ARTICLE

Following His Majesty's Directives: Corporate Generosity, Social Responsibility, and State Making in Oman

Robin Thomas Steiner, Westminster College

ABSTRACT

This article investigates the social and political effects of the introduction of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Oman. With oil reserves dwindling, Oman faces the challenge of transforming a society and economy long dependent on distributive state spending into a diversified economy capable of continuing the nation's prosperity after oil. As a seemingly market-based solution to the problem of "too much" government, CSR has been championed by officials and practitioners as a tool to empower private sector businesses to replace the state as a provider of welfare and services. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork and interviews with members of Oman's business community, state officials, and others, this article challenges these presumptions, demonstrating that CSR has been implemented in Oman in ways that perpetuate the nation's dependence on oil revenues and distributive state subsidies. Pointing out that the Omani state's subsidy-driven development has long relied on the incentivized collaboration of private sector businesses, this article argues that the introduction of CSR in Oman has occurred in ways that resonate with older practices of corporate generosity. Instead of introducing market-based alternatives to state-guided subsidies, CSR has been instituted in Oman in ways that allow the state to leverage private sector organizations to extend its

Anthropological Quarterly, Vol. 94, No.2, p. 283–312, ISSN 0003-5491.

distributive reach. In conversation with scholarship on the role of neoliberal discourses and practices in the diversification efforts of states of the Arab Gulf, this article highlights the discrepancy between development plans and their outcomes to demonstrate how seemingly neoliberal interventions may be co-opted to achieve alternative ends. [Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility, rentier governmentality, diversification, neoliberalism, expertise, the state, Oman]

Nearly every day, Oman's major Arabic and English language newspapers feature articles showcasing corporate generosity. Carefully posed photos of formally dressed Omani businessmen and women—in traditional dishdashas, massars, and abayas—signing agreements of support, posing alongside members of communities they are helping, and receiving awards in honor of their generosity are commonplace alongside articles announcing corporate initiatives, sponsorship arrangements, and programs designed to help Omani communities and build the nation. In spite of their ubiquity, such articles were carefully read, discussed, and analyzed by many of my Omani friends, colleagues, and interviewees—the merits of particular companies and their commitment to building the nation and supporting Omani communities debated. Although corporate generosity has a long history in Oman, since the late-2000s businesses and the national media have started to articulate such activities in terms of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)—a transnational movement of business responsibilization directed toward replacing functions of the welfare state with the market-oriented generosity of private businesses. With smaller oil reserves than many of its Gulf neighbors and with the end of oil approaching, the introduction of CSR in Oman has occurred alongside state-sponsored diversification efforts intended to reduce the dependence of citizens and businesses on government support and to transform the private sector into a driver of economic growth capable of continuing the nation's prosperity after oil. To many, corporate generosity articulated in the form of CSR appears to be a mechanism to diversify the nation's economy away from a dependence on oil revenues and state spending; by replacing the services and welfare provided by the state with those provided by the private sector, Oman's dependence on oil revenues and state spending should—the argument goes—be reduced. Taking these perspectives as a starting point, this article asks: What kind of work does CSR do in Oman? How has the introduction of CSR changed or sustained older practices of corporate generosity and towards what ends? What can the new discourse of CSR tell us about the social and political functions of Oman's seemingly neoliberal, market-oriented diversification efforts?

Drawing on materials collected during 16 months of fieldwork in Oman including participant observation at CSR-focused events, newspaper articles, and 40 qualitative interviews with CSR practitioners, non-profit managers, state officials, members of the business community, and Omani citizens, this article examines the introduction of CSR into Oman and its social and political effects. To set the scene, I begin this article with an outline of Oman's state-guided, subsidy-driven political economy that highlights how the Omani government has historically leveraged the corporate generosity of local businesses to pursue state-defined development objectives. Turning to the transnational discourse of CSR, I describe how creating a diversified economy in Oman has come to be framed as a problem of "too much" government, a problem which (it is imagined) can be resolved in part by encouraging private sector businesses to establish CSR programs that provide services and support to citizens outside of official state channels. Examining how such CSR programs unfold in practice, I argue that CSR in Oman has not succeeded in "rolling back" the state or in reducing the dependence of businesses and citizens on oil-funded government spending; rather, the new discourse of CSR has provided longstanding patterns of state-centric, subsidy-based development with a new neoliberal vocabulary, rationale, and ends, and in the process complicated Oman's diversification efforts.

Subsidized Development and the Performance of State Concreteness

For many in Oman, the beginning of oil production in the late 1960s meant the arrival of the modern state and the start of "development"—the new state's most fundamental activity. Before the discovery of oil, small isolated villages dependent on farming, fishing, and Indian Ocean trade were governed at a distance by a state apparatus consisting in most cases of only two local officials, a *wali* appointed to represent the Sultan and a *qadi* to arbitrate disputes (Valeri 2013b:38). For these communities, Oman's new oil-funded state meant the introduction of roads, schools, hospitals, and—perhaps most significantly—new jobs in comfortable, air-conditioned government buildings. As one man put it to me while describing the experience of his grandparents, when the government arrived, "all of the traders in the town of Sur sold their ships…Government jobs appeared [and] instead of people going out to sea for their income, they started working for the government."[1]

Like many other oil-producing countries, the discovery of oil in Oman provided the growing state with a reliable source of income not dependent on popular taxation. With hydrocarbon revenues comprising more than 70 percent of the state's budget (Oman Economic Review 2020), Oman followed in the footsteps of other Gulf States and used its oil revenues to subsidize the development of the state bureaucracy, national infrastructure, the economy, and citizens themselves. For those living in Oman, the benefits of oil took the form not of cash payments but of free services; new infrastructure built without taxation; state-provided land and housing; subsidized job opportunities and expatriate workers; low-interest, often forgiven loans; subsidized gas, water, and electricity; free education and scholarships for study abroad; agency laws that secure monopolies for local businesses on the importation of specific goods; and generous government contracts for Omani corporations. In practical terms, development through subsidies created a situation in which the benefits of oil were distributed indirectly and unequally among Oman's citizen population. A former rural fisherman, for instance, may receive a benefit from the nation's oil consisting of a government job providing a lower-middle class income, retirement benefits, and publicly-provided housing, while a well-connected merchant in Muscat may benefit from oil in the form of agency contracts granting him a monopoly on the sale of certain goods, subsidized foreign labor, and lucrative government contracts, providing him an enviable upper-class lifestyle.

Anthropologists writing on the state have long argued that the state—as a "thing" or abstraction—does not have an existence independent of the practices and representations that produce it (Sharma and Gupta 2006, Alonso 1994). Approached in this way, the state can be conceived of as an *effect*; a product of practices and discourses which give the impression that the state—as a concrete, coherent, clearly bounded entity—exists (Mitchell 1991). Ferguson and Gupta (2002) propose the framework of *vertical encompassment* to characterize how mundane practices enable the state to be imagined as a "thing." The state's concreteness is a product, they argue, of practices that establish institutional and social hierarchies and of practices that exert control across geographic space. Together, these practices allow the state to be imagined as a "thing" having both verticality (or the appearance of governing "over" society) and encompassment (or the appearance of governing "across" a specific territory).

