants in Organizational Advocacy

Sung-Un Yang and Nicholas Browning

(CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)

DOI: 10.4324/9781003593140-11



Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
NEW YORK AND LONDON

9 Shaping Public Expectations

The Interplay of Individual, Organizational, and Social Determinants in Organizational Advocacy

Sung-Un Yang and Nicholas Browning

In its annual Trust Barometer, Edelman assesses respondents' views of ethics and competency related to business, NGOs, government, and media. In 2021, business emerged as the only sector of the four viewed as both competent and ethical, and that trend has persisted (Edelman, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024b, 2025). Respondents of the 2020 Edelman Trust Barometer indicated their heightened expectations for companies' roles—including those of CEOs—in partnering with the government to create positive social outcomes (Edelman, 2020). With rising expectations for organizational advocacy (OA) from stakeholders, scholars have found companies are actively working to fulfill these demands through proactive initiatives (Austin et al., 2019; Browning et al., 2020; Browning et al., 2019; Dodd & Supa, 2014; Yang et al., 2022). While recent years have seen a heightened emphasis on how OA impacts external stakeholders and consumers (Chatterji & Toffel, 2019; Dodd & Supa, 2015; Weber Shandwick, 2016), a thorough investigation into the reasons *why* individual members of the public hold such elevated expectations of companies and their CEOs concerning pro-social communication and actions remains lacking. In this chapter, we aim to theoretically explore this phenomenon by providing a comprehensive understanding of the individual, organizational, and social determinants that influence these expectations for OA.

Lack of Faith in Government

Individuals naturally desire improvements in their sociopolitical conditions; it is less apparent why business has emerged as a favored means for delivering that change. Business has historically faced significant distrust, particularly following in the late 19th- and early 20th-century periods of the Belle Époque and the Gilded Age. These periods of the later industrial age were marked by income inequality and social unrest (Piketty, 2014). The United States enacted measures such as the Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890 to combat anticompetitive monopolies. At the turn of the century, President Theodore Roosevelt used his bully pulpit alongside muckraking journalists to highlight abuses of businesses, which became foundational elements of the progressive movement (Milkis, 2009; Weinberg & Weinberg, 2001). Following the defeat of TR's

progressive party, President Woodrow Wilson nevertheless continued to push for many of its principles, supporting the passage of the Federal Trade Commission Act of 1914, further protecting competition against monopolistic forces (Urofsky, 2012).

The interwar period was marked by further distrust of business in the United States, whose citizens were skeptical of corporate practices they felt led toward the Great Depression. Though Americans of the 1930s and 1940s remained broadly supportive of a capitalist economic system, they felt government regulations were needed (Browning, 2018; Roper, 1949). The New Deal policies enacted during President Franklin Roosevelt's administration were widely popular, and despite partisan divisions, Americans remain broadly supportive of the Social Security program and generally approve of efforts to ensure access to healthcare and aid to the poor, all outgrowths of New Deal legislation (Pew Research Center, 2024; Rosentiel, 2010).

The New Deal reforms embodied the macroeconomic ideas championed by John Maynard Keynes, who believed government intervention could counter destructive boom-and-bust cycles that resulted from more laissez-faire approaches. He advocated for strategic government spending to stabilize employment and demand while simultaneously spurring private investment (Keynes, 1936; Wapshott, 2011).

In the decades that followed, from the Marshal Plan to the moon landing, the U.S. government showcased a general effectiveness at addressing many of society's ill, and improving the lives of many citizens—though certainly not all. These developments likely explain why over 70% of Americans trusted the federal government “to do the right thing” in the postwar era of the 1950s, a highwater mark in that measure (Deane, 2024). That earned trust in government began to erode following social upheaval during the Civil Rights struggle and Vietnam War, corruption scandals such as the Pentagon Papers case and Watergate, and the inability of government to effectively combat stagflation and the related economic crises of the 1970s (Bernstein & Woodward, 1974; Holt, 2021; Rothstein, 2017; Samuelson, 2010; Sheehan et al., 2017). Trust in the federal government fell to 30% during this era, marking a steep and rapid decline (Deane, 2024).

The Keynesian view dominated the political economy throughout the mid-20th century, but classical liberals persisted in pressing an alternative view, chief among them Friedrich Hayek. A younger contemporary of Keynes, Hayek advocated for a more limited role of government in economic affairs, arguing that extensive central planning eroded individual liberty by awarding governments too much power over citizens' lives (Hayek, 1944; Vallier, 2022; Wapshott, 2011). Hayek's student, Milton Friedman, further opposed many foundational elements of the New Deal. Friedman served as an advisor to both President Ronald Reagan and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, leaders instrumental in spurring a neoliberal revolution that favored decreased government regulation, the promotion of free-market capitalism, and a more modest welfare state. While neoliberals view democratic governments as having

important roles to play, those roles are limited, and they remain skeptical of many government interventions (Friedman, 1962; Vallier, 2022).

The neoliberal view was the dominant philosophy of political economy through at least the early 21st century—and arguably continues to be. However, the skepticism with which neoliberals approach government intervention has been dwarfed by that of populist, nationalist, and other right-leaning political movements that have risen to prominence following the Great Recession of 2008. Indeed, while neoliberals oppose the Keynesian approach of debt-financed economic policies and centralized power and planning, they still envision a role for limited democratic governance. At various points, Hayek (1944) defended government constructing infrastructure, establishing natural disaster relief, funding healthcare, guaranteeing basic worker and consumer safety, and protecting the environment. Even the more libertarian Friedman (1962) proposed negative income taxes, which amounted to wealth transfers from the rich to the poor as a means for reducing poverty.

Many right-leaning parties and governments of 2025 take a far more libertarian view than the neoliberals who preceded them. As an example, many tenets of Project 2025, which have been embraced in the early days of President Donald Trump's second term, represent immense departures from neoliberal ideals: embracing a unitary executive theory and an ideologically driven government bureaucracy; combatting free trade via tariffs and other isolationist policies; dismantling basic legal oversights; gutting the welfare state; limiting civic participation via restrictions on speech, press, and protest; etc. (American Civil Liberties Union, 2025; Dans & Groves, 2023). Effectively, majority sentiment regarding political economy has, over the past century, progressed as from a view in which government can *address* social, political, and economic ills toward one in which government *creates* social, political, and economic ills.

Withdrawal and Polarization

Of course, there are several non-governmental organizations—in particular charities, nonprofits, religious institutions, and various incorporated and unincorporated associations and groups—that have historically advocated for the advancement of numerous sociopolitical causes as well. Many NGOs continue to play that important role, and according to Edelman (2025), they are generally viewed as ethical, perceived as trusted, and thought to serve as “a unifying force that brings people together” (p. 33). However, we temper that optimism with caution.

In his observations of 19th-century American society, Alexis de Tocqueville noted the propensity of Americans to organize through private associations to achieve a litany of ends, all the while stressing the similarities among how these associations, cities, states, and the country as a whole are governed (de Tocqueville, 1840). Political scientists contend that, among other things, these private-sector associations are necessary for cultivating a habit of democracy; therefore, it is no accident that declining participation in these institutions has

coincided with declining faith in government, as well as other stalwart institutions (Appelbaum, 2018; Meacham, 2018; Putnam, 1995, 2020).

