Chasing Apostasy:

Corporate Expressions of Wealth and Regional Identity in Alberta

by

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Abstract

Globalization poses a balancing act for regional cultures, in the sense of establishing global relationships, building reputations, and managing historical uniqueness. The independent prosperity that has seen the regional identity of Alberta defined as *maverick* meets a growing collective force through globalization, creating a question of how independence survives in collective society. Many organizations mirror this problem as independent capitalist structures that now face growing competition from organizations successfully embracing interdependent models. Corporate cultural expressions found through publicly available Web sites may reflect independent versus interdependent attitudes and behaviors, aligning toward either regional norms or global standards. In this context, a qualitative and quantitative content analysis of corporate social expressions is presented to compare these behaviors and provide a snapshot of current regional cultural trends in light of globalization. Findings suggest that while the maverick stereotype persists among Alberta corporations, there is clear evidence of preliminary movement toward the embracing of global standards. A closer look at Alberta social identity further reveals underlying motivations that could well be conducive to globalization. Continued transformation is expected due to either institutional or self-ordering regulatory pressures, and the study herein provides a point of reference for future measurement while suggesting that research in this area might equally transform to keep pace with the evolution of globalization.

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As a regional study, this paper presupposes the worthiness of examining the Province of Alberta in particular when arguments may exist that Alberta is much like other North American prairie regions or even like the whole of Canada in the sense that it exudes a nomadic and itinerant nature largely driven through a composition of immigrant inhabitants (Rozum, 2004; Van Herk, 2001). However, Alberta diverges from its American prairie counterparts through political association with Canada, which is distinguished from the USA via a *mosaic* versus *melting-pot* social characterization. The heterogeneous social nature of Canada has demanded acknowledgement of differentiation and, at the same time, expectation of acceptance through a complex network of relationships, perhaps reflecting a petri dish of current global cultural challenges. While certainly a part of this dynamic, Alberta presents an historical context of tensions between country and province that are unique to only this prairie region.

Within Canada, Alberta is differentiated from other provinces through its association with money and right wing politics, as well as by having stronger social ties with the USA and a strong contempt for federal government. Like Quebec, Alberta stands out in its demand for independence from central Canada, but Van Herk (2001) alludes to an important distinction between the two provinces in that the former argument reflects an historical European struggle for power while the latter reflects a new force clashing with the old. The relationship is thus more parent-child for Canada and Alberta, respectively, than parent-parent in the case of Canada and Quebec, to extend the metaphor of the family dynamic applied by Rozum (2004) and Van Herk (2001). Originated as a colony that would feed central Canada through economic prosperity, the capitalist foundation of Alberta is hardwired in its inhabitants and their purpose.

Free enterprise prosperity resultant from unwavering demand for independence has in turn defined the land and contributed to the label of *maverick* to describe original thinking and fearless behavior that has resulted in economic success. The economic association of Albertans and among Albertans themselves has however perpetuated a stereotype of sorts for the maverick identity described by Takach (2009) as greedy and self-serving, descriptors that are highly incompatible with current momentum toward globalization.

The unique positioning of Alberta described above thus presents a rich platform for regional consideration in light of yet another relationship that has begun to form as an emerging response to globalization: Alberta's relationship with the world, where fierce capitalism will meet new definitions of wealth and potential collective powers. A contradiction of fundamentalist and populist following, Alberta and its inhabitants define a perpetual state of chasing apostasy that may serve either to embrace or defy global collectivism. To drill down a sense of the Alberta position in globalization, this project is particularly concerned with how Alberta social identity is reflected corporately by organizations that are beginning to include social metrics into their strategy planning along with traditional financial metrics (Emerson, 2003). This research should provide a resource for Alberta organizations that are faced with establishing corporate social responsibility (CSR) statements, which has become a growing global trend in the past decade and has come to be considered an organizational best practice (Emerson, 2003; Williams & Aguilera, 2008). Insights into regional and global identity dialectics as a response to emerging communications technologies and the effects of globalization may also benefit a wider audience of corporations beyond the Alberta borders that seek to identify and report on CSR. The Government of Canada has produced a corporate social responsibility implementation guide for businesses to provide authoritative information, advice, and examples

for these initiatives (Government of Canada, n.d.). Proposed areas for action in this document are related to human rights, development, labor standards, environment, and anti corruption. These predominant global issues reflect Marshall McLuhan's predictions of a global village resulting from emerging communications technologies (McLuhan, 1962). Within the context of McLuhan's prediction, this research looks to explore how Alberta corporations are responding to the CSR phenomenon and determine if patterns arise that reflect movement towards more global interests at the expense of this province's maverick heritage or if the latter continues to persist.

The research question is examined both quantitatively and qualitatively and the study seeks convergence through mixed methods, including a content analysis that measures existing corporate social responsibility statements in a comparison between a sampling of corporations (Jick, 1979). The Alberta-based crown corporation, ATB Financial (ATB), is included in the CSR analysis and represents the organization that has inspired this study, the researcher having been employed by ATB since 2005. As an organization defined by an Albertan workforce servicing a clientele of Albertans, ATB well represents the challenges being faced by Alberta corporations in addressing global demand for social responsibility at the corporate level while meeting the needs of regional interests. The combination of methods used in this study attempts to account for the complexity and ambiguity of CSR research, which remains highly subjective due to a lack of standardized data and measurement tools (McWilliams, Siegel, & Wright, 2006; Rodríguez, Siegel, Hillman, & Eden, 2006). The consideration of Alberta regional social identity is also founded in subjective accounts of historical evaluations, with empirical strength deriving from a convergence of views.

In line with views of Albertans as described by other historians (e.g., Van Herk, 2001), Ford (2005) asserts that "This is a province with its heart in its wallet and its soul in utter

darkness" that cannot see "life on the edge of disaster" (p. 10). Van Herk describes the Alberta mavericks as having a "collective resistance to being caught, owned, herded, taxed, or identified" (Bergman, 2002, p. 56). Contemporary support for this description is a lack of recent voter turnout, which indicates ambiguity in the province's social interests (Adria, 2008). Moreover, these descriptions of Albertans, along with the province's oil industry, contradict global social consciousness hot topics of poverty reduction and environmental sustainability. Clearly, Alberta businesses will be challenged to compensate for the Alberta maverick identity in the preparation of CSR statements and responding to global concerns. Yet, global social consciousness pervades Alberta through the CSR positioning of national and international organizations that are situated in this province; globalization in business having transcended borders worldwide (Emerson, 2003). Furthermore, the very notion of wealth may also be changing in light of globalization.

Wealth is a theme that persists in both a consideration of Alberta social identity as well as in the development of CSR reporting as organizations strive for survival and prosperity (McMaster, 2004; Government of Canada, n.d.). Wealth, however, may no longer be considered in purely financial terms as evidenced by corporate reporting strategies that include social metrics. Growing trends facilitated by communications technologies toward sustainability efforts reflect a blended value proposition that sees a merger of financial and social considerations by corporations (Emerson, 2003; Agyeman & Angus 2003). The network-building, social capital creation, and eco-centric focus involved with sustainability efforts present an inconsistency with the Alberta maverick identity; however, many believe that such efforts will be the very determinants of organizational viability (Agyeman & Angus, 2003; Porter & Reinhardt, 2007). A growing investment focus on social capital versus economic capital may be changing the way that individuals define wealth globally, while our communications technology infrastructure

further abstracts the notion of value through the digital fusion of both commerce and identity (Emerson, 2003; Raby, 2008). Such emerging trends are impacting Albertans and may have a homogenizing influence in Canada to which the Alberta maverick identity is not immune (McLuhan, 1962). An hypothesis to be derived from this research is that Albertans have experienced either a loss of historical identity or a potential fusion of new values and heritage as a result of emerging patterns of response to communications technologies.

The overall design of this study is then twofold, offering explanatory considerations via literature review in the delineation of global social consciousness and the Alberta maverick social identity as dependent variables. Causal elements for these effects are elucidated through an examination of critical theory, medium theory, social capital theory, and historical evaluations to elucidate operational definitions for the core concepts. CSR represents the corporate expression of these concepts and is therefore examined in terms of academic interest, popular business culture, and regulatory impacts. Current corporate positioning is then evaluated for global versus regional orientation via descriptive research that examines a cross-section of organizations and their CSR reporting, which represents the main aspect of interest for this study. With this framework does the research offer insights into the question “How does the Alberta maverick social identity persist within the emerging global village?” as well as evaluate the above hypothesis.

Literature Review

Corporate responses to emerging technologies have reflected considerable interest around the potential of new collaboration capacities found in social media. Beniger (1986/2007) predicted that digitalization could be expected to be as profound for macrosociology as money was for macroeconomics. Certainly, communities and corporations alike are responding to global movements made possible through social media, which begin to see a transformation of economic and social motivations (Emerson, 2003). Corporately, the challenge becomes one of embracing an interdependent organizational model that witnesses a shift in values and notions of wealth and success, leading toward heightened social consciousness and sustainable community representation (Agyeman, & Angus, 2003). Culturally, the challenge will be to align global best practices with regional socioeconomic drivers, in the establishment of effective CSR reporting.

Beniger (1986/2007) pointed to the complexity of understanding societal transformation as a factor of critical new machinery, and his depiction of a *Control Revolution* may now be reflected in industry response to the popularity of social network services like Facebook and MySpace, response that has been varied, emphatic, and may even resonate "an ever-mounting crisis of control" (p. 303). The relationship between communications technologies and the phenomena associated with globalization is complex and dialectical in nature, reflecting a blurring of lines between cause and effect. Similarly, the variables of global social consciousness and Alberta social identity as manifestations of global versus regional effects may also only be considered dialectically as distinct yet intrinsically interdependent phenomenon. To this end, the literature review examines dialectical considerations associated with the core concepts, which are presented as evolving social and economic interests. Critical theory meets communications theory as the impact of technological advancements within the context of rising social networks

is considered as a precursor to current corporate preoccupations with social reporting that coincide with shifting notions of wealth and value. Cultural theory offers current insights into socioeconomic issues around globalization that contextualize regional positioning and the dialectic that has shaped Alberta social identity, which is examined through historical accounts of regional experiences taken largely from the seminal writings of Catherine Ford and Aritha Van Herk. The theoretical focuses are thus intended to provide context and causation for the core concepts, leading to operational definitions that afford greater validity for measurement within organizational reporting.

A Socioeconomic Foundation

A foundation for the rise of social networks as a factor of globalization is provided through an examination of the interrelations and dialectics of social and economic interests from the perspective of critical theory and communications theory. The questions of privilege and power in communications research originate from the critical tradition, where emphasis is placed on understanding ideologies that dominate society, with particular focus on the key beneficiaries and propagators of the power structures, as a means to pinpointing the oppressive social conditions for the emancipation of society (Littlejohn, & Foss, 2005). Like Beniger, many have shaped communications theories around this tradition, presenting social uprising as a factor of communications evolution. An examination of these theories sets a stage for the historical evolution of motivations behind the players involved in this study, the power arrangements that characterize their society today, and the role of communications technologies in shaping these structures.

Critical Theory. Marxism is generally considered the originating branch of critical theory (Rogers, 1994). Marx positioned production as the determinant of the nature of society, with

economy at the base of all social structure (Marx, 1888). The capitalist structure perpetuates production motivated by profit that ultimately results in the oppression of the working class (Marx, 1888). A lineage of theorists and researchers have explored, supported, and expounded this theory (e.g. Rockmore, 2002; Wheen, 2000; Wolff, 2002). British Marxist academic, Nicholas Garnham, as described by Murdock (1995), adds that the most pervasive conditions of contemporary cultural practice stem from capitalism by operating within a sphere where cultural production organizes the making of public meaning, and more generally forms the conditions under which these meanings are encountered and worked out in everyday life. A perpetual cycle of oppression results in this view, to which Murdock (1995) further asserts the "pervasive political romance with privatization and rolling back" (p. 91) of capitalist societies has had a reverse effect on any positive evolution of welfare capitalism by deepening further and reinforcing the inequalities of condition and life chances.

Marx believed that currency alienated the worker from the value of his labor, resulting in a lost sense of spirit as the things produced and commodities alike evolve a life and movement of their own to which humans and their behavior merely adapt (Marx, 1888; Marx, 1859). This disguise of capitalism, referred to as *commodity fetishism*, sees the exchange and circulation of commodities become the product and reflection of social relationships among people. By-products of such capitalist structures manifest as individualist and materialistic societies preoccupied with consumption that are void of depth and historicity (Campbell, 1995). The dynamic between need and desire is skewed in capitalist modernity, where social experience is reduced to the consumption of chance or isolated events that reflect fragmentary individual aesthetic experiences and sensations (Campbell, 1995; Hegel,1812/1969). This view of capitalist social structures presents a stage of conditions that positions industry and corporations

predominantly as power stakeholders in current Western culture that both profit from and propagate the oppression of an alienated labor force.

While clearly having been inspired by Marxism, the Frankfurt School expanded its philosophical scope to organize inquiries into current philosophical questions in a way that united philosophers sociologists, economists, historians, and psychologists (Weininger, 1995). The Frankfurt School saw capitalism as an evolutionary stage in the development of socialism and later communism (Littlejohn & Foss, 2005). This group became increasingly interested in the role of mass communication and media as structures of oppression in capitalistic societies; however, the most famous member of the Frankfurt school, Jurgen Habermas, sought a new social paradigm based on intersubjective rationality that witnessed a convergence and integration of social action theory, system theory, and symbolic interactionism theory (Burgerm, 1988; Mitrović, 1999).

While Habermas recognized the importance of Marx's concept of production as key for reconstructing history, he also pointed to the fact that social evolution is based upon individual and collective learning for the sake of solving problems that people are faced with during the development of production forces (Mitrović, 1999). Similarities between Marx's and Habermas's theories include a belief in good human nature, the search for non-capitalist ways of social organization, and alternatives to social development. While Marx looks for the latter in communist solidarity, Habermas seeks out principles founded in mutual negotiation and communications processes, such as through expanding the space reserved for free action and communication of people who, in mutual communication, may arrive at decisions, conclusions, and consensus through discourse (Mitrović, 1999). Certainly, Habermas paints an idealistic and pragmatic picture of communications potential in his theory of communicative action. Given that

the paradigm aligns conveniently with numerous current mega trends facilitated through mass media in the processes of globalization and integration of modern world society, Habermas's work on communicative action has enjoyed significant applause from critics (Mitrović, 1999).

Critical theory through cultural studies bridges further the gap to communications theory through a populist nature and interest in ideologies that dominate cultures but focus on social change through culture itself. Hardt (1989) examines the relationship between culture and communications, finding support for the juxtaposition of concepts from Leach (1965) who considered that the idea of culture as context for the creation of meaning also included notions of culture as a communications system. Hardt (1989) advocates communications as a pragmatic replacement for Marx's economics as the base of all social structure; and points to a weakness in communications studies that reinforce existing notions of society and avoid considerations of existence that could significantly alter an understanding of democracy. In this light, Dewey (1939) pointed to communication as the necessary condition for the shared process of inquiry, which becomes a condition for sharing attitudes and experiences for the realization of common goals.

Communications analysis in the United States has been preoccupied with studies of individual and group processes, ranging from individual knowledge creation, conduct and self-control to the role of media in the construction of sharing of social realities (Hardt, 1989). Thus does Hardt qualify that communications emerges as an ordering mechanism that constitutes a process of control (Hardt, 1989). Mead's behavioral studies indicated that communications involves "participation in the other" where individuals put themselves in the place of the other person's attitude to communicate using significant symbols (Mead, 1969). Extending the process

to media, Mead (1969) suggests that they become facilitators of community structure and control, which positions media to play a significant role in the formation of democracy.

From a communications perspective, Marx and other critical theorists were concerned with how messages reinforce oppression in society. Communications practices, within Marxism, are seen as the product of tension between individual creativity and the constraints of society on that creativity, where language may in turn have an oppressive impact on individual expression, as class reflects in both language usage and understanding. (Littlejohn, & Foss, 2005). Murdock (1995) suggests that to understand the dynamics of contemporary culture is to understand the ways in which meaning-making occurs in central public arenas. He believes that media are increasingly incorporated into and become products of the structures and logic of capitalist enterprise (Murdock, 1995). This view of media as an instrument of social control has been well delineated in the context of objective journalism practices that have largely served to preserve dominant culture and political perspectives (Hardt, 1989).

Through the above examination of critical theories that reflect the dialectics and interrelation of social and economic interests in society, a foundation is set for further exploration into the growing preoccupation with social networks in contemporary society. The socioeconomic foundation elucidated by critical theorists provides a point of reference for further examination of social change through recognition of cultural departure from capitalist structures. The flow of power in society thus proves dynamic, and consequently demands a pragmatic orientation for the modern organization. The CSR phenomenon is a reflection of such pragmatism through its conscious positioning within the corporate structure, and at the same time reflects evolving ideals of new power models in society. Where critical theory arrives at a philosophical focus on communications through a lineage of enlightenment around the forces

behind social constructs, communications theorists such as McLuhan and Christensen depart into the realm of digitalization and the transformational impacts of communications technologies that are shaping society toward a converging global social identity.

Communications theory. Marshall McLuhan expanded and enhanced the role of communications technologies in social constructs with his seminal work on media theory. With respect to McLuhan, the relationship between humans and technology is best understood through his famous postulation of "the medium is the message" (McLuhan, 1964, p. 7). Here, he considers beyond the obvious of response to medium content. Instead, the message looks at changes in interpersonal dynamics that an innovation brings with it, which may evolve as effects that are enabled, enhanced, accelerated, or extended by the innovation (Federman, 2004). In terms of the medium, this could be any extension of humankind, so it relates to anything that may be conceived or created, whether it be the product of body, senses, or mind. Just as language may extend thought from one mind to another, so does a hammer extend the body, enabling its possessor to do more than was possible without the instrument (Federman, 2004). In considering responses to emerging technologies, the study herein is in effect focusing on the *message* of social media that has given way to the growing trend of corporate social reporting and behaviors therein reflecting global social consciousness.