In Oman, many of the practices which produce the state's vertical encompassment have taken the form of subsidies—distributions of free services, infrastructure, and assistance aimed at spreading development. When the state "arrives" into an Omani town, people know it is there because it provides jobs; distributes state housing and plots of land; subsidizes water, electricity, and gasoline; and builds new infrastructure like roads, bridges, mosques, and markets. As a state producing practice, subsidies have several important characteristics relevant to this analysis.

First, subsidies allow for the state to govern through practices of cooptation. When the Omani state arrived, it appeared into a context that had largely survived without it. In this environment, producing the state involved not only providing new services to Omani communities but also manufacturing an assortment of needs that the burgeoning state alone was able to fulfill (Valeri 2013b:71–73). Subsidies functioned as a practice of state formation not merely because they required the creation of new practices and institutional arrangements that allowed the state to govern "over" society, but also because such practices worked to cultivate an individual and collective dependence on the state. These new subsidies enabled the growing state to render older solidarity groups and organizations dependent on the policies and agenda of the new state's institutions. In this context, the distribution of subsidies helped to generate a new sort of political game in which access to resources came to depend on the pursuit of development-focused agenda of the oil-funded state (Valeri 2013b:71–74).

Second, subsidies have also allowed Oman's government to develop its economy in ways that are structured more around state-centered distribution than markets. While subsidies and other forms of state support have been used by governments around the world to establish markets, create new industries, and develop technologies (Mazzucato 2015), in Oman subsidies are often deployed in ways that generate a dependence on state policies and support rather than on market forces. One way in which this occurs is through the use of dueling subsidies—sets of two or more subsidies which together have the effect of inflating both the supply of something and the demand for that thing. Oman's labor economy is a useful example. Oil revenues and state spending on development projects in Oman have allowed for a rapid expansion of private sector businesses and a growing demand for skilled and unskilled workers. Rather than constructing a market capable of linking this new demand for workers with a supply of potential citizen employees, the state instead subsidizes both the supply of labor available to local businesses and the demand for Omani employees. On the business end, the state permits businesses to recruit and import foreign workers whose wages are often half to a third of those commanded by Omani citizens, effectively subsidizing their labor expenses.[2] As of April 2020, foreign workers in the country on a temporary basis made up 86 percent of Oman's private sector workforce and 41 percent of Oman's total population (National Centre for Statistics and Information 2020). With foreign workers undercutting the wages of citizen employees, the Omani state offers a second subsidy to citizen workers, providing them with privileged, highly paid employment opportunities in the government and the private sector. As a result, the Omani state is working to develop the nation's labor economy through a set of subsidies that collectively has the effect of inflating both the supply of labor available (by providing businesses with access to low-cost foreign workers) and the demand for labor (by providing privileged employment opportunities to citizens). In place of generating a market that balances the forces of supply and demand, the Omani state has, in effect, created a distributive arrangement in which the needs of Omani employers and citizen workers are uncoupled from one another and independently fulfilled by the state. In such an arrangement in which citizens pressure the state for more jobs and businesses pressure the state for more foreign workers, Oman appears to many locals in this context to counterintuitively suffer from both a shortage of jobs and a shortage of workers.

For a formerly impoverished oil-rich state like Oman, development through distributive subsidies rather than markets has advantages. In a context in which the state can afford to fund development projects at a rate faster than the existing private sector or citizen workforce can sustain, dueling subsidies and other forms of distributive support allow the state to develop citizen workers and businesses more rapidly than would be possible if they simply relied on market forces. Such subsidies allow hospitals to be established in the absence of local doctors, enable schools to be built in the absence of local teachers, and permit hotels, shopping malls, and restaurants to be launched in the absence of adequate numbers of local hospitality workers. And for Omani employees, subsidized employment opportunities guarantee citizens a higher standard of living and more comfortable working conditions than could be provided through market-based employment. Without the interests of capital and labor coupled together by a market, private sector businesses and citizen workers are each freed to grow and prosper at a rate limited only by the generosity and allocative decisions of the state. Economic growth thus occurs not through the expansion of market-based systems of production and consumption but through the circulation and recycling of state largess. Political scientist Nazih Ayubi (2008:248) characterizes such consumption-based development as a form of economic "expansion" rather than growth: state spending allows for the construction of material infrastructure, institutions, businesses, and social services without establishing the systems and productive mechanisms needed to maintain the economy in the absence of continued state support. So while Oman's state-fueled economic development has enabled a rapid expansion in modern infrastructure and services, it has also done so in ways that rely on continuous subsidies that allow the vertical encompassment of the Omani state to be secured through distributive interventions in the economy.

Paternalistic Social Responsibility and the Leveraging of the Private Sector

While the Omani state guides the nation's benevolent development and the provision of distributive subsidies, many of Oman's development projects and subsidies are in practice financed, maintained, and implemented by organizations *outside* the state apparatus—specifically, by private sector businesses. These organizations are mobilized to fill in for the state, providing services, support, and subsidies in ways that expand and extend the state's program of development. The Omani government persuades private sector organizations to provide subsidies and development on its behalf through what I refer to as *leveraging practices*—sets of formal and informal practices, understandings, and legal arrangements that enable private sector businesses to be leveraged to pursue state-defined interests.

Oman's labor economy is a useful example of how the state's regime of subsidies is extended by the private sector through, in this case, formalized leveraging practices. As outlined above, the Omani state intervenes in the labor economy, subsidizing businesses (by providing them with clearances to import inexpensive workers from abroad) and subsidizing citizen employees (by providing them privileged, high paying employment opportunities). While the Omani government provides privileged employment to roughly 46 percent of Oman's citizen workforce (National Centre for Statistics and Information 2021:73), a significant portion of the subsidized work opportunities citizens receive are provided by private sector businesses. Businesses are leveraged to provide privileged employment opportunities to citizens through a set of state-enforced Omanization policies that link a business' ability to import low-cost foreign workers with that business' provision of subsidized jobs to citizens. The system works like this: the Omani state—in this case, the Ministry of Manpower—assigns an Omanization quota to businesses operating in state-defined economic sectors that must be met before a business is permitted to import low-cost expatriate workers. For instance, a business operating in the construction sector—where the state's Omanization quota is set at 30 percent (Bhatia 2015)—would need to provide subsidized employment opportunities to 30 Omani citizens for every 70 expatriate workers it employs. These Omanization policies effectively codify an arrangement between the state and private sector businesses: the state provides businesses with subsidized foreign labor on the condition that businesses provide citizens with privileged, subsidized employment opportunities. The state, in other words, provides subsidized employment to citizens not only by offering Omanis jobs in the growing government bureaucracy but also by introducing a regime of practices and legal arrangements that leverage private sector businesses to provide state-secured subsidized employment.

Another example of leveraging practices is the sponsorship of state-guided, community-level development by private sector companies. One of the mechanisms that the Omani state has used to develop underdeveloped areas is to introduce a company into an area to act as a patron and sponsor for local development. As one business owner explained it to me,

> …[when oil companies] go to their allocated areas, where they got the permission of the government to work in, [they will provide services. If] this region needs a school, [they] will build a school. [If] this region needs a proper clinic, [they] will build a proper clinic… Why? Because [they are] getting millions of Riyals from this region,

> so if [they] just take [those] millions and [they] do nothing for the community, this means what? The community will come and say, "you are taking so much money from our region, and you are doing nothing." …Whereas if I go and dig my wells over there plus I do all of [these] community-related initiatives, I'll help the community over there, definitely all the people over there, or at least the majority of them, they will come up with a positive perspective of this company.[3]

Many Omani communities were developed—at least in part—through the help of corporate patrons whose programs helped to extend the state's caring generosity into rural areas.

