Business Unusual: A case study of Patagonia's use of Corporate Social Responsibility and Corporate Activism to promote Environmentalism and Environmental Justice

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Abstract

The recent emergence of Corporate Activism within Corporate Social Responsibility debates has focused mainly on authenticity and brand reputation, which means that important research on the role of corporations in societal and environmental change through activism remains scarce. The aim of this research is to uncover mechanisms for how Corporate Activism can enhance the reputation of Corporate Social Responsibility programmes through a case study of Patagonia, the outdoor apparel brand that is headquartered in the U.S. This research used a mixed-methods explanatory sequential design approach and employed a mixture of ethnographic and case study qualitative methods through fieldwork in the U.S. and desk-based research in the UK. This research examined the motivations behind engaging in environmental activism from both the nonprofit organisation and corporate perspective. The key findings relate to the overall ease of the grant-making process, the relative autonomy of local stores in making key decisions related to environmental activism, and reciprocal relationship-building by staff at both organisational levels. The findings related to conceptualisations of trust-based and place-based philanthropy and outlines the role that Patagonia plays within the environmental movement in Utah. These findings make important contributions to the fields of Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Activism and offer recommendations for corporations attempting to authentically support grassroots activist organisations.

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Contents

Abstract 2

Acknowledgements 3

Contents 5

Table of Figures 9

List of Abbreviations 11

1. Introduction 13

The Research Problem 13

The Research Aim and Objectives 16

Introducing the Case Study: Patagonia Inc 17

Patagonia and Environmental Initiatives 21

The Footprint Chronicles 21

Carbon Footprint 21

Environmental Philanthropy 23

1% for the Planet 24

B-Corp Status 25

Environmental Activism 27

Definition of Key Terms 30

The Structure of the Thesis 34

2. Literature Review 38

Corporate Purpose, Corporate Social Responsibility and Corporate Activism 38

Business as Usual: Corporate Purpose 39

The Business Roundtable 42

Corporate Social Responsibility 43

Corporate Volunteering 46

(Corporate) Philanthropy 46

Critiques of Corporate Social Responsibility 51

Emergence of Corporate Activism 52

Environmentalism: Policy Instruments, Issues and Emerging Themes 61

Environment Vs Business: Two Differing Perspectives 62

Kickstarting the Environmental Movement 64

Emergence of Environmental Justice 71

Environmental Impacts of the Apparel Industry and Potential Solutions 76

Patagonia's Own Contributions to the Literature 79

Conclusion: The Research Gap 81
3. Methodological Approach and Research Context 82
Introduction 82
Research Approach 82
Unit of Analysis 83
Research Design 83
Case Study Methodology 84
Sampling 86
Methodology 86
Phase 1: Desk-Based Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis 88
Phase Two: Fieldwork, Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis 93
Selecting the Research Location: Salt Lake City and the State of Utah 94
Economic Context 95
Environmental Context 97
Sampling 101
Research Methods 103
Phase 3: Qualitative Data Analysis 106
Positionality 106
Ethical Considerations 107
Conclusion 108
4. Supporting Grassroots Activism: The Role of Philanthropy 110
Introduction 110
Total Direct Giving 113
Average Donation Size 120
Direct Giving in Utah 127
Indirect Giving 132
Local Store Environmental Giving 137
Methodological and Theoretical Contributions 138
Conclusion 140
5. Examining the Nature of Relationships between Corporate and Environmental Actors 141
Introduction 141
Patagonia's Environmental Grant Programme: Documenting Experiences of Nonprofit Organisations 142
Grant Process 142
Grant Outcomes 149

Grant Monitoring and Reporting 155
Patagonia as Community Organisation: The Role of Non-Financial Mechanisms 158
Community Events at Patagonia Stores 158
Patagonia Action Works and Catchafire 163
Employee Volunteering 167
Environmental Activism Conference 171
Product, In-kind Donations and Discount 174
Different Types of Relationships 176
Conclusion 179
6. Supporting Grassroots Environmental Activism at the Local Level: Motivations, Intents and Perceptions 181
Introduction 181
Community Store Grants Programme 181
Nonprofit Tabling 186
Winter Walks 189
Employee Engagement: Organising Activism Events 190
Embeddedness within the Community 195
Enabling Local-Level Autonomy: Support from Patagonia Corporate Office 202
Staff Engagement in Environmental Activism 207
Conclusion 210
7. Corporate Activism in Action: A Case Study of Bears Ears National Monument 212
Background 212
Patagonia's Response 214
Knock-On Effects: Cementing a Public Stance 217
Supporting Grassroots Environmental Action and Activism 219
8. Discussion: The Role of Corporate Activism in Supporting Grassroots Environmental Activism 223
Patagonia as Funder 224
Patagonia as Activist 229
Patagonia as Community-based Organisation 231
The Role of CSR in Supporting and Enabling Grassroots Environmental Activism 233
Patagonia's Role Within the Environmental Justice Movement 241
Conclusion 243
9. Conclusion, Recommendations and Future Research Possibilities 245
Implications and Recommendations for Businesses 251
Implications and Recommendations for Environmental Organisations 254

Future Research Possibilities 256
Bibliography 258
Appendix A: Principles of Environmental Justice from the People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit 285
Appendix B: Patagonia's Five Elements of Responsible Business 287
Appendix C: Utah-based environmental non-profits that have received funding from Patagonia 294
Appendix D: Participant Information Form 295
Appendix E: Semi-Structured Interviews Questions for Organisations 297
Exploratory Interviews 297
Project Overview 297
Part One- Initial questions 297
Part Two- Overview of the Organisation 297
Part Three- Broad Challenges and Support 297
Part Four- Financial and Operational Constraints 298
Part Five- Further Research 298
Appendix F: Patagonia Grants Programme Stipulations 299
Appendix G: What next for Patagonia?: Patagonia Purpose Trust and the Holdfast Collective 301
Home Planet Fund 301
Appendix H: Influence on other Outdoor Apparel Companies and Retailers 304

Table of Figures

1.1	Patagonia's famous 'Don't Buy this Jacket' ad in The New York Times took a stance on mass consumerism that is typical of Black Friday promotions.
1.2	Patagonia's published carbon footprint for 2022/2023
1.3	Patagonia's B Impact Scores since becoming a registered B-Corp by B-Lab.
1.4	Patagonia's B Impact Assessment Scores across the five indicator categories.
1.5	Examples of environmental activism by Patagonia
1.6	A 'Vote the Assholes Out' message escribed on a Patagonia logo
1.7	Word Cloud demonstrating the common words used in definitions about corporate/brand activism.
2.1	BRT's 2019 statement on the purpose of a corporation.
2.2	Carroll's pyramid of CSR
2.3	The Responsible Business Pentad
2.4	How Brand Activism differs from CSR activities
2.5	The different issues that brand activism can support
2.6	Brand Activism can be regressive or progressive
2.7	Comparing CSR and CA
2.8	Vredenburg et al's (2020) Typology of Brand Activism
3.1	Process and stages of conducting an Explanatory Sequential Design. Adapted from Cresswell (2022:55)
3.2	My explanatory sequential mixed methods design.
3.3	Excerpt from Patagonia Org's Form 990-PF that details key information relating to philanthropic giving.
3.4	Map of the U.S., with Utah highlighted
3.5	Major outdoor recreation categories and nominal value added in US$ billions to the US economy
3.6	Visitation numbers to Utah's 'Mighty 5' national parks
3.7	Map depicting the Bears Ears National Monument boundary, the State of Utah monument proposal, uranium and other mineral deposits and oil wells in the area.
4.1	The Five Categories of Issues that Patagonia fund.
4.2	Total Direct Giving by Patagonia from 2007-2021
4.3	Top 20 organisations that have received funding from Patagonia, with cumulative totals for donations between 2007 and 2021.
4.4	Top 20 organisations that have received Patagonia alongside their reported revenue and net assets.
4.5	Average donation size by Patagonia to environmental grantees (in USD)
4.6	Number of organisational grants received by number of donations made
4.7	Average Grant Size for a single-recipient organisation
4.8	Map of the Contiguous U.S. with each circle representing the number of organisations that have received Patagonia funding
4.9	Total Number of Donations by State, inclusive of number of organisations that have received funding in each state and the average donation amount.
4.10	The Main Issues that environmental non-profit organisations have been funded by Patagonia in Utah

4.11	A basic depiction of Patagonia's direct and indirect funding model
4.12	Table showing the dynamic grant classification system, classifying Patagonia grants as small, medium and large based on the mean average that year.
4.13	Patagonia Salt Lake City grantees for Financial Year 2023 on display in the local store
6.1	Screenshot of Patagonia SLC's website that contains a link to where community partner organisations can sign up to the Community Partner Tabling programme
6.2	Patagonia Store Zip Code Median Income Differential to State Income
6.3	Researcher's own photograph of Patagonia's gazebo used for eventing outdoors.
6.4	Each Patagonia store's individual logos on their Instagram accounts
7.1	Map of Bears Ears National Monument
7.2	Screenshot of Patagonia website homepage
8.1	Patagonia's tri-relationship model with their overarching role of supporting and enabling grassroots environmental activism
8.2	Author's reconceptualization of Carroll's (2016) pyramid of CSR.
8.3	Author's own reconceptualization of Kotler and Lee's (2005) and Sarkar and Kotler (2020) CSR activities
G.1	The Home Planet Fund Financial Flow
G.2	Patagonia's 50 years poster that illustrates there will be looking to save life on earth, and not follow in the footsteps of other companies seeking to build a new home on Mars.
H.1	A product example of The North Face's advocacy for Bears Ears

List of Abbreviations

BENM	Bears Ears National Monument
BEP	Bears Ears Partnership
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
BRT	Business Roundtable
BWA	Buffalo Watershed Alliance
BEA	Bureau of Economic Analysis
CA	Corporate Activism
CAP	Cold-Air Pool
CBE	Communities for a Better Environment
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CJ	Climate Justice
CLF	Conservation Lands Foundation
CO^2e	Carbon Dioxide Equivalents
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CV	Corporate Volunteering
EHC	Environmental Health Coalition
EJ	Environmental Justice
EP&L	Environmental Profit & Loss
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EPIC	Environmental Protection Information Centre
ESG	Environmental, Social and Governance
FOCM	Friends of Cedar Mesa
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GSENM	Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument
GSL	Great Salt Lake
GULB	Green Urban Lunch Box
HEAL Utah	Healthy Environmental Alliance of Utah
IRS	Internal Revenue Service
NPS	National Parks Service
ORS	Outdoor Retailer Show
PAW	Patagonia Action Works
PM	Particulate Matter
SAC	Sustainable Apparel Coalition
SBTi	Science Based Targets Initiative
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEC	Securities and Exchanges Commission
SLC	Salt Lake City
SOC	Save Our Canyons
SUWA	Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance
SVM	Shareholder Value Maximisation
SWOP	Southwest Organising Project
TBL	Triple-Bottom-Line
USP	Unique Selling Proposition

WRA	Western Resource Advocates
UK	United Kingdom
U.S.	United States of America
UDB	Utah Diné Bikeyah
UN	United Nations
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCC	United Nations Framework on Climate Change
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UPHE	Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment
URC	Utah Rivers Council
USFS	United States Forest Service
WCG	Wasatch Community Gardens
WELC	Western Environmental Law Center

1. Introduction

The Research Problem

The global fashion and apparel industrial sector account for roughly ten percent of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (UNEP, 2023; UNEP & UNFCC, 2023) with the approximate release of 4-5 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents (CO^2e) annually (Biswas et al, 2024; Aponte et al, 2024; Shedlock & Feldstein, 2023), consuming more energy than the shipping and aviation sectors combined (UNFCC, 2018). Additionally, the same industry is responsible for a large proportion of environmental and social harms, including poor labour conditions (Bernard, 2023; Bick et al, 2018; Ross & Morgan, 2015; Rahman, 2014; Klein, 1999), wastewater discharge and associated water pollution from synthetic dyes (Yu et al, 2023; UNEP, 2023; Uddin, 2021; Moazzem et al, 2021; Kant, 2012), use of toxic chemicals (Moazzem et al, 2021; European Environment Agency, 2019), excessive raw material consumption (Aponte et al, 2024; Parsons, 2023), and disposal of goods in landfills (Aponte et al, 2024; Geegamage et al, 2024; Parsons, 2023; Williams & Hodges, 2022). As such, the rising demand and consequent consumption of textile materials makes the fashion and apparel industry one of the most environmentally polluting industries in the world (Biswas et al, 2024; Aponte et al, 2024; Li et al, 2024; Parsons, 2023; Stallard, 2022; Ki et al, 2021). The proliferation of environmental harms continues to have economic, social and environmental consequences for both the apparel sector itself and their supply chains operations.

With wide-ranging environmental harms discussed both in academic and civil-society circles, considerable attention has focused on how corporations measure their environmental impact and take steps to address it. Corporate responses include regulatory frameworks such as the United Nations (UN) Global Compact, the Sustainable Apparel Coalition (SAC), and voluntary Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives at the local level. These frameworks aim to mitigate environmental harms but are often used to demonstrate the 'progress' being made by a company towards its social and environmental obligations. In many cases, these frameworks fail to tell the whole story of how apparel products are made and the impact of these products on the environment: this phenomenon is known as greenwashing (Myers, 2024; Sammons, 2024; Kohli, 2024; Badhwar et al, 2024; Pabon, 2023).

For example, the global sportswear corporation Nike measured their GHG emissions in 2021, reporting that 0.4% of emissions were categorised as Scope 1[1] emissions, 0.7% were categorised

[1] Scope 1 emissions are direct GHG emissions occurring from sources that are controlled or owned by an organisation (WRI & WBCSD, 2022).

as Scope 2[2] emissions, and 98.9% of emissions were categorised under Scope 3, with purchased goods and services comprising 88.5% of total Scope 3[3] emissions (SAC, 2023). This highlights the role of outsourced labour in processing and manufacturing products, often in factories where products are made for many competing apparel companies (Aibar-Guzmán et al, 2022; Rahman, 2014; Klein, 1999) and demonstrates the majority of carbon emissions are emitted throughout the supply chain. These activities are often deemed to be outside of the main organisational boundaries of a business' activity because they do not own or control those assets. Positioning products as socially or environmentally friendly often requires examining complex supply chains and promoting sustainable practices (Wang, 2024; Abuzawida, 2023).

Research has shown that a high level of consumers desire to buy products that have both a social and environmental benefit (Pasirayi et al, 2023; Accenture, 2018). Products with a positive social and environmental benefit sit alongside other attributes such as quality and affordability when making product purchasing decisions from the range of brands in the marketplace (Accenture, 2018). A 2023 study by McKinsey and NielsenIQ examined consumers in the United States of America (hereafter referenced as U.S.) and their spending habits and found that businesses that design and manufacture products with a positive environmental and social represents logical business acumen due to its potential for sales growth and market equity, but also provides a moral incentive for consumers when making purchasing decisions (McKinsey & NielsenIQ, 2023).

Simultaneously, there has been a marked increase in activism being employed by corporations as they seek to lend support to organisations that work on global environmental and social justice issues (Korshun, 2021; Sibai et al, 2021; Sarkar & Kotler, 2020; Vredenburg et al, 2020). This phenomenon, known as Corporate Activism (CA) (Eilert & Cherup, 2020) or Brand Activism (Sarkar & Kotler, 2020; Vredenburg et al, 2020), has emerged within the CSR literature and differentiates itself in numerous ways. CA can be defined as "a company's willingness to take a stand on social, political, economic, and environmental issues to create societal change by influencing the attitudes and behaviours of actors in its institutional environment" (Eilert & Cherup: 2020:463).

As a recent phenomenon, CA has opened new avenues for research possibilities by focusing on the many businesses that utilise activism to address societal issues, reach new customers, expand their market share and further develop their unique selling proposition. As companies have

[2] Scope 2 emissions are defined as indirect emissions associated with the generation of purchased energy (WRI & WBCSD, 2022).
[3] Scope 3 emissions are the total of indirect emissions that are not included in Scope 2 that occur both upstream and downstream of the value chain in a reporting company (WRI & WBCSD, 2022).

traditionally tended to remain neutral on social, environmental and/or political issues, the emergence of CA has profound implications for the role of corporations in addressing global issues that are typically outside of the narrowly defined concept of corporative purpose in the literature.

It is becoming clear that consumers both want and expect companies to engage in brand activism. The consulting firm, Accenture, conducted a global survey of 30,000 consumers and found that two-thirds of customers want and expect businesses to take a stand on current and relevant issues like sustainability, transparency or fair employment practices (Accenture, 2018). The research identified the different factors, including geography, product categories, brand maturity, demographics and ecosystem readiness, that influence the stance a brand might take and how it affects their competitiveness. For example, the research found that sixty percent of Gen Zers and Millennials believe it is important for companies to take a stand on issues such as human rights, race relations or LGBTQ equality, whereas only half of Gen Xers and Boomers feel the same (Accenture, 2018), suggesting that future generations will consider brand purpose to be an important consideration when making purchases in a congested and contested marketplace.

Similar research conducted in 2018 by the global communications marketing firm Edelman found that 64 percent of consumers around the world will buy or boycott a brand solely because of its position on a social or political issue, with the survey of 8,000 people across eight markets finding that consumers believe that brands are a more powerful force for societal change than government (Ahmad et al, 2024; Bhagwat et al, 2020; Vredenburg et al, 2020; Edelman, 2018). Another key survey finding was that 60 percent of respondents felt that brands should make it easier to see what their values and positions on important issues are when they are about to make a purchase (Edelman, 2018). This suggests that some brands do not explicitly state their corporate values for fear of public backlash, and further suggests that brands that are brave enough to take a stance on any important issue, whether social, environmental or political, could reap financial benefit.

Research conducted by Sprout Social found that people want companies to take stands on important issues, and that social media is the place to do it. The study, called The Sprout Social Championing Change in the Age of Social Media', surveyed 1,022 U.S. consumers in 2017. Their survey found that 66 percent of consumers say it is important to take a public stand on social and political issues (Sprout Social, 2017). Social media has allowed anyone, anywhere, to take a public stance on any issue that they want to, and individuals and organisations with large amounts of followers carry substantive weight when making a stand using social media platforms (Nam et al, 2023; Lim & Young, 2021). Social media has also enabled corporations to respond quickly to

external events that could become critical public issues; one of the most recent examples include the Black Lives Matter protests after the murder of George Floyd.

The Research Aim and Objectives

This creates an important paradox: how can an industry that has contributed to many environmental harms experienced by communities around the world want to engage in activism centred around environmental issues? Businesses that want to play a central role in addressing environmental issues must critically examine their own impacts while simultaneously advancing the broad aims of the diverse environmental movement. This intersection, created by the merging of CSR activities and CA stances, has implications for how corporate actions can be considered authentic and sincere, as opposed to attracting criticism. One way this has been achieved by companies is through supporting grassroots activism (Eilert & Cherup, 2020) and one of the most successful companies to have achieved this is Patagonia (Buchanan et al, 2024; Eilert & Cherup, 2020; Vredenburg et al, 2020). My aim is thus to show *how supporting activism at the grassroots level can shape positive social and environmental outcomes for CSR strategies*. To achieve this aim I use a case study of the American outdoor apparel company, Patagonia[4], and identify the following objectives:

- Determine which grassroots environmental organisations have been supported by Patagonia and how this support is manifested.
- Examine the nature of the relationship between grassroots environmental activists and a corporate activist.
- Examine the motivations and intents behind Patagonia's pursuit of corporate activism and how their role is perceived in supporting grassroots environmental activism

The research findings demonstrate that Patagonia engage in both financial and non-financial mechanisms to enhance the capability of nonprofit organisations in the environmental sphere. These mechanisms are employed at multiple levels to support environment organisations, and staff work under a high degree of local autonomy at the local level. Consequently, there are multiple relationships that are formed via these partnerships: financial, activist and community-based. This makes important contributions to academic, business and civil-society debates on theories of CSR, corporate philanthropy, Environmental Justice (EJ), and activism as a tool for social change. Therefore, the impact of this research is wide-ranging. It provides an original

[4] Patagonia is an outdoor recreation company headquartered in California, USA, founded by climber Yvon Chouinard in 1973.

contribution to the burgeoning field of CA in the form of an in-depth case study that outlines the various mechanisms that can be employed by corporations as they seek to support grassroots environmental activism.

An overview of Patagonia is provided below that aims to contextualise the company within the outdoor industry and the broader corporate world, its environmental impact, some of the main public stances the company has made, and an overview of the products it makes and sells.

Introducing the Case Study: Patagonia Inc

> "*The reason that the rich were so rich, Vimes reasoned, was because they managed to spend less money […] A really good pair of leather boots cost fifty dollars. But an affordable pair of boots, which were sort of OK for a season or two and then leaked like hell when the cardboard gave out, cost about ten dollars. But the thing was that good boots lasted for years and years. A man who could afford fifty dollars had a pair of boots that'd still be keeping his feet dry in ten years' time, while a poor man who could only afford cheap boots would have spent a hundred dollars on boots in the same time and would still have wet feet"* (Excerpt from Men at Arms by Terry Pratchett, 1993:40)

The English fantasy author Terry Pratchett coined the oft-quoted "Boots Theory" of socioeconomic unfairness in his 1993 Discworld novel *Men at Arms*. In this novel, his character, Sam Vimes, muses on the unfairness of being poor in an unequal society. This theory, which is detailed in the opening to this section, has been used by social scientists to describe many social and economic phenomena, for example, the cost and cycle of poverty, and the inaccessibility of sustainable fashion to those with lower incomes (Srinivas, 2020). This is especially pertinent in the case study of Patagonia as their sustainable apparel model means its products are priced at a premium (Guerreiro et al, 2023; Lowett, 2011) and it is perceived by many to be financially out of reach for lower-income consumers when they make decisions about spending on products and apparel geared for outdoor recreation (Abela, 2023).

It also highlights the various paradoxes that emerge during a close examination of Patagonia. Patagonia engage in anti-consumerist marketing messaging, most famously through the "Do Not Buy This Jacket" message in the New York Times (Patagonia, 2011) on Black Friday[5] (see Fig 1.1) but have achieved marketing success through its campaign as it attracts new customers and retains existing customers (Hepburn, 2013; Heren, 2012). In a marketing campaign, Patagonia took a stance on over-consumption and hyper-consumerism, and ran a campaign focused on a prevailing issue within the apparel industry: that the most sustainable clothes were the ones that you had already purchased (Conway-Wood, 2022). Rather ironically, it has been reported that this campaign led to an increase in sales for Patagonia, as consumers were keen to buy Patagonia

[5] Black Friday is the Friday after Thanksgiving in the U.S., marking the start of the festive sales period.

clothing products as it appealed to their values (Alexander, 2024; Better Marketing, 2020; Hope, 2015; Lowett, 2011). In any case, Patagonia pledged to donate all sales made on Black Friday, despite having no Black Friday discounts of any kind, to environmental projects.

Figure 1.1: Patagonia's famous 'Don't Buy this Jacket' ad in The New York Times took a stance on mass consumerism that is typical of Black Friday promotions.

My selection of Patagonia as a case study was deliberate as the company has been used as a case study in many different fields. Patagonia have been used as an academic case study in the fields of green marketing (Guerreiro et al, 2023; Zint & Frederick, 2002), sustainability and consumerist social media messaging (Cristófol Rodríguez et al, 2021), circular fashion (Gautam, 2024; Iwasaki, 2024; Rattalino, 2018), CSR authenticity and engagement (Jung & Sa, 2020), and sustainable business and strategy innovations, including supply chain management (Shourkaei et al, 2024; Rattalino, 2018; O'Rourke & Strand, 2017; Fowler & Hope, 2007).

Even specifically within the literature on CA, Patagonia is referred to as "a pioneer and one of the leaders in corporate activism" (Buchanan et al, 2024:2), an "example of a company that engages in bottom-up, grassroots activism to create environmental change" (Eilert & Cherup, 2020:467) and "whose values-driven messaging and practices are in sync with progressing social change" (Vredenburg et al, 2020: 450). Buchanan et al (2024) argue that Patagonia can be viewed as an extreme case of CA, therefore the dynamics being examined in extreme cases tend to be more

visible and can positively contribute towards the development of theory. While Patagonia have become well-known in academic texts as a company that has embraced sustainability and business responsibility, there has been no published research conducted as-of-yet that examines Patagonia's corporate activist stances and how they link with their environmental philanthropic model and non-financial support mechanisms for environmental nonprofit organisations or how their approach could be replicated by other corporations. This research will address that gap, providing an analysis of how Patagonia engage in environmental activism more broadly, and provide an extensive examination of the company and its role in supporting environmental nonprofit organisations.

Patagonia stopped advertising on social media sites, such as Facebook and Instagram, during protests regarding social media sites proliferating hate speech and misinformation on their platforms (Buchanan et al, 2024). This campaign, called 'Stop Hate for Profit' was orchestrated by a diverse range of companies that included Ben & Jerry's, Starbucks and Disney and, as 95.8 percent of Facebook's revenue comes from advertising, it led to over one thousand companies removing ads on the platform (Conway-Wood, 2022). Despite this widespread example of CA in practice, it did not lead to a significant drop in revenue for Meta[6] (Hsu & Lutz, 2020).

Patagonia have been labelled as one of the most sustainable companies in the world (Shourkaei et al, 2024; Rattalino, 2018; O'Rourke & Strand, 2017), despite Patagonia highlighting the oxymoronic basis of sustainable business (Chouinard & Stanley, 2012). In several of their books, Patagonia have stated that their reasons for not using the word 'sustainability' in their marketing collateral include the recognition that the company does take more from nature than they give back, and therefore they would not apply the word to their business until they can conduct all their operational activity within interfering with nature's capacity to regenerate itself (Chouinard & Stanley, 2023; Chouinard, 2016; Chouinard & Stanley, 2012). Patagonia have oft decried what they perceive as rampant over-consumerism and the ills of the fashion industry, but still advertise sales periods for off-season products through classic marketing mechanisms. They engage in activist marketing messaging through their product lines in North America and Europe, but their clothes are made in lower-income countries situated in Asia and South America, often in the same factories as fast fashion brands (Van Heugten, 2023).

Patagonia have been widely recognised by external audiences for their environmental philosophy, authentic approach to business, and for their corporate reputation (Balch, 2024; Feloni, 2018). In 2019, Patagonia won a UN Champions of the Earth award and were recognised for both their

[6] Meta is the parent company of social media platforms Facebook and Instagram.

approach to sustainability and their advocacy for protecting Earth's resources (UNEP, 2019). Patagonia ranks as the world's most authentic brand on the Authenticity Index 500[7], which is based on survey results from thousands of respondents who measure brands based on factors such as transparency, consistency and social responsibility. In an Axios-Harris Poll conducted in 2023, Patagonia were named as the most reputable company in the U.S., returning to the top following a drop to third place in 2022 (Barrett, 2023). Additionally, Patagonia was listed by *Fortune* as the coolest company in the world in 2007 (Chouinard & Stanley, 2023), which may have contributed to its image and lead to marketing success from outside their key demographic. Patagonia clothing, like other outdoor brands, are purchased by consumers who may not engage in sports such as climbing or surfing, and may instead wear clothing because of its fit, reputation or the brand association that comes along with wearing a particular brand. Patagonia has made strides to curb its image and association with financial-technology (fin-tech) firms (Magsino, 2018; Flanagin, 2018). As of 2019, Patagonia stated that it would no longer market merchandise to fin-tech firms through its co-branding corporate sales programme, instead choosing to co-brand with individuals and organisations associated with outdoor sports, regenerative organic farming, and environmental activism (Mittica, 2019).

Patagonia changed their business strategy in 2018 to be more environmentally conscious and address the climate crisis (Rattalino, 2018; Feloni, 2018), with the stated purpose of "We're in business to save our home planet" (Gallagher & Myers, 2016:2). As a purpose-driven business, Patagonia have long-used activism in their strategy, which is best captured by the Director of Philosophy at Patagonia:

> "It can be no surprise that companies are also now asked to take positions on issues critical to citizens […] purpose needs to precede activism, that a corporate stance undertaken as a marketing campaign or a leap onto a bandwagon in support of a popular cause will be counterproductive in the long run […] activism grounded in a company's core purpose can be built on for decades and adapted to the changing moment without loss of meaning […] activism that is consistent in voice and behaviour over time builds trust and credibility." (Stanley, 2020:394)

Over the past twenty years Patagonia has contributed nearly US$90 million to over 2000 grassroots environmental organisations around the US, of which $7 million has directly funded Indigenous-led projects (Patagonia, 2018). Patagonia has a physical store presence in sixteen countries[8] and sells branded products in thousands of officially licensed retailers globally. Each of

[7] Full list is available at: https://www.authenticity.co/brands#other1.
[8] Argentina, Australia, Austria, Canada, Chile, Czechia, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Peru, South Korea, Sweden, United Kingdom and U.S.

these retailers must apply to Patagonia directly to sell their products in their stores. This enables Patagonia to have a greater influence on their downstream supply chain.

The brand Patagonia was initially set up as an offshoot of Chouinard Equipment for Alpinists and "was meant to be an easy-to-milk cash cow, not a risk-taking, environmentally-obsessed, naval-gazing company" (Stanley & Chouinard, 2023: 30). The company transitioned over time to one that measured their environmental footprint as it became clear that they were contributing towards some of the issues that they were adamantly against. Indeed, Chouinard Equipment for Alpinists found their niche in the climbing industry by creating a product that addressed an environmental issue pervasive in the climbing industry: hard-steel pitons were left in rock faces, damaging the rock within Yosemite National Park and going against the ethos of environmental authors that proposed the 'leave no trace' principle (Chouinard, 2016; Desmond, 2008). The new pitons were designed using aluminium hexentrics and stoppers and revolutionised the sport of rock climbing in the U.S. (Desmond, 2008).

Patagonia and Environmental Initiatives

The Footprint Chronicles

Bennet et al (2009) argue that when companies are candid about their shortcomings, they increase their credibility and likeability among consumers. To augment this point, they use the example of Patagonia and how the company have attempted to truthfully outline the entire process that is used when making their products, to avoid being accused of greenwashing, through an initiative called the Footprint Chronicles. The Footprint Chronicles is a website that allows visitors to track ten rotating products from their catalogue from design through delivery, highlighting the positive and negative aspects to producing each item (Bennet et al, 2009). This was the first case of a major apparel manufacturer tracking the social and environmental impacts of specific products and not being afraid to expose the bad aspects within the overall process (CSRWire, 2008). Walker (2008) highlights that the findings from the Footprint Chronicles are limited as only the primary materials are traced and packaging is not evaluated, but the impact of publishing production information into the public realm enables competitors to access this information: this deliberate attempt at openness and informally sharing best practices can act as a spur to action for other companies that has an exponential affect.

Carbon Footprint

As a private company, Patagonia have no legal obligation to report on carbon emissions (Weitzman, 2023), but instead they have elected to do so. As a company, they have pledged to be

net zero across their entire business by 2040. Their emissions reduction target was validated by the Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTI) in April 2023. Within this, Patagonia have pledged to reduce their carbon footprint by aligning with the 1.5°C pathway agreed at the 2015 Paris Agreement by making products with less impact (Patagonia, 2024a). The end of 2022 saw companies that committed to the SBTI reach thirty-four percent of the global economy by market capitalisation, with the highest company representation from Japan, the UK and the U.S. (SBTi, 2023).

Reporting on emissions helps any business in understanding more about their climate impacts. Therefore, Patagonia are primarily targeting emissions within their supply chain by funding energy audits at their highest-emission suppliers, before investing in climate solutions to eliminate sources of emissions (Patagonia, 2024b). To assist in meeting this goal, Patagonia developed an Environmental Profit & Loss (EP&L) metric that calculates the cost of carbon associated with every item that the company sells. The EP&L metric is used to select and promote product choices, identify improvements in sourcing and manufacturing processes, and reduce how many clothes are made[9]. What is interesting about the approach that Patagonia have taken is to incorporate supply chain improvements and carbon assessments within their business model; these are funded through reinvestments back into the business from the sale of products. Patagonia's philanthropic model is different: it is centred not around greening their supply chain, but instead focusing on the communities which serve as the markets for their products to be sold in. Patagonia's philanthropic model is aimed at systemic change to combat climate change through supporting community-led initiatives that reduce or eliminate the reliance on fossil fuels or protect nature. However, it should be noted that Patagonia's philanthropic ventures to date have been centred around the countries and markets in which Patagonia products are sold, not in the regions of the world where their products are manufactured or in other countries which are experiencing the worst effects of climate change.

Using data from Patagonia's website in relation to GHG Emissions, Figure 1.2 is a graphical representation of their carbon footprint from 1st May 2022 to 30th April 2023. All figures are measured in metric tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents (MT CO^2e). Patagonia's total emissions for 2022-2023 was 200,119 MT CO^2e.

[9] For more information, visit https://eu.patagonia.com/gb/en/climate-goals/#asset-modal-our-metrics. Accessed 2/7/2026.

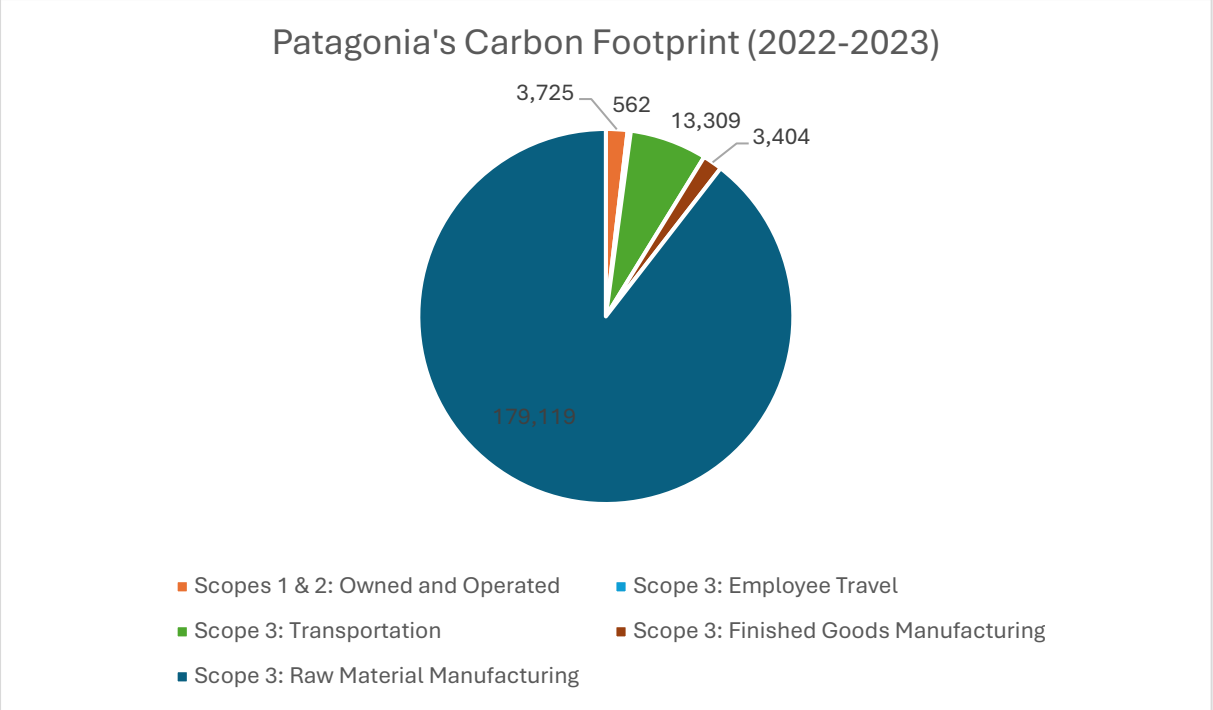


Figure 1.2: Patagonia's published carbon footprint for 2022/2023

The data from Figure 1.2 shows that ninety-five percent of emissions come through Patagonia's supply chain (Thoren, 2021), through raw material manufacturing in factories and mills. In an attempt to reduce emissions from the manufacturing of raw materials, Patagonia have developed an 'insetting' approach, as opposed to offsetting: this involves Patagonia inviting other smaller brands to partner with them to invest in "greening" the factories in exchange for carbon credits (Thoren, 2021). This approach enabled Patagonia to score a 'C' grade in Stand Earth's Fossil-Free Fashion Scorecard 2023, ranking forty-third in the most influential fashion companies on their efforts to phase out fossil fuels. This ranked them alongside competitors VF Corporation, Mammut, Asics and Nike, and below brands such as H&M, Levi's and Puma.

Environmental Philanthropy

Patagonia's approach to environmental giving has been acknowledged in several texts concerned with the history of Patagonia's environmental philanthropy (Chouinard & Stanley, 2023; Chouinard, 2016). Their approach stemmed from the work that Mark Capelli, a biology graduate student, presented at a Ventura City Council meeting that focused on the biodiversity found along the Ventura River, once a major steelhead salmon habitat and the subject of a development plan. During the meeting, several experts argued that the river was declared 'dead', but Capelli presented a slideshow showcasing the biodiversity that still lived in the river, including evidence that steelhead salmon came to spawn in the Ventura River. As the development plan was defeated, Patagonia offered Capelli a desk, mailbox and financial contributions to help him fight

the river's battles (Chouinard & Stanley, 2023; Chouinard & Stanley, 2012), and, from there, Patagonia's environmental philanthropy strategy emerged.

In their own words, Patagonia's approach has tended to favour "the little groups no other corporation would touch, rather than NGOs with big staffs, high overheads, and corporate connections" (Chouinard & Stanley, 2012: 57-58). This claim has been restated in other books published by Patagonia, and is the central claim that will be examined in Chapter Four. Early donation sizes were between $1,000 and $5,000 to a range of environmental initiatives across the U.S. Patagonia fund projects in the following countries: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Czechia, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the U.S. Analysing these countries, it is clear to see that they encompass the industrialised nations of Western Europe, North America and East Asia (Japan and Korea), as well as the two countries that make up their namesake, the Patagonia region of Argentina and Chile, and then also Australia.

The factories where Patagonia products are made are situated in Bangladesh, China, Colombia, El Salvador, Hong Kong, India, Mexico, Nicaragua, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, U.S. and Vietnam (Patagonia, 2020). Out of these countries, only one- the U.S.- can apply for money for environmental projects or take part in the Environmental Grant programme. The American-centric nature of Patagonia's philanthropy will be critiqued in Chapters Four, Five and Eight, but the point to be made at this juncture is the need to examine the intentions of a corporation who fund environmental projects in richer, industrialised nations, but fail to invest in community environmental projects in locations where their products are made. By using third-party factories, mills and farms around the world to make products, Patagonia continue to engage in globalisation structures and processes alongside their competitors within the apparel industry and therefore have attracted criticism from labour rights activists. Such criticism has spilled over into the public sphere, with an article written by an investigative journalist criticising some of the labour practices in factories where Patagonia products were made (Van Heugten, 2023). Their response was similar to any other apparel company when accusations are levelled at them: we do not own our factories, and therefore cannot be held liable for any malpractice that may exist in those factories (Van Heugten, 2023). It has also been recognised that Patagonia are a relatively small player within global textile supply chains (Shourkaei et al, 2024).

1% for the Planet

In 1986, Patagonia committed to annually donating ten percent of profits to environmental groups because they held the belief that the industrial impact of Patagonia's business activities should be

mitigated through a self-imposed Earth tax (Chouinard & Stanley, 2012). Soon after, Patagonia pledged a donation of one percent of sales or ten percent of profits (whichever value is higher) after recognising that any business activity will affect the planet even if the company does not make a profit (Chouinard & Stanley, 2012). This public commitment gave rise to the "1% for the Planet" initiative, co-founded by Yvon Chouinard and Craig Mathews, the owner of Blue Ribbon Flies (Chouinard & Stanley, 2012). This movement, which has subsequently attracted other businesses to partake in, has 3,929 business members from sixty-one countries and, since 2002, have donated US$282 million to environmental causes (1% For the Planet, 2020). Despite being in operation for over twenty years, there is very little research that focuses on 1% for the Planet as a mechanism for environmental philanthropy or the impact on the bottom-line of a business that partakes in the scheme. This research fills this gap by highlighting how the 1% for the Planet pledge has been operationalised by one of the initiative's founding members, opening avenues for future researchers to contribute further contribute by examining how other companies engage in 1% for the Planet.

B-Corp Status

Patagonia was the first company in California to change its organisation's legal status to become a Benefit Corporation (Buchanan et al, 2024). They have been certified as a B Corp by B-Lab since December 2011. In 2024, Patagonia scored 166 out of 200 in their re-certification process by B Lab. This score was aggregated by assessments of Patagonia and its subsidiaries: Patagonia Asia-Pacific and Patagonia Europe. Patagonia Asia-Pacific scored 157.1 and Patagonia Europe scored 152.6, while Patagonia (based in North America) scored 171. The overall score was calculated using a weighted average based on headcount. Figure 1.3 below highlights how Patagonia's overall B Impact Scores have changed since their first assessment in 2011. A score of 80 is required to qualify for B Corp certification, and Patagonia has exceeded that threshold in all subsequent assessments.

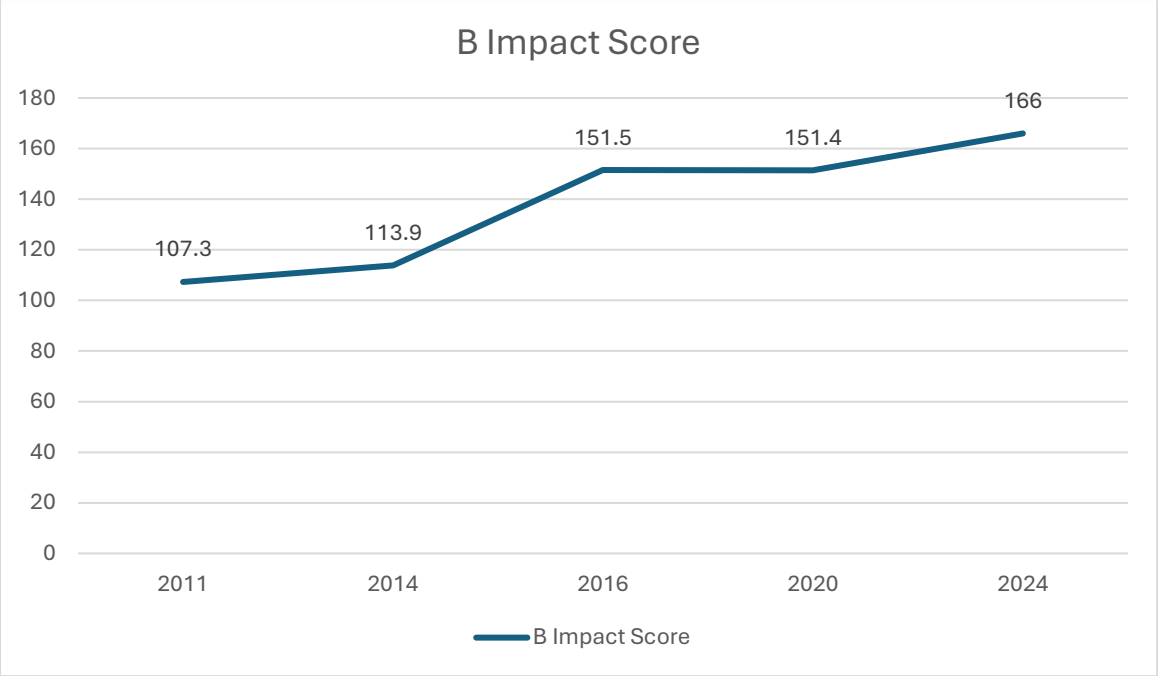
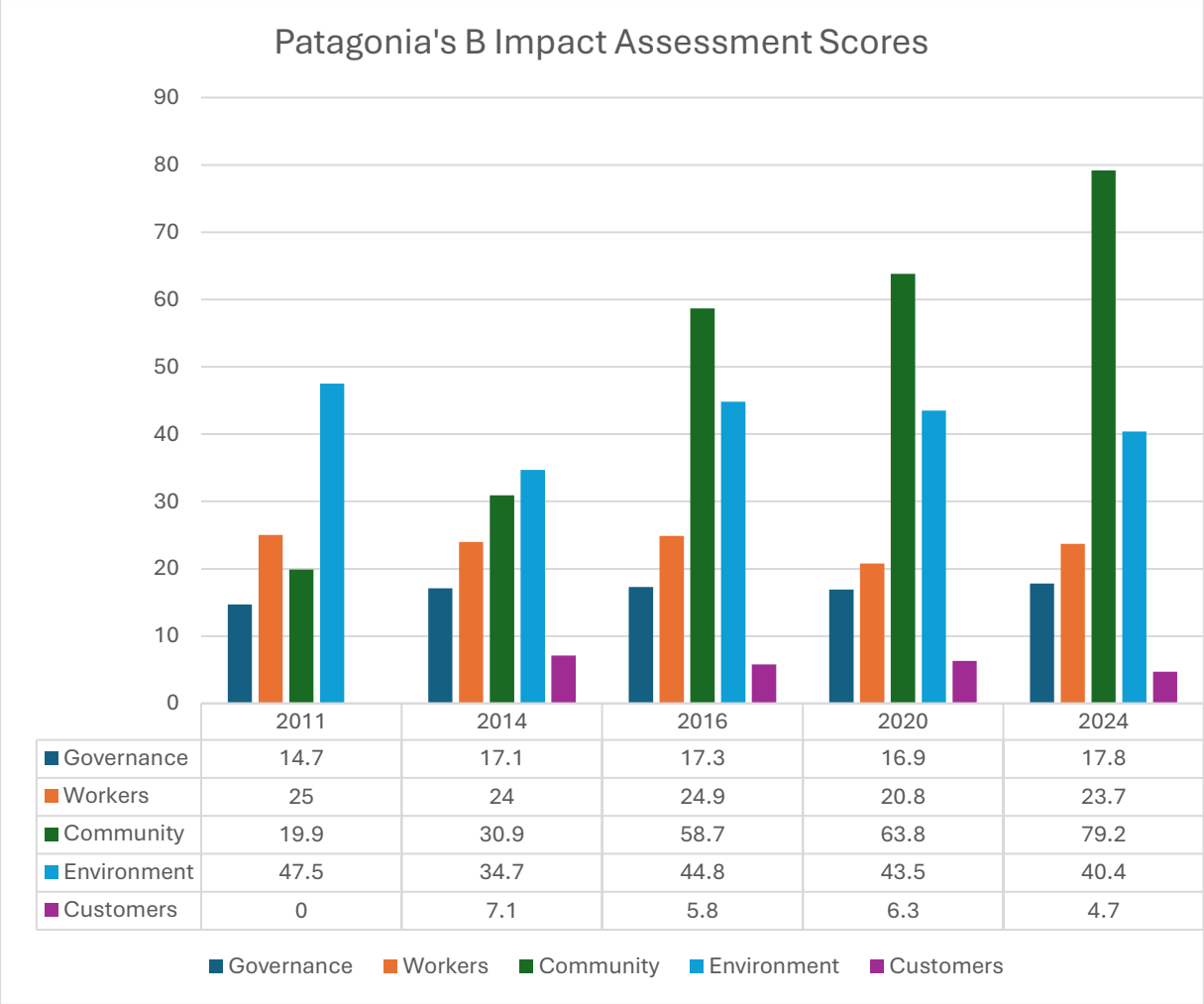


Figure 1.3: Patagonia's B Impact Scores since becoming a registered B-Corp by B-Lab.

In the B Impact Assessment, companies rate their performance in five 'Impact Areas': governance, workers, community, environment and customers. The B Impact Assessment scores for each Impact Area can be seen in Figure 1.4. As the data shows, Patagonia score highly on community and environment. The community score has increased with each assessment, while the environment score has been more variable with each assessment. The community impact is assessed through an evaluation of a company's engagement with a broad range of topics: diversity, equity and inclusive commitment statement, training, and hiring practices for staff and board members, the conduction of a pay equity analysis by gender, race, ethnicity and other demographic factors, the multiple by which the highest-paid worker is paid compared to the lowest-paid full-time worker, the creation of job opportunities for underemployed populations, incentives for community volunteering activities, a formal commitment to donating a percentage of revenue to charity, purchasing from local suppliers owned by underrepresented populations, writing a formal code of conduct for suppliers, disclosing the names of company suppliers (including their social and environmental performance, developing industry social and environmental standards, and banking with a Certified B Corporation (Honeyman & Jana, 2019).



	2011	2014	2016	2020	2024
Governance	14.7	17.1	17.3	16.9	17.8
Workers	25	24	24.9	20.8	23.7
Community	19.9	30.9	58.7	63.8	79.2
Environment	47.5	34.7	44.8	43.5	40.4
Customers	0	7.1	5.8	6.3	4.7

Figure 1.4: Patagonia's B Impact Assessment Scores across the five indicator categories.

Honeyman and Jana cite Patagonia as an example of a company that:

> "uses the B Impact Assessment for continuous improvement […] in 2012, Patagonia- one of the most eco-friendly companies on the planet- scored 107 our of 200 points. By closely evaluating their results and identifying areas for improvement, Patagonia was able to increase its score to 152 points by 2016. This put them in the 98th percentile, among the highest-scoring B Corps in the world" (2019:51)

Environmental Activism

The company's first public stand on an environmental issue was in Chouinard Equipment Company's (now known as Black Diamond) inaugural catalogue, which featured an article that urged American climbers to 'climb clean' (McSpirit, 1998). The first environmental-themed catalogue was published in 1989 and all publications thereafter have supported at least one environmental cause. Publicising the company's stance on controversial issues creation division among customers as the stances caused offense for customers against issues but gained the loyalty of supportive consumers (McSpirit, 1998). Patagonia responded by stating "We're sorry to

lose a customer, but we won't change our position to regain business" (McSpirit, 1998:35). Since then, Patagonia has shifted towards direct environmental activism, with at least fifteen examples illustrated below in Figure 1.5 (Buchanan et al, 2024). This includes direct political activism against a political candidate and the use of legal mechanisms to promote environmental causes.

Example	*Year*
Begins 'Vote the Environment' election-year campaigns to encourage customers to vote for candidates focused on environmental protection	2004
Sends thousands of emails written by its customers to US Senate to support Arctic Wilderness legislation to save Alaska from drilling and mining	2007
Closes stores on the day of the People's Climate March so that employees can participate in demonstrations	2014
Delivers a petition with over 70,000 signatures to the Obama administration to remove dams on the lower Snake River	2015
In Australia, the CEO writes a letter to the Australian Environment Minister strongly opposing the expansion of a coal terminal	2015
In Canada, the founding CEO writes a letter to the Port of Vancouver Commissioner, asking them to withdraw from constructing a rail-to-marine oil terminal	2016
In Argentina, petitions Argentina's Supreme Court to halt dam construction	2017
In Australia, after the country adopts legislation that makes peaceful protest more difficult, sends a letter to about 170 members of parliament and donates AUD$50,000 to activists that challenge this legislation	2017
Boycotts a large Outdoor Retailer trade show in Utah after state leaders sought to remove federal protection from public land	2017
Sues the Trump administration because of his order to reduce the size of the Bears Ears National Monument by 85 per cent, and the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument by half	2017
In Europe, works to save the last free river in Europe with petitions, documentary films, lobbying, and coalitions with local grassroots activists	2018
Endorses US Senate and Congress candidates with positive environmental orientations	2018
Closes offices and stores and gives four days of paid time off to volunteer employees who serve as poll workers in the 2020 US presidential election	2020
Puts a tag with 'Vote the Assholes Out' on Men's and Women's 'Road to Regenerative Organic Stand-Up Shorts' to show its opposition to political candidates that deny the climate crisis	2020
Stops selling its merchandise at Wyoming ski resort after the 2020 presidential election because one of the resort owners hosted a fundraiser featuring Trump supporters	2021

Figure 1.5: Examples of environmental activism by Patagonia (From Buchanan et al, 2024:8)

There have been significant examples of Patagonia engaging in direct political activism through their apparel. Figure 1.6 below demonstrates a public stance that Patagonia took in the build up to the 2020 U.S. Presidential election. Both Esquire and GQ magazine wrote op-eds on the incident, which was aimed at any politician from both parties that were climate-change deniers or who were driving through legislation and policies that undermined efforts to combat climate change. The concept was intended to be bipartisan by nature but was considered to be aimed at President Trump's record on environmental and climate-related policies and legislation

(Buchanan et al, 2024; Conway-Wood, 2022). Printing was limited and unannounced but picked up by the public and shared around 55,000 times on the social media platform Twitter (now known as X). This example was a follow-up action from a 2004 "Vote the Environment" campaign that supported U.S. Congressional candidates pushing for environmental protection (Buchanan et al, 2024), culminating in a formal endorsement of two U.S. Senate candidates in 2018.

Figure 1.6: A 'Vote the Assholes Out' message escribed on a Patagonia logo. Available under CC by 2.5

In an interview with Fortune magazine, Vincent Stanley[10] stated that Patagonia would only take a public stance on issues that fall within its corporate expertise, adding that the public could call out a company when they take on issues unrelated to their products or is not a long stance associated with that business (Barrett, 2023). This demonstrates an alignment with optimal congruence theory, a core aspect of CA that will be examined in Chapter Two (Ahmad et al, 2024; Buchanan et al, 2024; Vredenburg et al, 2020). Stanley further argues that being authentic is central to earning the trust of consumers (Barrett, 2023).

[10] Patagonia's Director of Philosophy.

This section has introduced Patagonia as the case study for this research project by describing the company's key products and business ethos, including raising awareness of over-consumption and making long-lasting products. This section has also introduced Patagonia's social and environmental initiatives, including its long history of environmental philanthropy and activism, and provided an overview of Patagonia's environmental credentials, including its carbon footprint reporting, B-Corp certification, 1% for the Planet initiative and the Footprint Chronicles, which details the environmental footprint of specific products within their catalogue. I will now briefly define the key terms and concepts used in the remainder of the thesis. An overview of each chapter will conclude the introduction.

Definition of Key Terms

In this section I consider how the different terms used throughout this thesis are defined in the literature. As a central concept related to both grassroots environmental activism and CA, activism itself needs to be clearly defined. This thesis will adopt Martin's definition of activism as "action on behalf of a cause, action that goes beyond what is conventional or routine" (2007:19). This definition implies that activism is temporally linked, as conventions and routines change as society or politics changes. To use a basic example, this would mean an organisation taking a supportive stance on women's suffrage in 2024 in the United Kingdom (UK) is very different from organisations taking that stance when it was illegal for women to vote. Therefore, this definition implies that early adopters of taking action are more likely to be considered activists, whereas late adopters are not.

Likewise, there is a need to define what is meant by corporation, business and brand as these terms are used throughout this thesis. A corporation is a legal construct with specific features, such as an independent (without engaging liabilities for the human people involved in its activities) and perpetual existence (acknowledging that people employed by the corporation may join or leave at any time), and with a formal management system (often referred to as directors and members) (Sheehy, 2023). While the corporation is the preferred model for businesses to operate under (as opposed to partnerships or sole proprietorships), non-business entities have organised under the form of a corporation for a specific purpose. The literature about corporate purpose will be examined in Chapter Two because of its importance in conceptualising the role of corporations in taking a stance on social, environmental, political or economic issues.

A business differs from a corporation in that it refers to any activity that provides goods and services to consumers, including other businesses, for the purpose of making a profit (Poff, 2023; UEA, 2017). Other synonyms for business include firm, company or enterprise (UEA, 2017). As

such, a business may be organised under a corporate governance model and the activities relating to selling products or services are the business functions. Likewise, a profit-seeking business may be organised under a partnership model: in the UK, John Lewis is organised under such arrangement.

A brand is an entirely different concept that is often conflated with definitions of corporations and businesses. A brand is a fluid concept that has internal and external connotations (Jones, 2017). Internally, a brand is linked to what an entity stands for: its purpose, vision, mission and ideology (Jones, 2017). Externally, a brand is linked to the reputation and image of a specific entity and is what resides in the minds of customers when they think of an organisation or product (Keller, 2012). This last point is exemplified by Amazon's founder Jeff Bezos, who stated that a brand is "what people say about you when you are not in the room" (Jones, 2017:20). Branding is not limited to profit-seeking businesses; instead, any individual or organisation, such as a nonprofit organisation, university or city, can build their own brand by establishing a reputation and value within the marketplace (Jones, 2017).

These definitions are important in relation to this research study because Patagonia is an example of all three concepts. Patagonia Inc is the registered, legal, corporate structure that protects the individuals working at the company from liabilities and enables the company to exist in perpetuity. The Patagonia business is the culmination of all the goods and services that are employed to make products for consumers that enable the company to make a profit. The Patagonia brand is the equity it has earned in terms of its products and reputation (both internal and external) and plays a role in how Patagonia are perceived by the public. As an example, the Patagonia business choosing to disclose the environmental footprint of its products is a business decision that has an impact on how the Patagonia brand is perceived within the marketplace. As such, the terms 'corporation', 'business' and 'brand' are used throughout the thesis when referring to the specific context in which Patagonia's activities have an impact on their respective concepts.

As a recently defined concept, CA has had numerous definitions attributed to the concept, some of which will be outlined in Chapter Two. To-date academic literature has often conflated definitions of CA with definitions of brand activism, providing inconsistencies between theories regarding activism from businesses. While the two are separate concepts, the definitions related to activism are remarkably similar. This thesis will primarily refer to CA unless brand activism has been explicitly used in the literature for definitions or specific characteristics related to the subject. Figure 1.7 shows various definitions of corporate and brand activism to uncover what some of the key components of the definitions are. The most prevalent words in the literature directly

concerning brand activism are 'brand', 'company', 'promote' and 'social issues'. This gives an indication, albeit a basic one, that CA could be loosely defined as a brand or company promoting social issues. However, the secondary words that appear in definitions add a lot more complexity to the issue. There are a lot more words that signify the 'doing' part of activism- words such as 'stand', 'actions', 'change', and 'create'. Simultaneously, the ethical framework that shape sociocultural interventions are included at this level, with 'values' or 'moral' signifying the underpinning motivation for pursuing CA. Finally, there is the 'issue' itself: it could be 'economic', 'sociopolitical', 'political' or 'environmental'. However, these issues are shaped by another key word that appears here: 'partisan'. This word shapes the dividing debates that surround CA, as taking a moral stand on a particular issue could be construed as a partisan issue if it directly relates to the policies and practices of a specific political party at the expense of another. 'Partisan' also has direct connotations with some of the tertiary words found in Figure 1.7, such as 'contested', 'opposition', 'side', 'nonneutral', 'attitudes', and 'divisive', all of which significantly alter the framing of CA as previously loosely defined. What emerges, therefore, is a high-level definition of CA as being a company or brand taking a nonneutral stand on a contested sociopolitical, environmental or economic issue.

Figure 1.7: Word Cloud demonstrating the common words used in definitions about corporate/brand activism.

This research will examine how CA is operationalized and in turn may contribute towards re-defining how CA can be enacted by corporations. Therefore, it is within the scope of this thesis to redefine what CA is and what it is not: as a relatively recent phenomenon with many alternative definitions some clarity needs to be provided. As stated earlier in this chapter, this research will

use Eilert and Cherup's definition of CA for the purposes of the research: "a company's willingness to take a stand on social, political, economic, and environmental issues to create societal change by influencing the attitudes and behaviours of actors in its institutional environment" (2020:463). This definition is useful because it focuses on several of the key themes that are central to the research study: the willingness of a company to take a stand on public issues, the motivation to create social change, and the ability to influence competitors and other actors to make the same change. In Chapter Two, I will examine the many different characteristics of what constitutes CA, drawing on other definitions that have shaped the theoretical and conceptual framing of issues related to the field of CA.

Environmental activism, while synonymous with non-profit environmental groups such as Greenpeace or Friends of the Earth, is a multidimensional concept that has had correlations and consequences for environmental policy (Dalton, 2015). The environmental movement has developed using a variety of activist tactics; for example, national and international litigation efforts, involvement of Green parties in electoral and legislative politics, lobbying by conservation groups and blockades of transport routes (Roberts, 2007). It has been defined as "organised participation in environmental issues, comprising an example of environmentally friendly behaviour rooted in the political realm" (Marquart-Pyatt, 2012:684). Marquart-Pyatt (2012) differentiates environmental activism from conventional or routine behaviours, such as recycling or conservation, by explicitly stating that the commitment to the environment is channelled in formal settings and realised through institutional structures.

The early Environmental (In)Justice (EJ) movement focused on toxic chemicals being dumped in African American areas in U.S. cities (Bullard, 2021; Martinez-Alier et al, 2016), as well as critiques of corporate capitalism, the need for greater democratic representation, and building grassroots coalitions to challenge unequal treatment (Čapek, 2021). Having originated in the U.S., subsequent work to document EJ movements have focused on other regions and countries, such as Latin America, India, and South Africa (Svarstad & Benjaminsen, 2020; Álvarez & Coolsaet, 2018). EJ did not originate from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or from any specific governmental policy; instead, it emerged from local grassroots community struggles by embracing the principle that all people are entitled to equal protection to environmental, energy, health, employment, education, housing and transportation (Bullard, 2021). Therefore, EJ is defined as the "accepted term for describing the disproportionate impacts that environmental pollution has on the health and well-being of low-income communities and communities of colour as compared with other populations" (Monsma, 2006:444). This definition is important for this

research study because it cements the notion that environmental harms are unevenly distributed along racial lines.

The Structure of the Thesis

Having identified the research problem and stated my research aim and objectives, the remainder of the thesis will be structured as follows. Chapter Two examines the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings of the research by reviewing relevant literature. This will be examined using a historical and socio-cultural perspective, detailing how the key debates within the research scope have formed over time and have been influenced by both academic and non-academic sources. This chapter will review key literature pertaining to the purpose of a corporation from differing perspectives; demonstrating the changing normative assumptions of a corporation's purpose from both a legal and social standpoint. Emerging from literature concerned with corporate purpose has been the rise of CSR as a dominant framework for assessing the social (and in some instances environmental) responsibility of businesses and how that has been received by both the business community, but also by citizen-led organisations and community groups. This section focuses on the CSR mechanism of corporate philanthropy and addresses some of the recent trends, such as trust-based, place-based and participatory philanthropy that have emerged. Similar terms such as Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) emerge within CSR literature, as well as concepts such as responsible business and stakeholder capitalism. This section of the second chapter concludes by examining the concept of CA and how it emerged from CSR policies and practices, and has been shaped by legislation concerned with freedom of speech and freedom of expression that allows companies to take public stances on controversial issues.

The second half of Chapter Two turns its focus to literature that examines the environmental movement in the U.S. It outlines the historical and social context that enabled the environmental movement to enter the U.S. political mainstream, and documents some of the major policies that were announced during this time. With major environmental wins dominating the U.S. political climate, the concept of EJ emerges, that centres around a similar concept of environmental racism, in which the neighbourhoods experiencing the worst impacts of environmental policy were often neighbourhoods with a large majority of black residents. This chapter examines the theoretical underpinnings on EJ, drawing on literature from Bullard, Warren and Schlosberg. This literature also delves into more recent legislative changes and how the corporate world has undermined environmental regulations in the pursuit of maximising shareholder value. Furthermore, this chapter also documents the wilderness movement and the rise of the landscape as a 'protected' entity, which has shaped both access to and enjoyment in these landscapes, often with implications for EJ.

Chapter Three outlines the methodological considerations and approach for this research project. This chapter will present the research design, including the decision to employ mixed-methods research into an examination of a case study. Further, I will outline my rationale for examining financial records as part of this research project and how that contributes to the overall research aim and some of the research objectives. As the need for fieldwork was identified to study the relationships between Patagonia and environmental organisations, I will present the specific research location of Utah, and contextualises Utah within the boundaries of the research project. This chapter includes an overview of the main environmental issues, the sociopolitical demographics that comprise Utah's population, and the rationale for selecting the Patagonia store in Salt Lake City (SLC) is provided. Thereafter, I present the set of qualitative methods employed within this ethnographic research study which will be complemented by a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of each research method. This section of the chapter concludes with an outline of my own positionality to the research and the ethical issues that needed to be addressed to ensure this research could be conducted.

Chapter Four analyses data relevant in achieving the first research objective: determining which grassroots environmental organisations have been supported by Patagonia and how this support is manifested. It examines the various mechanisms through which the environmental movement have been supported by CA, with a focus on philanthropy at both the corporate level and at the grassroots level. Drawing on secondary data collection, a quantitative analysis of Patagonia's philanthropy is presented, including an overview of the geographical and thematic scope of grants offered by Patagonia for environmental projects. This is followed by an examination of Patagonia's environmental grant giving within Utah, and an outline of the key environmental organisations that have received funding from Patagonia. This chapter concludes by outlining Patagonia's indirect philanthropy; this occurs when Patagonia award grants to grantmaking organisations, who offer grants to nonprofit organisations themselves.