McLuhan's communications theory presented a rather idealist view of communications technologies. Carey (1998) notes that his technological utopia seemed to even suggest that television would heal racial animosities and revive the American dream at the time of the Vietnam conflict. The dark history of print, however, challenged his optimism in that the medium coincided with the rise of the nation state, colonialism, empire, and the worldwide extension of capitalism and the power dominations therein (Carey, 1998; Mumford, 1934).

McLuhan maintained the ideal by focusing not just on media, but rather, on media ecologies and the relationships among forms of representation to offer insights into not only historical communications revolutions but also existing communications revolutions (Carey, 1998).

As such, McLuhan extended the problem of communications to the historical realm, illuminating new dimensions of *creation* and *retention* to the pre-existing and singular *transmission* view of communications posited by Shannon and Weaver (1949) (Carey, 1998). He departed from the universal and mathmatical theory of communications proposed by Weiner (1948), to suggest that media not only faciliated messages but also acted as agents for thinking and shaping collective memory (McLuhan, 1964). McLuhan further asserted that such media affect society principally by changing the dominant structures of taste and feeling to alter the desired forms of experience, which presented a departure from Marx's view of technologies as instruments of the objective world (Shuklian, 1995). Change, then, could emerge based on aesthetics and a shifting of aesthetic values resulting from patterns of response to new media versus through Marx's prediction of political revolt (Brantlinger, 1983; Bross, 1992; Brummett, & Duncan 1992; Grosswiler, 1996). Such change is reflected in McLuhan's prediction of the global village.

The McLuhan legacy culminated at the prediction of a global village, popularized in his books *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (McLuhan, 1962) and *Understanding Media* (McLuhan, 1964). McLuhan described how electronic media has contracted the globe into a village through the instantaneous movement of information to bring all social and political functions together in a sudden implosion (Global Village, 2009). The global village shrinks distance, allowing more opportunity for talk and cross-cultural sharing to create a society that resembles a retrieval of oral culture in the characteristics of thinking,

perceiving, and interacting (McLuhan, 2007). Throughout this process, electronic media have heightened human awareness of responsibility to an intense degree (McLuhan, 1964).

With his description of the global village, McLuhan does not elucidate a number of key political and economic questions: global divisions of labor and the widening gap between rich and poor, or issues of capital flow, the environment, migration and national sovereignty as impacted by transnational corporations (McLuhan, 2007). He did, however, predict how electronic technologies would alter daily business and interpersonal relations, including a total reorganization of economy around information. McLuhan also believed that electronic technology would lead to the detrimental loss of private identity through the connectedness and speed of electric technologies (McLuhan, 2007).

The obvious parallels between his predictions and the arrival of the Internet have made the latter virtually synonymous with the notion of the global village. McLuhan foresaw that the enhanced speed of online communication, the access to it, and the capacity to share global news very rapidly would force people to become more involved with one another from countries around the world and be more aware of global responsibilities. Through the affordances of the new media environment, there would exist the potential to break down centralized power and form a community that lives on a more integrated basis, with more shared responsibilty. The interdependence would, according to McLuhan, extend into the corporate sphere as a mandatory movement (McLuhan, 1962).

To understand the potential of media in shaping new socio-psychological structures leads to better understanding of the current corporate preoccupation with technology. The preoccupation from a capitalist perspective may understand technology as a commodity to be acquired; however, the very consumption of that commodity shapes new structures of

consciousness and subsequent new patterns of behavior as delineated by McLuhan. With the evolving consciousness does focus then turn to the effects of media, and industry has indeed responded to these effects, turning to the potential of the Internet and social media while organizational theory trends point to the challenges associated with globalization and the key considerations of complexity and differentiation, the need for integration, and the transfer of knowledge and innovation (Daft, 2007). Thus does a contemporary definition of global social consciousness begin to take form. While quite well delinated and defined in literature, current terminology for the concept tends to vary somewhat. The next section will consider these definitions, provide an overview of how global social consciousness has come to be, and consider the growing economic, political, and cultural concerns related to the phenomenon.

The Rise of Social Networks

According to Williams (1986/2007), the changing objective of European expositions since the late 1800s pointed to a movement away from providing instruction for visitors on the wonders of modern science and technology to providing entertainment. By 1900, the Paris exposition was marked by universality in the scope of its visitors and content, and it moreover clearly emphasized the sensual pleasures of consumption over the intellectual pursuit of knowledge progression, reflecting the rise of a consumption culture (Williams, 1986/2007). The advent of marketing saw an exploitation of dreams and substitution of subjective images for external reality towards a merger of fantasy and commerce, while large-scale city lighting through electrical power created "a collective sense of life in a dream world" (Williams, 1986/2007, p. 174). Thus was the social universe of consumption altered by nineteenth-century technological progress, and the fantasy spaces delineated by Williams may be extended further in the context of globalization and culture. In this light, the following section considers the impact

of global technologies on space and time, towards the cultural repercussions of the latter, the potential evolution of Marx's commodity fetishism, and McLuhan's predictions around the role and flow of information in society.

Intersecting communications and socioeconomic perspectives. The complex tapestry of motivation behind the CSR phenomenon and a growing focus on sociological demands may find roots in Winston's theory of supervening social necessity, where technologies must be not only functional but also fill a need in society (Winston, 1998). In the context of Beniger's control revolution, that *need* may be extended to Harold Innis's belief that that change comes from the margins of society "since people on the margins invariably developed their own media" (Harold Adams Innis, 2007, ¶ 14). The new media would permit those on the periphery "to develop and consolidate power, and ultimately to challenge the authority of the centre" (Harold Adams Innis, 2007, ¶ 14). Parallels can be seen with the socially motivated rise of social media, which corresponds to Innis's belief that the dialectical relationship between technology and society is mutually influential. Innis also believed that the "instability resulting from a lack of balance between time- and space-biased media, and agitation from the margins of the empire, can equally drive social change" (Harold Adams Innis, 2007; ¶ 20).

An example of the dialectics involved with time- and space biased media may be envisioned in the context of the current workplace. Within Innis's model, Facebook would be considered a space-biased medium as it threatens the extension of empire over space. The time-based media that social network sites aim to balance would then be the Blackberry or iPhone, which threaten to extend the corporate conquest over personal time. The agitation from the margins of the empire may correspond to a reaction against degenerative workplace conditions that four generations in the present workforce currently find themselves in (Foster, 2006). This

dialectic further aligns with Marx's theory of social conflict, where groups within a capitalist society tend to interact in a destructive and uncooperative manner that allows no mutual benefit (Social Conflict Theory, 2007). Both Marx and communications theorists such as McLuhan and Innis refer to society rising up to overtake an imbalance of power; however, Marxism proposes an armed and violent solution to the problem, with revolution aimed at bringing about radical change of the culture, customs and values of a society (Elliott, 1984). Innis and McLuhan, on the other hand, reflect more of an evolution that results from the relationship between new media and social conditions.

This argument merits further discussion as the role of communications in the transformation of society becomes predominant through what Ware (1983) describes as the failure in Marx's prediction of how revolution would come about. According to the standard view of the Marxist tradition, Marx thought the proletarians would revolt against their oppression when their class consciousness was sufficiently developed. A proletarian revolution has not come within the described manner, which would be attributed to a lack of sufficient understanding on the part of the workers to obtain sufficient political power to overthrow the state. According to Ware (1983), there are many factors necessary for a class and its allies to obtain sufficient power, including communication, proximity of people, solidarity, organizations, widespread revolutionary fervor and commitment, desire for fulfilment of individual and collective interests, moral integrity, organizational skills, some social theory, and perhaps widespread awareness of some basic views. In this light, the Web 2.0 capacities may be envisioned as fundamental enablers of the necessary conditions for revolution to occur.

Certainly, current treatment of communications technologies views the Web in a dialectical manner, with a focus on the transformations that it is now subject to not being a factor

of new technologies but rather of a fundamental mind shift that encourages individuals to participate in developing new structures and content. Thus do evolving services and technologies encourage users to make knowledge explicit and evolve a collective intelligence (Kolbitsch, & Maurer, 2006). As both product of society transformation and faciliator of the latter, technologies have coincided with an altered dimensional experience that witnesses the phenomenon of globalization as a restructuring of space and time.

The restructuring of space and time. Hannerez (1996) wrote "In the most general sense, globalization is a matter of increasing long-distance interconnectedness, at least across national boundaries, preferably between continents as well." Where globalization has empirically broken down cultural boundaries through the wide availability of air travel and accessibility of telecommunications, the term *global culture* now implies both the development of cultural cosmopolitanism on a global scale and redeployment of cultural consciousness to accentuate specific identities in global conflicts (Lee, 1994). Consistent among scholarly definitions of globalization is the reference toward space and time displacement that sees more and more people now involved with more than one culture (Featherstone, 1995). Giddens (1984) points to the technological ability of satellite communication that recontextualizes both imagery and information across time and space.

Carey (1989) focused heavily on the significant changes that the telegraph has made to society in relation to the reconfiguration of space and time, where communications technologies have weaved into the social, political, and economic structures of contemporary societies. He asserts that the telegraph marked a decisive separation of the terms *transportation* and *communication*, which previously were synonymous, and enabled communities to move away from the local towards the national and international, or global. (Carey, 1989). People were able

to communicate from one side of the world to the other, which gave way to a leaner use of language and ultimately led to a "fundamental change in news" (p. 210) that saw greater objectivity in order to appeal to larger audiences (Carey, 1989). Through the globalization effects of the telegraph, a new social awareness became apparent as individuals were able to connect with others belonging to different cultures (Carey, 1989). In addition to the profound effect on space, the telegraph gave new importance to the concept of time (Carey, 1989). The introduction of standard time was a converging result of both the new innovation and economic motivations that saw a complete reorganization toward an evening of commodity markets through uniformity and interdependence (Cary, 1989).

Schuerkens (2003) qualifies the space-time reorganization, noting that "Today, life-spaces, activities and social links of individuals and societies are larger than national frontiers" (p. 213). In essence, the concept of spatial distance now includes the world as a space. Waters (1995) suggests that, since around the 1980s, the most accelerated phase of globalization has occurred, where gobal networks of flows, processes, and links across geographical regions were formed, building on the European colonization and worldwide expansion of capitalism during the 19th and 20th centuries that had already experienced intensified worldwide networking. The acceleration that Waters refers to coincides with the advent of Intranet technologies; however, it may be prudent to temper his postulation of "accelerated globalization" in this context (Hannemyr, 2003). Hannemyr (2003) refutes many Internet claims about faster adoption rates for new technologies, and concludes that adoption rates for radio, television, and the Internet have actually been comparable. Perhaps change seems bigger when it's happening.

Sociological impacts of communications technologies related to the restructuring of space and time were also considered by Fortunati (2002), who examined with focus the changing

relationship of the social sphere and public space that coincided and propagated with the mobile phone. Fortunati (2002) argues that the framework of society is made up of space and time as primary determinations that integrate, stabilize, and structure reality. Within this framework, communications technologies have increased social productivity by expanding private spaces for social use, such as is the case with the capacity of the mobile phone to connect users to their private social networks without time or space restrictions (Crang & Thrift, 2000; Harvey, 1990/1997; Jedlowski, 1999; Thompson, 1995/1998). Thus do everyday perceptions of time and space become altered, the increasing perception of which has a profound impact on physicality within those constructs (Cassirer, 1923/1989; Simmel, 1908/1983).

Communications technologies become, in turn, used specifically as means to expand space and time, both from personal and corporate perspectives (Luhmann, 1988). Consider that the Blackberry was formed for business purposes as a means to facilitating work flexibility for employees, but these technologies also afforded a likely unintended consequence—from the corporate point of view—of facilitating personal flexibility. If business e-mails can be answered while watching a movie, then, alternatively, personal e-mails can be answered while attending a business meeting. Public spaces take on additional dimensions in that people can choose to interact with those in the immediate physical present or those demarcated in physical space but equally present via mobile contact, resulting in the capacity to choose between chance socialness and chosen socialness (Fortunati, 2002; Simmel, 1908/1983).

The democratizing potential of mobile communications technology finds a tension that gives way to larger cultural implications. The capacity for multitasking, in the sense of being able to talk on the phone while driving or walking, has an effect of expanding time; modern organization thus sees heightened ability for registering, understanding, and engineering smaller

spaces (Thrift, 2001). In the case of the phone, increased production becomes not just a labor objective but also a social consideration. Fortunati (2002) sees mobile phone use in public spaces demanding a question of not only aesthetics and behavior but also legal and political concerns. The wide and affordable availability of mobile phones now reflects a mass commodity that is democratizing in terms of ownership potential; however, the use of these instruments in public spheres may not conform to democratic values (Alberoni, 1998; Fortunati, 2002). Furthermore, freedom of individual social relations provided by mobile phones may be tempered by the limited social networks that the technology propagates.

Culturally then, mobile phones have coincided with a more acute social awareness, more highly structured patterns of activity, a greater sense of belonging to social networks versus places, and equality that begs evaluation of democracy values in a shrinking public sphere (Alberoni, 1998; Dutton, 1999/2001; Fortunati, 2002). As the world experiences a privatization of social structures, a sense of bias towards subjectivity and self-ownership begins to take form, and corporate capitalist structures thus begin to evolve an intensifying and inherent interest in social responsibility, the rise of social networks having bridged the gap to the power structure of old. Such movement has only intensified through Internet technology, with the cultural implications mirroring those described for the mobile phone. Kolbitsch & Maurer (2006) describe how new forms of content generation and organization on the Web have brought democracy to the Internet, blurring the traditional distinction between content producers and consumers.

Social empowerment of the Intranet. Before the introduction of social media, most of the information on the Intranet was offered by professional providers to advertise products, services, and organizations. Technological obstacles of complicated tools and the expertise required to

produce Web pages impeded the establishment of personal homepages. With Web 2.0, a bottom-up movement of content creation is observed, where consumers as users produce information that is popularized through distribution to other users and may even be picked up by mainstream media (Lenhart, Horrigan, & Fallows, 2004). This phenomenon requires a critical mass of users in order for the necessary self organization to take place (Johnson, 2001). The social, or *community based*, media allow for alternative perspectives and views often not suitable for traditional media, while finding particular suitability for niche audiences. Liu, Maes, and Davenport (2006) add that the performance of tastes in the sense of favorite music, books, and film, for example, constitutes an alternate network structure or "taste fabric" (p. 42).

Davis (2005) suggests that the services offered by Web 2.0 are based on an attitude versus a technology, reflecting the fundamental mind shift that coincides with the technological changes. In addition to being more democratic and enabling user participation, Kolbitsch & Maurer (2006) describe how social media have opened up new opportunities. Personal expression is facilitated through blogs, while collaboration among users and groups has been enhanced by wiki technology. However, the open public sphere of the Intranet also gives way to concerns that again see democratic values challenged. For example, authors can hide behind false names or anonymity, which leads to a lack of accountability both in conduct and for accuracy of information provided, while the other side of the coin involves concerns over privacy where personal information presented on the Intranet attracts fraudsters and marketers alike for undesired and potentially harmful use (Kolbitsch & Maurer 2006). As was the case with mobile phones, the open social space of the Intranet has not necessarily led to larger social networks. Lampe, Ellison, and Steinfield (2006) found that Facebook users generally gravitate searches toward users who they know offline versus browsing to meet complete strangers.

Regardless, access to the global sphere pervades and influence is inevitable, while the distinction between corporate culture and social culture begins to diminish. The resulting integration may then be positioned for evaluation in terms of a geographical consideration as presented in this study. To this end, the larger cultural issues associated with globalization are examined next.

The culture of globalization. Baudrillard (1993) referred to the elimination of distinct public and private spaces through globalization as an *obscene* modern culture of immediacy and transparency. Others, such as Giddens (1990) and Urry (1995) are more optimistic about the effects of modernization through global technologies, suggesting that cultural transformations have helped promote a world of more culturally accomplished and informed people and have helped produce openness toward the rich patterns of geographical and historical cultures offered in this world, respectively. Between these views is a general cultural understanding of globalization that emphasizes the problematic connection of cultural innovation and the conservation of cultural traditions (Baraldi, 2006). Alstyne and Brynjolfsson (2005) describe the paradox of cultural trends that coincide with information technology, where there exists the potential to bridge gaps and unite communities but also to fragment and divide groups. Baraldi (2006) suggests that globalization may threaten the survival of cultural traditions, but that closure to cultural contamination may prevent meaningful dialogue between plural cultures. Themes to be explored herein are related to cultural homogenization with capitalism as the driving force within globalization, glocalization and modernization versus Westernization, cultural citizenship, and global scrutiny particularly as it relates to corporate social accountabilities (Robertson, 1992).

Pieterse (1993) asserts that the most common interpretation of globalization involves the notion that the world is becoming more uniform and standardized through technological,

commercial, and cultural synchronization that emanates from the West. This suggests that the flow of cultural elements across borders is dominated by Western industrial nations, and implies the increasing development of consumption societies that mirror the Western world (Schuerkens, 2003). In this light, Eagleton (2000) refers to a "crisis of contemporary culture" (p. 33) that finds roots in both Marxism and Weber's rationalization wherein commodities are forming all levels of hierarchies in value and mixing diverse cultures "promiscuously" (p. 33) together, depleting the very symbolic resources necessary for ideological authority (Weber, 1934/2002). Lee (1994) provides two senses to the crisis of contemporary culture: 1) that the commodity form refers to the global spread of Western capitalism as cultural hegemony; and 2) that the resulting imperialist culture falls victim to the commodity form driven by the marketing of modernity. As global culture, nourished by the power of media and multinationals, loses all traditional anchors, the result is what Ritzer (1993) calls the *McDonaldization* of society. Ritzer also borrows from Weber's theory of rationalization, which posits that social actions and interactions are increasing based on considerations of efficiency or calculation rather than on motivations that derive from custom, tradition, or emotion (Weber, 1934/2002).

Weber (1934/2002) conceives rationalization as a driving force of modernization that manifests particularly through the capitalist market, in the administration of the state and bureaucracy, and through the expansion of modern technology and science. Thoughts from the Frankfurt School on Weber's work suggest that the spread of rationalization based on calculation and efficiency dehumanizes society (Weber, 1934/2002). Maanen (1992) reviewed the notion of global homogenization through the flow of culture in a comparison of Disneyland theme parks around the world, which lend to a replacement of local cultural character for transnational symbolic forms originating from elsewhere. This work speaks less to the idea of local cultures

being undermined by new cultural forms and more, once again, to the commoditization of cultural forms that are accepted as worldliness (Maanen, 1992).

