

**NGOs and Corporate Social Responsibility:
Which Strategies to Become Critical Stakeholders?**

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This paper aims to explore the condition under which the action of NGOs can embody a “third way” to move corporations to embrace social responsibilities, beyond the public regulation and the voluntary CSR.

In the last years in fact the advocacy NGOs are showing a growing interest for the business in their attempt to improve the environmental and social context by influencing the level of CSR. But, in the perspective of the stakeholder theory (and particularly in an instrumental orientation), are NGOs able to be critical stakeholders? Even if they have legitimacy and urgency, NGOs often don't have the power to directly influence the firm's financial and competitive performance.

The paper first examines the strategies typically used by the NGOs to achieve more power, acting through an other stakeholder that can threaten to withhold his resources. Traditionally there are two main stakeholders targeted: the national government and the consumers, but often both have demonstrated to be often too weak.

In the second part we examine the emerging influencing strategies and the way in which NGOs are attempting to involve in their battle two others stakeholders-allies: the shareholders and the executives.

In the third part the paper considers the effectiveness of the NGOs strategies by identifying three core resources: funds, legitimacy and information, and the new competences needed to engage with shareholders, executives and others NGOs.