Putnam (1995) was among the early voices sounding the alarm bell, and his work is arguably the most notable in this realm. He argues that the health of any democratic society depends on not only physical and human capital, but also social capital, which “refers to features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (p. 67). Putnam (1995, 2020) posits that the affinity for meaningful association characterized by de Tocqueville (1840) offers a crucial means to generate social capital. Furthermore, the weakening of these binding ties results in declining social trust, a withdrawal from citizenship duties, and a pessimism toward democracy itself. Recent polling data suggest this erosion is both serious and persistent, as Americans display a startling lack of confidence in not only the government but also public schools, news media, organized labor, banks, the medical system, science, and organized religion (Deane, 2024; Saad, 2023).¹

Indeed, social connections that once comprised essential aspects of Americans’ community and individual identities have shifted drastically in recent decades. Gallup reported that just 30% of Americans attended church weekly or nearly weekly in 2023, down from 42% in 2003 (Jones, 2024). Relatedly, in 1972, only 5% of Americans classified themselves as religiously unaffiliated; by 2020, that number had risen to 29%. Each age cohort is increasingly less religious than the one before, and religious nones will become a plurality sometime in the 2050s if this trend continues (Pew Research Center, 2022).

Religious institutions are often associated with promoting charity and volunteerism, the latter of which has also declined. In 2002, 28.8% of Americans 16 and older spent some time volunteering. That number steadily declined before plummeting during the pandemic, though it has rebounded somewhat, to 26.1% in 2023 (Kiersz, 2016; U.S. Census Bureau, 2023). In addition to formal volunteering, AmeriCorps (2023) also tracks informal helping. Though their findings on formal volunteering are similar to those of the U.S. Census Bureau (2023), the generational gaps are noteworthy, with younger generations engaging in less formal volunteering and informal helping than many older cohorts (Table 9.1, Figures 9.1 and 9.2).

Beyond these active forms of community engagement, we see declines in more passive areas as well. For instance, Americans are increasingly less likely to know and interact with their neighbors, particularly adults under 30 (Davis & Parker, 2019; Deane, 2024). Among the population as a whole, a majority never meet up with neighbors for parties or get-togethers, which were once relatively common (Davis & Parker, 2019; Thompson, 2025). Collectively, Americans are spending more time alone, at home, and using smartphones rather than socializing face-to-face, and this trend is especially pronounced among young adults, people of color, the poor, and the less educated (Thompson, 2025) (Figure 9.3).

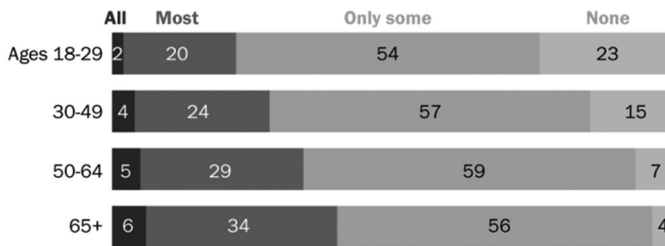
Table 9.1 Volunteering Rates in the United States

	Formal Volunteering Rate (%)	Informal Helping Rate (%)
Generation Z	24.5	36.4
Millennials	29.4	52.2
Generation X	32.3	61.2
Baby Boomers	27.7	62.2
Silent Generation or Older	21.4	54.1

Note: Based on data from AmeriCorps (2023)

Older Americans are more likely to know their neighbors than younger ones

% saying they know ___ of their neighbors, by age



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Feb. 26-March 11, 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

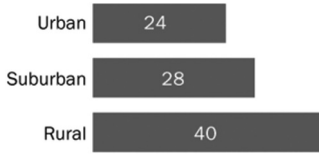
Figure 9.1 Who Knows Their Neighbors in the United States.

Note: "A half-century after 'Mister Rogers' debut, 5 facts about neighbors in U.S." Pew Research Center, Washington, DC (August 15, 2019) <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2019/08/15/facts-about-neighbors-in-u-s/>.

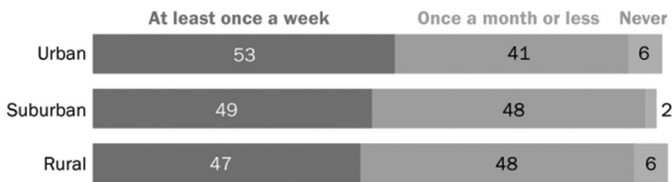
As traditional institutions and practices that build social capital unravel, political views have emerged as a dominant factor in our personal and social identities. Bishop (2008) argues that, in the United States, citizens are increasingly segregating themselves geographically based on political affiliation, evidenced by congressional and presidential elections becoming less competitive in more districts across the nation. According to The Pew Research Center (2017), in the past 30 years, divides on political views have remained largely consistent across various demographic characteristics, except for political party, for which the gap has more than doubled. Similarly, through a study of ANES data, Iyengar and Krupenkin (2018) found a stark rise in affective partisanship, or the tendency of members of one party to dislike and distrust

Rural residents are more likely to know most or all neighbors – but not to interact with them

% saying they know all or most of their neighbors



% saying they have face-to-face conversations with any of their neighbors, among those who know at least some of their neighbors



Note: Shares of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Feb. 26-March 11, 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 9.2 Interactions with Neighbors in the United States.

Note: “A half-century after ‘Mister Rogers’ debut, 5 facts about neighbors in U.S.” Pew Research Center, Washington, DC (August 15, 2019) <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2019/08/15/facts-about-neighbors-in-u-s/>.

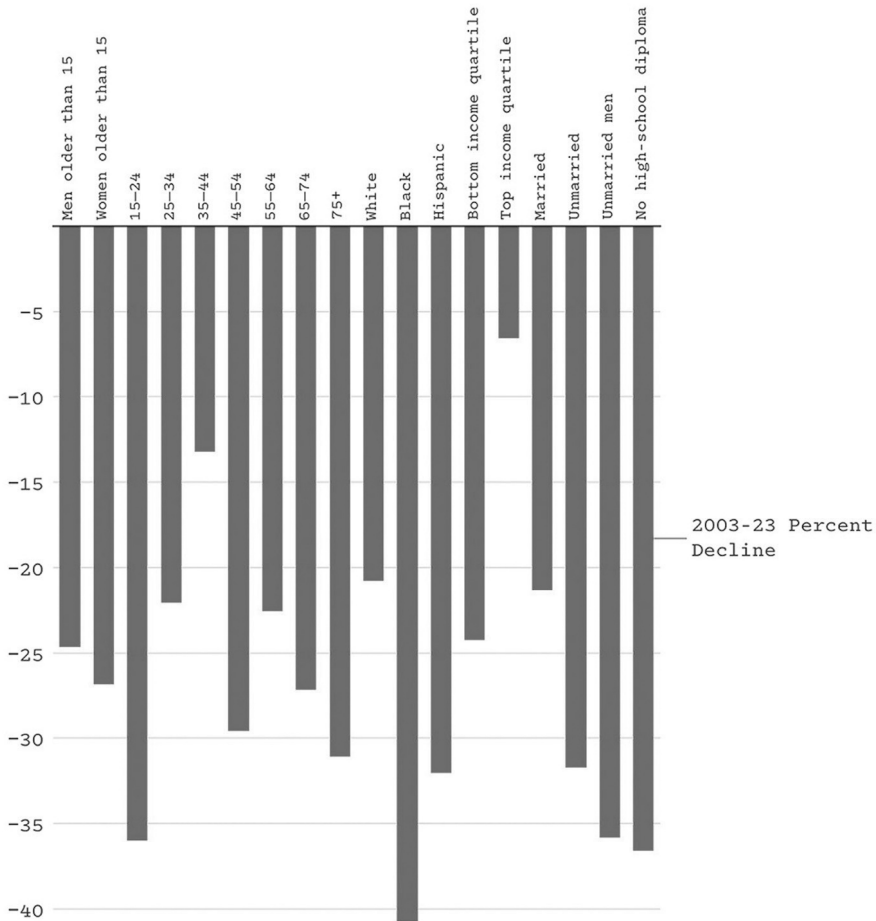
members of the opposition. Feeling thermometer ratings (0-100) toward rival parties have declined from 46.6 in 1980 to 19.9 in 2020, while feelings toward one’s own party have remained relatively constant over that same time (72.5 and 71.5, respectively). This finding suggests that anger toward outgroups could be a bigger driver of polarization than support for one’s ingroup (Figures 9.4 and 9.5).