Lee (1994) suggests that the acceptance of such processed signifiers renders the meaning of cultural authenticity irrelevant and through detachment from or bizarre connections with referents can result in an even higher exchange-value relationship. Frankfurt critical theorists suggest that people do not recognize cultural hegemony as a result of being socialized from a young age into believing that a satisfying consumer culture is the same as enjoying political and economic liberty (Agger, 1992). Taken together, these concepts have led to a desire among non-Western societies to emulate the Western model of consumption, which is equated with living the good life, but is actually just a simulation of modernity in the sense that what is desired refers more to the signfiers of the growing global culture industry and not particularly to the true historical referents of Western society (Lee, 1994).

The abstraction seen in this view of globalization may be described as a hyperreality of simulation that involves objectivity being gradually disengaged from the object, which implies that the West is undergoing an aestheticization of life where randomness becomes the driving force of all material appearances (Lee, 1994). According to Lee (1994), the hyperreality of simulation accelerated through technology has yet to overwhelm non-Western modernization, reflecting a subtle sugjugation of tradition that may occur through glocalization, which involves the notion of bringing aspects of globalization into a society at a macro level in conjunction with local cultural aspects at a micro level.

Mahbubani (2008) provides insights into the non-Western perspective of globalization that distinguishes modernization from globalization and reflects a transcendence of democractic values that have appeared in a growing sense of pride and liberation in Asia. This view involves

modernization and de-Westernization taking place at the same time, where Western politics does not play a role in the technological advancement of the East. Concurrently, the Western frame of mind and cultural perspectives that influenced Asia over the past 200 years are dissolving, resulting in a democratization of the human spirit, the sense of equality therein being the true gift of the Western world. Mahubani (2008) holds a positive perspective on the emergence of a cosmopolitan global personality, where popular culture mixes with traditions the world over. He further suggests that the West has become incompetent at dealing with global challenges, such as the threat of terrorism and maintaining the nuclear proliferation regime, and now has a sense of insecurity around globalization (Mahbubani, 2008). At the same time, Americans struggle to maintain the top positions at global organizations such as the World Trade Organization and the World Bank, the irony being that they may no longer actually believe in globalization (Mahbubani, 2008).

Stevenson (1997) extends concerns of cultural citizenship in the development global communications systems in light of an emerging cultural cosmopolitanism as facilitated by globalization. The concept of cultural citizenship involves upholding the rights and obligations of cultural pluralism, which involves participation in multiple cultures and presents a difficult balancing act of managing tradition and change. Appadurai (1996) has described how globalization in the sense of cultural pluralism may lead to problems of identity resulting from the borrowing of cultural forms, hybridizing those forms, resisting cultural imperialism and homogenization. Stevenson (1997), however, argues that the permanence of national cultures and their ability to respond to change has been underestimated even in light of what Thompson (1994) refers to as global scruitiny facilitated through global media cultures. Stevenson's (1997) concern lies with the complex politics of multiculturalism, reinforced and propagated through

media, that fails to achieve equal respect for others in a difference-neutral way. Habermas (1994) suggested that loyalty and obligation should be constructed around universal ideals versus ethnic ideals, but Stevenson (1997) argues that, paradoxically, universal acceptance may also be representative of a particular culture, which requires further receptivity to difference, and can involve suppression of uniqueness in identity formations.

Stevenson (1997) notes another paradox involved with modernity in that the more interdependent global systems become, the fewer agreed upon rules there seem to be regarding intercultural obligations. In this sense, the growing trend of corporate social responsibility would reflect a form of self regulation and/or response to global scruitiny, particularly in light of Wolfe's (1989) findings wherein governmental attemps to institutionalize obligations have been met with resistance. A *civil society*, described by Stevenson (1997) as a cluster of institutions including media, households, trade unions, and religious associations, could then be characterized as a self-organized domain of social life dependant upon taken for granted rules and expectations (Keane, 1989). Schuerkens (2003) advocates this view, arguing that a global world must involve action at a distance, acceptance and integration with others, mutual accountability, and mutual interrogation to reflect overall a "cosmopolitan conversation of humankind" (p. 211).

With almost evangelistic fervor, the egalitarian ideals of globalization have been widely reflected in popular business literature and have filtered through organizational theories in the goal of establishing best practices for global business initiatives. *Wikinomics* (Tapscott, & Williams, 2006) purports to be a roadmap for doing business in the 21st century, and it has received transcendental praise from a myriad of CEOs, including that of Google, Walt Disney, and Proctor & Gamble, for its optimistic look at collaborative and interdependent business

practices in the age of globlization. Former World Bank Program Director, Stephen Denning, offers his guide to enhanced knowledge management through Tolstoyan leadership practices that advocate non-hierarchical idea sharing in *The Leader's Guide to Storytelling: Mastering the Art and Discipline of Business Narrative* (Denning 2005). *Firms of Endearment: How World-Class Companies Profit from Passion and Purpose* provides support for the incorporation of qualities such as love, joy, authenticity, and soul into business practices to gain an edge over the competition and prosper in the context of globalization (Sisodia, Sheth, & Wolfe, 2007). Generally speaking, however, these recipes for global prosperity fall slightly short of perscriptive and perhaps more tangibility may be found in academic efforts related to the study of social capital.

Shifting Notions of Wealth and Value

Through the rise of social networks that has coincided with emerging technologies described above, a transformational social mindshift has witnessed altering of the capitalist structures originally defined by critical theorists. In this context, a culture of global social consciouness has become apparent and has seen the corporate world take action to embrace new social themes within traditional business models. These themes have been delineated under the umbrella of social capital theory, which argues altruism as a viable and even necessary ingredient for organizational prosperity. Social capital theory thus provides further definition for concept of global social conciousness in the corporate context.

Social capital in the organization. Emerson (2003) proposes that the traditional separation of social value versus economic value that has evolved through the nonprofit and for-profit sectors respectively may seem logical but is actually inherently wrong. He believes that there is no trade off between social and financial interests in the core nature of investment and

return and that the latter involves "the pursuit of an embedded value proposition composed of both interests" (Emerson, 2003, p. 38). Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) among others have postulated the potential for organizational advantage through strategies based on social capital. At the organizational level, Daft (2007) supports such arguments in his review of ethical values and reputation as being determinants of financial success. Daft's (2007) organizational theory also highlights the roles of boundary spanners and interorganizational linkages that contribute to network building for strategic advantages. The phenomenon of CSR reporting exemplifies how organizations are looking to social capital models and methods as part of their strategic planning, and as such concepts of reputation and reciprocity in business begin to take on value that shifts the focus and performance measurements away from strictly the monetary. This section examines from the corporate perspective the complexity of social capital reporting, how the new measures of social capital wealth may operate in the corporate context, the role of communications technologies in such pursuits, and the foray into CSR.

As the industrial world moves toward a consideration of both social and financial contingencies, Emerson (2003) looks at challenges involved with achieving a *blended value proposition* (BVP) that incorporate both spheres. Beyond the challenge of developing metrics to quantify social successes, the BVP aims to achieve the greatest maximization of social, environmental, and economic value whether it is a for-profit or non-profit firm in question (Emerson, 2003). To this end, current measurements such as the *Balanced Scorecard* (Kaplan, 1999) represent efforts to track performance based on a blended value proposition. However, a standardized approach that reflects common cultural currency in a comparison of relative investments is perhaps needed to better understand the various forms of value creation that are occurring (Emerson, 2003). Moore (1995) suggests that the solution for bringing together

quantifiable and not easily quantified elements, which is the inherent problem of a BVP, lies in being aware of the multiple dimensions of value versus a mutually exclusive consideration of otherwise competing values. To this end, Emerson (2003) suggests that a new framework for a lexicon of valuation be built to incorporate and internalize metrics such as *interactive social capital*. Only then may the fruits of social strategies be measured effectively and the nature of returns appreciated.

Reputation and reciprocity are two metrics that have been proposed for the new lexicon of valuation. Preston (2004) advises that reputation as a source of capital is real and must be included in corporate financial statements and reporting that is subject to analytical attention. Reputation may be difficult to measure in terms of gain but becomes crystal clear in terms of potential loss, as organizations have crumbled at the loss of this capital. In this sense, a good reputation becomes an asset (Dowling, 2001). Many researchers (e.g. Adler & Kwon, 2002) look at organizational structure as the starting point and framework for building reputation and other forms of social capital. Leana and Van Buren (1999) identify intraorganizational trust and a collective vision as being the generators of costs and benefits. The organizational structure as a source of corporate social capital may then be modified by the firm's actions and initiatives for benefit (Leenders & Gabbay, 1999).

A method for building reputation at the structural level may be found in integral theory, which posits that the integration of social consciousness into the organization through superordinate goals will motivate collective vision by addressing four quadrants of the post-modern organization that reflect its structure: inner individual, outer individual, inner collective, and outer collective (Landrum & Gardner, 2005; Wilbur, 2000). In terms of costs, Talmud (1999) advises that corporate social capital is expensive and depreciates over time without proper

maintenance. Through the social capital built by a collective vision, benefits occur in the form of better knowledge sharing, lower transaction costs and turnover rates, and a greater coherence of action (Cohen & Prusack, 2001). Brown and Ferris (2007) support the greater potential of collectivity by showing that individuals with higher levels of social capital will actually volunteer more and give more to secular causes.

Reciprocity is another form of relevant social capital for this case, which Molm, Schaefer, and Collett (2007) define as "the act of giving benefits to another in return for benefits received" (p. 200) and assign two dimensions of value: instrumental and symbolic. Instrumental value refers to the value of benefits received in exchange, while symbolic value refers to value generated by the act of reciprocity itself in the sense of the trust that may be built as a result. The latter becomes more powerful through repeated acts of immediate and voluntary reciprocity (Molm, Schaefer, & Collett, 2007). In this light, socially embedded relationships build trust and commitment with greater strength than relationships based entirely on market exchange, which reflects well the potential validity of a blended value proposition (Emerson, 2003; Molm, Schaefer, & Collett, 2007).

Customer loyalty through communality. Inherent in the notions of reciprocity and reputation is the sense of community relationships that may further be considered in light of communications technology capacities. Goodwin (1996) relates that consumers develop a sense of communality when they perceive service providers to be particularly dependable, competent, and trustworthy. This sense of communality becomes even more important at the group level, where social benefits such as altruistic behavior, trust, and confidence in mankind provide community members with a perception of benefit for being members of a given group (Putnam, 2000). Social capital is thus positively related to a sense of membership in a consumption

community originally defined by a perception of communality (Fraering & Minor, 2006). This suggests that the dependability, competence, and trustworthiness will be strengthened by greater altruistic behavior and trust. Organizations have looked to sanction and enhance these relationship bonds through the affordances of social media, which may facilitate the building of a larger community beyond the one-to-one dimension of business to individual customer.

Collaborative technologies can help build social trust among users and observers that provides capacity for reciprocity, which is further enforced by exemplary behavior of such (Kobayashi, Ikeda, & Miyata, 2006). Wagner and Fernandez-Gimenez (2008) support that social capital indeed increases between partners and group members through heightened collaboration, while Wellman, Boase, & Chen (2002) confirm that the Internet supplements rather than supplants prior communication. The resulting online social capital has also shown to have positive effects on respondents' participation in online civic forums (Kobayashi, Ikeda, & Miyata, 2006). While offline social capital intensifies the potential for further success online, the online success proves in turn to enhance offline social capital (Kobayashi, Ikeda, & Miyata, 2006). Even more than trust, reciprocity proves to contribute positively to participation in online civil discussion (Kobayashi, Ikeda, & Miyata, 2006).

Agyeman and Angus (2003) consider how communities may strengthen bonds through social capital efforts that reflect a broader focus employing inherently a collaborative platform through social media. The blended value proposition may reflect the very nature of broad focus civic environmentalism, which seeks to protect and enhance the environment while meeting social needs and promoting economic success (Agyeman & Angus, 2003). Since 1992, businesses have increasingly been striving toward principles of sustainability that reflect global concerns while addressing local manifestations of social, economic, and environmental problems

(Agyeman & Angus, 2003). An evolutionary extension of narrow focus civic environmentalism, which is premised on the transfer of information that serves to increase environmental values and pro-environmental behavior, broad focus civic environmentalism is based on deliberative and inclusionary processes and procedures that serve to engage the public actively in all areas of policy formation and implementation (Agyeman & Angus, 2003; Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002).

The scope of the broad focus is therefore much greater, as the terminology reflects. This deliberative, inclusionary, and participatory approach is what many authors believe will secure social capital and a holistic internalization of the links between environmental, social, and economic characteristics of a sustainable community (e.g. Blake, 1999; Burgess, Harrison, & Filius, 1998; Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002; Owens, 2000). The cause and effect characteristics of social capital as described by Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) are apparent in the argument provided by Agyeman and Angus (2003) that "a civic renewal and regeneration of social capital is an essential prerequisite for any sustainable community" (p. 348) while "approaches to public participation presented by 'broad focus' civic environmentalism can fully contribute to this process of civic renewal" (p. 348).

While Agyeman and Angus (2003) suggest that narrow focus initiatives can successfully contribute to environmental aspects of sustainable communities, they further promote that broad focus efforts will result in greater social capital along with a holistic appreciation of the environmental, social, and economic characteristics of a sustainable community that can be related back to the blended value proposition. If certain organizations have lacked appropriate social prerequisites for establishing a sense of community among customers, then arguably a more dramatic and wider-spanning approach such as that presented by broad focus civic efforts may be valuable. It is with the social capital concepts and values denoted herein—reputation,

reciprocity, BVP, and broad focus efforts—that the notion of an ideal CSR is positioned for this study. Corporately, however, the materialization of social responsibility has varied, as will be examined in the next section.

Corporate social responsibility. Corporate pursuit of social capital methods in business practices is apparent in the growing trend of social reporting among organizations; however, clearly the justification to engage in social practices largely finds a foundation in financial interests and perhaps in fear of being left behind. The Government of Canada (n.d.) further points to the "growing consensus about the connection between corporate social responsibility and business success" (p. 8). With regard to social media adoption, there exists, corporately, a feeling that the markets shaped by new technologies must be engaged in and yet enormous challenges are presented by such engagement (Day and Schoemaker, 2000). Emerging technologies have seen entire industries made obsolete, while effective best practices for navigating the bottom-up culture of social networking sites remain a work in progress. Technological uncertainty results from ambiguous market signals and embryonic competitive structures that blur the lines between emerging and established technologies.

Motivated both internally and externally, organizational focus on CSR has become a mainstay in many corporate public relations campaigns. A number of reasons for corporate engagement in the CSR process have been delineated, including increased economic profits, employee organizational commitment, public scrutiny, improved investor relations, and the good of society as a whole (e.g. Gan, 2006; Juholin, 2004; Mcintosh, Thomas, Leipzinger, & Coleman, 2003). While defined in a number of different ways that reflect varying levels economic, social, and environmental focus, CSR finds commonality in a motivation to engage in

socially responsible behavior as part of organizational strategy, particularly as a means to competitive advantage within the immediate marketplace (Porter, & Kramer, 2006).

The field of empirical CSR research has been hampered by a lack of consistency in reporting, a lack of consistency with the measurement of claims and activities, and a lack of consistency in accountability among organizations, which have contributed to many challenges for quantitative and qualitative studies in this area (McWilliams, Siegel, & Wright, 2006; Rodríguez, Siegel, Hillman, & Eden, 2006). Furthermore, the evolving practice and adoption of CSR by organizations combined with a growing number of industry measurements available to these organizations create many variables that impede tangible findings. Within Canada, sustainability reporting has increased 45% among TSX companies between 2001 to 2007, suggesting a tremendous amount of movement in this area of interest (Stratos, 2008). Adding to the ambiguity on the measurement side of such reporting, most of the organizations that report CSR on their Web sites also include a list of industry awards they have received, but the scope of awards systems available to organizations may dilute the credibility of noting such references. A growing adoption of the Global Reporting Index may, however, lead to greater consistencies within this field of research as 45% of Canadian organizations that report on CSR now report based on GRI measurements (Stratos, 2008).

As the Canadian Business for Social Responsibility (2008) reports, there is a confusing diversity of approaches that impedes analysis by even the most seasoned CSR report reader to distinguish if corporations are merely reporting CSR versus doing CSR, and furthermore if they are meeting the pace of their peers in that regard (Canadian Business, 2008). Trends in CSR reporting have been influenced by political, economic, and business focus on climate change, and are now leaning toward more meaningful methods of reporting emissions data, mitigation

strategies, consistency in carbon accounting and independent verification processes. However, as organizations undertake to address issues of materiality and provide greater transparency in their CSR reporting, the other side of the coin sees the "carpet-bombing" (Canadian Business, 2008, p. 4) effect of an overabundance of information being reported.

While not mandatory at this time in Canada, CSR reporting is seeing stronger regulations for such inclusionary practices around the globe. Under the umbrella of the European Modernization Directive, the European Union requires all member countries to create legislation with the explicit purpose of reporting employee and environmental matters. In compliance with this directive, the UK has passed an operating and financial review (OFR) regulation, which requires that companies generate reports of their social and environmental activities. In that the OFR goes beyond the requirements of the European Modernization Directive, it is expected to become the standard that other countries will use as a benchmark (Asmus, 2005).

Organizational theory has reflected social responsibility focus through heightened sensitivity toward the global environment and the human role in managing technological advances (Daft, 2007). John Woodward pointed to finding alignment of strategy, structure, and technology as the key to organizational success in the face of competitive change (Daft, 2007). Similarly, Day and Schoemaker (2000) provide a paradigm for dealing with emerging technologies that includes attending to signals from the periphery, inventing in learning, maintaining flexibility, and maintaining organizational separation. The question of regional culture in globalization leaves, however, an ambiguous starting point for organizations in efforts to adopt stronger corporate social responsibility and social capital strategies. Global versus local scrutiny presents a complex umbrella for many organizations that may both impede behavior at a higher, more altruistic, level of civil society and on the other hand propagate sentiments of ethnic

nationalism. In this light, the following examination of Alberta social identity aims to offer insight into the potential around such issues.