For businesses, such leveraging practices are understood as a "social responsibility" that private sector organizations have to the state and Omani society at large. Beyond providing jobs to citizens and investing in the development of local communities, practices as diverse as offering generous employment benefits, training and developing citizen workers, promoting traffic safety, sponsoring public education and welfare programs, and offering guidance and support to Omani small businesses owners are all framed as matters of social responsibility. This social responsibility—what I call *paternalistic social responsibility*, in reference to often-cited metaphors of paternal, sultanic care—is framed as deriving from the broader responsibility of Oman's Sultans to wisely use the nation's oil wealth to develop the country and improve the lives of its citizenry. Businesses have a responsibility to provide employment opportunities to citizens, but it is the state that is ultimately responsible for ensuring that businesses follow through on their social obligations and sufficiently contribute to its national development efforts.

For the private sector, paternalistic social responsibility enables businesses to develop a reputation of corporate patriotism, to show that—as one Omani businessman put it—"they aren't just here to take our money and run, they are part of the community."[4] In this sense, paternalistic social responsibility functions as a moral metric against which organizations are evaluated. Businesses that provide large numbers of jobs to citizens, invest in the community, and sponsor state-guided development efforts are recognized as virtuous, benevolent companies more interested in modernizing the nation than their own bottom line. Alternatively, businesses that are perceived to employ fewer Omanis or to spend too little on supporting national development are described as being greedy, self-interested, and more focused on plundering the nation's resources than making a positive contribution to its development. In an economy driven in large part by the allocation of subsidies and the distribution of government contracts, "good" businesses are rewarded through preferential access to state subsidies and distributive support while "bad" businesses are disciplined through isolation from state assistance.

Paternalistic social responsibility in this context functions as a practice of rent-seeking. Businesses support state-led modernization by providing subsidies and distributive development of their own with the knowledge that such efforts will be rewarded by a generous state eager to develop the nation and secure prosperity for its citizens. Political scientist Wanda Krause (2008) uses the concept of *rentier governmentality* to describe how oil-based Gulf states allocate and distribute resources in ways that co-opt individuals and organizations outside of the state to pursue state-defined objectives. She argues that such practices of co-optation are fundamentally empowering: they create a society of individuals and institutions that are more able to pursue their own agendas while also implementing the goals of the state (2008:63–64). An Omani business engaged in paternalistic social responsibility is not only being leveraged by the state to support the project of national development, but it is also transforming itself into a worthy recipient of distributive state subsidy.

In an important sense, then, the Omani state does not exist "outside of" or "in opposition to" the private sector or the economic sphere; rather, "the economy" is one of several sites where the state is produced. The Omani state, in other words, achieves vertical encompassment not only through the practices and institutional arrangements that make up the government bureaucracy, but also through the independent actions of private sector organizations leveraged by the state to extend subsidies and expand distributive development. The lurking presence of the Omani state in the private sector is concretely experienced in the so-called "entitlement attitudes" of citizen workers, and specifically in the expectation that the state is responsible for forcing businesses to hire them. "If you don't recruit locals," as one Omani business owner put it to me, citizens "will go back to His Majesty [the now late, Sultan Qaboos] and start throwing stones [at] him."[5] In this context, the relationship between a private-sector employer and a citizen employee is not a discrete exchange between the owner of capital and the seller of labor-power, rather it is a site where the distributive generosity of the state is manifested. Similarly, the lurking presence of the state is also apparent in private sector businesses' expectations of subsidies and state aid. "I wish I had a subsidy for training the Omanis," as another frustrated Omani business owner explained to me, "I have become like a training academy for them. I am helping the government; the government is not helping me."[6]

Paternalistic social responsibility then provides the Omani state with a mechanism to throw its voice. Like a ventriloquist, the state governs and is produced in part by the actions of an economic sphere and private sector outside of the formal state apparatus. While these longstanding practices of governance and state production have served Oman well, enabling economic development and modernization to occur at a rate faster than could be achieved by market mechanisms alone, they are a liability as the Omani state braces for the end of oil and works to diversify its society away from a dependence on oil-fueled state spending.

Diversification and Corporate Social Responsibility

With less oil than many of its Gulf neighbors, Oman's subsidy driven modernity is not sustainable. After five decades of oil-funded development, Oman's known oil reserves in 2020 will be exhausted in less than 14 years if current production levels are maintained (Oman Observer 2020). Although the looming end of oil is bleak, it is not new. As Limbert (2010:167) points out, projections of the impending end of oil—usually on a timeline of about 20 years—have been a near-constant feature of Oman's modernization since oil-funded development began in 1970. With the end of oil continually imminent, the Omani state has invested heavily in diversification efforts aimed at producing an economy and a society no longer dependent on oil revenues and distributive state spending. Such diversification efforts have been guided by a variety of seemingly pro-market practices and policies borrowed from the transnational discourses of economics and business.

For Omani officials and local experts—many of whom are foreign-educated in business and economics—diversification is most commonly framed as a challenge of investing in the private sector and empowering Oman's economy to meet the social and economic needs currently fulfilled by the state. Echoing the transnational, pro-market discourses of business and economics, such government officials and experts have tended to regard the dependence of Omani citizens and businesses on the support of the state as the result, not of regimes of dueling subsidies that provide a preferable alternative to market mechanisms, but of "too much" government. The problem, they argue, is that the Omani state has developed into a bloated and inefficient bureaucracy that stifles the freedom, creativity, and innovation of citizens and businesses through its onerous regulations and extensive entitlement programs. For such experts, neoliberal critiques of Keynesian welfare states like those advanced by Hayek (1944) and Friedman (1962) are assumed to be applicable to the very different political economy of Oman, allowing the challenge of economic diversification in Oman to be understood as a familiar problem of "too much" government requiring a familiar set of ready-made, market-based solutions.

Anthropologists have developed an extensive body of scholarship on neoliberalism and neoliberal technologies that explores how a variety of pro-market discourses, practices, and policies erode safety nets and construct new systems of control that increasingly rely on markets and market-focused practices (Harvey 2005, Cruikshank 1999, Elyachar 2005, Li 2007, Muehlebach 2012). Building on the work of Foucault (2008, 2003), much of this scholarship investigates neoliberalism not as a macroeconomic doctrine but as a set of mobile, complex, and unstable practices that expand the logic of markets to diverse societal domains—what Ong (2006:3) describes as neoliberalism "with a small n." Such neoliberal technologies have often performed a kind of work that Rose (1996:56) describes as the "de-statization of government": they operate to transform the role of the state in the control of populations, territory, and economy by introducing regimes of self-government that enable individuals to regulate themselves in relation to markets. In the context of a diversification effort in Oman that has been locally framed as a problem of "too much" government, seemingly pro-market interventions aimed at growing the private sector and economy—such as the privatization of state-run enterprises; the establishment of organizations to train, fund, and patronize citizen entrepreneurs; the deregulation of and investment in local businesses; and the creation of job training programs to develop the capabilities of citizens—appear to many to be a solution to the dilemma of oil dependence.