Increased Corporate Influence

Alongside a lack of faith in government, declining trust in traditional social institutions, and a rise in political polarization, the sociopolitical power and influence of business—in particular, multinational corporations (MNCs)—has increased. Notably, this phenomenon has deep historical roots. In *Santa Clara County v. Southern Pacific Railroad Co. (1886)*, the Supreme Court asserted limited rights of personhood for corporations. Marchand (1998) documents how, from that time through the 1940s, organizations actively engaged in

America, Alone

Percent decline in face-to-face socializing, 2003-23



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics' American Time Use Survey

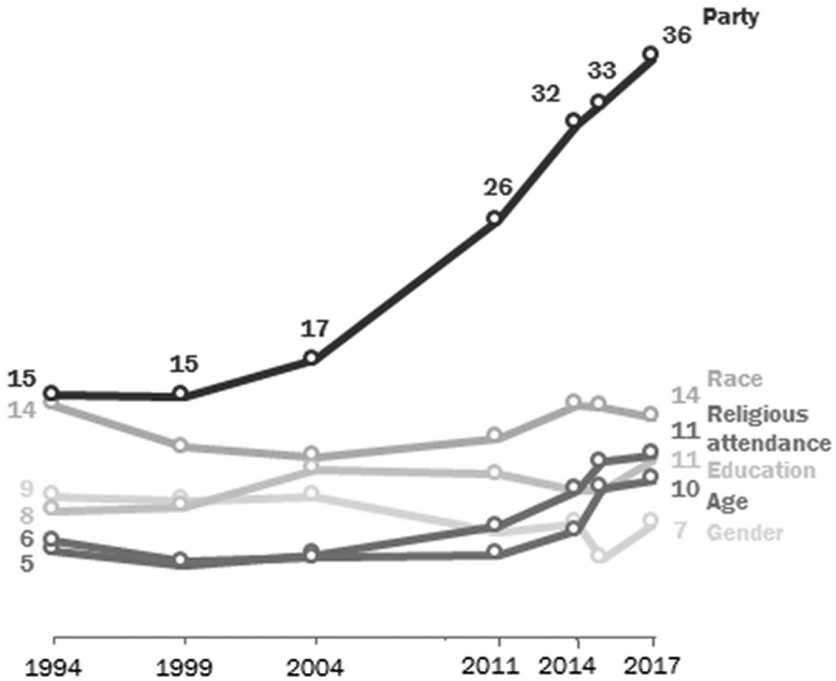
Figure 9.3 In-person Socializing in the United States.

Note: This graph appeared in the article, "The Anti-Social Century" by Derek Thompson, and is reproduced here with *The Atlantic's* permission.

efforts to morph from "soulless" entities into something more relatable and human, often through anthropomorphizing (e.g., AT&T's use of "Ma Bell"), placing employees or executives front-and-center in marketing and consumer outreach efforts, and at times going so far as to "absorb some of the functions of traditional social institutions" (p. 45).

As partisan divides over political values widen, other gaps remain more modest

Average gap in the share taking a conservative position across 10 political values, by key demographics



Notes: Indicates average gap between the share of two groups taking the conservative position across 10 values items. Party=difference between Rep/Lean Rep and Dem/Lean Dem. Race=white non-Hispanic/black non-Hispanic. Education=college grad/non-college grad. Age=18-49/50+. Religion=weekly+ religious service attenders/less often. Source: Survey conducted June 8-18 and June 27-July 9, 2017.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 9.4 Politics and Social Identity.

Note: "The Partisan Divide on Political Values Grows Even Wider." Pew Research Center, Washington, DC (October 5, 2017) <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2017/10/05/the-partisan-divide-on-political-values-grows-even-wider/>.

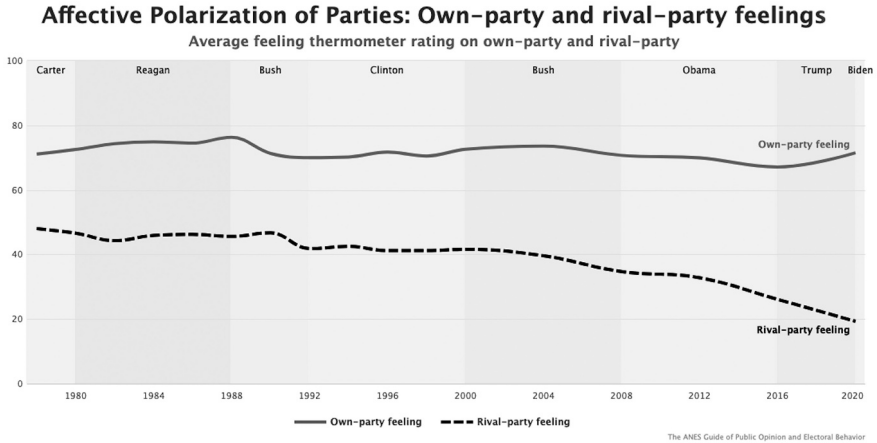


Figure 9.5 Increased Affective Polarization.

Note: From American National Election Studies (2020).

Community relations efforts at that time showcase early support of social institutions by businesses. For instance, chain stores faced a backlash beginning in the 1930s because individuals felt they drove local shops under and offered little to their municipalities. In response, chains engaged in numerous activities, including “the encouragement of employee participation in recognized community activities” (Beattie, 1943, p. 252) to endear them to local populations. Chain grocers in particular involved themselves in civic and charitable work, donated surplus foods, and sponsored agricultural education, all of which we would consider CSR activities today (Browning, 2018). These and similar CSR efforts persisted and grew across various industries throughout the latter half of the 20th century, and still continue (Carroll, 1999).

Smith (2003) speculates that “growing recognition of the failure of governments to solve many social problems and ... the diminished scope of government” (p. 55) have positioned business to step in to fill a needed gap. Other scholars further argue that the forces of globalism have extended the reach and power of MNCs, such that their power rivals or exceeds that of individual nation-states (Browning et al., 2022; Matten & Crane, 2005; Scherer & Palazzo, 2007, 2011; Scherer et al., 2006; Scherer & Smid, 2000). Furthermore, the capacity of government to guarantee citizenship rights—namely social rights (i.e., the freedom to affiliate with others), civil rights (i.e., the freedom from abuses by others), and political rights (i.e., the freedom to participate in self-governance) (see Marshall, 1964)—may be further diminished, such that businesses and other private sector actors have taken a greater role in administering and assuring said rights (Matten & Crane, 2005).

The growth of OA dovetails off—and perhaps serves as a continuation of—previous CSR efforts. A notable distinction between CSR and OA is the contro-

versy and politicization that characterizes the latter practice. Across several works, Scherer and Palazzo argue that corporations have undergone a similar politicization in which they increasingly engage in sociopolitical problem-solving in consort with state and civic actors, which takes place against a backdrop of increased power and influence of MNCs (Scherer & Palazzo, 2007, 2011; Scherer et al., 2006). Ultimately, this arises as a complex process of legitimization:

The legitimacy-ascribing environment of globally active corporations consists of a multiplicity of—often contradictory—legal and moral demands from a wide range of institutional and cultural environments in the different host countries. Accordingly, questions of corporate responsibility are of a much higher level of complexity than in more homogeneous national contexts. For a corporation to deal with changing societal demands in a reasonable way, it must replace implicit compliance with assumed societal norms and expectations with an explicit participation in public processes of political will formation. We consider this shift the *politicization of the corporation*.