Alberta Social Identity

Alberta center stage. Alberta social identity is considered herein within the context of globalization and regional versus global interests. Few regions in the world remain immune to globalization, and Alberta is no exception. Cultural challenges persist for the province under the global eye that begins to demand accountability and conformance. Contradicting the potential of such conformity is the regional historical association of Albertans as mavericks, or headstrong people with harsh opinions that refuse to be cornered and dictated to. The symbolism of the moniker points to a relationship with the land and a wild ferocity that Alberta historians have expounded with pride to provide a deeper foundation and greater balance for the social characterization of their province. Consistent themes include the Alberta disdain for Canada, a propensity toward the new, contradiction of character, boom and bust, harshness, tolerance, persistence, and of course wealth (Ford, 2005; Van Herk, 2001). The latter has become rather centre stage, particularly in the current global context, where Greenpeace has made Alberta tar sands one of its biggest targets (Stop the Tar Sands, 2009).

As much as Alberta may identify itself with the wealth that is the product of the land, the world may equally identify the province thus, and not necessarily in a positive light. Greenpeace advocates that the tar sands are not compatible with sustainability, and the world is listening (Stop the Tar Sands, 2009). Consultants Hill & Knowlton (2008) report that non-government organizations like Greenpeace continue to gain the trust of the public in light of globalization and now rank highly in terms of reputation and reliability. Furthermore, the consulting group suggests that trust is quickly becoming vital to the survival of organizations, as may be reflected

by the Edelman 2007 Trust Barometer which showed that 81% of survey respondents refused to purchase an organization's products or services where trust had been breeched (Hill & Knowlton, 2008). Perhaps moreover, 71% of those respondents purported to spread criticism of those organizations among friends and acquaintances (Hill & Knowlton, 2008). While the Alberta historians reflect pride in their depictions of their province's identity, they also recognize the importance of reputation on the global stage and understand that Albertans, as the maverick stereotype, find themselves in a precarious position. Furthermore, the Greenpeace approach that equally recognizes the demand side of the oil production issue lends a global pressure for large multinational corporations to practice sustainability, which may further threaten Alberta's most lucrative industry. As organizations move toward global behaviors that begin to define wealth beyond monetary terms, the maverick identity may be faced with finding new forms of expression.

The inevitability of globalization and regional behavioral transformation is a given for Van Herk (2005), who addresses the challenge of globalization in Alberta, particularly in light of the province's sense of agitated national citizenship with Canada and primary allegiance of identity to the province and even more so perhaps to particular Alberta cities and towns. She describes Canada as global in its make up of many different people from around the globe, but notes that "[Canadians] only seem vaguely aware of global movements" (Van Herk, 2005, p. 275). She points to the global energy that will affect Alberta life, identity, and citizenship, saying that the province's challenge will be to establish conduct as citizens of the world, further described as cosmopolitan, tolerant, courteous, and gracious (Van Herk, 2005). Despite the challenges that may lay ahead, the success of Alberta in this century is a given for Albertans, something they do not lose sleep over, for it is both tacitly and publicly understood that "a grand

future is [Alberta's] by right" (Nelson, 2005, p. 251). To this end, the themes behind the maverick stereotype are examined more closely along with a consideration of how these identifiers may be compatible with globalization.

The themes of Alberta identity. The themes that reflect Alberta identity as described through the writings of historians are interrelated and can rarely be considered outside of the citizenship ties to Canada. Whether addressing wealth, politics and religion, newness, and the relationship to the land, all notions of Alberta identity are formed in tension with its relationship to Canada. McLuhan describes Canadians as the people who learned to live without the bold accents of the national ego-trippers of other lands." (p.147, Ford, 2005). In *Against the Grain*, Ford (2005) agrees with this assessment, noting that Canadian heroes dare to be different, with a no-borders mentality, and are rarely elevated to the realm of myth; rather, Canadians rarely get the gold and are less about winning, but our literary and cultural artifacts reveal "a rich tapestry of historical and fictional figures who have at some time captured the public imagination and who reflect the dynamism and diversity of the Canadian mosaic in general" (Ford, 2005, p. 147). Perhaps due to a competitive nature that personally hints at the tension between the province and the country, she adds that this is most of all true for "Alberta in particular" (Ford, 2005, p. 147).

In *Mavericks: An Incorrigible History of Alberta*, Van Herk (2001) also reflects a competitive attitude regarding the cultural artifacts of history that the province carries forth, noting that while Alberta might seem relentlessly modern, it is also "truly, where the world began" (p. 29). In fact, longevity and historical depth are tough arguments for Alberta to win, particularly when newness is a theme much more relevant to characteristics of the province. Unlike Central Canada, as Van Herk refers to the geographic political concentration of the country, Alberta has few European ties to its identity and has no tolerance for the elite of the

former. Both authors tie Alberta heritage closer to America as a factor of settlement and business, while, with near contempt for British displays of excess, Van Herk asserts that renown explorer and geographer John Palliser could not even see Alberta through his European eyes (Van Herk, 2001). Ford suggests that the Alberta attachment toward newness stems from disdain over witnessing British influenced naming of geography that belies appropriate credit for the true founders, this having led to a detachment from history (Ford, 2005). While the relationship between Canada and Alberta is founded in difference and tension, an equally defining and interrelated force of Alberta identity may be found in the relationship between the region's land and its inhabitants.

Alberta buildings were built fast versus to last in response to harsh weather, which also lends to an ever-present aura of new. Van Herk (2001) notes that Western cities were built quick and dirty with logs and sandstone versus the brick and granite found in Central Canada. Through a description of the changing face of St Mary's church in Red Deer, Ford adds that Alberta has a new and constantly challenged history that is not for the sentimental (Ford, 2005). The pattern of feast and famine that has characterized the boom and bust nature of Alberta may have further influence on Albertans' propensity toward the new, as uncertainty breeds a take-it-while-you-can attitude (Ford, 2005). Albertans have consistently gained and lost their big cars and houses throughout the province's history and have subsequently always had to start anew.

The boom and bust economic and in turn spiritual extremes of Alberta may also be tied to the land in a very literal sense. Gibbins and Wilke (2005) explain that the character of Alberta can only be understood in terms of its reciprocal relationship with the land, the lineage of which can be broken down into the period of early agrarian settlement leading into the Great Depression, the period of oil and gas development from the 1940s to today, and the period of

rapid urbanization and population growth that started in the 1970s and continues. The land holds the strongest influence for the province and how it has been shaped, usurping the cultural heritage of its settlers (Gibbons & Wilke, 2005). Van Herk reflects this sentiment in an account of the Mounties coming West that is at once tragic and humorous. In a journey described as "hellish, cold and miserable" (p. 145), the group of Mounties, recruited for their "good character" (p. 146) and motivated by a romantic notion of the West, experienced first hand the harshness of the prairies that makes a survivalist nature the only background that matters for living in such geography (Van Herk, 2001). The Toronto horses bred and trained for the excursion did not survive the land, and many of the Mounties fled the regiment at various points in the journey. Sent by Central Canada to monitor whiskey trafficking and keep Westerners in check, the Mounties were an awkward integration that nonetheless integrated—those who survived the journey to and subsequent existence in Alberta that is—and ironically became symbolic of the place they were sent to subdue (Van Herk, 2001). Both figuratively and literally, Alberta found tolerance for the Mounties, and the sense of irony that is found in Mounties having become synonymous with the province reflects another predominant theme of duality.

Like the two ends of the spectrum represented by boom and bust, Albertans are most often described in terms of a contradiction. In a land characterized by its openly fundamentalist religious beliefs, one of the main tourist attractions is the Royal Tyrell Museum, famous for its evolutionary display of dinosaur heritage (Ford, 2005). Van Herk extends the contradiction theme noting that Albertans are male dominant but managed to appoint the first Canadian female judge. Similarly, Albertans demand that their liquor remains cheap but then try to not drink too much. They promise low-tax living but assiduously pay taxes; they gamble everywhere but also practice an astonishing degree of charity; they hate school but have the highest post-secondary

graduate rate in Canada; and, they approve of scandal but will put up a fight if Peter Pocklington tries to come back (Van Herk, 2001).

The harshness of the Alberta landscape may also lend to the harshness of opinions that characterize Albertans. Politically, Alberta is described as a "one party province" that is more comfortable voting a farmer into political power than a philosopher. In terms of political leadership, more important than qualifications or even gender is the requirement to "lead, follow, or get out of the way" (Ford, 2005, p. 215). Van Herk (2001) again ties to the land the protest politics of Alberta, equating this continuing pattern to the turbulent tornadoes that come in and rip out the grass roots, obliterating all good sense. Bible turned populist politics have characterized the direction of Alberta as it has stood up to the controlling powers of Central Canada. In the settlement of Alberta, Ottawa had envisioned and in many ways achieved a lucrative commercial colony that would support Central Canada; however, they underestimated the rebellious nature of Alberta inhabitants in addition to the value of oil, control of which they historically signed over to Alberta in 1929 (Van Herk, 2001). Not willing to back down, Canada subsequently began a legacy of oil and gas taxations that would serve to aggravate Albertans and perpetuate tensions and harsh attitudes. The continued tension would persist in nurturing a disdain for others, which may have contributed to racist behaviors that further played a role in shaping the Alberta landscape.

From the attitudes and behaviors toward First Peoples that persists in running rampant to oppression of Chinese immigrants who built the railway and filled the service industry roles that nobody else wanted for substandard pay, racism and its effects are a part of the Alberta heritage (Van Herk, 2001). Van Herk (2001), however, points to a difference between the effects of racism in Alberta and that of Canada, where First Peoples refuse to fade away in the former

geography (p. 7). They are strong, visible, political, even rich in some cases, and, as one of the fastest growing segments of Alberta's population, may actually have the numbers to bring significant change to the face of the province (Van Herk, 2001). According to Ford (2005), anti-Semitism led to the creation of ATB Financial, which she refers to as a "quasi-bank" (p. 107) and is not shy about calling it unconstitutional. That paranoia over Jewish bankers in Canada led to the creation of a regional financial institution is not contested by Van Herk (2001); however, she avoids further discussion on the subject and thus reserves judgment of ATB in her historical overview of Alberta.

In fact, ATB was formed after attempts to bring Alberta banks under provincial control were thwarted by the federal government, and it remains the most significant surviving remnant of the Social Credit ministry's economic policies in Alberta (ATB Financial, 2009). Ford's apparent contempt for the institution is questionable in the context that the creation of ATB provided a solid and dependable solution for the population's financial needs, particularly when other banks were fleeing the region in response to economic uncertainty (Finch, 2009). While banks were shutting down branches across the province, ATB would start up using a small corner of the empty bank buildings to build a legacy that to this day positions ATB as a cornerstone of rural Alberta (Finch, 2009). A self-proclaimed liberal, Ford's attitudes could be related more to contempt for the constant conservative political association of Alberta, to which ATB has always been intrinsically connected. Furthermore, the tension she relates in her own relationship to the land and politics therein is characterized as love-hate, suggesting perhaps a bit of dramatic sensationalism in her evaluation of ATB. In this light, the example reflects well the theme of tolerance between Albertan's and their province, keeping in mind that Ford according

to her own admittance enjoys the tension and notes "It is that sometimes infuriating spirit that keeps me in Alberta" (Ford, 2005, p. 2).

The survivalist nature that has had to tolerate and be tolerated by the harsh Alberta land has indeed given way to harsh behaviors and attitudes such as racism and contempt as described above, and the list continues, with Ford summarizing succinctly:

> "On the whole, [Albertans] are against the gun registry; in favor of corporal punishment both in the home and in the school; dead-set against liberalism in any of its forms; suspicious of central government and programs that might usurp a parent's authority, such as daycare; patriotic and nationalistic in their expression of citizenship and wary of 'the other,' the stranger, whether he be in a dark suit from Ontario or a dark person from the even-more-distant East" (Ford, 2005, p. 219).

Other definitions provided by Ford include a user-pay attitude, preference for the death penalty, and fair play over altruism (Ford, 2005). Van Herk (2001) echoes these descriptions noting that Albertans prefer punishment versus human rights and are unapologetic about their inappropriate opinions. Such attitudes, combined with a potential reputation that positions Albertans and wealth often in the same sentence, steers increasingly away from the behaviors suggested for a positive global association.

Wealth is often tied to Alberta as a defining characteristic, pointing to the big ranches, big vehicles, and its representative lucrative industries of oil and gas, agriculture, and forestry. Where the maverick stereotype may present wealth and Albertans as a relationship of greed, the themes described above may also lend a more balanced depiction. Taken as a byproduct of deeper Alberta motivations, *wealth* finds a place within the relationship to the land, sense of

history, and politics. In this sense, wealth may be the result of a persistent nature to tolerate and be tolerated by the land and in such reflects greater balance than the stereotype affords, where the land will only ever promise famine to follow the feast. Persistence to gain control of its destiny as self-sufficient entity and break free from the hegemonic constraints of Central Canada gave way to Alberta being the owner of its oil. Money was not the driving force as much as freedom in this case. Furthermore, the success of the agriculture industry in no way came easy to Alberta and was pursued based on romantic notions of Western existence versus a belief that it would result in considerable financial gain. That marriage in Alberta history was based more on money than heritage may actually speak more to a survivalist nature and contempt for British culture rather than simple greed. Economic strength moreover may be tied to a desire for self-reliance as opposed to greed.

Alberta identity and globalization. Turning now to the question of the Alberta challenge to establish global conduct as citizens of the world, a foundation has been laid above that may point to areas of strengths and weaknesses in light of the Alberta identity described above. At first glance, Van Herk's global prescription of being cosmopolitan, tolerant, courteous, and gracious, may not seem to fit with the attitudes described for Albertans. Altruism, according to Ford (2005) occurs more readily for Albertans in the form of lending a helping hand versus the doling out of money; however, Van Herk (2001) refutes the notion of Albertans not being charitable even on a monetary level, suggesting that this is a false reputation. Alberta industry obviously poses a significant challenge to global sustainability movements in that they coincide more with negative rather than positive environmental impact. While Albertans defend their industry, the responsibility for the wake of environmental damage cannot be left to Albertans alone as the suppliers of exports; the orientation of the supply and demand management chain

must equally transform toward sustainable interests (Schön, 2009). That Albertans embrace newness intrinsically as a part of life should lend significant opportunity toward the development of new industry practices, in addition to meeting the challenges involved with globalization and sustainability.

The demand for control over its destiny seems to contradict notions of global scrutiny and serving a higher global authority, but Alberta as a land of contradictions might just surprise. Through a contradictory nature might it find a balanced approach to pluralism and constructive differentiation as opposed to accepting with universal blindness and devaluing the uniqueness of other cultural groups. Furthermore, the Alberta averseness to central government may not inherently reflect an unwillingness to participate in a movement where obligations are an unspoken self-organized domain of social life dependant upon taken-for-granted rules and expectations (Keane, 1989). Finally, it must be noted that worldwide achievements in sustainability have been accomplished as a result of motivation to gain self-reliance. Take for example the Danish wind turbine, which was an important part of a decentralized electrification in the first quarter of the 20th century and has since provided a basis for the design of modern commercial wind power development (Cleveland, 2007).

The themes elaborated above provide insight into the underlying motivations of what has been described as the Alberta maverick social identity; they may also provide a starting point for further discussion around the Alberta movement toward globalization in terms of capacity and potential direction. For the purpose of this study, the stereotype, which Alberta filmmaker Geo Takach pinpoints with a description of Albertans as "oil-spoiled, beef-loving, polluting…Bible-thumping rednecks with less culture than yogurt" (Will the Real Alberta, 2009, ¶ 1), provides apparent identifiers that may be analyzed within the context of CSR. To this end, the following

methodology drills down toward a measurement of how the Alberta maverick social identity materializes as emerging patterns of response compared to that of global social consciousness through corporate social responsibility statements.

Methodology and Approach

A number of CSR statements and references as depicted exclusively by corporate Web sites are examined as a descriptive study into the abstract research question of how the Alberta maverick social identity persists in the emerging global village (de Vaus, 2001). Few comparative studies exist on cultural implications surrounding the development of CSR documents, and to this end the research does not represent an iteration of previous research (Williams & Aguilera, 2008; Husted & Allen, 2006). As a cross-sectional comparison, organizations that present ideal CSR statements are measured against that of a number of Alberta-based organizations. Content analysis provides a quantitative means to building meaningful data for the qualitative comparison and is presented herein as a two-phase evaluation to drill down both Alberta regional and global social identifiers. Context for the research design is also provided as a consideration of issues and elements associated with cross-sectional and content analysis methods to justify the approach taken and the organizations selected for the study.

Elements of the Research Design

As a means to focus the research question, core concepts of global social consciousness and Alberta social identity have been elucidated and defined in the literature review. While explanatory context has been provided for the concepts and may be considered further in future studies, this research aims to provide insights into current corporate expressions of social responsibility in Alberta as a reference point for inquiry around the dialectic of regional culture and globalization. As such, the study considers a sample of organizations as a comparative snapshot and points to specific expressions of behavior associated with globalization that

represent categories for the analysis of CSR reporting through Web sites (see Figure 1). The organizations chosen for the sample are representative of global organizations or Alberta

Human Rights

- Principle 1: Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and
- Principle 2: make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

Labor Standards

- Principle 3: Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
- Principle 4: the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labor;
- Principle 5: the effective abolition of child labor; and
- Principle 6: the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

Environment

- Principle 7: Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;
- Principle 8: undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and
- Principle 9: encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

Anti-Corruption

- Principle 10: Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

Figure 1. Content analysis categorization - United Nations Global Compact Ten Principles

organizations, and are further paired according to like-industries for comparative subgroupings that, taken together, may provide insights into patterns of behavior between the two organizational types. The focus herein is to determine if gaps exist between the CSR reporting of global versus regional organizations. Alberta organizations are thus the unit of analysis in this case, while it is the behaviors in CSR reporting that represent the main aspect of interest. The findings then are concerned with distinguishing expressions of regional and global drivers in

CSR so that organizations may better identify these drivers and subsequently position their CSR efforts more pragmatically. In this light, Alberta organizations will express either global or regional behaviors, the degree of which will provide the basis for further discussion and future analysis.