Chapter Five analyses primary data collected from qualitative interviews with key informants that contribute towards developing an understanding of the nature of the relationship between grassroots environmental activists and corporate activists, thereby addressing the second research objective. The testimonies collected from key informants are supported by field notes taken after observing participants within the local context of Utah. The findings provide some valuable insights into the financial nature of the relationship between Patagonia and their grantees selected from their Environmental Grants Programme. However, a financial relationship is not the only type of relationship that Patagonia has with grassroots environmental organisations. There are many non-financial mechanisms that have been developed at the local level that have

contributed towards various aspects of direct political or environmental activism. These non-financial mechanisms were put forward by interview respondents as more effective ways for corporates to support grassroots environmental activism, although it was reported that funding is still an important consideration. This chapter concludes by offering insights into the different relationships that Patagonia has with environmental organisations, which is further developed in Chapter Eight.

Chapter Six is the third empirical chapter and analyses data collected from qualitative interviews with key informants from Patagonia's store in SLC. The insights from the interviews are corresponded to the findings from participant observation and field notes and combines the testimonies from environmental organisations relating to Patagonia's involvement in grassroots environmental activism. Therefore, this chapter will contribute towards achieving the third research objective by examining the motivations and intents behind a corporation's pursuit of CA and how their role is perceived in supporting grassroots environmental activism. It outlines and verifies some of the non-financial mechanisms that have been used by staff at a local store level. The critical perspectives offered by staff at Patagonia offers an interesting insight into how they view their role within the environmental movement in Utah, with insights from environmental organisations to corroborate the findings from Patagonia staff. This chapter provides an overview of the entire model that Patagonia have built and gives an assessment of its authenticity by incorporating the perspectives of interview respondents.

Chapter Seven is a case study of CA in action. It utilises the example of the Bears Ears National Monument (BENM) in Utah as an environmental issue that combines the various actors involved in the research study. It introduces the debates and critically assesses Patagonia's involvement within the issue, and highlights the different ways that Patagonia have supported their CA stance through direct action and support to environmental organisations working first-hand on the issue.

Chapter Eight is a discussion chapter that combines the findings from the empirical chapters and addresses the central aim by showing how supporting activism at the grassroots level can shape positive social and environmental outcomes for CSR strategies. Drawing on evidence presented in the empirical chapters, this chapter outlines the specific different roles that Patagonia has within the environmental movement, namely that as a funder, an activist and a community-based organisation. These roles coalesce to form an overarching role for Patagonia, making the argument that the role that Patagonia has within the environmental movement is that of a supporter and enabler of environmental activism. This makes important contributions to theoretical understandings of how CSR and CA can be operationalised within corporate strategies, drawing on the literature presented in Chapter Two.

Chapter Nine outlines the main contributions of this research towards the relevant fields of CA, CSR, and environmental activism. Furthermore, the role of corporate philanthropy is highlighted as a key mechanism that enhances the authenticity and congruence of corporate activist stances. This chapter concludes by outlining implications for businesses and environmental nonprofit organisations, as well as offering suggestions for future research and discusses some limitations of the research approach. A full bibliography and various appendices follow this chapter.

2. Literature Review

In this chapter I will examine the key literature related to this study area. I start by examining the historical role that corporations have played in society and introduces the literature focused on corporate law in the U.S., as this is where Patagonia are headquartered. I examine the theoretical underpinnings of corporate purpose, including introducing the debate between Shareholder Value Maximisation (SVM) and stakeholder maximisation theory. I then examine the key literature in theories pertaining to CSR, including the differentiation between marketing-driven and corporate-driven activities. This includes an extensive examination of the conceptual framework of corporate philanthropy and the emergence of CA as an evolution of the concept of CSR.

This chapter will then introduce the key literature pertaining to environmentalism in the U.S. It outlines the different aspects of the environmental movement and introduces the key legislation that has been adopted within the U.S. policy framework. It introduces the key theoretical debates around the emergence of EJ within the environmental movement and outlines the key concepts relating to processes of EJ. As this research utilises a case-study methodology of the apparel company Patagonia, this chapter turns to a critical review of the literature pertaining to the environmental impact of the apparel industry. This aids in contextualising Patagonia's claims and reputation of being an environmentally responsible company. Finally, this chapter introduces Patagonia's own contribution to the literature and critically evaluates the different sources that have been produced by Patagonia, adding to the contextualisation of Patagonia as the subject of a case-study approach to research.

Corporate Purpose, Corporate Social Responsibility and Corporate Activism

"*Corporations are people too, my friend"* (Utah Senator Mitt Romney, 2011)

In the U.S., the location of a corporation's[11] headquarters determines the type of legal structure they are allowed to operate under. The formation of corporations has been permissible in the U.S. since the Revolutionary War, when state legislatures were granted powers to enable corporations to form to serve a social function (Chaffee, 2017). Central to this is the idea that corporations are legally defined as people and therefore are protected under the constitution. Corporations are protected under the First Amendment, including the rights to freedom of speech, free press, assembly and to petition the government (Jorczak, 2014; Bakan, 2004). Corporations can own and hold property, pay taxes, and sue or be sued under its name rather than the names of its

[11] The term "corporation" derives from the Latin term "corpus" which means "body of the people" (Chaffee, 2017).

owners (Jorczak, 2014). This concept, known as limited liability, radically changed the way that corporations were formed in society as shareholders were only held liable for their representative ownership share of a business (Poff, 2023). Decisions by the U.S. Supreme Court, such as the Citizens United[12] case in 2010, which protected corporate political spending as constitutionally protected speech (Paliewicz, 2019), and the Hobby Lobby[13] (2014) ruling that corporations have religious freedoms, further extended rights under the First Amendment to corporations (Paliewicz, 2019; Jorczak, 2014). The Citizens United case has essentially expanded corporate power through unlimited political spending, therefore increasing the possibility and likelihood of corporations directly influencing elections through political donations, direct lobbying and taking a stance on political issues (Dwyre & Kolodny, 2024; Ripken, 2012; Atkinson & Paschall, 2011). These rulings link to the research study area because companies can use 'free speech' to promote causes, regardless of whether they are for or against a specific cause; thereby increasing their chances of engaging in direct CA.

Business as Usual: Corporate Purpose

Traditionally, law and convention in most high-income countries have dictated corporate firms to be run in line with shareholder interests, which has ordinarily pursued profit maximisation channels in order to maximize shareholder wealth, a concept widely known as SVM (Bainbridge, 2023; Stout, 2012; Bakan, 2004). This echoes Milton Friedman's neoliberal doctrine that declared that the sole social responsibility of business is to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits (Richardson & Sjåfjell, 2015; Stout, 2012; Stout, 2008; Gouldson, 2006; Friedman, 1970). According to Friedman, "there is one and only one social responsibility of business- to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits so long as it stays within the rules of the game, which is to say, engages in open and free competition without deception or fraud" (1970:17). This states that businesses must operate under legal regulations and policies and therefore cannot pursue profit at the absolute expense of any other metric, whether that be socially or environmentally inclined. Published on 13th September 1970, just four months after the first Earth Day celebration, in which corporations were vilified due to the environmental harms they had caused to society, the timing was crucial in making the argument for SVM to be the sole and core purpose of a corporation.

This corporate perception of responsibility to legal compliance and SVM has largely remained *in situ* in many corporation's business strategies since (Inkpen & Sundaram, 2021; Stanley, 2020;

[12] Citizens United V. Federal Electoral Commission, 558 U.S. 310 (2010).
[13] Burwell V. Hobby Lobby, 573 U.S. 682 (2014).

Yan, 2019). However, SVM, and its associated strategy of shareholder primacy, can trace its legal origins in the U.S. to a 1919 legal case brought by the Dodge brothers against Henry Ford[14] (Bainbridge, 2023). As shareholders in the Ford Motor Company, the Dodge brothers expected to receive a cash dividend payout based on the profits that Ford had made to start their own car company (Stout, 2012; Bakan, 2004). Ford refused to pay out a higher dividend, citing that profits would be reinvested back into the company in the forms of higher wages, which would have curbed the influence of union organizers and increased the market share within the burgeoning motor vehicle industry (Roe, 2021). *Ford Vs Dodge* was escalated to the Michigan Supreme Court, with the ruling arguing that a business should be organised for generating profit for stockholders and the powers of business directors should be employed for that end[15]. This decision has been studied by generations of students and scholars from academic disciplines such as business, law, and economics (Roe, 2021; Stout, 2008; Dodd, 1932; Berle, 1931) and has contributed towards public academic debates around corporate accountability, governance and purpose, shaping public policy. In the 1930s, two legal scholars debated the issue: Adolf A. Berle and E. Merrick Dodd (Bratton & Wachter, 2008; Macintosh, 1999; Weiner, 1964). Berle argued that corporations and their managers are legally accountable only to their shareholders (Berle, 1931), whereas Dodd argued that corporations should be accountable to the society in which they operate; business corporations should provide a profit-making function while simultaneously providing a service to society. (Dodd, 1932).

The influence of SVM in the business world is evidenced by the Business Roundtable (BRT), comprised of the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of America's 200 largest companies, releasing a statement on the purpose of a corporation each year since 1997. The initial statement, which argued that the supreme duty of management within corporations is to its stockholders, with stakeholder interests relevant when it is viewed as a derivative of the principal duty to stockholders (Bainbridge, 2023), espoused rhetoric and discourse that favoured SVM as the modus operandi of the American public corporation (Rezaee, 2021). There has been a long history of academics and scholars defending SVM as the core purpose of a corporation, arguing that SVM provides the right incentive for corporate managers to do their job and pursuing objective and quantifiable metrics that operationalise stakeholder capitalism would be too difficult for managers to balance (Bainbridge, 2023).

[14] Henry Ford was the founder of the Ford Motor Company.

[15] *Dodge v. Ford Motor Co.*, 204 Mich. 459, 507 (Mich. 1919).

The critics of SVM have included many proponents of CSR and the Responsible Business movement. One such critic is legal scholar Lynn Stout, who challenges the doctrine of shareholder value by arguing that stakeholder value ideology is not a legal requirement or necessity for contemporary corporate management (2012). The legal argument to SVM is dismissed, as:

> "United States corporate law does not, and never has, required directors of public corporations to maximise either share price or shareholder wealth […] the law gives them a wide range of discretion to run public corporations with other goals in mind […] chasing shareholder value is a managerial choice, not a legal requirement" (2012:3-4).

Critics of companies that pursue SVM at the expense of other metrics often argue that SVM favours short-term financial performance in the form of profits over the long-term health of the business (Rezaee, 2021; Sjåfjell et al, 2015). Others have argued that pursuing maximisation in any metric, such as wealth, pleasure or power, equates to an addiction (Hawken, 2007). Similarly, the legal mandate for a corporation to pursue, without exemption, its own self-interest, regardless of the harmful consequences to others has been labelled as a pathological institution (Bakan, 2004).

Fitzsimmons et al define corporate purpose "as a moral reason for a company's existence; an overarching goal that guides everything a company does" (2022:208). They argue that it is important as it serves as a solidifying principle that should inform all aspects of a business, including its strategies, goals, practices and policies (Fitzsimmons et al, 2022) and inspires companies' stakeholders to create positive societal benefits, promoting social good and improving the lives of those both within and outside of the business. The formation of Benefit Corporations in 2012, which certifies a business based on value creation for non-shareholding stakeholders, opened avenues for organisations to publicly claim an identity that celebrates both shareholder and stakeholder success (Kim et al, 2016). Certification as a B-Corp helps to both recruit and retain employees that want societal purpose to be a key driver of corporate activity (Stammer, 2016). Even proponents of the SVM model of corporate purpose and governances have accepted that Benefit Corporations provide an option for corporate directors and managers to pursue stakeholder capitalism and will be judged by the market in how successful they would be (Bainbridge, 2023). The influence of B-Corporations in the business community is evident by the recent statements made by the World Economic Forum, whose founder stated: "a company serves not only its shareholders, but all its stakeholders – employees, customers, suppliers, local communities and society at large […] to improve the state of the world" (Schwab, 2019:np). This could be framed as a corporate response to growing pressure to take a more advanced role in addressing global social and EJ issues.

The Business Roundtable

Founded in 1978, BRT has issued Principles of Corporate Governance and, since 1997, has stated that corporations exist principally to serve their shareholders (BRT, 2019). In 2019, BRT released a new statement that superseded previous versions (see Fig. 2.1). This was to better reflect the BRT's commitment to the idea of a free-market economy that serves American interests and can ensure more inclusive and equitable prosperity (BRT, 2019). This statement served as the launchpad for corporations to shift from SVM to stakeholder value maximisation, while recognising that each individual company that signed the statement also serves its own corporate purpose. Signatories of this statement include the CEOs of major U.S. corporations, including Walmart, Target, Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, and Apple. Interestingly, several extractive industries signed this statement, including CEOs at ExxonMobil, Chevron Corporation, BP, and Marathon Petroleum Company.

STATEMENT ON THE PURPOSE OF A CORPORATION

Americans deserve an economy that allows each person to succeed through hard work and creativity and to lead a life of meaning and dignity. We believe the free market system is the best means of generating good jobs, a strong and sustainable economy, innovation, a healthy environment and economic opportunity for all.

Businesses play a vital role in the economy by creating jobs, fostering innovation and providing essential goods and services. Businesses make and sell consumer products; manufacture equipment and vehicles; support the national defense; grow and produce food; provide healthcare; generate and deliver energy; and offer financial, communications and other services that underpin economic growth.

WHILE EACH OF OUR INDIVIDUAL COMPANIES SERVES ITS OWN CORPORATE PURPOSE, WE SHARE A FUNDAMENTAL COMMITMENT TO ALL OF OUR STAKEHOLDERS. WE COMMIT TO:

- **DELIVERING VALUE TO OUR CUSTOMERS.** We will further the tradition of American companies leading the way in meeting or exceeding customer expectations.
- **INVESTING IN OUR EMPLOYEES.** This starts with compensating them fairly and providing important benefits. It also includes supporting them through training and education that help develop new skills for a rapidly changing world. We foster diversity and inclusion, dignity and respect.
- **DEALING FAIRLY AND ETHICALLY WITH OUR SUPPLIERS.** We are dedicated to serving as good partners to the other companies, large and small, that help us meet our missions.
- **SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITIES IN WHICH WE WORK.** We respect the people in our communities and protect the environment by embracing sustainable practices across our businesses.
- **GENERATING LONG-TERM VALUE FOR SHAREHOLDERS, WHO PROVIDE THE CAPITAL THAT ALLOWS COMPANIES TO INVEST, GROW AND INNOVATE.** We are committed to transparency and effective engagement with shareholders.

Each of our stakeholders is essential. We commit to deliver value to all of them, for the future success of our companies, our communities and our country.

Figure 2.1: BRT's 2019 statement on the purpose of a corporation.

Research suggests that BRT's restatement on the purpose of a corporation has vindicated stakeholder theory, with investors reacting positively to firms' pledges immediately after the statement (Glambosky et al, 2022). It has marked a significant turning point in public perception of the purpose of a corporation and has given considerable weight to the debate that a business has a responsibility to society.

Corporate Social Responsibility

For as long as there have been debates about the purpose of a corporation, there have been debates about the responsibility that a business has to society (Carroll, 2016; Carroll, 1999; Carroll, 1991). This is known as CSR. While the concept of CSR has been broadly defined by many different scholars, there is still some debate and confusion as to how CSR should be defined as it is often biased towards the specific interests of a certain group, thereby preventing consensus and implementation (Carroll, 2016; Dahlsrud, 2008). Research by Dahlsrud (2008) examined thirty-seven definitions of CSR that were published by twenty-seven authors between 1980-2003. The definitions were analysed and coded according to five dimensions of CSR that the definitions referred to. The five dimensions were environmental, social, economic, stakeholder and voluntariness. Dahlsrud's analysis finds that the environmental dimension received a significantly lower dimension ratio than other dimensions and argues that this was because environmental dimensions were not included in early definitions and some organisations opted to differentiate between CSR and corporate environmental responsibility. The CSR definitions describe a phenomenon, but neglect to present guidance on how to manage challenges that may arise within the phenomenon itself (Dahlsrud, 2008).

Since the turn of the century, corporations have become more explicit in their CSR reporting, moving beyond perceptions that sustainability and CSR were fads that involved extra costs and regulation (Rattalino, 2018). In no small part has this been caused by laws and regulations being made that demand corporate sustainability reporting and consideration of other metrics, such as ESG, when making investments. The surge in popularity for ESG in mainstream economics has been partly due to heightened focus of the environmental and social impacts embedded within the cost of conducting business. Here, governance takes into consideration the multitude of different factors that comprise the operations of a corporation or business, and metrics in governance performance generally tend to focus on gender and ethnic representation in senior management roles.

A systemic literature review conducted by Latupi Agudelo et al (2019) considers the evolution and history of CSR. This exhaustive review of the literature, conducted by searching for the most influential (in terms of citations) papers on the history of CSR, show that while there were some references to the social responsibility of business from as early as the 1930s, it was not until the 1970s that the term became popularised. They argue that the first Earth Day influenced the U.S. political framework by pushing "forward the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency by the end of 1970 and translated into a new regulatory framework that would later influence corporate behaviour and create additional responsibilities for corporations" (Latupi Agudelo et al,

2019:5). The 1970s were when several influential reports were published that influenced the responsible business movement and the societal shift towards accepting and mandating CSR. This included CED (1971) acknowledging the evolving social contract between business and society, and the Club of Rome (1972) report which questioned the validity of economic growth at the expense of its growing ecological footprint and promoted the idea that businesses should engage in social and environmental issues as and when they arrived (Latupi Agudelo et al, 2019). The authors also note that several businesses were established during this time with a social conscious in mind; Ben & Jerry's ice cream brand was founded in the U.S. in 1978 and The Body Shop was established in 1976 in the UK.

One of the most influential proponents of CSR is Archie B. Carroll, who has written extensively on the phenomenon (Carroll, 2016; Carroll, 2015; Carroll, 1999; Carroll 1991; Carroll, 1979). One of the most popular constructs of CSR has been Carroll's CSR pyramid (see Fig 2.2). This states that the four responsibilities of business can be categorised as economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic. According to Carroll, society requires businesses to be profitable (economic responsibility) and to obey laws and regulations (legal responsibilities). This echoes Friedman's argument mentioned earlier that businesses should be profitable while not breaking the law. However, these two requirements are bolstered by considering what society expects and desires businesses to do. By doing what is just and fair, as well as avoiding harm in its operations, businesses must consider their ethical responsibilities to society. Finally, being a good corporate citizen means that businesses should engage in philanthropic activities.

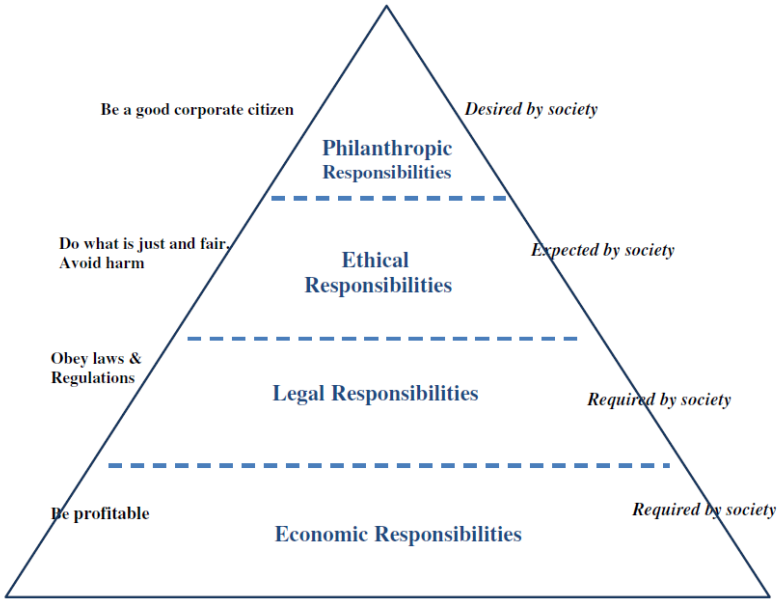


Fig 2.2: Carroll's pyramid of CSR (2016:5)

Many studies have demonstrated that CSR initiatives established by corporations are to attract and retain the best talent available within the job market (Jiang & Luo, 2024; Ikram et al, 2021; Kim et al, 2020; Lee & Chen, 2018; Carnahan et al, 2017; Slack et al, 2015). CSR that has been operationalised under a corporation's internal brand strategy creates an internal culture that enables employees to use their abilities and skillset to the maximum extent possible (Ikram et al, 2021). CSR, therefore, becomes an instrument through which employees can work on social and environmental issues that matches their values as well as doing work that furthers the ambitions of the corporation itself. CSR has become a normative requirement for most large corporations, and in certain contexts it is mandatory for companies to engage in CSR activities. In India, the Companies Act 2013 requires Indian companies beyond a certain size to spend a mandated percentage of their profits on CSR activities or explain why if they do not do this (Jain et al, 2021). In Australia, The Australian Stock Exchange (ASX) requires companies to report on the economic, environmental and social sustainability risk and their risk mitigation strategies (ASX Corporate Governance Council, 2014).

Gilberthorpe has made several important contributions to debates around sustainable development and CSR strategies, with a particular focus on the activities of multinational corporations in the extractive industry. For example, Gilberthorpe et al (2016) argued that the multitude of actors involved in mining activities determine whether and how mining can be 'sustainable' as opposed to corporately designed and implemented CSR strategies. Considering the range of stakeholder voices is critical in understanding processes of sustainability as opposed to considering the positive and negative impacts (Gilberthorpe, Agol & Gegg, 2016). Likewise, Gilberthorpe has examined sector-wide initiatives, such as the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, and determined that mineral-rich countries that have participated in the scheme can effectively shield themselves against corruption, but recognise that sector-wide initiatives are not a 'one-size-fits-all' solution in driving industrial change within the extractive industry more broadly (Papyrakis, Rieger & Gilberthorpe, 2017).

Kotler and Lee (2005) identified six initiatives that most CSR-related activities fall under which can either be marketing-driven or corporate-driven, and based on the conceptualisation of good corporate citizenship (Kotler & Lee, 2005). Under marketing-driven activities, there are cause-promotions, cause-related marketing (CRM), and corporate social marketing (CSM). Cause-promotions occur when a corporation provides funding, in-kind contributions, or other corporate resources that aid in increasing awareness about a specific cause or to support organisations with fundraising, participation or volunteer recruitment for a cause (Kotler & Lee, 2005). CRM occurs when a corporation commits to donating a percentage of revenues to a specific cause based on

product sales, which is often time-bound, product-linked and tied to a specified charity (Kotler & Lee, 2005). CSM occurs when a corporation supports the implementation of a behaviour-change campaign intended to improve outcomes at the community level (Kotler & Lee, 2005). The key aspect to corporate social marketing is the focus and intended outcome being behaviour change.

The corporate-driven CSR activities are corporate philanthropy, community volunteering, and socially responsible business practices. When corporations adopt discretionary business practices and investments with the aim of supporting social cause, improving community wellbeing and/or protecting the environment, they are deemed to have incorporated socially response business practices (Kotler & Lee, 2005). The key literature concerning debates within the fields of corporate philanthropy and community volunteering will be outlined in the section below. Corporate-driven CSR activities are especially pertinent to this research study: the extent to which these activities are utilised and the perception of their impact on environmental nonprofits are a central part of this thesis, and I will examine in more detail in Chapters Five, Six and Eight.

Corporate Volunteering

Corporate Volunteering (CV) is the act of a corporation's employees freely giving their time and skills to a beneficiary, whether that be an individual, a group or a nonprofit organisation (Brzustewicz et al, 2023; Kotler & Lee, 2005). This could be in the form of a corporation providing employees with paid time off from work to pursue a volunteering opportunity of their choosing or organising teams to support a specific cause that the corporation has targeted. This second aspect could be through a formal partnership in which a non-profit organisation regularly onboards cohorts of corporate volunteers to work on a specified project- whether that be one that is co-created by the corporation and the non-profit organisation, or one that embeds corporate volunteers into existing programmes.

Recent studies on CV have demonstrated that when the practice is embedded within a corporation's CSR strategy it can improve work meaningfulness (Brzustewicz et al, 2023) and workplace happiness (Hatami et al, 2023) for employees. This aids in building relationships between employees and can improve employee satisfaction and retention (Brzustewicz et al, 2023; Hatami et al, 2023).

(Corporate) Philanthropy

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines philanthropy[16] as "goodwill to fellow members of the human race and an act or gift done or made for humanitarian purposes". According to Giving

[16] The etymology of Philanthropy can be traced to both Greek and Latin origins, especially from the words *'philo'* for 'loving' and 'anthrōpos' for 'mankind'.

USA's 2024 report[17], a total of US$557.16 billion was donated to charity in 2023, a 1.9% increase over 2022 levels, but when adjusted for inflation, total giving declined by 2.1%. Of this total, sixty-seven percent of giving was by individuals, nineteen percent by foundations, while corporations gave US$36.55 billion, an estimated seven percent of total giving. Donations to organisations focused on animals or the environment was an estimated US$21.2 billion, around three percent of total giving and an eight percent increase on 2022 levels. The highest percentages of total giving were for religious activities (24%), human services (14%) and educational activities (14%). Nonprofit organisations often operate within a highly fragmented marketplace which includes competing with each other for potential donors and supporters (Nguyen & Faulker, 2020). Currently only 1.3% of environmental philanthropic giving is directed towards climate justice organisations (Zakour, 2024; Gee & Walton, 2023).

Corporate philanthropy occurs when a corporation makes a direct contribution to a specific cause, ordinarily in the form of cash grants, donations, and in-kind services (Kubíčková, 2018; Kotler & Lee, 2005). Furthermore, Gautier and Pache (2015) argued that corporate philanthropy is a voluntary endeavour that involves firms giving unconditional transfers of cash or other assets for public purposes. Their argument stipulates several key factors to corporate philanthropy. Firstly, it is entirely voluntary; corporates are not legally expected to transfer cash or other assets for public purpose and instead choose to do so. The reasons why they may choose to do so could be to improve its social performance, raise its reputation within a market or to strategically align with its corporate purpose. Secondly, it can only be considered as corporate philanthropy when it is unconditional; this essentially means that the recipient is not expected to deliver anything particular in return to the donation. In organisational fundraising strategies, this type of donation is known as 'unrestricted' funding, which allows for greater flexibility for the recipient organisation to spend the money as they see fit. Thirdly, the transfers of cash and other assets can include resources, such as workplace giving, gift matching and CV (Cha et al, 2023). Finally, this definition focuses on the need for donations to be used for public purpose. This form of charitable giving signals to stakeholders that a firm is socially responsible and enhances its corporate image, establish and strengthen its reputational capital and, therefore, improve the firm's sustainable competitive advantage (Yang, 2022). A study by Seo et al (2021) examined the returns to specialization versus variety in corporate philanthropy and found that firms earned higher revenues when they gave to many different causes and holding the total amount of donations constant.

[17] Giving USA 2024: The Annual Report on Philanthropy for the Year 2023.

Corporate philanthropy is often closely related to ethical fundraising, especially from corporate sectors with a demonstrable conflict of interest with the aims and missions of various nonprofit organisations. Academic literature on nonprofit fundraising ethics has been scarce and has recently focused on the strategies of nonprofits when attracting and securing funding for the causes they support (Faseur et al, 2025; Chapman et al, 2025; Suh & Hijal-Moghrabi, 2025; Hansen, 2023). Faseur et al (2025) examined individual donors' ethical perceptions of fundraising practices by nonprofit organisations and uncovered seven drivers that judge (un)ethical practices: authenticity, honesty, effectiveness, accountability, efficiency, freedom of choice and respect. Likewise, Chapman et al (2025) surveyed fundraising professional working in diverse nonprofit organisations and, through a thematic analysis, revealed that fundraisers perceive ethical challenges related the solicitation of funds from vulnerable donors, how beneficiaries are depicted in fundraising materials, and the use of funds by nonprofit organisations. Likewise, Suh and Hijal-Moghrabi (2025) argue that nonprofit organisations are ethically and equally accountable to both givers (donors and funders) and receivers (beneficiaries and recipients), and therefore ethical communications materials from nonprofit organisations aids in building trust between different stakeholders. The linkages between stakeholder theory and ethical fundraising have been highlighted by Hansen (2023), who argues that the alignment of an ethical fundraising policy with the charitable mission of the organisation should consider the interests of all stakeholders who can affect, or be affected by, its activities.

Stakeholder theory has also been utilised to examine strategic responses from nonprofit organisations when a donor is embroiled in a scandal and the money becomes 'tainted' (Dunn, 2010; Morris, 2008). Dunn (2010) used stakeholder theory and resource dependency theory to identify external pressures and internal constraints that would force a nonprofit organisation to consider three strategies when faced with an unethical donor. The first strategy would be to return the money and public acknowledgement of the relationship, the second would be to keep the money but remove the acknowledgement, and the third would be to keep the money and continue to publicly praise the donor (Dunn, 2010). Morris (2008) argues that nonprofit organisations have an agreement with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) that enforces a fiduciary responsibility with respect to its stakeholders, and therefore turning down a gift is comparable to mismanagement as it turns down valuable resources that could be used for the public good.

Specifically, within the climate sector, research conducted by Indiana University found that grantee organisations wanted philanthropic funders to alter their grantmaking approach, including shifting away from programme-specific or restricted grants and from onerous reporting requirements that do not over-burden frontline organisations. Additionally, the research found

that nonprofit organisations in the climate sector in the U.S. should be supported through unrestricted or general operating support (Shrestha et al, 2023), which is also known as trust-based philanthropy.

Trust-based Philanthropy

A recent trend within philanthropy has been the rise of trust-based philanthropy (Jones et al, 2024; Powell et al, 2023). Trust-based philanthropy is conceptualised as being rooted in reciprocal values and relationship building, the encouragement of mutual learning between partners, and system equity with the vision of advancing a more impactful nonprofit (Jones et al, 2024). It emerged as a response by funders during the COVID-19 pandemic to loosen restrictions on nonprofits to better deal with external shocks (Wiepking & de Wit, 2024; Powell et al, 2023). Historically, philanthropic giving from foundations has tended to follow a restrictive model to avoid inefficiencies and ensure that grants align with organisational objectives (Wiepking & de Wit, 2024; Hunnick et al, 2021). However, donor-imposed restrictions on grant activity have contributed to mission drift, onerous reporting requirements, and the ability of nonprofit organisations to respond to dynamic changes within their institutional environments (Wiepking & de Wit, 2024).

Jones et al (2024) argue that trust-based philanthropy has the power to loosen restrictions on nonprofit partners and defines the funders' role as being a partner working in service of nonprofits and communities. It is characterised by the offering of unrestricted or general operating grants with limited reporting requirements (Jones et al, 2024; Powell et al, 2023). The proposed six dimensions of trust-based philanthropy include: give multi-year, unrestricted funding; do the homework; simplify and streamline paperwork, be transparent and responsive, solicit and act on feedback, and give support beyond the cheque (Powell et al, 2023; Trust Based Philanthropy, 2021). Trust-based philanthropy shifts the onus onto the granter organisation to conduct their due diligence on prospective grantees and is therefore viewed as a dynamic shift in terms of power relations between donor and grantee (Jones et al, 2024; Powell et al, 2023). However, the next step for trust-based philanthropy advocates is demonstrating effective impact on communities that have adopted this approach (Daniels, 2024). As a recent trend within philanthropy, there has been limited research conducted on how trust-based philanthropy is operationalised by corporations, and therefore this research will contribute to the literature by examining whether Patagonia's philanthropic model displays components of trust-based philanthropy.

Place-based philanthropy

Another recent trend within grantmaking is the increase in place-based philanthropy (Reid et al, 2022; Smarick, 2021; Colinvaux, 2018). Place-based philanthropy is practiced by both embedded

funders (physically positioned within, and routinely interact with, the communities they serve) and non-embedded funders (Reid et al, 2022). Corporations make decisions to be embedded within communities based on multiple factors, including but not limited to: an area's business climate and attitudes of local and state governments (Galbraith & De Noble, 1988), tax incentives (Button, 2019), good transportation links (Zandiatashbar et al, 2019; Forkenbrock & Foster, 1996), availability of skilled labour (Karakaya & Canel, 1998), and proximity and access to markets (Karakaya & Canel, 1998; Galbraith & De Noble, 1988).

Mazzei (2017) argues that despite a long history of place-based grantmaking, the philanthropic practice is highly nuanced and has yet to be fully defined and mastered by foundations. Place-based philanthropy exists when a foundation provides extensive and long-term support for a comprehensive mix of programmes within specific communities, with the expectation that this will aid in community development (Easterling, 2025; Easterling et al, 2023). Often this would be in the form of legally defined community foundations that raise money for localised community development from local leaders and businesspeople (Colinvaux, 2018).

Karlström et al (2009) outlined four key principles of embedded grantmaking, which involve long-term commitments to specific places, developing deep relationships with community stakeholders, facilitating grant initiatives through local relationships, and blending financial resources with other types of resources. The long-term nature of place-based philanthropy enables funders to organically develop strategies alongside community partners that are place-specific and responsive to local needs (Reid et al, 2022). Place-based philanthropy has been argued to be a more authentic community-driven activity (Easterling et al, 2023; Reid et al, 2022), in which a foundation operates under a hands-off approach as programmes as designed and developed by communities themselves. Similarly, Smarick (2021) argues that communities, especially urban communities, are characteristically diverse, and contain a multitude of relationships, habits, associations and traditions that have formed over time to create communities as they are today. This definition of community has connotations for how place-based philanthropy should be allowed to operate; Smarick (2021) argues that place-based philanthropists should not aim to disrupt or dismantle community institutions but instead have faith in communities to determine the typology of community-led reform that would not have been chosen by the philanthropic community themselves. When philanthropic grantmaking decisions are made by the communities impacted by issues, then it is evidence of participatory philanthropy (Taddy-Sandino et al, 2022). This is a separate distinction that needs to be made: place-based philanthropy can occur without the involvement of communities but may occur through community-based organisations. Participatory philanthropy is, therefore, an evolution of

place-based and trust-based philanthropy that positions the participants at the centre of decision-making.

The growing literature on place-based philanthropy has focused on the need for philanthropic institutions to trust communities when making decisions about the dominant issues that affect them. Place-based philanthropy is deeply connected to trust-based philanthropy (Easterling, 2025; Easterling et al, 2023), and the key principles of both types of philanthropy will be applied to Patagonia's model for corporate philanthropy in later chapters. This application will be used to analysis how Patagonia are engaging with the changing trends within the sphere of corporate philanthropy. There has been limited research that explores the dimensions of CSR, including corporate volunteering and philanthropy, from the perspectives of nonprofit organisations as most research on CSR has focused on the perspectives of corporations (Liang et al, 2024; Lin-Hi et al, 2015). This research will aid in filling that gap by providing the nonprofit organisation's perspective regarding Patagonia's model for both CSR and CA, within the place-based context of Utah.

Critiques of Corporate Social Responsibility

Critics of CSR abound, from those who believe SVM is the sole purpose of corporate activity (Pruskus, 2002; Friedman, 1970), to those who hold anti-corporate views due to their abuse of power and role in many social and environmental harms. CSR can hurt a company's image when its motives appear insincere, such as when it spends more on advertising CSR as opposed to CSR activities themselves (Arli et al, 2019; Yoon et al, 2006). Additionally, some critics label the pursuit of CSR as an expensive undertaking as there are increased costs for reporting and transparency, while may increase the price of products or services (Hopkins & Crowe, 2003). For example, Bakan (2004) argued that CSR is itself an oxymoron because it contains notions that corporations can be relied upon to promote the public interest, when their fiduciary duty is to promote their own interest. In this way, Bakan agrees with Friedman's argument, albeit they come from differing perspectives on whether corporations are good for society. Bakan argues that market deregulation of corporate activity is fundamentally immoral because corporate persons, labelled "institutional psychopaths who lack any sense of moral conviction" (2004:110) would do the ethically right and morally responsible thing to do if they governed themselves.

Even proponents of responsible business have criticised how CSR has been implemented. For example, Carol Sanford, in her book *The Responsible Business: Reimagining Sustainability and Success,* argued that the CSR movement needed to get back to ensuring businesses are responsible by nature and not the purview of a specialised department or programme (Sandford, 2011). This

is a familiar critique of CSR, raised by numerous other scholars, who argue that if CSR becomes the sole responsibility of one person, or a small team, within the company, then others would not consider it their job. Sanford's main argument is that it is everyone's job to ensure the business is responsible and should not be left to the direction of one officer or department within a business. Sanford proposed a turn to a more responsible business model that outlines the five responsibilities of businesses which have been influential in conceptualizing stakeholder capitalism (see Fig 2.3). Additionally, Sarkar and Kotler (2020) argue that CSR and ESG have been too slow in transforming companies to take meaningful action on the dominant social and environmental issues of our time, contributing to a new way for corporations to take action.

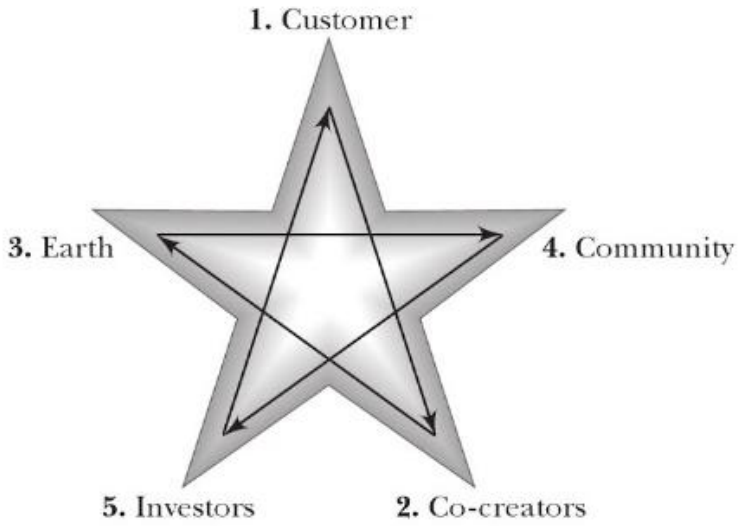


Figure 2.3: The Responsible Business Pentad. From Sanford (2011).

Emergence of Corporate Activism

CA has recently emerged through the CSR literature (Sarkar & Kotler, 2020; Eilert & Cherup, 2020). However, CA is not a new phenomenon: corporations have historically taken stances on a range of issues that affect their bottom-line, such as increased taxation and environmental regulation (McKean & King, 2024; Baloria & Klassen, 2018; Walker, 2012; Beder, 2002). The first wave of CA emerged as public trust in corporations was being significantly eroded as more environmental issues entered the mainstream political discourse, and corporations sought to utilise mechanisms, such as grassroots organising and media outputs to influence the political environment (Beder, 2002). The more recent wave of CA, as defined in the literature, is categorised as ideologically progressive actions for political causes that often have no direct

relation to the companies' core functions or products. and organised through collective action from multiple competing firms (McKlean & King, 2024).

Sarkar and Kotler (2020) define brand activism as "business efforts to promote, impede, or direct social, political, economic, and/or environmental reform, or stasis with the desire to promote or impede improvements in society" (2020:24). They argue that brand activism is a new activity that goes beyond the six identified CSR activities that were either marketing-driven (cause promotion, CRM and CSM) or corporate-driven (corporate philanthropy, workforce volunteering and socially responsible business practices) (Kotler & Lee, 2005). Brand activism differs from CSR because it is fundamentally concerned with urgent societal problems, such as climate change and social cohesion (Sarkar & Kotler, 2020). Therefore, brand activism is a values-driven agenda for companies to be more society-driven (see Fig 2.4) in which companies join a movement for socially equitable justice (Sarkar & Kotler, 2020).

Fig 2.4: How Brand Activism differs from CSR activities. Source: Sarkar and Kotler, 2020:25

Sarkar and Kotler (2020) have identified the broad issues that brands can support, and are categorised as social, workplace, political, environmental, economic and legal (see Fig 2.5). Social activism covers aspects related to equality and rights, for example: gender, racial, age, and LGBTQIA+ issues. It also can cover more corporate-facing issues such as social security provision, consumer protection or extended rights to privacy. Workplace activism is concerned

with governance, in particular CEO pay packages, supply chain management and organisation, labour and union rights, and relationships at the corporate level in terms of governance structures and trust between managers and employees. Political activism is concerned with lobbying, voting and voting rights, as well as policy. For example, corporations may actively lobby politicians to enact certain laws or policies that may be outside of their institutional environment: this could include promotion of more stringent environmental laws. This could also be considered as environmental activism, which occurs when brands and corporations support policies about air and water pollution, conservation, emission controls and land-use. Economic activism occurs when brands support issues related to wage and tax policies that may impact the redistribution of wealth and income inequality. Finally, legal activism is concerned with the laws and policies that have direct implications for companies, such as citizenship, employment or tax laws.

Fig 2.5: The different issues that brand activism can support. Source: Sarkar and Kotler, 2020:28

According to Sarkar and Kotler (2020), another characteristic of brand activism is that the issue that brands support could be either regressive or progressive (see Fig 2.6). This has also been argued by other researchers of brand/corporate activism (Vredenburg et al, 2020). Brands that engage in regressive behaviours comes from varying industries and include seed and chemical manufacturer Bayer, weapons manufacturer Beretta, oil giants Exxon Mobil and Shell, as well as Goldman Sachs, Koch Industries and Nestle. Brands that engage in progressive brand activism include: outdoor apparel company Patagonia around public lands protection (environmental activism); Ben & Jerry's for campaigning on a wide range of issues, including democracy (political

activism), climate justice (environmental activism), GMO labelling (environmental activism), LGBT equality (social activism), overturning Citizen's United decision (legal activism) and fairtrade certification (economic activism); clothing company Levi Strauss for supporting gun violence prevention (social activism); and consumer goods giant Unilever, who do not invest in digital platforms that create increased polarisation or divisiveness in society (economic activism).

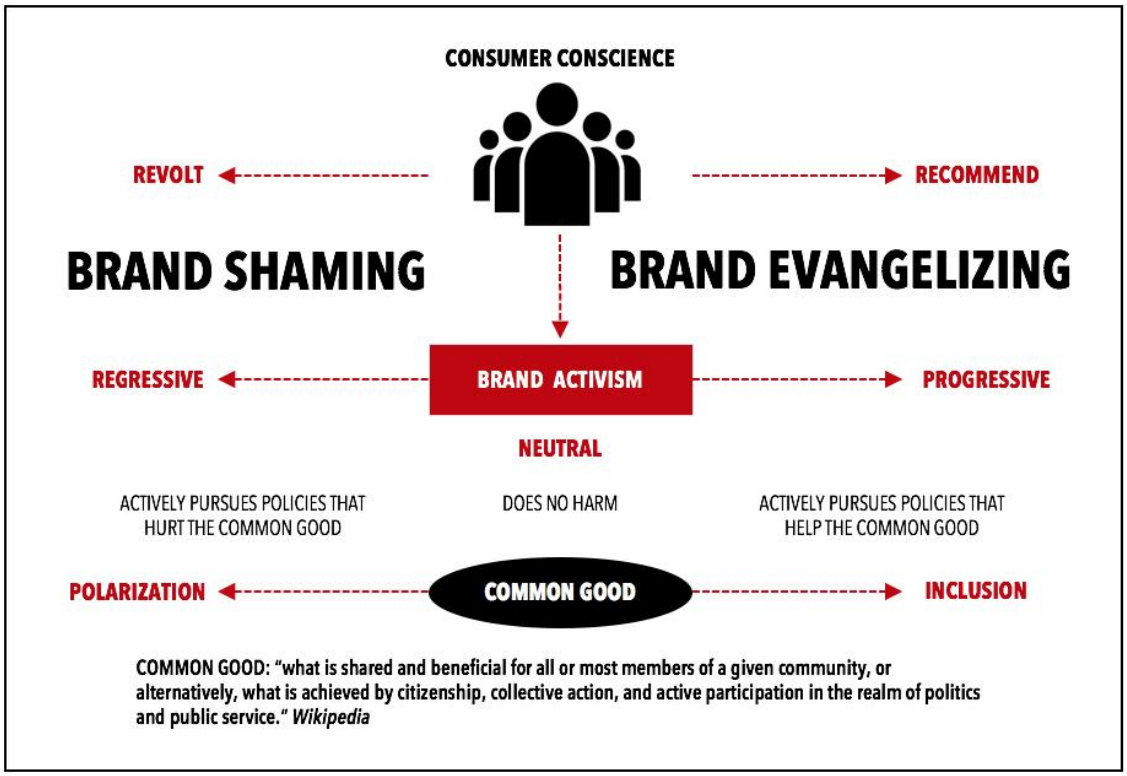


Fig 2.6: Brand Activism can be regressive or progressive. Source: Sarkar and Kotler, 2020:24

Eilert and Cherup (2020) define CA as "a company's willingness to take a stand on social, political, economic, and environmental issues to create societal change by influencing the attitudes and behaviours of actors in its institutional environment" (2020:463). Figure 2.7 below illustrates the major differences between CSR and CA. CA, therefore, supports issues which are not widely adopted or controversial within its institutional environment and is motivated by the need to create change. In contrast, CSR focuses on widely adopted or accepted issues within its institutional environment, and its motivation is to support, rather than to create change. The institutional environment in this case often refers to the mechanisms that surround the operations of a particular business. For example, a brewery would rely on a regular supply of clean water for its business model, and therefore it might lobby for legislation to clean water within the geographical context in which the brewery is located. This would be within its institutional environment. If the brewery was to adopt a nonneutral stance on social justice, or universal health

coverage, or climate change, then it would be outside of its immediate environment and therefore considered a form of CA.

	Corporate Social Responsibility	Corporate Activism
Supported issue	Widely adopted and/or accepted in institutional environment	Not widely adopted and/or controversial in institutional environment
Likelihood of negative feedback	Low unless mismanaged	Moderate to high
Motivation	To support	To create change
Use of influence strategies	Low	Moderate to high

Figure 2.7: Comparing CSR and CA (from Eilert and Cherup, 2020: 463)

Another fundamental difference between the two is that CSR has a low likelihood of generating negative feedback unless it is mismanaged. One the other hand, CA has a moderate to high likelihood of generating negative feedback. This negative feedback could arise from other brands or businesses, or from consumers, government entities or non-governmental organisations. Brands may use other brands' stances to their competitive advantage, especially if they were mismanaged and subject to criticism.

A key text in the literature on brand activism is offered by Vredenburg et al, who define authentic brand activism "as a purpose- and values-driven strategy in which a brand adopts a nonneutral stance on institutionally contested sociopolitical issues, to create social change and marketing success" (Vredenburg et al, 2020:446). The authors introduce four characteristics that are central to their critical examination of brand activism. Firstly, the brand is purpose and values driven. Secondly, the brand addresses a controversial, contested, or polarizing sociopolitical issue. Thirdly, the issue can be progressive or conservative in nature, which has also been characterised by other authors (Sarkar & Kotler, 2021). Finally, they argue that the firm contributes towards a sociopolitical issue through messaging and brand practice. Vredenburg et al present a typology of brand activism (see Fig 2.8). This is a helpful visualisation of the types of brand activism that exist and offers a tool for categorising how different brands engage in prosocial corporate practice and activist marketing messaging, and it is worth delving deeper into each quadrant.

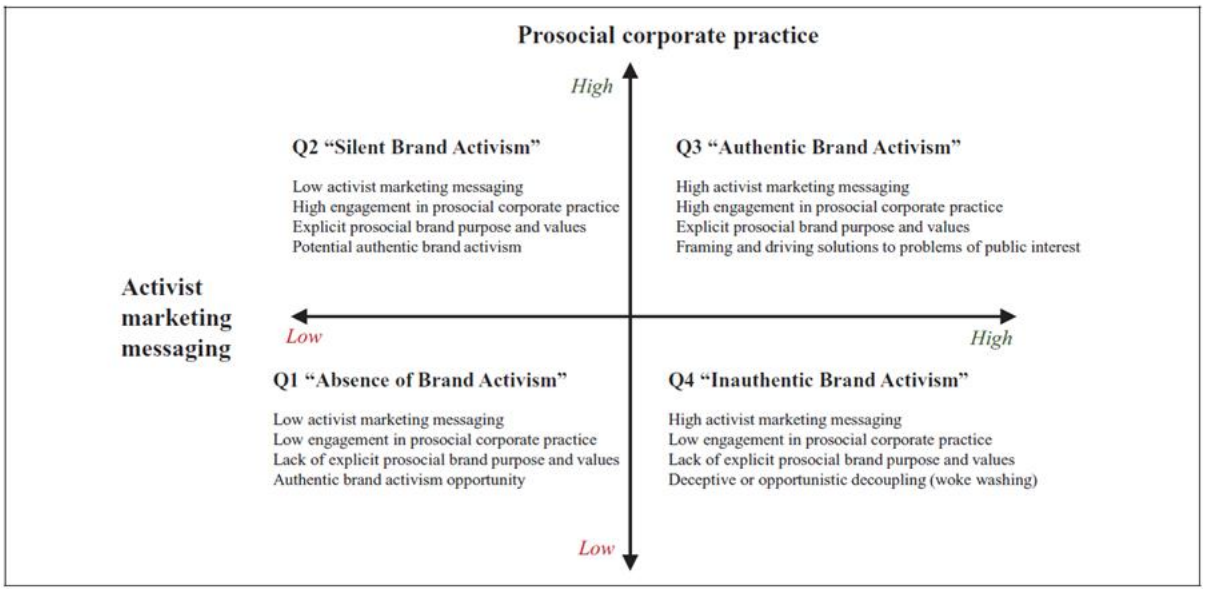


Figure 2.8: Vredenburg et al's Typology of Brand Activism (2020:449).

Brands in the "absence of brand activism" quadrant (Q1) are "those who have yet to adopt prosocial corporate practices in their approach to the marketplace and do not have prosocial brand purpose and values or use activist marketing messaging" (Vredenburg et al, 2020:450). Typically, they have operated and continue to operate without any consumer expectations that they will seek to engage in the pursuit of brand activism as they tend to be situated in industries which do not depend on partnering with social, political or environmental causes to expand their brand legitimacy. These brands, or companies, tend to operate under a business-to-business model and, consequentially, their marketing collateral is not consumer-driven. Vredenburg et al argue that brands in Q1 may have to acknowledge the changing social norms and consumer expectations of brands taking a stand, recognising the expectation for sustainable and prosocial stances within whole supply chains and not just for those that market directly with consumers. If brands are transparent and held accountable regarding their steps to adopt activist values and practices, then consumers will be tolerant, enabling brands to grow and develop as activist brands (Du et al, 2010).

Brands in the "silent brand activism" quadrant (Q2) "embrace sociopolitical causes as part of their core mission or strategic focus. However, they are more likely to operate quietly behind the scenes, working on long-term integrated prosocial corporate practices that are part of their modus operandi and inherently linked to their purpose and values" (Vredenburg et al, 2020:450). Brands situated in this quadrant are typically smaller brands with less brand power or recognition in the marketplace, but could include those who have pursued certifications, such as certifying as a B-Corp, or who make products that are either sustainable or socially minded. Vredenburg et al argue that as silent brand activists already have prosocial brand purpose, values, and corporate practices

to align with their messaging, they have the least to lose by entering the activist marketing messaging arena.

Brands in the "authentic brand activism" quadrant (Q3) are "perceived as authentic because their brand purpose and values, activist marketing messaging, and prosocial corporate values are aligned" (Vredenburg et al, 2012:450). The authors argue that authentic brand activism is superior to the other forms of brand activisms because it involves honest alignment of the activist marketing messaging with purpose- and value-driven prosocial corporate practice and it delivers the greatest brand equity outcomes (Vredenburg et al, 2020). The positive associations of a brand being perceived to act in a manner that is fully aligned with its values adds to the knowledge structures that consumers and citizens hold of that brand. This enables authentic brand activists to build brand equity on the sociopolitical cause they are supporting now but also increases the chances that stances taken in the future on other, possibly newer, controversial, contested or polarising socio-political issues will further contribute to brand equity. This is demonstrated by brands such as Ben & Jerry's, who have adopted causes and messaging that are less congruent with their established reputation (Vredenburg et al; 2020) by entering the discourse surrounding sociopolitical issues such as the criminal justice system and systemic racism, which has extended beyond the roots of its environmental activism it has been pursuing since the mid-1980s. Indeed, authentic brand activism can be either progressive or conservative and can only be considered to be authentic when its marketing messaging aligns with its overarching purpose and values. An example proposed by Vredenburg et al is that of fast-food restaurant Chick-Fil-A, which has harnessed its reputation for embracing core conservative Christian values such as closing on Sundays and donating to organisations that support anti-gay marriage legislation.

Brands in the "inauthentic brand activism" quadrant (Q4) are "already embracing activist marketing messaging that communities their support of sociopolitical issues. However, such brands lack explicit brand purpose and values and either do not exhibit substantive prosocial corporate practices or actively hide their absence of practices" (Vredenburg et al, 2020:451). This is, according to the authors, the riskiest quadrant for a consumer-focused brand to find themselves in because it opens up the brand to accusations of 'wokewashing' or 'greenwashing' if they attempt to respond quickly to societal expectations that brands should take a stand on issues of social and political importance. The outcome of this type of brand activism is normally negative and would lead to a brand either turning to Q1 (absence of brand activism) or Q3 (silent brand activism), where they would not market their activist messaging to consumers. There are several examples offered by the authors, including campaigns by soft drinks company Pepsi and gambling brand Paddy Power, in which the issues they chose to engage with were not considered to be

authentic as they did not have the values-driven prosocial corporate practices that underline the messages within their campaigns.

What is unclear in Vredenburg et al's definition and characteristics of authentic brand activism is the motivations behind pursuing brand activism in the first place, as well as the markers of marketing success. It is not clear whether marketing success is related to increased revenues or profits of the brand that has engaged in taking a stand on a controversial, contested or polarized issue, or whether marketing success is measured in terms of the issue itself becoming uncontroversial, uncontested and been generally accepted by all people, regardless of political persuasion. When brands engage in high activist marketing messaging, it should be of concern for those who are engaged in the issues directly to question whether the motivations behind the marketing messaging is to make profits at the expense of the issue, or whether it is truly aligned to the values and ideologies that underpin the social movements for change. As Vredenburg et al argue, "Brand activism must involve firm performance outcomes, specifically those related to increased revenues, brand equity, and customer loyalty, as well as aiming for social change" (2020:456). This could be construed as a motivator behind brands pursuing activism if it benefits the performance of the brand financially, through increased revenues, but also falls short of pursuing social change because it is the moral or ethically right thing to do.

The focus on moral outcomes related to brand or CA has been articulated by Sibai et al, in which an activist brand is defined as "a moral subject that reforms dominant moral judgments to promote social benefits" (2021:1652). The authors state that for brand activists to be successfully considered as authentic, brands, through their controversial strategies, must display moral competency and an astute ability to pass accurate moral judgments (Sibai et al, 2021). The authors identified three controversial strategies for activist brands that challenges the boundaries of free speech through a distinctive mechanism. These are: creating monstrous hybrids (blurring the boundaries of free speech), challenging the establishment (shifts the boundaries of free speech) and demonstrating exemplarity (introduces new boundaries to free speech). Creating monstrous hybrids is defined by the authors as "creating objects that simultaneously belong to several orders of worth or hold different moral standings (2021:1667), with examples from Lush, Renova and United Colours of Benetton that utilise controversial imagery to make salient points about an issue in society. Challenging the establishment is argued to occur when opposing parties of unequal standings engage and is characterised by the criticism of moral judgments underlying the powerful party's statements (2021), citing examples from Ben & Jerry's challenging President Trump's rollback of policies around racial and gender equity, LGBTQIA+ rights, and refugee and immigrant rights, and CrossFit challenging Coca Cola about its role in the increased risk of

diabetes. Demonstrating exemplarity is defined as presenting the brand as imagining better ways of thinking and living morally (2021), citing examples as diverse as Greenpeace moving away from denouncing large corporations and to fostering sustainable entrepreneurship and FCUK casting itself as an exemplar in shifting rules around the celebration of rebellious identity and self-expression. Stakeholders assess a brand on its controversial strategy based on how brands engage and demonstrate three moral skills: moral sensitivity, moral vision, and moral integration. Moral sensitivity is concerned with the "brands ability to recognise the moral content of situations" (2021:1652), moral vision is the "brands insight into the future of morality" (2021:1652) and moral integration is the "brands ability to pursue their moral beliefs in all situations" (2021:1652). When a brand lacks moral sensitivity, stakeholders judge the brand as 'deviant', in which the brand has transgressed the boundaries of what constitutes free speech. Likewise, when brands neglect to effectively demonstrate moral vision, they are deemed conformist, as they are just reproducing the boundaries of free speech and not pushing the boundaries to make their point salient. When brands do not demonstrate moral integration, they are judged by stakeholders as opportunistic, in which the boundaries of free speech have been manipulated to serve personal interests as opposed to a reformation of morality.

As brand activism has become more mainstream and arguably a normative business practice, scholarship has pivoted to focus on congruence between the brand and the issue it engages in through attempts at activism. Congruence is a widely used concept within marketing research that aims to capture how audience perceive partnerships and their outcomes (Ahmad et al, 2024; D'Arco et al, 2024; Vredenburg et al, 2020). Research on CA has highlighted the importance of value congruence between a firm and two key stakeholder groups: employees and customers (Buchanan et al, 2024; D'Arco et al, 2024). For employees, if CA does not line up with the values or expectations of employees, then it can negatively affect the corporate and its internal reputation (Buchanan et al, 2024; Wowak et al, 2022). For customers, research has documented the link between customers being more likely to support a corporation that share the same values as themselves and more likely to reject other corporations that do not share the same values (Escalas and Bettman, 2005). Therefore, a corporation's decision to engage in activism is expected to be affected by the morals and values held by its core customer base (Buchanan et al, 2024). Value congruence is also referred to as brand-fit (Lim & Young, 2021). Other theoretical considerations relating to branding include brand awareness and the two supplementary properties of brand recall and brand recognition (Khurram et al, 2018): these concepts related to processes of value congruence as customers can associate a particular brand when prompted by cues relating to the stances they have taken.

Brands sometimes adopt positions on sociopolitical causes that do not necessarily align with their established brand reputation; examples include Gilette taking a stance on toxic masculinity and Ben & Jerry's creating an ice cream that called for an investigation into systemic racism (Vredenburg et al, 2020). Research conducted by Lim and Young (2021) on Ben & Jerry's found that perceived fit and perceived authenticity were positive associators for corporate reputation. Of these two variables, their research suggests that perceived authenticity is the stronger of the two variables. Authenticity is recognised as important in practicing and operationalising CA, and it can be achieved through consistency in their CA stances and actions and delivering commitment to the issue at hand by removing the perception of fake engagement (Lim & Young, 2021).

Research conducted by Nam et al (2023) found that consumers express more positive emotions and purchasing intentions towards corporations that react quicker to sociopolitical issues. This finding suggests that consumers treat companies "response time to sociopolitical events as an informative cue of the firm's authentic commitment to the issue" (2023:632). However, positive purchasing intentions was limited when the issue is highly divisive along political lines. The research concluded that "consumers still view the brand's stance as authentic, even when they disagree with the firm's position" (Nam et al, 2023:642). The authors assert that CA is not just about taking a stance, but doing so quickly to help position themselves within a congested marketplace. The research conducted by Nam et al (2023) is significant in adding a temporal dimension to the concept of CA and strengthens the conceptualisations of value congruence and authenticity is being central to the operationalisation of CA.

McKean and King (2024) have identified two types of CA: leader-driven activism that derives from upper echelon theory, and employee-driven activism, deriving from social movement theory. Leader-driven activism is a top-down approach that reflects the CEO or C-Suite Executives position on a specific issue, whereas employee-driven activism is often a bottom-up approach that is used to decipher how employees feel about political issues. The authors found that CEO political ideology has an independent relationship with progressive forms of CA, and only companies with CEO founders were more likely to engage in progressive activism.

Environmentalism: Policy Instruments, Issues and Emerging Themes

The previous section of this chapter outlined the history of how corporate purpose has been shaped over time and introduced various concepts used in the business world for companies to demonstrate progress being made on social and environmental issues. It concluded by outlining

the concept of CA, which has emerged through the CSR literature to become one of the most prominent conceptual frameworks which companies are engaging with to reach consumers and to enhance their reputation. As CA is concerned with brands taking a stand on issues that fall under social, environmental, economic or political umbrellas, it is important for this research to consider the key literature and foundational concepts related to one branch: environmentalism.

This section will examine the literature concerned with environmentalism, including the development of the environmental movement and the issues that were first politicised. It starts from a global perspective before outlining the development of the environmental movement and environmental discourse within the U.S. It covers the main policy instruments that became prominent in the 1960s and 1970s and how environmental issues entered the political mainstream. It then explores the concept of EJ and how that changed the environmental movement to become more inclusive of differing perspective on humanity's relationship with the natural world.

Environment Vs Business: Two Differing Perspectives

In his 1993 book *The Ecology of Commerce,* the ecologist and entrepreneur Paul Hawken argues that the business world and the natural environment are in constant conflict, intensifying since the onset of the European Industrial Age that shepherded in an era of economic growth while causing environmental and societal harms (Hawken, 1993). Hawken argues that moving to a restorative economy would enable businesses to further the aims and ambitions of the ecological and environmental movement, while chastising the free market economy, arguing that as a system built on principles of efficiency, it is wholly inefficient in dealing with environmental issues. This is, Hawken argues, because "markets are superb at setting prices, but incapable of recognising costs" (1993:75). His argument for a move to a more restorative economy focuses on dismantling the linear model of production and shifting towards more cyclical models, in which waste generated through the market economy matches up with ecological processes of waste distribution and use within economies. Hawken endorses the creation of green taxes that would internalise the costs associated with environmental destruction into the prices of products, which would favour companies that take a more holistic approach to their pricing models. As Hawken states "businesses support good causes or actually voluntarily take on costs that other companies externalise, hoping their customers will hear about it and support them for it" (1993:89). He cites the examples of the organic cotton industry, which must be sold at higher prices compared to competing items; however, in a restorative economy, the farmer that uses chemicals would have to pay the actual costs to mitigate the polluting effects of their activities and would likely come to market at substantially higher prices than sustainably or organically produced cotton. Hawken

also has an alternative definition of the purpose of a corporation, stemming from this perspective as an environmentalist: "the ultimate purpose of business is not, or should not be, simply to make money. Nor is it merely a system of making and selling things. The promise of business is to increase the general well-being of humankind through service, a creative invention and ethical philosophy" (Hawken, 1993:1).

The Ecology of Commerce is a foundational book that has influenced the now-abundant texts that deal with the intersection between business and the environment and has influenced corporate managers and leaders to implement greener business practices (Forbes & Jermier, 2010). This includes Ray Anderson, founder of Interface Corporation as well as Yvon Chouinard, the founder of Patagonia (Baden, 2024; Forbes & Jermier, 2010). As the environment has traditionally been treated as an "externality" in traditional economic policy and practice (Ekici et al, 2022; Barrett & Makale, 2019; Malone & Winslow, 2018), regulations and legislation aimed at curtailing corporate environmental harms have been utilised under corporate strategy as "the cost of doing business" (Purnell, 2024). Several economic mechanisms, such as cost/benefit analysis, have been used by corporate managers to guide decision-making (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2018; Markandya, 2016; Pearce, 2003; Hanley, 1993), in which if the benefits of conducting a certain business activity outweigh the costs, then corporations should pursue that activity given that it maximises profits. In this scenario, costs could be governmental fines or compensation paid to individuals as a direct result of harm. However, even if every single company on the planet were able to adopt environmentally friendly practices that the leading companies do – such as the Body Shop, Patagonia and EM - then "the world would still be moving toward sure degradation and collapse" (Hawken, 1993:xiii).

A close examination of the Friedman doctrine, which has been so influential in economic policy formation around the world, demonstrates that corporations must still abide by legal procedures and legislative process. Environmental policy is one such consideration which entered the U.S. political narrative in the 1970s and required federal agencies, as well as businesses and other organisations, to consider environmental harm as part of business strategy. As concern about the state of the environment grew, businesses were the subject of intense distrust due to the primary role they played in proliferating environmental problems such as water and air pollution (Beder, 2002). This led to the "first wave of corporate activism" (Beder, 2002), in which business leaders became politically active and financing a "public relations effort aimed at regaining trust in corporate responsibility and freedom from government regulation" (Beder, 2002:16). Since then, corporations have taken a more vested interest in the fields of CSR and sustainability in general, with the argument that companies should view sustainability as an opportunity for the business

to increase efficiency and effectiveness, reduce waste, and create competitive advantage (Cavusgil et al, 2020). Furthermore, adopting sustainable practices can include an array of mechanisms, such as: beneficial agricultural practices, water conservation, air quality protection, reduced energy and fuel consumption, increased use of solar and wind energy, and improved work practices (Cavusgil et al, 2020).