(Scherer & Palazzo, 2007, p. 1108, emphasis original)

Societal Shift of Social Norms Toward Greater Awareness of Sociopolitical Issues

There has been a marked shift in social norms toward increased awareness and involvement with a variety of social issues, such as climate change; human rights; diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI); and income equality (Benneker et al., 2020; Poteat et al., 2020). For example, compared to previous generations, Gen Z and Millennials have become drivers of climate change activism, primarily through their engagement with societal issues on social media (Tyson et al., 2021). We argue that, due to the prominence of social media and online parasocial relationships, individuals—especially younger people with significantly greater social media use—recognize that on- and offline participation in hot-button sociopolitical and environmental issues has become “unwritten and implicitly reflects how people should behave in a group or society in certain situations and cultures” (Zhang et al., 2023, p. 2).

Benneker et al. (2020) found the interconnectedness of social norms with contemporary issues, such as human rights, reflects the observed shift toward greater awareness of sociopolitical and environmental matters (Benneker et al., 2020). Poteat et al. (2020) noted the relationship between a shift in social norms that increases awareness of gender-sexuality alliances (GSAs) and the active participation of these alliances in advocating for and promoting sociopolitical efficacy among sexual and gender minority (SGM) youth. Collectively, these findings suggest a growing recognition of issues related to inclusion and rights, a common first step in most behavioral models (e.g., AIDA).

Moreover, social norms influence the expectations for behavior among social actors, including individuals, groups, community members, and companies (Kormos et al., 2014; Schmidt et al., 2021). The connection between social norms and normative beliefs can be understood through both descriptive and injunctive social norms (Padon et al., 2016). *Descriptive social norms* refer to individuals' perceptions of how most people behave in a given context. They reflect the typical or average behavior observed within a group or community. In contrast, *injunctive social norms* pertain to individuals' perceptions of which behaviors others deem acceptable or unacceptable. These norms convey social expectations regarding how one should behave and are often connected to moral or ethical principles.

The norm activation model (NAM) (Schwartz, 1977) explains how individuals engage in prosocial behaviors. According to NAM, individuals must activate their personal norms to exhibit prosocial behaviors. To do this, they must be aware of the consequences of not engaging in prosocial actions (i.e., awareness of consequences) and recognize their personal responsibility (i.e., ascription of responsibility) in enhancing society through specific prosocial behaviors. Recent research has shown that younger generations are increasingly aware of environmental and social issues, leading to personal norms and expectations for companies' sustainability initiatives (Hörisch et al., 2019). NAM primarily emphasizes personal norms while also recognizing the impact of social norms—both injunctive and descriptive—on individual behavior (Park & Ha, 2014). Social norms can bolster personal norms by setting expectations for what is considered acceptable or typical behavior within a community.

We argue that the boundary condition of social actors regarding today's social norms has expanded from individuals to companies, as individual entrepreneurs have become more prevalent (i.e., one-person companies among numerous influencers, content creators, and marketers) and companies have emerged as a viable vehicle for addressing social problems. Thus, normative expectations have shifted from solely the individual to now include collective actors. Consumers increasingly expect brands and companies to take positions on sociopolitical issues, reflecting a shift in social norms that define acceptable corporate behavior (Schmidt et al., 2021).

In light of descriptive social norms, consumers notice that many brands openly address sociopolitical issues, creating a new standard for typical behavior in the marketplace. As more companies take prosocial stances, consumers expect similar actions from other brands. This reinforces the notion that prosocial behavior is now the descriptive norm within the industry. Moreover, concerning injunctive social norms, there is a growing belief among consumers that companies should foster social good (Becker-Olsen et al., 2006; Gaither et al., 2018). This belief is shaped by societal values that emphasize responsible conduct. When consumers observe their peers' supporting brands that take sociopolitical stances, they experience social pressure to expect and press for such actions, aligning their expectations with these wider societal values.

The theory of normative social behavior (TNSB) also helps us understand the relationship between descriptive and injunctive social norms in predicting one's prosocial behaviors or intentions (Mabry & Mackert, 2014). According to TNSB, when explaining behavioral intentions, the influence of descriptive social norms is stronger, especially when injunctive social norms are also high. This acts as a positive moderator alongside other factors such as outcome expectations, group identity, and ego-involvement. Moreover, this additional theoretical framework emphasizes that individual consumers extend their judgments of expecting company's prosocial behaviors not only based on their own observations of normative behaviors (i.e., descriptive social norms) but also by applying social approval, "based on the perceived degree of peer approval and social sanctions associated with not engaging in the behavior" (Mabry & Macker, 2014, p. 133).

Therefore, individual consumers have experienced a shift in social norms toward greater awareness of sociopolitical issues, which has increased the activation of personal norms through increased awareness of consequences and recognition of personal responsibility. As societal expectations evolve, social norms regarding prosocial behaviors influence consumers' expectations of corporate actions. These norms define what behaviors are deemed acceptable or typical for companies and brands. Both descriptive and injunctive social norms help align corporate behavior and prosocial communication with consumers' expectations, ultimately resulting in more OA.

The Impact of Social Media on Efficacy for Collective Problem-Solving

Self-efficacy theory suggests that belief in our ability to succeed in particular situations greatly impacts our motivations and behaviors (Bandura, 1977). Social media create platforms for individual users to share information and connect with others, fostering a sense of community necessary for collective action. This process empowers individuals to believe they can influence political processes and societal outcomes (Zúñiga et al., 2012).

However, this process is inexorably difficult given the inherent pluralism that forms the *de facto* condition of all political life. As Arendt (1958) describes it, pluralism reflects the reality that "men, not Man, live on the earth and inhabit the world," and that "we are all the same, that is, human, in such a way that nobody is ever the same as anyone else who ever lived, lives, or will live" (pp. 7–8). Because individuals can act independently in infinite and improbable ways, collaborative and collective actions are only possible within interspaces dedicated to debate and deliberation (Arendt, 1968). These interspaces do not come about naturally but are instead cultivated by societal leaders; therefore, we consider OA as a means by which organizations can fulfill this vital function, and social media as mechanisms for important sociopolitical discourse (Capizzo & Sommerfeldt, 2023).

From a Habermasian perspective, we might further conceptualize social media as part of the public sphere. Habermas conceives of the public sphere as

a normative space in which individuals form voluntary associations to debate and test ideas as equals. Moreover, discourse within the public sphere constitutes a two-way process with an illocutionary aim, and therefore at least a potential for building consensus through dialogue—a prospect similar to the two-way symmetrical communication approach championed by excellence theory (Finlayson, 2005; Grunig, 1992; Habermas, 1962, 1981a, 1981b). Public spheres enable stakeholders to critically engage with sociopolitical issues and potentially mobilize around them.²

In this spirit, social media platforms may empower individuals to voice their opinions in the marketplace and hold companies accountable. For example, in the context of hospitality management, individual users publicly share their experiences and feedback on social media, influencing businesses' reputations and practices (Gupta, 2019). Social media platforms serve as essential spaces for individuals, especially marginalized groups, to express their opinions and challenge societal norms (Sills et al., 2016).

Beyond individual efficacy, social media strengthen personal efficacy by allowing individuals to broaden their primary networks for greater collaboration and the cultivation of social capital with other users (Wang et al., 2020). By expanding primary networks and leveraging influence through social media, individuals' self-efficacy can evolve into collective efficacy, as demonstrated during social movements (Howard et al., 2011) and various company boycotts (Makarem & Jae, 2015). While controlling for situational motivations, Chon and Park (2020) also found that social media efficacy and affective injustice lead to an increase in social media activism. Therefore, we contend that the substantial rise in both individual and collective efficacy, driven by social media, has empowered consumers to demand that companies engage in prosocial behavior via their OA and CSR initiatives.

