

A Functional Account of Corporate Responsibility
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Prevailing accounts of managerial and corporate responsibility can be distinguished in terms of the interests or rights of the parties affected by corporate activities. For example, one way to understand the distinction between shareholder primacy theory and stakeholder theory is in terms of which parties deserve consideration from the manager's perspective. The same could be said for the distinction between a profit-maximizing account of managerial responsibility and double-bottom line and triple-bottom line approaches to managerial responsibility.

This paper examines whether these accounts overlook the relevance of the specific function that a given corporation plays (e.g., production of consumer goods, provision of professional services) to our understanding of corporate responsibility.

The intended output of this project is twofold: a scholarly article in a referred journal and a shorter article for a more general audience in a journal such as the California Management Review.

The activities to be undertaken toward this end fall into three categories. 1) to engage in a review of existing accounts of corporate responsibility; 2) to engage in a theoretical investigation of the relevance of the function of a corporation; and 3) to interview corporate executives as to their views.