Kickstarting the Environmental Movement

While environmental issues have been omnipresent, with environmental movements emerging in different places at different times (McCormick, 1989), environmental regulations and policies emerged during the 1970s (Ervin et al, 2003) when significant consideration was given to the issues that different communities faced regarding the destruction of the environment (McCormick, 1989). This was often caused by enhanced awareness of salient environmental issues through book publications or documentaries, demonstrating the power of media in changing public opinions on certain aspects of society. For example, Rachel Carson's seminal work *Silent Spring* (1962) which documented the dangers of chemical pesticides, eventually leading to the policy banning the use of DDT in 1974, has been credited with kickstarting the environmental movement in the U.S., eventually leading to government regulation aimed at protecting the environment (Davies, 2013; Pezzullo & Sandler, 2007; Ervin et al, 2003; Warren, 2003; Helm, 2003; Gottlieb, 1993; McCormick, 1989). *Silent Spring* challenged corporate hegemony and authority (Hawken, 2007). Carson's book inspired a whole generation of environmental activists, including the founder of Patagonia, Yvon Chouinard. This demonstrates the power of visual and printed media in changing public opinions on prevalent issues.

Some of the earliest U.S. based environmental organisations were founded with specific political agendas in mind and attracted small membership (Switzer & Broome, 2024). For example, the Sierra Club was founded in 1892 and the National Audubon Society was founded in 1905 (Switzer & Broome, 2024). Despite the existence of these environmentally focused organisations, it was not until the 1960s that the environmental movement began to focus on resource management and the increasing impacts of pollution in urban areas (Switzer & Broome, 2024). The 1960s saw scholars from the field of social ecology advocating for a transformation of power relationships in society based on the argument that most environmental problems stem from social problems (Davies, 2013). Influential in this field was Bookchin, who identified corporations and power-holders as the principal cause of social and environmental problems due to how they manipulate the public in the same manner as exploit the environment (Bookchin, 1982). This decade also saw expansion in both the number of environmental groups forming and the types of political strategies employed (McCormick, 1989). For example, the Environmental Defence Fund was

founded in 1967 and used litigation as a mechanism for political action and policy formation. Environmental organisations witnessed an increase in membership as environmental issues came to the forefront of public consciousness (Switzer & Broome, 2024; Davies, 2013).

The literature suggests that the environmental movement did not emerge as a singular issue within the U.S. public consciousness: other salient issues, such as the Vietnam War, labour rights and civil rights were also of public concern (Davies, 2013; Agnone, 2007; McCormick, 1989). Research suggests that a greater amount of federal legislation is passed when protest amplifies, or raises the salience of, public opinion on any specific issue (Agnone, 2007). Likewise, citizens can be more easily mobilised in environmental movements and political debates when there is a clear link between pollutants and their health (Delreux & Happaerts, 2016). Participation in environmental activism has been demonstrated to be affected by variation in moral schemas. Research conducted by Farrell (2011) demonstrated that individuals who hold intrinsic beliefs that nature is sacred were more likely to sign an environmental petition and participate in environmental activism. Individuals that held intrinsic or creational (those who believe that nature is sacred because it is a divine creation) schema are more likely to donate to environmental causes, relative to the unenchanted (those individuals who do not believe that nature is sacred).

Similarly, a study by Feinberg and Willer (2013) established the importance of moralization as a cause of polarization on environmental attitudes and suggested that reframing environmental discourse in different moral terms can reduce the gap between liberals and conservatives in environmental concern. Indeed, environmental issues have experienced higher levels of political polarization (Feinberg & Willer, 2013). The environmental movement has appealed to moral schemas on a wide range of issues (Gifford et al, 2018), including recycling (Chan & Bishop, 2013), choice of diet (Gifford & Chen, 2017), energy conservation (Lacroix & Gifford, 2017), and efficiency and curtailment behaviours (Schultz & Kaiser, 2012).

One of the most influential events that helped position the environmental movement with mainstream discourses was the first Earth Day, held on 22nd April 1970. At the time, it was the most attended social event in the world (McCormick, 1989), with over twenty million people attending in the U.S. alone (Switzer & Broome, 2024). The success of the first Earth Day is credited with Nixon forming the EPA and the formation of civil society organisations such as Friends of the Earth, League of Conservation Voters, Natural Resources Defence Council, and the Centre for Science in the Public Interest (Switzer & Broome, 2024) The inclusion of new groups within a burgeoning environmental movement enabled the inclusion and expansion of different environmental issues to be addressed, while remaining focus on single-issues: “groups do not subsume their identities to the movement. Rather, the number of groups that address

environmental and social issues grows, each keeping its unique character and focus while adding to the richness of the movement as a whole" (Hawken, 2007:148).

Various types of media, such as photographs and documentaries, have become important ways of attracting and retaining members to the environmental movement. The famous photographs *Earthrise* and *The Whole Earth* taken from the Apollo missions 8 in 1968 and 17 in 1972 respectively have been credited with sparking the environmental movement into being and became important symbols of environmentalism (Morin et al, 2020). Galen Rowell, the nature photographer, described *Earthrise* as "the most influential environmental photograph ever taken" (ABC News, 1999). The influence of visual media that combines mass media, personal experience, interpersonal communication and imagination, have been demonstrated to positively determine people's perceptions of issues such as climate change, which can have strong bearings on their behavioural choices and agency to mitigate against and adapt to climate change (Nicholson-Cole, 2005). For environmental educators and activists interested in changing public environmental attitudes, targeting emotions and beliefs, rather than knowledge, should be the sources of information on which to base their environmental programmes (Pooley & O'Connor, 2000).

For example, the Academy-Award winning documentary *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006), staring former U.S. Vice President Al Gore, focuses on a slideshow that Gore presented over 1,000 times at various fora. Additionally, the BBC-produced series *Blue Planet II,* narrated by Sir David Attenborough and watched by over fourteen million people across the UK (BARB, 2017), has been credited with changing public opinion on single-use plastic consumption (Shukman, 2019; Calderwood, 2018) and was positively mentioned in a speech launching the UK Government's 25-year Environmental Plan by former Prime Minister Theresa May (May, 2018). However, research suggests that while the series did increase viewers' knowledge of environmental issues, it did not support widespread behaviour change (Dunn et al, 2020). This may be due to study participants having pre-existing high levels of environmental attitudes, thereby limiting the study's external findings by not being representative of the wider UK population (Dunn et al, 2020).

Development of Environmental Policy in the U.S.

In the U.S., there has been a clash between proponents of conservationism and preservationism in environmental policy (McCormick, 1989). The conservationist approach, favoured by Gifford Pinchot[18], considers that humans should actively intervene and manage the environment in a sustainable manner (Morin et al, 2020). In contrast, preservationist philosophical approaches,

[18] Gifford Pinchot was the first USFS Chief.

advanced by John Muir[19], consider humans "are more likely to exacerbate environmental problems by intervening […] preservationists perceive humans as the main threat to the environment, even if they are well intentioned and care for the environment" (Morin et al, 2020:67). The U.S. government's creation of the National Park Service (NPS) was emblematic of the preservationist movement, driven by romanticism and nostalgic depiction of nature (Morin et al, 2020). The National Park Service Organic Act was signed into law in 1916 by President Woodrow Wilson. This Act established the NPS as an agency of the U.S. Department of the Interior. The NPS was established with the stated purpose to "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations" (U.S. Congress, 1916:1).

The NPS is summarised succinctly by McKasy et al, who state that "National parks are an attempt to preserve open wild space in a world where such space is decreasing. They represent the expectation of Americans to "see" wilderness and wild animals, but safely from their cars or on guided tours" (2023:46). This represents the prevailing notion that national parks are where tourists go to visit, but designated wilderness areas, national recreation areas and national monuments, all of which experience less footfall per annum than national parks, are where people can go to experience solitude and recreate. Wilderness areas have been designated through the Wilderness Act, passed by the U.S. Congress in 1964, which declared congressional policy of securing the experiences of wilderness for future generations and established the National Wilderness Preservation System. The concept of wilderness was defined as "an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain" (1964:891), in sharp contrast to areas where humans dominate the landscape. Additionally, wilderness areas should provide opportunity for solitude and for outdoor recreation that leaves limited impact on the local environment. Experiencing solitude in nature has been proven to be beneficial for mental and physical health (Daniel et al, 2018; Kaplan, 1995) and has been reinterpreted for a twenty-first century audience as a release from digital connectivity (Lang & Borrle, 2021). By de-tethering oneself from digital connectivity and physically separating yourself from others, personal experiences of introspection and societal release can be achieved; this extends solitude beyond the idea that it is avoidance of other people (Lang & Borrle, 2021).

Experiencing solitude on public lands has become more difficult due to a growing population (Long et al, 2003), increased visitation rates (Williams, 2022; Xiao et al, 2018; Svajda et al, 2016) and the effects of climate change (Kanawaza et al, 2018). While the NPS received fewer

[19] John Muir co-founded The Sierra Club.

international tourists due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, some parks received record-breaking visits from domestic tourists (McKasy et al, 2023; Kupfer et al, 2021; Gössling et al, 2020). While increased visitation and outdoor recreational activity can bring economic opportunities to protected areas, there could be an increase in land degradation due to overuse (Svajda et al, 2016), threatening the unique flora and fauna in each context (Adach et al, 2022). For national parks and protected areas to properly function, then effective management and supervision must put in place alongside promoting collective responsibility from visitors of and communities near national parks (Adach et al, 2022). Title 16, Section 1 of the U.S. Code states that national parks have a dual mission "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations" (U.S. Department of the Interior, 2015). The competing double purpose of protecting resources and creating access to recreation often come into conflict (McKasy et al, 2023; Xiao et al, 2018; Svajda et al, 2016). The conflict between the competing goals of preservation and providing access often forces land management agencies, such as the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and NPS, to make compromises between managing impacts from visitation and protection of cultural and ecological resources (Svajda et al, 2016). Underpinning this duality is the concept of the "tragedy of the commons", which is characterised by the notion that if individuals have access to a resource, such as the protected areas inside a national park, resources would be exploited until it does not exist (McKasy et al, 2023).

The history of the NPS within the U.S. has proven to be contentious since long before Yellowstone was designated as the world's first national park in 1872 (Anson, 2019; McCormick, 1989; Hampton, 1981). Early designations were premediated on conditions of 'uninhabited wilderness, which often meant that Indigenous peoples had been forcibly displaced and erased through specific federal policies (Spence, 1999). Forced displacement, illegal land acquisition and destruction of Indigenous cultures are core aspects of settler colonialism[20] (Reed, 2020; Wolfe, 1999) and continue to be manifested today through official names of places and spaces (Smith, 2021). Reclaiming original names for specific cultural sites and landscapes occurred at Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park in Australia and Denali in the U.S., which signals devolution of ownership and management back to traditional landowners (Rose et al, 2022; Young, 2009).

[20] Settler colonialism is defined as "the specific mode of domination where a community of exogenous settlers permanently displace to a new locale, eliminate of displace Indigenous populations and sovereignties, and constitute an autonomous political body" (Veracini, 2019:1).

Treuer (2021) argues that national parks were intended to be natural cathedrals in which protected landscapes were places where people could worship the sublime. Stegner argued that "National parks are the best idea we ever had. Absolutely American, absolutely democratic, they reflect us at our best rather than our worst" (1983:4). Positioning the NPS as a great idea was further popularised by Burns and Duncan in their 2009 television documentary miniseries entitled *The National Parks: America's Best Idea* (Weber and Sultana, 2013), but this series effectively erased Indigenous history and voices from the landscape, remarkable considering all the parks were established on Indigenous homelands (Child, 2011). Designating spaces as national parks under the premise of conservation and protection have been exclusionary from the outset (Rose et al, 2022; Byrne, 2012; Brockington & Igoe, 2006; Spence, 1999) and continue to be visited overwhelmingly by the white population (Taylor et al, 2011; Weber and Sultana, 2013; Scott & Lee, 2018). Ethnic minorities continue to have lower visitation rates to protected areas compared to white demographic groups (Xiao et al, 2018). The NPS is being challenged not only by structural racism and exclusion, but also by its aging infrastructure, increasing visitation rates, species invasion, habitat degradation and climate change (Schwartz et al, 2019).

Rose et al (2022) acknowledge that U.S. national parks have historically been places designed by and for White, upper-class people that has contributed to the forced displacement and marginalisation of Indigenous people. This point will be examined in later chapters as the mainstream environmental movement has been often reinforced racial power dynamics and representation with membership models. Furthermore, Rose et al (2022) argue that national parks, like other cultural landscapes within the U.S., are infused with racial relations that have both subtle instances of marginalisation and explicit episodes of material violence. While this study has not examined racial relations, racial representation within both the outdoor industry and the wider environmental movement has become a pressing issue within the context this research study was carried out in.

Environmental policy became globalised in 1972 following the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) creating the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). UNEP was formed following the UN Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm in 1972. It was a first step in analysing the human impact on the global environment that took a broad look at environmental policy goals and objectives as opposed to detailed normative positions (Hironaka, 2014; Handl, 2012; Jamieson, 2007). The concept of sustainable development was formalised in the 1980s, which contains the oft-quoted definition of sustainable development defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987:43). International efforts to

combat environment issues has since expanded with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC) in 1992 (known as the Rio Declaration). Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration (1992) introduced and defined the Precautionary Principle as "where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation" (UNGA, 1992: 3). This definition "shifts the burden of proof that an activity is not harmful onto those taking the potentially problematic action. It implies that there is a social responsibility to protect the public from exposure to environmental harm" (Bell, 2014:29). The Precautionary Principle means that "new products, processes or materials should not be introduced into production or consumption systems unless it is certain that they do not cause unwanted damage to humans or to the environment" (Delreux & Happaerts, 2016:184).

If the 1970s witnessed the birth of environmental regulation and policy enter the U.S. political discourse, then the 1980s and 1990s witnessed the destruction of environmental regulation and policy under successive Republican governments. The election of Margaret Thatcher in the U.K. in 1979 and the subsequent election of Ronald Reagan in the U.S. in 1980 lauded free-market capitalism and the dismantlement of environmental policies that were deemed burdensome on businesses seeking to pursue SVM as their primary corporate purpose (Beder, 2002). Both Reagan and Thatcher endorsed Milton's Friedman's economic policies and strategies that purported environmental regulations were deemed excessive and a block to economic growth. Scholars have argued that Reagan-era pushbacks on environmental issues, including environmental regulatory bodies such as the EPA, ended up reinventing the environmental movement and increasing membership and budgets (Switzer & Broome, 2024; Hoffman, 2016). The subsequent election saw George Bush Sr enter the Presidential office, and the early 1990s saw a further dismantlement of environmental policies in favour of economic policies.

Accordingly, the environmental movement has had evolved over time and can be viewed as the human response to policies that are causing destruction to ecosystems, while the social justice movement is aimed at addressing the economic, social and environmental causes of environmental health matter that affect different cultures and communities (Hawken, 2007). Therefore, the environmental movement needs to recognise that in order to protect the environment, it must confront power within the corporate world, and by incorporating EJ and social justice into movement-building, the environment movement can work to address the dominant contemporary social and environmental challenges.

Emergence of Environmental Justice

Warren states that "the modern environmental movement was born in the 1960s, and almost upon its birth it came under fire for not being inclusive enough, and for defending the recreational landscapes of white, middle- and upper-class people at the expense of America's minority-dominated inner cities and the rural and urban workplaces of blue-collar people" (2003: 298). Environmental (In)Justice (EJ) is the "accepted term for describing the disproportionate impacts that environmental pollution has on the health and well-being of low-income communities and communities of colour as compared with other populations" (Monsma, 2006:444). EJ in the U.S. can trace its origins back to protests against plans to site a PCB landfill in predominantly African American areas in Warren County, New York State (Bell, 2014). The Reverend Benjamin Chavis, one of the anti-plan activists, coined the term 'environmental racism' and provided substantive linkages to the civil rights movement (Bell, 2014). The focus on the dumping of toxic chemical in African American areas in U.S. cities (Bullard, 2021; Martinez-Alier et al, 2016; Bell, 2014) has since been broadened to include critiques of corporate capitalism, the need for more democracy and building grassroots coalitions to challenge unequal treatment (Čapek, 2021). Having originated in the US, subsequent work to document EJ movements have focused on other regions and countries, such as Latin America, India, and South Africa (Svarstad & Benjaminsen, 2020; Álvarez & Coolsaet, 2018).

The EJ movement has been "one of the fastest-growing, and most successful, sectors of the environmental movement" (Schlosberg, 2007:46) in the U.S. and is comprised of social movements, groups and networks that are broadly concerned with EJ (Warren, 2003). These organisations cover at least two parts of the grassroots movement: the anti-toxics movement, and the movement against environmental racism (Schlosberg, 2007; de Luca, 2007; Bullard, 1994). The diversity of the EJ movement within the U.S. was encapsulated by Faber and McCarthy (2003), who argued that EJ emerged from six different movements: civil rights, occupational safety and Indigenous land rights, public health and safety, solidarity for human rights and self-determination of peoples in the developing world, and social/economic justice. Schlosberg adds that other parts stem from farmworkers, immigrant rights, and urban environmental movements (2007). As such, the EJ movement is a loose coalition of hundreds of grassroots groups led by people of colour and was born out of a challenge to the country's largest environmental organisations (Warren, 2003). This is evidenced through, the Southwest Organising Project (SWOP) sending a letter to the largest environmental organisations in 1990, known as the "Group of Ten", which comprises the Sierra Club, Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, Friends of the Earth, The Wilderness Society, National Audubon Society, Nature Resources Defense Council,

Environmental Defense Fund, National Wildlife Federation, Izaak Walton League, and National Parks and Conservation Association (Schlosberg, 2007; Moore and Head, 1994). The letter highlighted that "for centuries, people of color in our region have been subjected to racist and genocidal practices, including theft of lands and water, the murder of innocent people, and the degradation of environment" (SWOP, 1990:1), and further stating that "it has become clear to use that your organisations play an equal role in the disruption of our communities […] there is a clear lack of accountability by the Group of Ten environmental organisations towards Third World communities in the Southwest […] and internationally" (SWOP, 1990:1). In addition, SWOP accused these environmental organisations of continuing to "support and promote policies that emphasize the cleanup and preservation of the environment on the backs of working people in general and people of color in particular" (SWOP, 1990:1).

This letter, termed the 'letter that shocked a movement' (Davies, 2013; Pursell, 2005; Warren, 2003) represented a turning point in the EJ movement and environmental politics by placing racism and classism at the heart of the environmental movement, while also demonstrating that a Eurocentric view allowed "environmental groups to see environmental issues through a frame of pristine wilderness while blinding them to issues in environments where people live" (DeLuca & Demo, 2001:541). One of the most prominent scholars that has advanced EJ scholarship is Robert D Bullard. Robert D. Bullard, who argues that "people of colour have always resisted actions by government and private industry that threaten the quality of life in their communities […] this activism took place before the first Earth Day in 1970; however, many of these struggles went unnoticed or were defined as merely part of the "modern" environmental movement" (Bullard, 1994:3). The mainstream environmental groups do not have a long history of engaging or working with communities of colour and only engaged in paying attention to environmental and health threats to poor, working-class people when they were pushed to do so by the EJ movement (Bullard, 1994; Hamilton, 1994). Instead, large environmental non-governmental organisations (NGOs) were concerned with the preservation of scenic wilderness areas and protection of endangered species (Pezzullo and Sandler, 2007). As such, the EJ framework aims to "turn the dominant environmental protection paradigm on its head: it seeks to prevent environmental threats before they occur" (Bullard, 2005a:5).

As justice is at the centre of environmentalism (Jamieson, 2007), the three concepts of justice related to EJ scholarship has have been described as distributive, procedural and recognising. Distributive justice is "conceived in terms of the distribution or sharing out of goods (resources) and bads (harm and risk)" (Walker, 2012:10). The EJ movement in the U.S. has been founded on the basis that justice is an issue of distributional inequity, recognised by the movements being

built on concepts related to environmental racism and environmental health (Schlosberg, 2007; Bullard, 2005c). Procedural justice is "conceived in terms of the ways in which decisions are made, who is involved and who has influence" (Walker, 2012:10). Linked to procedural justice is Aristotle's concept of corrective justice as just punishment and associative compensation (Jamieson, 2007). Procedural justice is concerned with incorporating voices from marginalised communities with decision-making processes and ensuring authentic, accessible and honest communication between parties (Bell, 2014).

Justice as recognition is "conceived in terms of who is given respect and who is and isn't valued" (Walker, 2012:10). This concept of justice also incorporates participatory justice, which emphasises self-determination and respect for diverse cultural perspectives as opposed to distributive justice (Jamieson, 2007). The "Principles of Environmental Justice" (see Appendix A), adopted by the First National People of Colour Environmental Leadership Summit in 1991 is based on participatory principles, with only two of the principles referring to disruptive justice (Bell, 2014; Walker, 2012; Jamieson, 2007 Schlosberg, 2007; Grossman, 1994).

Bell (2014) argues that a fourth concept of justice should be incorporated into EJ movements: substantive justice. Bell argues that substantive justice is concerned with an individual's right to a healthy environment. This differs from distributive justice in that the former focuses on the state of the environment itself, whereas the latter is concerned with where environmental impacts are felt (Bell, 2014). Therefore, substantive justice is more concerned with stopping environmental issues from emerging in the first place by focusing on the sources of the issues in question. Pedersen (2010) adds two further dimensions: productive justice and ecological justice. Productive justice questions the decisions controlling the production of environmental issues by taking a more holistic approach to challenging decisions that present a potential environmental risk. This is akin to the precautionary principle within environmental policy. Ecological justice extends the concept further by removing the anthropocentric social justice perspective by adding in non-human justice mechanisms to focus on biodiversity and landscapes (Pederson, 2010).

Schlosberg (2004) argues that "global environmental justice needs to be locally grounded, theoretically broad and plural- encompassing issues of recognition, distribution and participation" (2004:518). His work examines the central tenets of EJ movements that rally against oppressive global financial and trade institutions, and inequity in Indigenous rights compared to other societal groups. Criticism is aimed at systems and processes that deprive people of their land and associated livelihoods while enriching large Northern-based corporations (Schlosberg, 2004). More anti-corporation sentiment is written by Whyte (2021), who argues that corporations have profited from unclean environments at the expense of Indigenous peoples' well-being, including

health, economic and cultural integrity. Furthermore, Martinez-Alier et al (2016) examined the intersectionality of ecological distribution conflicts with other social conflicts related to class, ethnicity, or Indigenous identity at a global level. From a decolonial perspective, Rodriguez (2020) argues that EJ entails developing a politics of difference that is not simply based on the search for recognition or inclusion in dominant structures, such as the liberal nation-state or capitalist systems, but that "emphasis should be placed on reconstructing, recovering and revaluing local knowledge as a key mechanism for achieving cognitive justice in development practice" (2020:89). From a global perspective, the linking of just transformations to sustainability within EJ frameworks have contributed to understanding the impacts of the climate and ecological crises from the perspectives of the most vulnerable in society (Martin et al, 2020). Similar research has found that adopting a systemic, multi-dimensional and intersectional approach that is inherent in EJ activism is well-suited to the realisation of equitable sustainable futures (Carmenta et al, 2023; Temper et al, 2018). More specifically, Rodriguez has focused on the integrating EJ frameworks within the conservation movement to enhance cognitive justice by linking well-being with cultural revitalisation (Rodriguez, 2017) and on restoring the past to envision alternative futures by proposing a restorative justice perspective (Rodriguez, 2022). This links to Smith's (2021) Indigenous Research Agenda, which places decolonization, transformation, and healing within research through mobilization initially at the local and community level. These processes of EJ will be analysed in later chapters with an examination of the types of EJ, and associated movements, that Patagonia claim to be supporting through its CA and CSR activities.

Furthermore, this links to the activist literature, which argues that if due care is not taken to incorporate the needs and preferences of local communities, these campaigns could impose the values and preferences of the Northern communities in which they are embedded (Bloomfield, 2014). Bloomfield (2014) uses the example of activists employing corporate shaming as part of their strategy, which supports Klein (1999) research that documented the economic reasons why targeted firms choose to act when exposed to these practices, as they are concerned with damage to their brand value, losing customers to a boycott, diminished prospects for recruiting and retaining employees, and a weakened ability to raise capital.

President Bill Clinton established the Office of Environmental Justice as a section of the EPA and on 11th February 1994 he signed Executive Order 12898 "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations" (Bell, 2014; Walker, 2012; Pezzullo and Sandler, 2007; DeLuca, 2007; Jamieson, 2007; Roberts, 2007; Bullard, 2005a; Bullard, 2005b). This contains the provision that "each Federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate,

disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations" (The White House, 1994:1). Walker (2012) argues that the EPA withdrew from pushing EJ policy at a federal strategic level and instead left each region across the U.S. to develop its own approaches: this was partly due to the EPA being stripped of resources and undermined by pressure exerted by powerful corporate interests (Walker, 2012). It was further undermined in President George W. Bush's administration by losing financial support and becoming less effective (Bell, 2014).

Walker (2012) identified seven key characteristics that underpin the framing of EJ in the U.S. and how it differentiates from global EJ frameworks. The first characteristic is the emphasise on politics of race, that reflects its emergence from grassroots civil rights activism. This racial emphasis enabled it to become a new brand of environmentalism that involved a more diverse constituency of activists compared to the traditional environmental movement. The second characteristic is that EJ maintained a focus on justice to people in the environment, as opposed to expressing a politicised concern for justice to nature. As this anthropogenic framing of people and communities is at the heart of the EJ framework, it distinguished EJ from more traditional framings of environmentalism in the U.S., which had been focused on wilderness and conservation concerns. The third characteristic is regarding the framing of environmental boundaries, the early EJ formulation work was narrowly focused on form of pollution, waste and risk, which have been broadly categorised under the framing of 'environmental bads'. As it was originally concerned with the placing of waste infrastructure, such as landfills, incinerators and chemical plants, it broadened out to include access to environmental benefits and resources, and placing emphasis on social outcomes as well as environmental outcomes. The fourth characteristic is the evolution beyond initial issues of distributive justice to be more inclusive of other forms of claims and assertions, including demands for participatory justice. The fifth characteristic is the diagnosis of the causes and assigning of responsibility of both inequality and injustice have focused on industrial and corporate actors and on institutional racism in the form of state policies. The sixth characteristic has been its geographical framing, focused on issue contained within the borders of the U.S., with both horizontal interconnections made between local grassroots struggles in the U.S. and the vertical scaling up to national claims and policy formation. More recently, the EJ framing in the U.S. has sought to expand beyond the national boundary, becoming more explicitly inclusive of the multiple interconnected scales of analysis. The final characteristic within the U.S. has been that versions of the EJ framework have emerged with the U.S. government and federal agencies, which have often been more narrowly framed in comparison to both the activist community and the social movement that has sprung up to support the EJ framing within the U.S.

DeLuca argues that the EJ framework has shifted the focus of environmentalism from wilderness and nature to people, but criticises this approach as it demonstrates a particular form of anthropocentrism wherein human interests are the only consideration within policy frameworks (2007). DeLuca criticises some of the larger environmental NGOs, such as the Sierra Club, for entering the discourse surrounding EJ. This argument is centred around the environmental movement adopting the anthrocentric rhetoric stemming from EJ literature, which will directly impact the ability of environmental organisations in making decisions that affect other species: putting humans first, DeLuca argues, has enabled the current environmental crisis that affects all species on Earth (2007).

Environmental Impacts of the Apparel Industry and Potential Solutions

As stated in the Research Problem (Chapter One), the global fashion and apparel industrial sector is a significant contributor towards global GHG emissions, accounting for roughly ten percent of all GHG emissions currently being emitted on an annual basis (Biswas et al, 2024; Aponte et al, 2024; Bonelli et al, 2024; Shedlock & Feldstein, 2023; UNEP, 2023; UNEP & UNFCC, 2023; Brewer, 2019). The emissions associated with the fashion and apparel industry are larger than the combined emissions from the shipping and aviation sectors (UNEP & UNFCC, 2023) and are also responsible for a wide range of environmental issues (Sehmen et al, 2024; Brewer, 2019). Most environmental impacts associated with the current model of production and consumption are shouldered by the low- and middle- income countries that are situated at the beginning of global textile supply chains: environmental impacts include water use, chemical and microplastic pollution and land degradation (Bonelli et al, 2024; Millward-Hopkins et al, 2023; Herciu et al, 2023). These environmental impacts have increased dramatically following the rise of fast fashion (Bonelli et al, 2024; Millward-Hopkins et al, 2023; Clarke-Sather & Cobb, 2019): the growing trend that combines shorter lead time in production and distribution processes with offering new products to the market as quickly as possible to increase consumption (Choi, 2014). The rise of fast fashion poses a challenge for promoting sustainable production and consumption practices and meeting Goal 12 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopting by all UN Member States in 2015 (UNGA, 2015).

The apparel industry is closely aligned to process of globalisation, in which companies are attracted to shift manufacturing and production to countries that have less stringent environmental and labour regulations, as well as cheaper raw materials (Aibar-Guzmán et al, 2022). This process, known as offshoring, has seen manufacturing and production significant drop as a key component of economic output in countries situated in the Global North (Casadei &

Immarino, 2023; Clarke-Sather & Cobb, 2019). With backlash against globalisation becoming more widespread and severe disruption to global supply chains during the COVID-19 pandemic, concepts such as 'nearshoring'; that is the relocating of production inputs to a geographically closer area of consumption (Capello & Dellisanti, 2024), and 'backshoring'; the return of production inputs to a corporation's 'home' country (Ancarani & Di Mauro, 2024; Casadei & Immarino, 2023), have been proposed as solutions for reducing GHG emissions associated with transportation and as a solution to the decline in industrial output in various markets. There is no evidence to suggest that Patagonia currently engage with these newer processes, and it was beyond the scope of this research project to examine these concepts. However, it is important to highlight that many apparel companies are considering moving production facilities as a way of cutting down their operational costs and associated GHG emissions.

Recent literature suggests that the concept of a Circular Economy (CE) could be a mechanism for reducing the environmental harms associated with many industrial practices, including those in the apparel industry (Gautam, 2024; Gazzola et al, 2024; Sehmen et al, 2024; Krywalski-Santiago, 2024; Herciu et al, 2023; Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017). For example, Gazzola et al (2024) propose corporates should build their sustainability strategies around the 3R model (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle) that is associated with the waste management hierarchy. However, Herciu et al (2023) propose a 9R model for circular fashion that includes refuse (slow fashion), rethink (use eco-friendly fabric and materials), reduce (offer more durable and affordable clothing), re-use (collect and resale clothing or offering clothing rental), repair (offers repairs and maintenance after the point-of-sale), refurbish (restore old clothing and resale), remanufacture and repurpose (collection of clothing for reprocessing), recycle (use recycled resource for clothing production) and recover (taking clothes out of landfill) (Herciu et al, 2023:314). Additionally, companies that adopt principles and practices related to the CE could be viewed as sustainable fashion companies as opposed to being associated with fast fashion (Krywalski-Santiago, 2024). Gautam (2024) highlights that adopting CE principles can significantly contribute towards the SDGs, but substantial shifts are needed in business models and industrial practices. However, some CE initiatives proposed, including the exports of used clothing from the Global North to the Global South, would see an increase in the subsequent impacts of pollution shifting or waste dumping, the undermining of local markets, and increasing reliance between Global North and Global South countries, thereby contributing to the marginalisation of communities in the economically poorest countries (Bonelli et al, 2024).

Building on the concept of CE, a recent shift in scholarship has focused on the rise of slow fashion (Guerreiro et al, 2023; Centobelli et al, 2022; Cristófol Rodríguez et al, 2021). Slow fashion is a

deliberate attempt by both corporations and consumers to rebrand sustainable consumption around an increased awareness of the environmental and social impacts associated with fast fashion (Seock et al, 2023; Brewer, 2019), with an explicit focus on planetary boundaries and excessive resource consumption (Centobelli et al, 2022). Some scholars argue that brands that engage in slow fashion prioritise slowing the cycle of both consumption and production (Sarokin & Bocken, 2024), whereas others have argued the 'slow' refers to a philosophy of attentiveness that is mindful of stakeholders' needs and the impact of producing fashion on workers, consumers, and ecosystems (Chhabra et al, 2022; Brewer, 2019). The connection between suppliers, producers and consumers can enhance sustainability and CSR outcomes (Brewer, 2019). As such, slow fashion is categorised by durability, longevity and better value over the lifespan of a product (Seock et al, 2023; Chhabra et al, 2022; Liu et al, 2022).

The extensive literature on the environmental harms caused by apparel and fashion industry is relevant to this research study because as an outdoor apparel company, Patagonia sell a range of clothing products aimed at specific outdoor sports and activities. These sports include climbing, trail running, hiking, fly fishing, surfing, mountain biking, and snow sports. They do not make technical accessories for these sports, for example, they do not make skis, snowboards, mountain bikes, hiking books or surfboards, but instead make the technical clothing needed for recreating in these environments. Their product ranges from technical baselayers, wetsuits and waders, through to sweaters, t-shirts, shorts and underwear. Patagonia's bestselling products[21] include a $179 Torrentshell Rain Jacket, a $189 Nano Puff Vest, $65 Baggies Shorts and a $279 Down Sweater.

On the Patagonia website, they state, "Fashion is none of our business" and "we've never cared much for trends. Instead, we make gear that is multifunctional, repairable and timeless—because the longer it stays in play, the better it is for the earth" (Patagonia, 2024a:np). Despite this, they have been described as a fashion brand because of their continuing involvement in the apparel and textiles supply chains (Soni & Baldawa, 2023) and their willingness to work with other fashion brands to solve systemic issues. Patagonia's anti-consumerist stance on customers buying fewer products that have a lifetime guarantee has earned the label of being a 'slow' fashion brand (Guerreiro et al, 2023; Cristófol Rodríguez et al, 2021; Thomas, 2019), as opposed to the hyper-frenzied world of fast fashion. Patagonia' mission statement has never stated anything about making a profit and Chouinard considers the bottom line is linked to the amount of 'good' that the business has accomplished each year (Chouinard, 2016). Measuring 'good' is inherently subjective without demonstrable indicators that illustrate how the concept of doing 'good' is

[21] Correct as of 7/9/2024. Available at: https://www.patagonia.com/shop/best-sellers.

calculated. However, it does align itself with industry mechanisms such as Triple-Bottom-Line (TBL) accounting practices and sustainable development definitions that seek to measure a company's success based on its economic, environmental and social performance.

Patagonia's Own Contributions to the Literature

The introduction of a broad range of environmental policies coincided with a range of businesses starting up with a social and environmental focus at the heart of their operations. Brands such as Ben & Jerry's, The Body Shop, Patagonia and Seventh Generation were all founded in the 1970s. Patagonia has self-published several books that detail their business philosophy, history, and approach to environmental activism. In 2005, Yvon Chouinard published his philosophical approach to business memoir entitled "Let My People Go Surfing: The Education of a Reluctant Businessman". It provides a detailed history of Patagonia as a company including how it was established and where the founders took inspiration from. This book covers the broad range of Chouinard's philosophical approaches organised in a fashion which reflects Patagonia's previous mission statement. The book focuses on philosophies centred on business activities (product design, production, distribution), corporate activities (marketing, financial and human resources), management activities and environmental activities. The second edition to this book recaps the activities conducted by Yvon Chouinard and his experiment with Patagonia between 2005 and 2016, which he has titled "10 more years of business unusual". The phrase "Let My People Go Surfing" originates from an organisational flexible working policy that encourages sporting endeavours when the conditions allow: the office, being based in Ventura along the California coast, attracted staff who surfed the Pacific waves, and a good swell day can fall on a working day in the middle of the week. The idea is that when the environmental conditions allow someone to engage in a recreational activity of their choosing, they should be able to step outside of the office for a few hours and then make up the hours later in the day or in the week when conditions may be more unfavourable for their activity.

In 2012, Chouinard wrote "The Responsible Company" with Vincent Stanley, Patagonia's Director of Philosophy. This book is separated into seven chapters that describes Patagonia's approach to business operations including documenting the environmental crisis, what contemporary companies can do to be responsible, providing meaningful work, sharing knowledge, and the elements of business responsibility. It is not written as a historical account of the company Patagonia but rather as a toolkit for businesses seeking to implement responsible or sustainable business practices. It details the history of how business is conducted in the U.S., including the rise of limited liability and increased levels of consumerism. The authors directly challenge the Friedman doctrine and state the damage that SVM has not only done on the planet, but also on

American businesses themselves. To celebrate Patagonia's fiftieth year of being in business, the book was re-released as an updated sequel in 2023 and titled "The Future of the Responsible Company". Both these books contain a checklist for businesses split between five elements of responsibility: owners/shareholders, workers, customers, community and nature. This checklist can be found in Appendix B. The more recent publication shifts the narrative to focus on making a living and finding meaningful work in the age of the Anthropocene, but also for refocusing their environmental activism towards EJ. Patagonia's reference to environmental (in)justice within their more recent published literature demonstrate that they are beginning to see the picture surrounding EJ issues. In relation to Patagonia's grants programme, Stanley and Chouinard state:

> "the more we worked with minority groups fighting for the health of their land and communities, the more we understood that saving our home planet required the help of all races, classes, and zip codes. Our Grants Council added "front-line environmental justice" as its own category to support marginalized communities impacted by environmental degradation and pollution" (2023: 84)

In relation to the more general EJ issues that face residents in U.S. communities, Stanley and Chouinard state:

> "Patagonia will work with allies to support communities most impacted by environmental injustice. Chemical, oil and gas plants are not built in Grosse Pointe or Marin County. They crop up where rents are cheap and voices are not heard- in Cancer Alley between Baton Rouge and New Orleans, or Chemical Alley along the Kanawha River in West Virginia, or in the neighbourhoods next to the refineries of Richmond, California. In our state of California alone, people of colour make up nearly 92 percent of the 1.8 million people living within a mile of oil and gas development, all at greater risk of chronic headaches, asthma, and cancer" (Stanley & Chouinard, 2023: 167)

In addition to publishing books, Patagonia publishes articles online categorised under the themes of sports, culture and planet. Articles under the sports theme focus on stories from outdoor athletes from diverse disciplines, such as climbers, trail runners, surfers, skiers, snowboarders, fly fishers and mountain bikers. Their stories tell us of their connection to a particular place or space and often ties into an activist message. Articles under the culture theme focus on stories involving community, design, food, workwear and worn wear, and focus on activism through the lens of community engagement, reducing consumption, and designing better products for the market. Articles under the planet theme focus on environmental activism and Patagonia's environmental footprint. This is part of the Footprint Chronicles, in which Patagonia use communication tools to research, document and publish the environmental footprint of certain products.

Conclusion: The Research Gap

This chapter has focused on reviewing the substantive literature on the main concepts involved in this research study. As this research aims to examine the intersection between business and the environment, it has been necessary to conduct a review of the literature for corporate purposes, CSR and the emergence of CA, as well as the foundational principles underlying the environmental movement. These historical perspectives can trace the changes in public understanding of both issues and highlights the necessary policies that promote the rights of businesses to make profits as well as for no harm to come to the environment. The literature on EJ is central to any understanding of the modern-day environmental movement as it signifies a change in the key actors affected by corporate activities. This literature aided in choosing the research location by examining where environmental injustices have occurred and where Patagonia have supported environmental nonprofit organisations. As the EJ movement originated in the U.S, this is increasingly pertinent to the outcomes from this research study as the EJ movement attempts to rebrand itself around the different types of justice it aims to combat.

As an emerging trend within CSR literature, CA reimagines the role that businesses can have in addressing social and environmental issues. The focus within CA literature has been on marketing success and brand reputation as the two main drivers of CA, and there is a considerable lack of research that assesses the impact of CA from the perspectives of the organisations receiving the funding (Liang et al, 2024; Lin-Hi et al, 2015). Furthermore, research conducted on CA has been focused on defining the phenomenon and providing high-level examples of how it is operationalised, without providing any depth in the mechanisms employed by corporations to support their stances. This research seeks to address that gap by examining the impact of CA from both the perspective of the corporate actor and the nonprofit organisations that has received financial support. In addition, this research contributes towards the lack of studies on the role of philanthropy and non-financial mechanisms that enhance the authenticity of corporate activists regarding the stances they choose to take, and how this influences corporate reputation as an ally to a civil-society social movement.

The next chapter will outline the methodology used within this research study to successfully achieve the aims and objectives set out in Chapter One.

3. Methodological Approach and Research Context

Introduction

The previous chapters have introduced the research aims and objectives and reviewed the key theories and concepts relevant to this research project. This chapter will present the methodological approach that guided and shaped this research, as well as situating the research context. This chapter will start by presenting the research design, including the decision to employ mixed-methods research into an examination of a case study. Further, I will outline why I chose to examine financial records as part of this research project and how that contributes to the overall research aim and some of the research objectives. I then outline the fieldwork context: SLC, the capital city of Utah in the U.S., for the focus of ethnographic research. It offers a rationale for why this location was chosen to examine the business case study and the importance of examining CA and environmentalism within a specific geographical context. It provides an overview of the demographics of Utah and how these play into how environmentalism is enacted at the local level. I will then present the set of qualitative methods employed during an ethnographic research approach and reflect on the advantages and disadvantages of each research method. Further, I will reflect on my positionality in relation to the research and discuss the ethical considerations associated with the research project. This will focus on the gathering and obtaining of consent from research participants.

Research Approach

My research approach was inductive because the research contribution was to generate and contribute to theory, as opposed to a deductive research approach that focuses on generating and testing hypotheses that emerge from the theory (Clark et al, 2021: Matthews & Ross, 2010). As I only employed the use of one quantitative method (follow-the-money) and focused on primary data collection through qualitative methods, the inductive approach enabled me to use my own notes from observations as well as detailed answers from respondents in in-depth, semi-structured interviews (Clark et al, 2021).

Upon reflection, there were elements of a deductive approach used in my research design. As outlined in Chapter Two, the concept of CA has emerged recently from CSR literature and empirical studies, and, as such, has been defined and theorised by scholars from different fields. This meant there were elements of CA that I was seeking to observe throughout my research project to test theories related to CA. However, as it is still a recent social phenomenon, the research was designed to be exploratory in order to generate new understandings of how CA can

benefit environmental activism, and therefore the findings themselves can be used to support existing theories by incorporating new elements to them.

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis is organisations, both for-profit businesses and environmental non-profit organisations. Therefore, obtaining the names of organisations that received funding from Patagonia was critical to achieve my research aim of examining how supporting activism at the grassroots level can shape positive social and environmental outcomes for CSR strategies and my first research objective of determining which grassroots environmental organisations have been supported by Patagonia and how this support is manifested. Successfully identifying these organisations also contributes to successfully meeting my second research objective of examining the nature of the relationship between grassroots environmental activists and a corporate activist. This involved quantitative data collection through examining the organisations that have received funding from Patagonia by examining financial records. From this information, interviews were secured with staff members at relevant organisations who could provide an overview of their organisational activities and how they have built a relationship with a corporate funder. More specifically, I was interested in examining how those relationships have built over time and what some of the main successes have been in negotiating corporate partnerships. Finally, I discussed at length some of the issues that they face as an organisation in meeting their overarching mission and goal and related that back to the research context and problem area.

Research Design

As my research aim and objectives are to more fully understand the research phenomena as an emergent field of study, I adopted a mixed-methods research design. In a mixed-methods research project, there are three core mixed methods designs: convergent parallel design, explanatory sequential design, and the exploratory sequential design (Cresswell, 2022; Clark et al, 2021; Cresswell, 2014). An explanatory sequential design involves first collecting and analysing quantitative data before collecting and analysing qualitative data: this approach is appropriate in the instance where a researcher may want to further examine the relationships unearthed during quantitative data collection and analysis to generate additional insight into the research phenomena (Cresswell, 2022; Clark et al, 2021). This research used an explanatory sequential design (see Fig 3.1) because data from the Patagonia Org's IRS Form 990-PF was first collected to analyse which nonprofit organisations received grant funding from Patagonia and how much they received over the sample period (2007-2021). This allowed for subsequent qualitative research to be conducted with key informants from relevant organisations (both corporate and

nonprofit) to further analyse and generate insights into the nature of the relationship and any additional support they might be provided with that is not captured on secondary datasets.

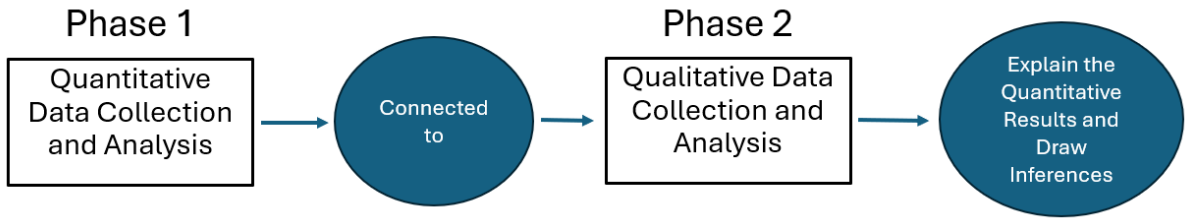


Figure 3.1: Process and stages of conducting an Explanatory Sequential Design. Adapted from Cresswell (2022:55)

As an explanatory sequential design was utilised within this research study, I now outline the following stages to the research design and process in Figure 3.2:

Phase	**Stage**	**Activity**	**Method**
1	1	Collection of secondary data through the IRS Form 990-PF	Follow-the Money
1	2	Analysis of quantitative data from the IRS Form 990-PF	Descriptive Statistical Analysis
1	3	Identification of the research site and case studies	Purposive Sampling
2	4	Remote Qualitative Data Collection to understand the nature of the relationship	Semi-structured interviews
2	5	In-person Qualitative Data Collection to further interrogate the nature of the relationship	Ethnographic methods including semi-structured interviews, participant observation, field notes
3	6	Qualitative Data Analysis	Analysis of transcripts and notes through NVivo

Figure 3.2: My explanatory sequential mixed methods design.

Case Study Methodology

Chapter Two highlighted that research concerned with examining the social phenomenon of CA is limited and tends to be focused on company outcomes as opposed to the beneficiaries of the activism itself. This raises the prospect for research to be conducted that contributes to the existing knowledge base surrounding CA by interrogating the purported characteristics of the

social phenomenon in question. One way that this can be achieved is through the utilisation of a case-study approach to research. A case-study design to research is a detailed and intensive analysis of a single case (Clark et al, 2021). Case study research is particularly interested with the complexities and specific nature of the case in question and has been employed in wide-ranging academic disciples such as sociology, anthropology, law, political sciences, social psychology, medicine, education and business studies (organisation and management studies) (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015).

Case studies are investigations into contemporary phenomena within its real-world context, relying on multiple sources of evidence that need to be converged through data triangulation. (Yin, 2018). When researching a single organisation's relationship with other organisations, it is important to collect information from the other organisations, not just the single organisation that is the focus of the case study; the inability to examine the relationships from the perspective of the other organisations can lead to unbiased conclusions being drawn (Yin, 2018). Therefore, it is logical that sampling is purposive, as it allows researchers to choose a case because it illustrates a process that is of scientific interest and demands a critical examination of the phenomena being observed (Silverman, 2017). Additionally, the use of a mixed-methods research design within case study research allows researchers to address more complex research questions and enables stronger evidence to be gathered, as opposed to evidence collected by a single method (Yin, 2018).

The selection of the primary case study for this research involved examining the literature for examples of companies that readily engage in CA and have demonstrable mechanisms in play that can be observed and examined. As this research has analysed an organisation (Patagonia) in how it supports other organisations (environmental non-profits) to uncover mechanisms for how CSR (and CA) can be done differently to mitigate environmental harms, it has employed a case study research design. The outdoor apparel company Patagonia have emerged in the CA literature as "an example of a company that engages in bottom-up, grassroots activism to create environmental change" (Eilert & Cherup, 2020:467) and "whose values-driven messaging and practices are in sync with progressing social change" (Vredenburg et al, 2020: 450). Patagonia are headquartered in the U.S., where a majority of their owned and operated stores are based. Patagonia's website and online activism platform 'Patagonia Action Works' (PAW) details the names of organisations that they partner with to promote environmental outcomes on an array of issues. These organisations form the basis of secondary case studies, in which the relationship between the environmental organisation and the corporate actor (Patagonia) can be examined in

detail. While this research uses a case study to meet the research aim, it utilises other methodologies and specific methods to meet the research objectives.

Sampling

My sampling method involved purposively selecting organisations that received funding from Patagonia and inviting them via email to participate in the research. To achieve this, a need was identified to find out which environmental organisations had received funding from Patagonia. Several organisations are listed on the PAW website, which provides supplementary information about the type of projects they have supported and how to contact that organisation for more information. However, all U.S.-based non-profit organisations and private foundations must fill out a Form 990 at the end of each tax year (IRS, 2021). This publicly details the financial amounts awarded to individual grantees from U.S.-based foundations. As Patagonia have a corporate foundation that is filed as Patagonia.org, they must fill out a Form-990 each year. This details all the grantees that have been supported by Patagonia to 'support environmental projects' and can be disaggregated down to state, city and environmental issue that they work on. As such, this form of purposive sampling not only details the names of organisations who have been Patagonia grantees, but it also generates secondary data that can be analysed to answer the research objectives and meet the research aims. From this data, the first research objective can be partially met: determining which grassroots environmental organisations have been supported by Patagonia and how this support is manifested. While this can be interpreted as standalone corporate philanthropy, investigative research methods will need to be employed to thoroughly question organisations about the financial grants they have received from Patagonia and how their model of corporate philanthropy assists Patagonia in pursuing CA. As noted in Chapter Two, corporate philanthropy is an important aspect of CSR and is fundamental in delivering a CA strategy that is truly authentic (Vredenburg et al, 2020).

Methodology

To successfully achieve the first research objective of determining which grassroots environmental organisations have been supported by Patagonia and how this support is manifested, this research utilised a follow-the-money method; this method is under-developed as an academic research approach due to being closely associated to investigative journalism and criminal case law (Hughes-McLure, 2022). Hughes-McLure argues that a follow-the-money methodological approach is well-suited to critical geography studies because it provides "a robust and detailed empirical evidence base, offering a clear and thorough understanding of precisely what's going on in a case study" (Hughes-McLure, 2022:1300). Other benefits to a follow-the-money approach include a contribution to understanding and analysing social and economic

relations which are created and supported by the circulation of money and analysing the specific mechanisms and consequences of financialization (Hughes-McLure, 2022). Hughes-McLure's proposed methodological approach is influenced by the Marxist concept of commodity fetishism, which is documented in the work of geographers Harvey (1990) and Christophers (2011), which adopts a follow-the-thing methodological approach for consumer commodities. By following place-based social and conditional relationships to methods of products, Harvey (1990) advocated for more detailed and robust spatial research that map the life cycle of commodities from the conditions of their production to the geography of their consumption and disposal. Christophers (2011) argued that the "thing" that could be followed in this approach could be money itself and identified three main challenges: scope (where and when to start and end the following), distinguishability (how and whether money can be tracked) and temporal (the issue of money flowing backwards and forwards in time). One of the limitations that Christophers (2011) highlighted is the issue with following specific dollars because it is almost impossible to track a specific dollar bill from its inception (being created at the U.S. Treasury) through to its final consumption point (being taken out of circulation or being destroyed).

Follow-the-money is made possible as a research approach through analysing the flows of financial information related to philanthropic foundations and non-profit organisations. This information is made publicly available by the IRS, which is the government agency responsible for tax collections and compliance for organisations and individuals and who set disclosure requirements (Harris et al, 2015). For non-profit organisations the disclosure requirements include information about grant recipients, such as the name, amount granted, purpose of the grant, and where the recipient organisation is based. This information is collected through the IRS Form 990 for non-profit organisations and the IRS Form 990-PF for private foundations (Levine Daniel et al, 2023). While data analysis of Form 990 has natural and more direct linkages with quantitative research, it can be used in qualitative research; through identifying an appropriate sampling framework, researchers can utilise e-filed data within a mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative analysis with complementary quantitative data analysis (Ely et al, 2023).

Electronic filing of the IRS Form 990 became mandatory for non-profits in the U.S. following the Taxpayer First Act of 2019 (H.R.3151)[22]. This, however, raised some concerns about the implications for researchers. Ely et al (2023) argue that while e-filing of nonprofit financial data enables public availability and eliminates the dependence on third-party proprietary databases, open data sources require researchers to spend more time independently ensuring data quality

[22] Prior to this, the IRS had accepted electronically filed returns since 2004 (Ely et al, 2023).

and understanding limitations within datasets. As this information is situated within the public domain and theoretically available to anyone who requests it, the IRS state that all

> "tax-exempt organisations must make available for public inspection certain annual returns and applications for exemption, and must provide copies of such returns and applications to individuals who request them. Copies usually must be provided immediately in the case of in-person requests, and within 30 days in the case of written requests."[23]

However, as Ely et al stated previously, third-party proprietary databases, curated by private organisations such as the National Center for Charitable Statistics and GuideStar, have traditionally collected data from the IRS Form 990 and charged a fee for access for interested parties (Ely et al, 2023; Levine Daniel et al, 2023; Schatteman & Waymire, 2017). Data that was, theoretically, in the public domain was put behind a paywall, enabling only organisations or individuals with available financial capital to purchase. This data is now readily accessible on the IRS website and from platforms such as ProPublica which offer recent e-filed data in the form of PDFs and XML files available for public download. However, for researchers interested in analysing nonprofit data before 2004, this data is not available on either the IRS website or readily available for all nonprofits on the ProPublica website.

The IRS website has a search tool that enables individuals to search for nonprofits by the Employer Identification Number (EIN). By typing in the EIN for the relevant organisation, individuals can download copies of returns from available tax years. Since 2016, copies of Patagonia Org's Form 990-PF are available to download on the IRS database. On ProPublica's website, Patagonia Org's Form 990-PF is available to download since Patagonia Org was established in 2007.

Phase 1: Desk-Based Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis

The first research phase consisted of desk-based quantitative data collection and subsequent analysis. Quantitative data, in the form of grant donations spaced across temporal intervals (years), was collected and used to generate case studies of environmental nonprofits that have been supported by Patagonia. These environmental nonprofits were then contacted via email to ask whether they would be interested in partaking in phase two, the qualitative stage of the research process.

[23] From https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/public-disclosure-and-availability-of-exempt-organizations-returns-and-applications-public-disclosure-requirements-in-general. Accessed: 2/7/2026.

The quantitative data collection and analysis took part in several stages that will be outlined in the following section. The first details instructions on how researchers can read the IRS Form 990-PF to ensure that they can arrive at the same results and draw similar conclusions in the data interpretation stage. These instructions are also useful for researchers who may be interested in a follow-the-money approach to nonprofit giving in the U.S. and how philanthropic donations are being awarded to different social, political, cultural and environmental organisations.

Reading the IRS Form 990-PF

To ensure that a follow-the-money methodological approach can be conducted by future researchers, there are several key sections of the IRS Form 990-PF that details pertinent information, including:

- Name of Foundation (Page 1)
- Section A: Employer Identification Number (Page 1)
- Section H: Check Type of Organisation
- Part I Analysis of Revenue and Expenses, Line 1 (a): Contributions, gifts, grants, etc., received
- Part I Analysis of Revenue and Expenses, Line 25 (d): Contributions, gifts, grants paid
- Part I Analysis of Revenue and Expenses, Line 26 (d): Total expenses and disbursements
- Part VII Information about Officers, Directors, Trustees, Foundation Managers, Highly Paid Employees and Contractors (continued), Section 3: Five highest-paid independent contractors for professional services
- Part XIV Supplementary Information, Section 3: Grants and Contributions Paid During the Year or Approved for Future Payment (see Fig 3.3)
- Schedule B: Organisation Type
- Schedule B Part I: Contributors

Form 990-PF (2021) Page **11**

Part XIV **Supplementary Information** (continued)

3 Grants and Contributions Paid During the Year or Approved for Future Payment

Recipient Name and address (home or business)	If recipient is an individual, show any relationship to any foundation manager or substantial contributor	Foundation status of recipient	Purpose of grant or contribution	Amount
a *Paid during the year* TIDES FOUNDATION PO BOX 29903 SAN FRANCISCO, CA 941290903	NONE	PC	TO SUPPORT ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS.	904,000
RESOURCES LEGACY FUND 555 CAPITOL MALL STE 1095 SACRAMENTO, CA 958144608	NONE	PC	TO SUPPORT ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS.	180,000
NEW VENTURE FUNDCOLLECTIVE ACTION FUND 1828 L STREET NW WASHINGTON, DC 200362656	NONE	PC	TO SUPPORT ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS.	165,000

Fig 3.3: Excerpt from Patagonia Org's Form 990-PF that details key information relating to philanthropic giving.

The most critical part of the Form 990-PF for researchers interested in examining foundation giving and philanthropy is Part XIV Supplementary Information, Section 3: Grants and Contributions Paid During the Year or Approved for Future Payment. This section of the IRS Form 990-details the names and addresses of grant recipients, the foundation status of the recipient, the purpose of the grant or contribution and, most importantly, the financial amount (see Fig 3.3). This information is only available for grants made nationally: there are no required reporting of details related to international grantmaking (Levine Daniel et al, 2023).

Additionally, the Form 990-PF has an optional section titled Section B Part I: Contributors. This section is useful for examining where contributions for philanthropic foundations have come from. In the case of Patagonia, each of Patagonia Org's Form 990-PF have one contributor: Patagonia Inc. This is the main business account for Patagonia, who donate that money to Patagonia Org to be redistributed among their environmental grantees. Not all foundations disclose their contributors: some are able to raise money through public fundraising or through specific donors. In many cases this is labelled as 'restricted' on the Form 990-PF. There are other examples of corporate foundations that have their contributions coming from their associated businesses: for example, Ben & Jerry's, the ice-cream maker known for their social activism, have a philanthropic foundation that they are the sole contributor towards. As this section of the Form 990-PF is not universally applied, it does not equate to a full analysis of any philanthropic foundation but instead can be used for specific case studies when this section does yield some interesting data points.

Information about grant amounts aids in univariate analysis that can provide descriptive statistics (Clark et al, 2021). These include basic diagrams (line, bar and pie charts), measures of central tendency, and measures of dispersion (Clark et al, 2021). Measures of central tendency provide a figure that is typical for a distribution of values and can be measured in three ways: arithmetic mean (the sum of all the values in a dataset divided by the number of values), median (the absolute middle value in a dataset) and mode (the most common value in a dataset) (Clark et al, 2021; Cresswell, 2014; Matthews & Ross, 2010). Measures of dispersion enables the researcher to draw contrasts between comparable distributions of values and are measured in two main ways: the range (the difference between the maximum and minimum values in a dataset) and the standard deviation (the difference between individual values in a dataset and the arithmetic mean) (Clark et al, 2021). These descriptive statistics enable analysis to occur that aid in understanding the total funding provided by the granter, the number of organisations they have donated to, the average donation amount and the variance between grantee organisations in terms of their respective donation size.

Reading the IRS Form 990

To ensure that a follow-the-money approach can be followed by other researchers, there are several key sections and lines of the Form 990 that is submitted by nonprofit organisations that details pertinent information related to academic research. These include:

- C: Name of Organisation
- D: EIN
- I: Tax-exempt Status
- K: Form of Organisation
- Line 12: Total Revenue (Current Year)
- Line 18: Total Expenses (Current Year)
- Line 19: Revenue Less Expenses (Current Year)
- Line 22: Net assets or fund balances (End of Year)
- Part III Line 1: Briefly describe the organisation's mission
- Schedule A, Part I: Reason for Public Charity Status
- Schedule A, Part II, Section A, Line 1: Gifts, grants, contributions, and membership fees received.
- Schedule A, Part II, Schedule C, Line 14: Public support percentage for 2022
- Schedule I, Part II: Grants and Assistance to Domestic Organisations and Domestic Governments

This information can help curate the narrative around a nonprofit's financial performance in terms of grants received and the type of work it aims to complete in line with its mission. It aids in providing contextual information about a nonprofit which can be triangulated using more qualitative research methods, such as interviews. This contextual information is an important aspect of this research project because it gives an indication of the types of organisations that have received funding from Patagonia through their corporate philanthropy programme. This support is central to the analysis of how Patagonia engage in CA and what types of environmental harms they are aiming to redress through their philanthropic support.

Data Cleaning

Data from Form 990s, whether from a nonprofit organisation or from a private foundation, can be readily accessible through the IRS website or from alternative sources such as GuideStar and ProPublica. For this research project, data was downloaded from ProPublica's Nonprofit Explorer[24]. The Nonprofit Explorer is a database of completed Form 990s in both digital and PDF formats. The search function on the database enables the researcher to type in the name of a nonprofit. By typing in 'Patagonia Org', I could collect information about Patagonia's

[24] Available at: https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits. Accessed: 2/7/2026.

philanthropic arm of the business[25] and includes available Form 990-PFs. Since 2014, Patagonia Org's Form 990-PF can be accessed online or downloaded as a PDF or XML file. Prior to 2014, Patagonia Org's Form 990-PF is only able to be downloaded as a PDF.

For Patagonia Org's Form 990-PF prior to 2014, the PDFs were downloaded, and data extracted line-by-line for details of Patagonia's environmental grant-giving programme. Information extracted into Microsoft Excel included the name of the recipient organisation, the state and town that the organisation was based in, and the financial amount they received in the respective tax year. The data was organised in Excel alphabetically. This process was time-consuming, but it enabled data quality checks to be carried out in real time. For each year, a new column was added to the Excel spreadsheet with the respective year added in. Some of the Form 990-PFs were organised in alphabetical order, enabling the data input process to be easier. Other Form 990-PFs were either organised by grant size or randomly, which slowed down the data input process. Environmental grantees that were first-time recipients were added in as a row in Excel and organised alphabetically.

For Patagonia Org's Form 990-PF since 2014, data was downloaded in both PDF and XML format. The XML files were uploaded into Microsoft Excel which enabled all the recipient organisation's information to be imported. This data was then copied into the main Excel spreadsheet alongside the previous years' data to build up the database of environmental grantees supported by Patagonia. The XML data was quality checked by examining the grant information from the downloaded PDF to ensure that the recipient organisation's data was correct.

Other data cleaning and quality checks involved examining the names of recipient organisations to see if they had received more than one grant in a year. As the purpose of each grant is to support environmental projects, it does not disclose whether multiple grants offered in a single year where to support different environmental initiatives that the organisation worked on. In this instance, the grant amounts were added together for the specific recipient organisation and a note added in a separate column on the Excel spreadsheet to indicate that they had received multiple grants in a single year. Quality checking the names of recipient organisations also revealed spelling mistakes of organisations' names and inconsistencies with the name of the organisation itself. For example, The Wilderness Society is listed on ProPublica's Nonprofit Explorer as 'Wilderness Society' but its name on their Form 990 is 'The Wilderness Society'. The Wilderness Society received grants from Patagonia using both names: this meant that further quality checks were needed to ascertain the correct name of the organisation so accurate grants amounts could

[25] Available at https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/142004175. Accessed 2/7/2026.

be inputted into the spreadsheet. This was done by cross-referencing the EIN for the nonprofit named in the Form-990 with the official IRS search portal. This was the case for numerous organisations, allowing for the correct spelling and legal names of nonprofit organisations to be used.

Data Analysis

The cleaning of the Form 990-PF data enabled data analysis to occur. Inferential statistical analysis was not essential for this research because the quantitative data collected required descriptive statistics to demonstrate who received grant funding from Patagonia and how much they received. It was not necessary to create hypotheses to be tested through inferential statistical models based on the quantitative data alone. Instead, the use of descriptive statistics helps to support case study research as it can outline the basic facts that help to support latter stages of data analysis, including the coding of key-informant interview responses and field notes from events organised by environmental nonprofit organisations during the fieldwork phase.

The following descriptive statistical measures were used:

- Mean Average
- Median
- Mode
- Range, including Minimum and Maximum values and interquartile range.

These offered a descriptive overview of the different organisations that have received funding from Patagonia Org through the Form 990-PF. This information is presented in Chapter Four and the findings from this analysis helped with selecting the geographical context for fieldwork and subsequent purposive sampling of organisations that can aid in achieving the overall aim of the research and the associated objectives.

Phase Two: Fieldwork, Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis

The second phase of this research employed qualitative data collection methods within a fieldwork setting that helped in understanding the nature of the relationship between Patagonia and their environmental grantees. This aided in meeting my second research objective of examining the nature of the relationship between grassroots environmental activists and a corporate activist, as well as my third research objective of examining the motivations and intents behind Patagonia's pursuit of CA and how their role is perceived in supporting grassroots environmental activism. This information is critical in unearthing any non-financial mechanisms that are employed by Patagonia to support environmental nonprofit organisations and developing

an understanding of the impact of these mechanisms. This involved contacting environmental organisations to see if they were interested in participating in the research study using the financial information that was collated and analysed in Phase One. The findings presented in Chapter Four illustrate that Patagonia have supported over two thousand environmental nonprofits across the U.S. since 2007. Therefore, there was a need to narrow the scope of the research to focus on how Patagonia engage on environmental issues within a specific geographical location. The geographical location chosen was the state of Utah, and fieldwork was based in the state's capital city of SLC. The following section will briefly outline the geographical context of SLC and Utah and its relevance in understanding the research phenomenon of CA.