Social media have nurtured a strong sense of efficacy, particularly at the collective level, as individual consumers frequently witness the desired results of consumer activism. In light of social proof (Cialdini, 2009), public conversations about corporate behavior and social issues have become more visible and amplified through social media. *Social proof* is a psychological phenomenon where people look to others' behaviors for guidance, especially when uncertain. It stems from the tendency to conform to observed actions of those perceived as similar or more experienced. From a social proof viewpoint, consumer activism might be influenced by participating in a trend without having strong personal motivation or conviction. Occasionally, seemingly minor issues can escalate into major crises for organizations due to significant backlash from individual consumers (Pang, 2013). Social media also play a positive role by providing platforms for individuals to express their communication behaviors and form a collective identity around shared problems and perceptions, then press companies to join them (Literat & Kligler-Vilenchik, 2019).

As we noted earlier, personal norms regarding prosocial behaviors have expanded to encompass social norms. This shift has helped individuals form normative expectations of companies' prosocial communications and actions via

descriptive and injunctive social norms. At the same time, individuals have experienced declining trust in government and traditional institutions. Consequently, they increasingly rely on companies as alternatives that hold enough influence and accountability to drive positive social change. For individuals to engage in activism encouraging companies to communicate and act prosocially, we believe that both personal and collective efficacy are essential. Social media have created platforms that allow individuals to express their sense of personal and collective efficacy, as well as foster a shared identity for problem-solving.

Evolving Preferences of Millennials and Gen Z

Millennials and Gen Z are particularly influential in shaping these expectations (Choi et al., 2020; Ewest, 2018). They are more likely to align their consumption choices with their social and environmental values, and they seek out companies that demonstrate a commitment to sociopolitical causes. These demographic groups exercise significant market influence, further driving expectations for companies' social advocacy efforts.

With high expectations and significant influence, younger generations increasingly reward and prioritize brands that show a genuine commitment to social issues beyond their immediate business interests (Pinto et al., 2019). Recent global polls reveal that 63% of Millennials and Gen Z are willing to pay more for products and services from companies that are committed to making a positive social and environmental impact (Deloitte, 2023). Additionally, 68% of them said they would stop purchasing from a company if its statements and actions do not align with their values and beliefs (Edelman, 2024a). Thanks to social media, younger generations now have increased awareness of environmental, social, and political issues, which shapes their personal norms and contributes to shared collective social norms regarding companies' behavior and communication (Hörisch et al., 2019). Young generations offer greater incentives for corporate reputation and relationship building to those companies that demonstrate authenticity and accountability in their substantive corporate actions (Xu & Chang, 2023).

Critics argue that younger generations prioritize impression management, focusing on how their peers perceive them. Therefore, while they may outwardly express concern for social issues and show support for companies and brands that engage in prosocial behavior, their actions may not align with these beliefs. For instance, addressing issues related to fast fashion and mass consumerism, Pruthi and Kharbanda (2024) highlighted the hypocrisy of Gen Z regarding environmental and sustainability issues. However, we argue that fast fashion consumption behaviors should not solely determine the rejection of genuine motives and intentions toward positive social change, considering countervailing economic factors.

Also, in terms of self-expression and socialization, younger generations leverage social media to shape the expectations and practices of companies related to prosocial initiatives. They seek to connect with others who share

similar interests and to present themselves positively online through conforming behavior (Kircaburun et al., 2018). For younger generations, the pressure to conform and the need for collective action should be understood within the context of the social identity process rather than simply a form of impression management (Wang et al., 2020). Additionally, for younger generations, social media are used not only to gather information and express oneself but also as tools for activism driven by a sense of unity and collective spirit (Stahl & Literat, 2022).

Meeting Expectations of Social Norms and Values

Increasingly, businesses recognize that OA can positively impact their bottom lines and reputations. In terms of signaling theory, demonstrating a commitment to social causes can attract and retain customers, enhance brand loyalty, and attract top talent (Browning et al., 2020; Browning et al., 2019). Also, thanks to increased visibility in media, organizations can cut through content clutter to gain customers' attention (Hambrick & Wowak, 2021). As individuals become more aware of potential benefits, they expect more companies to incorporate OA as a core part of their business strategies. Failure to meet expectations can result in decreased credibility, a tarnished reputation, a shift to other brands, and/or boycott behaviors (Yang et al., 2020).

As previously explained, stakeholders today possess both descriptive and injunctive social norms, along with a significant increase in personal awareness and personal norms about prosocial communications and actions. As such, both descriptive and injunctive social norms help align corporate behavior and prosocial communication with consumers' expectations, ultimately promoting improved societal well-being through effective OA practices. Expectancy violations theory (EVT) explains how individuals may respond when others break social norms or communication expectations (Burgoon, 1993).

According to EVT, when such violations occur, individuals pay closer attention to unexpected situations and seek to discern the violator's motives. Yang et al. (2020) indicated that the resulting violations can greatly affect stakeholder perceptions, especially in a hyperpartisan political environment. We argue that, despite anticipated benefits such as competitive business advantages and media attention, if companies fail to satisfy consumers' expectations regarding their prosocial communications and actions, individual consumers will begin to understand the motives behind this passiveness and recognize ulterior intentions. Browning et al. (2020) found when organizations took a stance on a sociopolitical issue rather than remaining silent, perceptions of communicated commitment were positively affected. Additionally, for non-partisan issues, when organizations took positions as industry leaders rather than followers, such effects of OA on perceptions of communicated commitment were stronger. According to EVT, these findings suggest that if organizations remain silent or merely follow the lead of other organizations in OA, individual consumers will perceive violations of their normative expectations and a decreased commitment to organizations' prosocial efforts.

Conclusion

This chapter tackled the underlying reasons for individuals' heightened expectations of companies' prosocial communication and actions in the context of OA. The chapter identified seven key factors at individual, organizational, and social levels, including (1) a lack of faith in government; (2) withdrawal and polarization; (3) increased corporate influence; (4) a societal shift of social norms toward greater awareness of sociopolitical issues; (5) the impact of social media on efficacy for problem-solving; (6) evolving preferences of Millennial and Gen Z publics; and (7) the need to meet expectations of social norms and values.

Younger generations have a heightened awareness of social, political, and environmental issues. A significant reason for this increase in awareness is the greater exposure to discourse facilitated by social media. Rather than just focusing on individual image management, social media users also come together to form identities that promote collective problem-solving. Such increasing awareness serves as the foundation for personal norms related to prosocial behavior, which includes descriptive and injunctive normative expectations of various social actors, such as companies and CEOs. Recent polls of trust and credibility (e.g., Edelman, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023; Edelman, 2024b, 2025) have consistently suggested individuals perceive business as the most capable sector to deal with sociopolitical matters, alongside rapidly decreased credibility and trust in government and traditional institutions. Therefore, individual consumers now have strong normative expectations for prosocial actions and communications by companies and their leaders. When companies and CEOs fail to meet expectations (e.g., Volkswagen emissions scandal in 2015, United Airlines passenger removal incident in 2017, Facebook/Meta privacy controversy with Cambridge Analytica in 2018), these violations increase scrutiny and public backlash against their values and operations.