Figure 2 depicts the relationships that exist between regional and global identity as factors of universal determinants such as those which have been examined throughout the explanatory portion of this study: technology, environment, economy, innovation, etc. Alberta social identity and global social identity may be envisioned as dependent variables, as time order cannot be established and either variable is capable of change (de Vaus, 2001). That is, regional identity has been developing in conjunction with global identity and either variable may have an impact on the other.

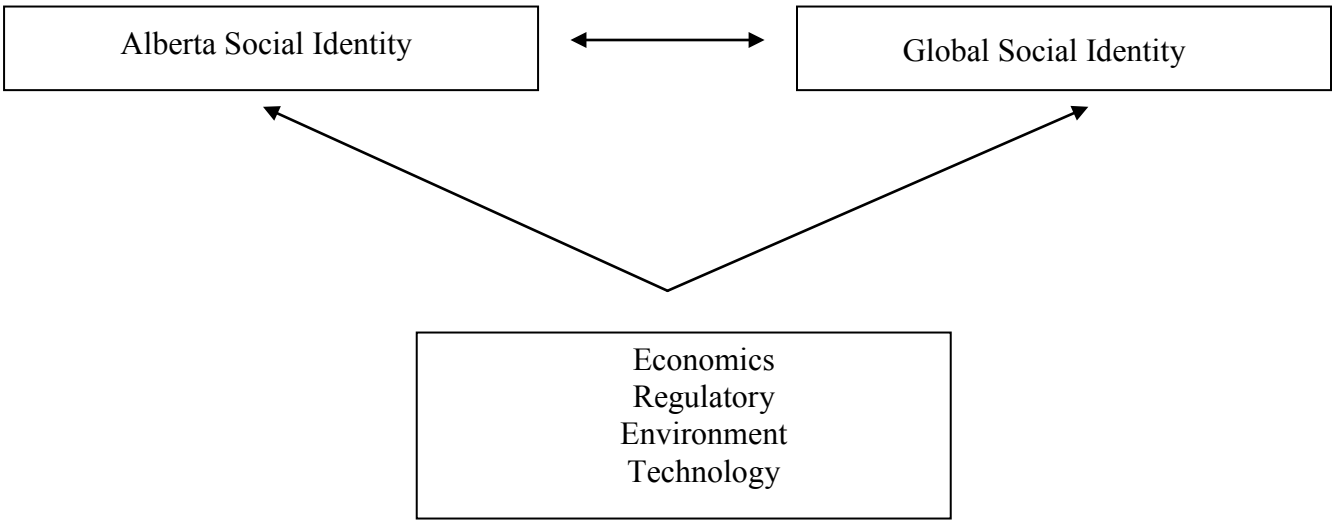

Figure 2. Relationships between concepts

The sample of organizations to represent the global and Alberta regional groupings was selected based on independent variables of size, geographical presence, and availability of information. Accolades were considered as a variable to define further the global organizations, while an additional variable of industry was imposed to determine relevant pairings and establish

external validity for subgroup analysis (de Vaus, 2001). Table 1 reflects the simple cross-sectional design of this research that involves a non-random allocation of experimental and

Method of allocation to groups Non-random	Phase 1 Presence of global behavior indicators (Figure 1)	Phase 2 Cultural nature of reporting
Group defined as Alberta organizations Geographical presence Size Availability of CSR information Industry	Measure on outcome variable as defined by adherence to global behavioral indicators.	Measure on outcome variable as defined by cultural nature of reporting
Group defined as Global organization Accolades Size Geographical presence Availability of CSR information Industry	Measure on outcome variable as defined by adherence to global behavioral indicators.	Measure on outcome variable as defined by cultural nature of reporting

Table 1. Simple cross-sectional design

control group organizations, defined as Alberta regional versus global, and measurement of the extent to which the outcome variables are linked to the independent groupings (de Vaus, 2001). Data analysis conformed to statistical rigor through rigid categorization for the content analysis portion of the study, where Web sites were examined for the presence of key attributes reflecting global behaviors. Each organization involved in the study was subjected to the same content analysis in order to provide a structured set of data to enable systematic comparisons between global-regional pairings (de Vaus, 2001). In this light, the first phase of the study as depicted in Tables 2.1 and 2.2 involved reviewing the Web site content for each organization to establish the presence of global indicators. The second phase as presented in Table 1 further considered qualities of behavior defined by Hofstede (2009) that drill down the nature of social

responsibility reported by the experimental and control groups to provide further evidence of the global versus regional Alberta corporate interests.

UN CSR principles	Vancity		BC Hydro		Starbucks		Google		Johnson & Johnson Inc.	
Human rights										
1	Yes	G	Partial	R	Yes	G	Yes	G	Yes	G
2	Yes	G	Partial	R	Yes	G	Yes	G	Yes	G
Labor										
3	Yes	R	Partial	R	Yes	G	No		Yes	G
4	Yes	R	Partial	R	Partial	G	Partial	R	Yes	G
5	Yes	R	Partial	R	Yes	G	Yes	G	Yes	G
6	Yes	G	Partial	R	Yes	G	Yes	G	Yes	G
Environment										
7	Yes	G	Yes	G	Yes	G	Yes	R	Yes	G
8	Yes	G	Yes	G	Yes	G	Yes	G	Yes	G
9	Yes	G	Yes	G	Yes	G	Yes	G	Yes	G
Anti-corruption										
10	Yes	G	Partial	G	Yes	G	No		Yes	G

Note. UN CSR principles are presented according to number and category in Figure 1. For each principle and organization, two measures are given: 1) "Yes/No/Partial" refers to the presence of this principle in the organization's reporting; 2)"R/G" refers to the regional versus global nature of the reported principle.

Table 2.1. Phase 1 content analysis of organizations with ideal CSR based on UN CSR principles

UN CSR principles	ATB Financial		ATCO Group		UFA		Suncor		Stantec	
				Human rights						
1	No		Yes	G	Yes	R	Partial	R	Yes	G
2	No		No		No		Yes	R	Partial	R
				Labor						
3	Yes	R	No		No		No		Yes	R
4	No		No		No		No		No	
5	No		No		No		No		No	
6	Yes	R	No		No		Partial	G	Yes	G
				Environment						
7	No		No		Yes	G	Partial	R	Yes	G
8	No		Yes	R	Yes	G	Yes	R	Yes	G
9	Yes	R	Yes	G	No		Yes	G	Yes	G
				Anti-corruption						
10	Yes	G	No		No		No		Yes	G

Note. UN CSR principles are presented according to number and category in Figure 1. For each principle and organization, two measures are given: 1) "Yes/No/Partial" refers to the presence of this principle in the organization's reporting; 2)"R/G" refers to the regional versus global nature of the reported principle.

Table 2.2. Phase 1 content analysis of Alberta CSR reporting based on UN CSR principles

The research analysis was conducted using an interval/ratio scoring system as depicted in Tables 2-3, where the presence of a global indicator from the first phase was represented as a

single point (de Vaus, 2001). In all, organizations were capable of 50 points total, and half marks were allotted where a global indicator was indirectly present, such as would be the case where the organization makes reference to abiding by a principle but does not overtly indicate that they advocate the principle or provide any particular positioning around the issue. A direct example of this would be where an organization indicates it is an equal opportunity employer within the context of an employment application form found at the Web site, but does not provide further detail around advocacy nor position the principle as part of a formal social responsibility statement. To this end, Web sites were reviewed in their entirety and credit was given for both indirect and direct presence of global principles as suggested in order to account for the current lack of reporting standards around CSR (McWilliams, Siegel, & Wright, 2006; Rodríguez, Siegel, Hillman, & Eden, 2006). The cumulative scoring for organizations with ideal CSR versus Alberta CSR is depicted in Table 3.

			Totals		
			Presence of principles		
Ideal CSR	10	6.5	9.5	7.5	10
Alberta CSR	4	2	2	4.5	7.5
			Presence of globally-oriented principles		
Ideal CSR	7	4	10	6	10
Alberta CSR	1	2	2	2	6

Note. The presence of a principle is rated by a score of 1, where "partial" receives a half point (i.e. .5). Only the global ratings receive a point of "1" for each principle.

Table 3. Phase 1 totals and comparison of content analysis for ideal CSR reporting versus CSR reporting by Alberta organizations based on UN CSR principles

Scoring for Phase 2 involved a *high-moderate-low* qualitative rating of behavioral indicators expressed in the organizations' Web sites as shown in Figure 3.1. These ratings were based on world cultural dimension averages as being the norm that would correspond with global organizations comprising the control group (see Figure 3.2).

Cultural dimensions	*Qualities reflecting global behavior*	*Qualities reflecting Alberta behavior*
Power Distance (PDI)	Moderate - equality of power (among groups and institutions), interaction, respect	Low- self reliance, loose bonds with others, inclusionary.
Individualism (IDV)	Moderate - looking out for community, global economic focus	High - looking out for self and region, regional economic focus, avoidance of transparency
Masculinity (MAS)	Moderate - comforting, compassionate, openly nurturing	High - aggressive, competitive
Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)	Moderate - responsive to regulations, rules, pragmatic	Low - open to change, innovation, deterministic
Long Term Orientation (LTO)	Moderate - ongoing goals toward social, economic, community betterment, perseverance	Low - structured goals for economic improvement, appreciation of cultural traditions and regional obligations

Figure 3.1. Phase 2, Hofstede's cultural dimensions & global versus Alberta behavior

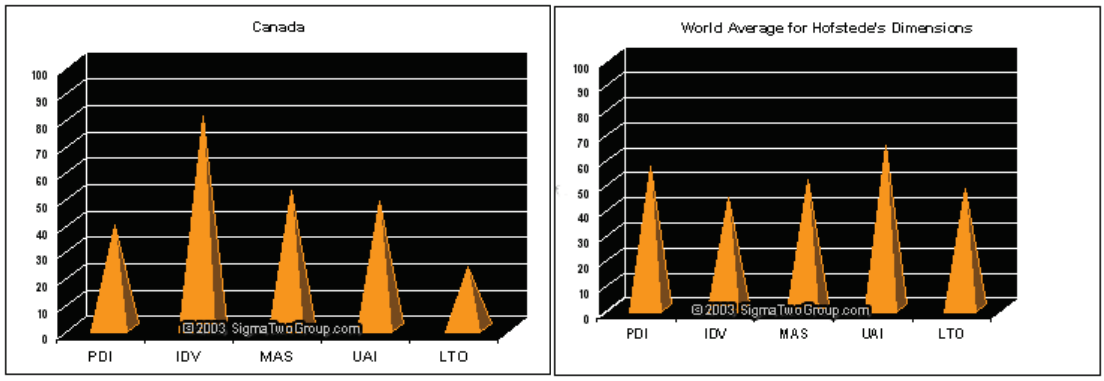

Figure 3.2. Phase 2, Canada average versus global average

Deviations from the norm then rated higher or lower for the experimental group and were presented as qualitative discussion in the findings. Those deviations were predicted based on Canadian cultural dimensions and further defined using specific terminology for the prediction of Alberta social identity behaviors as defined in Figure 4.

Indicator	*Qualities reflecting Alberta social identity*
Regional focus versus global focus	Activities and interests related to regional interests
Shareholder/owner economic preoccupation out of balance with stakeholder issues and community/state welfare	Shareholder/owner bias
Less integration of responsibility at a strategic level	Evidence of compliance, kindness, and strategic philanthropy. Less conviction and integration, as shown by reporting comprehensiveness, regional focus in activities, unbalanced focus in activities biased toward economic interests.

Figure 4. Phase 2, Alberta social identity indicators

Design Evaluation

While content analysis has the advantage of being able to analyze trends over a long period of time, it has only been in the last decade that businesses have begun to exhibit serious evidence of CSR in their strategic management and stakeholder social reporting (Emerson, 2003; Williams & Aguilera, 2008). In this light, the cross-sectional attributes of the study herein rely on a snapshot of existing differences in CSR reporting rather than changes over a given period of time (de Vaus, 2001). Similarly, the organizations chosen for the study were also based on existing differences to overcome the current lack of consistent data available to measure the pace or nature of change that has taken place since the onset of the CSR reporting phenomenon.

Cross-sectional content analysis proved to be the most effective design for this study given the lack of CSR history available to perform meaningful longitudinal analysis and the

intent to provide statistically valid generalizations for the region of Alberta (de Vaus, 2001). While a case study approach to the research question may have been conducive to exploring the phenomena and context of global social consciousness and regional social identity, the intent of this study is to establish *how* regional identity persists in CSR rather than *why* it persists, as the *why* is predicated on the lineage of theories provided via the literature review. In this light, an examination of *how* the global communications phenomenon impacts regional culture will provide a more timely and progressive study. Furthermore, the grand scope of appetite for research on culture and globalization is more widely addressed through generalization versus the case study approach that looks to extract more meaning from actors and better understand human behavior (Holt, 2008). Concerns of reactivity and replication inherent in the focus group and survey methods associated with case study design are also overcome through a content analysis approach (de Vaus, 2001).

As a research method, case studies usually benefit from presenting multiple cases, as a single case does not usually test the theory vigorously enough; however, obtaining access to multiple cases becomes a challenge for investigators (de Vaus, 2001). By contrast, content analysis for this project is enhanced through easy access to a cross section of corporate social responsibility statements, which are widely and publicly available on the Internet. A single case study might not then provide the richness of sampling that the content analysis can offer, while establishing a second case for perspective and triangulation would be difficult to achieve, particularly for a focus group segment. From a postpositive perspective, existing CSR statements should have already taken into consideration a regional sampling of Alberta attitudes toward social policy and would therefore have a proclivity to reflect regional interests. Thus, deeper insights into Alberta social consciousness may be inherently reflected in the content

analysis. To this end, content analysis provides an efficient means to produce potentially similar data to that which the case study would produce, while offering generalization that the latter cannot. Furthermore, potential issues around confidentiality are circumvented by the exclusive use of publicly available documents for the data collection (de Vaus, 2001).

Examination of Research Tools

Content analysis has been effectively employed in cultural studies by assessing the image of particular groups in society (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006). Therefore, the content analysis for the first phase of this study involves relating certain characteristics of the population reflected by a body of message content to the characteristics of the messages produced (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006; see Tables 1-3). That is, if an Alberta corporation is representative of certain characteristics based on historical depictions of Alberta social identity, then its CSR statements should reflect characteristics related to its identity (Holsti, 1969).

Also lending strength to the approach of content analysis in the case of examining cultural indicators is the recent development of CSR reporting guidelines that may provide a foundation for categorization and offset the complexity of addressing inconsistencies that arise from varying perspectives, positioning, and presentation of social responsibility. The Government of Canada guide to implementing CSR provides a useful starting point for such categorization. It points to the *United Nations Global Compact Ten Principles* (p. 82) as key international CSR instruments, which are further broken down into five categories of: human rights, labor standards, environment, and anti-corruption (Government of Canada, n.d.) (see Figure 1 for a list of the ten UN global compact principles).The principles therein comprise the categories used for the Phase 1 content analysis of the present study.

Embracing a blended value perspective for establishing a well-designed CSR implementation framework, the Government of Canada (n.d.) guide points to the importance of integrating economic, social, and environmental decision-making through the organization. Such integration is mirrored in the categorization provided by Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) guidelines for sustainability reporting, which include environmental, labor practices (and decent work), society, product responsibility, and economic performance indicators (Sustainability Reporting, n.d.). While these implementation and reporting guidelines embrace regional and business interests, it is important to note that these are considered as integrated and obviously necessary elements of CSR efforts that must still "meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission, 1987, p. 43). The GRI report further qualifies that organizations are key forces in society that have an important role to play in achieving the goal of sustainability (Sustainability Reporting, n.d.). The distinction of business and regional interests as an integration of social, economic, and environment efforts is helpful for the measurement of CSR statements in this study.

For the purpose of measurement, the above categories may be applied to CSR statements to determine comprehensiveness and adherence to sustainability as well as to differentiate regional versus global interests. As many organizations adhere to GRI reporting guidelines, the UN global principles are used for this analysis as a means to reducing bias. Comprehensiveness and adherence to the globally determined CSR instruments may provide insight into the extent that Alberta corporations embrace sustainability efforts. Similarly, the regional versus global focus may point to patterns of leaning toward global interests or alternatively the preservation of regional heritage and avoidance of global subscription. While quantitative analysis of these factors provides a standardized means of data gathering for orientation and conformity, a

qualitative consideration of corporate approaches to CSR reporting is necessary in order to look further into the nature of that reporting.

The second phase of the study is based on cultural dimensions defined by Hofstede (2009), which define further and equally provide context for the content analysis results as shown in Figures 3.1 and 3.2. An analogy is made through the representation of ideal CSR reporting as a reflection of the global average of cultural dimension ratings. This association is then measured against the CSR reporting of Alberta and Alberta-based organizations, which are expected to align more closely with Canadian cultural dimension averages. The examination thus reveals trends in predominance toward either global behaviors or regional behaviors at a multi-dimensional level. The more behaviors trend toward Canadian cultural dimension averages, the more regional influences as opposed to global influences come to light.

In Canada, individualism ranks as the highest cultural dimension, particularly in comparison to the world average, which suggests that Alberta CSR would reflect efforts emphasizing more individual economic versus collective gain. Long-term orientation rated as the lowest dimension for Canada, a rating that was much lower than the world average. Alberta is described by Van Herk (2005) as a culture of "home," which heavily supports a leaning toward individualism. Similarly, the provincial propensity toward newness would coincide with a tendency toward more short-term orientation as depicted by the Hofstede model. In terms of uncertainty avoidance, Canada ranks lower than the world average, suggesting that Canadians are open to different ideas, opinions, and have greater tolerances for the unknown. In this case, Alberta identity may prove to either correlate or depart from the Canadian average in that Albertans may be described as having narrow focus in terms of convictions or broad focus in terms of a contradictory nature.