Selecting the Research Location: Salt Lake City and the State of Utah

It was identified that SLC in Utah be selected as the fieldwork site (see Fig 3.4). This is for several important reasons. Firstly, SLC has a Patagonia Outlet Store in the Sugarhouse neighbourhood (hereafter referred to as Patagonia SLC). Therefore, there is a tangible brand presence within a specific geographical place that engages in community outreach and awareness raising through events, grants, and partner tabling opportunities. While this may relate to all other Patagonia stores located across the U.S., the context of Utah differentiates itself from stores in cities such as Chicago, New York, Boston and San Francisco. This contributes to the second reason for selecting SLC and the state of Utah as the fieldwork site: multiple examples of Patagonia taking a stand on environmental issues. Patagonia have taken stances on issues in Utah that affect decisions being made in the other states or at the federal level: this includes their stances on BENM (in the south of Utah) and the Outdoor Retailer Show (ORS) (held in SLC). These examples are examined in detail in Chapter Seven. The third reason for selecting SLC was access to environmental organisations that had received funding from Patagonia. Utah had numerous environmental grantees from Patagonia's grant-giving programme that were based in SLC and could be approached to participate in the research (see Appendix C for a full list). The information that they could provide, such as the issues they work on, their funding strategy and income generation, their relationship with Patagonia, and some of their successes would help to generate the right data that can aid in building a profile of a corporate activist and assess the extent that they have been authentic. The number of organisations that received funding provided a sample size that could provide insights into the differences between the grant-giving programme at the store level compared to the corporate level. This sample size provided a realistic opportunity to build relationships with various grantees as well as the store within the research timeframe.

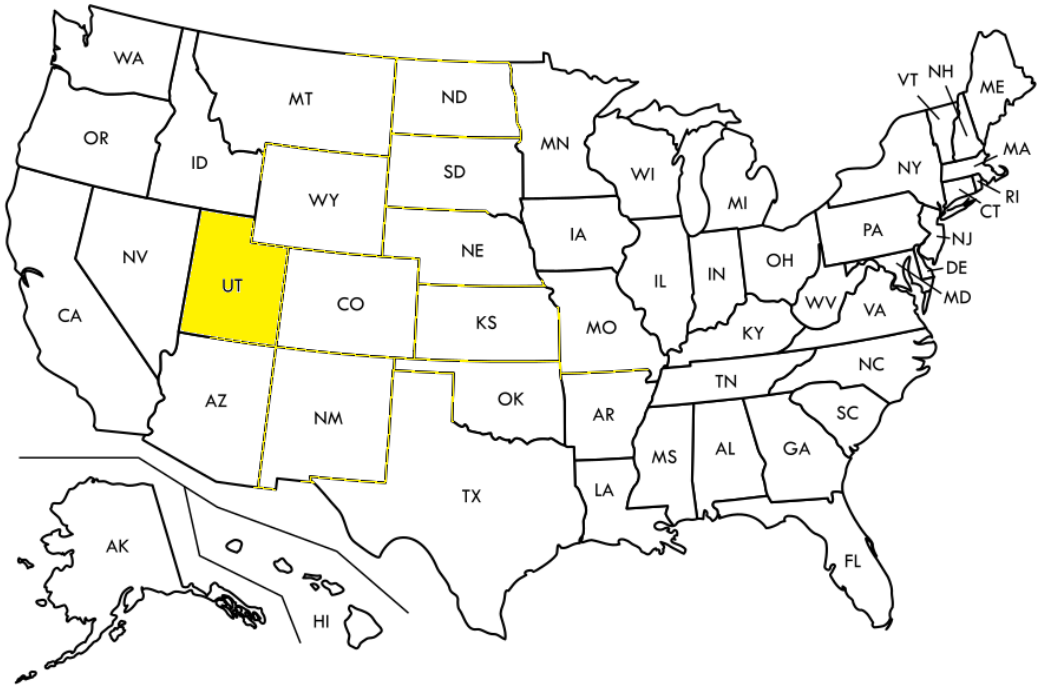


Figure 3.4: Map of the U.S., with Utah highlighted in yellow.

This was supported by remote interviews with environmental nonprofit organisations that were based in other states. These states included California, New Mexico, Arizona and Colorado. The information provided by organisations working in other states added to the data analysis process by seeing if there were any major discrepancies in the grant process or opportunities provided by Patagonia. This aided in assessing the extent to which the local context is shaped by the store and what localisation methods were utilised to create engagement frameworks that were fit-for-purpose at the local level.

Economic Context

Utah contributes almost US$220 billion to the U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) annually (Statista, 2023). The three largest sectors of the Utahn economy are Real Estate, Manufacturing, and Professional, Scientific and Technical Services: each of these sectors have grown annually and contribute over US$20 billion dollars to Utah's GDP on an annual basis (IBIS World, 2024). Outdoor recreation contributes US$6.4 billion to Utah's economy and employs 83,000 people (Linnabary, 2021). The Outdoor Industry Association (OIA) state that more than twice as many direct jobs in Utah depend on outdoor recreation as on mining and energy combined (OIA, 2017). In 2013, Utah became the first state to create an Office of Outdoor Recreation (OOR) and hosts an annual Outdoor Recreation Summit (OOR, 2021). OOR's website states that Utah's natural assets include thirty-four million acres of public land, five national parks, forty-four state parks, fifteen ski resorts and thousands of miles of mountain bike trails, who all reported record visitation

in 2018 with 10.7 million national park visits, 6.8 million state park visits and 4.4 million skier days (Leaver, 2020).

Utah's fifteen ski resorts include eleven based less than an hour's drive from Salt Lake International Airport. The ski and snowboard industry directly contribute to 25,980 jobs, US$197.9 million in state and local tax revenue and US$1.94 billion in non-resident visitor spending (Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute, 2024a). Winter sports facilities in Utah have benefitted from public investments in roads, public transit and airport expansions that arose from SLC hosting the Winter Olympics in 2002 (Pace, 2006). As SLC has been selected to be the host city for the 2034 Winter Olympics, it is estimated that it will be the first winter games that will not require the construction of new venues as 92% of venue's will be existing facilities (Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute, 2024b).

The Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), regularly conduct economic analyses that quantify the value of outdoor recreation to the overall U.S. economy. In 2020, the outdoor recreation economy accounted for 2.1% of U.S. GDP, which equates to US$459.8 billion (BEA, 2020). Outdoor recreation activities fall into three general categories: conventional activities (bicycling, boating, hiking, hunting), other core activities (gardening and outdoor concerts); and supporting activities (construction, travel and tourism) (BEA, 2020). The nominal value added to U.S. GDP is illustrated in Figure 3.5. These categorisations help to determine the infrastructure required for enabling conventional outdoor recreation to occur across the U.S.

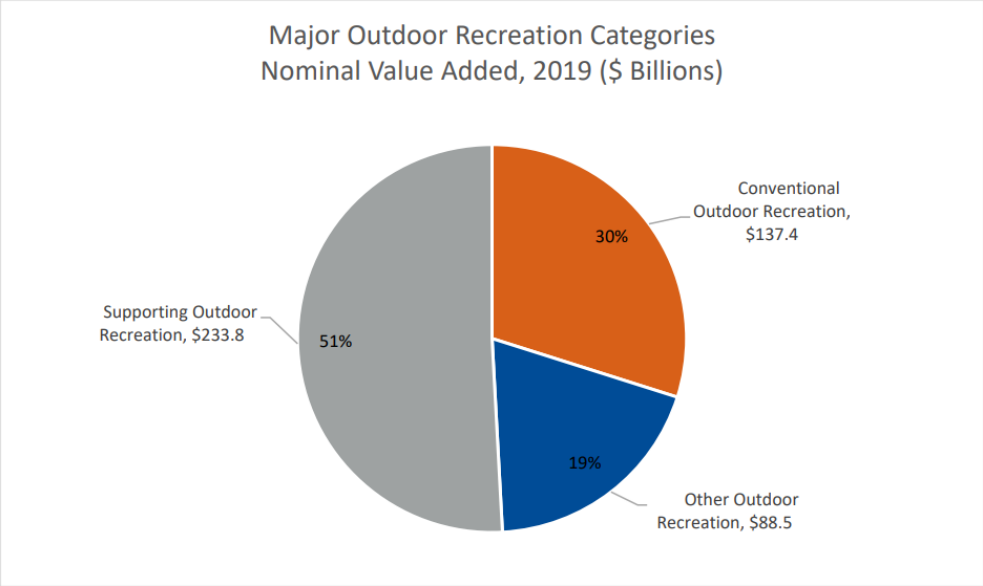


Figure 3.5: Major outdoor recreation categories and nominal value added in US$ billions to the US economy. Source: U.S. BEA, 2020.

Environmental Context

The diverse range of terrain and opportunities for year-round outdoor recreation has earnt Utah the nickname of "nature's playground", as millions of people visit Utah's ski resorts and national park, generating billions of dollars in economic impact (Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute, 2023). Utah is the thirteenth largest state by area, comprising 52.7 million acres. Of this total, federal agencies manage 33.2 million acres, which is around 63 percent of the total land area (Utah State Legislature, 2023). The two largest federal agencies that manage public land are the BLM, which manages over twenty-two million acres, and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), which manages over eight million acres (Utah State Legislature, 2023).

National Parks and Public Land

Utah is well-known for its 'Mighty 5' national parks[26] (NP), which are situated in southern Utah. Figure 3.6 below illustrates visitor numbers to the Mighty 5 since 2008, in which numbers remained steady at six million visits a year, rising to over ten million in 2016 and only dropping to just below 7.7 million during the COVID-19 pandemic. Collectively, these NPs attracted 10.63 million visitors in 2023, down from a peak of 11.27 million visitors in 2021. This figure demonstrates the impact of Utah's *Mighty 5* ad campaign, launched in 2013, that was designed to attract out-of-state visitors and contributed to rapid visitation growth at Arches, Canyonlands and Capitol Reef NPs. The "Mighty 5" campaign was successful in showcasing Utah's natural assets and encouraged visitation from domestic and international markets (Sundeen, 2020). This has contributed towards record numbers of visitors to Utah's national parks, causing overcrowding and diluting the resources needed to support public land infrastructure (Williams, 2022). Arches, Bryce Canyon and Zion continue to suffer from excess demand in the form of congestion, leading to the state of Utah to craft a new demarketing campaign that aims to provide a more tailored tourism experience aimed at increasing the value of a visit and diverting tourists to alternative sites selected to match visitor interests (Drugova et al, 2020). Data from the NPS demonstrate the Mighty 5 attract over one million visitors a month between April and October, with various travel companies and website advertise the best routes for tourists to see the most scenic spots. The success of its campaign has led to Arches NP implementing a timed-ticket entry policy and Zion NP announcing a permit process to hike Angels Landing, one of the most overcrowded spots within Zion NP (Williams, 2022). The Mighty 5 have been estimated to contribute US$2.5 billion to the Utahn economy (NPS, 2020).

[26] The Mighty 5 are: Zion, Bryce Canyon, Arches, Canyonlands and Capitol Reef.

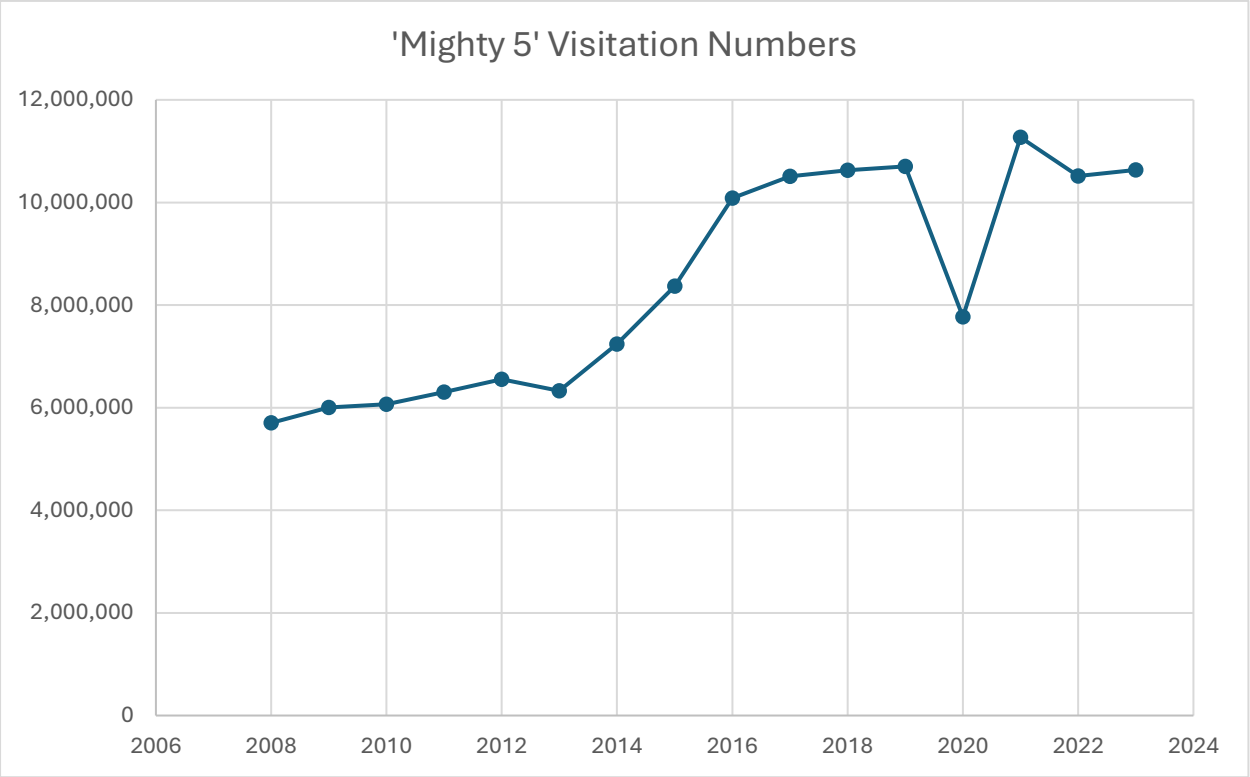


Fig 3.6: Visitation numbers to Utah's 'Mighty 5' national parks. Data from the National Park Service.

Air Quality

According to the American Lung Association's *State of the Air 2024*[27] report, the Salt Lake MSA is the ninth worst city in the U.S. by exposure to ozone pollution and the nineteenth worst city by exposure to short-term particle pollution. Historically Utah has suffered poor air quality in urban areas, with air pollution being a prominent public issue as early as the 1880s, contributing to the first legislative effort focused on improving air quality to be a SLC municipal ordinance mandating the installation of emission control devices (Mitchell & Zajachowski, 2022). Since the 1880s there has been a change in the dominant pollution sources, with "changes in the production and combustion of fuels used for energy and the state's unique topography of high mountain basins and lakes that exacerbate air quality conditions" (Mitchell & Zajachowski, 2022:20).

Persistent Cold-Air Pools (CAPs) are common along the Salt Lake Valley during winter and are frequently accompanied with unhealthy air quality levels and episodic periods of dense fogs, and public awareness of the adverse health effects of CAPs (colloquially known as inversion events) is increasing with a number of local environmental groups advocating for policies and practices

[27] For a full list, see: https://www.lung.org/research/sota/city-rankings/most-polluted-cities. Accessed 2/7/2026.

that reduce the effects of these (Lareau et al, 2013). Data collected between December 2010 and February 2011 demonstrates "a coherent link between strong long-lived CAPs and high concentration of fine particulate aerosol" (Lareau et al, 2013:62). A CAP is defined "as a topographic depression filled with cold air" (Lareau et al, 2013:51) and "occurs when atmospheric processes favour cooling of the air near the surface, warming of the air aloft, or both. The resulting stable stratification prevents the air within the basin from mixing with the atmosphere aloft while the surrounding topography prevents lateral displacement and favours air stagnation" (Lareau et al, 2013:51). This phenomenon is not unique to Utah (other cities such as Los Angeles and New York regularly experience hazy weather caused by smog) but the geographical location, next to the Wasatch mountains, makes it a particular difficult issue for residents that live in the valley.

Water Quality and Quantity

Being situated geographically in the South-West U.S., Utah is one of the driest parts of the North American continent (EPA, 2021; The Economist, 2020) and is currently in a megadrought (McGivney, 2022a; McGivney, 2022b Williams et al, 2022). Large reservoirs such as Lake Mead and Lake Powell, along with the Great Salt Lake (GSL) are reaching record low levels and shrinking fast (McGivney, 2022a). Additionally, Utah's property tax system essentially subsidises water prices, making water prices in Utah some of the lowest in the country. With water prices so low, it actively encourages residents to use water and not conserve it. This is noticeable by the number of green lawns and parks that spotted around the metropolitan areas of Utah. Water is also used for irrigating export crops such as alfalfa, which is a crop that is exported to other countries such as China.

Biodiversity and Habitat Protection

The shrinking of the GSL in Utah has led to decreased area, volume of water and increased salinity (Hall et al, 2021). Various factors have caused the GSL to reach historic low levels, including the effects to climate change, drought and water diversions which has exposed over 1945 km^2 of lakebed: this exposure can transport particulate matter (PM) to nearby urban areas and cause air quality and health concerns (Attah et al, 2024; Grineski et al, 2024; Seltenrich, 2023). This disproportionately affects disadvantaged communities in the SLC metropolitan area, with unhealthy exposure from PM pollution affecting communities with higher levels of Pacific Islander and Hispanic residents the most (Grineski et al, 2024). The GSL offers vital habitat for 338 different species of birds, including the Eared Grebe, Wilson's Phalarope, American Avocet, and Black-Necked Stilt: these have all evolved the ability to digest brine flies and shrimp which are abundant in the GSL due to the lack of competition from other invertebrates (Kropelnicki, 2024; Conover & Bell, 2020).

Resource Extraction

Utah contains a range of geologic, energy, and mineral wealth and the development of these resources through mining and other extractive activities has played a huge role in developing Utah's economy (Boden et al, 2012). Mills et al (2019) summarises the Utah mining Industry by estimating the "combined value of Utah's extractive resource production in 2019 totalled US$6.5 billion, including production of metals and industrial materials ($3.5 billion), natural gas ($760 million), crude oil ($1.8 billion) and coal ($480 million)" (2019:1). Additionally, Mills et al (2019) state that Utah has been a significant producer of iron, uranium and vanadium.

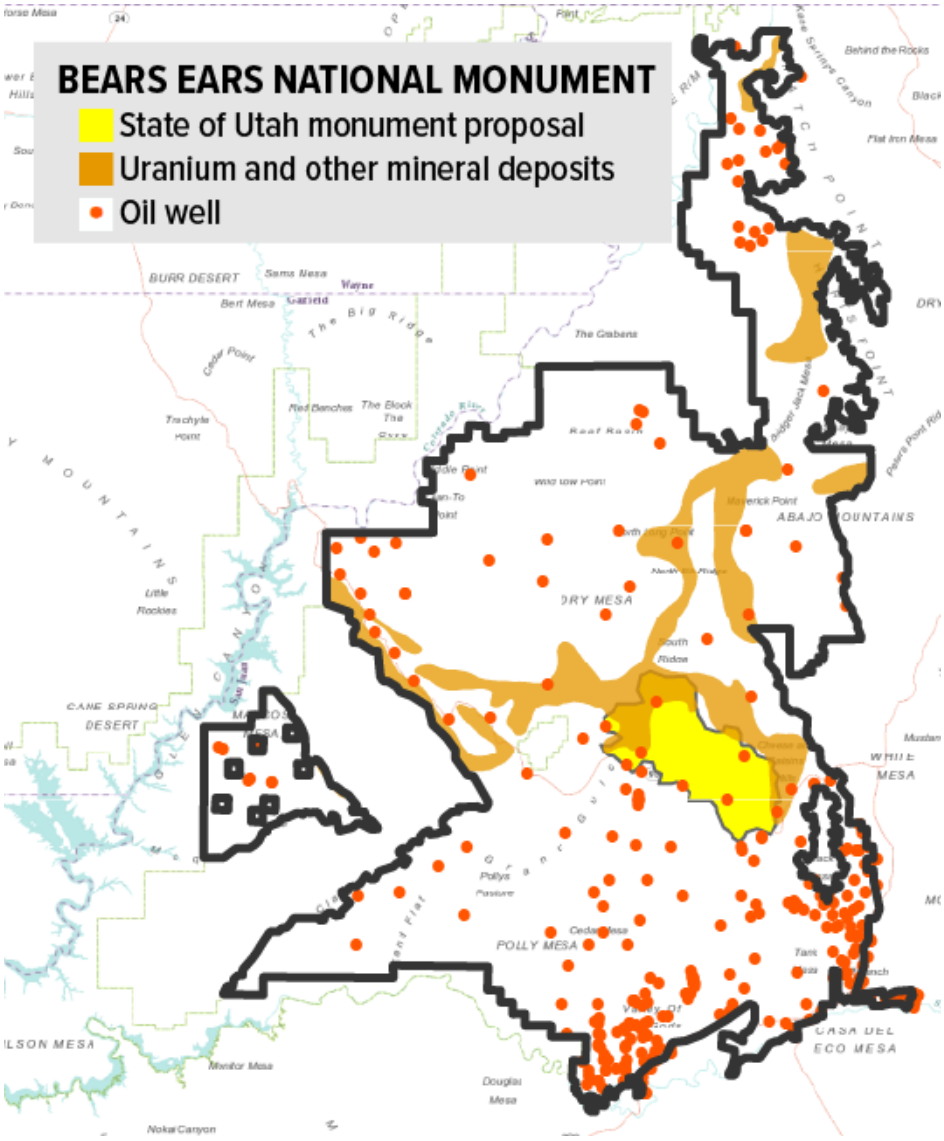


Figure 3.7: Map depicting the BENM boundary, the State of Utah monument proposal, uranium and other mineral deposits and oil wells in the area. Source: Salt Lake Tribune (2017)

Figure 3.7 shows the extractive industry interests in the area that was designated as BENM. This case study will be examined in further detail in Chapter Seven: at this point it is worth reflecting that the reduction in size of the BENM by the Trump Administration has been correlated to the

extractive industry interests within the geographical boundaries of the original proposal by the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition (BEITC).

Environmental Nonprofit Ecosystem

Utah is home to numerous environmental nonprofits that have been supported by Patagonia's Environmental Grants Programme. The full list of environmental nonprofits supported by Patagonia is listed in Appendix C. Several nonprofit organisations are working directly with land management partners, aiding in achieving their mandate. This is evidenced through the work of Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance (SUWA) and the Bears Ears Partnership (BEP), who have utilised different mechanisms for how they would work with land management agencies and how they can work to protect land for current and future generations.

Sampling

A total of forty-six environmental organisations received Patagonia funding between 2007 and 2021, of which twenty were discounted because they had received less than US$10,000 in total between the sampling years. This was due to either the environmental organisation ceasing operations or because the grants were not recent enough for staff to be able to confidently discuss the nature of the relationship between their organisation and Patagonia. Therefore, organisations that received more than US$10,000 were purposively selected for this research project as their experiences would yield greater insights into the nature of corporate philanthropy and associated activism.

The twenty-six organisations based in Utah that received more than US$10,000 were invited via email to participate alongside information pertinent to the research project. This was supplemented by emails to another twenty-eight organisations, including some of the largest recipients of Patagonia's philanthropic giving. In total, fifty-four environmental organisations were invited to participate in the research project via email, with twenty-seven environmental organisations agreeing to participate. All environmental organisations had either been funded by a local Patagonia store or had been funded by the Patagonia corporate office in Ventura. Four corporations were invited to participate and two agreed to participate (Patagonia SLC Outlet Store and Black Diamond). Four other key stakeholders were invited to participate after meeting at events held over the course of the fieldwork, and three agreed to participate in the research project.

In total forty-three respondents agreed to participate in this research project. These forty-three respondents were interviewed over the course of thirty-five interviews, with four interviews held with more than one respondent at a time. Two interviews were conducted with four respondents

each. Of the forty-three respondents, twenty-five identified as female and eighteen identified as male. Thirteen interviews were conducted remotely using Microsoft Teams or Zoom prior to fieldwork with twenty-two interviews conducted during the fieldwork period of January 2023-August 2023 either in-person or online. In-person interviews were nominally held at the environmental organisations' office, but three took place in more informal settings such as a café. All interviews were recorded on two devices to ensure that the recordings could be saved and the best recording used for transcription. Data was triangulated using other research methods such as participant observation at events organised by environmental organisations and by field notes. While respondents did not disclose their ethnicity, ninety percent of respondents were White, with the final ten percent comprising of Native American, Latinx and Mixed-Race ethnicities. The ethnicity of respondents reflects the perception that the mainstream environmental movement, including some of the largest environmental nonprofits, are overly represented by individuals that identify as White, including in positions of authority and power within those organisations.

The job titles of interviewees were varied, but included nine Executive Directors, eight Development Directors, two Policy Associates and two Community Organisers. Interviews were also conducted with individuals who held the titles of Operations Manager, Research Manager, Fund Development Manager, Foundation Relationship Manager, Communications Director, Political Director, Community and Events Director, Journalist, Sustainability Consultant, Outdoor Industry Academic Researcher, Corporate Giving Director, Donor Relations Officer, and Vice President. Respondents from corporations held the job titles of Social Media Lead, Activism Lead and Advocacy and Sustainability Manager.

Twelve environmental organisations that agreed to participate in the research operate with a staff of less than ten people, and the job roles within these organisations are fluid. For example, it was noted that an Executive Director also did the job of a Development Director due to the budgetary constraints of hiring a full-time member of staff to focus solely on sourcing funding for the organisation. Environmental organisations that employed less than ten people across its operations included O_2 Utah, Buffalo Watershed Alliance (BWA), Climate First: Replacing Oil and Gas (CFROG), Environmental Health Coalition (EHC), Environmental Protection Information Centre (EPIC), Glen Canyon Institute (GCI), Grand-Staircase Escalante Partners (GSEP), Healthy Environmental Alliance of Utah (HEAL Utah), Sageland Collaborative, Save Our Canyons (SOC), Utah Diné Bikéyah (UDB), and Utah Rivers Council (URC).

Research Methods

The following will outline the various ethnographic research methods that I employed in my qualitative research design for Phase Two. My second research objective is to examine the nature of the relationship between grassroots environmental activists and a corporate activist. To meet this research objective, I employed the use of remote interviews using video conferencing technology for the first round of interviews. These interviews took place before the fieldwork commenced and were designed to be exploratory to capture the prevailing themes and issues that face key informants that worked with non-profit organisations in the Southwest U.S. around environmentalism and their relationship with Patagonia. The primary platform used was Microsoft Teams, while Zoom was also used for a couple of remote interviews. Most online video conferencing platforms can be recorded and offer built-in transcription, although the quality of the transcripts can vary. Following each online interview, I watched the interview back and read through the transcripts, changing any words that had failed to be transcribed accurately and ensuring the transcript was a true reflection of the interview. Although this did add more time to the process of transcribing the interview, it was an effective way of close reading the interview transcript and starting to pick out themes from the interview themselves. However, I will delve further into the method for data analysis later in this chapter.

During the fieldwork period, I used both remote video interviews and in-person interviews that followed a semi-structured format. In-person interviews were used after rapport had been built up between me and the potential interviewee after meeting at an event or they had preferred that method of interviewing. In-person interviews were held at either the environmental non-profit's offices or at a neutral location such as a coffee shop. Interviews were recorded using a dictaphone as well as a voice recorder app on my mobile phone. This enabled the interview to be recorded twice in case the batteries failed in either device, and ensured that there was a back-up in case the equipment malfunctioned. The in-person interviews were transcribed as soon as possible following the conclusion of the interview to ensure that the conversation and emergent themes remained as fresh in my mind as possible. While this was time-consuming and labour-intensive, it was important to do this at the time to enable swift follow-up with respondents if there was anything else that needed following up and for clarification purposes. Additionally, it enabled the respondent to receive a copy of the transcription if they had requested one. The participant information form can be found in Appendix D and the semi-structured interview questions can be found in Appendix E.

In addition, the research adopted more mobile approaches, such as the use of walking interviews, when interviewing key informants from non-profit organisations that worked on urban agricultural

production: this included Green Urban Lunch Box (GULB) and Wasatch Community Gardens (WCG). Both walking interviews took place after a preliminary remote interview and involved a tour of their premises and allowed the interviewee to explain the work they were doing in more detail, using visual cues and prompts to stimulate findings and reflections. In addition, Patagonia organised 'Winter Walks' which involved a local non-profit organisation walking with Patagonia customers or citizens interested in environmental issues in a local area. Two of these organised walks were not formal interviews *per se but* instead enabled me to have a conversation about their organisation and the work they do in a more informal setting. The notes from these walks were logged in the form of field notes.

Groups interviews were also used as a research method. Group interviews were used to interview two or more participants that were employed by the same organisation, and it enabled participants to reflect on what their colleagues were saying and add more information. These interviews were normally longer than individual interviews because with two or more respondents in the room together there was a richer and more diverse conversation taking place. These interviews were conducted in-person, and organisations that were group interviewed included SUWA, BWA, O_2 Utah, and the Patagonia SLC Outlet Store.

Other ethnographic research methods used throughout the research included participant observation and field notes. Participant observation was used when attending events organised by environmental non-profit organisations that had received grants from Patagonia. Information about these events were sourced either by examining flyers at the Patagonia SLC Outlet store and signing up to their events notifications via email, or from viewing the events calendar of nonprofit organisations themselves. Some of these events were organised and ran by multiple non-profit organisations on the same premises. Some events were held in a business premises; several breweries regularly allowed their spaces to be used by environmental non-profit organisations, with a percentage of total sales for the evening being divided by the non-profit organisations that had organised the evening. These events enabled me to get to know various staff at the environmental non-profits and understand more about their organisation's mission and operations. The use of an ethnographic research approach meant I was able to observe the interactions between staff and members of the public, with the findings from these events outlined in later analytical chapters. These events were accessible either on-foot or by using public transport. Alongside participation observation, the use of field notes was employed to assist in documenting my reflections and observations made while attending events that were central to the research aims and objectives. Field notes were recorded in two ways: verbally and physically. Verbal field notes were recorded on my mobile phone and included my personal reflections after

a specific event or interview. Physical field notes were written down in a field notebook and normally took place when I was sitting down in a quiet setting. This enabled me to refer to previous field notes that I had taken over the course of the research and see the connections that enabled initial analysis to occur, as well as a myriad of other notes that had been made over the course of the research, some of which were redundant by the end of fieldwork.

The third research objective is to examine the motivations and intents behind Patagonia's pursuit of CA and how their role is perceived in supporting grassroots environmental activism. This objective was achieved through semi-structured interviews with relevant staff at Patagonia SLC Outlet Store and accompanied by semi-structured interviews with staff at environmental organisations. These were supplemented using ethnographic research tools such as participant observation at events held by the store and using field notes. A two-hour group interview with the Activism Lead and Social Media Lead was arranged to discuss the motivations at the local level for supporting environmental activism and how this support is manifested. This was followed up by emails with the relevant staff member to augment on points raised in the interview. Participant observation was used when attending events organised by Patagonia or by environmental non-profit organisations that had received support from Patagonia through their environmental grant-giving programme. Information about these events were sourced by examining flyers at the Patagonia SLC Outlet store and by signing up to their events notifications via email. This was of crucial importance at the start of the fieldwork period, when as an outsider (see positionality section below) I had little-to-no understanding of how Patagonia engaged in CA at the local level and how they managed relationships with their grantees. The use of participant observation was helped by living in the Sugarhouse neighbourhood of SLC, a twenty-minute walk from the Patagonia SLC store. By positioning myself close to the Patagonia store, I attended events regularly and observed the dynamics of environmental activism at the local level. This deliberate decision enabled participant observations to be conducted for bespoke events, often organised at late notice. As a visiting scholar at the University of Utah, I could travel for free across the Utah Transit Authority network, enhancing my ability to attend and observe organised events either by foot or by public transport. Public transport was used to conduct in-person interviews at various environmental organisations offices.

The Patagonia SLC Outlet store regularly held events at their Sugarhouse store that were normally based around a certain environmental theme. For example, one event was organised for a wilderness advocate who had written a book about their experiences working with grizzly bears in Yellowstone National Park. This event was organised by the Patagonia corporate office as part of a book tour, and enabled interested citizens to attend the talk, buy a copy of the book and meet

the author. Other events held at the store included a local art fair, a repair workshop event and a non-profit breakfast for the 2023 class of environmental grantees. When the store was not hosting events, they regularly hosted tabling events with local non-profit organizations who were invited to showcase their organisation's work to Patagonia customers. In these instances, the store ran their operations as business as usual, with employees dedicated to their operational roles and to customer concerns and queries.

Phase 3: Qualitative Data Analysis

As mentioned previously, all semi-structured interviews were recorded and transcribed. The transcriptions were either done manually or through software available through Microsoft Teams. The transcriptions were saved as Microsoft Word files, and then uploaded to qualitative data analysis software, NVivo. The transcriptions were coded to unearth connections between respondent's answers and to gather insights into the research phenomena. NVivo "facilitates rich text analysis, flexible interpretations, memos, development of matrices, modelling and framing" (Grbich, 2013). The coding schema developed in NVivo allowed for insights to be drawn around the mechanisms developed by Patagonia to support grassroots environmental activism. The codes were split between different thematic areas and included insights into:

- Financial mechanisms: including splits in general fundraising, the grant process, grant outcomes, monitoring and reporting.
- Non-financial mechanisms: including community events, tabling opportunities, digital activist platforms, conferences, employee volunteering, product, in-kind and discount services.
- Types of environmental issues: including land management, air quality, carbon emissions, water quality, water quantity, protected species, biodiversity, and responsible access to green spaces.
- Relationships between different actors: including relationships between environmental organisations and Patagonia local stores, environmental organisations and Corporate Patagonia staff, environmental organisations with other environmental organisations in coalitions, and between Patagonia local stores and Corporate Patagonia staff.
- Perceptions of Patagonia's model for CA: including authenticity, stances, types of support, influence and outcomes.

Positionality

In relation to the research context and topic, I would consider myself to be an outsider for several reasons. Firstly, I am a white researcher from the UK conducting research outside of my own

community in a different country. I came across very few British people during my time in Utah and I stood out by having a different accent and background from the people that were central to my research topic and area. However, this did have some advantages; as an obvious outsider, I found that most research participants were happy to talk through their organisation's work with me and often started with basic information, such as their mission and the work they do. This was especially the case with the pre-fieldwork interviews I conducted remotely with various environmental grantees. When I told interviewees I was coming to the U.S. for an extended period of time, to witness first-hand the work they were doing and how they interacted with their corporate funder, I found that interviewees were a lot more forthcoming with information and were eager to meet up in person once I had settled in the area. This not only created a more welcoming environment for an outsider but also ensured that some of the relationships I had built up before fieldwork would continue in the field. It should be noted that being associated with the University of Utah during my fieldwork period was of great importance: it provided a local endorsement of my research topic and associated aims and objectives.

During the fieldwork period, being an outsider meant learning and respecting local customs and norms, both when conducting fieldwork itself, but also living and working in a new city in a new country. While I had travelled to the U.S. previously, I had not visited the Southwest U.S., including SLC or Utah. While English is the official language of the U.S. and is widely spoken throughout the Southwest U.S., there are other languages that research participants may be more comfortable speaking in: this includes Spanish and Indigenous languages.

While both my academic and professional background has given me knowledge of global environmental issues, I had not been exposed to the U.S. EJ literature to the same extent. Therefore, this background knowledge did give me an understanding of the types of environmental issues that non-profit organisations were dealing with and enabled a rapport to be built between myself and the interviewee. With the EJ organisations, I noticed that I would sit back more and listen to how they defined EJ and the types of initiatives they were working on. This enabled participants to open up about the nature of their relationship with external partners, including Patagonia, and they could make their point in full without interruption.

Ethical Considerations

As the research design is exploratory in nature and uses multiple methods across different research stages, there were numerous ethical factors to consider. Firstly, some of the environmental nonprofit organisations in Utah that received funding from Patagonia are Indigenous led. Therefore, in relation to any research conducted with Indigenous non-profit

organisations, ensuring that the following ethical issues were considered throughout the research were important. This includes the Free, Prior and Informed consent of research participants, the [re]production of traditional knowledge; academic integrity relating to respecting the origin and findings based on traditional knowledge; and the data management process related to the findings. With other organisational types, there were other ethical issues to consider and factor into the research process. Some of the organisations work on environmental issues in ways that attract controversy, which is particularly the case with organisations that engage in direct environmental activism. As such, some of the tactics these organisations employ in the political sphere may be best left outside of the research findings in case this attracted the attention of the wrong group.

To address these ethical considerations, I adopted Bryman and Bell's (2007) principles relating to ethical considerations in research, namely the "do no harm" principle, and assurances of privacy and anonymity for respondents that choose that option. I disclosed the research purpose, scope and intended impacts in the appropriate form before getting participants consent to take part in the research (participation observation and engagement). Participants were offered a full transcript of any interview that they participated in which allowed for the opportunity to retract or amend any statements they may have made during the interview process. This also included an opt-out clause, in which the participant has the right to withdraw at any part of the research process.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the methodological approach and research design. The research design is one that incorporates mixed methods in an explanatory sequential order, with quantitative data collection and analysis occurring in the first phase which has informed the qualitative data collection and analysis in the second phase. Phase One involves the examination of Patagonia Org's IRS Form 990-PF, which details the financial transactions between Patagonia and environmental organisations based in the U.S. This aspect of the research is important because it enables purposive sampling to occur that can generate insights into how corporate philanthropy can support CA. It also supports my first research objective of determining which environmental organisations have been supported by Patagonia and how this support has been manifested.

The results from Phase One identified the need for fieldwork to take place to study the research phenomenon. Fieldwork occurred between January 2023 and August 2023 in SLC, Utah. This chapter has outlined the fieldwork context of SLC and why it was chosen to examine the business case study and the importance of examining CA and environmentalism within a specific

geographical context. It provided an overview of the demographics of Utah and how these play into how environmentalism is enacted at the local level. This background is important because it contextualises the different environmental pressures that are pertinent to the specific case study of Utah and the role that Patagonia have played in attempting to address these issues. I then presented the set of qualitative methods employed in this research, including the use of semi-structured interviews with key informants, participant observation at organised events, and supplementary field notes. Further, I have reflected on my positionality in relation to the research and discussed the ethical considerations associated with the research project.

The next chapter will address the first research objective of determining which grassroots environmental organisations have been supported by Patagonia and how this support is manifested. This includes the analysis of Patagonia Org's IRS Form 990-PF and highlights the shifts and trends within Patagonia's philanthropic model between 2007 and 2021, including the total amount of philanthropic dollars donated to environmental causes, the average grant size for a recipient organisation, the number of single-recipient environmental organisations, and the geographical spread of grants. It focuses on the specific amounts awarded to environmental grantees within Utah, as well as introducing the role of the Community Store Grants Programme within Patagonia's philanthropic playbook.

4. Supporting Grassroots Activism: The Role of Philanthropy

Introduction

The previous chapters have examined the relevant literature to this research study, outlined the methodological approach to meet the research aims and objectives, and introduced the fieldwork context. This chapter will address the first research objective by determining which grassroots environmental organisations have been supported by Patagonia and how this support is manifested. This chapter will initially take a step back from the fieldwork context to demonstrate the logical nature of an explanatory sequential design in a mixed-methods approach. As data from Patagonia Org's IRS Form 990-PF was first collected to analyse which nonprofit organisations received grant funding from Patagonia and how much they had received over the sample period (2007-2021). This was achieved through adopting a follow-the-money approach that was outlined in Chapter Three. Follow-the-money is a useful method as it allows for money to be tracked from the starting point (Patagonia) to the end points (grantees). Patagonia raise money through product sales, and this is subsequently transferred to Patagonia Org to be donated to various environmental causes. This allows for subsequent qualitative research to be conducted with key informants from relevant organisations (both corporate and nonprofit) to further analyse and generate insights into how the nature of the relationship and any additional support they might be provided with that is not captured on secondary datasets (see Chapter Five and Six).

Kotler and Sarkar (2020) have identified six main aspects to CSR activity and explained how CA signals an evolution of the ideas. One of the foundational aspects of corporate-driven CSR activity is corporate philanthropy. Corporate philanthropy can be used as an indicating signal that a brand or business is supportive of a nonprofit organisation's mission, purpose, or operating tactics (Chapman et al, 2025; Hansen, 2023). Most corporate philanthropic endeavours are actioned through corporate foundations (Kubíčková, 2018; Gautier & Pauche, 2015; Kotler & Lee, 2005).

It is a fair assumption that corporate philanthropic activity can be a precursor to direct CA (i.e. taking a public nonneutral stance on an issue). This assumption is validated by the argument that corporate philanthropy is a prosocial corporate practice, one of the four foundational elements to authentic CA (Vredenburg et al, 2020). As stated in Chapter One, Patagonia's approach to corporate philanthropy has tended to favour "the little groups no other corporation would touch, rather than NGOs with big staffs, high overheads, and corporate connections" (Chouinard & Stanley, 2012: 57-58). This chapter will address this central claim to their philanthropic model and starts by taking a holistic look at the total amount of philanthropic dollars that Patagonia have

donated since 2007 and examining the average donation and number of organisations that have been supported by Patagonia. This holistic approach examines the data from a federal perspective and aids in identifying the regions and states that have received the most funding from Patagonia. This was an important primary consideration for this researcher to choose Utah as the site of fieldwork. This chapter will then turn to an examination of the different categories of environmental activism that Patagonia have chosen to direct their philanthropic efforts towards.

Patagonia set up the corporate foundation "Patagonia.org" in 2007 as Patagonia's separate legal entity, and has since awarded grants to non-profit organisations with the intended, stated purpose of "to support environmental projects[28]". While Patagonia have been running an environmental grant programme since the mid-1980s, data is only publicly available since 2007; therefore, only grants awarded since 2007 will be subject to data analysis. As outlined in Chapter Three, the Form-990-PF was downloaded from the ProPublica website[29], which details the total number of grantees and the amounts they received in a given year.

The top-level data downloaded from the Form-990-PF reveals various notable insights that help to explain Patagonia's approach to corporate philanthropy. This data only covers Patagonia's environmental grants programme within the U.S., as it was beyond the scope of this research project to analyse financial grants from the other countries and markets in which they operate. While only grants from within the U.S. are offered for analysis, there is a large and varied range of organisations and provokes numerous insights that aid the analysis of this research project. An important note is that Patagonia awards grants to organisations working across different categories of environmental issues: land, water, climate, communities and biodiversity (see Fig 4.1). Land-based issues include terrestrial ecosystems and land use, sustainable agriculture and food systems, mineral extraction, healthy forests, and pollution, toxic and hazardous wastes. Water-based issues include freshwater/inland ecosystems, coastal and marine ecosystems, and pollution, toxic and hazardous wastes. Climate-based issues include energy extraction, climate and atmosphere, renewable energy and transportation. Communities-based issues include EJ, civil democracy, sustainable communities and Indigenous populations/communities. Finally, biodiversity issues focus on biodiversity and species preservation.

[28] On every Patagonia IRS Form 990-PF, all environmental grantees were funded with the intention of supporting environmental projects. This differs from specific project activities detailed in other foundations IRS Form 990-PFs.
[29] Propublica.org/.

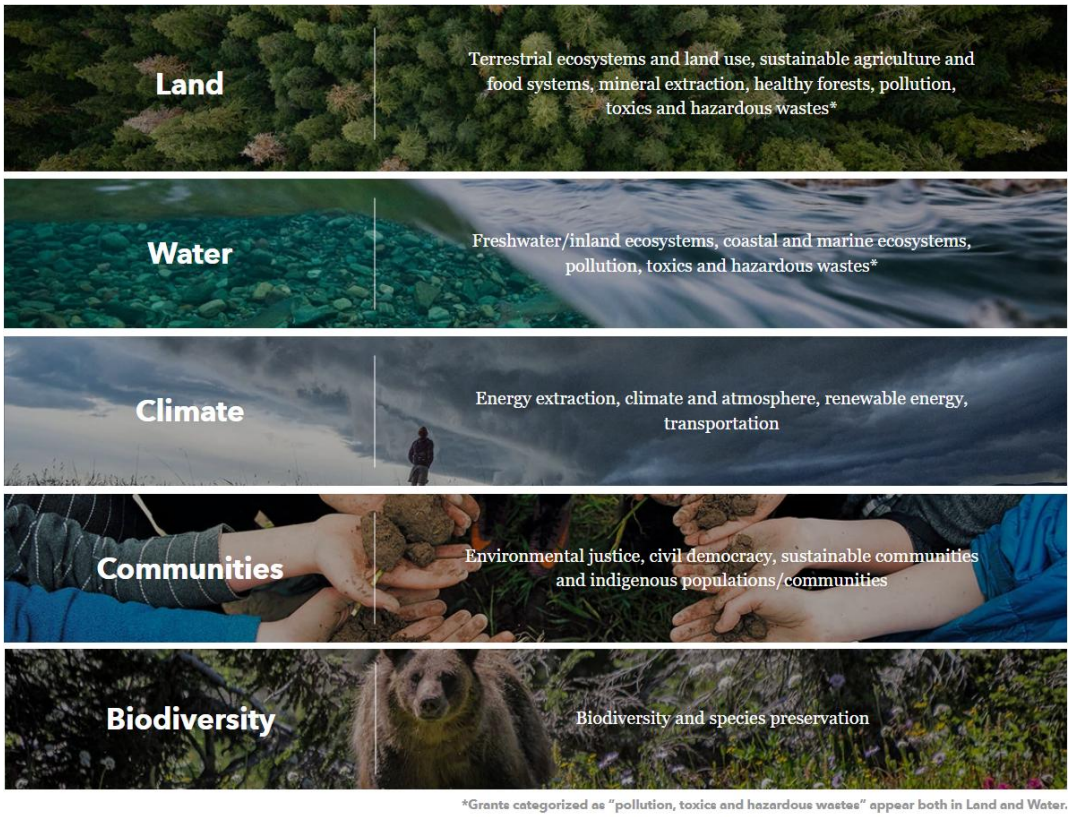


Figure 4.1. The Five Categories of Issues that Patagonia fund.

Additionally, the stipulations for Patagonia's corporate grants programme are outlined on their website[30] and is listed in full in Appendix F. Patagonia aims to fund work that builds an equitable, inclusive and diverse environmental movement, confronts systemic bias, discrimination and injustice in policy or outdoor spaces, is action-oriented and focused on root causes, and identifies specific goals and objectives that can be effectively measured to evaluate success. Patagonia do not fund work for organisations that perpetuate systemic biases and discrimination, organisations without a non-profit status or a comparable fiscal sponsor, trail creation, maintenance or restoration, any dam renovations, human-assisted fish passage infrastructure or hatchery programmes, conservation easements or land acquisition, research, environmental conferences, green building projects or projects focused solely on environmental education. These stipulations are important for consideration here prior to data analysis as it specifically outlines the how and what of Patagonia's funding model.

[30] Available at: https://www.patagonia.com/how-we-fund/ Accessed: 2/7/2026.

Total Direct Giving

Between 2007 and 2021, Patagonia donated a total of US$111,727,963 to 2,409 different organisations across the U.S. with the stated aim to support environmental projects. Figure 4.2 illustrates the total amount donated by Patagonia on an annual basis. At first glance, it clearly demonstrates the total amount donated has increased over time. A closer examination reveals the total amount of direct funding has been inconsistent, making it difficult to ascertain on an annual basis the total amount that could be made available for environmental non-profits. However, there are some interesting explanations as to why the amount appears to be inconsistent, especially in more recent years. From 2020-2021, the global COVID-19 pandemic led to shutdowns globally. In the U.S., Patagonia were one of the first companies to close their stores, while Patagonia's distribution centre in Reno, Nevada, was closed while the company pivoted their business model to be safe enough for workers amid a global health crisis. This

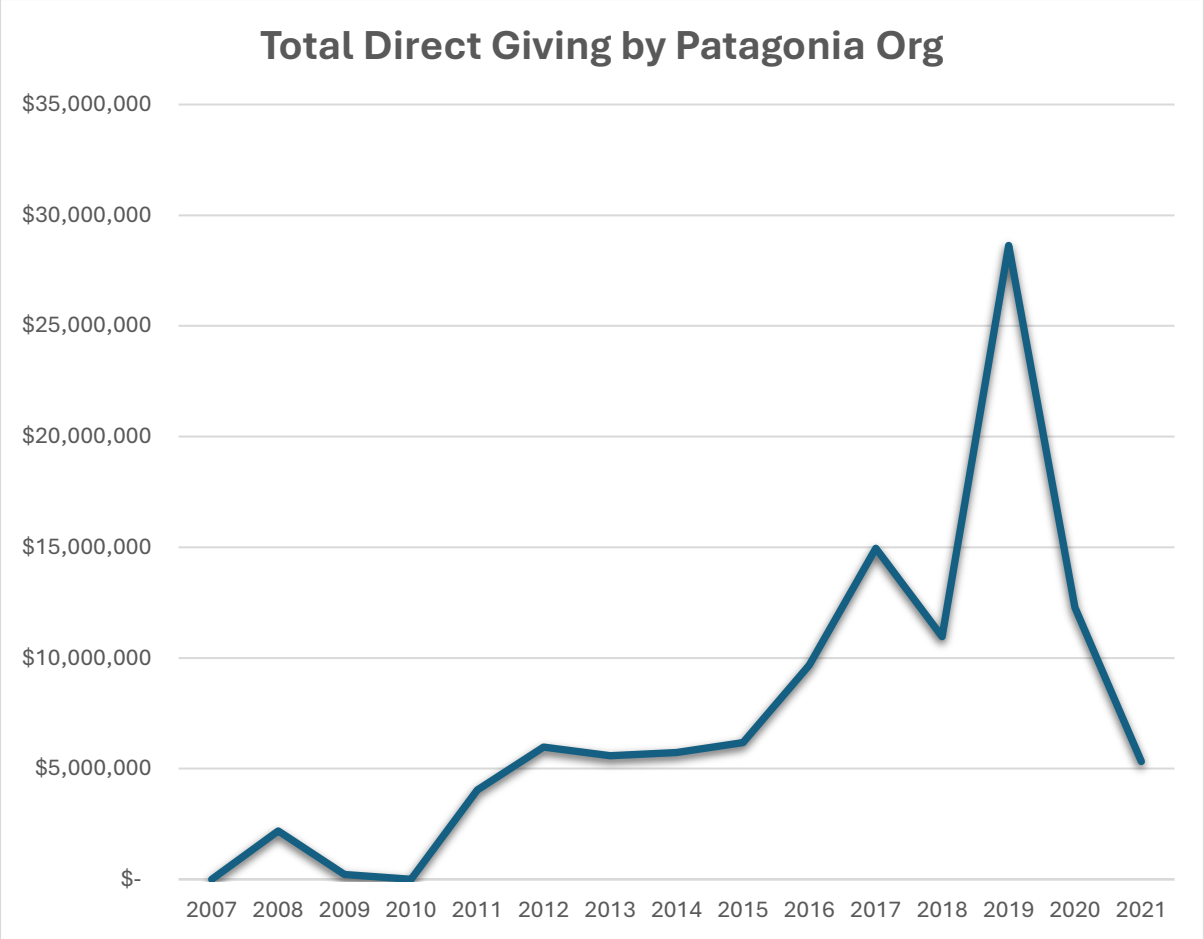


Figure 4.2: Total Direct Giving by Patagonia from 2007-2021

significantly affected Patagonia's sales both in-store and online, thereby reducing revenues and profits. As Patagonia's direct giving is tied to the amount of profit it makes, Patagonia's corporate philanthropy dropped by 57.1%, from a high of US$28,634,429 in 2019 to US$12,280,292 in 2020, and then further dropped by another 56.7% to US$5,323,331 in 2021.

The 2019 total figure included Patagonia's largest ever donation, a US$10,091,758 donation to Network for Good[31], which, according to their website, is a 501(c)(3) charity that operates a technology-enabled donor advised fund which enables donors to raise and direct funds to their favourite charities. It is likely that this figure was reached based on President Trump's corporate tax rate cut from 35% to 21%, of which Patagonia benefited from a US$10million tax rebate (Wright, 2018). This led to Patagonia's then-CEO Rose Marcario stating "taxes protect the most vulnerable in our society, our public lands and other live-giving resources […] in spite of this, the Trump administration initiated a corporate tax cut, threatening these services at the expense of our planet" (BBC, 2018). It is impossible to ascertain who directly received funding through this as it is reported as a single donation to Network for Good; therefore, any organisations that received funding during 2019 could have benefited from Patagonia's indirect giving. A search through Network for Good's 2019 Form-990 does not contain a single donation to one organisation with that specific amount; therefore, we can surmise that Patagonia donated money through Network for Good to numerous organisations, who may have been concurrently included as grant recipients from Patagonia's direct environmental grants programme. For 2019, the only year Patagonia donated to Network for Good, Network for Good's total revenue was US$497,451,609 and US$485,432,773 was issued out through unrestricted grants.

Even by removing the donation for Network for Good from the overall total, 2019 would still be the highest year regarding total direct giving. Regardless, the total amount of direct giving was a 161.33% increase from the US$10,957,047 awarded out in 2018. In turn, this was a decrease of 26.76% from 2017, which witnessed US$14,959,737 being awarded to environmental organisations. Between 2011 and 2016, total grants awarded were on average US$6,197,022. This perhaps signalled a return to a healthier business environment after the financial market crash and global recession in 2008. This would explain why 2009 and 2010 had smaller total amounts of direct giving; as companies embrace processes of globalisation and international supply chains, they share in the risks and rewards of that system and therefore are vulnerable to shocks and stresses of global markets.

Looking forward, one may think that the current trajectory demonstrates that Patagonia's direct giving will diminish even further or even stop altogether. As all available data was analysed during the research write-up phase, it did not include the data from 2022 as this was made publicly available in 2024. Data from Patagonia's Form 990-PF shows that total direct giving returned to pre-COVID levels, with a total of US$13,217,158 paid out to environmental non-profits through grants, gifts and contributions. This total includes a US$3,765,000 donation to Charities Aid

[31] https://www.nfggive.org/home.

Foundation America, which is a similar operation to Network for Good in that they partner with companies and corporate foundations to run grant management services and help donors make strategic and focused philanthropic decisions. In a similar fashion, any organisation that Patagonia funded through this platform cannot be analysed and collated to their total received from Patagonia, as their totals in Charites Aid Foundation America's Form 900-PF will include donations from other sources.

Identifying which nonprofit organisations that received the highest direct giving from Patagonia's environmental grants programme is a primary point of interest in this research. The top twenty organisations that received funding from Patagonia from 2007 through to 2021 are listed in Figure 4.3 below. It highlights the organisations and causes that attract higher amounts of funding from corporate philanthropic endeavours, in this case Patagonia. It also calls into question Patagonia's funding model of supporting "the little groups no other corporation would touch, rather than NGOs with big staffs, high overheads, and corporate connections" (Chouinard & Stanley, 2012: 57-58). This is what will be examined next by providing a summary of the type of organisation will be presented alongside their mission and projects that the organisation has been involved in.

Name	State	Total
Tides Foundation	California	$ 18,069,670
Network for Good	Washington D.C	$ 10,091,758
Conservation Lands Foundation	Colorado	$ 2,195,000
New Venture Fund- (Alaska Engagement Partnership)	Washington D.C	$ 867,500
ZZYZX Foundation	California	$ 775,000
Alaska Wilderness League	Washington D.C	$ 687,125
Sierra Club Foundation	California	$ 678,897
Tides Canada Foundation	British Columbia	$ 605,000
National Tropical Botanical Garden	Hawaii	$ 600,000
The Wilderness Society	Washington D.C	$ 598,000
Resources Legacy Fund	California	$ 595,000
1% for the Planet	Vermont	$ 525,000
Conservacion Patagonica	California	$ 479,140
Trout Unlimited	Washington D.C	$ 459,246
Earth Island Institute	California	$ 447,572
Conservation Alliance	Oregon	$ 431,500
Save our Wild Salmon Coalition	Washington	$ 417,850
EarthJustice	California	$ 412,000
Rodale Institute	Pennsylvania	$ 410,000
Save the Waves Coalition	California	$ 397,000

Fig 4.3: Top twenty organisations that have received funding from Patagonia, with cumulative totals for donations between 2007 and 2021.

Firstly, the organisation that have received the highest amount direct giving is the Tides Foundation. Based in California, the Tides Foundation's mission is the belief that a "just and

equitable future can exist only when communities who have been historically denied power have the social, political, and economic power they need to create it"[32]. To achieve this, the Tides Foundation work in partnerships with donors and doers to amplify impact and providing fiscal sponsorship to grassroots organisations that do not have a 501(c)(3) status and engaging in philanthropy through Donor Advised Funds, Collective Action Funds, Social Change Leader Funds, Impact Investing and Strategic Advising and Consulting. The Tides Foundation's initiatives include a Healthy Democracy Fund, Women's Environmental Leadership Fund, Advancing Girls Fund, Frontline Justice Fund and an Immigrants Belong Fund[33]. The Tides Foundation received twelve grants between 2007 and 2019, with an average grant size of US$1,5050,806. According to ProPublica's non-profit explorer, the Tides Foundation's revenue in 2022 was US$580,695,428 and had net assets worth US$894,210,063.

Conservation Lands Foundation (CLF), based in Colorado, have consistently received money from Patagonia from 2013 onwards, with grants made annually between 2013 and 2021 with an average grant size of US$242,778. In 2011, CLF received an initial grant of US$10,000. The mission of the CLF is "to protect, restore, and expand the National Conservation Lands through education, advocacy and partnerships"[34]. The foundation is concerned with protecting public land and ensuring that land does not become available for mining, development and other activities. They launched a geospatial platform called 'The Climate Atlas', which has mapped U.S. landscapes for the benefits they could provide to enhance climate and biodiversity. CLF offer grants to over eighty local organisations in their Friends Grassroots Network, which spans thirteen states[35], with all, with the exemption of Florida, situated within the Western U.S. In Utah, CLF has supported BEP, Conserve Southwest Utah, GSEP, and UDB. Some of these organisations have received separate donations from Patagonia; this is what I have termed 'indirect giving' and is examined in a section later in this chapter. According to ProPublica's non-profit explorer, CLF's revenue in 2023 was US$6,946,945 and had net assets worth US$9,778,730.

The New Venture Fund was established in 2006 and is based in Washington D.C. Their vision is an "equitable world built on respect, access, opportunity, distributed power, and advancement for all people"[36]. As such, they believe that philanthropy can shape a more just and equitable future, and manage a charitable portfolio of more than US$356 million across nine regions around the globe. Their mission is to be a force for social good and maximise the impact of charitable dollars

[32] https://www.tides.org/about/mission/.
[33] https://www.tides.org/funds-initiatives/.
[34] https://www.conservationlands.org/who_we_are#our_mission_section.
[35] The Grassroots Friends Network has groups in Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.
[36] https://newventurefund.org/who-we-are/mission-and-values/.

by centring equity and belonging in their culture and work, increase and diversify opportunity and access to funding, promote respect, cooperation and collaboration, simplifying and helping partners to navigate complexity, and encourage bold efforts to create necessary, transformative change[37]. The New Venture Fund operates under a fiscal sponsorship model that provides operational expertise and ensures that change can be delivered in a more efficient, cost-effective and time-saving way, negating the need to establish a new organisational structure. Between 2017 and 2021, the New Venture Fund received US$787,500 from Patagonia with an average donation of US$157,5000. Between 2013 and 2014, New Venture Fund received two separate donations of US$40,000, bringing the total amount that New Venture Fund has received from Patagonia to US$867,500. In the case of Patagonia, the funding to the New Venture Fund was to support the Alaska Engagement Partnership. This partnership aimed to create and support a network of Alaska-based organisations that collaborate on conservation issues; this comprised of Alaska Center for the Environment, Alaskans First Campaign, Bristol Bays United, Cook Inletkeeper, Sitka Conservation Society, and Trout Unlimited's Alaska Program. Some of these organisations were also direct recipients of Patagonia funding. According to ProPublica's non-profit explorer, New Venture Fund's revenue in 2022 was US$755,584,165 and had net assets worth US$895,023,712.

The Alaska Wilderness League is also headquartered in Washington D.C and received grants from Patagonia on twelve separate occasions from 2008 to 2021. Alaska Wilderness League's mission is "to protect Alaska's wild lands and waters by inspiring broad support for federal policy action"[38] and they have received Patagonia funding in consecutive years since 2011, with an average donation size of US61,557. Direct giving has ramped up since 2016, with an average donation of US$89,500, almost US$30,000 more than the average donation size for all years. Before 2016, the average donation size was US$25,021. The likely reason for this is due to the U.S. Congress passing a tax bill in 2017 that mandated an oil and gas programme for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Patagonia have supported the work of the Alaska Wilderness League, including its fight to protect the Arctic Refuge from drilling, through the production of the 2016 documentary 'The Refuge'. This fifteen-minute documentary, with over half a million views on YouTube, follows the story of two Gwich'in women whose traditional culture has become threatened by oil extraction and climate change. The Alaska Wilderness League aims to build allies in political channels such as the U.S. Congress and presidential administration, ensuring that past conservation gains are preserved and stronger protections are secured for places in Alaska. While based in Washington

[37] https://newventurefund.org/who-we-are/mission-and-values/.
[38] https://alaskawild.org/who-we-are/.

D.C., it operates under a different model to the New Venture Fund by seeking policy protections and has a partner office in Anchorage, Alaska. According to ProPublica's non-profit explorer, the Alaska Wilderness League's revenue was US$4 million in 2023, and their net assets are worth US$4,723,769.

Sierra Club Foundation is based in California and received money from Patagonia on twelve different occasions between 2008 and 2021. Having received a total of US$678,897 from Patagonia, the average donation size is US$56,575. The Sierra Club Foundation received two donations that were significantly above the average donation size: US$106,188 in 2016 and US$206,718 in 2017. The Sierra Club Foundation is the independent fiscal sponsor of the Sierra Club's charitable programmes, which is categorised as a 501(c)(4) organisation. The mission of the Sierra Club Foundation is to promote "efforts to educate and empower people to protect and improve the nature and human environment"[39]. As a more traditional grant-giving foundation, they fund organisations and projects that work on issues that full under the following programmes of the Sierra Club: Climate and Clean Energy; Lands, Water, Wildlife; Outdoors for All; Environmental Law; People and Justice; Grassroots Action; and the Shasta Alpine Hut. In 2021, the Sierra Club Foundation awarded over US$84 million to twenty different programmes. The Beyond Coal Campaign received almost US$28 million from this, with Clean Energy Solutions and Wild America receiving just over US$11 million each. By contrast, the EJ programme received just under US$2.5 million and Outdoors for All received just over US$1.8 million in grant support. According to ProPublica's non-profit explorer, The Sierra Club Foundation's revenue for 2022 was US$87,746,859 and has total net assets worth US$176,944,324, which has decreased from US$233,914,186 in 2021.

Of these organisations, only two received a single grant donation: Network for Good received US$10,091,758 in 2019 and ZZYZX Foundation received US$775,000 in 2012. The ZZYZX Foundation is owned by the Chouinard family directly and 2012 was the only year that Patagonia Org sent funds to the ZZYZX Foundation which were redistributed out to environmental grantees. As part of this in-depth examination and analysis, I examined the 990-PF associated with the ZZYZX Foundation and found several notable donations. Tompkins Conservation, a non-profit organisation set up by Kristine Tompkins, a former CEO of Patagonia, and her late husband Douglas Thompkins, who founded outdoor apparel brand The North Face and co-founded Esprit, received US$1.5 million from ZZYZX Foundation in 2021. The Tompkins Conservation organisation has worked to protect large areas of Patagonia in Chile and Argentina, with fifteen national parks expanded or created, two marine national parks created, thirty-two rewilding,

[39] https://www.sierraclubfoundation.org/mission.

conservation and monitoring projects established, and ten community-based projects. Kristine Tompkins was the featured subject of the National Geographic documentary 'Wild Life', which was released in 2023 and was shown at Patagonia stores across the U.S.