However, in Oman, such transnational regimes of business and economic expertise have led local experts to often overlook how dueling subsidies and other forms of state support produce distributive economic arrangements that behave in ways quite different than traditional markets. In a conventional labor market, for instance, one might expect that policies that generate growth for local businesses would also produce jobs and improved livelihoods for citizens. But in Oman, where private sector businesses rely primarily on the inexpensive labor of foreign workers, policies and investments directed at developing local businesses won't necessarily produce tangible benefits for Omani citizens whose employment is dependent on state policies. Likewise, investments aimed at building the skills and "competitiveness" of citizen workers won't necessarily help local businesses who may view hiring more than the minimum number of citizen workers to be an unnecessary expense.

In this respect, the challenge of diversification in Oman might be better understood not as a problem of "too much" government but as a blockage of economic mechanisms that has found a solution in the distributive economic arrangements of the state. In this context, seemingly pro-market efforts to "roll back" the state and expand the role of the private sector in economic life may generate counterintuitive effects. Rather than producing a diversified economy or reducing Oman's dependence on oil revenues and state spending, I argue instead that such interventions create an increasingly dense and complex web of institutional arrangements that allow state-guided regimes of distribution to continue, albeit in ways mediated by seemingly independent private sector businesses. Although local officials have invested Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) with national ambitions of producing a diversified future, in the Omani context expanding the role of the private sector in the distribution of services, welfare, and development does not automatically diminish the role of the state or "roll back" the architecture of oil-funded, subsidy-driven development.

Although the term Corporate Social Responsibility has a longer history (Carroll 1999), CSR in contemporary corporate parlance refers to a transnational movement of business responsibilization that grew to global prominence in the 1990s with the establishment of consulting and nonprofit organizations, dedicated journals, courses and workshops, awards, voluntary guidelines, and certification mechanisms focused around promoting, measuring, and managing the socially responsible activity of corporations (Welker 2014, 2009). While businesses have long engaged in a wide variety of socially responsible activity, what differentiates the CSR movement from other forms of business responsibilization is its integration of market-based incentives with ethical business conduct.

As a movement, CSR owes its origins to a climate of deregulation instituted in economies around the world since the 1970s that worked to reduce the role of the state and empower markets in overseeing and monitoring the behavior of businesses (Harvey 2005). Such deregulation has not meant less regulation of businesses; rather, it has involved a change in institutional arrangements such that the state's regulatory authority is delegated to other agents, such as auditors, consumers, and shareholders (Power 1997:31). Through the introduction of novel rituals of verification, deregulation has allowed the creation of new regimes of transparency and disclosure that render the formerly hidden inner life of businesses public and accountable in new ways. As a growing body of social science research on audit has illustrated, by encouraging businesses to implement standardized checking practices and making the results of those checking practices public, states can withdraw from the direct regulation of organizations and instead allow businesses to engage in self-government in response to new, market-based public pressure (Strathern 2000, Power 1997). Following a series of high profile environmental and human rights scandals, negative media coverage of corporate activity intensified in the 1970s and 1980s, leading to new forms of market-based consumer and investor activism, such as boycotts, ethical consumerism, and socially responsible investing (Moon 2014:73–83, Garsten and Hernes 2009:189–190). The increasing transparency of the inner workings of business combined with the threat of consumer and investor activism has rendered corporations increasingly vulnerable to negative publicity, public opinion, and the pressures of customers and shareholders (Garsten and Hernes 2009:190, Vogel 2005).

In this environment, businesses needed new tools to manage their reputations and guard against the dangerous costs of negative publicity. CSR developed as a mechanism to allow companies to protect their brand name and reputation by linking an organization's practices and philanthropic works to public awareness of their brand. Through CSR, businesses can present themselves as "conscientious organizations" while directing attention away from other potentially damaging issues (Garsten and Hernes 2009:190–192). As a means to manage the brand name of companies, CSR enabled charity and ethical business practices to be transformed into a marketable commodity, making it possible for corporations to consider moral and ethical obligations to their employees and surrounding communities within a larger calculus of profit-making. Encapsulated by the concept of the "business case," texts on CSR have long encouraged businesses to view their social and charitable work as economically profitable efforts aimed at altering public perceptions of sponsoring organizations (Moon 2014; Welker 2014, 2009). By rendering the moral imperatives of welfare and the provision of social goods commensurate with the market-based imperatives of business, CSR makes social problems and business ethics intelligible to market forces (Dolan and Rajak 2011).

By doing so, CSR erodes the boundary between the market-based business activity and ethical community engagement, generating not only the possibility of newly moralized markets and corporations but also of social development initiatives colonized by profit-oriented corporate motives (Dolan and Rajak 2011, Garsten and Hernes 2009, Shamir 2008:3). Literature on CSR in anthropology and the social sciences has highlighted how businesses embracing the new discourses of social responsibility have operated to replace the state as the provider of welfare, services, and development (Rajak 2011; Welker 2014; Siltaoja, Malin, and Pyykkönen 2015; Vallentin and Murillo 2012). Through such activities, corporations render technical the social and political challenges of the communities in which they work in ways that align the solutions to such challenges with their corporate interests and cloak their organization in moral authority (Shamir 2008, Sydow 2016, Sharp 2006). While the introduction of CSR has coincided with the "rolling back" of the welfare state in many contexts (Brejning 2012), it has also done so in ways that revitalize older, coercive practices of patronage and clientelism (Gardner 2012, Rajak 2011:177). In such contexts, "the gift" of development—when provided by corporations rather than sanctioned state institutions—has largely rendered states' practices of vertical encompassment more precarious, enabling businesses and their transnational audiences of consumers and investors to encroach increasingly on the work of government.

For many in Oman, CSR appears to be a positive step towards creating a diversified future in which the economy—rather than the state—generates sustainable growth developing the nation and securing the economic prosperity of its inhabitants. However, regardless of the outcomes of CSR anticipated by planners, the practical effects introducing the transnational discourse of CSR to Oman are best understood not as an inevitability but as an open question, an empirical problem available for investigation. It is to that investigation that I now turn.

Corporate Social Responsibility in Oman: Ruptures and Continuities

It is a truism among Corporate Social Responsibility practitioners that CSR is "new" to Oman. Local practitioners describe "spreading awareness" of CSR by encouraging business initiatives and sharing best practices as a core component of the work they do. The introduction of CSR in Oman has ultimately not enabled the creation of a diversified economy or the "rolling back" of the state; rather, it has produced institutional changes which have tended to preserve the private sector's role in extending the distributive reach of the state. These changes can be broadly characterized in two ways. First, introducing CSR to Oman has involved establishing an array of new social and technical arrangements associated with the CSR movement but which also don't undermine the centrality of the state as the provider and instigator of national development. Second, introducing CSR to Oman has also involved applying CSR's new discourse to older, preexisting patterns of state-centered paternalistic social responsibility.