The qualitative analysis of this study integrates further the cultural dimension analysis and the content analysis involving the United Nations international CSR measurements to drill down further to evidence of Alberta-specific behavior and trends through CSR reporting (see Figure 4 for a list of the Alberta social identity indicators). In terms of maverick identity, trends toward regional interests reflecting a self-reliant nature are expected for Alberta CSR reporting. A tendency toward suspicion of the other would support the regional preoccupation as well as a trend toward less integrated reporting, both in the physical sense of visibility and transparency and in the philosophical sense of thinness at the strategic level (Van Herk, 2001). These behaviors may be compared to Agyeman and Angus's argument around narrow focus civic environmentalism, which involves a transfer of information that serves to increase environmental values and pro-environmental behavior, while broad focus civic environmentalism by contrast is based on deliberative and inclusionary processes and procedures that serve to engage the public actively in all areas of policy formation and implementation (Agyeman & Angus, 2003; Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). This notion of narrow versus broad focus may further be extended to the cultural consideration of long versus short term orientation, where the broader focus takes into account a larger sustainability interest versus that of regional sustainability.

In an extensive cross-national study, Waldman, Sully de Luque, Washburn, and House (2006) examined the relationship of CSR with the two cultures of institutional collectivism and in-group collectivism. In conjunction with behavior that reflects regional sustainability, Waldman et al. (2006) show that CSR in countries with institutional collectivism traits such as obtaining gratification for addressing long-term concerns are more likely to manifest behaviors positively associated with the three dimensions of CSR: shareholder/owner, stakeholder issues, or community/state welfare. Alternatively, CSR in wealthier countries are mostly concerned with

shareholder/owner CSR issues; that is, CSR strategies which maximize economic returns (Waldman et al, 2006). For the purpose of this study, a hypothesis may be made wherein Alberta CSR strategies reflect a predominant leaning toward economic returns whereas a more globally-oriented organization reflects a greater balance of the three dimensions.

The economic preoccupation of the Alberta maverick depiction should then reflect a more narrow focus defined by less integration of transformational and philanthropic behavior in its sustainability efforts (Agyeman & Angus, 2003; Brown & Ferris, 2007; Given & Olsen, 2003). Hill & Knowlton (2008) provide a spectrum of CSR positioning that speaks to varying levels of integration reflected by, at one end of the spectrum, *compliance*, *kindness*, and *strategic philanthropy*, and at the other end of the spectrum, *conviction* and *integration* (see Figure 5 for a spectrum of CSR positioning). This is used as a tool to mitigate discrepancies between presentations of CSR on organizational Web sites and to measure qualitatively the depth of CSR

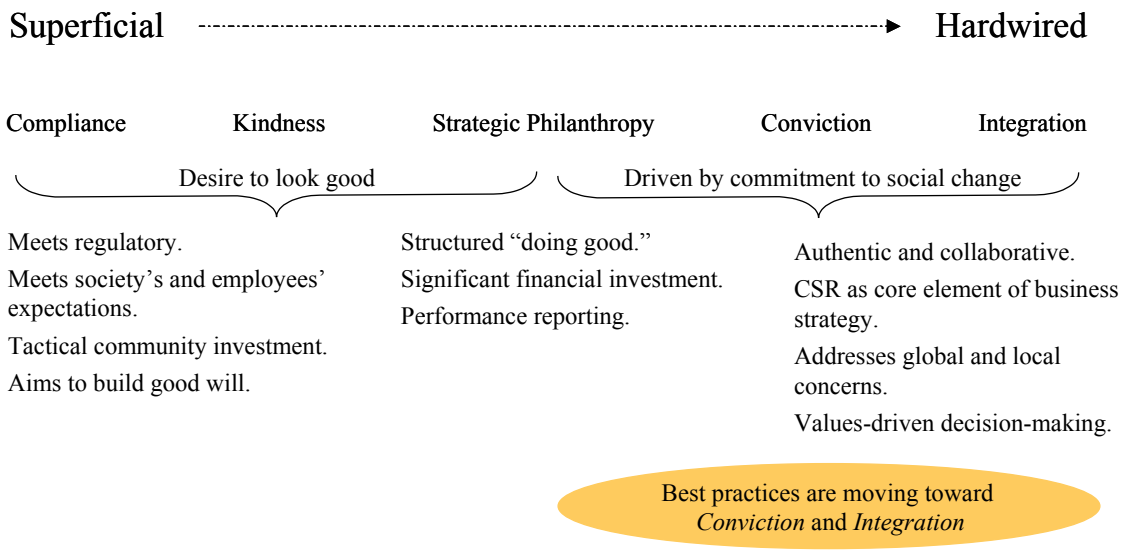

Figure 5. Hill & Knowlton's (2008) spectrum of CSR positioning

positioning based on those presentations. In this light, Alberta specific behavior, recognized as competitive and outspoken, should tend toward the beginning of the spectrum, reflecting cultural interests that are more competitive in nature and less caring and modest as represented by a higher masculinity rating within Hofstede's model. Like Canada, the Alberta cultural dimension of power distance would be expected to rate rather low in correlation to the description of Albertans as "illogically wealthy hillbillies" (p. 1) and given that the wealth distribution for the region is based less on tradition and education (Van Herk, 2001).

Figure 6 provides an example of how organizations differ in their presentations of CSR reporting and how these fit with Hill & Knowlton's (2008) spectrum. The top image shows a Web site main page with an integration of CSR ideals throughout the page and points to areas of interactive social focus, where discussion boards are available for online communication between customers and Dove representatives (Dove, 2009). Clearly the organization gives the impression of having strong social interests, particularly when compared to an organization that segregates CSR references as is depicted in the bottom image. Most of the references in the Husky (2009) main page point to financial interests, which suggests that the social considerations are secondary. The secondary positioning of the social interests renders the offering closer to the realm of superficial and would thus align with behavior expected for an Alberta organization. In fact, Husky Energy happens to be an Alberta-based organization that, like Dove, has a global presence. Dove, however, would align much closer to the expectation of global behavior based on the integration of CSR ideals as presented on the homepage.

The discrepancy between CSR positioning on organizational Web sites also materializes in presentation format. For example, Figure 7 shows how Husky presents its CSR reporting in formal documents, whereas Dove presents its CSR positioning via interactive quizzes on social

issues directed at visitors to the Web site. The Husky reporting further follows GRI measurements and presents based on that tool, whereas the social interests are integrated as the Web site offering itself in the Dove example. Figure 8 also depicts less formality in CSR reporting, where the organization provides a statement regarding community involvement but does not provide a report based on, for example, GRI standards in CSR reporting.

For the purpose of this study, the presentation style of CSR does not factor as a determinant of UN CSR principles for the Phase 1 evaluation. Rather, the content of all instances of CSR reporting regardless of presentation style is taken into consideration and evaluated according to the global compact principles. Consideration of presentation style is then factored in for the Phase 2 evaluation of behaviors reflecting global versus Alberta social identity indicators. In addition to considering the overall orientation of organizational CSR reporting to local versus larger geographical interests, Phase 2 examines the balance of social and economic interests presented by the Web site. Integration at the Web design level is considered a reflection of strategic or hardwired CSR positioning that points to global orientation. By contrast, segregation or lack of reporting is considered a reflection of superficial CSR that points to the Alberta maverick orientation. The formality of reporting is less important to this study and is presented herein largely to orient the reader to the inconsistency of styles that currently exist in CSR reporting and to help explain further how the evaluation was conducted.

Figure 6. Comparison of hardwired versus superficial CSR reporting

Figure 7. Comparison of formal versus informal CSR reporting

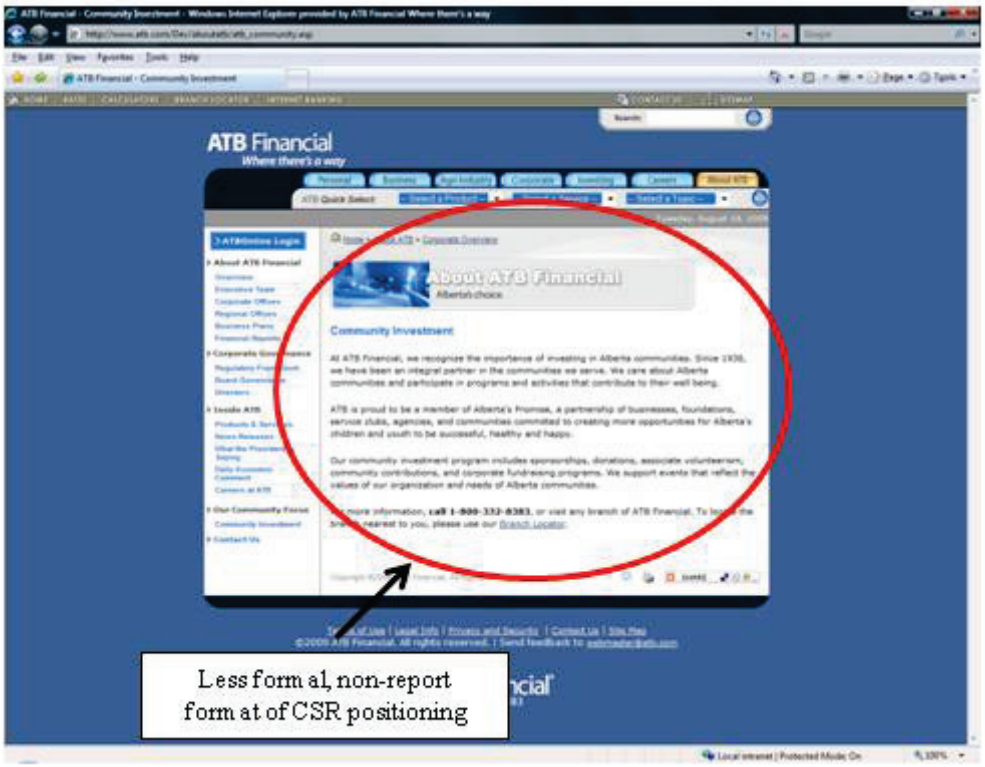

Figure 8. Less formal CSR reporting

Overview of Sample

In total, ten organizations were selected for analysis, including five that represent Alberta organizations and five that represent organizations with ideal corporate social responsibility. The choice of number reflects a standard of user-centered design testing that represents relaxed statistical rigor as noted and supported by Virzi (1992) and Nielsen (1993). The number also embraces practical realities of the study size and allows for a closer look at each organization, which may serve to offset some of the inconsistencies in reporting and measurement that have impeded CSR research (McWilliams, Siegel, & Wright, 2006; Norgaard & Hornbaek, 2006; Rodríguez, Siegel, Hillman, & Eden, 2006). That is, the analysis may be framed by a qualitative

look at the selection of the organizations so as to narrow further and potentially strengthen future discussion on this study. An overview of the selection process follows.

Overall, the organizations selected for analysis were limited to those offering Web sites and CSR reporting in English due to language limitations of the researcher. On one hand, a comparison of North American versus non-North American organizations could provide insight into CSR patterns from different cultural perspectives; however, the subtle differences that may be exposed through a comparison of organizations within North America may draw closer to emerging patterns among smaller regions and the impacts of localization. The organizations for the regional sample include: ATB Financial (2009), ATCO Group (2009), UFA (2009), Suncor Energy (2009), and Stantec (2009). The organizations selected for their ideal CSR include: Vancity (2009), BC Hydro (2009), Starbucks Coffee Company (2009), Google (2009), and Johnson & Johnson Inc. (2009). Bias was reduced by the fact that none of these organizations at the time of the study had been mandated by government regulations to produce CSR reporting.

From a common sense point of view, organizations with global presence might naturally present more globally integrated CSR, which is why Alberta organizations with international presence were included in the sample, such as Suncor Energy and Stantec. Furthermore, where possible, organizations bearing industry similarities were also selected, as was the case with ATB Financial and Vancity or ATCO Group and BC Hydro. These organizations represent a very similar scope in terms of being provincial service providers of financial products or utilities, respectively. UFA and Starbucks Coffee Company also have similarities as they both share agricultural interests, while Suncor Energy and Google are giants in their respective industries. Stantec and Johnson & Johnson Inc. represent the final pairing, which was determined by their size and multinational presence.

The discerning of regional organizations presented a challenge in that globalization has made it difficult to pinpoint an Alberta corporation that is exclusively Albertan. Certainly, the size of the organizations, for analysis purposes, had to be significant enough to both publish comprehensive Web sites and provide a fair comparison to organizations with ideal CSR. While Suncor Energy and Stantec have international presence, they are both Alberta-based organizations with their head offices located in the province and were selected on this basis. These organizations may therefore be expected to address global CSR concepts more comprehensively than the other regional selections. Ambiguity arising from the international scope of these organizations may be offset by the regional scope of the ideal CSR organizations that represent only a provincial territory, in the case of Vancity and BC Hydro.

Organizations selected for their ideal CSR were based on accolades and references in business literature. Vancity received a rating of A+ on its 2008 review by GRI standards (GRI Reports List, 2009), is recognized by the Government of Canada (n.d.) for its superior CSR efforts, and is noted by Stratos (2008) as a leading CSR reporter. BC Hydro is also recognized as a leading reporter by Stratos (2008) and has received awards for its sustainability efforts from both the Fraser Basin Council and the Association of Professional Engineers & Geoscientists of British Columbia (S04(1) Awards, 2006). Johnson & Johnson Inc. is recognized as a firm of endearment by Sisodia, Sheth, and Wolf (2007) and has been deemed the corporation with the second best reputation in America by Harris Interactive® (Awards and Recognition, 2009). Google and Starbucks Coffee Company also make the cut as Sisodia, Sheth, and Wolf's (2007) firms of endearment and are consistently recognized for their CSR practices in popular business literature (e.g. Denning, 2005; Tapscott, & Williams, 2006).

Because existing differences rather than change measurements are sought within the context of this cross-sectional research design, only organizational Web sites have been reviewed as data sources. Further analysis could potentially include interviews from key organizational representatives in order to determine future plans for CSR integration or plans that are currently underway. For example, from her employment with ATB Financial, the researcher is aware that the organization is working diligently to integrate stronger CSR positioning; however, organizations are always in flux as a factor of their environments (Daft, 2007). This being the case, published and publically available documentation may provide the only certain positioning of an organization. Certainly, accountability for that positioning may also come into question but this will remain largely outside the scope of this study for reasons of practicality. Findings from the CSR content analysis of the ten selected organizations follow.

Findings

This study was conducted in two phases, beginning with a content analysis as depicted in Tables 2-3. The qualitative criteria that comprise Phase 2 are outlined in Figures 3 and 4, respectively. Findings from the latter phases are elucidated herein in a manner that integrates the phases via an examination of each organization, contextualized by an overview of the preliminary content analysis.

Content Analysis Overview

The organizations were measured for the presence of principles related to UN international reporting guidelines (see Figure 1). Organizational Web sites were reviewed in their entirety for this examination, as CSR reporting exists in a multitude of formats. In total, the ideal organizations scored 43.5 out of a possible 50 points for the presence of the UN principles, with 37 out of a possible 45 points (82%) being achieved for reflecting global orientation around the principles presented (see Table 3). By contrast, Alberta organizations collectively scored only 20 points for the presence of the UN principles and, of those indications, only 13 out of a possible 21 (62%) were globally oriented (see Table 3). Clearly, the ideal organizations reflect stronger, more comprehensive, and more globally represented CSR compared to the Alberta organizations. The following qualitative analysis for each organization drills deeper into the nature of the CSR reporting to see how the Alberta maverick identity persists. To facilitate the qualitative approach in drawing comparisons and contrasts, the Alberta organizations are paired with the ideal organizations as described earlier.

Organizational Review

ATB Financial and Vancity. ATB does not provide formal CSR reporting in the sense of a published document dedicated to sustainability issues; however, the organization does provide

information on community investment, employment policies, and a business plan for fiscal years 2009-2011. The latter shows integration of regional social concerns, but largely remains focused on the shareholder, who in the case of ATB as a Crown corporation, happens to include employees and customers. The positioning as a Crown corporation further lends a greater sense of adherence to regulatory compliance in the overall reporting and therefore a higher UAI. The exclusively regional focus of efforts reflects a quality of self-reliance and inclusionary behavior, for a lower sense of PDI. The financial focus and lack of balance among the triad of economic, social, and environmental concerns that is predominant throughout all reporting suggests competitive and aggressive qualities for higher IDV and MAS. The financial focus is also indicative of shorter-term orientation.

Vancity received high marks (7) for global orientation compared to ATB Financial (1) in its CSR reporting as determined by the content analysis. The global orientation of Vancity is further reflected in the analysis of cultural dimensions, where a balance of interests is predominant throughout its extensive reporting available to the public. While Vancity follows GRI reporting principles, this does not necessarily always lead to a larger global orientation, as is seen later in the examination of Suncor. Vancity reporting presents no distinct bias at any point between the economic, social, and environmental triad. They subscribe to transparency, indicative of moderate individualism, in noting that their employee engagement scores have seen a slight decline over the last year and in reflecting on the financial impacts of the economic downturn. The organization has also opened up a community blog through a micro Web site devoted to social and environmental concerns, reflecting strong corporate citizenship, transparency, and lower IDV. Finally, the organization has invested in developing change

products, such as the Clean Air Auto Loan and Shared World Term Deposits (aimed at reducing global poverty) that speak to broad focused efforts at the product level.

Integration of corporate responsibility is seen both physically in the Web site design for Vancity compared to that of ATB Financial and strategically/philosophically as reflected by product offerings, public deliberation forum, and performance measurements that show conviction toward sustainability that is built into the corporate framework. ATB responsibility remains focused on the shareholder, with regional community involvement reflecting at best efforts toward strategic philanthropy. A comparison of the homepages for ATB and Vancity in Figure 9 exemplifies the difference in CSR focus between the organizations. At the ATB homepage, there is no mention of efforts related to responsibility, whereas Vancity positions a strong community focus directly from its homepage.