Discussion Questions

- 1 Is the heightened expectation of companies' ethics and competency due to diminished trust in government and traditional institutions, as suggested via fully functioning society theory? If government and traditional institutions restore public trust and credibility, do you expect people to display lower trust in companies and CEOs? Or do you believe that the increased trust and credibility of companies operate independently of our trust in government and institutions?
- 2 When it comes to adopting prosocial behavior on an individual level, what factors contribute to the gap between *intended* behavior and *actual* behavior? What challenges might prevent stakeholders from engaging in prosocial behavior, despite their increased awareness and sense of personal responsibility?
- 3 How are personal values and political ideologies connected to the descriptive and injunctive social norms that influence companies and their leaders in terms of OA? Specifically, is there a limit to how these social norms are

established and applied to companies based on an individual's political beliefs and values? Or do these norms transcend personal ideologies and values? What are the implications of “sticky” sociopolitical issues (e.g., abortion) on expectations regarding companies' social advocacy?

Notes

- 1 We should point out here that, in many instances, the overall lack of trust in institutions in part masks broad partisan gaps. For instance, this manifests in various measures, such as trust of news media (Democrats = 77% and Republicans 42%), higher education ($D = 74\%$ and $R = 31\%$), and the Centers for Disease Control ($D = 78\%$ and $R = 33\%$) (see Deane, 2024).
- 2 The public sphere as conceptualized by Habermas shares many similarities with the marketplace of ideas theory, which places a premium on consensus building. Recently, several public relations scholars have challenged this ideal in favor of alternatives such as dissensus and agonism, though a complete discussion of this literature lies outside the scope of the current piece (see Aghazadeh et al., 2023; Capizzo & Feinman, 2022; Ciszek & Logan, 2018).

References for Further Reading

- Aghazadeh, S. A., Capizzo, L., & Tindall, N. T. J. (2023). Wrangling in the Marketplace or Bartering in the Bazaar? Adapting Metaphors for Public Relations' Societal Role. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 36(2), 129–151. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1062726X.2023.2285067>
- Browning, N. (2018). Ethics and the Profession: The Crystallizing of PR Practice from Association to Accreditation, 1936–1964. *American Journalism*, 35(2), 140–170. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08821127.2018.1455400>
- Scherer, A. G., & Palazzo, G. (2011). The New Political Role of Business in a Globalized World: A Review of a New Perspective on CSR and its Implications for the Firm, Governance, and Democracy. *Journal of Management Studies*, 48(4), 899–931. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2010.00950.x>
- Schwartz, S. H. (1977). Normative Influences on Altruism. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 10, pp. 221–279). Elsevier.
- Yang, A., Saffer, A. J., & Li, Y. (2020). Managing Stakeholder Expectations in a Politically Polarized Society: An Expectation Violation Theory Approach. *Journal of International Crisis and Risk Communication Research*, 3(2), 275–300.

References

- Aghazadeh, S. A., Capizzo, L., & Tindall, N. T. J. (2023). Wrangling in the Marketplace or Bartering in the Bazaar? Adapting Metaphors for Public Relations' Societal Role. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 36(2), 129–151. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1062726X.2023.2285067>
- American Civil Liberties Union. (2025). *Project 2025, Explained*. <https://www.aclu.org/project-2025-explained>
- American National Election Studies. (2020). *Affective Polarization of Parties: OWN-PARTY and Rival-Party Feelings*. https://electionstudies.org/data-tools/anes-guide/anes-guide.html?chart=affective_polarization_parties
- AmeriCorps. (2023). *Volunteering and Civic Life in America*. <https://americorps.gov/about/our-impact/volunteering-civic-life>

- Appelbaum, Y. (2018). Americans Aren't Practicing Democracy Anymore. *The Atlantic*. <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2018/10/losing-the-democratic-habit/568336/>
- Arendt, H. (1958). *The Human Condition*. University of Chicago Press.
- Arendt, H. (1968). *Men in Dark Times*. Harcourt Brace & Company.
- Austin, L., Gaither, B., & Gaither, T. K. (2019). Corporate Social Advocacy as Public Interest Communications: Exploring Perceptions of Corporate Involvement in Controversial Social-Political Issues. *The Journal of Public Interest Communications*, 3(2), 3. <https://doi.org/10.32473/jpic.v3.i2.p3>
- Bandura, A. (1977). Self-Efficacy: Toward a Unifying Theory of Behavioral Change. *Psychological Review*, 84(2), 191–215. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.84.2.191>
- Beattie, T. E. (1943). Public Relations and the Chains. *Journal of Marketing*, 7(3), 245–255.
- Becker-Olsen, K. L., Cudmore, B. A., & Hill, R. P. (2006). The Impact of Perceived Corporate Social Responsibility on Consumer Behavior. *Journal of Business Research*, 59(1), 46–53.
- Benneker, V., Gërkhani, K., & Steinmetz, S. (2020). Enforcing Your Own Human Rights? The Role of Social Norms in Compliance with Human Rights Treaties. *Social Inclusion*, 8(1), 184–193. <https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v8i1.2166>
- Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1974). *All the President's Men*. Simon & Schuster.
- Bishop, B. (2008). *The Big Sort: Why the Clustering of Like-Minded America Is Tearing Us Apart*. Mariner Books.
- Browning, N. (2018). Ethics and the Profession: The Crystallizing of PR Practice from Association to Accreditation, 1936–1964. *American Journalism*, 35(2), 140–170. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08821127.2018.1455400>
- Browning, N., Lee, E., Lee, S. H., & Yang, S.-U. (2022). We're All in This Together: Legitimacy and Coronavirus-Oriented CSR Messaging. *Sustainability*, 14(5), 1–36. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14052534>
- Browning, N., Lee, E., Park, Y. E., Kim, T., & Collins, R. (2020). Muting or Meddling? Advocacy as a Relational Communication Strategy Affecting Organization–Public Relationships and Stakeholder Response. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 97(4), 1026–1053. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077699020916810>
- Browning, N., Yang, S.-U., Park, Y. E., Lee, E., & Kim, T. (2019). Do Ethics Matter? Investigating Donor Responses to Primary and Tertiary Ethical Violations. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 96(4), 1145–1171. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077699019835903>
- Burgoon, J. K. (1993). Interpersonal Expectations, Expectancy Violations, and Emotional Communication. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 12(1–2), 30–48. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X93121003>
- Capizzo, L., & Feinman, M. (2022). Extending Civic Values in Architectures of Listening: Arendt, Mouffe and the Pluralistic Imperative for Organizational Listening. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 34(6), 274–295.
- Capizzo, L., & Sommerfeldt, E. J. (2023). Cultivating Listening Spaces for Civil Society: Reorienting Public Relations amid Hannah Arendt's Urgent Pluralism. *Public Relations Review*, 49(4), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2023.102351>
- Carroll, A. B. (1999). Corporate Social Responsibility: Evolution of a Definitional Construct. *Business & Society*, 38(3), 268–295. <https://doi.org/10.1177/000765039903800303>
- Chatterji, A. K., & Toffel, M. W. (2019). Assessing the Impact of CEO Activism. *Organization & Environment*, 32(2), 159–185.
- Choi, D.-S., Lee, K.-H., & Hur, H. (2020). Social Enterprises' Social Orientation: The Impact on the Organizational Commitment of Employees. *Journal of Public and Nonprofit Affairs*, 6(1), 44–62. <https://doi.org/10.20899/jpna.6.1.44-62>