The CSR movement Oman owes its origins to a series of reforms, initiated after a collapse of oil prices in the late 1990s, that aimed to reduce Oman's dependence on oil revenues and state spending (Valeri 2013a:23–24, Hodson 2013:102, Hertog 2013:4). In addition to a wave of privatization of state-run industries and utilities (Valeri 2013a:25), these reforms included the creation of the Capital Market Authority (CMA), a regulatory agency that sets accounting, corporate governance, and disclosure standards for companies traded on the local Muscat Securities Market. Although the CMA's authority is limited to the hundred or so companies traded on the Muscat Securities Market, the introduction of new transparency and corporate governance requirements lifted expectations of corporate disclosure in the private sector more broadly. Alongside enforcing the new standards, the CMA also took the lead in introducing CSR to private sector Omani companies, by encouraging local businesses to publish annual reports outlining their CSR contributions and ultimately by establishing the Oman Centre for Corporate Governance and Sustainability—an organization tasked with sharing CSR expertise and best practices with Oman's business community.[7]

By the mid-2000s, departments devoted to CSR were starting to appear in Omani companies, and advertisements for CSR-specific jobs began to fill local newspapers. In the years that followed, CSR has developed into a frenzy of business and public support. Walkathons, roadshows, concerts, infrastructure projects, workshops, scholarship, health and safety campaigns, and a host of other events and initiatives are sponsored and carried out by local businesses in ways that are linked, often explicitly, to their Corporate Social Responsibility. Although practices of CSR have been taken up by a wide variety of businesses and other organizations such as schools, hospitals, and social clubs, many of the companies with the most active CSR programs are corporations that are publicly traded on the Muscat Securities Exchange. Among these businesses, corporations involved in the Omani banking industry such as Bank Muscat, National Bank of Oman, Bank Dhofar, and Bank Sohar are particularly well known for their active CSR programs; additionally, companies involved in Oman's telecommunication industry such as Omantel and Narwas (now Ooredoo) also maintain extensive programs. Beyond the publicly traded companies, businesses involved in Oman's oil and gas sector—many of which are partially or wholly owned by the government—are also renowned for their CSR programs, with Petroleum Development Oman, Shell Development Oman, and Oman LNG being notable examples. Additionally, many of Oman's prominent family-held businesses and conglomerates—such as the Zubair Corporation, Suhail Bahwan Group, and Khimji Ramdas—also have major CSR initiatives. While widespread among large, publicly scrutinized companies, CSR programs and activities remain less common in smaller, privately-held businesses.

Beyond the CMA and the enforcement of new standards of transparency, the arrival of CSR in Oman led to the establishment of a series of new practices and socio-technical arrangements presupposed by the global discourse of CSR. First, implementing CSR in Oman required a rationalization and bureaucratization of charity in private sector Omani companies. Before CSR, it was common for individuals, local communities, or government officials to approach companies and request that they sponsor events and activities, including communal weddings, workshops, sports clubs, and festivals. The introduction of CSR meant replacing these sponsorships and donations—which were generally provided in an ad hoc manner at the discretion of employees—with an organized department or personnel who could uphold systematized criteria and objectives for evaluating requests for company aid. For practitioners with whom I spoke, the rationalization of private sector charity was accompanied by a more thoughtful and systematic allocation of charitable resources towards programs that provide lasting improvements and sustainable change in place of the often-cited temporary solutions offered by older practices of sponsorship. Additionally, the rationalization of charity accompanied by the implementation of CSR often led companies to allocate a budget—usually calculated as a percentage of profits—for the support of charitable activities and community programs.

One of the core features of transnational CSR has been its emphasis on collaboration between socially responsible businesses and NGOs who use corporate donations and sponsorships to develop and provide services to local communities (Welker 2009:145–146). In Oman, where development and social services have largely been provided by state institutions and local businesses directly, introducing CSR has meant establishing a constellation of non-profit associations and charities capable of receiving donations from socially responsible businesses. Such non-profit organizations—of which there are now more than 30—offer businesses an easy way to participate in CSR and contribute to specific causes without needing to develop and manage their own social programs (Ministry of Social Development n.d.). This new ecosystem of Omani non-profits operates under close supervision of the state. Before non-profit organizations are permitted to begin operations, they must undergo a rigorous registration process, typically lasting between six and seven years. After this process is complete, Omani non-profits are required to receive permission from the state's Ministry of Social Affairs before every event they organize and every publication they print.[8] Additionally, Omani non-profits are prohibited from accepting foreign funding without government approval and can be shut down at any time at the discretion of the Ministry.[9]

While some of Oman's new non-profit organizations concentrate on raising public awareness around issues like cancer, blindness, and road safety, other non-profits focus on providing services that at times duplicate those already being offered by the state. One non-profit organization that I spoke with provides food, clothing, and housing assistance to low-income Omanis—services that at times overlap with those already offered to citizens by the Ministry of Social Development. In such cases, they coordinate carefully with the Ministry to ensure that the citizens they provide assistance to have been officially vetted and declared entitled to state support, and then they align their activities so as to substitute for the assistance that would be otherwise be provided by the state.[10] The real social problem solved by such Omani non-profits is not a failure of the state to adequately provide services and welfare to the national population, but the relative scarcity of organizations capable of absorbing CSR-driven donations. Counterintuitively, the introduction of CSR into Oman has resulted in the invention of problems for which corporate donations to non-profit organizations are the solution.

In addition to creating a new local ecosystem of non-profit organizations, the arrival of CSR in Oman has also been accompanied by the introduction of corporate-organized volunteering. For many socially responsible Omani businesses, simply providing funding to a non-profit organization does not showcase the kind of commitment to sustainable development that they hope their organization can provide; businesses would also like to be seen as facilitators for the volunteer efforts of their employees. While Omani communities have a long history of mobilizing to support one another cooperatively, the practice of corporate-organized volunteer work (in which citizen employees volunteer for a non-profit organization) is new to many in Oman. As one practitioner explained it, often, employees "want to volunteer, but [they] don't know what to do."[11] For CSR practitioners and directors of Oman's new non-profit organizations, introducing CSR in Oman involves establishing and spreading a new culture of volunteerism by facilitating projects and teaching citizen employees the practices and expectations of volunteer work.

As these examples demonstrate, the introduction of CSR has led to the establishment of a variety of new practices and socio-technical arrangements that are associated with (and often preconditions for) the transnational CSR movement. To participate in CSR, businesses need transparency and reporting requirements that create an audience for their socially responsible activities, rational processes and procedures in place to formalize their charitable activities, an ecosystem of non-profit organizations and problems for which corporate donations are the solution, and employee volunteers whose volunteerism corporations can facilitate. Although significant, these changes don't undermine or replace older practices of paternalistic social responsibility that mobilize businesses to contribute to state-guided development and to extend the government's distributive reach. Instead, CSR in Oman has been implemented in ways that resonate with older practices; rather than achieving a de-statization of government, they enable the state to govern and be constituted through the activities of socially responsible private sector organizations.

One of the most significant ways that CSR continues the state-centric practices of paternalistic social responsibility is through the state's active role in guiding the socially responsible activities of private sector businesses. To start with, this state guiding of CSR is done indirectly through the announcement of national directives and development strategies, most commonly presented in the speeches of Oman's late leader, Sultan Qaboos. As one CSR practitioner explained,

> [our company] is keen to support communities with social programs [that] improve certain aspects as [outlined by] government strategies. We work along with the government [to address] what…the need[s] of the community [are] as per the government's point of view…The minute they announce [that] they have a strategy to support [a particular objective] every company looks at how they would support [it]. And the government appreciates all of these initiatives…That is how it is…Oman as a market [is] always driven by His Majesty's directives and what the government thinks, and the private sector to what extent they can support it…through their own capacity.[12]

Many of the CSR initiatives and programs taken up by private sector Omani companies are traceable—and often directly linked—to specific speeches or announcements by Sultan Qaboos calling the nation together to address certain national problems. For instance, Sultan Qaboos's 2009 speech on traffic safety and the dangers of reckless driving inspired a host of CSR initiatives (Salim and Salimah 2015), including business-sponsored training programs to educate employees about the importance of traffic safety; the formation of a non-profit to spread awareness about traffic safety; the publication of materials to educate elementary school children about traffic safety; and business participation in regularly held Traffic Safety Expos that allow companies to educate the public about traffic safety issues and to showcase their CSR. Similarly, Sultan Qaboos's 2013 speech at the symposium on the development of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Saih Al Shamikhat brought the issue of supporting Omani-run SMEs and local entrepreneurship to the forefront of the national agenda (Oman Economic Review 2013). Following his speech, a flurry of private sector CSR support for SMEs erupted, involving the formation of business-sponsored training programs for entrepreneurs; the establishment of several private funds to provide capital to small businesses; the development of business-organized mentorship programs; as well as efforts among businesses to hire Omani-run SMEs, even though they are often recognized as more expensive and less reliable than larger companies (Steiner 2020). The explicit outlining and public presentation of government strategies and the interest of private sector corporations in supporting them enables the Omani state to steer the socially responsible activities of local businesses towards the pursuit of state objectives.