The story beginning to emerge when you delve deeper into the types of organisations that received the most funding from Patagonia is that some of these are large organisations that generate large revenues and collectively hold billions of dollars' worth of assets. Large environmental non-profits organisations, such as the Sierra Club and Resources Legacy Fund, continue to attract philanthropic dollars from corporate foundations such as Patagonia. This contradicts the assertion that Patagonia only fund smaller environmental groups with little overhead costs as the largest recipients are large NGOs with mature programmes, high overheads and corporate connections. Several of the organisations listed in Figure 4.3 are much smaller-scale operations, such as Save our Wild Salmon Coalition, Conservation Alliance, CLF, Save the Waves Coalition and Alaska Wilderness League, but the majority of these still attract multi-million pounds worth of revenue each year, as well as having assets worth multiple millions of dollars. Figure 4.4 below lists the same organisations with their 2023 revenue generation and net assets.

Organisation Name	Total Patagonia Funding	Latest Published Revenue	Latest Published Net Assets
Tides Foundation	$ 18,069,670	$580,695,428	$894,210,063
Network for Good	$ 10,091,758	$485,586,276	$43,372,497
Conservation Lands Foundation	$ 2,195,000	$6,946,945	$9,778,730
New Venture Fund- (Alaska Engagement Partnership)	$ 867,500	$755,584,165	$895,023,712
ZZYZX Foundation	$ 775,000	$1,520,000	$3,599,187
Alaska Wilderness League	$ 687,125	$3,995,994	$4,723,769
Sierra Club Foundation	$ 678,897	$87,746,859	$176,944,324
Tides Canada Foundation[40]	$ 605,000	N/A	N/A
National Tropical Botanical Garden	$ 600,000	$15,141,654	$78,447,489
The Wilderness Society	$ 598,000	$62,637,504	$85,788,281
Resources Legacy Fund	$ 595,000	$88,915,279	$113,602,050
1% for the Planet	$ 525,000	$6,719,066	$5,056,853
Conservacion Patagonica[41]	$ 479,140	N/A	N/A
Trout Unlimited	$ 459,246	$62,688,640	$40,042,389
Earth Island Institute	$ 447,572	$23,677,718	$28,786,547
Conservation Alliance	$ 431,500	$2,865,320	$5,451,711
Save our Wild Salmon Coalition	$ 417,850	$579,086	$222,060
EarthJustice	$ 412,000	$125,960,142	$238,324,316
Rodale Institute	$ 410,000	$15,591,796	$44,077,824

[40] It is not possible for Tides Canada Foundation's revenue and net assets to be established due to the operation being headquartered in Vancouver, Canada; therefore, they do not have a profile on ProPublica's Nonprofit Explorer.
[41] Conservacion Patagonica has since merged into Tompkins Conservation.

Save the Waves Coalition	$ 397,000	$1,177,157	$500,523

Figure 4.4: Top 20 organisations that have received Patagonia alongside their reported revenue and net assets.

This illustrates the point that some of the largest recipients of Patagonia donations are large, well-resourced environmental organisations whose very existence does not rely on receiving funding from Patagonia. Most of these organisations are in a position of privilege to receive donations that are above Patagonia's average donation size while not needing that size of donation to stay afloat or to continue to fund some of the projects that they run year on year. While two of these organisations, Network for Good and New Venture Fund, are the richest organisations in terms of revenue generation and net assets held, they are two examples of organisations that have considerable grant-giving programmes themselves and, therefore, are likely to use money donated from corporate direct giving in programmes. These is a huge disparity between the top organisation and the organisation that places twentieth of this list, demonstrating that many of these organisations have benefitted from above-average donations over many different years, thereby enabling them to direct funding from Patagonia into specific projects and programmes that aim to have a positive impact on the environment.

Average Donation Size

However, the total dollars donated to environmental non-profit organisations only begins to tell the story, and only from the perspective of Patagonia. A clearer indication of how effective or impactful Patagonia's environmental grants programme is to examine the average donation size

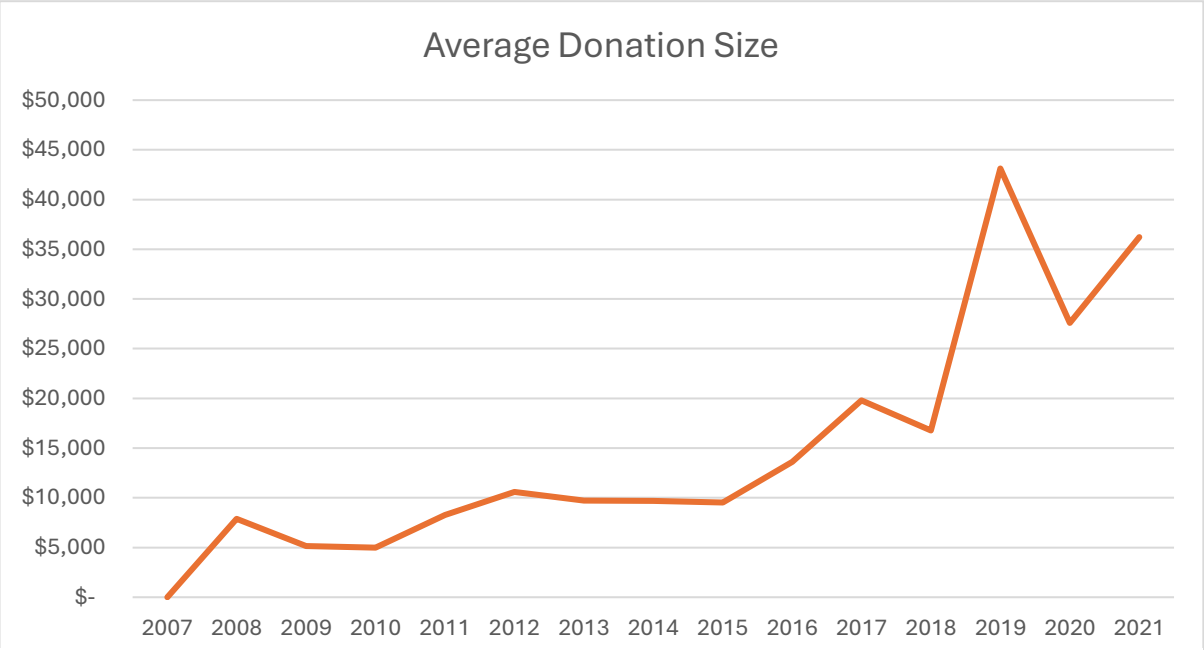


Figure 4.5: Average donation size by Patagonia to environmental grantees (in USD)

(see Fig 4.5) because it paints a more comprehensive picture of how environmental non-profit organisations have been funded. The average donation size enables grantees to compare whether they are receiving similar funding to other like-minded organisations, whether they be working in the same geographical region, on the same environmental issue, or if they have similar funding sources. As Figure 4.5 demonstrates, the average donation size has increased since 2015. Before 2015, the average grant was below US$10,000, with only 2012 having a slightly higher average grant size of US$10,574. Since 2015, the average grant size has increased, closely aligning itself with the trends shown in Figure 4.2, and reaching the highest average donation size of US$43,124 in 2019 (the highest total giving figure). However, despite total giving dropping in 2020 and 2021, the average grant size remained larger than in years prior to 2019. This potentially represents a shift in Patagonia's philanthropic approach: even though the number of non-profit organisations that directly receive funding decreases, they can expect to receive a larger grant.

Figure 4.6 illustrates the number of grants received by each organisation. While most organisations received multi-year grants (grants in two or more years), the single largest grouping is single grantees. These are organisations that received one grant from Patagonia between 2007 and 2021. A total of 919 organisations received between two and four grants. The number of organisations that received over five are significantly fewer, with 256 organisations receiving between five and seven, 133 between eight and ten, and thirty-one organisations receiving eleven or over grants. This analysis is important because securing multi-year grants is a key principle of trust-based philanthropy (Powell et al, 2023; Trust Based Philanthropy, 2021). Research on nonprofit fundraising has highlighted the importance of consecutive or multi-year funding streams for non-profit organisations (Jones et al, 2024; Powell et al, 2023). However, this finding also suggests that Patagonia engage in outreach activities to newer organisations to encourage them to apply. With most organisations receiving either a single grant or a few grants spaced over non-consecutive years, it supports the statement made by Patagonia that they want to support a wide range of environmental non-profit organisations.

The average grant to a single grantee (an organisation that has received only one grant from Patagonia) is US$9,145. This discounts the anomalous results with Network for Good and ZZYZX Foundation. The average grant size for 2-4 donations was US$11,263, and for 5-7 donations was US$12,673. For 8-10 donations it was US$15,303 and for 11+ donations it was US$21,161. This discounts donations to the Tides Foundation as that skews the data further.

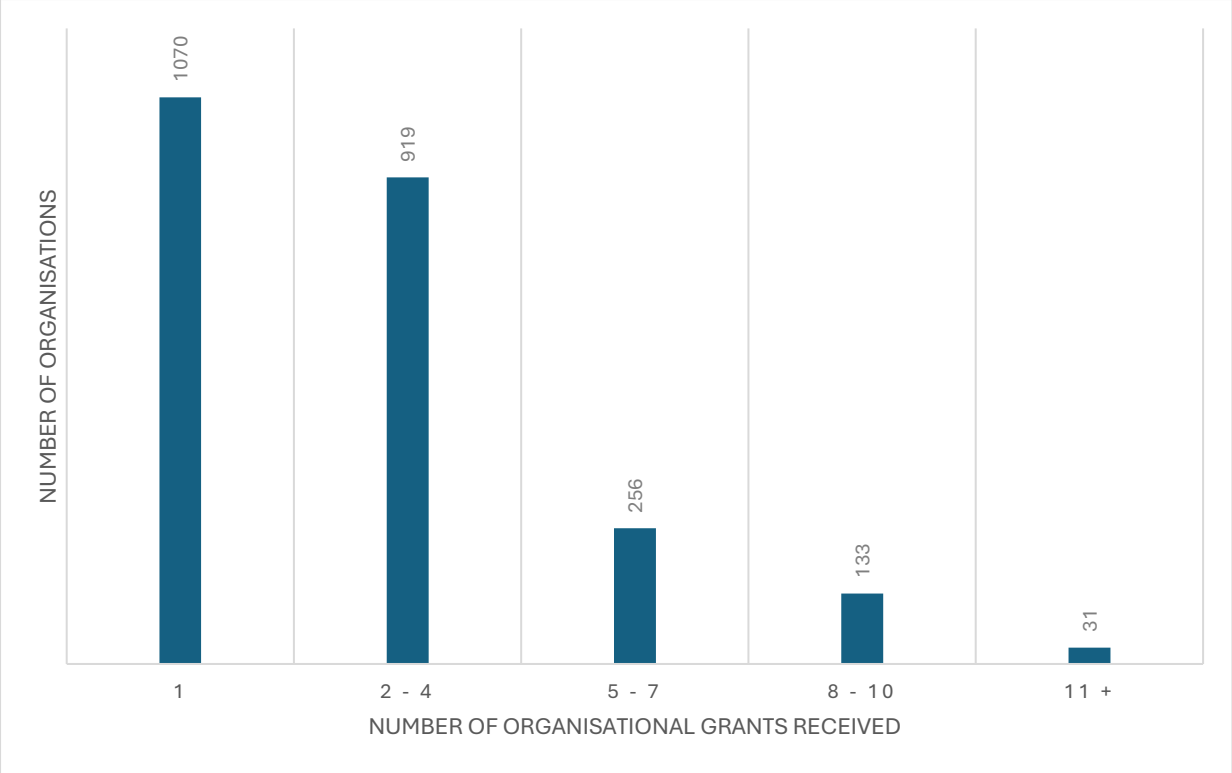


Figure 4.6: Number of organisational grants received by number of donations made.

The only two organisations that received funding in 13 years (all bar 2007 and 2010) were Save our Wild Salmon Coalition and River Network. Save our Wild Salmon Coalition are based in Seattle, Washington and received a total of US$417,850 in grant funding. The average grant size was US$32,142. River Network are based in Boulder, Colorado, and received a total of US$290,000. The average grant size was US$22,308.

Additionally, the number of new organisations receiving funding each year demonstrates some interesting results. These are classified as single recipients, whereas others are either returned grantees or consecutive grantees. Figure 4.7 below shows that the average grant size for a single recipient of Patagonia funding has increased over time. Despite fewer organisations being funded in 2020 and 2021 compared to previous levels, the average grant size for a new recipient was higher. This shows a potential shift in approach by Patagonia to provide larger grants to fewer organisations, while simultaneously supporting new non-profit organisations and organisations that they have not funded previously. At the same time, some of the larger non-profits outlined in Figures 4.3 and 4.4 have continued to be supported in recent years, with the Tides Foundation receiving a similar percentage of total funding year-on-year.

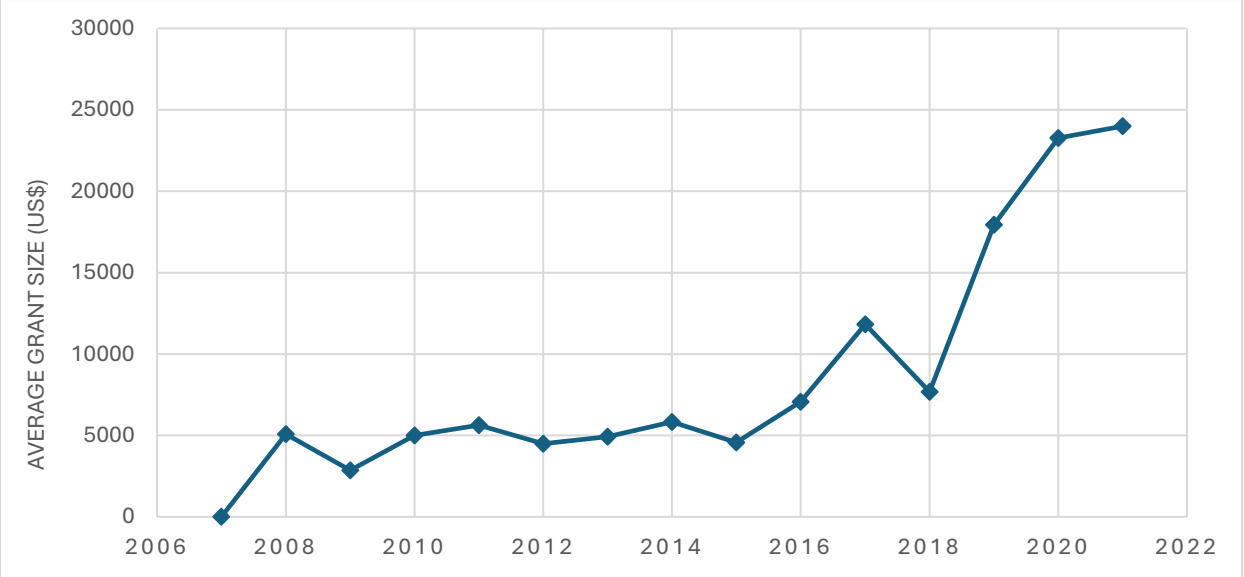


Figure 4.7: Average Grant Size for a single-recipient organisation

Thus far I have analysed Patagonia's direct giving and its focus on funding organisations on a one-off basis or over multiple consecutive years. I have split this by examining the organisations that received the most direct funding from Patagonia and analysed what type of organisation they are to uncover how they are able to attract larger donations than the average donation size. In addition, I have calculated the average donation size on an annual basis, highlighting that the average donation size has increased quite substantially since the foundation was established in 2007. Another aspect to Patagonia's direct giving is which geographies receive more support than others. This is examined in the following section of this chapter.

State by State Direct Giving

States have different environmental issues and priorities in how these issues can be addressed. Some environmental issues span multiple geographies and affect the lives and livelihoods of people residing within different states. One such issue is water quality and quantity flowing along the Colorado River. What happens upstream in Colorado and Utah affects downstream users in Nevada and California. Other environmental issues are more place-based; for example, the drying of the GSL is likely to have enormous impacts for those residing along the Wasatch Front. What this means is that some environmental problems can be tackled at the local level, whereas others need federal policy and legislative changes to address them.

As the first section of this chapter has demonstrated, Patagonia's funding has been directed at a wide range of organisations, some 2409 in total, to support environmental projects. While some organisations have received considerably more funding than others, the average donation size has increased over time and Patagonia have funded organisations either singularly or in multiple years, depending on the issue that the organisation work. This analysis has not taken into account the geographical context of the different organisations that have received corporate funding from Patagonia. Figure 4.9 illustrates all the states that received direct funding from Patagonia and is split by the total donations received (in US$), the number of grantee organisations, and the average grant size per state (in US$). The geographical diversity is enormous as forty-nine individual states and the District of Columbia received funding from Patagonia*:* the only state not to receive any funding from Patagonia was Oklahoma.

California has received both the highest total donations (US$37,829,030) and the highest number of grantee organisations (486), and this is supported by California having the biggest circle as shown in Fig 4.8. This is not surprising as Patagonia was founded in California and has its

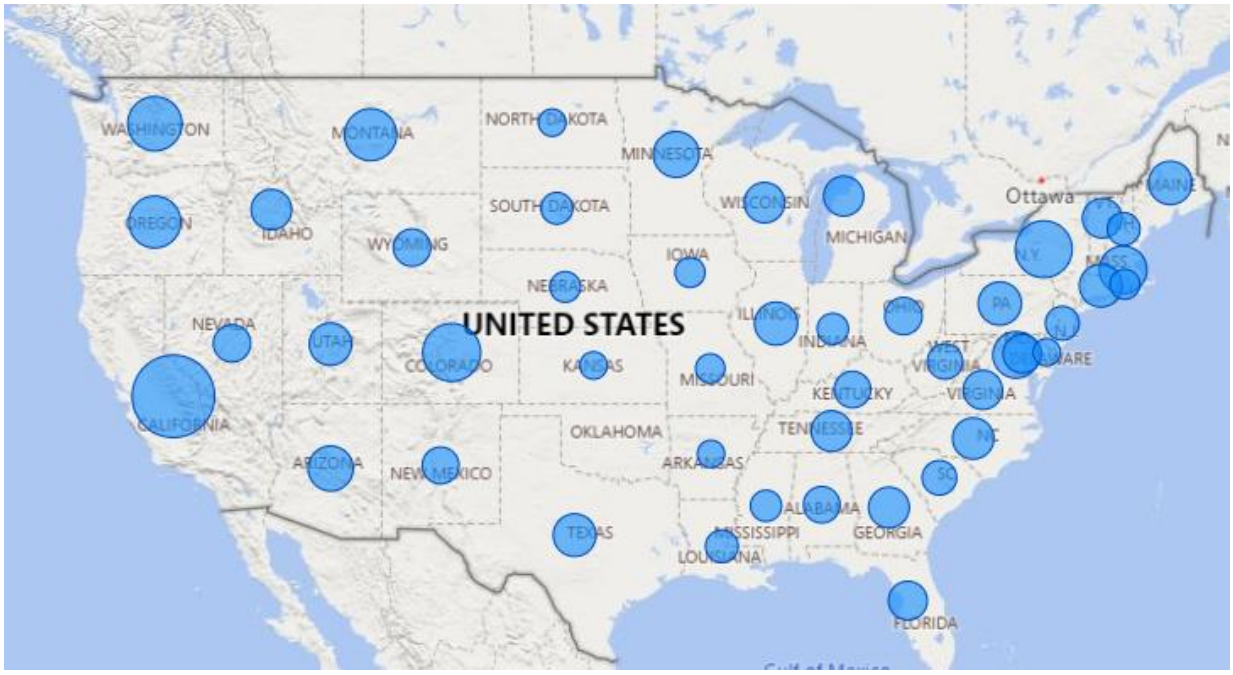


Figure 4.8: Map of the Contiguous U.S. with each circle representing the number of organisations that have received Patagonia funding

headquarters in Ventura. Additionally, Patagonia have seven brick-and-mortar stores in California alone, the highest out of any state; creating more opportunities for donations to environmental organisations through the local store environmental giving programme (discussed later in this chapter). The average grant size is US$77,838, the second highest amount after Washington D.C. Even if you subtracted the Tides Foundation donation from the total, California would still be the largest recipient from Patagonia.

State	Total Donations	Number of Grantee Organisations	Average Grant Size per State
California	$ 37,829,030	486	$ 77,838
Colorado	$ 7,390,396	161	$ 45,903
New York	$ 4,940,118	152	$ 32,501
Washington	$ 3,951,354	128	$ 30,870
Montana	$ 3,361,266	109	$ 30,837
Oregon	$ 3,756,365	109	$ 34,462
Massachusetts	$ 1,349,824	77	$ 17,530
Washington D.C.	$ 16,923,702	70	$ 241,767
Minnesota	$ 1,554,354	66	$ 23,551
Arizona	$ 1,862,222	61	$ 30,528
Hawaii	$ 1,320,780	58	$ 22,772
Maine	$ 892,252	52	$ 17,159
Pennsylvania	$ 1,337,518	51	$ 26,226
Illinois	$ 1,046,982	50	$ 20,940
Connecticut	$ 981,934	48	$ 20,457
Texas	$ 687,186	48	$ 14,316
Utah	$ 1,585,520	46	$ 34,468
North Carolina	$ 1,739,445	41	$ 42,425
Georgia	$ 734,514	38	$ 19,329
Tennessee	$ 489,687	38	$ 12,887
Idaho	$ 1,412,271	47	$ 30,048
Wisconsin	$ 1,320,950	37	$ 35,701
Alaska	$ 2,345,217	36	$ 65,145
Michigan	$ 781,582	35	$ 22,331
Vermont	$ 1,243,880	33	$ 37,693
Virginia	$ 1,109,896	31	$ 35,803
Florida	$ 608,276	30	$ 20,276
Maryland	$ 518,417	29	$ 17,876
Nevada	$ 636,753	24	$ 26,531
Ohio	$ 452,431	24	$ 18,851
Wyoming	$ 901,320	24	$ 37,555
New Mexico	$ 898,250	22	$ 40,830
Alabama	$ 601,091	21	$ 28,623
Kentucky	$ 422,513	21	$ 20,120
West Virginia	$ 896,050	17	$ 52,709
South Carolina	$ 197,503	15	$ 13,167
New Jersey	$ 255,531	13	$ 19,656
Louisiana	$ 535,000	10	$ 53,500
New Hampshire	$ 646,750	10	$ 64,675
South Dakota	$ 388,223	8	$ 48,528
Indiana	$ 111,500	7	$ 15,929
Mississippi	$ 58,400	7	$ 8,343
Nebraska	$ 365,750	6	$ 60,958
Iowa	$ 210,056	5	$ 42,011
Rhode Island	$ 79,904	5	$ 15,981
Missouri	$ 76,000	4	$ 19,000
Arkansas	$ 87,000	2	$ 43,500
Delaware	$ 70,500	2	$ 35,250
Kansas	$ 53,500	2	$ 26,750
North Dakota	$ 114,000	2	$ 57,000

Figure 4.9: Total Number of Donations by State, inclusive of number of organisations that received funding in each state and the average donation amount.

Organisations based in Washington D.C. have received the highest average grant size (US$241,767), and the second highest total amount of donations from Patagonia (US$16.92 million). However, they are only the eighth highest organisation in terms of total number of organisations supported. This strongly suggests that organisations headquartered and operating in Washington D.C. could expect to see higher donations and fewer organisations to share the overall total with. There is a Patagonia store presence in Washington D.C., but the grant sizes suggest that the corporate Patagonia office are the direct funders of the vast majority of organisations based in the U.S. capital. One reason for this is that Washington D.C. is where federal legislation and policies are drafted and voted on, and therefore there remains a higher degree of influencing policy and lobbying lawmakers by maintaining an office in the capital as opposed to in other state capitals. At a deeper level, the types of organisations that are headquartered in Washington D.C are environmental non-profit organisations that have received Patagonia funding considerably above average; these include Alaska Wilderness League (US$689,125), The Wilderness Society (US$598,000), Outdoor Alliance (US$365,000), League of Conservation Voters (US$192,000), Pew Charitable Trust (US$180,000), Endangered Species Coalition (US$173,125), Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (US$159,500) and World Wildlife Fund (US$135,000). Several of these organisations have vast revenues and assets at their disposal: for example, the Pew Charitable Trust generated over US$415 million in revenue in 2023 and has net assets worth over $932 million. Additionally, the World Wildlife Fund generated nearly US$373 million in revenue in the same year and has net assets worth just over £623 million.

Colorado is the third-highest state by total donations (US$7,390,396) and the second highest state by number of organisations (161) that have received funding from Patagonia. Patagonia have three stores in Colorado (Denver, Boulder, and Telluride) and is home to the Conservation Lands Found (CLF), one of the highest recipients of Patagonia funding.

It is particularly noticeable in states where Patagonia does not have a store presence. Twenty-four out of the bottom twenty-six states in Fig 4.9 do not have a Patagonia store (exceptions are Nevada and Maryland), whereas eighteen out of the top twenty states have at least one Patagonia store (exceptions are Arizona and Connecticut). For example. Iowa does not have a Patagonia store and, since 2007, only five organisations have received funding from Patagonia. Of these five, three of these have received two grants consecutively, and one organisation received a single grant in 2016 for US$16,000. The other organisation (Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement) has received eleven grants, with consecutive funding awarded between 2011-2020. Likewise, nonprofit organisations based in Arkansas, Delaware, Kansas and North Dakota have only received two grants each since 2007.

The finding of Patagonia funding tending to favour environmental organisations in locations where the company has a store presence is an example of place-based philanthropy (Easterling, 2025; Easterling et al, 2023; Reid et al, 2022; Smarick, 2021; Colinvaux, 2018) and embedded grantmaking (Karlström et al, 2023). As noted in Chapter Two, place-based philanthropy occurs when foundations provide extensive and long-term support for a comprehensive mix of programmes within specific communities (Easterling, 2025; Easterling et al, 2023) and can be practiced through embedded or non-embedded funders. Likewise, embedded grantmaking occurs when charitable foundations make long-term commitments to specific places, develop deep relationships with community stakeholders, facilitate grant initiatives through local relationships, and blending financial resources with other types of resources (Karlström et al, 2023). The findings from this chapter demonstrate that Patagonia facilitate grant initiatives and make long-term commitments to specific places, evidenced by the donations to locations where Patagonia have a store presence or have made significant efforts to support environmental nonprofits in areas where they would be categorised as a non-embedded funder. For example, thirty-six environmental nonprofit organisations based in Alaska have received grant funding from Patagonia, despite there being no physical store presence. The US$2,345,217 that has been awarded to organisations based in Alaska is among the highest total amounts received by any state from Patagonia. Similar figures exist for states such as Idaho, Wisconsin and Michigan, all of which have a significant number of environmental nonprofit organisations but no physical store presence.

Direct Giving in Utah

Forty-six organisations have been in receipt of funding from Patagonia, placing Utah at seventeenth when compared to all other states. Utah, however, places eleventh when analysed by total donations, receiving a total of US$1,585,520 from Patagonia since 2007. The forty-six environmental non-profits have been categorised according to the main issue they work on (see Fig 4.10) and are outlined in full in Appendix C; this coding exercise brought up some difficulties as some organisations work on competing environmental issues. For example, some organisations work on climate change projects through public land conservation and wilderness protection. Other organisations work mainly through community groups to enhance the protection of land or water resources.

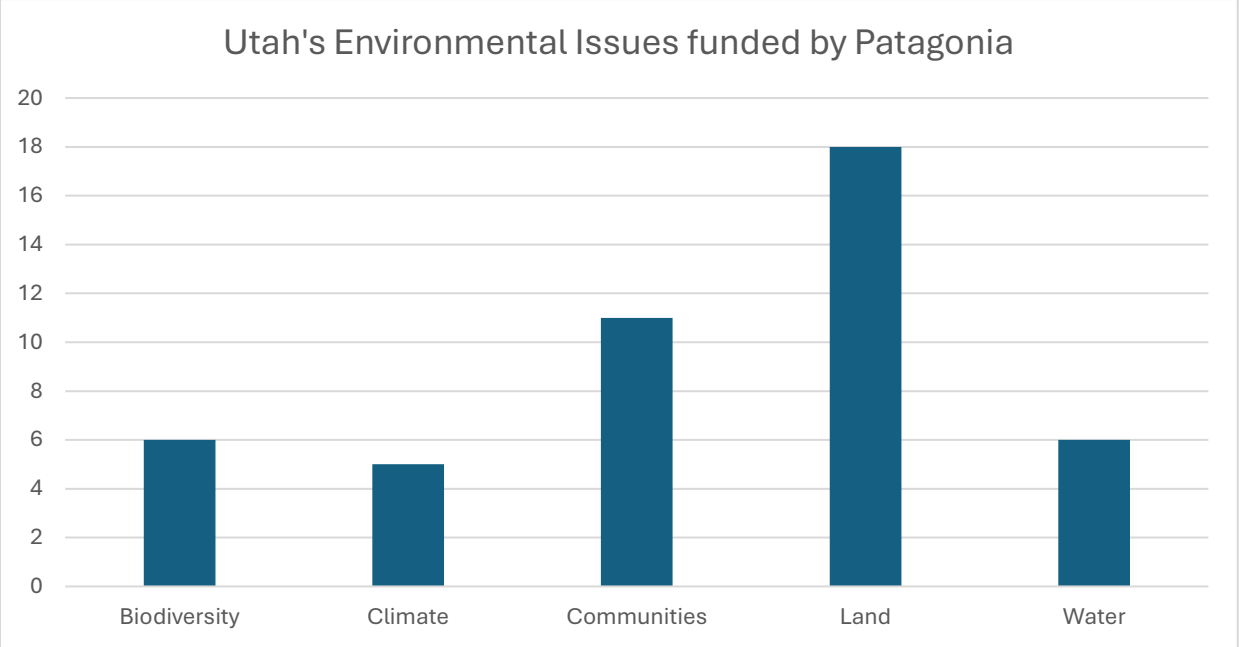


Figure 4.10: The Main Issues that environmental non-profit organisations have been funded by Patagonia in Utah

Most organisations based in Utah have some form of climate change programme. However, that may only form one part of their portfolio of programmes because they view climate change as an intersectional issue that cuts across many different aspects of environmental policy and practice: land management, water quality and quantity, biodiversity loss and community development. Some of these organisations will be examined next.

BEP, formerly known as Friends of Cedar Mesa (FOCM), was founded in 2012 and is the organisation that is based in Utah to have received the highest amount of funding from Patagonia. Between 2014 and 2020, BEP received seven grants with a total of US$173,750 through direct giving. The average donation was US$24,821. BEP work with Indigenous-led partners and other stakeholders and focus on responsible and respectful access to public lands. As such, they BEP have been coded under 'land'. The maximum donation was US$35,000 in 2016 and the lowest donation was US$12,000 in 2014. BEP has been supported by Patagonia, Bedrock Sandals, Kahtoola, Duct Tape Then Beer, Peak Design and MiiR as an environmental recipient under the 1% for the Planet initiative.

UDB received seven grants between 2014 and 2021, totalling US$169,500 in donations from Patagonia. The average donation size was US$24,214, with a maximum donation amount of US$45,000 in 2019 and the lowest donation amount of US$12,000 in 2014, the first year UDB received a donation from Patagonia. UDB work to support Indigenous communities with recognition over land rights and co-management of public lands and was coded under

'communities'. UDB have been supported by Patagonia, Duct Tape Then Beer and Trimble Advisors through the 1% for the Planet initiative. UDB was founded in 2012 and became a 501(c)(3) non-profit organisation in 2014.

URC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organisation founded in 1994 with the stated mission of being 'a grassroots organisation dedicated to the conservation and stewardship of Utah's rivers and sustainable clean water sources for Utah's people and wildlife".[42] URC have received a total of $153,000 from Patagonia on eleven occasions, with an average donation of US$13,909. The highest amount they received was US$25,000 in 2019, and the lowest amount was US$7,000 in 2013. As the organisation state on their website "Conservation is the heart of conservatism and yet conservative Utah is America's most wasteful water user. Utah incentivises people to waste water by collecting property taxes to lower the price of water below its cost of delivery. This is not conservative." Recently, URC has partnered with other environmental non-profits including Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment (UPHE), American Bird Conservancy, Center for Biological Diversity and the Sierra Club in suing the state of Utah for its failure to establish a goal and a water budget for the GSL and are being represented by environmental attorneys at legal non-profit Earthjustice. As URC work principally on water-related issues within Utah, they have been coded under the environmental theme of 'water'.

SUWA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organisation founded in 1983 and headquartered in SLC, but has offices and staff located across Utah and the wider U.S. SUWA's stated mission is "the preservation of the outstanding wilderness at the heart of the Colorado Plateau, and the management of these lands in their natural state for the benefit of all Americans"[43]. SUWA received US$130,500 from Patagonia between 2011 and 2019, with an average donation size of US$14,500. The maximum donation from Patagonia was US$21,000 in 2013 and the smallest donation was US$8,000 in 2014 and 2015. SUWA's flagship policy is 'America's Red Rock Wilderness Act' (H.R. 3031/ S. 1310) which aims to add more than eight million acres of BLM public land in Utah to the National Wilderness Preservation System. This Act alone would preserve 1.5 percent of the lands needed to reach the 30x30 goal, which aims to protect "30 percent of America's lands and oceans by the year 2030 to prevent the collapse of the Earth's natural systems" (SUWA, 2023). As SUWA work on wilderness preservation and land management issues, they have been coded under the environmental theme of 'land'. SUWA are an environmental partner in the 1% for the Planet initiative, with supporting members including Patagonia, On the Trail Financial Planning, Jackson Browne and Tim's Naturals.

[42] https://utahrivers.org/what-we-believe.
[43] https://suwa.org/about-suwa/.

GCI is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organisation founded in 1996 and based in SLC "dedicated to the restoration of Glen Canyon and a free flowing Colorado River"[44]. GCI received US$106,500 from Patagonia between 2008 and 2019. The highest donation was US$15,000 in 2019 and the lowest donation was US$10,000 in 2008, 2012 and 2017. The average donation has been US$11,833. The creation of the Glen Canyon Dam caused the Colorado River to back up 186 miles through Glen Canyon to form Lake Powell. This caused Glen Canyon to become known as "the place no one knew" and "the lost national park" of the U.S. Due to GCI's work on river management and ecosystem restoration, they have been coded under the environmental theme of 'water'. GCI have signed up to the '1% for the Planet" initiative as an environmental grantee, enabling businesses to donate 1% of sales to GCI as part of their environmental philanthropy. These include Patagonia, Marc & Rose Hospitality, Party Shirt International and Cameron Clark Photography.

Sageland Collaborative, formerly known as the Wild Utah Project, is based in SLC and was founded in 1996 with the stated mission to "provide science-based strategies for wildlife and land conservation".[45] Their focus is on conservation priorities that promote habitat connectivity, protect species in conservation need and restore vital habitat. The initial project, called the Wild Utah Project, provided science-based strategies for conservation of wildlife and wildlands for nine million acres of wilderness managed by the BLM: the results from this study formed the basis for SUWA's America's Red Rock Wilderness Bill (H.R. 3031/ S. 1310). The organisation has received a total of US$76,000 from Patagonia between 2008 and 2018. The maximum grant size was US$20,000 in 2017, and the lowest donation was US$4,500 in 2008. The average donation size was US$8,444. The Sageland Collaborative have been supported as an environmental partner by Patagonia, New Belgium Brewing and North Drinkware as part of the 1% for the Planet initiative. Due to the work that the Sageland Collaborative does on species and habitat conservation it has been coded under the environmental theme of 'Biodiversity' but arguably could be coded under the theme of 'land' simultaneously.

The Wildlands Network is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organisation founded in 1991 and based in SLC with the stated mission to "reconnect, restore and rewild North America so that life - in all its diversity - can thrive"[46]. The Wildlands Network has received a total of US$111,500 from Patagonia between 2012 and 2020. The highest donation of US$30,000 was made in both 2018 and 2019, and the lowest donation of US$9,500 was made in 2015. The average donation size is US$18,583. As the Wildlands Network work on biodiversity through land conservation, it posed

[44] https://www.glencanyon.org/who-we-are/.
[45] https://sagelandcollaborative.org.
[46] https://www.wildlandsnetwork.org.

a tricky coding choice but has been coded under the environmental theme of 'biodiversity', but it could, theoretically be coded under 'land' simultaneously. The Wildlands network has been supported as an environmental partner by Patagonia, New Belgium Brewing and West Arete under the 1% for the Planet initiative.

GSEP was founded in 2004 and is based in Kanab, Utah, and classified as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organisation with the stated mission of "honouring the past and safeguarding the future of Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument through science, conservation, and education"[47]. GSEP received US$80,000 from Patagonia between 2016 and 2020. The highest donation was US$35,000 in 2018 and the lowest donation was US$5,000 in 2017. As GSEP predominantly work on conservation within a protected landscape, their work has been coded under the environmental theme of 'land'. The average donation size is US$16,000. GSEP has been supported by Patagonia, New Belgium Brewing, Brink XR, Ned & Co. LLC and AllTrails, LLC as an environmental recipient under the 1% for the Planet initiative.

HEAL Utah is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organisation founded in 1999 and based in SLC with the stated mission "to protect Utah's environment and its people by promoting clean air, clean energy, and comprehensive solutions to radioactive and toxic waste"[48]. HEAL Utah has received US$77,576 from Patagonia between 2008 and 2020. The highest donation amount was US$15,576 in 2017 and the lowest donation was US$2,000 in 2012 and 2014. The average donation size is US$7,052. As HEAL Utah work predominantly on climate change issues such as clean energy and climate-associated environmental issues such as clean air, it has been coded under the environmental theme of 'climate'. HEAL Utah has been supported by Patagonia, Jackson Browne, Maine Beer Company, Trimble Advisors, Ski Butlers, season eqpt, and Green Spoon Sales as an environmental partner through the 1% for the Planet initiative.

WCG is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organisation founded in 1989 and based in SLC with the stated mission "to empower people to grow and eat healthy, organic, local food"[49]. WCG received US$41,850 from Patagonia between 2008 and 2019. This highest donation was US$10,000 in 2017 and the lowest donation was US$1,600 in 2015. The average donation is US$4,185. As WCG focus on food production and urban agriculture, it has been coded under the theme of 'land' but arguably could be considered under the theme of 'communities' because of its focus on empowering people and community groups.

[47] https://gsenm.org/mission/.
[48] https://www.healutah.org/about/.
[49] https://wasatchgardens.org/who-we-are/our-mission.

SOC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organisation based in SLC with the stated mission of being "dedicated to protecting the beauty and wildness of the Wasatch Mountains"[50]. Founded in 1972 in "response to the threat of urbanisation of the Wasatch Mountains just outside of Salt Lake City"[51], SOC received five grants totalling US$17,500 from Patagonia between 2011 and 2016. The highest donation was US$6,000 in 2011 and the lowest donation was US$1,500 in 2014, with an average donation size of US$3,500. Due to SOC's programmatic focus on protecting beauty and wildness of a specified area, it has been coded under the environmental theme of 'land'. SOC have been supported by Patagonia and Klean Kanteen as part of the 1% for the Planet initiative.

GULB is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organisation based in SLC with the stated mission to "empower people to connect to food and their community by revitalising urban spaces and building a resilient food culture"[52]. GULB have received a total of US$42,500 from Patagonia between 2014 and 2020. The highest donation they received was US$12,500 in 2016 and the lowest donation was US$1,000 in 2014. The average donation is US$6,071. GULB has been supported by Patagonia and Trimble Advisors as part of the 1% for the Planet initiative.

Indirect Giving

As the previous section outlined, there have been substantial donations granted to environmental organisations within the U.S., with notable insights for the amount of funding received and the type of organisation that received the money. As detailed above, several of the top recipients of funding from Patagonia were foundations. Many of these foundations provided funding to environmental non-profit organisations, often those who had been funded by Patagonia as well. This is what I term 'indirect philanthropy'. I define it as philanthropy awarded to foundations who thereby directly donate money to non-profit organisations as part of their ordinary grant-giving programme. In a hypothetical situation, a manager donates US$1 million to a foundation. This foundation then donates that money to ten different non-profit organisations, each with a grant-size of US$100,000. The manager, therefore, has non-directly donated US$1 million to ten different organisations, but has deferred the decision of where that money has been donated to the foundation itself. A manager may choose to do so because they do not want to run a grantmaking programme themselves, or they may agree or align with the interests of the foundation and thereby trust them to disperse that money to the right organisations.

[50] https://saveourcanyons.org/about/mission-and-history.
[51] https://saveourcanyons.org/about/mission-and-history.
[52] https://thegreenurbanlunchbox.com/about/.

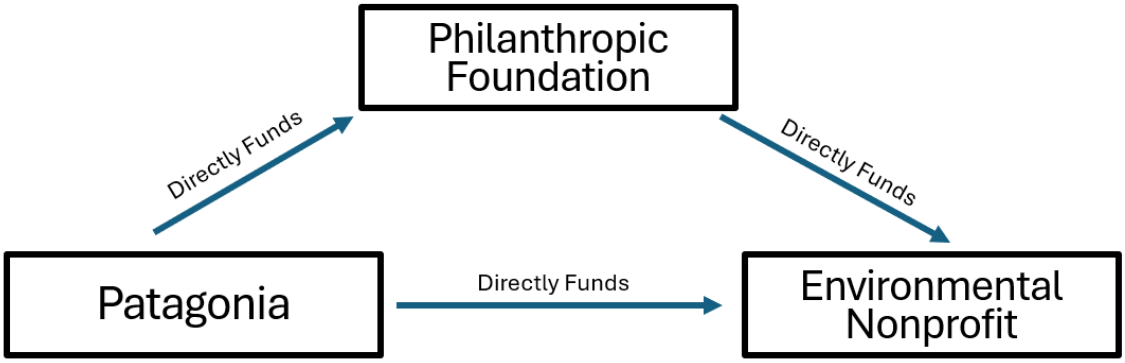


Figure 4.11: A basic depiction of Patagonia's direct and indirect funding model. Source: Author's own

To return to the case study of Patagonia, there have been several examples within their direct giving programme of indirect giving. A basic depiction of this funding relationship is represented in Figure 4.11. This section examines several of the grantees from the direct giving programme and analyses the non-profit organisations that have received money indirectly from Patagonia as a result. This analysis is useful in determining the effectiveness of Patagonia's environmental grantmaking programme but does not make any claims into the modalities and operationalisations of the other foundations itself. Instead, it begs to ask several questions into the efficacy and efficiency of grantmaking as a process in and of itself, with implications for how grassroots organisations may perceive corporate grantmaking and direct giving in the face of contrasting experiences from different donors.

An examination of the Form 990-PF for philanthropic foundations reveals some familiar names of organisations, as many of the recipients have received funding from Patagonia directly. Many of the largest philanthropic foundations that receive money from Patagonia have hundreds or thousands of grantees, often split across grant-making programmes separate to environment. For example, the Tides Foundation, the largest recipient of funding from Patagonia, had 2266 grantees in 2020, with the purpose of grant split between healthy individuals and communities, equality, human rights, and economic empowerment, quality education, sustainable environment, and general support. Several environmental non-profits have received considerable donations from Tides Foundation who have received funding from Patagonia directly. In 2020, Dine Citizens Against Ruining our Environment (Dine CARE) received US$180,000, Earthjustice received US$3,362,330 and Green America received US$1,000,000, all of whom received funding from Patagonia. Likewise, UDB received a US$10,000 grant from Tides Foundation in 2023 and in 2022, the Climate Justice Alliance received US$265,000 and Communities for a Better Environment (CBE) received US$116,500 from Tides Foundation.

Other foundations have smaller philanthropic funds and organisations in which they donate to. For example, the CLF is the third-largest recipient of funding from Patagonia, having received US$2,195,000 between 2011 and 2021. CLF is a grant-making organisation that supports environmental non-profits who work on land management, wilderness preservation, and conservation projects. CLF has directly supported numerous environmental non-profits who have also received funding from Patagonia. In 2023, three Utah-based environmental non-profits who have received direct funding from Patagonia also received grants from CLF to "promote conservation", these included GSEP (US$50,000), BEP (US$70,000) and UDB (US$40,000). CLF's process of grant-making is to award non-restricted grants to a closed-group of grantees that work on conservation initiatives: these include their grassroots 'Friends' network. Typically, because the organisations they fund are interested in conservation projects, these organisations are based in western states where there is a significantly higher proportion of public land under federal ownership and therefore open to being subjected to National Conservation Area status.

Some examples include GSEP, who in 2021 received US$50,000 from CLF and US$30,000 from Patagonia in the same year. BEP received US$70,000 in 2023 from CLF. Network for Good have twice-funded the Utah Clean Energy Alliance (US$66,772 in 2022 and US$77,607 in 2021), as well as providing US$6,261 in funding for CBE in 2020. Additionally, Network for Good provided US$5,819 in funding for UDB in 2021 and US$19,410 to CFROG in 2020. Resources Legacy Fund has donated to CBE (US$25,000 in 2022 and US$67,000 in 2021), Earthjustice (US$2.5 million in 2022). The Wilderness Society has donated to the Western Environmental Law Centre (WELC) twice: US$120,000 in 2022 and US$15,000 in 2019.

There are also examples of philanthropic foundations donating money to other philanthropic foundations. For example, the Resources Legacy Fund donated US$100,000 to Tides Foundation and US$292,000 to Sustainable Markets Foundation in 2019. In the same year, the Sustainable Markets Foundation received US$75,000 from Tides Foundation. If this creates a confusing picture, then that would be an accurate assessment. It highlights the murky nature of indirect philanthropy as opposed to more direct philanthropy in which the grant money can be spent on programmes as opposed to be re-donated to other organisations.

The main conclusion from this analysis is that it opens a debate about the effectiveness of Patagonia donating to other foundations, some of which have larger resources than Patagonia itself, as it evolves its environmental grant-giving programme through the changes in corporate governance and operating going forward. As detailed in Chapter Two, Patagonia have publicly stated that they have tended to favour "the little groups no other corporation would touch, rather than NGOs with big staffs, high overheads, and corporate connections" (Chouinard & Stanley,

2012: 57-58). This is worthy of further analysis, which will be considered here (see Fig 4.12). The first variable to consider is the number of grants awarded per year. This information provides insight into the total number of organisations that received funding in a given year. The second variable is the total number of funds awarded out to nonprofit organisations in the form of grants. From these two variables, an assessment can be made of the mean average grant awarded out to nonprofit organisations in a given year. The mean average is a useful measure of central tendency as it allows for analytical insights to emerge about the nature of Patagonia's philanthropic endeavours.

The mean average also enables dynamic classification of grants to occur. As both the number of organisations and the total philanthropic dollar giving changes on an annual basis, it was prudent to use the mean average as a core tenet of the classification system. Grants have been categorised as small, medium and large based on the value of the mean average in a given year. Small grants have been categorised as less than or equal to the value of the mean average (≤mean). Medium grants have been categorised as those which are larger than the mean and less than or equal to double the value of the mean average (>mean - ≤2mean). Large grants have been categorised as grants that are higher than double the value of the mean average (>2mean) for that year. The devised dynamic classification system enables the mean average from earlier years to not be distorted by the mean averages generated in later years in the sample.

The results reveal numerous interesting points of discussion. Grants categorised as small comprise the majority (>50%) of total donations in terms of organisations supported. The percentage of organisations supported with small grants averages at 79.8% of the total organisations supported. This average includes the donation from 2010, in which there was only one grant awarded for $5000. Taking the 2010 figure out of consideration, the average is 78.3%. The lowest year was 2008, in which 67% of grants were categorised as small, and the largest year (apart from 2010) was 2019, in which 87.5% of grants were categorised as small. This variable alone suggests that the majority of organisations are supported using small-scale grants, supporting Patagonia's central claim.

However, when you examine the percentage of total funding that was allocated for small grants, a different story emerges. Grants categorised as small received on average 36.4% of total available funding. An average of 64.6% of available funding is awarded to organisations using medium-scale and large-scale grants each year. The dynamic classification means that some organisations receive small, medium or large-scale grants in different years based on the mean average for each year, even if the absolute value of the grant amount stays the same.

Year	Totals			Small Grants				Medium Grants				Large Grants			
	Grants	Total Giving	Average	Grants	% of total	Total	% of total	Grants	% of total	Total	% of total	Grants	% of total	Total	% of total
2008	276	$ 2,178,902	$ 7,895	185	67.0	$ 737,735	33.9	85	30.8	$ 812,167	37.3	6	2.2	$ 629,000	28.9
2009	42	$ 216,553	$ 5,156	35	83.3	$ 107,553	49.7	4	9.5	$ 32,000	14.8	3	7.1	$ 77,000	35.6
2010	1	$ 5,000	$ 5,000	1	100.0	$ 5,000	100.0	0	0.0	$ -	0.0	0	0.0	$ -	0.0
2011	487	$ 4,033,599	$ 8,283	393	80.7	$ 1,593,088	39.5	63	12.9	$ 726,627	18.0	31	6.4	$ 1,713,884	42.5
2012	565	$ 5,974,404	$ 10,574	491	86.9	$ 2,267,744	38.0	56	9.9	$ 779,520	13.0	18	3.2	$ 2,927,140	49.0
2013	574	$ 5,584,714	$ 9,729	417	72.6	$ 1,780,333	31.9	98	17.1	$ 1,189,875	21.3	59	10.3	$ 2,614,506	46.8
2014	592	$ 5,733,479	$ 9,685	414	69.9	$ 1,720,668	30.0	134	22.6	$ 1,635,531	28.5	44	7.4	$ 2,377,280	41.5
2015	648	$ 6,178,943	$ 9,535	495	76.4	$ 2,295,624	37.2	105	16.2	$ 1,246,219	20.2	48	7.4	$ 2,637,100	42.7
2016	711	$ 9,676,997	$ 13,610	600	84.4	$ 3,844,652	39.7	72	10.1	$ 1,276,954	13.2	39	5.5	$ 4,555,391	47.1
2017	756	$ 14,959,737	$ 19,788	573	75.8	$ 4,969,887	33.2	137	18.1	$ 3,339,158	22.3	46	6.1	$ 6,650,692	44.5
2018	653	$ 10,957,047	$ 16,780	509	77.9	$ 4,143,516	37.8	112	17.2	$ 2,548,350	23.3	32	4.9	$ 4,265,181	38.9
2019	664	$ 28,634,329	$ 43,124	581	87.5	$ 8,153,396	28.5	51	7.7	$ 2,796,000	9.8	32	4.8	$ 17,684,933	61.8
2020	445	$ 12,280,928	$ 27,598	358	80.4	$ 4,967,775	40.5	58	13.0	$ 2,494,000	20.3	29	6.5	$ 4,819,153	39.2
2021	147	$ 5,323,331	$ 36,213	110	74.8	$ 1,809,331	34.0	25	17.0	$ 1,290,000	24.2	12	8.2	$ 2,224,000	41.8

Fig 4.12: Table showing the dynamic grant classification system, classifying Patagonia grants as small, medium and large based on the mean average that year.

Medium grants (>mean - ≤2mean) comprise an average of 15.6% of total organisations supported and a total of 20% of total available funding. However, large grants (those that receive >2mean) comprise an average of 6.2% of total organisations supported, but receive an average of 43.4% of total available funding. This demonstrates an inequality in how resources are allocated between larger organisations and smaller organisations. These findings are reflective of previous studies that have found that environmental philanthropy has tended to favour the largest nonprofit organisations (Jenkins et al, 2018), and highlights how indirect philanthropy has been used as an approach to widen the impact of Patagonia funding, but, as Patagonia have created their own philanthropic model based around small-scale grants, it does call into question the authenticity of their corporate philanthropy and claims to be an advocate for smaller, grassroots environmental activist organisations.

Local Store Environmental Giving

Fig 4.13 details the grantees that received funding from the Patagonia SLC Outlet store during the 2023 financial year. This poster was made by local western landscape artist Lizzie Wenger, who was commissioned to paint a mural outside the SLC Outlet store during renovations in 2024. The art captures the distinctive red rock and arches that southern Utah is famous for and attracts outdoor recreation and tourism. Each grantee received US$15,000 from the Patagonia SLC store, and customers could read about each organisations' missions in the biographical information section of the poster. As part of the announcement into the grantee process, the Patagonia SLC Outlet store ran a breakfast morning with environmental non-profit organisations and the three grantees were invited to table and talk to customers about their organisation's work.

Two of the three local-store environmental grantees were previous grantees: Utah Recycling Alliance received US$17,616 across three grants from Patagonia previously, whereas UPHE received a standalone donation of US$1,500 in 2016. The only new environmental non-profit was O_2 Utah, and the only nonprofit organisation classified as a 501(c)(4) to receive a grant.

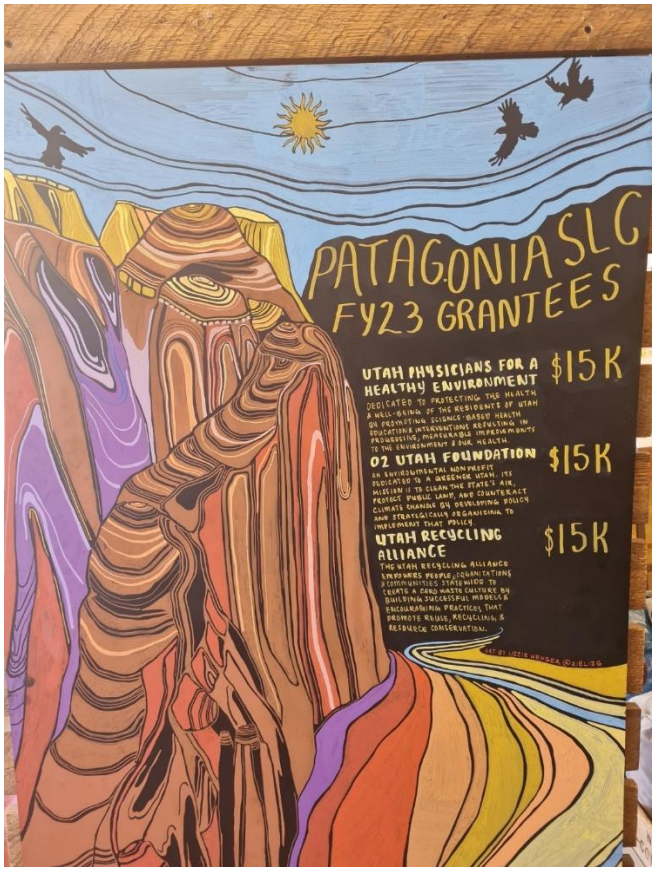


Fig 4.13: Patagonia SLC grantees for Financial Year 2023 on display in the local store. Author's own photo.

Methodological and Theoretical Contributions

The findings from this chapter make important methodological and theoretical contributions. The first contribution is how a follow-the-money approach can be conducted within academic research. Hughes-McLure (2022) argues that the follow-the-money method is under-developed as an academic research approach as it has been closely associated with investigative journalism and criminal case law. This research has adapted the follow-the-money method to Patagonia's philanthropic model to determine which grassroots environmental organisations have been financially supported by Patagonia. For a case study research design, follow-the-money was instrumental in purposively sampling research participants because a direct relationship was identified between Patagonia and environmental grassroots organisations. This allowed for an explanatory sequential research design in which quantitative data, in the form of grants, can be collected and analysed before further corroboration using qualitative research methods (Cresswell, 2022; Cresswell, 2014; Clark et al, 2021). As a relationship has been proven to exist between Patagonia and certain environmental organisations, it means that at least one aspect of their relationship is financial, contributing towards achieving the second research objective of examining the nature of the relationship between grassroots environmental activists and a

corporate activist. Further qualitative enquiry is needed to ascertain whether other types of relationships are held between Patagonia and grassroots environmental organisations which will fully meet the second research objective. The results from the qualitative enquiry are presented in Chapters Five and Six.

The utilisation of Patagonia as a case study has theoretical implications within the general field of CSR and, more specifically, within corporate philanthropy. Research on corporate philanthropy has tended to focus on outlining what is meant by corporate philanthropy (Gautier & Pache, 2015; Kotler & Lee, 2005), on high-level donations towards particular causes (Chapman et al, 2025; Hansen, 2023) and how it can be incorporated into effective CSR strategies (Kotler & Lee, 2005). Additionally, Patagonia have been described as a company that engages in bottom-up, grassroots activism (Eilert & Cherup, 2020) and a pioneer in CA (Buchanan et al, 2024); but these statements have been made without examining the role of philanthropy as one of the key mechanisms that Patagonia use to support their CA stances. This chapter has contributed an in-depth examination of Patagonia's philanthropic giving and demonstrated that large foundations receive a larger share of total available funding compared to smaller grassroots organisations. This contradicts the assertion by Patagonia themselves who state that they support "the little groups no other corporation would touch, rather than NGOs with big staffs, high overheads, and corporate connections" (Chouinard & Stanley, 2012: 57-58). A more accurate assessment is that Patagonia's philanthropic support is a dynamic mixture of direct and indirect giving, combining grants to small grassroots organisation with larger grants to established foundations with the necessary resources to distribute to a wider range of organisations working on related issues.

As corporate philanthropy is a foundational aspect of corporate-driven CSR activity (Sarkar & Kotler, 2020; Kotler & Lee, 2005), the analysis provides an assessment of how supporting grassroots environmental activism through financial mechanisms can shape positive social and environmental outcomes for CSR strategies. Coupling the total amount of philanthropic support with the upward trajectory of the average grant donation size signals that Patagonia are being more strategic with their philanthropy and enhances their social and environmental impact. Furthermore, as corporate philanthropy can indicate that a brand or business is supportive of a nonprofit organisation's mission, purpose or operating tactics (Chapman et al, 2025; Hansen, 2023), this chapter has outlined the various organisations that are involved in the environmental movement within Utah and documented the different environmental issues that they work on. This step is important because it offers a typology of environmental activism that aids in determining whether Patagonia are supportive of the principles and components of EJ (Bell, 2014; Walker, 2012; Jamieson, 2007; Schlosberg, 2007) or environmentalism more broadly. The analysis

demonstrates that Patagonia are deeply involved in supporting organisations that work on land-based and community-based issues, whereas organisations that work on water, biodiversity and climate related issues have seen fewer grants. This will be further developed in Chapter Five and Six.

Thus far the analysis has focused on descriptive statistical analysis to illustrate the geographical spread of Patagonia grants. The data suggests that by investing in the communities in which they are physically located, Patagonia's grants support the principles of place-based philanthropy (Easterling, 2025; Easterling et al, 2023; Reid et al, 2022; Smarick, 2021; Colinvaux, 2018) and embedded grantmaking (Karlström et al, 2023). Additionally, the data analysis has found evidence that Patagonia engage in at least one principle of trust-based philanthropy (Powell et al, 2023; Trust Based Philanthropy, 2021) by providing multi-year grants, either consecutively or non-consecutively, to environmental nonprofit organisations. However, there is no evidence presented thus far that Patagonia engage in participatory philanthropy (Teddy-Sandino et al, 2022).

Conclusion

In this chapter I have determined which grassroots environmental organisations have been financially supported by Patagonia. In doing so, I have partially met the first research objective of determining which grassroots environmental organisations have been supported by Patagonia and how this support is manifested. By conducting analysis on secondary financial data obtained through a follow-the-money approach, this chapter determined which nonprofit organisations have benefitted from Patagonia's philanthropic endeavours and outlined the types of grants available. Furthermore, this chapter has identified the trends within Patagonia's philanthropic programme, including the total number of organisations supported, the number of new organisations supported, and how the average size of grants has changed over time. However, this research has only focused on one manifestation of support: financial. As the data from this chapter was analysed prior to going to the field, it identified the range of nonprofit organisations within Utah that have been Patagonia grantees and introduced the reader to the main nonprofit organisations. These nonprofit organisations were invited to participate in this research project, underlining the mixed-methods, explanatory-sequential methodological design outlined in Chapter Three. The perspectives of these organisations in terms of quantifying the impact of Patagonia's Environmental Grants Programme will examined in the subsequent chapter, along with examining the other mechanisms that have been employed by Patagonia to build relationships between themselves and environmental nonprofit organisations within the environmental movement.

5. Examining the Nature of Relationships between Corporate and Environmental Actors

Introduction

The previous chapter examined the financial relationships that Patagonia have engaged with and provided an overview of the geographical locations and environmental nonprofits that have received corporate donations. This chapter will now focus on the perceptions of the environmental nonprofit organisations that work in Utah, and across the Southwest, towards Patagonia. I have chosen to include the experiences of some organisations based outside of Utah because some of the work that they do is either in Utah, or they work on similar issues that organisations within Utah are working on. The experiences of these organisations help to tell a story that positions Patagonia as an effective granter and an ally in the work that they do.

This chapter will explore how environmental nonprofit organisations view their relationship with Patagonia and determine the various mechanisms that have been employed to ensure that the relationship remains successful. This will ensure that the second research objective will be met by examining the nature of the relationship between grassroots environmental activists and a corporate activist. This chapter also addresses the remainder of the first research objective by identifying the types of support offered by Patagonia to support grassroots environmental activism.

This chapter starts by examining Patagonia's Environmental Grant Programme from the perspectives of environmental organisations. The analysis focused on the grant process, outcomes, and monitoring and reporting. Included within this analytical section is the perspective from environmental organisations on the importance of receiving a grant from Patagonia, while highlighting that the grants themselves are part of each organisation's wider fundraising strategy. The chapter then explores how the grant process enables trust-based and place-based philanthropy that increases the reputation of a corporate donor when taking a stance on a certain environmental issue (Shrestha et al, 2023; Taddy-Sandino, 2022). In the second part of this chapter, the analysis turns to the role of non-financial mechanisms that complement Patagonia's Environmental Grants Programme. The non-financial mechanisms emerged as a major theme from the qualitative data analysis and include: a) non-financial mechanisms that environmental nonprofit organisations are able to use (such as community tabling and events), b) the platforms that Patagonia use to promote environmental activism (such as PAW and Catch-a-Fire), c) employee volunteering, d) Patagonia's Environmental Activism Conference, and e) Product, In-Kind Donations and Discount. The final section within this chapter outlines the different types of

relationships that have been identified by environmental organisations between themselves and Patagonia as a brand, business, and corporation. These relationships will be further developed in Chapter Eight to account for the perspectives from Patagonia that emerge in Chapter Six.

Patagonia's Environmental Grant Programme: Documenting Experiences of Nonprofit Organisations

Patagonia's Environmental Grants Programme is an important enabling activity that does several things. Firstly, it provides a rich background into the types of environmental nonprofit organisations that have received funding from Patagonia, including the issues that they work on. Secondly, the process itself deserves to be examined taking into consideration the experiences of the people that submit proposals and are awarded grants. This takes into consideration any of the intended or unintended outcomes related to the grant process. As corporate philanthropy is a core aspect of CSR (Kubíčková, 2018; Gautier & Pache, 2015; Kotler & Lee, 2005) and, by extension, CA, there may be a multitude of ways this funding is operationalised that deserve to be examined in detail. This section will also examine the impacts of the funding from the perspectives of the recipient organisations and explore what the funding enabled them to do within their own projects and programmes.

Grant Process

Patagonia's Environmental Grants Programme is in a mature stage: they have donated to environmental nonprofit organisations since the mid-1980s and have been formalised as the Patagonia Foundation since 2007[53]. The previous chapter examined the financial records and how the grants have been spread geographically and topically. This was useful in partly achieving the first research objective of determining which organisations have received funding from Patagonia. This section differs by offering a qualitative assessment of the grants, incorporating the experiences of nonprofit organisations who have been awarded grants through the programme since 2007. This will be useful in fully achieving the first research objective by identifying the ways in which Patagonia's support is manifested, which was outlined in the introduction to this chapter.