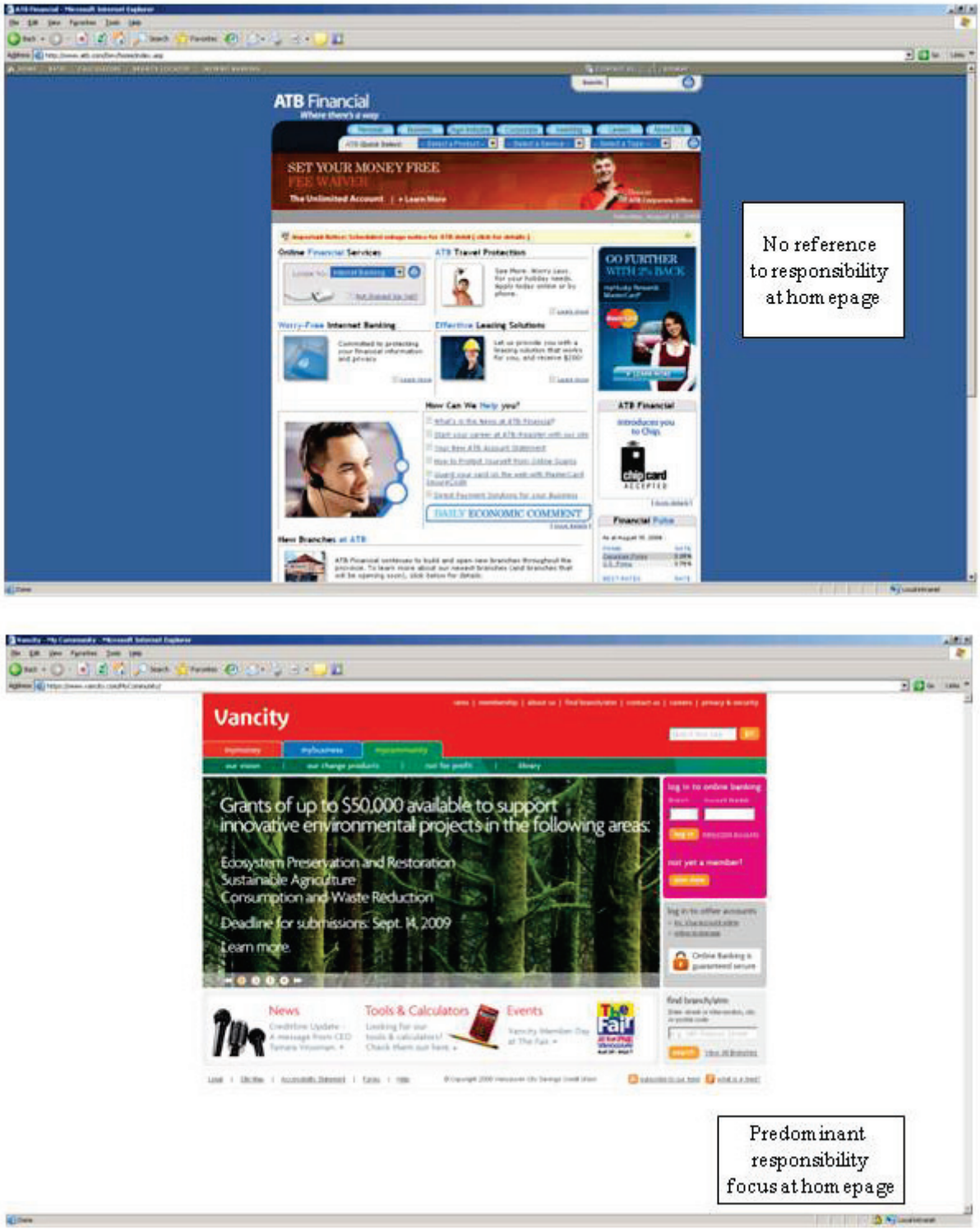

Figure 9. Comparison of ATB and Vancity homepages

ATCO Group and BC Hydro. ATCO Group is an Alberta-based worldwide organization with three main business divisions of power generation, utilities, and global enterprises of manufacturing technologies, logistics, and energy services. Despite the global presence, ATCO Group's CSR reporting is rather weak in terms of comprehensiveness and global orientation. Like ATB, ATCO Group reports on regional philanthropic efforts and looks to employees to be partners in such efforts. CSR reporting is segregated within their Web site, which has a predominant economic and inclusionary focus. An area of strong global focus may be found in the organization's presentation of international products; however, these are not change products aimed at effecting environmental or social benefit. ATCO Group scored the strongest on environmental principles within the content analysis compared to the other categories, and certainly a utilities group might be expected to report more fully on this dimension. In the case of this organization, however, the reporting remains lean, suggesting that they will strive to use resources "wisely" (ATCO Group, 2009, Partnership section, ¶ 2). This of course begs the question of perspective. If all other focus as indicated by their Web site is financially-motivated, one might presume the same of their environmental efforts. Overall, ATCO Group largely displays the qualities hypothesized for the Alberta organization in terms of cultural dimensions. The UAI may, however, be slightly lower as there is no strong sense of regulatory obligation in its reporting. In fact, even industry specific matters such as employee safety go without mention.

BC Hydro is the third largest electrical utility in Canada, and this group "endeavors to provide energy solutions to its customers in an environmentally and socially responsible way by balancing British Columbians' energy needs with the concerns of the environment" (Who We Are, 2009). This quote points to a focus on social and environmental interests, which is further reflected throughout the Web site along with comprehensive reporting on safety, planning and

regulatory, and sustainability. The reporting is integrated in the sense of speaking to both customer and associate interests, such as is exemplified by the safety reporting that gives both home and workplace safety tips. Their Community Outreach initiative sees BC Hydro representatives proactively touring the province of British Columbia to attend events where they can teach about energy saving, which points to a balance of shareholder, stakeholder, and community engagement. BC Hydro purports to pursue partnerships with high standards of conduct and, like Vancity, has also produced change products aimed at conservation and offers incentives for sustainable efforts on the part of consumers. In all, the organization shows qualities related more to the global cultural dimensions.

Like ATCO Group, BC Hydro scored the highest in terms of environmental principles, which are always deemed global in nature unless the indication of effort is either narrow or vague. A subscriber to GRI reporting, BC Hydro is completely transparent about both its CSR efforts and measurements of such by providing the GRI evaluation on the BC Hydro Web site. The organization has not fully embraced global principles of human rights and labor practices but is absolutely rigid and transparent about adherence to these principles at a regional level. In all, ATCO Group has a very low integration of CSR, falling likely within the category of *kind* as was hypothesized for the Alberta maverick identity, which further coincides with the largely economic and regional focus (see Figure 5 for an explanation of the rating). Interestingly, the worldwide presence of ATCO Group does not lend to nearly the level of global orientation and corporate citizenship as the provincially situated BC Hydro. A comparison of the organizations' community pages in Figure 10 reflects a static statement on the part of ATCO that remains local in focus, while the BC Hydro community page is a portal to multi-faceted sustainability initiatives.

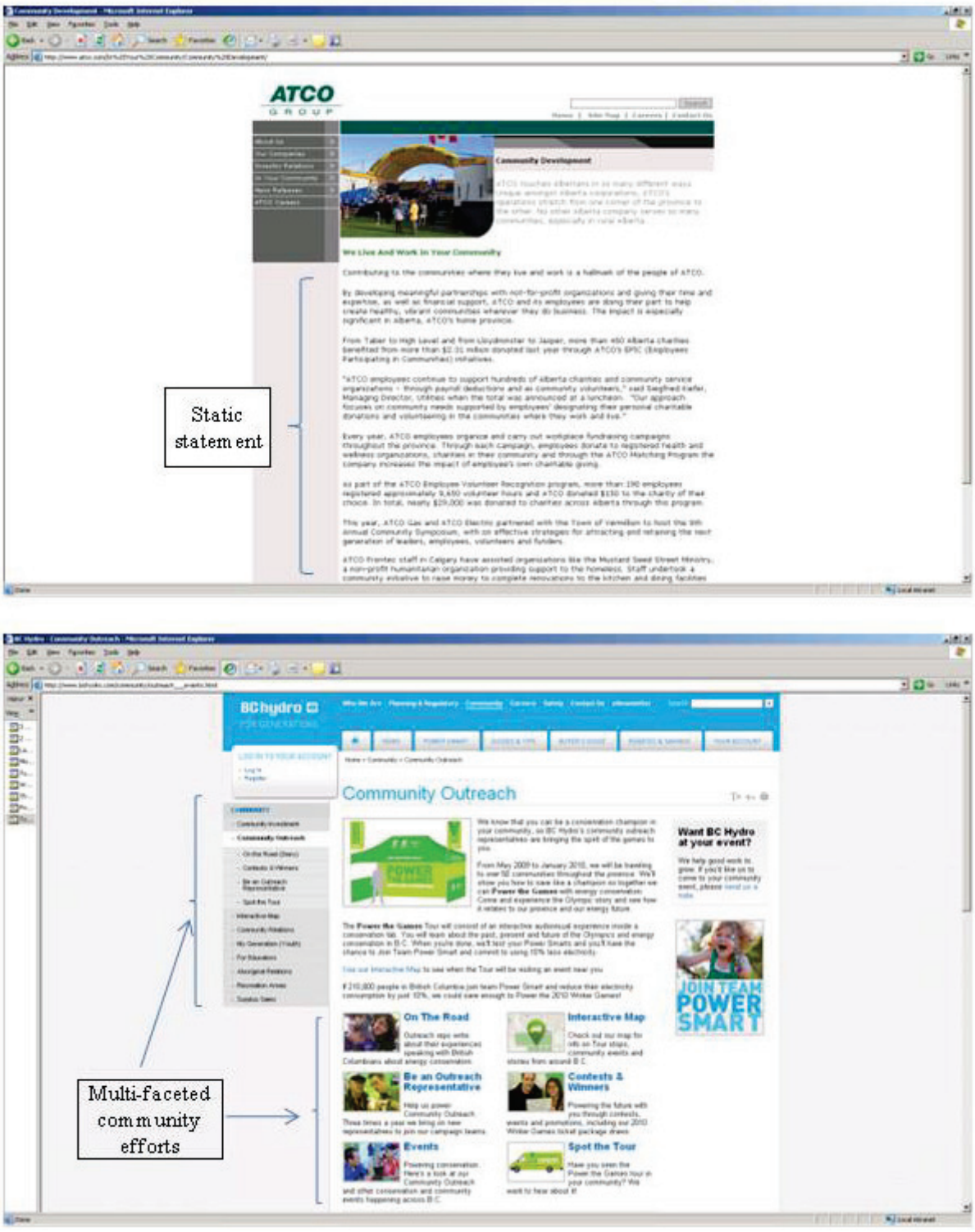

Figure 10. Comparison of ATCO and BC Hydro community pages

UFA and Starbucks Coffee Company. UFA is an Alberta-based and founded cooperative serving the Canadian Prairie Provinces as an extensive retail and distribution network of agriculture products. The organization claims "a passion for rural life and a business that is progressive and diverse" (Who We Are, 2007). As the quote and all other reporting in the Web site suggests, UFA appears to be competitive and aggressive in its regional and economic focuses. There is no mention of CSR at the homepage, which suggests weaker integration of such efforts. Community investment focuses only on country living and learning, and little evidence of adherence to any of the UN CSR principles exists. The nature of the group's PDI may be considered moderate, closer to the global rating, due to the cooperative structure of the organization, but the inclusionary premise of that cooperation suggests a lower PDI closer to the Canadian rating. IDV and MAS both appear to be clearly higher than world average, as is evidenced by a self-description of being market driven and a leading provider of agriculture products. The UFA vision does not provide any sense of long versus short-term orientation, suggesting ambivalence toward this dimension similar to what is related by the ATCO Group in this regard.

Starbucks Coffee Company (Starbucks) achieved 9.5 points out of a possible 10 in terms of adherence to UN principles, which starkly contrasts the rating of 3 achieved by UFA. Starbucks is a multinational corporation that subscribes to GRI reporting principles and offers extensive documentation of all CSR positioning and activities, which are highly integrated into the physical structure of the organization's Web site. They have selected to be globally oriented in all areas of the UN principles, which point largely to the origins of its product and focus on labor standards, human rights, and education in coffee producing countries. In light of the larger global connections, Starbucks purports to partner with only suppliers that have a high standard of

principles toward like interests. Regional interests are not sacrificed at the interest of global efforts, with just as much attention being given to associates—who are referred to as "partners"—wellness, diversity, and education, as well as community philanthropy. Relating a strong sense of high power equality, community and global focus, transparency, nurturing, and long-term interests, Starbucks clearly reflects qualities of global behavior.

Again, the Alberta organization shows strong evidence of the maverick identity in question, with exclusive regional interest, lack of documented global concern, and bias toward financial performance. Considering the nature of the UFA industry, a larger interest in and transparency around environmental matters would tend to be expected, and yet far more information is provided on the organization's available clothing line than the three paragraphs afforded to sustainability efforts and positioning. In the comparison of UFA and Starbucks, the organization with global presence clearly does have the greater global-orientation in its CSR, where Starbuck's reporting reflects full integration and conviction compared to that of UFA, which may barely rate as *kind* given the information available on the Web site (see Figure 5 for an explanation of the rating). The Web site pages depicted in Figure 11 exemplify the disparity in local versus global interest presented by the two organizations.

Figure 11. Comparison of CSR positioning between UFA and Starbucks

Suncor Energy and Google. Suncor is an Alberta-based international corporation that positions itself as an "integrated energy company" (About Us, 2009, ¶ 1) seeking to strategically and responsibly develop Athabasca's oil sands. The organization has followed GRI standards since 2003 and has made transparency through reporting a focus of its strategic direction. Like Vancity, Suncor is acknowledged by Stratos (2008) as a leading CSR reporter. Unlike Vancity, the comprehensiveness of reporting relates more to the availability of many sustainability reports and less to the presence of UN CSR principles. Throughout its Web site, Suncor claims to want to be a good employer, neighbor, and corporate citizen. Certainly, community investment is made throughout North America, and a number of accolades have been bestowed for various best employer rankings by, for example, the *Globe and Mail*, and *Fortune Magazine*. Less evident, however, is how much balance exists between economic, social, and environmental concerns. For example, environmental responsibility is perhaps shown through the activity of reporting more than through actual evidence of environment efforts or progress. Suncor's use of land is actually rising, with reclamation remaining flat, and greenhouse gas emissions have held steady without significant improvement since 2002. Furthermore, staff turnover has been significantly on the rise since 2002. In terms of the value the organization delivers, this is largely presented as economic benefit.

Transparency is, however, a starting point toward global orientation in CSR, and the organization does compare slightly closer to the global indicators of cultural dimensions than the other Alberta organizations considered so far, particularly in terms of UAI, LTO, and perhaps MAS. While their reporting and physical Web site reflect a greater integration of interests, there remains a bias in favor of economic reporting and shareholder benefits. Suncor believes that economic prosperity promotes social well-being and preserves a healthy environment, which

reflects an economic bias. Given the latter, and the regional focus of its social efforts, individualism would rate rather high for this group.

Google is also a multinational corporation that received a score of 7.5 out of 10 in the UN principles analysis versus the score of 4.5 out of 10 that Suncor received. Compared to the Suncor CSR reporting, Google's reporting is far less formal and more conducive to reading online versus printing out reports, perhaps suggesting an integrated environmental effort. The balance to their vision is indicated in informal terms: "can make a profit without doing evil" (Google Corporate Information, 2009, Our Philosophy section). Stakeholders are a predominant focus of the Google CSR reporting, while their global presence lends more to respect and integration suggesting moderate PDI and IDV. The long-term orientation of the organization stands out in its integrated efforts toward education and solar facilities. Global orientation is further reflected in transformational behavior directed at diversity such as the integration of transgender facilities, suggesting moderate MAS.

While Suncor's reporting is the more extensive of this pairing, it is not as comprehensive as Google's in terms of integration of responsibility as a strategic corporate driver. The strong shareholder focus of the former overshadows the balance of social and environmental activity that may be taking place at the organization. Clearly, however, the gap between Alberta qualities and ideal qualities has closed somewhat with this pairing. Substantiation of the CSR reporting may provide evidence into further representation of Alberta maverick identity in the case of Suncor; however, a more complex tool would be required for such analysis to allow for equitable comparisons. The current lack of CSR reporting standards and format would make such an endeavor very challenging.

Figure 12 contrasts the presentation styles of Suncor and Google, where the former is much more stylized than the latter. The same is true for the organizations' CSR reporting, where Suncor presents formal reporting and accolades, whereas Google points directly to the efforts being made, which can be viewed as a more hardwired approach to CSR (see Figure 5 for an explanation of the hardwired evaluation). Suncor makes far more effort in drawing attention to its sustainability reporting efforts, while Google presents directly the issues that are important to the organization and avoids the self-promotion of accolade references.