In addition to guiding private sector CSR indirectly through issuing national directives, the Omani state also shepherds the socially responsible activities more directly through informal requests for the donations and cooperation of businesses. Several of the private sector CSR practitioners with whom I spoke described receiving requests and suggestions for potential CSR initiatives and activities from government organizations; while practitioners are quick to point out that they were never required to comply with state suggestions, these informal requests illustrate the active role the Omani state plays in directing private sector CSR. By directing the CSR initiatives of local companies, the Omani state creates a game in which organizations compete against one another to pursue state-defined objectives and, in the process, receive their own distributive rewards.

Like older practices of paternalistic social responsibility, CSR operates as an ethical metric against which organizations can be evaluated and granted government contracts and tenders. As one government official put it to me when describing state support for CSR initiatives,

> …if you create a good reputation and trust [for your company,] the government from the other side will grant you some projects because you are helping the society. [So, if your company has] looked after the environment, [has] contributed to the society, [has] built a mosque or a school or a clinic or [made] whatever contribution, then in the next tender, or the next project by the government, they will consider that.[13]

In this context, private sector CSR—like paternalistic social responsibility—functions as a leveraging practice, enabling businesses to compete for government contracts and subsidies through their contributions to state initiatives. Anthropologists studying CSR have highlighted how a corporation's socially responsible contributions to the surrounding community often take the form of a politics of "the gift" in which organizations give with the hope of gaining the consent, goodwill, or support of the communities in which they operate (Gardner 2012, Rajak 2011, Welker 2014).

Unlike contexts in which corporate patrons replace the state as providers of entitlements and guarantors of rights, in Oman "the gift" provided by socially responsible businesses acts as a gift not only between a corporation and a community but also between a corporation and the state itself: a contribution to the state's program of national development.

Additionally, the CSR initiatives provided Omani companies in many cases are designed to complement programs already offered by the state, both by "filling gaps" in state services and by cooperating with the state. A good example of such a program is Bank Muscat's *Jesr al Mustaqbal* scholarship. The Omani government offers educational scholarships to students who have high grades and who have scored well on standardized exams; however, many students—often those from lower-income families—do not receive government scholarships due to lower grades and exam scores. Bank Muscat's *Jesr al Mustaqbal* targets these students and provides them scholarships to pursue higher education (Bank Muscat 2012). In doing so, *Jesr al Mustaqbal* effectively enables Bank Muscat to use its CSR program to expand the provision of state services to communities who would otherwise not be eligible for government benefits. A second, related trend is for businesses to partner with the state, co-sponsoring events or paying for components of government programs. The participation of Omantel, Oman's largest telecommunications company, in the National PC Initiative, a government-administered program to provide low-income Omani students and teachers with internet-connected computers, is a good example. Omantel provides National PC Initiative participants with a modem and year of free Internet access while the state's Information Technology Authority provides the computers (Times of Oman 2013). Such partnerships not only allow private sector businesses to use their CSR to expand state services, but they also enable corporations to piggyback on state initiatives, effectively permitting businesses to attach a corporate brand onto government programs.[14]

In this subsidy-driven quid pro quo environment, CSR helps companies to counteract the suspicion that they are benefiting from state largess without doing their part to contribute to the development of Omani citizens or the nation. To this end, many of the CSR initiatives taken up by Omani companies are accompanied by a rhetorical emphasis on the expensiveness and lavish generosity displayed by sponsoring organizations. Corporate-sponsored workshops (on topics such as entrepreneurship and financial literacy) provided to citizens for free take place in the conference spaces of luxury hotels accompanied by extravagant catered buffets; corporate organized awareness-raising events frequently involve the distribution of a variety of gifts such as mugs, tee-shirts, and tote bags; and descriptions of CSR initiatives often emphasize the pampering citizen recipients and the high quality of the services and support provided. “Cash is available,” as one manager of a corporate-organized program to offer training and funding to citizen entrepreneurs explained to me when I asked about her program’s budget, “There is no issue in the budget… because we know this is the future of our country.”[15] Highlighting the no-expenses-spared generosity of their CSR programs enables companies in Oman to present themselves as righteous benefactors whose abundant generosity makes them worthy recipients of state support.

The introduction of CSR in Oman then has involved two sets of changes. First, introducing CSR to Omani businesses has led to the establishment of a series of new practices and socio-technical arrangements such as new transparency and reporting requirements for local businesses, a formalization of the processes and procedures that corporations use to engage in charitable activities, the creation of a new ecosystem of non-profit organizations able to absorb corporate donations, and the encouragement of corporate-sponsored volunteerism. These changes introduce a series of practices and institutional arrangements that are largely presupposed by the transitional discourses of the CSR movement. Second, the introduction of CSR in Oman has involved applying the discourses and language of the transnational CSR to a variety of established patterns of paternalistic social responsibility that enable private sector businesses to be leveraged to achieve state-defined objectives. These changes do not involve a de-statization of government or the replacement of state-guided development with markets and market-based institutions; instead, they serve to inflect deep-rooted patterns of paternalistic development with a new neoliberal vocabulary, rationale, and ends.

Conclusion: Neoliberal Rhetoric and Practice in the Arab Gulf

Scholars writing on the oil-producing states of the Arab Gulf have drawn a variety of conclusions on the role of seemingly neoliberal, pro-market practices and strategies initiated by states throughout the region that this article aims to complicate.

Political scientist Adam Hanieh, writing on recent diversification efforts in Oman and other Arab Gulf states, concludes that neoliberal reforms in Arab Gulf states will "significantly extend the reach of the market in a range economic sectors that have hitherto been state dominated" (2018:201). Focusing his analysis almost exclusively on the ambitious, diversification-oriented development objectives and plans released by states, Hanieh writes (regarding the case of Saudi Arabia), "regardless of the actual numerical targets met through these plans, what matters is what they tell us about the trajectory of economic strategy and the primary concerns of the…state" (2018:212). By fixating on the neoliberal rhetoric and seemingly pro-market development plans of the region's governments, Hanieh joins a number of other scholars (Held and Ulrichsen 2012; Sultan, Weir, and Karake-Shalhoub 2012) in suggesting that Arab Gulf states like Oman are entering a new post-oil era of economic liberalization and diversified, market-based growth.