The first aspect to be examined is the grant process itself. Most organisations have received funding through their local Patagonia store, and as this research occurred within the specific context of Utah, most organisations interviewed received their funding from the Patagonia SLC Outlet Store. The experience of respondents suggests that organisations are invited to apply to receive funding through the Community Store Grants Programme, with other organisations

[53] 2007 was the first year Patagonia submitted IRS filings via Form-990-PF.

invited to apply from the Corporate Office in Ventura. Therefore, developing and maintaining an ongoing relationship with the store would put any organisation in a good place to be invited to apply. This closed application process makes it difficult for newer organisations to attract income through this programme. With limited funding available, it is a competitive process: in 2023, only three organisations received funding from the Patagonia SLC Outlet Store (O_2 Utah, UPHE, and Utah Recycling Alliance). This highlights that Patagonia having a physical presence within a geographical location is an important enabler in building relationships with local nonprofit organisations that are engaged in a lot of issues on the ground. Through recruiting people from the area, the Patagonia SLC Outlet Store have been able to recruit people who experience and understand the wide range of environmental issues that the area faces. This is an additional dimension deserving of consideration within the literature concerning place-based philanthropy (Reid et al, 2022; Smarick, 2021; Colinvaux, 2018). This enables the grant application and reporting process to become more locally led and embedded in the solutions that are needed to combat the environmental issues at-hand. It has been suggested that this process leads to intelligent questions being asked that enable the nonprofit organisations to expand on their initial proposal and collect information that may have been missing from the grant application:

> "Patagonia is inside Utah, they are eager to learn what our solution is and ask informed questions. And that's what the grant process is about and they'll ask questions even after we submit a grant […] How are you going to do this? When are you going to do that? Who are you working with? They have really intelligent questions." (Male, Executive Director, URC, 31/1/2023)

This suggests that the grant process is not just cemented in a funding relationship, in which Patagonia perceive themselves as the donor who has the financial capital and willing to donate. Extending the questions beyond the grant-making process suggests that they take a more hands-on approach to their funding and are interested in how the solutions will be operationalised. Others have noted that the grant application process has been streamlined in the past few years, making it easier for nonprofits to report on the grants themselves:

> "it's general support for the most part. Like they wanna ask what you're using it for […] Their application process was probably one of the more in-depth applications and the past couple of years they've shortened it […] I think it's 4 pages now. It used to be like 8 -10 pages and you'd do like this big narrative and you talk about all your programs and where the money is going" (Male, Executive Director, GCI, 29/9/2023)

This change has, ultimately, led to several grantees being able to submit applications and build relationships with the local store. It also highlights that the money is for general support, which is also referred to as unrestricted income or general operating costs. This follows a more trust-based approach to philanthropy (Powell et al, 2023; Taddy-Sandino, 2022), in which the expertise of

grantees is rewarded with the trust that they can spend their money in the most effective way possible. This is a more flexible approach to philanthropy that benefits nonprofit organisations in numerous ways:

> "It goes to general operating […] We put in a grant application which does kind of outline what we anticipate doing with the grant money. […] most of it goes towards public lands work and endangered species" (Male, Executive Director, EPIC, 25/4/2023)

This demonstrates that while the grant itself is for general operating, there is an expectation that nonprofit organisations are signposting to where the money will be spent. This includes the general programmes that they may work on; in the case of the above quote, it will be spent on public lands and endangered species programmes. Another point is that nonprofits welcome general operating grants: this is, perhaps, not surprising given that it enables the nonprofit organisation to spend the money where they see best fit. However, it should be noted that this positive association with general operating grants aids in cementing Patagonia's relationship as a good corporate funder, a donor that is not seeking to influence where money is being spent and ensuring that trust is built at multiple levels as part of their ongoing relationship.

Trust-based philanthropy (Jones et al, 2024; Powell et al, 2023; Taddy-Sandino, 2022) and grant-giving is an important consideration when addressing issues relating to power and knowledge imbalances between granter and grantee. There is not an expectation that the granter, in this case Patagonia, believe they know the best solutions to the issues they want to see addressed and, instead, they trust that organisations can be effective grantees and make sustainable and equitable changes through their programmatic and operational activities. This point is accentuated by BEP, an environmental nonprofit that works jointly on land and community issues within the San Juan County area:

> "Patagonia is one of the rare gems in the funding world that says we trust you to do what is what you know you need to do with the funding that we give you, and we submit a proposal every year with our goals and our priorities, but their funding is unrestricted. It's for general operating. So, they're one of the very few and a model that is very partner first, really trusting that gives resources far beyond funding" (Female, Development Director, BEP, 18/8/2022)

This quote suggests that the model of partner-led and trust-based philanthropy goes beyond a funding relationship and, instead, offers more support to nonprofit organisations in the form of different mechanisms. These mechanisms will be outlined and examined later in this chapter, but the important point here is that having a partner-led model based on the principle of trust helps to support the claim that Patagonia are becoming more authentic with their philanthropic model.

This also signals a strategic intent to challenge power structures and hegemony and does not mean that organisations within the environmental movement must be aligned in all aspects of partnership building:

> "Building trust based strategic partnerships with organizations that you can have a trust and respect-based dialogue in solidarity, which means that you're not necessarily always 100% aligned, but you're in conversation with an intent to build alignment and power for change over the long term" (Male, Executive Director, WELC, 10/11/2022)

There is also an argument that by utilising a store-based model for local environmental grant-giving, Patagonia engages with principles associated with place-based philanthropy (Reid et al, 2022; Smarick, 2021; Colinvaux, 2018). This type of philanthropy examines the issues that may be more prominent within certain localities and is reflected in the typography of grants examined in the previous chapter. It is not surprising that grants being awarded to organisations in Utah or Colorado may be more focused on land-based issues, whereas in more urban contexts the grants are awarded to EJ and community-building organisations:

> "Patagonia has a model for grant making where they're very targeted, very specific, very place based […] the grants that they're issuing are the right sizes for the types of fights that they're fighting […] they have done such a good job both on the communication side using their big platform to sort of elevate the discourse and turn people's heads who might otherwise not care. Combining that with their grant making and also being a really good connector" (Male, Executive Director, EarthJustice, 10/5/2023)

This experience highlights several important considerations. The first consideration is that a targeted and specific place-based model is the right model for the types of issues they engage with. This model aims to utilise the expertise of organisations working on-the-ground in the places in which they are based, instead of being driven by decision-makers in areas outside of that specific context. This is an important aspect to place-based philanthropy (Reid et al, 2022; Smarick, 2021; Colinvaux, 2018). The second consideration is that Patagonia have a substantive platform that can engage people in issues that they may not be aware of or do not fully understand. This will be examined in more detail In Chapter Six when examining the role of social media and communication as part of Patagonia's non-financial offer to environmental nonprofit organisations, but for now it highlights that the financial support offered through the grant process enables specific issues to rise to the forefront of locally-led environmentalism. The third consideration is that combining grant giving with effective communication positions Patagonia as a community connector and playing a role as a facilitator of environmental activism at the local level. This is further evidenced in the following comment:

> "Even though Patagonia is this huge organisation like you have this local store aspect. Whoever happens to be in charge there is who we're working with. You know the local store is fun and effective to work with […] they are truly invested in their communities, whether it's because it's where they're operating or they're all their staff are from there […] they want to invest in a healthy and vibrant community" (Female, Executive Director, GULB, 7/8/2023)

The importance of the local store being invested in the community and responsive to the needs of environmental organisations aids in determining an additional relationship type between corporate activist and community activists. The analysis thus far has focused on the financial relationship, but another relationship type identified here is that Patagonia engage in place-based environmental activism through their role as a community connector. The community-based aspect to the relationship between corporate activist and community activists demonstrates some of the principles of embedded grant making (Karlström et al, 2009) and raises the possibility of non-financial mechanisms being offered to further enhance the goals of organisations based in the environmental movement. This includes being involved in direct activism focused on building a healthy and vibrant community. However, it is often a difficult balance for nonprofit organisations between fundraising and direct activism or advocacy asks. This was exemplified by SOC:

> "we can't run if we don't have money right […] clearly donations and money keep us to be able to do advocacy and grassroots activism. But our work can't be done if we don't have that grassroots element […]it's really hard to pick what's more important […] because you can't do one without the other" (Female, Development Director, SOC, 27/07/2023)

This rightly outlines that for activities to be conducted at the grassroots level then funding is needed. However, the outputs from grassroots activism are the primary drivers of organisational activity and enable the organisation to engage in the types of battles they need to generate successful campaigns. There was also a recognition that a recent change in the grant process has created confusion from both the perspective of Patagonia and potential grantees:

> "I was talking to her [Activism Lead at Patagonia SLC) and from my understanding, they were trying to rework it because it felt really exclusionary and basically them just inviting or picking a couple different organisations. I don't ultimately know what their decision-making process was why we didn't get selected this year versus other grants or other organisations. We're working on their process within the process, but we are still working with Patagonia pretty consistently […] we started working with Patagonia corporate and so they're still very valuable partners" (Female, Development Director, SOC, 27/07/2023)

This quote highlights that even though an environmental nonprofit organisation was not successful in attracting grant funding, they were still able to meet with staff at the store and discuss

the process. This is an example of the principles of trust-based philanthropy in action, in particular the principles of transparency and responsiveness, and solicit and act on feedback (Powell et al, 2023; Trust Based Philanthropy, 2021). It also highlights that non-grantees are still able to work with Corporate Patagonia on a particular issue, and this will be explored in detail later in this chapter.

Some respondents highlighted their awareness of the two types of Patagonia grants. Indeed, some organisations interviewed had been the beneficiary of corporate grants as opposed to store grants and, as a result, had received more in grant funding than other nonprofit organisations. Several respondents highlighted the need to understand more about the grant process so they could attract more funding:

> "I do think there's a way to get a larger grant. You know applying through their corporate offices […] they tend to probably focus more on Environmental advocacy organizations that we haven't in the past done a good enough job of talking about why that's us too." (Female, Development Director, WCG, 3/11/2022)

This illustrates that nonprofit organisations need to invest time and resources into understanding more about corporate grant processes and align themselves with the thematic areas underpinning a corporate philanthropic strategy. It also highlights that staff with the directive of securing income are researching potential ways to build that base of financial support, and this could be achieved through networking and sharing information with other nonprofit organisations who have been successful in being awarded larger grants. Collaboration and collective advocacy within the environmental movement will be examined in detail later in this chapter. Some organisations have asked if they could go for a separate docket of funding:

> "it's by invitation and we're told what to apply for. I've asked several times because I'm trying to go for retail and wholesale and they're like, no, at one point they said maybe. […] they basically said it's 15, we can't ask for more. Like for the folks that are getting more, it would be really awesome to understand that because it's by invitation, we just follow the instructions basically and are happy to have the grant award" (Female, Development Director, GSEP, 16/12/2022)

This process was outlined by another respondent that used to work for one of the largest recipients of Patagonia funding (CLF):

> "they have two dockets, I'll say one is kind of a general operating docket, which is where we fall in for smaller groups that are working on specific landscapes and then another half the year they focus on sort of the national broad, large landscape organizations, so that would have been like what Conservation Lands Foundation fell into because that was a group working on 36 million acres of lands across the West. So Patagonia would fund at a higher level to for Conservation Land Foundation to

> pass through to groups in different areas. So they do both and I'll say we're kind of set at this fixed amount" (Female, Development Director, BEP, 18/8/2022)

This suggests that the store grants are fixed at smaller financial amounts where there is little room for negotiation. The corporate grants may appear to be more attractive, but, as Patagonia is interested in funding organisations across the U.S. and with larger organisational remits, then there is less of a chance to secure funding that way. This may seem counterintuitive and raises several questions: why would Patagonia fund two types of organisations at different times of the year, and why do Patagonia engage in indirect philanthropy when they have mechanisms established for more direct forms of philanthropy? One possible answer could be due to resources available. It takes time for both corporates and nonprofits to build relationships and, with a fixed amount of funding available for specific landscapes and issues, it means that nonprofit organisations to not rely solely on support from a corporate donor. There is no guarantee that the corporate will continue to be profitable in the next financial year, especially a corporate that works in dynamic sectors such as apparel and retail. This became apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic, as illustrated by:

> "We felt we had a better shot at getting more significant funding through their corporate program. And you can't apply to both. So we switched in 2018 to the Corporate and not the store-based funding and we got funded, I believe, and that might have been the last year that we were funded at that level. COVID really halted, as I'm sure you've heard from other people, their grant programme and it kind of changed everything for them" (Female, Donor Relations Officer, WRA, 16/11/2022)

Corporates that tie corporate philanthropy to a particular figure (for example 1% for the Planet initiative) could see funding decrease when corporates have not met sales targets or have seen their brands lose market dominance. The reduction in corporate giving was also highlighted as a concern and strengthened the need for nonprofit organisations to adopt diverse revenue streams:

> "We have enough a diverse revenue stream that it's not the end of the world when some of these partnerships end, either because mission alignment has changed, or because the culture and society has changed to be less […] consumer driven, but you know sales are not at what they once were for a lot of brands" (Female, Operations Manager, Save the Waves, 10/08/2023)

Other nonprofit organisations have based strategies around merging and supporting with smaller nonprofits that had specialities that could benefit the overarching mission of a larger nonprofit organisation. This is evidenced by WildEarth Guardians:

> "we strategically grew over the last 12 to 15 years and we decided one of our strategies would be identifying small nonprofits that had a niche […] we ended up merging with several groups […] those groups that came in actually had relationships

> with individual stores where they would get small grants of 1 to $5000 […] our relationship was with the headquarters in Ventura […] sometimes those individual store relationships would last a while, but then they were like, no, you're getting money from corporate" (Male, Development Director, WildEarth Guardians, 20/12/2022)

However, these testimonies are countered by an example of a nonprofit organisation receiving funding from both dockets: URC. Their approach has been successful in alternating between grants awarded from the corporate office and from the store:

> "These days we get it from both. It just alternates and it depends on their priorities […] Sometimes we've gotten it from the store, sometimes we've gotten it from Ventura corporate office" (Male, Executive Director, URC, 13/1/2023)

These testimonies support the claim that as the grantmaking process is not uniform and is subject to changes on an annual basis, it does not wholly reflect some of the principles associated with trust-based philanthropy, such as awarding multi-year, unrestricted funding, or some of the main principles of place-based philanthropy, such as embedded community decision-making. With the majority of larger pots of funding being awarded from the corporate Patagonia office, it demonstrates that effective fundraising on the part of a nonprofit is linked to the relationship that they hold with the head office.

Grant Outcomes

A commonality between all but one environmental nonprofit organisations interviewed was that they had received grants from Patagonia between 2007-2021 (O_2 Utah received their first grant in 2023). However, the data analysed in Chapter Five demonstrated that several Utah-based nonprofit organisations have received sustained funding over a number of years. For example, URC have received ten consecutive grants between 2011 and 2020 but were not recipients in 2021. Likewise, SUWA received nine grants between 2011 and 2019 but have not received funding since then. During the fieldwork period in 2023, the three environmental grantees were nonprofit organisations that had either not been previously funded, as in the case of $O_2$2 Utah, or had not received grants for numerous years.

In terms of not receiving a grant, there were several respondents who discussed the process of rejection. For example, some respondents received generic messages of organisational support without any detailed feedback as to why they did not get funding:

> "They just said one of those messages that we love what you do, but we can't fund everybody. Like you're great. But not great enough, apparently" (Male, Executive Director, Sageland Collaborative, 20/12/2022)

This suggests that if nonprofit organisations do not receive funding over a number of years then they may turn to other sources of income and look to build relationships and partnerships elsewhere. Sageland Collaborative has received nine grants from Patagonia between 2008-2018, of which eight were consecutive grants (indicating sustained funding between 2011-2018). A similar testimony was outlined by a different respondent, who stated:

> "Last year, in 2021, they gave us a $15,000 grant, which is the largest we've ever received from them. And then this year, we were not funded by them. So it's the first time in, I think, nine years that we haven't received funding from them. Interestingly, after they get all this credit for changing their business model […] And we were rejected. And it was very surprising to me and very, from my perspective, very hard, because they've become a kind of steady source of support." (Male, Development Director, HEAL Utah, 9/12/2022)

This testimony reveals some interesting insights relevant to this research topic. Firstly, sustained funding is of paramount importance to nonprofits, so when there is a gap in income, it can affect programmatic outcomes (Chapman et al, 2025). The second point references the reputation of the corporate actor, Patagonia, and how they have changed their business model to focus on environmental activism and philanthropy: this was outlined in Chapter One, but Appendix G highlights how that role has changed over the course of the research. The respondent noted their surprise that the decision came from the local store and not from the corporate office, and they did not receive any constructive feedback. There has been a deliberate shift within the environmental movement to welcome more inclusive and diverse groups and part of that shift is the recognition that existing groups have to create space. Chapter Six will examine funding mechanisms from the Patagonia perspective in more detail, but for this testimony it is important to outline that Patagonia are deliberately curating a grants programme that seeks to incorporate newer organisations and approaches while also recognising that sustained funding is important for the environmental movement as a whole.

Other respondents reflected that the organisation had not been severely impacted by not receiving funding:

> "we weren't funded last year. And for the last few funding cycles, I think we've only gotten 15,000. Not that that's anything to disparage in any way, but it wouldn't make or break us […] I think there are people out there that would make up that funding" (Female, Development Director, Wildlands Network, 19/7/2023)

This relates to the size of the grants in question and how that money could be fundraised from elsewhere. As the testimonies around fundraising in general previously revealed, many nonprofit organisations are not wholly reliant on Patagonia funding, and indeed corporate grants are normally a small percentage of nonprofit organisations' fundraising strategies. In terms of not

getting funding, it was mentioned that for many organisations it did not break the organisation or stop them from doing what they set up to do. Most organisations could estimate or detail the percentage split from different fundraising sources such as individual giving, foundation giving, and corporate giving. These were correlated back to non-profit annual reports which detail splits in fundraising and how that money is spent. For example, GCI is a science-based organisation with a staff of three and an operating budget of US$150,000 a year. Seventy percent of their funding derives from individual donors, and this is an important strategy that has enabled them to be agile and adapt to the funding landscape. Part of this strategy has been to keep as many individual donors as possible, so they do not "rely on the good graces of a big foundation […] if that money doesn't come through all of a sudden, and they change their direction, then you're kind of screwed" (Male, Executive Director, GCI, 29/09/2022).

For example, SOC raises eighty percent of its funding from individual donors and twenty percent from grant income. This twenty percent includes whatever they can fundraise from a corporate donor like Patagonia. Having sourced most of their funding from individual donors enables SOC to use this income for general operating, while some of the income from grants may be in the form of restricted grants. The grant size means that nonprofit organisations are not wholly reliant on funding from Patagonia and instead they can leverage that funding to build their track record and attract funding from other sources. This is evidenced by:

> "it was like $2000 or $5000. And so it was always really helpful but when you look from a budgetary standpoint […] we have been able to find other financial sources to help fill in that gap" (Female, Development Director, SOC, 27/07/2023)

This viewpoint is shared by other nonprofit organisations. For example, much of SUWA's fundraising is sourced from individual donors: "we might get $5000 from them and our budget is four and a half million dollars. We appreciate their support but it's not changing the organisation" (Male, Executive Director, SUWA, 5/5/2023). This demonstrates that funding from Patagonia is a minimal part of any organisation's overall fundraising strategy. Funding from foundations, including corporate foundations, has not been a major source of income for any of the interviewed organisations, despite all receiving grants through Patagonia's Environmental Grants Programme. This demonstrates that while the funding from Patagonia is a welcome source of income for any organisation, and organisations are thankful for receiving a grant, the grant itself is not a major source of income that will cause the organisation to cease operations or cut back on staff or project costs. Collecting lots of small gifts enables organisations to develop projects using unrestricted income and is a useful way to continually engage with membership. For example, ninety percent of the SUWA's operational budget comes from membership dues, with the

remaining ten percent raised from specific grants from foundations. SUWA's executive director stated that:

> "our funding is lots and lots of small gifts […] we don't need a single one, but we kind of need all of them […] They're all kind of equally important. We're not just dependent on one or two funders" (Male, Executive Director, SUWA, 5/5/2023).

Indeed, it opens an argument that corporate philanthropy must become more prominent within the environmental movement as the current rate in which environmental organisations are funded are not enough to mitigate against the rising environmental harms that face communities across the U.S. The current rate of corporate philanthropy for environmental causes is low (Giving USA, 2024; Zakour, 2024; Gee & Walton, 2023), despite widespread attention being paid to issues that are globalised and has the potential to cause widespread disruption to existing business models, including supply chains, methods of production, and consumer habits. However, there is a need to critically examine corporate sources of philanthropy. Deciding whether to accept money from a corporation is a key component of any nonprofit organisation's ethical fundraising strategy that sits alongside other aspects regarding communication materials, public accountability, impact on stakeholders and use of funds in operations (Faseur et al, 2025; Chapman et al, 2025; Suh & Hijal-Moghrabi, 2025; Hansen, 2023; Dunn, 2010). This differs from organisation to organisation, and there is no clear distinction between whether an organisation should accept a donation from a corporation:

> "as long as we can repurpose the money to do what we need to do to improve our communities, we will take the money […] we are not gonna take money from industries that were actively fighting against" (Female, Development Director, CBE, 07/07/2023)

It may seem obvious that nonprofits would not accept money from industries that they are involved in fighting against, but it does highlight the grey areas between how organisations can fundraise effectively and use financial donations and direct them towards the most appropriate channels. In theory, a corporation could be donating money within some communities while being large contributors to polluting activities in others (Liu & Monier, 2024). For the specific example of Amazon and Jeff Bezos, a different approach was highlighted by HEAL Utah:

> "Amazon offered us a donation that we declined […] we did accept funding from Whole Foods, only because that was before Whole Foods was purchased by Amazon […] because the way that they engage in climate policy did not change and they aligned really closely with us on soil health and soil erosion." (Male, Development Director, HEAL Utah, 09/12/2022)

This highlights that companies that have been brought under the umbrella of a parent company, in this case Whole Foods being acquired by Amazon, still have power to align themselves with environmental issues that the brand has previously aligned themselves with. Conversely, there are companies that would be considered as insincere in their philanthropic efforts due to the moral and ethical stances used by environmental organisations:

> "there are companies that we would never take money from because the nature of their work is inherently at odds with what we do so" (Female, Fundraising Manager, EHC, 10/5/2023)

However, having a fundraising strategy that is wholly dependent on institutional or corporate funding is inherently risky (Dunn, 2010): it leaves any organisation vulnerable to the changing whims of which contested issues are in fashion within the broader environmental movement. Previously appealing environmental causes may give way to other, more pressing environmental issues. Organisations that have not engaged with the evolving trends within the sector may be left out of future funding opportunities, especially from institutional donors who have funding channels fixed to programmatic focus areas. This was reiterated to me by a respondent from EPIC, based in California:

> "one thing I've noticed with EPIC is that when we talk about how we have got to protect this forest because they have old growth trees, that was a talking point in the 90s. Today people are […] climate change, climate change, climate change […] I don't imagine climate change will go away and I bet there will be new things will come up" (Male, Executive Director, EPIC, 25/4/2023)

Some of these new issues are Indigenous rights activism and diversity within the environmental movement, including building inclusive spaces for people to recreate in. While these issues are arguably deserving on their own, it replaces the other issues that have dominated debates within the environmental movement for decades. With a shifting focus, organisations need to reposition themselves along these new lines to establish themselves as organisations that can work on a range of issues, thereby attracting funding from multiple sources.

An interesting analytical point of note is the changing demographics in individual giving. Individual donors are an ageing demographic, and donors from Gen Z and Millennial demographics not replacing the individual donors from the Boomer and Gen X generations. This is due to a multitude of potential reasons. For example, it was propositioned to me that "a lot of this is due to […] the cost-of-living crisis that most young people face. And I think that most organisations are not tooled well to engage with younger donors" (Male, Executive Director, HEAL Utah). However, engaging with younger generations is critical for ensuring that the environmental movement continues to engage in debates and issues in the future. The

engagement with younger generations, as well as underrepresented groups within the environmental movement, is part of different organisational strategies that aim to build a more inclusive and diverse environmental movement. This has been articulated from within the wilderness movement (an offshoot of the environmental movement) through SUWA in Utah:

> "we also want them to be diverse and awesome volunteers from all kinds of backgrounds. In the past it's been a lot of old white men volunteering and we are trying to change that up" (Female, Utah Organiser, SUWA, 26/7/2023)

This references the fact that the wilderness movement has been spearheaded by influential writers and thinkers such as Emerson and Thoreau, and, in the specific case of wilderness in Utah, Edward Abbey. A balance needs to be struck that maintains the interest of older donors in the movement while attracting the newer demographic groups that will come to redefine political and social movements in the U.S. As SUWA is an organisation that generates the majority of its revenue from membership dues, this balance is one that must be tightly controlled. However, within this context, it is also important that SUWA takes on a leadership role in defining the roles required for a changing and evolving wilderness movement. This includes recognising that there may be specific requests of the activist community, especially in relation to volunteering on wilderness projects:

> "I think the vast majority of them don't recognise that you need to step aside to make room. I know you want to do something, but let us help those who have never done this" (Female, Latinx Organiser, SUWA, 26/7/2023)

Stepping aside to make room for others is an important mechanism that allows newer members within the environmental movement to experience the land and associated feelings of solitude. There is also a recognition that most volunteers approach this from angle where they want to feel that they are helping a cause and highlights the fact that the majority of SUWA's funding base want to be actively involved in the wilderness movement, whether that be through volunteering on stewardship projects, petitioning politicians to urge them to consider SUWA's proposals, or turning out to help at community tabling events. The latter part of this chapter considers the mechanisms developed by Patagonia that enable environmental organisations to engage in grassroots activism.

Despite the funding from Patagonia not being a significant contributor towards the income of the various nonprofit organisations examined as part of this research study, the relationship between granter and grantee was important for those who participated in the research. One commonality between respondents was that it took effort and resources to maintain the relationship between themselves and the Patagonia staff. This was all too common throughout the COVID-19

pandemic, where all organisations had to pivot and reassess their operating models in a time of huge uncertainty. Having an advocate within Patagonia itself, whether that was a staff member who was aware of an organisation's mission and activities, would also provide some benefits. This "who-you-know" approach is common among any relationship between granter and grantee, but the relationship does not have to be pre-existing and can be built up over time with the application of organisational resources. This was mentioned by one respondent:

> "I don't know if maybe there was a staff member at the retail store that really liked us […] I don't think I've done a great job at courting them, staying in touch with them and making sure that whoever is on their current staff is invited to come to our programming and our events" (Woman, Development Director, WCG, 03/11/2022)

This highlights several key mechanisms for building and maintaining a relationship with a potential funder or an organisational ally. One is the recognition that any retail store is subject to staff turnover, which means that relationships need to be reforged with new staff taking on the positional responsibilities of the previous incumbent. For most non-profit organisations, that specific relationship is held with the Activism Manager at the Patagonia SLC Outlet Store. If that person was to leave or take on a different role within the company, then new relationships would be needed to be forged with the new Activism Manager, who would come into that role with their own motivations and specific interests they may want to address.

It may seem obvious to state that building and maintaining relationships at the local level is key to ensuring continued support for grassroots environmental activism. However, with a plethora of environmental issues that exist within Utah, including many that solely affect the Wasatch Front, it highlights that the organisations that have the resources and capacity to cultivate this relationship stand to benefit as opposed to those organisations that perhaps rely on their organisation's reputation as a deliverer of environmental outcomes to maintain their existing levels of support. This might be the case for organisations that have relied on a sustained funding stream and are, therefore, surprised when they do not receive funding.

Grant Monitoring and Reporting

For successful grantees, it is important to note what the expectations are for monitoring and reporting. It has already been determined that the grants themselves are used for general operating purposes: that is, the grants are unrestricted and can be spent by the nonprofit organisation as they see fit. This demonstrates the use of trust-based philanthropy that is important in curating a reputation as an authentic corporate activist and an ally to the environmental movement. It is pragmatic to assess the monitoring and reporting requirements associated with trust-based philanthropic grants.

In terms of how the relationship is perceived from the perspectives of nonprofit organisations, it was noted several times that Patagonia adopt a hands-off approach to reporting. One respondent mentioned that reliability and a hand-off approach helped to forge a great relationship:

> "we have a great relationship with them and they are both reliable and they're pretty hands off. I think they actually took away their reporting requirements. Or they just said send us what you had. We have no template. But they have like pretty minimal reporting requirements and it's for general operating" (Female, Fundraising Manager, EHC, 10/5/2023)

Removing reporting requirements is a bold step in trust-based philanthropy. One possible reason for this approach is that the grants are often a lot smaller compared to grants offered by other foundations and corporates. Therefore, the reporting requirements may fit the amount of dollars donated. For nonprofit organisations that receive larger amounts it could demonstrate a lack of accountability mechanisms, whereas for other nonprofit organisations that receive a below-average size grant this can unlock organisational resources that can be utilised to secure additional funding. This was argued by one respondent:

> "any grants that they're giving this year, there's no reporting requirements. So they gave us the grant and there's no administrative requirement after that, […] you're trusting us a lot. But small organisations don't have the time to be spending on a lot of follow up as it relates to those grants. So that's another thing I think within the corporate space, if you're giving money out in grants rather than donations, making sure that if you are asking for reports, like are they valuable? Are people reading them? And they just checking a box?" (Female, Executive Director, CFROG, 17/5/2023)

This insight into the purpose and audience of report production adopts a critical perspective into monitoring and reporting more generally. Donors ordinarily expect impact evaluation and reporting mechanisms to be embedded into programmes, otherwise change cannot be observed and measured. However, for smaller amounts of money based on the condition of trust, then impact may be minimal within the timeframe of a specific grant. One of the nonprofit organisations interviewed that had not received a grant for several years noted that the process for monitoring and reporting was straight-forward and did not use up many resources. Annual reports are a useful tool for nonprofit organisations to demonstrate programme impacts, and metrics designed around monitoring and reporting can aid in assisting corporations in demonstrating tangible impacts within the communities they operate in:

> "It wasn't a super cumbersome process like some grant processes are. It was a pretty basic application and then sending them a report every year to kind of show what the successes of the program were and the impacts of the program" (Female, WCG, 3/11/2022)

Despite not having stringent reporting requirements for grantees, there are still measures that Patagonia would like to capture through their environmental grants programme. This is a common practice that exists in philanthropy and grant-giving as it promotes transparency and accountability among granter and grantee (Tyler, 2013). While some CSR metrics have been designed with the interests of the corporation in mind, Patagonia's metrics have been designed with overall impact in mind. This goes beyond the grant itself, and instead focuses on the other activities that the environmental nonprofit organisation has been able to do within the context they operate in. This wider focus enables nonprofit organisations to not separate the pots of funding they receive and, instead, write a narrative that focuses on more holistic impact measures across a landscape as opposed to what has been achieved through one specific grant:

> "Patagonia is one that is, you know, they want quantifiable measures, but also to tell us the story of the impact that this funding had and the impact that the organizations had on the landscape in the last year. So qualitative and quantitative. It's usually a written report, but more and more, storytelling with video and visuals. Anything like that is something that we're trying to do more and more of" (Female, Development Director, FOCM, 18/08/2022)

The use of storytelling methodologies in impact evaluation and monitoring reporting is not a new phenomenon, but rather it is one that aims to capture qualitative and quantitative data to tell a more rounded story (St Croix, 2022). In theory, this approach can use up a lot more resources as they take more time and can come at a financial cost to the nonprofit organisation. Transcribing and coding qualitative interview responses to demonstrate impact uses more organisational resources, but assists in centring the voices of the groups that the nonprofit organisation is working with.

In terms of Patagonia's philanthropic impact, Patagonia have been able to create considerable impact given the constraints in their funding model. This is demonstrated in the following comment:

> "I think their impact is beyond what the dollar value states. And I'll say that in the five or six years I've been doing fundraising, they're probably one of the few groups I can say that about who, you know, give under like 6 figures" (Male, Development Officer, EarthJustice, 10/5/2023)

An important point for consideration is that Patagonia can demonstrate impact beyond the dollar value because the offer many alternative mechanisms that can be used by environmental nonprofit organisations. These are often non-financial in nature:

> "we've held events that at Patagonia stores, we've found graphic designers. We found consultants through Catchafire, which is part of their action works platform. We've

> done a lot of training. They do both resilient and resiliency training, diversity, equity and inclusion training. Advocacy trained they bring a lot of resources to groups. So I guess my short answer is no, I can't quantify it, but I also you know it's not something a lot of other companies are doing in terms of providing those resources and support" (Female, Development Director, FOCM, 18/08/2022)

This quote highlights the many different non-financial resources that Patagonia offer to environmental organisations, and that this is a unique trait among their corporate competitors. It is substantive evidence of Patagonia engaging in the principles of embedded grant making, including the blending of financial resources with other types of resources (Karlström et al, 2009). The non-financial support mechanisms outlined are numerous and include holding community events at Patagonia stores, using digital platforms such as PAW and Catchafire and holding training events. These will be examined in detail in the following section.

Patagonia as Community Organisation: The Role of Non-Financial Mechanisms

Community Events at Patagonia Stores

There is an argument to be made that Patagonia are viewed as a Community-Based Organisation (CBO); that is, one that operates "at a local level and work to address community needs" (Squires et al, 2022:33). The distinctive characteristics of CBOs include local knowledge, trust, and relationships which aid in positioning them to play a supporting role in place-based development (Squires et al, 2022). There is demonstrable evidence that Patagonia incorporate all three of these characteristics within their financial and non-financial offer to environmental nonprofit organisations. The previous section of this chapter has explored how trust is garnered through trust-based philanthropy and willingness to support local nonprofit organisations. One of the key components of trust-based philanthropy is the willingness to 'give beyond the cheque' (Powell et al, 2023; Trust Based Philanthropy, 2021), which refers to the ability of grant-giving organisations to provide responsive and adaptive non-monetary support that aids in strengthening organisational capacities (Powell et al, 2023). This dimension is especially important for organisations that have historically been excluded from networks or have received lower level of support compared to their more established peers (Trust Based Philanthropy, 2021). This next section will examine how local knowledge is utilised and relationships built at the local level that supports this dimension of trust-based philanthropy while simultaneously displaying characteristics associated with place-based environmental activism and philanthropy (Easterling et al, 2023).

Several of the interviewed organisations actively consider Patagonia to be a CBO or corporate activist: this is to say that they do not view Patagonia solely as a for-profit entity that operates a store within their neighbourhood. This is partly due to the size of Patagonia as a company which limits the number of owned or operated stores compared to other retailers within the outdoor industry. This means that Patagonia can be very targeted in their approach to how they want to work with environmental nonprofit organisations in each locality because they may only have one store in a city. This approach may differ from SLC to San Francisco because the needs of the community in each context would be fundamentally different:

> "they're a great resource to post presentations, they let us come and table whenever we want, they'll blast out events out on social media, so they are just a great community organisation to have. I can't believe they just sell clothing because it seems that they don't, but they do" (Female, Utah Organiser, SUWA, 26/7/2023)

This perspective reveals some interesting insights. In amongst all the community events and mechanisms available for environmental nonprofits, it is easy to lose sight of Patagonia's main reason for being in business: to make clothes and accessories that are well-suited to different terrains and recreational contexts. In this way, Patagonia are perceived as a community advocate with a large and influential platform that can encourage the messages from different environmental nonprofit organisations. The fact that they are referred to as a 'community organisation' is not by accident: it is a deliberately curated image that is shaped by the activities and motivations at the store level. This may just be the case for the SLC Outlet store though:

> "time and time again, Patagonia continues to be an awesome community partner to NGOs in Salt Lake and nationwide, although I can really only speak from the Utah Salt Lake perspective. And also, people who come from Patagonia tend to be amazing activists." (Female, Utah Organiser, SUWA, 26/7/2023)

This raises a pertinent question: does Patagonia attract environmental activists to work for them based on Patagonia's brand identity and reputation, or do Patagonia enable their staff to become environmental activists? The evidence is mixed: staff at Patagonia are often already community activists that share the same values as the company they work for, and Patagonia's brand image as a corporation that cares about environmental issues helps in attracting environmental activists to work for them. There is no question that Patagonia enable their staff to become environmental activists, but the chances are the staff themselves are already clued into the environmental movement. In the case of the wilderness movement, staff at Patagonia have attended SUWA's Wilderness Week held in Washington D.C using their allocated activism hours. While mechanisms at Patagonia enable their staff to engage in activism, the staff themselves are already likely to be clued into the aims and ambitions of the environmental movement and may choose to take unpaid

time off to follow their pursuits. At other events held by Patagonia it was noted by staff in attendance that they probably would attend these events even if they were not paid for their time to attend. This suggests that environmental activists are drawn to work for the brand due to their reputation working on environmental issues, and this has been argued by a former employee:

> "people who are familiar with Patagonia already know this […] It's part of the ethos of the company and from the outside it might be hard to tell whether that's real or whether that's fabricated, but it's quite real. People care about the environment […] I rarely had to win people over and convince them that sustainability is important" (Male, Former Sustainability Lead at Patagonia, 3/7/2023)

This sheds some light on the motivations behind people wanting to work for a company like Patagonia, as well as highlighting the role of congruence and authenticity in alignment between a brand and a specific cause (D'Arco et al, 2024; Ahmad et al, 2024; Buchanan et al, 2024; Vredenburg et al, 2020). It simultaneously demonstrates that Patagonia have achieved congruence between employees and the cause they have decided to campaign for. However, there is a need for Patagonia to achieve perceived congruence and authenticity between themselves and the nonprofit organisations within the community they serve. Therefore, there is a need for a deeper understanding of the types of community events that Patagonia organise to support the needs of the community in which they operate. One respondent highlights several mechanisms available to nonprofit organisations:

> "we've had a lot of chances to partner with the local Patagonia outlet, it's not just a retailer, they host a bunch of really cool community events. And so we table there a couple times a year and we've done a bunch of presentations there. And we've had events with like 100 + 150 people coming to it […] I almost think of them as more of a community organization than a company that sells jackets" (Male, Executive Director, GCI, 29/9/2022)

As the quote above suggests, having mechanisms such as community tabling, presentations and large-scale events helps to enhance Patagonia's reputation as a community-based organisation and not just one of a profit-seeking business. I attended several events hosted by the Patagonia Outlet Store in SLC and it was noticeable that Patagonia play an organising and supporting role within this. The nonprofit organisations themselves are at the heart of each event, and Patagonia assist in enabling each nonprofit organisation to get the most out of the event. Any public discussions are led by the nonprofit organisations and Patagonia provide the space and equipment free of charge. This is an example of giving support beyond the cheque and blending financial resources with other types of resources (Karlström et al, 2009) and reinforces the argument that Patagonia are engaging in trust-based philanthropy (Powell et al, 2023) and embedded grantmaking (Karlström et al, 2009).

One of the events organised by Patagonia was focused on regenerative agriculture, a central component of Patagonia's business operations. Although Patagonia are not the only corporate that promotes the use of regenerative agriculture in crop production, they have put significant investments in promoting regenerative agricultural techniques within their supply chains for not only their apparel, but other aspects of the business too. Patagonia Provisions, a subsidiary of Patagonia, was established in 2012 to challenge conventional agricultural practices and develop healthy, organic food primarily for the outdoor market, namely hikers and campers (Wieners, 2016). Its first product, wild salmon jerky, was first sold through retailers in 2013. The overarching thesis behind Patagonia Provisions is "if we're going to save our planet, food could be and should be the most important lever that we can pull toward that mission." (Barkho, 2023). Their products include seafood, namely anchovies, mussels, wild sockeye salmon, and mackerel, and organic grains, namely pasta and crackers (Patagonia Provisions, no date).

In 2016, Patagonia released a 25-minute-long documentary entitled 'Unbroken Ground: A New Old Way to Grow Food', that has been liked over twenty thousand times, attracted over a thousand comments, and viewed more than one million times on YouTube. The documentary told the story of how farmers are "willing to break the paradigm" (Unbroken Ground, 2016, 00:01:46) by challenging conventional farming practices through utilising regenerative agricultural principles, such as planting perennial crops, diversifying crop development within grain production, reintroducing indigenous species such as buffalo for land management, and using restorative fishing methods to catch salmon. The documentary features Yvon Chouinard who outlines why Patagonia have embarked on challenging normative assumptions about food production, stating that while Patagonia started as an experiment that demonstrated their approach within the apparel sector worked, branching into the food industry was another experiment, but was considered to be the "most important one they've ever tried" (Unbroken Ground, 2016, 00:02:26).

In 2017, Patagonia Provisions co-founded the Regenerative Organic Alliance (ROA) alongside the Rodale Institute and Dr Bronner's All-One! (ROA,2023). The ROA envisions "a thriving future through regenerative organic agriculture that heals our damaged planet and repairs our broken food system" (ROA, 2023:3) while its mission is to "build soil health, ensure equity for farm workers, empower farmers, and improve animal welfare through a holistic farm-based, brand-driven certification" (ROA, 2023:3). The ROA developed the Regenerative Organic Certified® programme that has licensed 127 brands, certified 5.7 million acres of land, developed 853 products with Regenerative Organic Certified® content, certified 174 farms, and supported 50,487 smallholder farmers in 45 growing groups (ROA, 2023). The vast majority of land and

products certified have occurred since 2022, when the Regenerative Organic Certified® trademark was successfully registered in the U.S., E.U., U.K, and Japan, signalling that Regenerative Organic Certified® production is part of a growing agricultural movement while also recognising that "the term 'regenerative' is at great risk of greenwashing and dilution […] the trademark enables consumers to trust-at-a-glance that products carrying our seal are regenerative on every level: environmentally, ethically and socially" (ROA, 2023:12).

The community-event organised by Patagonia showcased some of the products under the Patagonia Provisions umbrella of the business. Attendees were incentivised to speak to nonprofit organisations by offering opportunities to enter an opportunity drawing[54]. There was often a sign-up initiative or a sign of a petition as the central ask as part of this incentive, but it demonstrates that adding even a small incentive can increase participation in environmental issues. In attendance was the environmental nonprofit organisation GULB, a nonprofit organisation that works on regenerative and sustainable agriculture programmes in urban contexts through acquiring and repurposing brownfield land:

> "Patagonia is great for us. They're like one of our hubs for CSA [Community Supported Agriculture] […] events like that, it's important to just have the organisation there and kind of show face to get people involved […] Our biggest thing is volunteer recruitment but if people can't volunteer their time, like maybe they can donate" (Female, Farm Manager, GULB, 9/8/2023)

This highlights the role of events in raising awareness of issues that many not be front-and-centre of the public consciousness. As most nonprofit organisations operate volunteering models for participation, events can be a good way to advertise opportunities and strengthen the grassroots efforts of the environmental movement. Other community events include hosting nonprofits at the store at various times of the year. Some events are advertised as nonprofit breakfasts. These are events in which the store is closed and only staff at nonprofits and the Patagonia SLC Outlet Store are in attendance. Patagonia pay for the food and beverages and it is a chance for nonprofit organisations' staff to network and build personal connections, without the distractions of the public:

> "they offer several different ways to take advantage of their resources and connections. I did attend a nonprofit breakfast earlier this year that was a networking opportunity and also just to let people know the different ways that they can help out community organizations and that was like product donations and tabling opportunities" (Female, Development Director, WCG, 3/11/2022)

[54] Utah law prohibits raffles if money or property is exchanged for entry or a chance to win.

Other events organised by Patagonia SLC Outlet Store include a market-stall set-up in which different nonprofits are invited to table and Patagonia customers can learn more about the missions and programmes of different nonprofit organisations within Utah. Being in front of people can be useful in volunteer recruitment and fundraising, but that is not the purpose of each event itself:

> "we get invited to have a table at their store […] they had a holiday market just a couple weeks ago where I think 10 nonprofits had tables were people who were shopping in the outlet could stop by and learn about the organization […] It's a nice outreach thing, you get face time with a handful of people and might get a donation or two or a new volunteer" (Male, Executive Director, Sageland Collaborative, 20/12/2022)

The staff at Patagonia SLC Outlet Store have been able to amplify the needs and wants of grassroots environmental organisations through community tabling opportunities and event organisation. For example, HEAL Utah identify the role of the Patagonia store in promoting a direct political activism event and how this aspect to their relationship has been positive:

> "we worked to get citizens to comment to the Building Commission to improve building standards. And we had 80 people participate in that process was, which was the Building Commission even told us it was the most that they ever had, as far as participation. And Patagonia was pretty much our sole partner in helping make that happen. So we did a letter writing circle, it was either out their store or nearby their store, but their staff there, they helped promote it and helped get people there. And so in that sense, that partnership has been really great." (Male, Development Director, HEAL Utah, 9/12/2022)

Patagonia Action Works and Catchafire

In 2018, Patagonia established PAW[55] to facilitate human action by digitally connecting environmental activists with grassroots non-profit organisations to support their work, either through skills-based volunteering or crowdsourcing funds for project costs (Vredenburg et al, 2020). PAW was a finalist in the 2022 Shorty Social Good Awards, in which the programme is described as "a response-driven, relationship-building tool that elevates grassroots environmental activists and connects them with committed individuals who want to make a difference. PAW was driven by a desire to transform brand values into tangible actions" (Shorty Awards, 2022).

As a non-financial support mechanism offered by Patagonia, it has been used by several, but not all, nonprofit organisations. The experiences with the platform have been positive in terms of finding consultants and posting events:

[55] PAW was built by the creative agency 'someoddpilot'.

> "You know they're action works platform, you can find consultants and contractors to help with campaigns. You can post your events […] they've really put their company values forward in a way that is incredible in terms of partnership with nonprofits and environmental groups" (Female, Development Director, FOCM, 18/08/2022)

This testimony highlights how creating a digital activist platform helps to enhance the reputation of Patagonia as a company and their stated values. As such, the platform has had the desired effect of creating new partnerships with nonprofit organisation within the environmental movement. Other ways in which PAW has been utilised is through campaign signatures, volunteer recruitment and matched donations:

> "we've been able to identify and find a lot of great, experienced and skilled volunteers to do pro bono work for our organisation. We have been able to amplify our campaign so that we've gotten more signatures on it, but also spread it through new networks or additional networks. And we've also had matching donation opportunities through the Action Works page" (Female, Operations Manager, Save the Waves, 10/8/2023)

Online petitions have become a useful tool to bring activists from different geographies together (Han, 2024), and therefore it is not surprising that it has been utilised by different nonprofit organisations (Durso et al, 2018). As the quote above suggests, amplifying a campaign through a platform such as PAW is helping in attracting newer or additional networks than they currently belong to. Therefore, it aids in connecting activists from different backgrounds in a form of solidarity and allyship.

Matching donations from public fundraising is a useful mechanism for environmental nonprofits to increase financial resources and to increase their profile by aligning themselves with a corporation that shares the same values. Public and corporate fundraising efforts in the U.S. generally tends to amplify at the year-end, with dedicated fundraising days like 'GivingTuesday' occurring the Tuesday after Thanksgiving. In 2021, more than thirty-five million Americans participated in GivingTuesday and collectively raised more than $2.7billion (GivingTuesday, 2021). However, it appears that Patagonia stopped matching donations through the PAW platform:

> "In the past, action works actually matched your year-end campaigns, it was back in 2019. But then they stopped doing that, but that was great. That was like a huge boost to a lot of nonprofits" (Female, Executive Director, GSEP, 16/12/2022)

The financial boost offered to nonprofit organisations through PAW was also articulated by another respondent:

> "there have been a couple years where they will match donations for like a day or two […] they ended up giving us like 20,000 bucks or something. And you know

> which was a match of a 20,000 we raised too. I would love to see them do another donation matching […] it gets people fired up to donate to when they know the donations being matched dollar for dollar" (Male, Executive Director, GCI, 29/9/2022)

This kind of financial support also means that nonprofit organisations are incentivised to raise the profile of their campaigns to generate more financial support. Despite no longer offering to match donations, PAW has been useful as a mechanism to build up a grassroots environmental environment that is centred on activism:

> "this portal that they created to help leverage access to activists working on a campaign. So you know, we had some campaigns up on some of our work in Colorado in particular out of our Denver office. And so you know like reaching out to that network through Patagonia Action Works to actually get people to come to attend hearings, submit comments and actually build grassroots support" (Male, Development Director, WildEarth Guardians, 20/12/2022)

This illustrates the role that PAW has played in enabling both public-facing activism, such as attending hearings, and digital activism, such as online petitions. This suggests that the tool itself is evolving and could reveal newer and bolder activist tactics that promote environmental outcomes. The platform itself is centred around advocacy and campaigning that increases visibility of pertinent issues within specific places among Patagonia customers and supporters, and has been linked to the Environmental Grants Programme:

> "Patagonia Action Works, which from my understanding is their sort of advocacy and campaigning to get the message out to their customers and supporters. And I believe initially a lot of their grants came through that type of work. They would be made to people who they were already amplifying and supporting on particular issues […] I think mostly our support has been for public lands and these type of like visible place-based work" (Male, Development Officer, EarthJustice, 10/5/2023)

The other digital platform that interview respondents mentioned was the Catchafire platform. Catchafire is an online skills-based volunteering platform that has been operating for fifteen years. Respondents were quick to point out that although it is a non-Patagonia produced volunteering platform, it helps in sourcing volunteers that can provide added value to nonprofit organisations:

> "they have this online platform, they partner with this thing called Catchafire where nonprofits can find like a skilled volunteers to help with marketing or legal issues or graphic design" (Female, Development Director, WCG, 3/11/2022)

Therefore, this partnership is an opportunity for Patagonia to leverage skilled volunteers. These volunteers could be Patagonia employees as Patagonia has signed up as a corporate user of Catchafire's services. However, Patagonia have offered the services of the platform to some of their environmental nonprofit grantees:

> "you have to have this capacity to take advantage of these other resources. We are in a situation with this woman came forward through Catchafire and she wanted to help us with storytelling, which is great. But it took a lot of effort and I was willing to be point person, but she was kind of starting at Ground Zero. You know, it took a lot of our time to try to utilize our services so that one didn't really work out very well. But then on the other side, the designer, she was like ready to go right, we had like two conversations and she came up with this awesome design. So their Catchafire, I think is great" (Female, Executive Director, GSEP, 16/12/2022)

This quote demonstrates the effectiveness of skilled-based volunteering as well as demonstrating the risks associated with the approach. An additional point is linked to monitoring and reporting of platform outcomes. The testimony above suggests that the platform has produced mixed results in terms of outcomes from the nonprofit organisations, but they reveal positive metrics in terms of outcomes for Patagonia:

> "when we fill out the forms for Catchafire,they ask because they report on that they put, they calculate those numbers right based on what we put in there. Like what would this cost you if you were paying for it as a service. Now the problem is, you're putting those numbers in before you actually have the project with the person, right? […] I just don't know if those numbers totally reflect the actuality because you don't know how it's gonna work out until you get into it" (Female, Executive Director, GSEP, 16/12/2022)

The skill level of volunteers may not be the required standard needed for the approach and organisations could end up spending more organisational resources. For nonprofit organisations to leverage and maximise opportunities from the platform, tasks must be succinct and relevant to the skill-levels. This is evidenced from the experience from this respondent:

> "through our grant, we have access to Catchafire which we have used for our website design. We're currently working through a logo update, so we connected with a graphic designer volunteer to help us through that" (Female, Director, CFROG, 17/5/2023)

The team at CFROG have been able to recruit skills-based volunteers through Catchafire on specific projects: website design and logo update. The experience with platforms such as PAW and Catchafire has been overwhelmingly positive by all respondents who had used these services. However, there are some challenges with the platforms because of the stipulations over who can access them:

> "We did when we got funding, we used Patagonia Action works and Catchafire. Like they're incredible tools. We used it honestly all the time back when we got funding. And we actually worked with a local designer and illustrator in California who is really passionate. So that's how we got connected with her and so we used to use them all

> the time, but once you're no longer a Patagonia like grantee, you don't get access to them" (Female, Development Director, SOC, 27/7/2023)

The quote above suggests that only current grantees have access to non-financial mechanisms such as Catchafire and PAW. Despite staff at nonprofit organisations successfully engaging with the platforms created with the stated purpose of facilitating environmental activism, having it open only to current grantees appears to be short-sighted approach by Patagonia. It also presents evidence that Patagonia are not utilising all the characteristics of trust-based philanthropy, including offering support beyond the cheque (Powell et al, 2023; Trust Based Philanthropy, 2021).

As the quote above illustrates, it is often difficult for nonprofit organisations to recruit skilled volunteers to perform a task that could save them using their own resources; therefore, when a platform is created with the intended purpose of facilitating environmental activism, it should be open to former grantees:

> "tools like that are always nice to have. I don't know why you can't still have access to it if you have been passed grantees […] We've leaned more towards Instagram than Catchafire and be like, hey, we're looking for a graphic designer, and send out to our social media audience" (Female, Development Director, SOC, 27/7/2023)

As always, nonprofit organisations will find ways to recruit volunteers or consultants to perform activities. If Patagonia do not provide those services, then they will turn to other established channels (including Instagram or X) and tap into resources from their own networks. This may build the resilience and agency of individual organisations, but Patagonia may miss out on being a trusted facilitator of environmental activism. Widening the participation of environmental organisations within these platforms could only enhance their reputation as an environmentally friendly corporation and an ally to the environmental movement.

Employee Volunteering

A different form of non-financial support is the opportunity for Patagonia staff to engage in employee volunteering, using their 'Activism Hours' in their employment contracts. Employee volunteering, or CV as it has been referred to in the literature, is a foundational component of corporate philanthropy (Von Schnurbein et al, 2016; Kotler & Lee, 2005). This does incur some financial costs for Patagonia as they provide employees with paid time off to volunteer with local grassroots environmental organisations. However, this does not come at a financial cost to the environmental organisations. Patagonia's employee volunteering has been utilised by several environmental organisations to assist them with specific project activities:

> "not only do they provide us funding, but their local stores, their staff are very involved up at the Hill. So they come and participate in the legislature with us, we table at their store, we have this really, really good relationship with them" (Male, Development Director, HEAL Utah, 9/12/2023)

This specific ask has a direct impact on grassroots environmental activism. It offers tangible outputs that demonstrate engagement in the political process that can be traced back to Patagonia staff using their Activism Hours to support grassroots environmentalism. Often this is linked to local activism efforts, with employee volunteering supporting alongside the environmental grants themselves:

> "We also have a great relationship with their like employee engagement […] if we needed volunteers for something, they are oftentimes trying to have their volunteers involved in local work" (Female, Executive Director, CFROG, 17/5/2023)

Patagonia employees have also been involved with direct political lobbying as part of their Activism Hours. SUWA organise a trip to Washington DC to bolster support for SUWA's focal legislative piece, America's Red Rock Wilderness Act (ARRWA). The trip, called "Wilderness Week" to Washington DC involves around twenty environmental activists from across Utah and other parts of the U.S. to attract co-sponsors and signatories for ARRWA. SUWA's community organisers try to get a diverse range of identities to showcase the differing perspectives and experiences of why activists get involved in direct political activism and lobbying.

> "The stories and backgrounds to really create this cohesive picture that people in Utah care about wilderness preservation, people in Utah care about the climate crisis, and we're here because speaking out on behalf of these places because our delegation being anti-wilderness doesn't tell the whole story of Utah" (Female, Utah Organiser, SUWA, 17/04/2024)

In Spring 2024, two employees at Patagonia were invited to attend Wilderness Week with SUWA. They were able to attend using their Activism Hours to get involved in direct political lobbying with congressional delegates and to support SUWA's mission and key legislative ask.

> "Patagonia continues to be an awesome community partner to NGOs in Salt Lake and nationwide, although I can really only speak from the Utah Salt Lake perspective. And also like people who come from Patagonia tend to be amazing activists […] Patagonia continues to be to show up for us, I want to show up for them" (Female, Utah Organiser, SUWA, 17/04/2024)

This example of a payback mechanism used by a nonprofit to 'reward' individuals who work at supportive businesses is not an ordinary occurrence and it is important to take note of this specifically. The relationship tends to be skewed more favourably for corporations as that is where money is generated, with associated power relations stemming from the flows of money from for-

profit organisations to non-profit organisations (Jenkins et al. 2017). This is an example of non-profit organisations tapping into their own resources to reward the staff who have demonstrated over the years their commitment to grassroots environmental activism. This form of reciprocity and recognition is one that is uncommon within corporate and nonprofit organisational partnerships, which have tended to focus on the strategic alignment between a corporation's CSR initiatives with the organisational priorities of a nonprofit (Kubíčková, 2018). This example, therefore, makes a significant contribution to CSR and CA literature as evidence of nonprofits supporting corporate employees to support environmental activism.

The ability for businesses to pay their staff to take time off to volunteer also has considerable advantages for the business itself. Staff would be aware of what different nonprofit organisations were doing and can get involved in campaign development and execution:

> "I think if more businesses were paying people to engage with nonprofits, they would also get way more out of it. Because like the Patagonia folks, they're involved in our campaigns and know what we're doing. They know our staff, they can report back, if someone from corporate were to call the Patagonia store here locally, I have full faith that their staff could answer all the questions that I could answer, maybe not in the same level of detail, but they know the campaigns we're working on and they've been in the trenches with us" (Male, Development Director, HEAL Utah, 9/12/2023)

This testimony raises important theoretical considerations related to CSR-strategies and associated environmentalism. The involvement of staff within local environmental organisations aids in developing mechanisms for corporations to give support beyond the cheque, a component of trust-based philanthropy (Powell et al, 2023), place-based philanthropy (Easterling et al, 2023; Reid et al, 2022) and embedded grantmaking (Karlström et al, 2009). Additionally, as workplace volunteering is a corporate-driven CSR activity (Sarkar & Kotler, 2020; Kotler & Lee, 2005), supporting grassroots environmental organisations through workplace volunteering aids in developing localised knowledge about environmental issues and their impacts on local communities. In relation to the specific example purported by HEAL Utah, staff at Patagonia have been able to use their volunteering hours to support the organisation in their mission of promoting clean air, clean energy and find comprehensive solutions to radioactive and toxic waste within Utah. This focuses on the distributive justice (Walker, 2012; Schlosberg, 2007; Bullard, 2005c) and substantive elements (Bell, 2014) of EJ.

The other aspect to consider here is how employee volunteering is used as part of a toolkit for supporting newer organisations. A good example to use here is that of O_2 Utah, who emerged as a key actor during the process of conducting ethnographic research. As an early-stage environmental nonprofit (O_2 Utah was established in 2020), O_2 Utah was constantly looking out

for grassroots partnerships that could help evolve the organisation. The partnership with Patagonia was initially established by the Communications Director reaching out to the Patagonia SLC Outlet Store about community tabling opportunities:

> "I reached out through email with whoever their events volunteer person was at Patagonia at the time, and just said, Hey, we're looking for places to table and we think Patagonia is awesome. And yeah, I think that's pretty much how it started was just like setting up a table" (Male, Communications Director, O_2 Utah, 7/6/2023)

The relationship itself was formed on a non-financial basis, but was integral in advertising the nonprofit mission to a potential donor or supporter. The first activities that Patagonia staff engaged with O_2 Utah on were election day phone calling using staff's paid volunteering days:

> "So their staff had volunteer hours that they're able to give out to their employees as basically just paid days to go volunteer with nonprofits and other community groups. And so we would have Patagonia's team come into the office and do like Election Day phone calls, track down people that haven't voted yet make sure people are getting out to vote" (Male, Elections Manager, O_2 Utah, 7/6/2023)

These activities occurred before O_2 Utah were an environmental grantee and highlight that for some nonprofit organisations the non-financial aspects of a corporate/charity relationship can be more beneficial to a purely financial relationship. It also highlights that for nonprofit organisations to secure the support of a corporate entity it needs to invest in building that relationship over a period of time and demonstrating the key aspects to your organisation that make it deserving of being potentially funded in the future. This process is outlined by:

> "I think Patagonia's has a process with new nonprofits that they hadn't heard of before where it's just kind of keep showing up […] we started doing tabling and now they said, if you would like to plan an event, we have the space open and so now we can come back to the table and think of some event ideas that we can utilise. And they provided food and all these other things. So even though we weren't like a grant recipient, they were doing a tonne to also support us and make everything really easy for us to effectively do an event like that" (Female, Community & Events Director, O_2 Utah, 7/6/2023)

Part of this is down to utilising the brand identifiers that are associated with the Patagonia brand and their reputation within the local community. By tapping into the network of local nonprofit organisations that have forged relationships with the Patagonia SLC Outlet Store, O_2 Utah have been able to reach more people and build their own brand identity:

> "we started in 2019, realistically, 2020, that was also during the pandemic. There's more and more people I constantly meet people who have never heard of us, or who have heard our name. So working with Patagonia, like Patagonia is well-known

> already and has a pretty solid following. So I think that's probably the biggest benefit" (Female, Policy Director, O_2 Utah, 7/6/2023)

The interconnectedness of brand identity and association enables nonprofit organisations, such as O_2 Utah, to ensure that those who are loyal to the Patagonia brand can be a part of the activities they aim to do as well:

> "Patagonia is definitely one of those that has such a big name and is so trusted that it's also really helpful for us to have our name associated with them. On the donation side, on community events side, there's a lot of spaces where that that is a big benefit. To me, the way I think about it […] anyone who would walk into the Patagonia store who climbs and skis and bikes […] once they know that we exist, they'll easily align with us. And whether that means follow us on Instagram, join our newsletter, or even better come and volunteer or donate, that's just like an easy base for us to capture and align it with it our aims. Doing events with them is probably one of the fastest quickest ways to capture their crowd that already exists and bring them into our network" (Male, Elections Manager, O_2 Utah, 7/6/2023)

This illustrates that having key asks for interested citizens is important when building relationships with local organisations, whether that be corporate or nonprofit. O_2 Utah have been able to get quick and easy wins from interested parties: social media followings and newsletter sign ups. This is often the precursor to higher-level environmental activism asks, such as volunteering or donating. Both require a resource, whether time or financial, that not every person is able to provide. With so many different nonprofit organisations engaging in community tabling at the Patagonia store and a pragmatic realisation that the people walking through the door on Monday will be different to those that walk through on Tuesday, it is often difficult for someone interested in supporting an organisation to decide whether they want to support that cause or another cause that they may be closer to. It also demonstrates that holding events with Patagonia is a beneficial community engagement mechanism that is time-intensive but not financially intensive. When these events are combined with clear and concise asks for the community to be involved with, then there is likely to be a higher impact from these events from both sides.

Environmental Activism Conference

In 2016, Patagonia published "Tools for Grassroots Activists: Best Practices for Success in the Environmental Movement. The book was edited by Patagonia's Chair of Mentorship Project and Stanley's wife, Nora Gallagher, as well as Patagonia's Director of Environmental Grants, Lisa Myers, and the Senior Editor at Patagonia Books, John Dutton. The book is the highlights of twenty years' worth of outcomes from Patagonia's Tools for Grassroots Activists conferences that are held biannually near South Lake Tahoe in California. Each conference teaches marketing, publicity, and lobbying skills to around seventy-five participants from varying environmental non-

profit organisations that Patagonia work with (Chouinard & Stanley, 2012). The first Tools for Grassroots Activist conference was held in 1994 in Montana, at which participants asked the hotel where they were staying to not change the sheets every day, which was considered by the local newspaper as a revolutionary idea at the time (Chouinard, 2016). The book includes information pertinent to numerous areas of environmental activism including campaign strategy, marketing, organising, fundraising, communications, networking, lobbying, working with business, utilising the economics of conservation and visualising data. These chapters are bookended by well-known keynote writers from the U.S. environmental movement including Jane Goodall, Bill McKibben, Brock Evans, and Terry Tempest Williams, as well as case studies from various U.S. based environmental nonprofit organisations. Additionally, there are several "How To" sections that explain how to create materials in both print and visual formats, including the use of film.

I spoke to several respondents who had participated in a Tools for Environmental Activism workshop. This conference is organised by Patagonia at the corporate level, and testimonies from interview respondents revealed that the invite to participate was extended by staff working at the corporate level. As such, this mechanism is not an example of place-based environmental activism but instead is an example of a corporation developing mechanisms that enable and enhance activism. Attendees found that their experience of the workshop covered similar topics to what is presented in the book, and that the overall experience was incredibly positive:

> "they used to do a conference, it was called the 'Tools Conference' and it introduced tools for grassroots advocacy and they fund it. So it's free for the group. So they I got to go to that in 2013 where you go out maybe three or four days. But you like stay at this camp by Lake Tahoe and you just go to workshops all day, every day and you kind of like learn the tools of how to run grassroots campaigns and organizations […] to have that those resources to like learn how to actually like be a good grassroots advocate. I learned a lot from those […] there's a lot of education that they offer to grassroots organizations" (Male, Executive Director, GCI, 29/9/2022)

With the 'Tools for Environmental Activists' conference focusing on different aspects of environmental activism, there was one area that remained front-of-mind for the same participant:

> "the most important thing you can do is have individual members who support you. You don't wanna rely on big foundations because if the foundation changes priorities, then you're dried up. At that conference, they stressed the importance of building a good grassroots following and member support" (Male, Executive Director, GCI, 29/9/2022)

This quote provides evidence of mission drift and elite capture associated with traditional forms of environmental philanthropy (Jenkins et al, 2017; Delfin & Tang, 2007). It is worth restating here that environmental philanthropy is a small percentage of overall giving in the U.S., and

foundations can change priorities quickly. While strategic philanthropy has focused on ensuring alignment between nonprofit organisations and donors (Kubíčková, 2018), trust-based and place-based philanthropy differ by challenging existing power dynamics and attempts to create a more even playing field between organisations (Jones et al, 2024; Reid et al, 2022; Taddy-Sandino et al, 2022).