- Chon, M.-G., & Park, H. (2020). Social Media Activism in the Digital Age: Testing an Integrative Model of Activism on Contentious Issues. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 97(1), 72–97.
- Cialdini, R. B. (2009). *Influence: Science and practice* (Vol. 4). Pearson education Boston.
- Ciszek, E., & Logan, N. (2018). Challenging the Dialogic Promise: How Ben & Jerry's Support for Black Lives Matter Fosters Dissensus on Social Media. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 30(3), 115–127. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1062726X.2018.1498342>
- Dans, P., & Groves, S. (Eds.) (2023). *Mandate for Leadership: The Conservative Promise*. The Heritage Foundation.
- Davis, L., & Parker, K. (2019, August 15). A Half-Century after 'Mister Rogers' Debut, 5 Facts about Neighbors in U.S. *Pew Research Center*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2019/08/15/facts-about-neighbors-in-u-s/>
- de Tocqueville, A. (1840). *Democracy in America*. University of Chicago Press.
- Deane, C. (2024, October 17). Americans' Deepening Mistrust of Institutions. *Trend Magazine*. <https://www.pew.org/en/trend/archive/fall-2024/americans-deepening-mistrust-of-institutions>
- Deloitte. (2023). The Deloitte Global 2023 Gen Z & Millennial Survey. <https://www.deloitte.com/nz/en/issues/work/gen-z-millennial-survey-2023.html>
- Dodd, M. D., & Supa, D. W. (2014). Conceptualizing and Measuring “Corporate Social Advocacy” Communication: Examining the Impact on Corporate Financial Performance. *Public Relations Journal*, 8(3), 2–23.
- Dodd, M. D., & Supa, D. W. (2015). Testing the Viability of Corporate Social Advocacy as a Predictor of Purchase Intention. *Communication Research Reports*, 32(4), 287–293.
- Edelman. (2020). *Edelman Trust Barometer*. https://www.edelman.com/sites/g/files/aatuss191/files/2020-01/2020%20Edelman%20Trust%20Barometer%20Global%20Report_LIVE.pdf
- Edelman. (2021). *Edelman Trust Barometer*. <https://www.edelman.com/sites/g/files/aatuss191/files/2021-01/2021-edelman-trust-barometer.pdf>
- Edelman. (2022). *Edelman Trust Barometer: The Cycle of Distrust*. https://www.edelman.com/sites/g/files/aatuss191/files/2022-01/2022%20Edelman%20Trust%20Barometer%20Global%20Report_Final.pdf
- Edelman. (2023). *Edelman Trust Barometer: Navigating a Polarized World*. <https://www.edelman.com/sites/g/files/aatuss191/files/2023-03/2023%20Edelman%20Trust%20Barometer%20Global%20Report%20FINAL.pdf>
- Edelman. (2024a). *2024 Edelman Trust Barometer Global Report*. <https://www.edelman.com/trust/2024/trust-barometer>
- Edelman. (2024b). *Edelman Trust Barometer: Innovation in Peril*. https://www.edelman.com/sites/g/files/aatuss191/files/2024-02/2024%20Edelman%20Trust%20Barometer%20Global%20Report_FINAL.pdf
- Edelman. (2025). *Edelman Trust Barometer: Trust and the Crisis of Grievance*. https://www.edelman.com/sites/g/files/aatuss191/files/2025-01/2025%20Edelman%20Trust%20Barometer%20Global%20Report_01.23.25.pdf
- Ewest, T. (2018). The Prosocial Leadership Development Process as a Means to Prepare the Next Generation of Organizational Leaders. *On the Horizon the International Journal of Learning Futures*, 26(3), 225–237. <https://doi.org/10.1108/oth-02-2018-0010>
- Federal Trade Commission Act of 1914, n.d. 15 U.S.C. § 41-48.
- Finlayson, J. G. (2005). *Habermas: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press.
- Friedman, M. (1962). *Capitalism and Freedom*. University of Chicago Press.

- Gaither, B. M., Austin, L., & Schulz, M. (2018). Delineating CSR and Social Change: Querying Corporations as Actors for Social Good. *Public Relations Inquiry*, 7(1), 45–61.
- Grunig, J. E. (Ed.) (1992). *Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management*. Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Gupta, V. (2019). The Influencing Role of Social Media in the Consumer's Hotel Decision-Making Process. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, 11(4), 378–391. <https://doi.org/10.1108/whatt-04-2019-0019>
- Habermas, J. (1962). *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (T. Burger & F. L. Awrence, Trans.). MIT Press.
- Habermas, J. (1981a). *The Theory of Communicative Action: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason* (T. McCarthy, Trans.; Vol. 2). Beacon Press.
- Habermas, J. (1981b). *The Theory of Communicative Action: Reason and the Rationalization of Society* (T. McCarthy, Trans.; Vol. 1). Beacon.
- Hambrock, D. C., & Wowak, A. J. (2021). CEO Sociopolitical Activism: A Stakeholder Alignment Model. *Academy of Management review*, 46(1), 33–59.
- Hayek, F. (1944). *The Road to Serfdom*. University of Chicago Press.
- Holt, T. C. (2021). *The Movement: The African American Struggle for Civil Rights*. Oxford University Press.
- Hörisch, J., Wulfsberg, I. M., & Schaltegger, S. (2019). The Influence of Feedback and Awareness of Consequences on the Development of Corporate Sustainability Action Over Time. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 29(2), 638–650. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.2394>
- Howard, P. N., Duffy, A., Freelon, D., Hussain, M. M., Mari, W., & Maziad, M. (2011). Opening Closed Regimes: What Was the Role of Social Media during the Arab Spring? Available at SSRN 2595096.
- Iyengar, S., & Krupenkin, M. (2018). The Strengthening of Partisan Affect. *Political Psychology*, 39(S1), 201–218. <https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12487>
- Jones, J. M. (2024, March 25). Church Attendance Has Declined in Most U.S. Religious Groups. *Gallup*. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/642548/church-attendance-declined-religious-groups.aspx>
- Keynes, J. M. (1936). *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kiersz, A. (2016, February 25). Volunteering in America is at its Lowest Level in Over a Decade. *Business Insider*. <https://www.businessinsider.com/bls-volunteering-chart-2016-2>
- Kırcaburun, K., Alhabash, S., Tosuntaş, Ş. B., & Griffiths, M. D. (2018). Uses and Gratifications of Problematic Social Media Use Among University Students: A Simultaneous Examination of the Big Five of Personality Traits, Social Media Platforms, and Social Media Use Motives. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, 18(3), 525–547. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-018-9940-6>
- Kormos, C., Gifford, R., & Brown, E. (2014). The Influence of Descriptive Social Norm Information on Sustainable Transportation Behavior: A Field Experiment. *International Journal of Forensic Mental Health*, 47(5), 479–501. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013916513520416>
- Literat, I., & Kligler-Vilenchik, N. (2019). Youth Collective Political Expression on Social Media: The Role of Affordances and Memetic Dimensions for Voicing Political Views. *New Media & Society*, 21(9), 1988–2009. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444819837571>
- Mabry, A., & Mackert, M. (2014). Advancing Use of Norms for Social Marketing: Extending the Theory of Normative Social Behavior. *International Review on Public and Nonprofit Marketing*, 11(2), 129–143. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12208-013-0109-5>