Anthropology, as James Ferguson has aptly pointed out, "cannot take 'planning' at its word. Instead," he writes, "an anthropological approach must demote the plans and intentions of even the most powerful interests to the status of an interesting problem…for the anthropologist knows well how easily structures can take on lives over their own that soon enough overtake intentional practices" (1994:17). As a solution to a perceived problem of "too much" government, the introduction of CSR in Oman is an example of how a planned social intervention can produce outcomes that were neither intended nor recognized yet result in regimes of social control and political effects unanticipated by their policymakers. This article demonstrates that the outcomes of the neoliberal rhetoric and seemingly pro-market development plans of Arab Gulf states like Oman should be treated not as an inevitability or foregone conclusion but as an empirical problem, an "anthropological puzzle" (Ferguson 1994:17) requiring investigation and careful analysis.

Developing a different set of arguments regarding the role of seemingly pro-market technologies in the Arab Gulf, Ahmed Kanna (2011) has provocatively argued that neoliberal discourses and practices have helped to generate communities of "flexible citizens" in Dubai. Building on the work of Ong (1999, 2006) who explores how neoliberal technologies can be incorporated into a variety of authoritarian, postcolonial, and other regimes of governance through their selective application, Kanna (2011) proposes that Dubai's "flexible citizens" inhabit a zone of neoliberal exception within a society structured around a distribution-oriented "ruling bargain." Such flexible citizens, Kanna observes, have tended to embrace neoliberal discourses and practices in ways geared more towards articulating "national ethics and modes of proper and authentic citizenship" than creating value in the economic sense (2011:168). While Kanna's analysis is insightful, his focus on how neoliberal rhetoric and technologies produce citizens who are exceptions to the dominant regimes of governance of their own societies neglects the possibility that such seemingly pro-market technologies may operate in ways that contribute to local projects of distributive governance. By illustrating how a seemingly pro-market solution to the "problem" of oil dependence has unfolded in ways that reproduce older practices of state-centric social responsibility, this article demonstrates how a set of seemingly neoliberal interventions may be co-opted to achieve alternative ends.

The introduction of CSR in Oman then has led neither to a "rolling back" of the state nor to a reduction in the entitlements and distributive support offered to citizens or local businesses. Instead, CSR has enabled the distributive functions of the Omani state to be channeled through a series of other actors, creating a distributive network that relies on a denser and more complex web of institutional arrangements to achieve a familiar result. In the context of pressures to diversify that threaten the material interests of both citizens and Omani businesses, the seemingly pro-market discourses and practices of CSR appear to offer an unthreatening, if ineffective, solution. ■

Acknowledgments:

I am grateful to Sultan Qaboos University's Omani Studies Centre for hosting me during my time in Oman and to the patient generosity of my friends and interlocutors in Oman. All interviews were conducted confidentially, and the names of the interviewees withheld by mutual agreement. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Sixth Gulf Research Meeting (GRM), which was organized by the Gulf Research Centre Cambridge at the University of Cambridge on August 24–27, 2015. Additionally, I would like to thank my mentor, Brian Silverstein, for his engagement and support throughout all stages of this project and Mandana Limbert, Gökçe Günel, James Greenberg, Pete Taber, Samantha Grace, and my anonymous reviewers for their constructive feedback on drafts of this manuscript.

Endnotes:

[1]Interview with a business owner, October 9, 2013.

[2]As Chang (2012) points out, immigration controls are a mechanism used by most capitalist states to construct and protect national markets for labor. In Oman, immigration controls are instead used by the state to subsidize the labor expenses of businesses.

[3]Interview with a business owner, May 12, 2014.

[4]Interview with CSR practitioner, July 2, 2014.

[5]Interview with a business owner, March 19, 2014.

[6]Interview with a business owner, May 6, 2014.

[7]Interview with an auditor, January 18, 2014.

[8]Interview with a non-profit manager, August 2, 2011

[9]Interview with civil society expert, August 9, 2011.

[10]Interview with a non-profit manager, August 1, 2011.

[11]Interview with a CSR practitioner, August 2, 2011.

[12]Interview with a CSR practitioner, July 2, 2014.

[13]Interview with a Capital Market Authority official, June 8, 2014.

[14]Interview with a CSR practitioner, June 19, 2013.

[15]Interview with a manager of an SME training program, May 15, 2014.

References:

Alonso, Ana Maria. 1994. "The Politics of State, Time and Substance: State formation, Nationalism, Ethnicity." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 23:379–405.

Ayubi, Nazih. 2008. *Overstating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East*. London: I.B. Tauris.

Bank Muscat. 2012. "Bank Muscat Presents 'Jesr al Mustaqbal' Scholarships to 2nd Batch of Omani Youth." Accessed from http://www.bankmuscat.com/en-us/PressReleases/Pages/BMJesralMustaqbal.aspx on May 17, 2017.

Bhatia, Neha. 2015. "Oman Contractors Hit by Nationalisation Targets." *ConstructionWeekOnline.Com*, October 5. Accessed from http://www.constructionweekonline.com/article-35720-oman-contractors-hit-by-nationalisation-targets/ on May 17, 2017.

Brejning, Jeanette. 2012. *Corporate Social Responsiblity and the Welfare State: The Historical and Contemporary Role of CSR in the Mixed Economy of Welfare*. Burlington: Ashgate.

Carroll, Archie B. 1999. "Corporate Social Responsibility: Evolution of a Definitional Construct." *Business & Society* 38(3):268–295.

Chang, Ha-Joon. 2012. "Thing 3: Most People in Rich Countries are Paid More Than They Should Be." In *23 Things They Don't Tell You About Capitalism*, 23–30. New York: Bloomsbury Press.

Cruikshank, Barbara. 1999. *The Will to Empower: Democratic Citizens and Other Subjects*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Dolan, Catherine and Dinah Rajak. 2011. "Introduction." In Catherine Dolan, Christina Garsten, and Dinah Rajak, eds. "Ethnographies of Corporate Ethicizing" Theme Section, *Focaal: Journal of Global and Historical Anthropology* 11(60):3–8.

Elyachar, Julia. 2005. *Markets of Dispossession: NGOs, Economic Development, and the State in Cairo*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Ferguson, James. 1994. *The Anti-Politics Machine: "Development," Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press.

Ferguson, James and Akhil Gupta. 2002. "Spatializing States: Toward an Ethnography of Neoliberal Governmentality." *American Ethnologist* 29(4):981–1002.

Foucault, Michel. 2003. "Governmentality." In Paul Rabinow and Nikolas S. Rose, eds. *The Essential Foucault: Selections from Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984*, 229–245. New York: New Press.

__________. 2008. *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–79*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Friedman, Milton. 1962. *Capitalism and Freedom*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Gardner, Katy. 2012. *Discordant Development: Global Capitalism and the Struggle for Connection in Bangladesh*. New York: Pluto Press.

Garsten, Christina and Tor Hernes. 2009. "Beyond CSR: Dilemmas and Paradoxes of Ethical Conduct in Transnational Organizations." In Katherine E. Browne and B. Lynne Milgram, eds. *Economics and Morality: Anthropological Approaches*, 189–210. Lanham: AltaMira Press.

Hanieh, Adam. 2018. *Money, Markets, and Monarchies: The Gulf Cooperation Council and the Political Economy of the Contemporary Middle East*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Harvey, David. 2005. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Hayek, Friedrich A. von. 1944. *The Road to Serfdom*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Held, David and Kristian Ulrichsen. 2012. "Editor's Introduction: The Transformation of the Gulf." In David Held and Kristian Ulrichsen, eds. *The Transformation of the Gulf: Politics, Economics, and the Global Order*, 1–25. New York: Routledge.