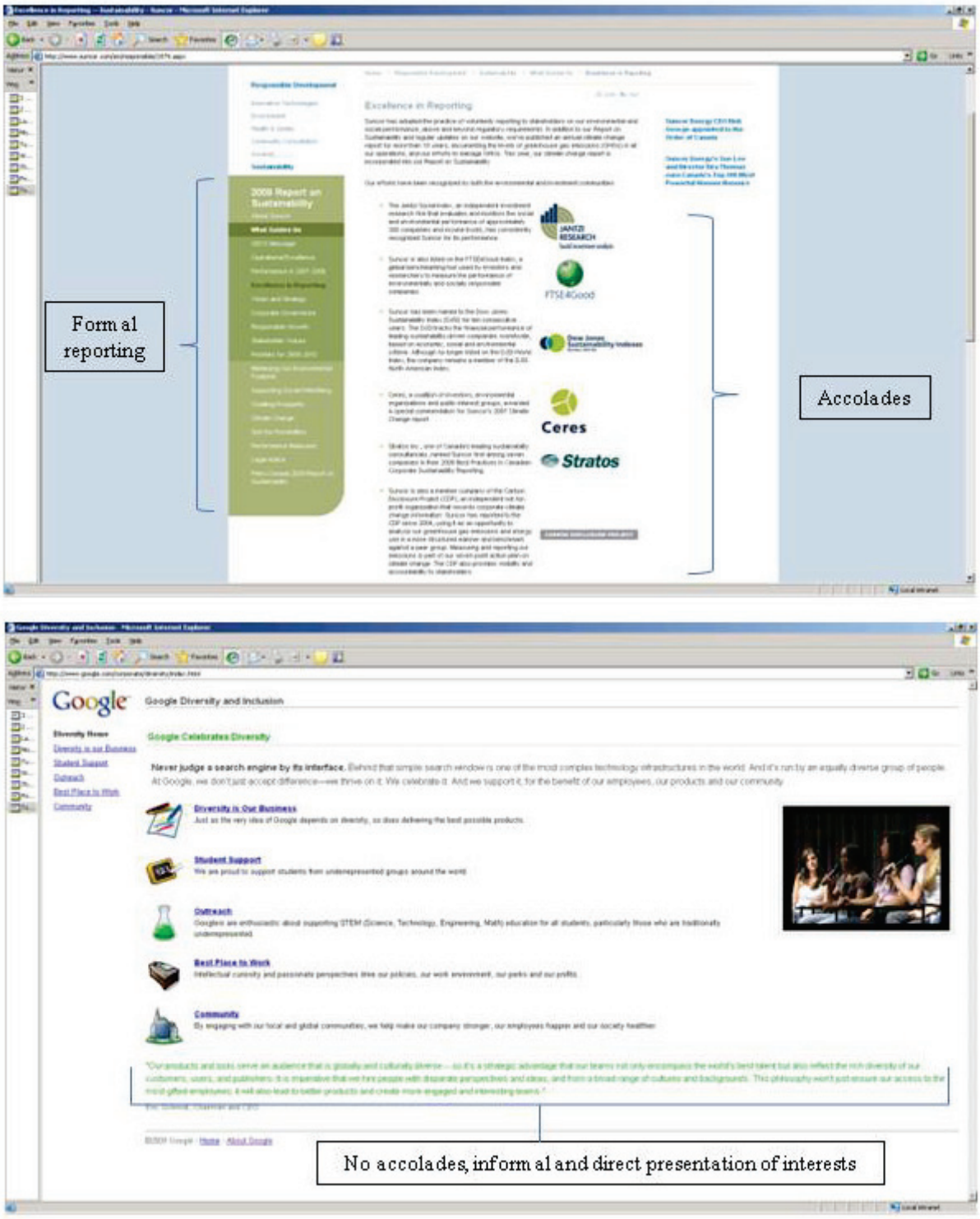

Figure 12. Comparison of Suncor and Google CSR presentation styles

Stantec and Johnson & Johnson Inc. Stantec is an Alberta-based multinational professional consulting firm providing services in planning, engineering, architecture, interior design, landscape architecture, surveying, environmental sciences, project management, and project economics for infrastructure and facilities projects. Like Suncor, Stantec purports to strive for economic, social, and environmental balance in its business activities, provides formal reports outlining such efforts, and integrates a balanced message throughout its Web site. The reporting, however, tends to be substantively thin, if transparent. Environmental and social efforts are represented by what appears to be one-off efforts such as the implementation of one hybrid Mercedes at one office and the implementation of facilities in a few of their offices that accommodate some religious meditation obligations. Furthermore, their presentation of society interests refers more to employees than to the community at large, and in this, they claim to have high turnover and show a very modest racial diversity with an 80% Caucasian workforce.

Corporate giving at Stantec is highly structured, with a 1% pretax charitable commitment spread in a prioritized manner to communities where they have an employee presence, suggesting regional orientation, lower PDI, and higher IDV. Moderate MAS is reflected in the reporting, but the organization's vision and values confuse this evaluation along with its level of responsibility integration and institutional versus in-group collectivist leanings. That is, while they claim to strive for balance of economic, social, and environmental matters, their vision clearly positions them to be a top-ten design firm and concentrates on the shareholder benefit. Furthermore, they list "profits" (Stantec, 2009, Vision and Values section) as a value, which certainly points to the behavior hypothesized for Alberta identity.

By contrast, Johnson & Johnson Inc. claims to strive for an integrated balance of responsibility and reflects this throughout the organization's extensive and comprehensive

reporting. Beyond receiving a score of 10 out of 10 for the presence of UN principles—and of these, all were globally oriented—Johnson & Johnson Inc. presents a clear global-orientation around its CSR philosophy and fully integrates its efforts at the level of convicted strategic direction. Supporting this is the platform for civic deliberation that is made available through multiple online forums concerning a variety of subjects related to their products and services. Higher integration of responsibility is also seen through the organization's supplier diversity program, which includes minority businesses in order to create jobs and wealth in minority communities. The Johnson & Johnson Inc. vision is represented by a credo that relates its balanced responsibility to shareholders, stakeholders, and the environment; while the organization's brand promises to "care for the world, one person at a time" (Johnson & Johnson Inc., 2009, Our Company section, ¶ 1). Thus does the organization reflect behavior hypothesized for the global identity.

This pairing provides a qualitative comparison of the difference between suggestions and physical references toward balanced and integrated behavior with actual evidence of the latter as is seen in the Johnson & Johnson Inc. reporting. Figure 13 depicts a comparison of the static CSR suggestion versus the integrated approach where CSR ideals drive the very essence of the way the corporation presents itself on the Web. Furthermore, it may also point to weakness in the GRI measurement of rewarding quantitative approaches to CSR reporting. On the other hand, as mentioned earlier, transparency is a starting point as organizations such as Stantec and Suncor appear to be making themselves available to be held accountable. With Stantec scoring higher or as high as some of the ideal organizations in terms of reflecting UN CSR principles, the gap between behaviors hypothesized for Alberta versus those hypothesized for global identity continues to narrow.

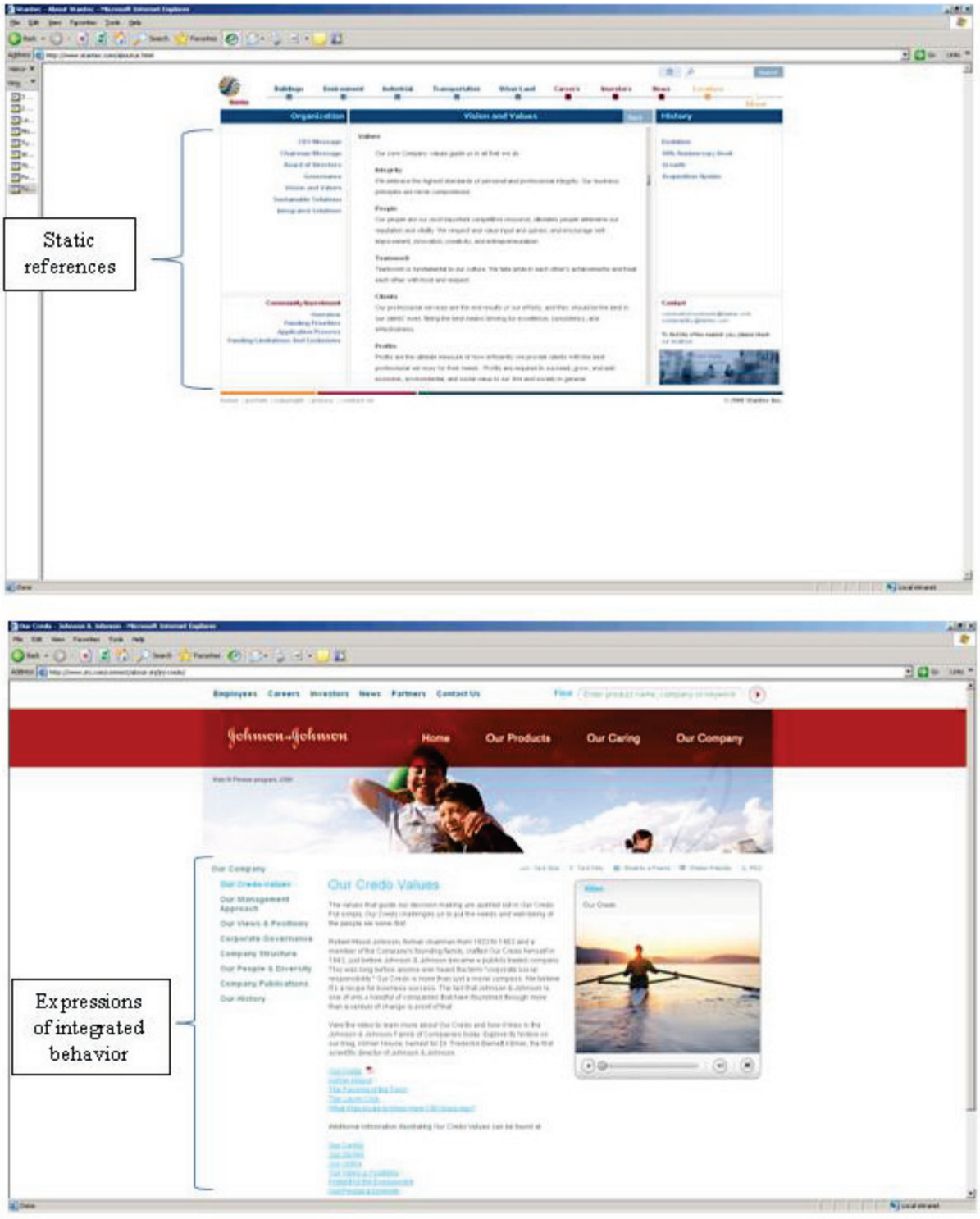

Figure 13. Comparison of CSR behavior between Stantec and Johnson & Johnson

Discussion

A picture is worth a thousand words. In the case of this study, a picture of corporate trends in CSR is provided to act as a reference tool for building future research and extracting insights into the dialectic of regional and global culture. A snapshot of CSR may provide a starting point for holistic discovery and measurement as the phenomenon evolves and as organizations continue to navigate globalization. A product of capitalization, the modern organization has entered a stage of metamorphosis, where transformation is inevitable and the efforts therein will be ultimately determined as successful or otherwise. Academia and corporate have long been two worlds colliding at best, and often two worlds unto their own. Just as the effects of globalization have witnessed privatization of the public sphere, so has an integration of corporate life and home life manifested. It should come as no surprise, then, that academia and corporate may also begin to integrate more prominently in research. Rather organically, does this study reflect equal parts of once distinct worlds, and the hope is that other segregated domains will also be juxtaposed in an integrated manner for future research pursuits.

In terms of how the maverick social identity in Alberta persists in CSR reporting, the above findings present evidence that suggests both adherence to the maverick stereotype and movement toward globalization. There is little if any evidence among the Web sites of the Alberta organizations examined that global interests are being pursued at the expense of regional interests, at this point. Keeping in mind that a Web site could change in an instant, it is important to remember that the evolution of CSR among organizations remains a field that will continue to be in flux. Longitudinal analysis of such changes will reflect a better sense of how the Alberta maverick identity continues to evolve through CSR reporting, and whether the direction taken serves to sustain or impede the province's prosperity. In the snapshot provided herein, a number

of themes for further discussion have arisen that may contextualize continued research into Alberta identity, CSR, and globalization.

Historians and researchers (e.g. Ford, 2005; Van Herk, 2001; Takach, 2009) have attempted to provide context for the Alberta maverick identity that serves to achieve a more balanced depiction of Albertans and to dispel myths and stereotypes, while this study has attempted to extend the argument to the corporate level. The balancing of identity meets the consideration of pluralism and challenges therein that may continue to impact regional identities, forcing groups to look beyond biases that have led to inclusionary behavior. In the case of Alberta, a region dedicated to self reliance from the rest of Canada, interdependence in globalization may involve rising above old habits. A question of whether or not Alberta will ever achieve a sense of nationalism with Canada or may simply leapfrog over national boundaries to meet growing global forces remains to be considered. The size and makeup of Canada has fostered a number of significant regional identities from East to West that all face the same problem of pluralism, where each has the opportunity through globalization to experience a wider set of possible lives than ever before and thus see an implosion of life worlds (Srinivas, 2006). Managing tradition and change becomes an identity problem, or balancing act of borrowing cultural forms and hybridizing them, and at the same time resisting cultural imperialism and homogenization (Appadurai, 1996; Berger, 1997; Friedman, 1994; Hannerz, 1996). As the scope of globalization expands, cultural studies may increasingly turn the focus toward urban identity and away from regional considerations, as the former becomes a more apparent driving force or flow of culture (Barber, 1995; Berger, 1997; Friedman, 1994; Huntington, 1996; Maanen, 1992; Tomlinson, 1991).

Ford (2005) supports the notion that urban interests are departing from the rural and superseding the latter in terms of popular opinions within Alberta. Arguably, urban perspectives in the region have turned more liberal than the maverick stereotype may reflect; however, those views are overshadowed by a political structure that gives disproportionate voting power to rural areas that may reflect more strongly the grassroots sentiments (Ford, 2005). Thus may the maverick stereotype appear to the world stronger than it actually is. The lack of voter turnout at recent Alberta elections would further support a growing reproach toward the existing political model and focuses therein (Adria, 2008). In this sense, dialectics around the potential changing landscape of political structures in light of globalization also presents a rich platform for further research.

The elaboration of Alberta identity in light of the maverick stereotype may further lead to larger study involving cultural homogenization, hyperreality, and consumerism. The examination of Alberta identity herein led to a consideration of regional qualities that may be conducive toward globalization, and yet the maverick stereotype persists in the analysis of CSR reporting. An explanation for this contradiction may be found in a proposed *Stampedification* of Alberta society, where the local character of the region reflects a symbolic form that is a false representation of the actual history of the region. Ford (2005) suggests that the point of the Calgary Stampede is to have fun while remembering that it is not real, but the regional aestheticization and worldwide appeal of the event has arguably served to support the maverick identity that persists otherwise (Lee 1994; Maanen, 1992; Ritzer, 1993). To this end, the propensity of rural communities in Alberta toward historical objectification—as is exemplified by the Vulcan association with Star Trek and the Glendon exaggeration of Ukrainian heritage through the display of the world's largest perogie—may further support the sense of hyperreality

that points to a movement linking more strongly the relationship of urban identity and cultural implications of globalization and less strongly the historical regional identity.

Van Herk (Takach, 2009) expresses concern over the Stampedification, or objectification, of Alberta, calling it a trap for Albertans who may love the myth so much that they cannot resist wearing the costumes. As was the case with the Disney integration to the international stage presented by Maanen (1992), the issue of perpetuating a false history of Western society presents a subject for philosophical consideration to examine the longer-term implications of living a cultural fantasy and whether this represents a negative predicament of denial or perhaps a positive liberation from the past. Takach (2009) expresses hope for Albertans in the reach for a heightened sense of self-awareness and purpose, which may be realized through a nature of perplexing contradictions. Those contradictions further reflect a state of duality that, as defined through this study, may also facilitate effective pluralism that provides a foundation for gracious globalization. Again, longer-term study will evaluate the merits of the latter proposition.

A theme of regulation in globalization and CSR reporting also presents a wide platform for further discussion. Insofar as the institutionalization of obligations has been met with resistance, movements toward mandatory CSR reporting create a tension around the very nature of globalization (Wolfe, 1989). While the lack of consistency in CSR reporting and an excess of measurements wreaks havoc within the study of this field, alignment of reporting standards and measurement have not necessarily led to greater clarity as was seen in the cases of Suncor Energy and Stantec, where the reporting practices received accolades but the contents of the reports were questionable in the sense of truly balanced activity. Truth is a complicated measurement, as are intentions. Whether regulation will instill a stronger sense of obligation and commitment than a self-regulating order, as has been associated with the rise of social media,

again comprises the plot of a longer story that this ephemeral study as a prelude may only glance toward. On the topic of Alberta CSR, a sense of obligation mandatory or otherwise may have already led to the expanding address of issues that is seen through organizational reporting for the region. Further regulation, if imposed to a region unwilling to be herded, could plausibly lead to defiance and larger falsehoods. The study of CSR may therefore be envisioned as a field with many bumps and holes, a product of the land and the Earth from which such human efforts derive.

Conclusion

In an effort to show how the Alberta maverick social identity persists in corporate social responsibility reporting, this study has provided a lineage and foundation for the assumptions of global social consciousness and Alberta social identity that underlie the arrival of the CSR phenomenon and regional impacts therein, respectively. The Alberta social identity review attempted to provide an explanatory context for the descriptive pursuit of the research question; however, it must be noted that the explanatory findings are intended as correlative and probabilistic, similar to how globalization is presented as coinciding with emerging communications technologies. Quantitative and qualitative analysis of ten organizations has reflected a clear maverick behavior in Alberta CSR reporting compared to that of ideal global organizations. Movement in the direction of more comprehensive and integrated reporting approaches is reflected in the larger multinational Alberta-based corporations that may hint at a growing trend toward more global compliance in these efforts. Still, current evidence suggests that the compliance remains strongly regional and economically focused for the Alberta organizations.

A more in depth look at the social nature of Albertans—beyond the maverick stereotype—pointed to underlying motivations that could well be conducive to globalization, an evaluation that is qualified by Van Herk's description of the Alberta maverick as "an inspired or determined risk-taker, forward-looking, creative, eager for change, someone who propels Alberta in a new direction or who alters the social, cultural, or political landscape" (Mavericks, 2009). To be sure, change will come for Albertans as it always has through boom and bust. The future will tell how long that change will take to transform from the financially-motivated stereotype

that sees Alberta first or the forward-looking character that will "lead, follow, or get out of the way" (Ford, 2005, p. 215) of those who are moving toward global citizenship.

The CSR phenomenon has presented a tangible starting point for measuring regional identity against global movements; however, such reporting is inherently influenced by capitalist motivations that overshadow the larger society and define Western society in particular. The notion of transformation in society and globalization may therefore be the subject of cultural studies that equally transform, perhaps highlighting urban identity over regional identity as a more appropriate main point of reference. Longitudinal research that builds on the descriptive research found herein may provide insights into the rate and nature of socioeconomic change currently being experienced (de Vaus, 2001; Menard, 2001). Change measurements may examine how historical relevance is diminishing for regional cultures as new and preferred identities are defined as best costumes for the global stage. As the world determines what it demands of existing regions either through regulation or self-organization, future measurements in this area of research will chronicle an entirely new global history.

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