- Makarem, S. C., & Jae, H. (2015). Consumer Boycott Behavior: An Exploratory Analysis of Twitter Feeds. *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 50(1), 193–223. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joca.12080>
- Marchand, R. (1998). *Creating the Corporate Soul: The Rise of Public Relations and Corporate Imagery in American Big Business*. University of California Press.
- Marshall, T. H. (1964). *Class, Citizenship, and Social Development*. Doubleday.
- Matten, D., & Crane, A. (2005). Corporate Citizenship: Toward an Extended Theoretical Conceptualization. *Academy of Management Review*, 30(1), 166–179. <https://doi.org/10.2307/20159101>
- Meacham, J. (2018). *The Soul of America: The Battle for Our Better Angels*. Random House.
- Milkis, S. M. (2009). *Theodore Roosevelt, the Progressive Party, and the Transformation of American Democracy*. University Press of Kansas.
- Padon, A. A., Rimal, R. N., Jernigan, D., Siegel, M., & DeJong, W. (2016). Tapping Into Motivations for Drinking Among Youth: Normative Beliefs About Alcohol Use Among Underage Drinkers in the United States. *Journal of Health Communication*, 21(10), 1079–1087. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10810730.2016.1222030>
- Pang, A. (2013). Social Media Hype in Times of Crises: Nature, Characteristics and Impact on Organizations. *Asia Pacific Media Educator*, 23(2), 309–336. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1326365x13517189>
- Park, J., & Ha, S. (2014). Understanding Consumer Recycling Behavior: Combining the Theory of Planned Behavior and the Norm Activation Model. *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal*, 42(3), 278–291.
- Pew Research Center. (2017, October 5). The Partisan Divide on Political Values Grows Even Wider. *Pew Research Center*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2017/10/05/the-partisan-divide-on-political-values-grows-even-wider/>
- Pew Research Center. (2022, September 13). Modeling the Future of Religion in America. *Pew Research Center*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2022/09/13/modeling-the-future-of-religion-in-america/>
- Pew Research Center. (2024, June 24). Americans' Views of Government's Role: Persistent Divisions and Areas of Agreement. *Pew Research Center*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2024/06/24/americans-views-of-governments-role-persistent-divisions-and-areas-of-agreement/>
- Piketty, T. (2014). *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Pinto, D. C., Herter, M. M., Nicolao, L., & Terres, M. d. S. (2019). The Benefits of Unrelated Brand Corporate Social Responsibility: An Abstract. In P. Rossi & N. Krey (Eds.) *Finding New Ways to Engage and Satisfy Global Customers*. AMSWMC 2018. Developments in Marketing Science: Proceedings of the Academy of Marketing Science, 367–368. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-02568-7_97
- Poteat, V. P., Godfrey, E. B., Brion-Meisels, G., & Calzo, J. P. (2020). Development of Youth Advocacy and Sociopolitical Efficacy as Dimensions of Critical Consciousness within Gender-Sexuality Alliances. *Developmental Psychology*, 56(6), 1207–1219. <https://doi.org/10.1037/dev0000927>
- Pruthi, S., & Kharbanda, A. P. (2024). Mass Consumerism and the Hypocrisy of Gen Z. <https://thefulcrum.us/business-democracy/gen-z-consumer-behavior>
- Putnam, R. D. (1995). *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton University Press.
- Putnam, R. D. (2020). *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. Simon & Schuster.
- Roper, E. (1949). The Public Looks at Business. *Harvard Business Review*, 27(2), 165–174.
- Rosentiel, T. (2010, December 14). How a Different America Responded to the Great Depression. *Pew Research Center*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/2010/12/14/how-a-different-america-responded-to-the-great-depression/>

- Rothstein, R. (2017). *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*. Liveright.
- Saad, L. (2023). Historically Low Faith in U.S. Institutions Continues. *Gallup*. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/508169/historically-low-faith-institutions-continues.aspx>
- Samuelson, R. J. (2010). *The Great Inflation and Its Aftermath*. Random House.
- Santa Clara County v. Southern Pacific Railroad Co., 118 U.S. 394 (1886).
- Scherer, A. G., & Palazzo, G. (2007). Toward a Political Conception of Corporate Responsibility: Business and Society Seen from a Habermasian Perspective. *Academy of Management Review*, 32(4), 1096–1120. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2007.26585837>
- Scherer, A. G., & Palazzo, G. (2011). The New Political Role of Business in a Globalized World: A Review of a New Perspective on CSR and its Implications for the Firm, Governance, and Democracy. *Journal of Management Studies*, 48(4), 899–931. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2010.00950.x>
- Scherer, A. G., Palazzo, G., & Baumann, D. (2006). Global Rules and Private Actors: Toward a New Role of the Transnational Corporation in Global Governance. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 16(4), 502–532. <https://doi.org/10.5840/beq200616446>
- Scherer, A. G., & Smid, M. (2000). The Downward Spiral and the US Model Business Principles – Why MNEs Should Take Responsibility for the Improvement of World-Wide Social and Environmental Conditions. *Management International Review*, 40(4), 351–371.
- Schmidt, H. J., Ind, N., Guzmán, F., & Kennedy, E. (2021). Sociopolitical Activist Brands. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 31(1), 40–55. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jpbm-03-2020-2805>
- Schwartz, S. H. (1977). Normative Influences on Altruism. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* (Vol. 10, pp. 221–279). Elsevier.
- Sheehan, N., Smith, H., & Kenworthy, E. W. (2017). *The Pentagon Papers: The Secret History of the Vietnam War*. Racehorse.
- Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890, n.d. Pub. L. No. 51-647, 26 Stat. 209, 15 U.S.C. § 1-7.
- Sills, S., Pickens, C., Beach, K., Jones, L., Calder-Dawe, O., Benton-Greig, P., & Gavey, N. (2016). Rape Culture and Social Media: Young Critics and a Feminist Counterpublic. *Feminist Media Studies*, 16(6), 935–951. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2015.1137962>
- Smith, N. C. (2003). Corporate Social Responsibility: Whether or How? *California Management Review*, 45(4), 52–76. <https://doi.org/10.2307/41166188>
- Stahl, C. C., & Literat, I. (2022). #GenZ on TikTok: The Collective Online Self-Portrait of the Social Media Generation. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 26(7), 925–946. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2022.2053671>
- Thompson, D. (2025). The Anti-Social Century. *The Atlantic*. <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2025/02/american-loneliness-personality-politics/681091/>
- Tyson, A., Kennedy, B., & Funk, C. (2021). Gen Z, Millennials Stand Out for Climate Change Activism, Social Media Engagement with Issue. *Pew Research Center*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/science/2021/05/26/gen-z-millennials-stand-out-for-climate-change-activism-social-media-engagement-with-issue/>
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). *Volunteering and Civic Life*. https://www.census.gov/data/datasets/time-series/demo/cps/cps-supp_cps-repwgt/cps-volunteer.html
- Urofsky, M. I. (2012). *Louis D. Brandeis: A Life*. Schocken Books.
- Vallier, K. (2022). Neoliberalism. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 1–50.
- Wang, W., Liang, Q., Mahto, R. V., Deng, W., & Zhang, S. X. (2020). Entrepreneurial Entry: The Role of Social Media. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 161, 120337. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2020.120337>
- Wapshott, N. (2011). *Keynes Hayek: The Clash that Defined Modern Economics*. W. W. Norton & Company.
- Weber Shandwick. (2016). *The Dawn of CEO Activism*. <https://www.webershandwick.com/news/the-dawn-of-ceo-activism/>

- Weinberg, A., & Weinberg, L. (Eds.) (2001). *The Muckrakers*. University of Illinois Press.
- Xu, H., & Chang, B. (2023). Goodwill or Just for Show? The Effects of Different Corporate Social Justice Statements and the Role of Perceived Authenticity. *Journal of Communication Management*, 27(4), 493–521. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jcom-09-2022-0105>
- Yang, A., Saffer, A. J., & Li, Y. (2020). Managing Stakeholder Expectations in a Politically Polarized Society: An Expectation Violation Theory Approach. *Journal of International Crisis and Risk Communication Research*, 3(2), 275–300.
- Yang, S.-U., Kang, M., Kim, Y., & Lee, E. (2022). The Effects of Leadership in Corporate Social Advocacy on Positive Employee Outcomes. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 34(6), 296–316. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1062726x.2022.2123331>
- Zhang, W., Liu, Y., Dong, Y., He, W., Yao, S., Xu, Z., & Mu, Y. (2023). How We Learn Social Norms: A Three-Stage Model for Social Norm Learning. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14, 1153809. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1153809>
- Zúñiga, H. G. D., Jung, N., & Valenzuela, S. (2012). Social Media Use for News and Individuals' Social Capital, Civic Engagement and Political Participation. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 17(3), 319–336. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2012.01574.x>