Hertog, Steffen. 2013. "Introduction: The Role of MENA Business in Policy Making and Political Transitions." In Steffen Hertog, Giacomo Luciani, and Marc Valeri, eds. *Business Politics in the Middle East*, 1–16. London: C. Hurst & Co.

Hodson, Nathan. 2013. "Breaking Loose: Reduced Private Sector Dependence on Governments in GCC economies." In Steffen Hertog, Giacomo Luciani, and Marc Valeri, eds. *Business Politics in the Middle East*, 101–132. London: C. Hurst & Co.

Kanna, Ahmed. 2011. *Dubai, The City as Corporation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Krause, Wanda. 2008. *Women in Civil Society: The State, Islamism, and Networks in the UAE*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Li, Tania. 2007. *The Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development, and the Practice of Politics*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Limbert, Mandana. 2010. *In the Time of Oil: Piety, Memory, and Social Life in an Omani Town*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Mazzucato, Mariana. 2015. *The Entrepreneurial State: Debunking Public vs. Private Sector Myths*. New York: PublicAffairs.

Ministry of Social Development. n.d. "Associations and Charities." Ministry of Social Development, last modified August 8, 2018. Last accessed https://www.mosd.gov.om/index.php/en/associations-and-clubs-2/charitable-organizations on June 5, 2020.

Mitchell, Timothy. 1991. "The Limits of the State: Beyond Statist Approaches and Their Critics." *The American Political Science Review* 85(1):77–96.

Moon, Jeremy. 2014. *Corporate Social Responsibility: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Muehlebach, Andrea Karin. 2012. *The Moral Neoliberal: Welfare and Citizenship in Italy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

National Centre for Statistics and Information. 2020. *Monthly Statistical Bulletin 31* (May). Muscat, Oman: National Centre for Statistics and Information.

__________. 2021. *The Detailed Book of Ecensus 2020 Results*. Muscat, Oman: 2020 Electronic Census of Population, Housing and Establishments.

Oman Economic Review. 2013. "The Small And Medium Enigma." *Oman Economic Review* (152):38–50.

__________. 2020. "Providing Impetus for Growth." *Oman Economic Review* (235):26–28.

Oman Observer. 2020. "Oman's Oil Reserves at 4.84bn Barrels, Gas at 23.8 Tcf." *Oman Daily Observer*, July 16. Accessed from https://www.omanobserver.om/article/11932/Main/omans-oil-reserves-at-484bn-barrels-gas-at-238-tcf on July 19, 2021.

Ong, Aihwa. 1999. *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality*. Durham: Duke University Press.

_________. 2006. *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Power, Michael. 1997. *The Audit Society: Rituals of Verification*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Rajak, Dinah. 2011. *In Good Company: An Anatomy of Corporate Social Responsibility*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Rose, Nikolas. 1996. "Governing 'Advanced' Liberal Democracies." In Andrew Barry, Thomas Osborne, and Nikolas Rose, eds. *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neo-liberalism, and Rationalities of Government*, 37–64. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Salim and Salimah. 2015. "National Traffic Safety Recommendations." Accessed from http://www.salimandsalimah.org/oman-crashes/national-traffic-safety-recommendations/ on May 29, 2020.

Shamir, Ronen. 2008. "The Age of Responsibilization: On Market-Embedded Morality." *Economy and Society* 37(1):1–19.

Sharma, Aradhana and Akhil Gupta. 2006. "Introduction." In Aradhana Sharma and Akhil Gupta, eds. *The Anthropology of the State: A Reader*, 1–41. Malden: Blackwell.

Sharp, John. 2006. "Corporate Social Responsiblity and Development: An Anthropological Perspective." *Development Southern Africa* 23(2):213–222.

Siltaoja, Marjo, Virpi Malin, and Miikka Pyykkönen. 2015. "'We are All Responsible Now': Governmentality and Responsibilized Subjects in Corporate Social Responsibility." *Management Learning* 46(4):444–460.

Steiner, Robin Thomas. 2020. "Cultivating "Omani Ambitions": Entrepreneurship, Distributive Labor, and the Temporalities of Diversification in the Arab Gulf." *Economic Anthropology* 7(1):80–92.

Strathern, Marilyn. 2000. "New Accountabilities: Anthropological Studies in Audit, Ethics, and the Academy." In Marilyn Strathern, ed. *Audit Cultures: Anthropological Studies in Accountability, Ethics, and the Academy*, 1–18. New York: Routledge.

Sultan, Nabil, David Weir, and Zeinab Karake-Shalhoub, eds. 2012. *The New Post-Oil Arab Gulf: Managing People and Wealth*. London: Saqi.

Sydow, Johanna. 2016. "Global Concepts in Local Contexts: CSR as 'Anti-Politics Machine' in the Extractive Sector in Ghana and Peru." In Catherine Dolan, Dinah Rajak, and Robert J. Foster, eds. *The Anthropology of Corporate Social Responsibility*, 217–242. New York: New York: Berghahn Books.

Times of Oman. 2013. "National IT Drive Distributes 87,000 Computers to Youths." *Times of Oman*, March 19. Accessed from http://timesofoman.com/article/11891/Oman/National-IT-drive-distributes-87000-computers-to-youths on March 28, 2017.

Valeri, Marc. 2013a. "Oligarcy vs Oligarcy: Business and Politics of Reform in Barahain and Oman." In Steffen Hertog, Giacomo Luciani, and Marc Valeri, eds. *Business Politics in the Middle East*, 17—41. London: C. Hurst & Co.

_________. 2013b. *Oman: Politics and Society in the Qaboos State*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Vallentin, Steen and David Murillo. 2012. "Governmentality and the Politics of CSR." *Organization* 19(6):825–843.

Vogel, David. 2005. *The Market for Virtue: The Potential and Limits of Corporate Social Responsibility*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.

Welker, Marina A. 2009. "'Corporate Security Begins in the Community': Mining, the Corporate Social Responsibility Industry, and Environmental Advocacy in Indonesia." *Cultural Anthropology* 24(1):142–179.

_________. 2014. *Enacting the Corporation: An American Mining Firm in Post-Authoritarian Indonesia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Foreign Language Translations:

Following His Majesty's Directives: Corporate Generosity, Social Responsibility, and State Making in Oman
[**Keywords**: Corporate Social Responsibility, rentier governmentality, diversification, neoliberalism, expertise, the state, Oman]

По указам его Величества — корпоративная щедрость, социальная ответственность и создание государственности в Омане
[**Ключевые слова**: корпоративная социальная ответственность, государство-рантье, диверсификация, неолиберализм, опыт, государственность, Оман]

Seguindo as Diretivas de Sua Majestade: Generosidade Corporativa, Responsabilidade Social, e Construção do Estado em Omã
[**Palavras-chave**: Responsabilidade Social Corporativa, governamentalidade rentista, diversificação, neoliberalismo, perícia, o Estado, Omã]

إتباعاً لتوجيهات جلالة الملك: كرم الشركات والمسؤولية الاجتماعية وصناعة الدولة في عُمان

كلمات البحث: المسؤولية الاجتماعية للشركات، الحكومة الريعية، التنويع، الليبرالية الجديدة، الخبرة، الدولة، عُمان