This once again highlights the importance of individual donors and building a network of supporters at the grassroots level in ensuring that environmental nonprofit organisations can achieve their mission and not be wholly reliant on a specific foundation. As stated earlier, the environmental movement has shifted focus in recent years and nonprofit organisations who do not remain relevant will see funding decrease from those channels. Creating and building a grassroots network is also important to demonstrate to potential donors that the public is generally supportive of their campaign, thereby reducing any risk in awarding grants to nonprofit organisations that are working on campaigns that may be politically controversial. Linked to building a grassroots movement is crafting compelling storytelling narratives:

> "Glen Canyon is such a compelling place. It's such a central part of American environmentalism. When Glen Canyon Dam was built, it kickstarted a big part of the American environmental movement in the Sierra Club that grew from this tiny organization into this national powerhouse that was able to stop dams. And after Glen Canyon Dam was built, people were so fired up and they realized the impact of these big dams and that momentum was what helped stop the Grand Canyon dams […]. But Glen Canyon is just such an important part of America's environmentalist identity that I think it's always gonna be compelling" (Male, Executive Director, GCI, 29/9/2022)

Another respondent explained that they had been invited after phoning Patagonia to get some clarification about the grant application process and after a "nice, wonderful conversation with one of the staff" they had been invited to participate in the conference. In their experience, it was in the top three of conferences that they had been involved with as:

> "the attitude there was so helpful and so geared towards you and your organisation being successful […] I was so impressed when they said that when people leave here, they take back all this information and our best guess is ninety percent of those organisations are successful in their campaign. And I was like, wow, ninety percent, but I could see it because of that kind of nurturing, informative, collaborating, really helpful approach" (Woman, Board Member, BWA, 12/12/2023)

The outcome of attending the conference for this one respondent was that they were able to not only be successful in raising money for their organisation, but they were also able to run for city council and start a political dialogue around water quality, purchase US$1.3 million dollars' worth of land next to one of their streams, and fund an environmental study that helped to clean up

harmful algal blooms. This demonstrates some tangible environmental outcomes associated with Patagonia's non-financial mechanisms.

Patagonia also run specific training modules throughout the year to work alongside the 'Tools for Environmental Activists' conference. One respondent that worked for an EJ organisation participated in a fundraising cohort and discussed their experience with me:

> "We met every other week for three months and there was a fundraising coach and it was with other professionals. There are some inherent tensions between individual giving and justice work, and it was a space to talk about that with other people doing the same work. So, like in my cohort was people who were doing environmental justice […] I participated in like a storytelling workshop that they had as well" (Female, Fundraising Manager, EHC, 10/5/2023)

Organising training for nonprofit organisations around a specific topic like fundraising demonstrates another mechanism that Patagonia have been able to employ in supporting the environmental movement. In this specific example, it demonstrates supporting organisations that are within the EJ movement specifically: this is important as fundraising along EJ issues can be very different to fundraising around broader environmentalist issues. The other aspect to this training programme is the role of Patagonia in facilitating connection and communication between different nonprofit organisations working on the same issues. This approach can enhance the strengths of the environmental movement in collective advocacy and grassroots organising. The supportive and optional, as opposed to mandatory, approach by Patagonia was appreciated:

> "they were very clear that it was not mandatory and it wasn't going to adversely affect our relationship. But it was like a true offering and that felt genuine. And that was really nice because sometimes with grants […] you have to be in these meetings and we didn't budget for how much time we're spending in these. So I appreciate Patagonia is truly attempting to support the work through using resources they have as opposed to just demanding more of our time" (Female, Fundraising Manager, EHC, 10/5/2023)

Product, In-kind Donations and Discount

Another way for Patagonia to support nonprofit organisations is through product and in-kind donations. Product and in-kind donations are considered core elements of corporate philanthropy (Kubíčková, 2018; Gautier & Pache, 2015; Kotler & Lee, 2005). Some of these donations are used as incentives for political engagement:

> "They've donated gift cards, and it's just incentives to help get people involved in the legislature. Things like that they've been really good about and then their staff are

> always at our events, they're always showing up for us. They're really great to work with in that sense" (Male, Development Director, HEAL Utah, 9/12/2022)

This not only highlights how products have been donated as incentives, but also that staff at Patagonia regularly attend events held by nonprofit organisations outside of the Patagonia store. By showing up at nonprofit organisations' events, staff at Patagonia can situate themselves within the environmental movement as supporters, allies, advocates and activists. From this quote alone it is unclear if there is a mandate from Patagonia for staff to attend events or whether they attend on a personal basis. Once again, it highlights whether Patagonia create activists or whether environmental activists are attracted to work for the brand. Other nonprofit organisations have been the beneficiary of a Patagonia programme that ensures rejected clothes can be used by those within the movement:

> "One thing that Patagonia has done that they don't really advertise is they have their puppies programme, as they call it, which is clothing that has been returned or has been rejected and they can't sell for some reason and they will donate it to environmental groups for use by staff" (Male, Executive Director, EPIC, 25/4/2023)

This not only ensures that Patagonia products do not go to waste but also provides an alignment between the Patagonia brand and the environmental movement itself. If people within the environmental movement are seen wearing the Patagonia logo, then it helps to position the brand as being positively associated with the environmental movement (Ahmad et al; 2024; Buchanan et al, 2024; Vredenburg et al, 2020). This is also aided by the fact that not only do nonprofit organisation get product donations, but they also receive Patagonia Pro discounts at retail stores:

> "I don't fucking make enough money to buy Patagonia, but they also give us pro deals too so we effectively get 50% off of sticker price or retail price […] I appreciate little things like that almost as much as I appreciate the grant because it shows the degree of caring about the organisation and its staff of an organisation. That is an area of Patagonia support that makes me emotionally feel like Patagonia […] truly cares about the environmental movement" (Male, Executive Director, EPIC, 25/4/2023)

The Patagonia pro discount has been highlighted as an employee perk for nonprofit organisations:

> "We have a Patagonia pro discount though […] I feel like when we onboard folks then I tell them that they have that as a perk. We have so few perks at non-profits that one counts for a lot" (Female, Fundraising Manager, EHC, 10/5/2023)

A critical observation can be made here on this specific form of corporate philanthropy (Kotler & Lee, 2005). Patagonia have stopped co-branding on their products from many different industries, citing the environmental impact of clothing being discarded if employees no longer worked at the companies that have a corporate partnership deal with Patagonia (Mittica, 2019). The financial services industry is one that has had such an association (Flanagin, 2018; Magsino, 2018).

Patagonia's co-branding strategy shifted from corporations to organisations associated with outdoor sports, regenerative organic farming, and environmental activism (Mittica, 2019). The above quote provides evidence that Patagonia have a pro deal with environmental groups to further increase their brand equity and brand association with the environmental movement. Thus, when attending grassroots environmental activist events, the public see the Patagonia brand on employees' and volunteers' clothing. This may aid in Patagonia achieving value congruence between the brand reputation and the cause it supports (Ahmad et al; 2024; Buchanan et al, 2024; Vredenburg et al, 2020), demonstrating the positive associators for corporate reputation of perceived fit and perceived authenticity associated with CA (Lim & Young, 2021).

Thus far, this chapter has introduced and examined a range of financial and non-financial mechanisms that have been created by Patagonia and used by many different nonprofit organisations. The array of mechanisms created using various resources presents the case that being an authentic corporate activist means that companies need to consider a broad range of tools that can be used by the social movements fighting for the same issue. While Patagonia has chosen to focus on the issue of climate change and the environmental crisis and have developed a range of mechanisms designed at supporting the environmental movement, other brands can adopt a similar approach that augments the stances they are taking on any issue. It does require significant resource allocation and a willingness from employees to organise and plan activities related to the issue in question, but the rewards in terms of employee engagement, commitment to activism, and brand reputation could be beneficial. This chapter will now highlight the different types of relationships that emerged throughout an ethnographic study on Patagonia in Utah.

Different Types of Relationships

This chapter started with the premise that financial relationships were an essential component of corporate activist stances (Eilert and Cherup, 2020; Vredenburg et al, 2020). These financial relationships are often secured through philanthropic activity, in which a corporate foundation donates money to a nonprofit organisation (Kubíčková, 2018; Gauiter & Pauche, 2015; Kotler & Lee, 2005). This research has found that the financial aspect to the relationships that Patagonia hold with local nonprofit organisations is not always the most important. Instead, the grant process and outcomes were a significant aspect to the findings, as it demonstrates Patagonia's approach to adopting trust-based principles within philanthropic giving (Jones et al, 2024). According to the six principles of trust-based philanthropy, an argument can be made that Patagonia use four of these within their approach. These include giving support beyond the cheque, do the homework, simplify and streamline paperwork and solicit and act on feedback (Powell et al, 2023; Trust Based Philanthropy, 2021). However, it is not clear whether this has

been a deliberate attempt by Patagonia to incorporate trust-based philanthropy into their model, or whether they have altered their approach more broadly to be more inclusive of the recent trends within philanthropy more generally. The non-financial elements to Patagonia's philanthropic model have been well-documented throughout this chapter, and there is considerable evidence presented that Patagonia do the homework on grantee organisations through the range of engagement mechanisms they have at their disposal. This approach enables newer organisations to establish a connection and develop a relationship with the local Patagonia store, regardless of their track record in terms of delivering on environmental outcomes. This contributes to conceptualisations of place-based philanthropy (Reid et al, 2022; Smarick, 2021; Mazzei, 2017; Karlström et al, 2009). The evidence from this chapter suggests that Patagonia do engage in place-based philanthropy because the company have been physically based in the community for a long period of time (commitment to specific places) and they have offered financial and non-financial resources through holding relationships with a host of nonprofit organisations.

Nonprofit organisations that have stopped receiving funding from Patagonia have been quick to turn to other sources of income, and it was identified that the grant amounts are not sufficient to cause significant resource losses. Most organisations that were interviewed were quick to highlight the non-financial aspects to the relationship. This includes access to the PAW and Catchafire platform, the grassroots environmental activism conference, employee volunteering hours, community tabling opportunities, event hosting, social media amplification, and features on films, videos and blogs produced by Patagonia. When non-financial mechanisms are tied into an organisations' status on a grant portal, it takes away critical resource at a time when the environmental movement needs access to as many tools and mechanisms available to combat environmental issues. It would also ensure that Patagonia remain an important component of place-based environmental movements and aid in augmenting the claim that Patagonia are authentic in their approach to environmental action.

There has been substantial evidence provided that staff employed by Patagonia have been able to engage in direct forms of activism. There have been different mechanisms through which staff at Patagonia have been able to do this. Firstly, staff have CV hours that are called 'Activism Hours'. While CV is nominally a mechanism associated with CSR activity (Brzustewicz et al, 2023; Hatami et al, 2023; Kotler & Lee, 2005), Patagonia encourage and enable staff to directly get involved with activist activities organised by the nonprofit organisations within the environmental movement. Additionally, there have been several mechanisms designed by Patagonia that places emphasis on being embedded within communities and playing a role as a CBO. This fixation in

place through an owned-and-operated store presence enables their philanthropy and activism to be place-based (Reid et al, 2022; Smarick, 2021; Colinvaux, 2018; Mazzei, 2017; Karlström et al, 2009). By integrating themselves into the fabric of a community, Patagonia have been able to build their reputation as an activist through hosting events, supporting nonprofits and tailoring their message to suit the local context.

In terms of the relationship between a grassroots environmental organisation and a corporate activist, there is significant evidence that Patagonia are genuine in their attempts to be an ally and supporter of different environmental issues. This is exemplified by the example of an EJ respondent:

> "we've always had a really good relationship with the programme people at Patagonia. And I think in terms of the place of wanting to support the work is really genuine. It's part of the whole culture […] it didn't seem like they're just doing this, […] It's a different type of partnership. Of course, because they're not in the work with us. That changed a little bit with the District 15 film because they produced that and you know that they were a little bit more than in the work with us" (Female, Development Director, CBE, 07/07/2023)

This quote highlights that another type of support that Patagonia can provide is the use of awareness raising through film (Morin et al, 2020; Shukman, 2019; Calderwood, 2018; Nicholson-Cole, 2005). It also highlights how Patagonia are not embedded within EJ communities at present: this will be developed further in Chapter Six through analysing Patagonia store locations and how they relate to income levels. Income levels are a strong indicator of the absence of EJ issues, because of the disproportionate geographical spread of environmental issues in neighbourhoods with lower incomes. The geographical distance between these two types of communities can be stark:

> "It's always good to get in front of folks […] our goal is never we're gonna raise so much money from this […] geographically the store is located 35 miles from where we work. Because it's North County, San Diego Coast, North County has a much higher income a world away. But it's great to talk to people there about the work that we do […] not only do we fundraise, but we also have petitions that we have signed by folks, so we have multiple reasons why we want to grow our base. (Female, Fundraising Manager, EHC, 10/5/2023)

Additionally, the approach taken by outdoor companies regarding environmental philanthropy has centred around issues of inclusion and diversity within outdoor spaces. There is a high level of congruence between outdoor companies and inclusive outdoor participation as supporting these kinds of initiatives aids in attracting newer audiences to their businesses. However, one

respondent argued that there are more pressing issues within the environmental movement, and that is where both philanthropy and programmes should be pivoting towards:

> "I see a lot of grants and I see a lot of opportunities like we want to get minorities outside or we want to give access to the outdoors […] you could get a few kids outdoors or you could clean the air of an entire neighbourhood. (Female, Fundraising Manager, EHC, 10/5/2023)

Programmes that address EJ would attempt to balance the scales in terms of systemic oppression caused by issues that originate outside of an individuals' or communities' sphere of influence. In addition, programmes that address EJ have more inclusive participation and motivations because it does not assume that people will end up buying products from your company if they fund these type of initiatives:

> "I think investing in environmental justice has 1) greater reach. You now it's impacting more people. Two, it's true justice. It's truly an attempt to right the scales. Not just for one person, but like a systemically. (Female, Fundraising Manager, EHC, 10/5/2023)

It is worth noting that Patagonia have taken a stance on an issue that is global in nature, but their philanthropic and non-financial offer of support has only been extended to the markets in which their products are sold. For Patagonia to demonstrate authentic leadership on a global issue, it must enable grassroots environmental activism on a global scale. This may not be compatible with their current business model as donations and resources may become diluted and ineffective, but they risk attracting backlash from environmental activists in the Global South as being elitist and only reflective of their consumers as opposed to their producers, manufacturers and supply chain operatives. To put it crudely, if you have money to buy Patagonia products, then you can be supported on the issues that affect you and your community. If you do not have that money, then you must turn to other sources.

Conclusion

This chapter has identified the different mechanisms that have been developed by Patagonia to support grassroots environmental organisations. These mechanisms have been raised and analysed from the perspectives of the grassroots environmental organisations; this addresses the gap in the literature outlined by Liang et al (2024) and Lin-Hi et al (2015) that stated most research on CSR has focused on the perspectives of corporations. The findings suggest that the grants identified in Chapter Four are an important mechanism that enables grassroots activism to occur, but the financial impact is minimal when compared to other sources of income. However, the grant process is an important finding as it demonstrates that Patagonia have pivoted to a trust-based philanthropic model (Jones et al, 2024; Wiepking & de Wit, 2024; Powell et al, 2023), which

has been highlighted to be more effective to organisations working in climate change, climate justice and environmental issues (Shrestha et al, 2023). Similarly, Patagonia's philanthropic approach follows the norms and trends associated with place-based philanthropy (Reid et al, 2022). As place-based philanthropy has tended to focus on the needs of community-based organisations, Patagonia have adopted this model through the Local Store Environmental Grants Programme.

However, the financial nature of the relationship is just one mechanism available to environmental organisations. Substantive evidence has been provided to demonstrate that Patagonia engage in the principles of embedded grantmaking, including the blending of financial resources with other types of resources (Karlström et al, 2009). The non-financial support mechanisms outlined are numerous and include holding community events at Patagonia stores, using digital platforms such as PAW and Catchafire and holding training events. Additionally, product and in-kind donations are offered to environmental organisations that provides an additional element of corporate philanthropy (Kubíčková, 2018; Gautier & Pache, 2015; Kotler & Lee, 2005). The findings from this chapter aid in conceptualising the different corporate mechanisms developed by Patagonia that are made available to environmental organisations. The next chapter examines these mechanisms from the perspective of Patagonia staff, and assesses Patagonia's model for CA from the perspectives of staff at Patagonia and the environmental organisations they support.

6. Supporting Grassroots Environmental Activism at the Local Level: Motivations, Intents and Perceptions

Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the nature of the relationship between Patagonia and environmental nonprofits within Utah. It highlighted several case studies of specific environmental issues when Patagonia have employed CA as a tool for advocacy and support. Additionally, it highlighted the different financial and non-financial support mechanisms that have been utilised by environmental nonprofits within Utah and the impact that has had within the environmental movement. This includes non-financial support mechanisms such as Community Tabling opportunities, event hosting, CV and access to digital platforms.

This chapter will meet the third research objective by examining the motivations and intents behind a corporation's pursuit of CA and how their role is perceived in supporting grassroots environmental activism. It draws on primary data from semi-structured, key-informant interviews with Patagonia and environmental organisations' staff to generate insights about how Patagonia's business model seeks to support environmental issues at the local level and is supported by secondary data analysis to augment the claims made. This is supported by my own field notes and participant observations. As I regularly attended events organised by Patagonia SLC during my fieldwork period, I wrote notes about each event that I attended to cross-reference with the insights generated through the semi-structured interviews. It begins by examining the financial mechanisms employed by the Patagonia SLC Outlet Store through the Community Store Grants Programme, before examining non-financial mechanisms such as nonprofit tabling, events, employee engagement, community engagement and the relative autonomy that the store has in determining which environmental nonprofit causes they wish to advocate for. This chapter will then outline the support that a local store receives from the Patagonia Corporate office.

Community Store Grants Programme

Environmental grantmaking is central to Patagonia's CSR model and provides a tangible outcome that assists in ensuring that any stands the company makes in relation to an issue is authentic and is backed up by prosocial corporate practice (Vredenburg et al, 2020). The Patagonia SLC Outlet Store run a community store grants programme in which staff make the collective decision on which nonprofits are going to be supported financially in that given year:

> "it's a staff decision. I'm required to set up the boundaries of it and invite the organisations that meet the requirements […] it's such a grey area with granting. And

> it's not my favourite process. And we're pushing to flex the boundaries a little bit." (Female, Activism Lead, Patagonia SLC Outlet Store, 13/07/2023)

Collective decisions made by staff enable a form of localised control that support the internalised aspects of participatory philanthropy (Taddy-Sandino, 2022; Gibson, 2018). However, it does not support the more external aspects that characterise participatory philanthropy that include making collective grantmaking decisions with the communities affected by environmental issues (Taddy-Sandino, 2022; Gibson, 2018). However, it was identified by staff at Patagonia that there are many options available to environmental nonprofits that include giving support beyond the cheque: a principle of trust-based philanthropy (Powell et al, 2023; Trust Based Philanthropy, 2021). The boundaries of the grant programme and what grants could be used for was highlighted as an important consideration when deciding who gets awarded grant funding:

> "with our grant programme, a lot of groups think that they need a grant […] everybody needs more money. But a lot of the time, they need more grant money for volunteers, or for getting clothes for our volunteers. And so that's where we find the root cause of why you need these funds, and maybe help in a different way that's more beneficial. Let's get some volunteers out to your group, or let's get some product to you" (Female, Activism Lead, Patagonia SLC Outlet Store,13/07/2023)

This highlights the role of non-financial support mechanisms that may be on offer that could assist nonprofit organisations. This includes the role of recruiting volunteers through mechanisms such as PAW or Catchafire instead of using grant money to recruit and train volunteers within programmes. This is evidence of Patagonia engaging in corporate-led CSR activities to create positive social and environmental outcomes (Brzustewicz et al, 2023; Sarkar & Kotler, 2020; Kotler & Lee, 2005). Recruiting skilled volunteers to be used at an environmental organisations' disposal could have a higher impact than a $10,000 grant as they may be able to provide a service that either increases revenues (such as volunteers sourcing, writing and winning bids) or saves the organisation money in the long run.

Product donation is another highlighted mechanism that the local store can use to support organisations. This is evidence of Patagonia's corporate philanthropy going beyond financial assistance and being inclusive of donations and in-kind services (Kubíčková, 2018; Gautier & Pache, 2015; Kotler & Lee, 2005). These products could be used in 'opportunity drawings' that not only raise funds for nonprofit organisations, but also help to align the brand with the cause in question. This supports the literature that has highlighted the role of congruence between CA stances and the causes that have been supported by a corporation (Ahmad et al, 2024; D'Arco et al, 2024; Buchanan et al, 2024; Wowak et al, 2022; Vredenburg et al, 2020). I attended many events that were either run by Patagonia or by a nonprofit organisation in which Patagonia

merchandise were available as prizes in an opportunity drawing. These normally included smaller items, such as trucker hats, beanies, t-shirts or products from the Patagonia Provisions range. At some events there was no fundraising element to the opportunity drawing; instead, tickets were allocated based on engaging with nonprofit organisations who were tabling at the event. As highlighted above, product donations can also be used for nonprofit organisations who may require more durable clothing for volunteers within specific geographical contexts. This would normally be used for outdoor-based environmental activities, such as biodiversity monitoring or taking diverse groups out to experience wilderness for the first time.

One of the findings from Chapter Five in relation to the grant process and outcomes was that the process itself has changed over time, with organisations that have received multi-year funding not being awarded grants. The perspective from staff at Patagonia highlights that this was correct, and the previous process is outlined below as:

> "Before it was open to the public, and they just had to meet the grant requirements. And then you could apply you could submit a proposal, which was then given to the staff, and everybody on the staff read it. There were probably like 20 grants submitted. And we had a giant grant meeting where we all decided who gets what money, it was like increments of like 4000 to 6000 for each group. And there were like 15 of them getting grants" (Female, Activism Lead, Patagonia SLC Outlet Store, 13/07/2023)

The analysis from Chapter Four found that the average grant size has increased over time while the total amount of philanthropic giving has decreased since a peak in 2019. This strategic change in funding has meant that while funding pots have increased in size, the number of groups receiving funding has dropped. Indeed, previous grants could be submitted as long as they fitted the grant requirements, but as the organisation has shifted to trust-based philanthropy and awarded grants under general operating requirements (Jones et al, 2024; Powell et al, 2023; Taddy-Sandino, 2022; Kasper et al, 2021), there is a need to control who is applying and what they could potentially use it for. The new process is outlined in full below:

> "last year, we invited five and funded three, we could have funded four. But we thought our money would be better in larger increments. This year, I invited 12. And we have to narrow it down to three or four, which is a group decision. And the way that I chose those 12 was I sent out a survey to 20 to 30 groups […[I made sure to say very clearly, if you would like to be considered for grant, check the box that says I want grant funding. And so from there any groups that set grant funding, and they met our requirements, I invited to set to fill out a letter of interest. And that letter of interest basically just is another checkbox of Yes, I meet the requirements. So now all 12 have submitted their letter of interest. And from this point, now, I have to pick who

> gets to submit a proposal, which our grant team doesn't want to send more than like eight, because it takes so much time for groups to submit a grant" (Female, Activism Lead, Patagonia SLC Outlet Store, 13/07/2023)

This raises several key points for consideration. One is that larger funding pots attract a lot more competition between potential grantees. With only three or four groups securing funding, the majority of applicants are likely to miss out despite being invited into a closed application process. This was the experience of many environmental organisations documented in Chapter Five. The second point for consideration is that there are lots of groups that require support of some sort which may be non-financial. This supports the previous quote which outlines the other types of support that Patagonia SLC may be able to offer, such as sourcing volunteers for projects or providing products either for staff use or for fundraising activities. Therefore, the Patagonia SLC store can offer much more than financial support: they can assist nonprofit organisations in searching for a whole range of solutions that they may need to support their operations. Thirdly, there is a lot of administration on the part of the Activism Manager at Patagonia SLC. This person must develop the shortlist, find out which organisations require financial support, and then preliminarily decide which of the twelve organisations will be asked to write a letter of interest. There is a decision to be made to cut the number of potential grantees down to eight, which involves rejecting the letters of interest for four organisations. This part of the process is one where relationships could be damaged, especially if that organisation has invested a lot of time and energy in regularly attending Community Partner Tabling events or organising other events with staff at Patagonia SLC. Finally, from those eight, the staff at Patagonia SLC decide who they want to fund based on the total amount they have available: in 2023 this was three with equal amounts, but in other years it has been more with differing amounts of grant funding. The shift to an invite only competition has been highlighted as problematic for staff at Patagonia SLC:

> "now it's on an invite only basis, which is problematic in my opinion, but they are kind of understanding that it's a tough thing. So I have to reach out and invite whoever I think will apply and will receive money, which is so ambiguous. And that's my largest issue with my job" (Female, Activism Lead, Patagonia SLC Outlet Store, 13/07/2023)

This has implications for deciding which nonprofits can get funding. To have the best chance of securing funding, nonprofit organisations must be actively involved in activism events and activities, be well-known among staff and have a distinctive model for operating that separates themselves from the rest of the competition. As alluded to in a previous quote, it takes a lot of time for environmental nonprofits to submit a request for funding and the hardest part of the job for staff at Patagonia is to decide who will not receive funding, but also may receive funding in future years. As funding amounts are still relatively low, this may put off some nonprofit

organisations who may wish to use their internal resources to search for funding from alternative sources. This was documented in Chapter Five by highlighting the increasingly important role of developing a diverse donor base that aids in ensuring environmental organisations do not succumb to mission drift and elite capture of issues: this is a prominent issue within funding from institutional foundations and donors (Wiepking & de Wit, 2024; Hunnick et al, 2021). However, it does open the door for newer nonprofit organisations with fewer financial backers to receive grants that can help the organisation grow:

> "I also want to be really thoughtful with our funding […] consecutive funding is more helpful for groups. So year after year, funding is helpful. And we're also told to find new groups and be unique and find organisations that are doing things a different way. So those are obviously controversial opinions. But navigating that with the staff has been easier because I get everybody's opinion on who everybody wants to fund." (Female, Activism Lead, Patagonia SLC Outlet Store, 13/07/2023)

This recognises that year-on-year funding can lead to a more sustained impact from projects and programmes. Multi-year programmatic grants are associated with capacity-building of grantees, whereas one-year programme grants are associated more with co-optation of issues as grantees align themselves with the priorities of funding organisations (Delfin & Tang, 2008). At the same time, space needs to be created for newer organisations that may employ different activist tactics and political mechanisms that could shape positive environmental outcomes. One such organisation that received grant funding from Patagonia in 2023 was O_2 Utah, which, as stated in the previous chapter, is organised as a 501(c)4 nonprofit organisation: this enables O_2 Utah to spend more on lobbying efforts and can endorse candidates for public office. The benefit of endorsement means that more environmental legislation could be passed at the state legislature, thereby increasing the impact of their actions.

Patagonia have attempted to branch into more traditional forms place-based and participatory philanthropy (Easterling et al, 2023; Taddy-Sandino et al, 2022; Colinvaux, 2018) through their Community Grants Programme[56], a recently launched pilot programme. It was mentioned by a Patagonia SLC Outlet employee, who described the programme as:

> "a fairly new pilot programme. And it's by region and it's outside of retail. It's up to the community to decide who Patagonia funds. If we were to get a community grants programme for Utah, you could apply to sit on a board if you are just a community member here. And you will read all the submitted proposals and decide I want Patagonia to fund this group or this group. And you all decide together as a committee. So I think that's the direction hopefully that places will go if it benefits that

[56] The Community Grants Programme is different to the Community Store Grants Programme as it does not rely on the physical presence of a store to award grants.

> community, you get a larger budget as a community grants programme, so I'm definitely pushing for that. (Patagonia SLC Activism Lead, Female, 13/07/2023)

As place-based philanthropy has tended to be theoretically defined around the idea of 'place', in particular a specific geographical location with its own socio-cultural and historical context (Smarick, 2021), it has tended to be more broad than thematic issues (such as the environment) that Patagonia have focused on (Easterling et al, 2023; Colinvaux, 2018). Therefore, an important consideration is that place-based philanthropy can be issue-focused through place. In other words, donors and granters can focus on specific issues and use place as a conduit for activism and other activities to take place. This form of philanthropy would still be categorised as place-based and it broadens the definition to be inclusive of specific issues that may affect different places at different times. This type of philanthropy still requires utilising local knowledge and enhancing locally-led decision making regarding the funding of solutions towards issues. This is because decision-makers embedded within communities are aware of the issues and the organisations who are working on the issues themselves (Reid et al, 2022). If voices from marginalised communities were incorporated into the Community Grants Programme then it would support the critical dimensions of EJ outlined in the literature focusing on procedural justice (Bell, 2014; Walker, 2012) and Schlosberg's (2004) argument that EJ needs to be locally grounded and encompassing of recognition, distribution and participation. Furthermore, this form of philanthropic giving outlined by Patagonia supports the assertion by Gilberthorpe et al (2016) that strategies related to CSR should involve the participation of the multitude of actors that are situated within local communities as opposed to being top-down implementation strategies. However, as this programme is in its infancy, it is too early to draw conclusions, and further analysis can be made once the programme has been embedded within different localities.

Nonprofit Tabling

As stated in the previous chapter, the Community Partner Tabling programme has played an important role in helping environmental nonprofit organisations engage with the Patagonia SLC store and their customers:

> "nonprofits come to us to table because they know that that's a perk that we offer. We have a very user-friendly form on our website so that nonprofits can very easily just sign up for a date. And that's just its own system that we don't really have to manage getting more people in" (Female, Activism Lead, Patagonia SLC Outlet Store, 13/07/2023)

This quote implies that the Community Partner Tabling programme at the Patagonia SLC store is a mature programme: it has been running for several years with enough interest that nonprofits continue to sign up regularly to be a part of the programme. In terms of the form on the website,

it is very user-friendly. The information needed is the name of the nonprofit organisation, the name, email address and phone number of the person tabling, the options of dates and times for tabling, and the organisation's goal when tabling with Patagonia SLC. As highlighted in Fig 6.1 this could be to share information about their work, advertise for upcoming projects, source volunteers or raise money. The process is not too arduous, making it easier for both Patagonia SLC staff and the nonprofit organisation involved.

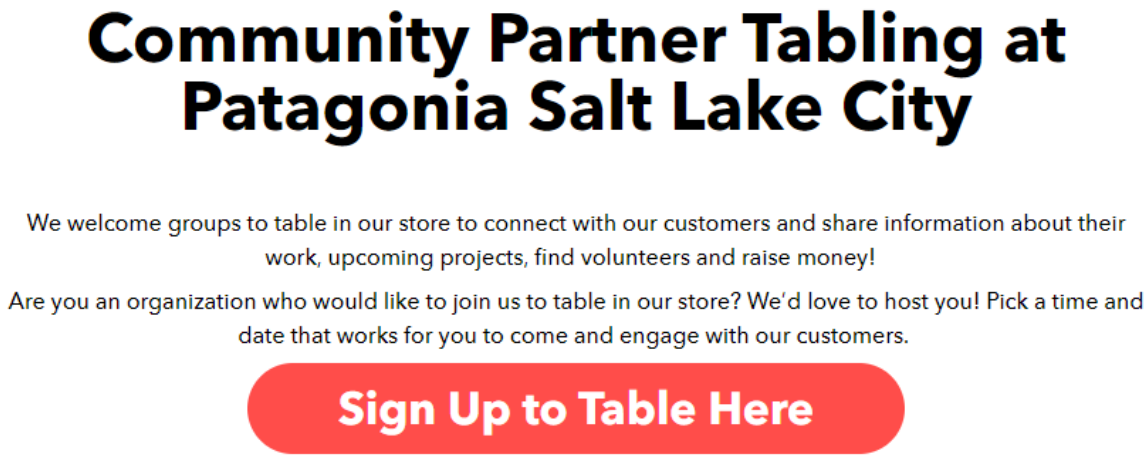


Fig 6.1: Screenshot of Patagonia SLC's website that contains a link to where community partner organisations can sign up to the Community Partner Tabling programme.

As nonprofit organisations operate in a highly fragmented marketplace, often competing for potential donors and supporters (Nguyen & Faulkner, 2020), the ability for individuals to successfully recall what a nonprofit organisation does is of critical importance. This is central to theories of branding, including brand awareness and its two properties: brand recall and brand recognition (Khurram et al, 2018). Employees at Patagonia SLC view Community Partner Tabling as an impactful action that enhances the reputation and brand recall of a nonprofit organisation:

> "To have that space at Patagonia helps to connect with people face to face, because I think a lot of people will see the name of a nonprofit somewhere. They don't really understand what they do, or they see like a sticker. And so having that named recognition, and then getting to know that there's a person behind that table that's passionate and loves their job and wants to talk about an environmental issue, I think is contagious. And it helps kind of create a personal story for it for people to then understand what this nonprofit does." (Female, Activism Lead, Patagonia SLC Outlet Store, 13/07/2023)

The focal point of contagious enthusiasm and passion for environmental issues illustrate that these issues, and the events that raise awareness of said issues, are highly personal. This aids in developing communication tools that raise the profile of the nonprofit organisation's brand and

ability to differentiate itself from competing organisations (Nguyen & Faulker, 2020). There are numerous motivations for nonprofit organisations to consider using the Community Partner Tabling programme:

> "sometimes people are just looking for email signups to get more people on their newsletter. But other times, they sign up specifically to table to share out a petition and get signatures. And so there's just sometimes that activism aspect to tabling to engage customers and people coming into the store in that way" (Female, Activism Lead, Patagonia SLC Outlet Store, 13/07/2023)

This supports the findings from Chapter Five that demonstrated the relationship between Patagonia and an environmental organisation can be categorised as activist in nature. As Patagonia create a space for direct activism to occur within their stores, it enhances their role as an enabler and supporter of activism within local communities. The activism aspect has potential to cause controversy and could, theoretically, potentially deter customers from revisiting the store. The risk of this is reduced when communication channels are kept open and honest, building and ensuring trust within the relationship between Patagonia staff and the nonprofit entity. This trust guarantees that if an activist ask at a community partner tabling event is controversial, Patagonia staff have prior knowledge of the ask and its potential controversy. Controversial asks are never a surprise, but instead have been risk assessed and managed accordingly to ensure that the nonprofit is supported with whatever they may need to get the most of out the Community Partner Tabling:

> "I'd say the goal of every event is to amplify a nonprofit […] whether through fundraising, sharing their mission or something they're working on. But every event we hold is to benefit a nonprofit in some way" (Female, Activism Lead, Patagonia SLC Outlet Store, 13/07/2023)

To-date there have been no studies that have examined how community tabling can be utilised to support the aims and ambitions of nonprofit organisations. These findings are an original contribution to the literature on mechanisms of environmental activism within corporate spaces. As an important finding in this research study, the utilisation of space within a corporate store for environmental nonprofits to engage the community with opportunities for direct activism is a tool that can be replicated among other businesses seeking to support CBOs. Additionally, hosting environmental nonprofit organisations is an example of consistent commitment to an issue that removes the perception of fake engagement: this is integral in achieving authenticity in CA stances (Lim & Young, 2021; Vredenburg et al, 2020). As a mechanism for authentic CA, hosting nonprofit organisations within a corporate space is not a marketing-driven or corporate-driven activity (Sarkar & Kotler, 2020), but instead is a society-driven activity because it relies on community-based nonprofit organisations directly applying to the Community Partner Tabling programme.

This is an important addition to conceptualisations of CSR and associated CA, and is itself an example of CA in action (Sarker & Kotler, 2020). This addition to how CA can be operationalised will be developed further in Chapter Eight.

Winter Walks

The Winter Walks series was run by Patagonia SLC Outlet Store during March 2023 to mark the 50th anniversary of Patagonia's founding. This was the first of a series of events planned by Patagonia stores across the country to mark the occasion. The walks were essentially a partnership between the local Patagonia store and an environmental non-profit, although one of their Winter Walk series was a collaboration between three businesses: Patagonia, Hoka, and Keep Nature Wild. Non-profits that took part in this were URC, O_2 Utah, and Friends of Tracy Aviary. Each walk was planned and hosted by a different Patagonia employee, who had taken the lead on organising the date and location of the walk with the partner organisation.

The walks were held on Wednesday mornings between 8-9am in a different city park each week. The first walk was held in early March 2023 and, with all the precipitation that the Wasatch Front experienced in the winter, it made for a very wet walk with very few walkers. It was mentioned by URC that the record winter snowpack would lead to an increased flood risk across the valley over the spring. The timing of the walks probably contributed to the varying attendance. The first walk that I went on was attended by two employees from URC, two employees from Patagonia SLC Outlet, and myself. It was a brutally cold morning, but we had a great conversation and walk around the base of the canyon. The second walk I went on was organised with running brand Hoka and outdoor apparel brand Keep Nature Wild. This event, held in Sugarhouse Park, a short walk away from the Patagonia SLC Outlet store, was an organised litter pick-up run with the authority of the local municipality. There were twenty-five people in attendance, ranging from individuals who did not know anyone through to whole families. This walk involved participants splitting up into groups with trash bags, gloves and litter pick-up sticks to go around the park and collect as much litter as they could find, and to leave any dangerous litter (such as needles and glass) for the municipality to pick up later. Following this, there was a raffle with prizes donated by Patagonia, Hoka and Keep Nature Wild.

The third walk was organised with Friends of Tracy Aviary and held at Liberty Park, where the Tracy Aviary is located. This walk around the park was run by volunteers from the Tracy Aviary and involved identifying bird species that lived in the park. It became clear that the GSL is an important migratory route for birds flying both north and south, and the reduction in the lake's

size was going to be a growing problem for many bird species. This event was attended by around fifteen people and attendees met for coffee and discussions beforehand.

The final walk was with O_2 Utah in the peak above The Avenues, a series of streets that are located between the Utah Capitol building and the University of Utah. The views from this location offered incredible views over the entire valley. This was attended by four employees from O_2 Utah, two employees from Patagonia, and a couple of citizens. It was the first collaboration between O_2 Utah and Patagonia that I was aware of, but O_2 Utah had previously organised similar walks during the summer months for people concerned about air quality and pollution to meet up and discuss while taking a walk. It was mentioned that although attendance for these events was sporadic, with some weeks attracting more attendees than others, it was still a nice way for the team to get together outside the office and take a walk together. It should be stated that organising outside events during the winter months is a daunting challenge within the Salt Lake Valley due to the harsh weather conditions. Additionally, organising outside events during the middle of the week was not likely to attract hundreds of people to attend, but instead attracted individuals who were keen to hear more about the work that environmental nonprofits do within the Salt Lake Valley.

While the Winter Walks series was a recent innovation in Patagonia's offer to environmental nonprofits that coincided with the 50th anniversary of Patagonia's founding, the low attendance and variability in weather conditions meant that this was a low-impact activity. It was clear that higher attendance was linked to the opportunity to receive in-kind product donations, a core component within the concept of corporate philanthropy (Von Schnurbein et al, 2016; Kotler & Lee, 2005, Carrol, 1991). Likewise, the Winter Walks programme is an example of the consistency in providing support mechanisms for nonprofit organisations, thereby increasing the authenticity of Patagonia's environmental CA stances (Lim & Young, 2021; Vredenburg et al, 2020). In terms of the Winter Walks programme contribution to the literature on environmentalism and EJ, the only organisation that participated in the Winter Walks series that worked on the distributive dimension of EJ (Walker, 2012) was O_2 Utah. The other organisations were more concerned with the broader environmental movement aims of water conservation, biodiversity loss and waste management.

Employee Engagement: Organising Activism Events

At the store level, there are a multitude of ways for employees to get involved in the many aspects of Patagonia's business operations. This is not only to promote opportunities for employee development, but also to explore their passions and interests if it aligns with Patagonia's core

business mode. The store runs a series of niches for employees to get involved with that include marketing, warehouse operations, visual merchandising and activism. Each of these niches are headed by a manager, who runs their niche as part of their weekly hours on the retail rota. While each manager is expected to spend eight hours a week managing their individual niche, the reality is different:

> "it's a pretty grey area […] On paper, for my position, specifically, it says eight hours a week, which is not possible. It's all just kind of like semantics saying eight hours, but chatting with other activism team leads throughout the company, everybody has their own method of doing it. And I think, for us, when we see that the floor is okay, we can kind of step away for a while" (Female, Activism Lead, Patagonia SLC Outlet Store, 13/07/2023)

This demonstrates that there are time-constraints imposed on managers who want to take on a leadership role within the local store. The nature of working in a retail environment ultimately means there will be periods of slower customer traffic and busier periods where everyone needs to be present within the physical store space to keep operations running smoothly. At the same time, planning events with nonprofits takes up a lot of time, and the quote above highlights that this is not always possible during the allotted eight hours a week. This raises a question: how do Patagonia continue to organise and run lots of events at the local level? The answer is relatively simple: ensure that all staff can work on a niche and have autonomy to run local events:

> "I think in retail, they always talk about how you've got to be adaptable. So I think it's just season to season changes how we get to allocate our time. And I think across the company, there's always never quite enough time […] we have such an active community and an active staff who wants to go out and do and create and build that there is just so much more time needed for things outside of retail. But because our staff so engaged […] there's also people that are wanting to jump in and help. A lot of people help plan events and kind of take the lead" (Female, Activism Lead, Patagonia SLC Outlet Store, 13/07/2023)

This stresses that the local store has both an active community and active staff willing to engage on a wide range of environmental issues. The opportunity for retail staff to work on individual niches enables staff to make autonomous decisions about the type of events they want to organise and run with the help and support of local nonprofit organisations. While these events can be categorised as non-financial support, they do require planning from paid employees, and employees are paid for their time at these events. This indicates an indirect financial resource implication for the company to consider when planning events. However, these events are not philanthropic in nature but are more concerned with elevating the issues that environmental non-profits work on. During my fieldwork, Patagonia organised several events within SLC that coincided with their celebrations for being in business for fifty years. The way these events are

structured were through a Patagonia store employee planning and organizing of an event, and then other employees assist them in delivering the event. For example, one of the store employees took the lead on a regenerative urban agriculture event and spent a fair amount of time within their working hours leading on the organising aspects, including asking local non-profits to come along to the event and table. This was documented in Chapter Five. Local nonprofits in attendance were Tree Utah, GULB and WCG. The Activism Team Lead at the Patagonia Outlet Store oversaw the events, but the structure and planning were left to the lead team member(s). This allowed a sense of leadership and autonomy over the structure of events. It reinforces the importance of local-level autonomy at the store level in outlining the priorities for the store in terms of both the types of events they organise but also the environmental themes they want conveyed through these events.

This was a recent change in how the local store operate their niches. There was a deliberate business decision made to have employees involved in niches based on their interests and passions:

> "we went through a whole year, everyone was part of one niche. And then we're like let's change it up […] for the core staff, people really know what they're interested in passionate about. But we have a lot of people who've just joined us, or people are just staying for like six months, and they get to kind of dip their toes in all different areas." (Female, Marketing Lead, Patagonia SLC Outlet Store, 13/07/2023)

This involvement enables employees to develop and learn about the ways in which Patagonia aims to differentiate itself from other business models, including its emphasis on employee activism. This sits alongside their day-to-day job as part of working in a retail environment, and employees are paid for their time performing in these roles. This appears to be a tool for improving skills across the entirety of the business that can be utilised in ensuring staff are attracted to work for a company and aids in employee retention (Jiang & Luo, 2024; Kim et al, 2020; Lee & Chen, 2018; Carnahan et al, 2017; Slack et al, 2015) as well as enabling employees to use their abilities and skillsets to the maximum extent possible (Ikram et al, 2021). This is further evidenced by:

> "you're signing up for things that interest you to kind of get to know more sides of the company, rather than this will be my job forever. I'm interested in the store web page. Maybe I'll shadow that manager one day and see how they do it" (Female, Marketing Lead, Patagonia SLC Outlet Store, 13/07/2023)

This appears to distinguish from other retail and customer-facing environments where employees are cogs in a well-oiled machine and are not included within CSR initiatives (Ikram et al, 2021). This is partly due to emphasis and encouragement on building relationships with customers at the local level, and it does not even have to do with activism or finding a new nonprofit to support. It can even be as simple as asking a customer about a recent trip that they have been on:

> "the difference at Patagonia is, we are always told that we're the face of the company, they value retail so much. And so we are encouraged to […] chat with customers about a trip […] it not only creates an experience for the customer, but it keeps us interested, they want us to not be robots and just caring about clothes and what we sell because we don't work on commission, we don't really care if we sell anything or not. We just want people to understand what our company does. And we're the face to educate people for that" (Female, Marketing Lead, Patagonia SLC Outlet Store, 13/07/2023)

Patagonia has built a reputation around being an environmentally friendly company (Shourkaei et al, 2024; Rattalino, 2018; O'Rourke & Strand, 2017) and one that takes action on environmental matters (Eilert & Cherup, 2020). But that does mean that the company itself is fixated on the trends within the environmental movement: instead, it innovates and ensures that it can align itself with many different facets of the environmental movement. This helps to continuously raise the education levels of staff on a broad range of environmental issues, aiding in staff retention (Jiang & Luo, 2024; Ikram et al, 2021; Kim et al, 2020) and ensuring staff can be supported as the company switches focus between different issues:

> "I think the company innovates I would say it's not just a retail company. I think there's so many different facets. And I've been there for six years so it's kept me there that long […] each quarter something new comes up […] we really want to switch our focus and focus on our provision side or regenerative agriculture side of the business. And so that keeps me on my toes […] it's always things that I'm not familiar with" (Female, Activism Lead, Patagonia SLC Outlet Store, 13/07/2023)

In terms of engaging in CA, there are some deliberate mechanisms in place to enable Patagonia to respond quickly to events happening in the local area or across the wider region, whether that be in the rest of the country or worldwide. In part this is down to Patagonia's history of engaging on a wide range of environmental issues, whether that be through corporate philanthropy, awareness raising, or using powerful forms of media to get their position across to the public. Patagonia's track record of engaging on a wide range of issues and using their platform to take a stand on a side of a publicly contentious issue has enabled them to respond more quickly and efficiently when new issues surface or emerge (Nam et al, 2023). As demonstrated in previous chapters, these issues do not emerge in a vacuum and are, instead, intrinsically linked to other issues that nonprofit organisations have worked on previously. This is best summarised by the following quote from Patagonia employees:

> "I think that Patagonia has throughout its history been at the forefront of issues, but also […] consistently supporting issues that there's so much understanding, there's all these foundational statements or support or initiatives within the company that when they need to take a stand really quickly, they've already had all of this stuff to back up that statement or to back up what their quick decision and that any quick decision

> that's made is never just a quick decision that they've had this work in the process all along to be able to stand up for things" (Female, Activism Lead, Patagonia SLC Outlet Store, 13/07/2023)

This demonstrates that having internal processes and foundational statements in place enables companies to pivot quickly in the changing face of civil society demands (Nam et al, 2023). While no one company can hope to address all environmental issues in a place as large as the U.S., Patagonia have been able to respond to environmental and social issues in a wide range of locations, often through their grant giving programme to environmental nonprofits. The relationships built with grantees through the grant giving programme enable Patagonia to be aware of and respond to other environmental issues that may be happening at that location. This is more the case when there is a physical store presence, as staff can build relationships directly at the local level and feed that directly back to Corporate Patagonia. This correlates to the findings from Chapter Four that demonstrate that states with a Patagonia store presence receive more funding compared to areas that do not have a store presence, and provides further evidence that supports the notion that Patagonia engage in place-based philanthropy (Reid et al, 2022; Smarick, 2021; Colinvaux, 2018). When directing large campaigns against an issue at the national level, Corporate Patagonia provide support to staff working at the local level to assist them when dealing with members of the public, some of whom may be against the stand taken by Corporate Patagonia. The relationship between the Corporate Patagonia office and local Patagonia stores is critical in ensuring staff are supported, and the process was outlined below:

> "But every single time they're about to release a statement or a campaign or anything, even if it's something that you don't think is going to be controversial, they're like, we've been researching this for six months. Here are all the talking points. Here are some Q&A's here. Here's a frequently asked question you'll probably get. You'll probably get the campaign before it is released. […] it's all so thoughtful to protect us, and we're all very empowered to protect each other at the store level. So if there is any hostility or anything, we have the empowerment to say you're not welcome here" (Female, Marketing Lead, Patagonia SLC Outlet Store, 13/07/2023)

Again, this demonstrates the importance that Patagonia places on its brick-and-mortar retail stores in terms of delivering the ethos and moral values that Patagonia has as part of its brand identity and recognition (Khurram et al, 2018). The ability to make employees feel "empowered" to take a stand themselves and to protect themselves at the store level is a notable finding from this research study and contributes towards understanding how supporting grassroots activism can shape positive social and environmental outcomes for CSR strategies. Additionally, it provides a moral dimension to CA stances, as staff are empowered to make moral judgments and are internally supported to make those judgments (Sibai et al, 2021).

Embeddedness within the Community

In terms of the localisation of each Patagonia store, it is important for the employees to be engaged in local-level activism and have an awareness of environmental issues at hand there. However, this should form an integral part of a cohesive strategy for engagement in environmental issues that includes the staff at local stores interacting with staff at the Corporate Patagonia office on a regular basis. This can aid in elevating place-based issues that might need more attention, drawing on the significant influence and reach that the Corporate Patagonia brand has compared to local stores. This dimension is worth quoting in detail because it raises several further points of consideration:

> "each store is so hyper localised is not by accident […] It's on purpose because that's where the change starts, and so we can look at our local community and say what are the needs of this local community because they're not going to be the exact same as in Denver. But they might be similar […] this group is working on air quality in Utah. And so we're going to help that and support that as a local store. And I know Patagonia as a big corporation cares about air quality overall. And they can give us the resources and the trust to attack it at a local level. And then the trust and the relationship to bring it back and say, hey, this gondola is actually just bigger than the local front, and we need your help. So I think in every Patagonia interview, they're emphasised like the store is supposed to be a gift to the community and that the localization of each Patagonia is so important to Patagonia as a whole." (Female, Activism Lead, Patagonia SLC Outlet Store, 13/07/2023)

This provides some notable insights. Firstly, the idea of the local store being a gift to the community reveals how Patagonia perceive their presence in the community to be. This could be examined under two different lenses. On the one hand, the 'store-as-community-gift' reveals that the community are 'lucky' to have a local Patagonia store, in that they were chosen to host a Patagonia store out of many possible options. On the other hand, this could be construed as a way for Patagonia to give back to the communities in which they are based, which is a foundational principle of stakeholder capitalism (BRT; 2019; Sanford, 2011) and CSR (Carroll, 2016). The local community has awarded them a social license to open a store in that vicinity, and with that social license comes an expectation that they will be members of the community and not be extractive entities that suck wealth and opportunity outside of the area.

Secondly, it highlights the localisation of environmental issues at the store level. This design is purposeful to allow for the local community to express their concerns over the environmental issues that are so prominent in that geography. In some cases, there may be similarities between the issues faced by communities in Utah and other communities, such as Colorado or California. But these issues and may be completely different to environmental issues faced by communities

in New York, Boston or Chicago. This is supported by local staff voting on the organisations that they want to fund in each grant-giving cycle, as they can choose to support environmental grantees that are either working on a prominent local environmental issue or they have invested a lot of energy into building relationships with the store that an employee feel might be worth rewarding. It also reflects the perception of the store within the community itself. Many businesses that have brick-and-mortar operations award grants to community organisations. For example, British supermarket Tesco have an in-store system in which customers are given tokens based on the amount they have spent to vote for which local organisations should be given grant-funding. So, CSR and philanthropy is not a new or radically different phenomenon, even at the local level. What makes the Patagonia case slightly different is that it is the employees themselves who chose to vote on what issues they would like to fund, as opposed to customers, executives or even the community organisations themselves.

Thirdly, the two issues that were discussed within this quote (air quality and the gondola proposal) were two of the most prominent and public-facing environmental issues that were being fiercely fought over during the fieldwork period. Air quality, as mentioned previously, is a tangible environmental issue with demonstrable impacts on healthcare and life expectancy along the Wasatch Front (Lareau et al, 2013). Two out of three of the 2023 Patagonia SLC Outlet environmental grantees were air quality organisations (O_2 Utah and UPHE). For air quality, there is enough evidence that corporate Patagonia is working on the same issue that they can provide resources and trust that the store can work with local organisations at the local level. However, the other issue is the gondola. This issue, which was outlined by several research participants, namely at SOC, but also at Black Diamond and SUWA, was escalated from the local store to the corporate Patagonia office, which would run the brand's social media accounts with much larger followings. The corporate office trust that the local store would bring their attention to environmental issues that need considerable effort and resources to fight. It highlights the autonomy that the local Patagonia store has in determining which issues they should fund and support, and also the trust that they can escalate issues to the corporate office when they feel their time and resources would be best utilised to help solve, or contribute towards solving, a specific issue.

Deciding to be embedded within a community is a deliberate decision for any business: businesses of any size conduct extensive research before making decisions about where to locate their stores and production facilities. Research has identified many factors that go into business location decision-making, including but not limited to: an area's business climate and attitudes of local and state governments (Galbraith & De Noble, 1988), tax incentives (Button, 2019), good

transportation links (Zandiatashbar et al, 2019; Forkenbrock & Foster, 1996), availability of skilled labour (Karakaya & Canel, 1998), and proximity and access to markets (Karakaya & Canel, 1998; Galbraith & De Noble, 1988). Corporate Patagonia staff would have made decisions on where to locate their stores that would have involved analysing the optimal locations that could enhance business outcomes but also reach new markets. In SLC, the Patagonia Outlet Store is situated in the Sugarhouse neighbourhood. Sugarhouse has good transportation links: it is connected to the UDOT system through a streetcar system and situated less than one hundred metres from the second-longest interstate highway in the U.S. (1-80[57]). Furthermore, it is an area of the city which has seen high inter- and intra- state migration as people are attracted to its close links to the outdoor recreation options along the Wasatch Front and in Sugarhouse Park. The decision to move there was a deliberate and considered one:

> "That was a decision I want to say, like 15 years ago because of a lease ending. So they were like this is where people are moving. This is seeming to be the right spot. I'd love to see us move out of Sugarhouse. Personally, I'd like to be more in the industry area, more West by the highway, it seems we've kind of hit the mark on a lot of things in Sugar House. We've reached that community, let's try a new one and find new organisations to work with." (Female, Activism Lead, Patagonia SLC Outlet Store, 13/07/2023)

This raises an interesting point: important consideration should be made to where Patagonia not only choose to locate their stores, but where they feel they could move within cities. Across the U.S., Patagonia has thirty-eight stores located, of which five are dedicated Outlet Stores. California has the most Patagonia stores with seven. These are located in Cardiff-by-the-Sea, Palo Alto, Pasadena, San Francisco, Santa Cruz (Outlet Store), Santa Monica and Ventura. Colorado has three Patagonia stores (Denver, Boulder and Telluride), while New York City has two stores in Manhattan and one store in Brooklyn. Chicago, Boston and Atlanta all have two Patagonia stores. Hawaii has two stores, with one located in Hale'iwa and the other in Honululu). Likewise, Texas has two stores, one in Dallas and the other in Austin. States that have one store each are: Maine (Freeport- Outlet Store), Maryland (Balitmore), Minnesota (St Paul), Montana (Dillon- Outlet Store), Nevada (Reno- Outlet Store), North Carolina (Charlotte), Oregon (Portland), Pennsylvania (Pittsburgh), Tennessee (Nashville), Utah (SLC- Outlet Store), Virginia (Alexandria), Washington (Seattle) and Washington D.C.

This is important as it gives an indication of the neighbourhoods and communities that Patagonia have deliberately chosen to situate themselves in. As mentioned by the Activism Lead at the Patagonia SLC Outlet Store, staff feel that they would be better relocating within cities when they

[57] I-80 is an east-west transcontinental freeway (San Francisco to New York).

feel saturation with environmental awareness within a particular neighbourhood. Therefore, it is important to consider the median incomes of the neighbourhoods where Patagonia currently have their owned and operated stores. When you add in the median income of the Zip codes where Patagonia stores are located and compare it to the state median income, it reveals some interesting results. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the median household income in the U.S. is US$74,755 while the mean average household income is US$105,555. This demonstrates that most stores are located in zip codes which are higher than the state average in which they are located, and are above the average for the entire U.S. (see Fig 6.2). Palo Alto has the highest positive differential as the median income for Zip code 94301 (where Patagonia are located) is $217,111, compared to the Californian state median income of $91,152. This is a difference of $126,459. The second highest differential is the Patagonia store on the Upper-West Side of New York City ($87,437 above the state median income). Boston has the highest negative differential, with the store located in a Zip code with a median income of $-43,034 to Massachusetts average. Interestingly, Patagonia also has a store in the city of Cambridge in the Greater Boston area that posts a positive differential of $23,832. Sixty-six percent of Patagonia stores post positive differentials (25), with thirty-four percent of Patagonia stores posting minus differentials (13). Interestingly, the sixty percent of the locations of Patagonia Outlet stores are in Zip codes with minus differentials (Dillon, Freeport and Reno), while the other two stores have a smaller positive differential ($1,213 for SLC and $10,810).

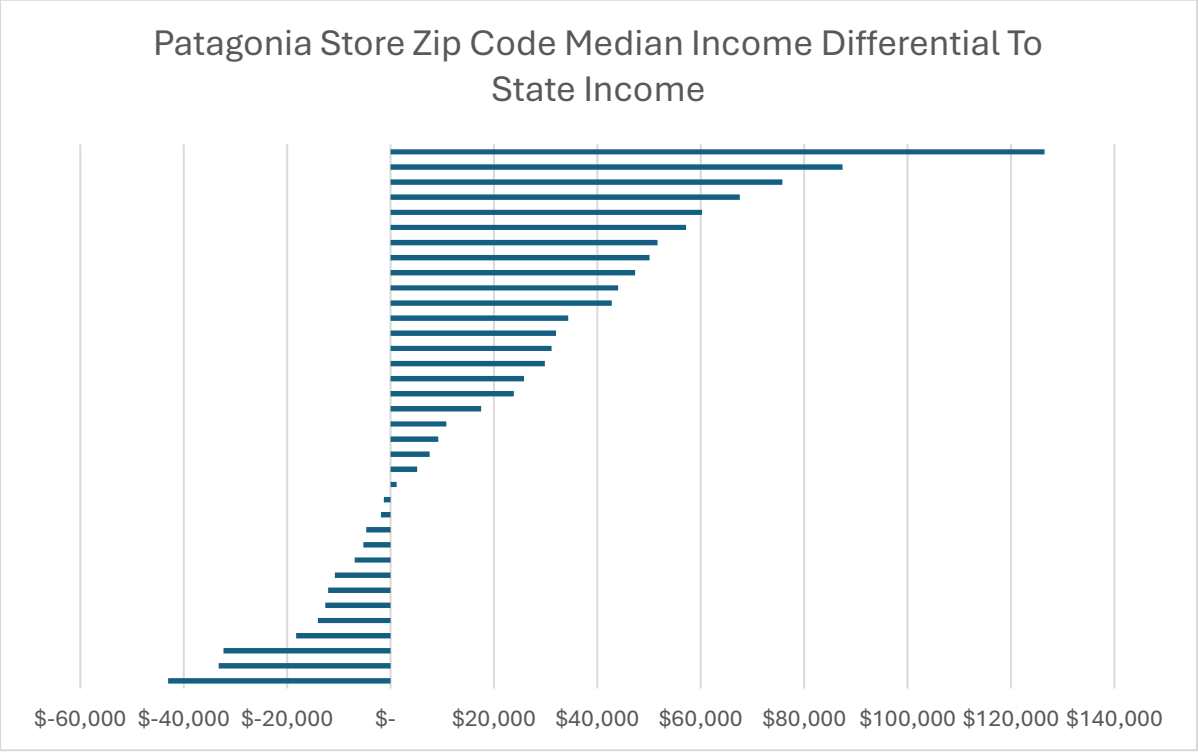


Figure 6.2: Patagonia Store Zip Code Median Income Differential to State Income.

This suggests a few noteworthy analytical points. Firstly, Patagonia have placed their Outlet Stores in locations where customers may not be able to afford Patagonia clothing and therefore can be attracted to the brand at a more affordable price. Secondly, Patagonia have deliberately placed their owned and operated stores in locations where the median average income is higher than the state average. This could reflect the affordability of their clothing and, therefore, Patagonia understand that they need to cater to a certain market. However, Patagonia also sell their clothing through licensed suppliers which may exist in the same communities, as well as operating an e-commerce platform. Therefore, a point that can be made here is that Patagonia do not need to locate their stores in more affluent communities. Situating themselves in more affluent communities creates barriers for environmental nonprofit organisations, especially those focused on EJ and frontline environmental activism, to be able to attend store events such as Community Tabling and nonprofit organised events. Situating in affluent locations may also attract environmental organisations that already attract large amounts of funding and may not need a store grant. As the findings in Chapter Five demonstrated, all nonprofit organisations that were interviewed appreciate the value of financial donations from any source as collectively they enable the organisation to be able to carry out the projects they need to. This creates a difficult decision for Patagonia staff to create an equitable grant programme that inclusively incorporates the diverse needs of the growing environmental movement (Hawken, 2007).

The third point to be made here is that the locations are overwhelmingly urban. This is not surprising given the different dimensions of business location decision-making. However, for an outdoor apparel brand that promotes environmental activism and inclusive outdoor recreation, an assumption could be made that there is a gap between how staff in different Patagonia stores are able to tell authentic stories of environmental activism for issues outside of their specific context. For example, the BENM case study outlined in Chapter Seven was able to be well-articulated by staff at the Patagonia SLC Outlet Store, but the same may not be true with staff in Boston or Atlanta. Likewise, staff at Patagonia SLC Outlet store were perhaps not as well acquainted with the types of environmental issues that other store locations were advocating for. This highlights the role of Corporate Patagonia in conducting research and training staff across the entirety of the U.S. on the broad range of environmental issues and enables individual stores to be focused on the hyper-localisation of environmental issues within their communities.

The fourth point is that there is potential for elite capture of environmental issues (Bloomfield, 2014), especially in locations where the median income is significantly higher than other neighbourhoods. However, the local autonomy of stores in selecting which grants will be funded, as opposed to communities themselves voting on the issues, is one way that Patagonia can stop

this issue from happening. However, if staff are recruited locally then they may not have knowledge of the diverse range of environmental issues that could exist outside of their specific context, and it highlights the important role of each stores' Activism Manager in curating the invite list of potential environmental grantees. This is one way to avoid elite capture of issues and could ensure that the grants are awarded to the most appropriate organisations.

Alternative perspectives are offered by grassroots environmental activist organisations that critically reflect on the main audience for Patagonia's products and services. For example, within the wilderness movement, SUWA argue that Patagonia have a specific audience that aligns with the audiences within factions of the environmental movement:

> "I think they also have a really specific audience, like it's very affluent and white, and that's an audience that I come across a lot in my work and to make the wilderness movement one that has all of us part of was on my priority list" (Female, Utah Organiser, SUWA, 26/7/2023)

This recognises that Patagonia's approach to environmentalism has been entrenched in the perspectives of affluency and whiteness, which is a commonality between supporters of the wilderness movement and of Patagonia as a company. As Patagonia attempt to rebrand themselves as an advocate of EJ and anti-racism, it remains to be seen whether or not their customers will join them on that journey or inadvertently boycott them for their stance. However the nature of the relationship with Patagonia is that they are willing to leverage their brand position and reputation to support environmental groups while not expecting anything back as a condition of their support:

> "I don't see a conflict of interest with Patagonia[…] they lend us their credibility. They don't ask for anything back […] there are organisations that do business with corporations where it is a quid pro quo. We have avoided those kinds of situations and Patagonia […] it's a one way relationship. They're not afraid of controversy. You know they do what they believe. I am sure that there are people that view the Patagonia brand more favourably because you're willing to take on this activism. But there's never a sense truly from my part, that Patagonia is expecting anything back from us." (Male, Executive Director, SUWA, 5/5/2023)

In terms of supporting the various (distributive, procedural and recognition) dimensions of EJ (Walker, 2012; Jamieson, 2007, Schlosberg, 2007, Bullard, 2005b), Patagonia engage in all three dimensions in various guises. They support procedural justice through large donations to environmental nonprofit organisations that conduct legal work, such as WELC, EarthJustice, and SUWA. These organisations all get involved in environmental litigation and regularly file lawsuits against federal agencies and individuals in breach of environmental regulations. Patagonia also support some elements of distributive justice, such as the work conducted by organisations such

as EHC, CBE, CFROG and O_2 Utah. In terms of recognising EJ, Patagonia support BEP, UDB, URC and SUWA, all of whom work on respect for diverse cultural perspectives to be incorporated into land and water management plans. As justice as recognition is concerned with respect and value of groups, there are multiple projects run by these nonprofit organisations centred around elevating Indigenous voices into environmental management programmes.

Overall, there is a recognition that Patagonia play the role of ally within the EJ movement. This is partly due to geographical factors, such as the locations of their stores (this is examined in Chapter Seven). The role of Patagonia these organisations is to raise awareness of issues faced by frontline communities and their coalitions:

> "Patagonia is more of an ally in this space […] they're not directly part of the frontline communities. They're not part of the coalitions. But they are a key ally in raising awareness of the issues communities face (Female, Development Director, CBE, 7/7/2023)

Others reflected on the influence of Yvon Chouinard in influencing Patagonia's reputation within the environmental movement:

> "I know that Patagonia truly because of their owner, they truly have made that commitment for all the right reasons as opposed to just, you know, trying to look good" (Female, Development Director, WCG, 3/11/2022)

In terms of more general stances made by any company, one interesting observation was the role of individuals and employees setting the mission and vision for a company, and it is these individuals who are the ones who demonstrate leadership.

> "companies are made-up of individuals and the individuals are the people who are setting the mission and the vision for the organisation. I don't know if you can ever be neutral to and if you're neutrality is a sort of way of consenting to the bad that's going on in the world […] to be taking a stand on what you believe in as a leader and as someone who can make decisions in an organisation is important" (Female, Operations Manager, Save the Waves, 10/8/2023)

Others were quick to point out that companies that take a stance on complex issues that are controversial will only lead to future success the brand may experience in the marketplace. This would demonstrate an innovative approach and would lead to any former customers returning to companies when the issue is centrally within the public consciousness:

> "companies should go ahead and take a stand. You might lose some customers, but they'll come back eventually because where else are they going to go? At some point, there will be no companies that are not talking about climate change or not reporting on their emissions or whatever it is that they're concerned about there will be

> nowhere else to go. You have like the innovation curve and you have the first adopters and you have these laggards and so that's the way we're going to change. And if you're a company, you've got to be looking forward. You know you don't want to cater to your laggards because you will lose business. You'll lose more business that way than aligning with the direction that everyone's going and being a fast follower" (Male, Former Sustainability Lead Patagonia, 3/7/2023)

It is important to recognise that the size of a business can play a huge role in the stances they can take. Public corporations may need to seek more clearance from shareholders before taking a stance on an issue, whereas private corporations are more agile and adapt quicker to social cues. Private corporations vary in size, but it could be argued, as one respondent did, that "the smaller the corporation, the more authentic the relationship" (Female, GULB).

Enabling Local-Level Autonomy: Support from Patagonia Corporate Office

It is clear from previous sections of this chapter that there is substantial autonomy exercised by the Patagonia SLC Outlet Store regarding the breadth and depth of issues the store would like to engage with. For this to happen, there are several support mechanisms offered by Corporate Patagonia that enables store-level autonomy to take ownership of the issues they consider to be important to the local community. Some of this is in the form of corporate directives, which set out the requirements for each store to host nonprofit organisations and associated events. Others are in the form of equipment provision which enables events to run smoothly and professionally:

> "the requirements for each store is to host at least two tables and one event a month, and that comes from corporate. And they provide guidelines, like a rule book, basically, here's how to pay vendors. And here's how to host a film screening. We have a giant screen that we set up and we've got all the chairs and kind of AV equipment needed to host speakers or films. And that stuff all comes from corporate or they provide tents that if we're going to be tabling outside. But then each store is left to totally plan their own events, dream up whatever fits their store needs and their staff desires and the community" (Female, Activism Lead, Patagonia SLC Outlet Store, 13/07/2023)

This raises three points deserving of attention. The first point is that each store is directed by Corporate Patagonia to host events and nonprofits on a regular basis, with the directive being to host two Community Partner Tabling events and one other event each month. As the previous chapter outlined, this ensures that a steady stream of nonprofit organisations are able to table at the stores to raise awareness about their mission and come with specific asks for the community. The second is that Corporate Patagonia provide key equipment needed to run successful events, whether that be film screenings, tabling events or local market stalls, either at their store or out in the local community. For example, the Patagonia Outlet Store had a gazebo that was used for

community events such as Sugarhouse Rocks (a local festival held monthly in Sugarhouse during the summer months that played live music and invited local businesses to set up stalls) and activities planned during the series of Winter Walks (see Fig 6.3). This serves as a visible reminder of the brand's support of initiatives that affect people that live and work in the area.

Fig 6.3: Researcher's own photograph of Patagonia's gazebo used for eventing outdoors.

The third and arguably most important point is that Corporate Patagonia enable autonomy at the local level that empowers staff to plan their own events that fit the demands and desires of staff and the local community. The Patagonia SLC Outlet Store were ambitious in this regard, organising double the mandated tabling events at the store and deliberately creating a busy environment:

> "And I think our team is really ambitious. And so I think we average probably like four events a month. And maybe at least five tabling. So it's busy, but it's busy because we want it to be at our store. Not because it's required in the same way." (Female, Activism Lead, Patagonia SLC Outlet Store, 13/07/2023)

This autonomy is exercised when retail stores select grant recipients and build relationships with them. To augment this claim, it is prudent to delve into the experiences of environmental grantees in terms of how the relationship has been able to develop. For example, one respondent mentioned the importance of the local store and the specificity in addressing environmental issues locally:

> "So the majority of the time that we've worked with Patagonia, it was with their store based grants program and it was specific to Salt Lake […] that was more based on the individual store choosing us out of different grant applicants. And we had a relationship with that Salt Lake City outlet store which is very cool place and has really lovely people that work there" (Female, Donor Relations Officer, WRA, 16/11/2022)

The individual store choosing to award grants to local organisations is an example of local autonomy in action. Local autonomy was also captured by SOC in relation to raising awareness of issues and campaigns related to organisational priorities:

> "The Patagonia Salt Lake City outlet is a separate entity from corporate Patagonia in a lot of ways. And so they're able to do a lot of activism and speak out on issues without contacting corporate and so long as they make it clear that it's just Patagonia Salt Lake City that supports protecting little Cottonwood Canyon" (Female, Policy Associate, SOC, 05/07/2023)

The separating of Patagonia SLC and corporate Patagonia is an interesting phenomenon as it highlights the differences in power and influence between the two entities. The local store can take stances on environmental issues within the community without consulting Corporate Patagonia, but it must be clear that the stance is representative of the local store as opposed to the corporate office. However, the corporate office has been a useful tool to raise awareness of issues beyond the local context and mobilising the resources needed to make an impact on activist asks:

> "we were able to kind of tie in corporate Patagonia and they pushed out a lot on social media about the gondola issue, they pushed out a petition that people could sign. They pushed people to the Wasatch Front regional council meeting, which was kind of the most recent engagement with the gondola at the governmental level. And so now that we have kind of Patagonia corporate on board too it introduced this new dynamic to the partnership" (Female, Policy Associate, SOC, 05/07/2023)

This dynamic relationship between essentially two different entities (Patagonia local and Patagonia corporate) helps to shape the key aspects of direct activism. The Patagonia SLC Outlet Store can speak out on local issues and engage in activism without sign-off from Corporate Patagonia, as long as it is clearly conducted through the local brand. The use of different Patagonia logos that reflect the local context within each store is an important strategy that enables different Patagonia stores to take the lead on environmental issues within their geography (see Fig 6.4). However, there is a large gap between the reach of a local store when compared to the larger brand at the corporate level.

This is evidenced by the clear difference in the number of social media followers the corporate brand has compared to a local store. Patagonia has over 5.4 million followers on Instagram, 1.7million likes on Facebook, nearly 900,000 followers on LinkedIn, 467,000 subscribers on YouTube, 183,400 followers on TikTok and 585,000 followers on Twitter. On the social media platform X, Patagonia (@patagonia) have created or engaged with over 25,000 posts since the company joined in 2008. Over 5,300 of these posts have been photos or videos, highlighting the favoured approach of using visual media to aid in social media storytelling and activist asks. On

Instagram, Patagonia have published over 3,700 posts on their channel since they joined the social media platform in 2012. As Instagram has been designed as a photo and video-sharing technological application, all these posts have included visual media, with some offering text descriptions and asks in the captions section.

Fig 6.4: Each Patagonia store's individual logos on their Instagram accounts. Source: Author's own.

Each Patagonia store maintains their own social media presence with varying levels of follower engagement. Each store has their own logo that has been independently designed and references the specific place they are based: this helps differentiate the store from others and aids in creating an alternative brand engagement space (see Fig 6.4). For example, the Patagonia store in New York City utilises the distinctive lettering from the subway system and the Patagonia Brooklyn store incorporates the Brooklyn Bridge in its design. Patagonia San Francisco incorporates some of the natural fauna (Brown Pelican) and man-made structures (Golden Gate Bridge) in their logo design. In contrast, Patagonia Saint Paul has incorporated a winter design in its logo to reflect the winter sports and recreational activities in Minnesota. Patagonia SLC incorporates a bee as part of its logo, reflecting the fact that Utah is referred to as the Beehive state. The store with the highest number of followers on Instagram is the Ventura Patagonia store with 22,800 followers, and the store in Telluride, Colorado has the lowest number of followers with 331. The total

followers of Patagonia stores on Instagram are 262,620, with an average of 7,295 each. For reference, the Patagonia Outlet Store in SLC has 9382[58] followers on its Instagram account. With the corporate Patagonia brand attracting 5.4 million followers on Instagram, it is clear that there is a significant power disparity between the main brand and the local stores in terms of reach which raises the central point that any social media endorsement from the main Patagonia Instagram account can help to elevate issues raised by individual stores at the local level. This aids in bringing local issues to national or international attention:

> "We've always worked really closely with the Salt Lake City, Patagonia. We have been Patagonia grantees, but that EIS push for the roadless rule comment period was the very first time that we ever got global Patagonia involved. And it took a lot of work with the Patagonia Salt Lake City store as well as the Patagonia Global […] I would say the biggest boost that we got from that we got some donations but I would say we got way more grassroots based support or we got like 1000 new Instagram followers a day" (Female, Development Director, SOC, 27/07/2023)

In terms of broadcasting relationships with nonprofit organisations, the approach taken by Patagonia has been to be very public facing about this. This is evidenced through the number of nonprofit organisations that are located on the PAW platform and on the individual websites of each Patagonia store across the U.S. It is this public endorsement of nonprofit organisations that would position Patagonia in the authentic brand activist category (Vredenburg et al, 2020). This is because they have demonstrable prosocial corporate practice (philanthropy, socially responsible business practices, and CV) and they engage in high levels of brand activist messaging through clearly outlining the types of nonprofit organisations that are supporting. This is different to other brands or businesses that may also donate to nonprofit organisations across the U.S.:

> "they are pretty loud about it. There are some other organisations that are quieter about the money they give, so I understand that it's part of their brand identity and personally, that's fine with me" (Female, Fundraising Manager, EHC, 10/5/2023)

This quote captures the silent brand activists (Vredenburg et al, 2020); the brands that have prosocial corporate practice but do not want to take public stances on issues. These brands may have developed extensive CSR programmes, donated generously through corporate philanthropic foundations and promoted CV opportunities for staff. As outlined in the above quote, these brands or businesses may wish to remain anonymous or not publicly advertise their relationship with an EJ organisation. This could be for fear of backlash from the public or because they may not be allowed to broadcast that relationship due to their ownership model. Patagonia

[58] Correct as of 31/08/2024.

is different because they are deliberately loud about the type of partnerships they have formed with nonprofits, and this is central to Patagonia's brand identity.

Staff Engagement in Environmental Activism

As in all walks of life, not everyone is going to agree with your values. While in the case of corporate values and public stances taken in the form of CA, people may vote with their feet or their wallets in terms of buycotting or boycotting from brands (Bloomfield, 2014; Klein, 1999). However, not everyone may be aware of a corporation's reputation regarding social and environmental issues. As mentioned in Chapter One, most consumers make purchasing decisions based on quality and money. As Patagonia have a reputation for quality through their ironclad guarantee and technical product lines, there will be consumers who are not aware of their environmental activism and may have a difference in opinion. In cases like this, when customers are against public displays of issues that Patagonia support, employees at the store will not back down from their public stances. A Patagonia employee said, "we value our safety more than a sale so if that means asking a customer to leave because they're being disrespectful then we will do that versus putting up with it just to sell something" (Female, Activism Lead, Patagonia SLC Outlet Store). This is a noticeably different reaction to other businesses that have publicly backed down from stances they have made that attracted criticism from right-wing activists. For example, U.S. big-box retailer Target removed pride-related merchandise during Pride Month, citing concerns over staff safety as they were targeted by anti-LGBT activists. By contrast, if Target had followed Patagonia's model, they would have doubled down on their decision to sell Pride-related merchandise and instead ask those activists to leave. However, in the case of Patagonia, this is not a rushed decision and instead is highly nuanced. As a Patagonia employee said,

> "The decision to have a permanent pride flag in every retail store in North America is one that went with a lot of thought […] it wasn't just an overnight thing without any thought of repercussions. Of course, we know that there's going to be people that don't agree. With the safety in mind. If somebody's like pushing to buy something and they're being disrespectful, like, just get them what they want and get them out of the store because we just don't need to be fighting over something that puts us in danger. And that has happened before, where they're like, I just want to buy this and whatever. So it's like, I don't want to create a ripple of being like, no, you can't buy this. Where the analogy comes in, is we're not just going to put up with this over and over like that we're going to fold, we're going to stick to our values" (Female, Activism Lead, Patagonia SLC Outlet Store, 13/07/2023)

This demonstrates that on occasions when customers make one-off comments, the best action is to make the sale: in this situation, it is incredibly difficult to deeply discuss the issue at hand, especially if they are a one-time customer or are visiting from a different area. The likelihood of

them coming back into the store for any follow-up are minimal. However, when comments become more targeted at individual employees or are outwardly racist, xenophobic or abusive towards staff, then employees will not hesitate in asking customers to leave at the forfeit of revenue. The alignment between advocacy and activism at the local level has been observed by respondents from environmental nonprofits:

> "they're probably one of the best […] the Patagonia Salt Lake City store does such an exceptional job of creating a safe space for everyone of like whether you're part of the LGBTQ+ community […] I think a lot of times, especially in Utah, can become polarising of like where you go and things like that. And they've done such a good job of creating like a safe space built around activism" (Female, Development Director, SOC, 27/7/2023)

This testimony provides the context in which support can be manifested. It begins with the most visible people that the public associate with the brand: retail workers. This identifies the role of local stores in ensuring that the main brand identifiers run throughout the company. If retail staff were not engaged in environmental activism, then it may call into question Patagonia's public approach to environmentalism. Enabling staff to engage in activism and working with grantees means that partnerships can be genuine and more sustainable:

> "I think the best partnership is multifaceted. I think the best one is when your pairing some kind of financial donation with grassroots advocacy as well as getting their staff involved in terms of like wilderness stewardship projects are coming out on trail" (Female, Development Director, SOC, 27/7/2023)

The approach to partnerships that are multifaceted in nature and not narrowly defined in terms of finance enables corporations like Patagonia to raise awareness of issues that might not otherwise be within the public consciousness. This translates into corporations playing a communicative role and using their public platforms, built through creating and sustaining a brand, to take stance on issues:

> "I also think you know they have done such a good job both on the communication side using their big platform to sort of elevate the discourse and turn people's heads who might otherwise not care. Combining that with their grant making and also being a really good connector" (Male, Development Officer, EarthJustice, 10/5/2023)

Other respondents were quick to point out the congruence between the role of customers in companies like Patagonia taking stances on issues (Ahmad et al, 2024; Buchanan et al, 2024; Vredenburg et al, 2020), and identified how customers are drawn on for support:

> "Part of it's because they have a receptive customer. These companies are producing products for people to go and enjoy them outdoors […] there's a link between those people enjoying the outdoors and caring about the environmental impacts that

> companies are having on those same places and the environment in which they're recreating" (Male, Former Sustainability Lead Patagonia, 3/7/2023)

This identifies the role of outdoor recreationalists supporting companies that are willing to support environmental projects within geographies they either recreate in or live in. This can enhance the financial returns of companies that are able to identify congruence between the lived experiences of their customers and any issues they may face in their daily lives:

> "most companies don't want to turn off their customers by saying something or doing something that seems too activist or too woke, and turn off their customers. Some companies don't care, and in case of Patagonia, like it's been actually driving more success for them to be more real and say what they really believe in and stand behind it and actually the business has grown because they didn't really care if they lost customers, they thought doing the right thing was the right thing" (Male, Former Sustainability Lead Patagonia, 3/7/2023)

The literature suggests that CA occurs when brands or businesses take non-neutral stances on public issues that could be controversial in nature (Sibai et al, 2021; Vredenburg et al, 2020; Eilert & Cherup, 2020; Sarkar & Kotler, 2020). This definition was captured by one respondent as evidence of Patagonia's approach and how that might be controversial for other companies:

> "I'll say just generally is like they are not afraid to throw down on things that could be controversial for other companies, which I think is probably pretty obvious, but that's where it's been a nice connection" (Female, Executive Director, CFROG, 17/5/2023)

It is not surprising that a corporation being open about their environmental philosophy and ethos provides a nice connection for nonprofit organisations within the environmental movement. There is also the recognition that this approach could court controversy, which was highlighted by another respondent:

> "the approach that Patagonia took as a corporate entity is something that more corporations could look to be doing. I really like it. I actually get from a standpoint that why some companies don't do it […] because Patagonia became associated with a brand of conservation and environmentalism. That doesn't appeal to all audiences in all people" (Male, Development Director, WildEarth Guardians, 20/12/2022)

The definitions of CA within the literature reflect that CA stances are not meant to be universally accepted. If they were, then the issue itself would not be controversial. There is a recognition that this approach is favourable, but this could be due to the stance being a positive association with the environmental movement (i.e. in favour of environmental action and regulations, as opposed to be against). If any brand was overtly against the aims of the environmental movement it would provide interesting perspectives of the role of corporations in taking a stand on an issue. However,

what is not evident from these testimonies is how a corporation is able to create a reputation and alignment around any issue. The quote above suggests that the Patagonia have become associated with conservation and environmentalism but does not expand on how this association has been developed.

Additionally, CA has been presented in the literature as a corporate-led initiative that helps to amplify the brand status and reputation by taking a public stance on an issue (Sarkar & Kotler, 2020; Vredenburg et al, 2020; Eilert & Cherup, 2020). McKean and King identified two types of CA: leader-driven activism and employee-driven activism (2024). However, I argue that CA can take on an additional form: customer-driven. Customer-driven CA is when a brand takes a public stance on an issue after it has engaged customers with their views on the issue. An example of this is Black Diamond taking an anti-gondola stance in Little Cottonwood Canyon after engaging their customer base, thereby ensuring alignment. While some corporate staff may have been supportive in taking a stance, the company only took the stance following data analysis on public and consumer sentiment on this issue. This differs from more employee-led CA (McKean & King, 2024), which is exemplified by backcountry.com taking a stance on the same issue after their staff asked the company to publicly come out against the gondola proposal in Little Cottonwood Canyon:

> "Probably the best example of that would be backcountry.com. They almost never come out against anything political, but they did come out against the gondola and that was because of the employees at backcountry.com were asking for them to take a stance and protecting little Cottonwood Canyon" (Female, Development Director, SOC, 27/07/2023)

Similarly, a corporate activist stance may be corporate-driven or leader-driven (McKean & King, 2024). This is the case with Patagonia, and is exemplified by the case study of BENM that will be outlined in Chapter Seven. There is a need to examine how the relationship between Corporate Patagonia and the local Patagonia stores is structured around other specific issues within Utah but are generalisable to environmental issues around the country. This is evidenced through environmental issues centred around the issue of land designation, and this will be examined via a case-study approach in Chapter Seven. It highlights the challenges associated with taking a stand on a decisive issue and how nonprofit organisations have responded to Patagonia's CA stances through the case of BENM.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to achieve the third research objective of examining the motivations and intents behind a corporation's pursuit of CA and how their role is perceived in

supporting grassroots environmental activism. This chapter has outlined the various ways in which Patagonia view their role in supporting environmental activism. It has focused primarily on the Environmental Grants programme and the ways in which funding is awarded to nonprofit organisations. The process itself has changed from awarding small amounts of funding to lots of different organisations to an invite-only application in which organisations are awarded larger grant sizes. As the store is embedded within the community, it follows the principles of embedded grantmaking (Karlström et al, 2009) and place-based philanthropy (Reid et al, 2022; Smarick, 2021; Colinvaux, 2018). However, there was significant evidence provided that the grants themselves do not follow two principles of trust-based philanthropy (Jones et al, 2024; Powell et al, 2023), including not awarding multi-year grants and not being transparent or responsive.

Additionally, this chapter has focused on the non-financial mechanisms developed by Patagonia and examined the impact of these from the perspective of staff involved in operationalising these mechanisms. It has focused on community tabling opportunities, activism events and the amplification of issues. In addition, the role of Patagonia in community engagement has been put forward, as well as identifying the ability of staff at the local store to campaign for issues they feel strongly about. This autonomy is supported by various mechanisms put in place by Corporate Patagonia that ensure staff at retail stores are sufficiently resourced to run events and support environmental organisations nonprofits in as many ways as possible. Finally, there are numerous aspects to engaging in CA at the local level, but this is a directive that comes from innovation at the corporate level. The illustrative case study of BENM in Chapter Seven is an example of the interactions between Corporate Patagonia and local stores in relation to environmental issues, and provides a link between the allocation of resources with the CA stance. This will be further developed in the next chapter.

7. Corporate Activism in Action: A Case Study of Bears Ears National Monument

The previous chapters have presented the empirical evidence that meets the research objectives. This chapter uses a case-study approach to examine the most prominent environmental issue that Patagonia have campaigned: the BENM in southern Utah. This was introduced within the environmental context of Utah section of Chapter Three. This chapter starts by outlining the importance of the BENM designation to the Tribal nations, other land-based environmental nonprofit organisation and to Patagonia's brand image. It examines the complexities of a landscape protection designation and outlines how Patagonia used CA to take a stance on the environmental issue. This section draws on the critical reflections of the public stance Patagonia took in relation to BENM and examines the other mechanisms that Patagonia employed to cement their position. This case study concludes by examining how different nonprofit organisations engaged in BENM were supported not only by Patagonia, but also by other brands operating within the outdoor recreational industry.

Background

In 2015, the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition (BEITC), a partnership of the Hopi, Navajo, Uintah and Ouray Ute, Ute Mountain Ute and Zuni Governments, petitioned President Obama to create BENM, arguing that this "portion of Southern Utah holds historical, natural, and cultural value to both Native people and non-Native Americans" (Johnson, 2021:1). Unique to the proposition was a "provision that promised Native Americans a significant role in its management" (Swanson, 2020:285). To quote from the proposal itself, "tribes have never before petitioned for a presidentially-declared national monument, much less one of the size and scope we propose here" (BEITC, 2015:2). Additionally, the Bears Ears area is home to more than 100,000 Native American cultural sites, ranging from lithic scatter to granaries to complex villages (BEITC, 2015:9).

A map of BENM can be found below in Figure 7.1. Working closely with BEITC was UDB, a Native-led, non-profit organisation that has been advocating to protect the Bears Ears region over the last decade (Smith, 2020). Since 2014, UDB have received US$139,500 in funding from Patagonia through their environmental grants programme, with a maximum donation of US$45,000 in 2019, to support environmental projects.

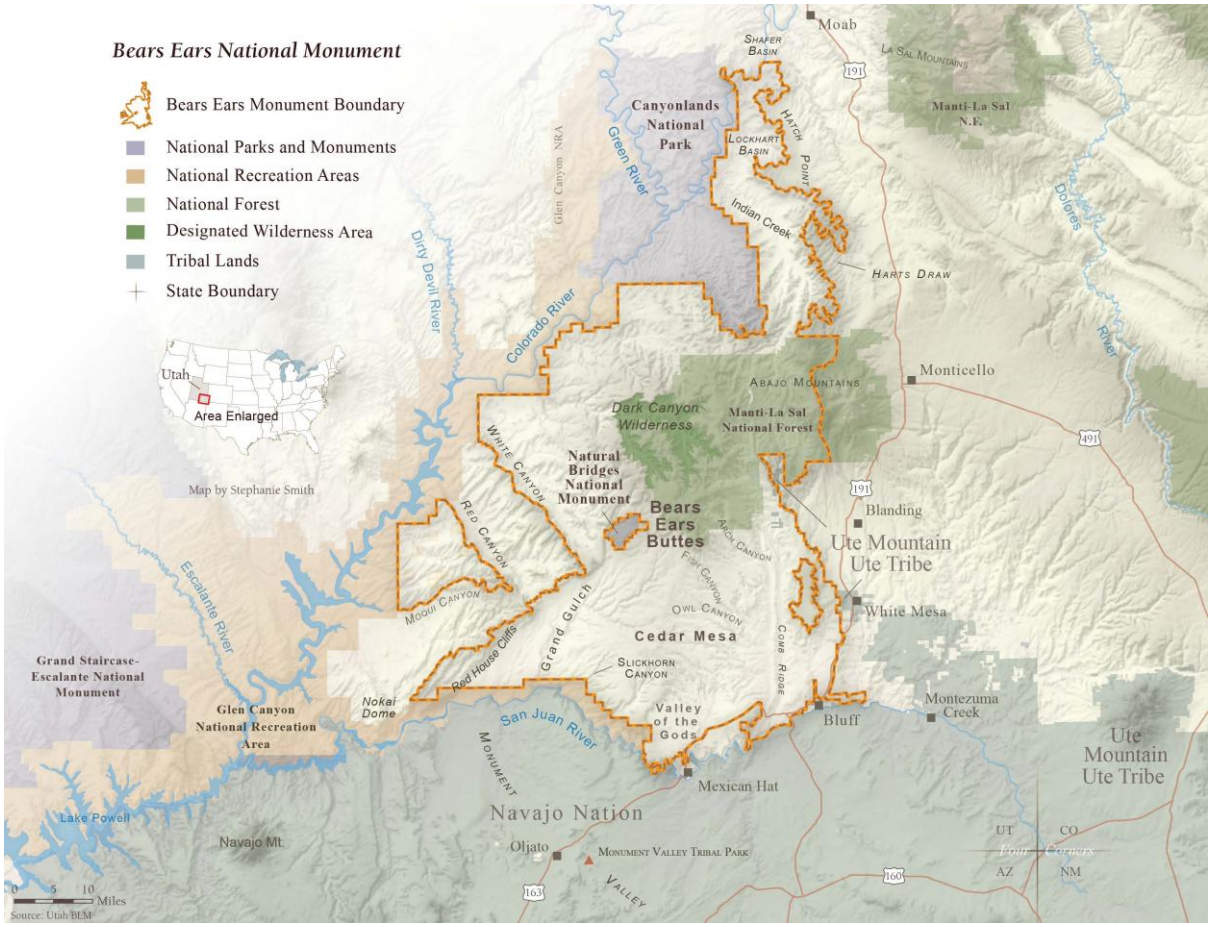


Figure 7.1: Map of BENM. (Source: BEITC).

The petitioning of the Bears Ears to be designated as a National Monument by local tribes and environmental groups was a markedly different approach to a previous large-scale National Monument designation in Southern Utah: the Grand-Staircase Escalante National Monument (GSENM). The designation of GSENM in 1996 by President Clinton was a top-down approach that had little-to-no involvement of local interests, with opposition arguments centring on loss of access to economic opportunities from a proposed coal mine, restrictions on traditional uses of public land, and drawn on political animosity towards a Democrat president (Petrzelka & Marquatt-Pyatt, 2013). The 1.9-million-acre designation became the largest National Monument designation in U.S. history (Yonk et al, 2013) and created distrust between local communities and federal land management agencies, such as the BLM (Petrzelka & Marquatt-Pyatt, 2015). Hence, the decision for another large-scale national monument designation in Southern Utah was not universally welcomed, and created significant political, economic and social challenges.

President Obama designated the Bears Ears area as a National Monument in December 2016 and it became the second largest national monument in the contiguous forty-eight states and the District of Columbia, with an area of 1.35 million acres (Wilkinson, 2018). Since BENM's

designation there have been considerable increases in both outdoor recreation participation and outdoor recreation-related industries (Smith et al, 2021). In December 2017, President Trump signed a proclamation reducing the size of BENM by 1,150,860 acres, which was immediately contested in court by Native American and environmental groups (Swanson, 2020). The redrawing of BENM's boundaries favoured the extractive industry in Utah, specifically the prominent oil, gas and uranium sites in the area (Smith, 2020). The underlying tensions underpinning contemporary debates around public land has shaped political discourse within Utah and the rest of the U.S.; the nuanced reaction from differing stakeholders can aid in conceptualising how authentic corporations can be with their activist stances.

Patagonia's Response

The reduction in BENM led to Patagonia suing the Trump Administration, stating that the Antiquities Act of 1906 gave authority to the President to create national monuments, but it did not give the President the power to undo a prior president's monument designations (Seamon, 2018; Marcario, 2017). Patagonia ran a public awareness campaign (see fig 7.2), but that was criticised by academics and Indigenous activists alike as it reinforced settler-colonial rhetoric that avoided acknowledging that land was not previously stolen by settlers from Indigenous groups (Anson, 2019).

Figure 7.2: Screenshot of Patagonia website homepage. Source: Anson (2019).

Anson (2019) offered a rewrite of the advertisement:

> "The President Stole Land Again: The US settler state perpetrated yet another illegal theft of Indigenous lands. Follow these links for how to get involved in the return of these lands to their original protectors, the Utah Diné Bikéyah and the five Sovereign Tribes of the Bears Ears Inter- Tribal Coalition" (2019:58-59)

This rewrite, while attempting to amplify modes of decolonisation, was again criticised by an Indigenous audience, who said the rewrite should simply say "We Stole Land Again" (Anson, 2019). The decision made by Patagonia to run with "The President Stole Your Land" campaign was criticised by those involved in the designation. For some it was seen as an outsider organisation coming in and being unaware of the many facets of the debate:

> "I thought that was a rash and not well thought out ad campaign. I mean it was on par for Patagonia or a corporation coming in from outside or maybe even for a large conservation group like The Wilderness Society or something that's based outside of the area and is not really aware of some of the nuances and some of the subtleties. Even just saying that he stole your land by reducing the monument, it's just not true. […] I thought that was rash." (Male, Journalist and Author, 19/4/2023)

In addition, this quote highlights that although the national monument designation was removed, the land involved in the parcel was still designated as public land and had not been sold off to the highest bidder. Although public land management carries a federal mandate to promote multiple use of the land (recreation, agriculture, oil and gas exploration), it remains in the ownership of the American public through the various federal land management agencies, such as the BLM, USFS or NPS. A National Monument designation enables parcels of land to have higher protection status and remove certain aspects of the multiple-use mandate. Therefore, even the phrase "The President Stole Your Land" has been argued to be factually incorrect; exemplified by the rapid and public nature of the campaign run by the Corporate Patagonia office.

That is not to say that the campaign itself did not pick up on some of the major challenges that were being faced by environmental nonprofits in the wake of the National Monument protections being reduced. For some environmental nonprofit organisations, the BLM's policy of multiple use is a direct challenge to the sustainability of the area in terms of protecting cultural artefacts and culturally sensitive landscapes. The original designation was due to the extractive industry interest on sacred lands that caused Tribal nations to petition the U.S. Government for land protection mechanisms. However, the campaign itself was a cause for concern among local communities and opponents to the designation:

> "After they were called out for it, they did respond in a good way. And I don't know if they publicly apologised, but they seem to have changed their tone. But yeah, that opened them up to a lot of criticism […] And that's one of the drawbacks of people

> like Patagonia getting involved is that it allows opponents of things like Bears Ears to then say look, it's actually Patagonia who is setting the agenda here. Not the grassroots Indigenous groups, even if they might say it's SUWA or it's the Sierra Club or something like that, setting the agenda. And they're using these indigenous groups to get what they want" (Male, Journalist and Author, 19/4/2023)

This testimony highlights the co-optation of environmental concerns by parties that have considerable power and influence compared to grassroots environmental activists, which is a central tenet of EJ discourse (Whyte, 2021; Schlosberg, 2004) and is operationalised through the values and preferences of dominant forces taking hold over the needs and preferences of local communities (Bloomfield, 2014). However, this testimony suggests that after the initial campaign, Patagonia responded well. This was achieved by not backing down from their previous message, but instead adapting their message to be more culturally appropriate and reflective of the intricate debates involved within the National Monument designation. The Corporate Patagonia office flew senior staff at UDB out to Ventura to provide cultural sensitivity training for staff at their office and this example has been used in UDB's media training toolkit as an example of how not to report on the issue. UDB's media orientation for cultural sensitivity and accuracy training was developed by UDB's Cultural Resources Coordinator and Communications Director. This toolkit dissects the rhetoric used by Patagonia in Figure 7.2 by stating that the lands are Indigenous lands already, and therefore can someone really steal protected land that has already been stolen. The toolkit also breaks down the narrative implied through 'The President Stole Your Land' by stating "'The President' implies that the leader of this nation is doing something wrong and illegal. However, our experience with Presidents in Indigenous communities is that they usually do something wrong and illegal regularly" (UDB, N.D.). UDB also took issue with the term 'largest protected land grab', citing examples of the co-option of lands by the thirteen colonies in 1777, the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, and the California Gold Rush in 1848.

Upon reflection after receiving training from UDB, Patagonia were willing to admit that their campaign had perpetuated a common problem: that Indigenous communities that had led the initial effort to establish Bears Ears as a National Monument had been overlooked, and they had failed to reflect that land had been taken from Indigenous peoples well before the election of President Trump (Moore, 2021). This response has been well-received by those within UDB, including the Cultural Resources Coordinator, Angelo Baca. In an interview with Boulder Weekly, he stated "The Native community has been very grateful to them [Patagonia] and their efforts because as you think of an outside entity, an outdoor retailer, taking large steps like that to try to be an ally, and has never done that before, of course there might be little mistakes here and there. I feel like the intentions are good, and we're all here to learn, and there are no fingers being pointed in blame" (Moore, 2021). Angelo Baca featured in Patagonia's feature-length film "Public

Trust: The Fight for America's Public Lands" (2020). This film premiered on 26th September 2020 and has over 2.8 million views and over a thousand comments on YouTube. This film examines the main threats to public lands including the multi-use agreement, oil and gas leasing and extraction, transfer of federal lands to state ownership, and the repeal of public land legislation afforded by U.S. Congressional decision-making mechanisms and the Antiquities Act. The film follows three case studies: BENM in Utah, Boundary Waters Wilderness Area in Minnesota, and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. These case studies encapsulate the political, economic, social and environmental dimensions of debates centred around public land policy in the U.S., as well as providing an historical outlook at the changing levels of political support for public land designation and environmental legislation. For example, both President Nixon and President Reagan are used as examples of the diverse breadth of political opinion regarding environmental issues within the same political party.

The use of BENM as a case study in public land designation and withdrawal is another example of how Patagonia uses media to take a stance on an issue that is controversial and not universally accepted. It also raises awareness of the political tensions that underly the environmental movement within Utah, a traditionally conservative state that is advocating for federal transfer of public lands to state ownership for oil and gas leasing and extraction, and simultaneously advertise the state's national parks and publicly designated land areas to tourists worldwide (Williams, 2022; Sundeen, 2020; Drugova et al, 2020). Another documentary is "Defined by the Line" (2015), a seven-minute-long documentary that captures the work of FOCM in southern Utah and the work the organisation has done to raise awareness of the threats to the Bears Ears landscape from both extractive industry development and from human recreation. This film has attracted over 75,000 views on YouTube and is part of Patagonia's public lands advocacy and support offered to environmental nonprofit organisations that goes beyond the cheque (Powell et al, 2023).

Knock-On Effects: Cementing a Public Stance

Patagonia's decision to sue the Trump administration had knock-on effects for other forms of activism. The ORS, the largest trade show in the U.S. for the outdoor industry, has traditionally been held bi-annually in SLC. The decision to reduce the size of both monuments to open-up to oil, gas and uranium mining contributed towards Patagonia leading an industry-wide boycott of the trade show. The ORS moved to Colorado in 2017 and recently returned to Utah in 2023. Upon attending the ORS in 2023, it was noticeable that Patagonia did not have a booth at the summer trade show, and several other outdoor brands were conspicuously absent as well. Boycotting institutional trade shows is a direct form of CA that has been well documented in the literature

(Masalmeh, 2023; Brantley, 2021 Neilson, 2010). Brands operating within the outdoor industry hold a lot of power and can wield influence on political campaigns when operating as a collective and taking a stance on an issue that affects their brand equity and customer base:

> "You know the outdoor industry is a $887 billion industry. […] there's a lot of money in Utah that the outdoor industry brings. So a lot of companies came together and said, you know, we're not going to go to ORS anymore. And you know, we actually had it moved to Colorado, where politically things were a little more positive towards publicly. And now that's shifting back and ORs going back to Salt Lake this year, but. It was, you know, one of the first times that companies really have banded together for specific place and took a stand in such a public way and put their company values forward" (Female, Development Director, BEP, 18/08/2022)

This highlights that it is not just Patagonia that have been involved in this public stance, but other outdoor companies too. These companies are also backing their stances by supporting the initiatives of nonprofit organisations that are deeply involved in the issue at hand:

> "The North Face, Patagonia, Osprey, Smartwool, all these groups helped create the visitor centre. They're both protesting the political landscape in Utah but they're giving their support on the ground to the landscape too" (Female, Development Director, BEP,18/08/2022)

This quote demonstrates that a duality between taking a public stance and having the resources to back up that stance through supporting local nonprofits engaged in the issue. As CA is loosely defined as a corporation taking a stance on a controversial issue outside of its institutional environment, this case study marks a significant contribution to the CA literature (Eilert & Cherup, 2020; Vredenburg et al, 2020). The evidence presented in this chapter demonstrates that Patagonia took a stance (supporting public lands) on a controversial issue (BENM) and have supported a wide range of organisations working directly on the issue. This goes beyond purely philanthropic giving, instead incorporating the many non-financial elements that augment public stances. If Patagonia had just taken a public stance, but not supported that stance with additional resource, critical questions could be directed at Patagonia. By connecting to the theoretical underpinnings of authentic brand activism (Vredenburg et al, 2020), this would cause them to be categorised as inauthentic brand activists. If they were to do the latter, as opposed to the former, then they could be classified as silent brand activists, in which they are willing to support environmental nonprofits through resource allocation but unwilling to use their brand identity and reputation to take a public stance on the issue.

When these two components are combined, then it positions any brand in the authentic brand activism space:

> "My turning point with them was everything with Bears Ears and the OR show. […] it was wild and the energy there that Patagonia built together and said no we're going to do this giant march up to the state capital and we're pulling out of OR if the state of Utah doesn't actually want to protect their public lands and seeing what they did to really unite almost every single outdoor company. And you had people like Alex Honnold there from The North Face and Tommy Caldwell, you had these incredible athletes all there at the same time marching to the state capitol. And I think that really changed because it shows the authenticity of what they've been doing of saying we are no longer going to be here and give funding to the state if you're not going to protect it." (Female, Development Director, SOC, 27/07/2023)

Despite SOC not working on BENM issues, staff there are aware of the role of Patagonia within its industrial context in creating a political movement with tangible aims and objectives. It also highlights the need for Patagonia to find other allies within the outdoor industry to help augment the claims being put forward to decision-makers, and simultaneously provides an example of corporates being welcomed within activist circles after remodelling their CA stances to be tailored to the cause they align with.

However, reversing the stance taken by Patagonia could also be an example of authentic CA. For example, Patagonia could have taken a different stance on BENM that was more aligned with a wide range of local actors: community groups in San Juan County, other environmental organisations concerned with over-use and environmental degradation, or the fossil fuel industry. Patagonia could have supported those groups with additional resources to seek the permanent removal of national monument designations. In this scenario, it could be considered authentic CA if that stance aligned with their core corporate purpose. As Patagonia have built their brand equity based on their reputation for quality products and environmental activism, this would make a marked departure from their prosocial corporate values, and therefore would be considered inauthentic activism.

Supporting Grassroots Environmental Action and Activism

The environmental nonprofit organisation formerly known as Friends of Cedar Mesa is based in Bluff, Utah, just within the southeastern boundary of BENM. The organisation renamed itself as BEP in September 2022 to reflect the geographic scope of where they operate but also how the organisation uses partnerships to promote the Bears Ears region. BEP identified a need for a visitor centre was heightened with the growing awareness of and interest in the BENM as a place for recreation. With growing visitation rates causing a strain on local resources, there was little time for federal agencies to create a visitor centre that could educate visitors about responsible and respectful recreation. Visitor centres are often run and managed by federal agencies, such as the BLM, NPS or USFS, who manage the land that is technically owned by the American people.

The ability for BEP to mobilise resources and attract funding to build a visitor centre enabled the organisation to build a centre that was unique in how it was managed and operated:

> "visitation to the monument has really increased with the designation and awareness of the monument, it's tripled in the last 5-6 years and to the point now where it's 400,000 to 500,000 visitors a year, which is a lot for small communities […] We started a campaign in 2017 to turn an old bar into a the first-of-its-kind, grassroots-led visitor centre. We own it, operate it with volunteers, have staff that live right there at the visitor centre, and it's open for 10 months out of the year. It's a model that we haven't really seen anywhere else, but knew that we were particularly suited to be able to fill that need" (Female, Development Director, BEP, 18/08/2022)

It was noted that individual visits to public lands, specifically to the NPS, has increased dramatically since the onset on the COVID-19 pandemic (Williams, 2022; Sundeen, 2020; Drugova et al, 2020; Xiao et al, 2018; Svajda et al, 2016; Long et al, 2003). In some cases, National Parks are moving towards a reservation system for popular areas where individuals have a two-hour allotted time to hike and recreate within the NPS infrastructure. The reservation system has been implemented within Utah: Zion, Arches and Canyonlands all have a permit system which are located just north of the BENM.

The construction of a visitor centre helped BEP to create campaigns that highlighted the need for respectful and responsible recreation and tourist activities. This campaign, called 'Visit with Respect', is geared towards reducing the tension between conservation and tourism that is prevalent in many other contexts around the world. The BENM covers a large area without the resources or infrastructure commonly found within the NPS; therefore, there is a need for nonprofit organisations such as BEP to be highly focused on how the BENM is advertised and how people are invited into the landscape:

> "our visit with respect campaign is really geared towards how to responsibly be in these landscapes […] our messaging is towards honouring tribes, focusing on these being ancestral lands and being very respectful of them […] It's more through the ecotourist or regenerative tourists who wants to come and really individually have an experience on an incredible landscape" (Female, Development Director, BEP, 18/08/2022)

A lot of this work needs to be done in partnership with the groups that helped create BENM in the first place. Partnerships with tribes and the BEITC are essential in ensuring that awareness-raising and education provision are culturally sensitive and appropriate for the context in which they operate. This helps to ensure that sacred sites and cultural artefacts are not looted (a crime under the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979) and the landscape can be resilient in the faces of dynamic challenges such as climate change, tourism and recreation:

> "We work very closely with the intertribal coalition as well as individual tribes. On specific projects, a lot of our work on the ground is site stabilization and making Bears Ears visitor ready. People are flocking to the landscape, really creating unintended damage to incredibly sensitive sacred cultural sites. There are a number of indigenous-led organizations, Utah Dine Bikeyah is one of them, which is based in Salt Lake City and so we partner with them on advocacy work and really focusing more on how we can build partnerships across the board and really be a support and a facilitator for groups to be on the landscape to elevate our voices collectively too" (Female, Development Director, BEP, 18/08/2022)

Alongside working with Tribal nations and Indigenous-led organisations, BEP have been able to tap into a network of corporate supporters that have funded the creation of the Bears Ears Education Centre in Bluff, Utah, but also have a customer base that regularly recreate on public lands. BEP have been able to leverage partnerships through the 'Visit with Respect' campaign that aligns the brand values of specific corporates with the brand values developed by BEP:

> "But also, you know finding partnership opportunities and ways to work together, for example, our Visit With Respect campaign is really perfect for a partnership with a Patagonia or Osprey because their customers are out in these landscapes and they want to provide education and meaningful value for them. So a partnership on a campaign like that can really augment our goals" (Female, Development Director, BEP,18/08/2022)

In terms of the types of support companies could provide to nonprofit organisations working on land designation, there are different ways for them to get involved and offer support. In-kind donations or donations for auction items are always welcome, but there is also a need for companies to reimagine their role as advocates and allies within the environmental movement:

> "I mean, we have a lot of companies that will give in-kind donations or donations for auction items to help us raise money. REI has a grant making Program that was involved during the monument Designation and with the Bears Ears Education Centre. To be perfectly honest, we're in a bit of a rebuilding and reconnecting phase with a lot of companies, there was so much attention and then things quieted down and we're now in a space of evolution. We're saying here's what support looks like" (Female, Development Director, FOCM, 18/08/2022)

In addition, BEP and UDB have been able to secure direct funding from CLF, who helped to work on the BENM campaign. The role of the CLF within the BENM was to facilitate and guide conversations about ideas about the potential designation as a National Monument and to provide resources to all the groups involved in that campaign. These resources were either financial or communications-driven, often involving on-the-ground campaign advice and strategy to ensure the success of the designation:

> "Bears Ears National Monument was, of course, the most well-known campaign that we helped steward. So the rule in that campaign was really to make that a priority and make that tribal engagement a priority for us and then do whatever we could to support the tribes in their leadership of that campaign. (Female, Foundation and Corporate Giving Director, CLF, 05/10/2022)

Other organisations that have worked on projects within BENM and neighbouring GSENM include SUWA. SUWA has highlighted that they played a supporting role with the designation as "we played a somewhat supporting role for the Tribes behind the scenes. The Tribes get the credit for the designation" (Male, SUWA, Executive Director, 05/05/2023). In terms of the grassroots mobilisation and political activism that occurred following the reduction in monument size, SUWA noticed that there was a role to play given the substantial size of their grassroots following:

> "SUWA was a lead organiser during a big protest up at the Utah Capitol. And at the time, we were working really closely with an Indigenous-led organisation called Utah Dine Bikeyah, and they were at the forefront of this as well as the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition. So all three of us came together with another couple of groups here and we had this big rally up at the Capitol" (Female, SUWA, Utah Organiser, 05/05/2023)

The case study of BENM is interesting for several reasons but primarily it provides a concrete example of numerous companies working together with grassroots nonprofit organisations to promote activist outcomes. This demonstrates that CA is more than just taking a stance: it needs to be followed up with actionable activities to be considered authentic. If corporations just took a stance but did not engage in the intricacies of the debates around land management and designation, then questions would be directed at the corporation as to why they took a stance in the first place. This case study demonstrates CA is not about financial philanthropy but creating tailored support to organisations that provides better outcomes overall. This is an important consideration when defining CA. The next chapter is a discussion that combines the empirical findings from the previous four chapters, outlines Patagonia's role within the environmental movement, and addresses the main contributions to the literature.

8. Discussion: The Role of Corporate Activism in Supporting Grassroots Environmental Activism

This thesis started with the research problem: the global fashion and apparel industrial sector is a significant contributor towards global GHG emissions (UNEP, 2023; UNEP & UNFCC, 2023), accounting for roughly ten percent of all GHG emissions currently being emitted on an annual basis (Biswas et al, 2024; Aponte et al, 2024; Bonelli et al, 2024; Shedlock & Feldstein, 2023; Brewer, 2019). The global fashion and apparel industry are also responsible for a wide range of environmental issues (Sehmen et al, 2024; Brewer, 2019). Simultaneously, there are numerous examples of fashion and apparel companies engaging in constructive dialogue about their impacts on the environment and taking meaningful steps to address these. As previous research has illustrated Patagonia's socially and environmentally responsible business practices (Shourkaei et al, 2024; Rattalino, 2018; O'Rourke & Strand, 2017; Fowler & Hope, 2007) as part of a corporate-driven CSR strategy (Kotler & Lee, 2005), this research has focused on the other dimensions of CSR activities and associated CA stances that have not been addressed within the literature. This research has utilised a case-study methodology to critically examine how an apparel company (Patagonia) is attempting to support grassroots environmental activism as part of their CSR strategy. Patagonia's strategy is a blend of corporate-led CSR activities, such as community volunteering and corporate philanthropy (Kotler & Lee, 2005), alongside direct CA (Eilert & Cherup, 2020; Vredenburg et al, 2020), that supports previously researched corporate-led CSR activities in Patagonia adopting socially (and environmentally) responsible business practices that attempt to mitigate the environmental harms caused by the manufacturing and distribution of Patagonia's products.

The purpose of this chapter is to tie together the findings from the three empirical chapters, connect the research findings to the key literature examined in Chapter Two, and to achieve the overarching aim of this research project: *how supporting activism at the grassroots level can shape positive social and environmental outcomes for CSR strategies*. With each empirical chapter focusing on specific research objectives that aid in achieving the research aim, this chapter starts by illustrating the different types of relationships between corporate activist and environmental activists to determine the role that Patagonia play within environmental activism at the local level. The research design of an explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach (Cresswell, 2022; Clark et al, 2021) enabled the different types of relationships to emerge by initially focusing on corporate philanthropic giving. This research phase determined the grassroots environmental organisations that had been beneficiaries of Patagonia's corporate philanthropic giving and thus established one relationship as a funder of environmental activism. The second research phase

involved triangulating the findings from quantitative data collection with qualitative inquiry. During the second phase, other types of relationships emerged that positioned Patagonia as a community connector and as a conduit for activism. Therefore, the relationships can be defined as a blend between funder, activist or community-based: the significance of this will be demonstrated next.

Patagonia as Funder

One of the foundational ways that Patagonia have supported grassroots environmental activists is through their corporate philanthropy and Store Environmental Grants Programme. As corporate philanthropy is a voluntary practice (Gautier & Pache, 2015) embedded within corporate-led CSR activities (Sarkar & Kotler, 2020; Kotler and Lee, 2005), it offers important considerations for determining the allocation of resources that can substantiate CA stances (Eilert and Cherup, 2020; Vredenburg et al, 2020). Financial support is an important indicator of prosocial corporate practice and is a precondition of authentic CA (Vredenburg et al, 2020). However, CA can still be authentic if 'beyond-the-dollar' support is offered to causes and is demonstrably useful in achieving the aims of the specific stance. Chapter Four highlighted the amount of financial support has been offered to environmental organisations and Chapter Five demonstrated the impact of this funding to the various recipient organisations. As all respondents have been a Patagonia grantee, it proves the existence of a financial element to their relationship and cements Patagonia as a funder of environmental activism. However, the type of philanthropy offered deserves further examination as it incorporates different elements of trust-based philanthropy (Jones et al, 2024; Powell et al, 2023), place-based philanthropy (Reid et al, 2022; Smarick, 2021; Mazzei, 2017) and embedded grantmaking (Karlström et al, 2009), in addition to a novel form of participatory philanthropy (Taddy-Sandino et al, 2022).

The collection of financial data and subsequent analysis in Chapter Four aided in determining the organisations that have been supported by Patagonia and critically assessing Patagonia's claim that their philanthropy has tended to favour "the little groups no other corporation would touch, rather than NGOs with big staffs, high overheads, and corporate connections" (Chouinard & Stanley, 2012: 57-58). The data analysis in Chapter Four (see fig 4.12) demonstrated nuance within this assertion, finding that while the majority of Patagonia's grantees receive small grants, the total giving to these organisations forms a minority in total available funding. The top 6.4% highest funders receive more philanthropic dollars (43.4% of total available funding) compared to the bottom 78.3% (36.4% of total available funding). However, these large foundations often work on multiple issues and play a grantmaking role themselves, which has been termed as Patagonia's indirect philanthropy. Additionally, substantive evidence presented asserts that Patagonia play a

dual role in funding, split between grants offered by Corporate Patagonia and the local stores. The local Patagonia stores identify environmental organisations within their local context and award smaller amounts of funding. The larger grants to foundations are awarded through Corporate Patagonia, and the subsequent grants from these foundations can be traced to organisations that themselves have received direct funding from Patagonia. A more accurate assessment of Patagonia's original claim is that Patagonia's philanthropic support is a dynamic mixture of direct and indirect giving, combining grants to small grassroots organisation with larger grants to established foundations with the necessary resources to distribute to a wider range of organisations working on related issues. This makes an important contribution to the literature concerning corporate philanthropy as it outlines different routes through which philanthropy can be operationalised by corporations (Yang, 2022; Seo et al, 2021; Kubíčková, 2018; Gautier & Pache, 2015; Kotler & Lee, 2005).

However, for Patagonia to support the claim they only support small groups that are outside of traditional corporate philanthropic giving, they can learn from other corporations in terms of establishing clear boundaries of what constitutes a small group. For example, the Ben & Jerry's foundation has a National Grassroots Organising programme that sims to further social and EJ by supporting organisations working at the community level (Corporate Philanthropy Report, 2024). As part of its process for accepting application, the Ben & Jerry's foundation apply strict criteria for organisations that include an annual operating budget of under $350,000 (Corporate Philanthropy Report, 2024). Introducing a limit on the operating budgets of grantees is one way to support the claim that Patagonia are supporting small and grassroots environmental organisations in the future.

The grant process and associated outcomes were a significant aspect to the findings, as it demonstrates Patagonia's pivot away from traditional grantmaking towards an adopting some newer approaches to philanthropic giving. This includes trust-based philanthropy (Jones et al, 2024; Powell et al, 2023), place-based philanthropy (Reid et al, 2022; Smarick, 2021; Mazzei, 2017) and embedded grantmaking (Karlström et al, 2009). However, this pivot requires a critical examination to allow for nuanced reflections to be put forward. As described in Chapter Two, trust-based philanthropy emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic and is based on six principles (see page 49). As a set of principles, the literature has yet to determine whether a philanthropic approach could be classed as trust-based if it did not utilise all six principles, and there has been little critical reflection of the pivot towards trust-based philanthropy. An argument can be made that Patagonia have adopted four of principles within their approach to varying extents, with some easier to assess than others. These include giving support beyond the cheque, do the homework,

simplify and streamline paperwork and solicit and act on feedback (Powell et al, 2023; Trust Based Philanthropy, 2021). However, there was little indication from research participants that Patagonia adopted some trust-based principles based on prior feedback from nonprofit organisations' experiences of the previous grant model. Instead, it was roundly perceived by respondents as a welcome shift that enhanced Patagonia's reputation and mirrored the size of grants that were being offered through Patagonia's philanthropic approach.

For example, giving support beyond the cheque is one aspect of Patagonia's philanthropy that has evidence both for and against it, and therefore becomes difficult to quantify. The evidence for is that many organisations highlighted a suite of non-financial mechanisms that are available from Patagonia, including in-store tabling opportunities and presentations, in-kind donations, petition sharing, public policy comment writing, and documentary making. Multiple respondents highlighted that access to non-financial resources was a key driver in perceiving Patagonia to be authentic. Apart from documentary making, many of these non-financial resources categorised as giving beyond the cheque were offered by local Patagonia stores to locally based organisations. However, the evidence that goes against this is that other non-financial support mechanisms, such as access to the Catchafire and PAW platforms, and attending the Grassroots Environmental Activism conference, are only available to current grantees, and not to the wider community of environmental organisations. Access to these specific non-financial mechanisms is granted by the Corporate Patagonia office, highlighting a discrepancy between the two-pronged approach of Patagonia's approach to philanthropic support. An argument can be made that the extent to which giving support beyond the cheque is operationalised to all environmental organisations is limited and is not unilaterally offered to all nonprofit organisations within the environmental movement.

Other principles associated with trust-based philanthropy are easier to quantify. The literature suggests that general operating (unrestricted) grants enables nonprofit organisations to better deal with external shocks (Wiepking & de Wit, 2024; Powell et al, 2023) and redefines the power dynamics between a funder and grantee (Jones et al, 2024). The testimonies in Chapter Five demonstrated that grants are now offered under general operating terms and conditions, and the grant application process has been streamlined. Grants can now be spent on any organisational activity and do not necessarily have to align with corporate objectives (Wiepking & de Wit, 2024; Hunnick et al, 2021). This research has highlighted that the easing of reporting requirements and the allocation of unrestricted funding are two mechanisms for establishing trust between Patagonia and grantee, but has not found that power dynamics have shifted. Indeed, power remains in the hands of Patagonia as it is their staff who vote on which organisations will receive funding.

Additionally, Patagonia do not offer multi-year grants, instead operating under a single-year grant model. This is because philanthropic giving is tied to Patagonia's revenue generation each year; if sales decrease or expenditures increase, then fewer dollars are available for philanthropic purposes. Therefore, the key question to ask if that if Patagonia do not use all six of the principles, then is their approach considered to be trust-based philanthropy? The experiences of nonprofit organisations suggest that Patagonia's philanthropic approach is a unique form of trust-based philanthropy, in which different principles are utilised based on the needs of environmental organisations themselves. The Patagonia team at the SLC Outlet Store do solicit feedback from organisations in terms of how they can better support the environmental movement in their locality, thereby introducing additional elements of place-based philanthropy (Reid et al, 2022; Smarick, 2021; Mazzei, 2017) and embedded grantmaking (Karlström et al, 2009) into Patagonia's overarching approach.

Place-based philanthropy is another recent trend within the literature concerning philanthropy and is practiced by both embedded and non-embedded funders (Reid et al, 2022). Place-based philanthropy occurs when a foundation provides extensive and long-term support for a comprehensive mix of programmes within specific communities, with the expectation that this will aid in community development (Easterling, 2025; Easterling et al, 2023). Patagonia's model for philanthropic giving has incorporated both embedded and non-embedded elements. The embedded elements include the positioning of Patagonia stores within certain markets; these are overwhelmingly urban and in areas with a significantly higher difference in income (see Fig 6.2). The Store Environmental Grants Programme is one tool used to demonstrate place-based philanthropy as the stores decide which organisations in their local area will receive funding. The evidence presented in Chapter Four from Utah demonstrated that a comprehensive mix of environmental programmes received funding from the local store, with land and communities the two highest-funded programmatic types. The non-embedded nature of Patagonia's place-based philanthropy is the support offered by Corporate Patagonia to organisations situated outside of the parameters of a Patagonia store. Likewise, Patagonia are not embedded within the frontline communities facing EJ issues, and this physical separation has been argued to demonstrate their role as an ally as opposed to an EJ-focused corporation. These differing points aid in further developing conceptualisations of place-based philanthropy (Reid et al, 2022; Smarick, 2021; Mazzei, 2017).

Karlström et al (2009) outlined four key principles of embedded community grantmaking, which involve long-term commitments to specific places, developing deep relationships with community stakeholders, facilitating grant initiatives through local relationships, and blending financial

resources with other types of resources. The available evidence suggests that Patagonia engage in embedded community grantmaking because the company have been physically based within specific communities for a long period of time (commitment to specific places) and have offered a blend of financial and non-financial resources to nonprofit organisations. This research has found that the availability of non-financial support is often more beneficial compared to financial grants for grassroots environmental organisations. The range of nonfinancial mechanisms developed can be classified as philanthropic in nature, such as in-kind product donations (Kubíčková, 2018; Kotler & Lee, 2005) and community volunteering (Kotler & Lee, 2005). Other nonfinancial mechanisms, such as community tabling and event organisation, go beyond traditional conceptualisations of CSR activities as they encourage and enable direct environmental activism, with Patagonia playing a supporting role within this. These mechanisms provide evidence of other relationship types which will be discussed below. Additionally, Patagonia have created a version of participatory philanthropy that is unique in that it does not involve external local participation within grantmaking decisions, but instead utilises internal participation for deciding who receives funding at the local level (Taddy-Sandino et al, 2022). Looking forward, the Community Grants Programme outlined in Chapter Six would be considered evidence of participatory philanthropy, and worthy of future research. However, the fact that Patagonia do not engage the community in decisions affecting grants and they are offered on an invite-only basis presents considerable evidence that the overall process does not reflect the aim of the trust-based philanthropic movement: the shifting of power away from granter and towards grantee. While each grantee experiences looser reporting requirements and general operating grants, only organisations invited to apply for funding are considered. All other organisations are effectively channelled into other aspects of Patagonia's approach, including non-financial mechanisms for community engagement.

In conclusion, Patagonia have created their own unique philanthropic approach that incorporates dimensions associated with trust-based, place-based and embedded grantmaking. This marks a shift from their previous model that followed more traditional corporate philanthropic mechanisms that included restricted funding and strict reporting requirements. While respondents viewed the change as positive, they also highlighted that Patagonia's philanthropic giving was minimal when compared to other sources of income. Patagonia's Environmental Store Grants Programme is categorised as a 'nice-to-have' as opposed to a 'must-have', and specific emphasis has been placed on the role of non-financial mechanisms in the ability for Patagonia staff to effectively respond to the needs of different environmental organisations.

Patagonia as Activist

Patagonia have developed a range of non-financial mechanisms that go beyond traditional CSR activities (Carroll, 2016; Kotler & Lee, 2005) and complement their role as a funder of environmental action. These non-financial mechanisms can be categorised as activist support; evidence from Chapters Five and Six highlighted that Patagonia play the role of activist when resources are allocated towards activities centred on environmental activism. These resources include: the use of social media from Corporate Patagonia to augment direct activist activities at the local level, the development of digital platforms to link activists to environmental organisations, and staff using Activism Hours as part of Patagonia's CSR strategy.

This research has determined that Corporate Patagonia allow local Patagonia stores to exert autonomy over the environmental issues they want to take a stand on. This marks a considerable contribution to debates on how CSR can be better operationalised (Kotler & Lee, 2005). For activism to be considered authentic, corporations must engage in prosocial corporate practice and be involved in framing and driving solutions to problems of public interest (Vredenburg et al, 2020). Local-level autonomy over CA stances is an important integration of these two areas because it effectively enables the local context to be positioned within stances and supports locally-led prosocial corporate practice (Vredenburg et al, 2020). The testimonies from Chapter Six highlight that Patagonia staff are supported by Corporate Patagonia to take a stand on a range of different issues. The relationship between Corporate Patagonia and local stores is an important dimension in enabling grassroots activism to be supported, and it has been highlighted that Corporate Patagonia are a useful conduit to raise awareness of larger environmental issues; their sizable social media following compared to local stores enables issues to have their profile elevated and attract the attention of environmental activists in other parts of the U.S (see page 205). This supports the literature that outlines the role of organisations with extensive social media followers in enabling stances to be made on multiple issues (Nam et al, 2023; Lim & Young, 2021).

Other aspects to Patagonia's model for CA have emerged throughout this thesis. This includes Patagonia developing their PAW platform and incorporating the use of other platforms, such as Catchafire, to support environmental groups with specific activities. While some of these may fall under the classification of corporate community volunteering, especially in the cases where corporate staff have used volunteering hours to support environmental organisations, this is not the desired outcome of these platforms. Both platforms have been designed to connect any volunteer with any environmental or social cause, with volunteers using their skills and expertise to support nonprofit organisations with specific tasks (Vredenburg et al, 2020). The experiences

of these platforms outlined in Chapter Five highlight that these platforms are useful when environmental organisations are clear about the specific outputs related to a task, and metrics have been designed to demonstrate the estimated cost saving of a particular activity. However, the various testimonies related to these platforms reveal that only current grant members can access and use these platforms for specific requests. The unrelated outcome of this is two-fold as environmental organisations that are current grantees can attract funding and non-financial support, whereas other environmental organisations are not awarded funding and are closed off to receiving non-financial support. One way to remedy this is to open platforms such as PAW and Catchafire to previous grantees, thereby enabling environmental organisations that are not in receipt of funding access to volunteers that can augment their projects and operational strategies. In this scenario, philanthropic funding becomes a vetting opportunity for the environmental organisation to demonstrate tangible outputs and outcomes from funding, thereby building a track record and reducing the risk from Patagonia's brand reputation in the future. Therefore, access to activist platforms should be considered as an activist-driven activity on the part of the corporation (see Fig 8.3).

There has been substantial evidence presented that staff employed by Patagonia have been able to engage in direct forms of activism through CV, which is known as 'Activism Hours'. While CV is nominally a mechanism associated with CSR activity (Brzustewicz et al, 2023; Hatami et al, 2023; Kotler & Lee, 2005), Patagonia encourage and enable staff to directly get involved with activist activities organised by nonprofit organisations within the environmental movement. This not only enhances the reputation of the corporate actor within this space but also contributes to the wellbeing of employees who themselves may be activists. The literature has found that when CV is embedded within a corporation's CSR strategy, it can improve work meaningfulness, workplace happiness and aids in employee satisfaction and retention (Brzustewicz et al, 2023; Hatami et al, 2023).

Throughout the research, I found myself asking a rhetorical question: does Patagonia create environmental activists through their mission-based corporate activities, or does Patagonia attract environmental activists to work for the company based on their reputation? On balance, I would argue the latter. Environmental activists would like to work for a company that shares the same values as themselves and employee benefits, such as volunteering with nonprofit organisations, enables a higher staff retention rate within the retail industry. However, employee activists can call out their own company if they perceive the communications and messaging as being inauthentic. This tension is captured through a conversation with a retail worker at the Patagonia SLC Outlet Store, who stated they struggled with the corporate message of combatting

overconsumption and "buy only what you need" when faced with customers who bought lots of variations of the same product. As Fig 1.1 highlighted, Patagonia's messaging of overconsumption and "buy only what you need" contributed towards increased sales for the corporation. Additionally, the Patagonia SLC Outlet Store regularly ran sales events, offering discounts on products that were considered out of season. This highlights a contradiction between Patagonia's claim that they are not a fashion company and their corporate actions designed to increase sales and revenue. Additionally, as Patagonia have now transferred their non-voting stock and profits to the Holdfast Collective (see Appendix G), financial capital raised through selling products is, theoretically, being reinvested back into the community via philanthropic donations. Therefore, an incentive has been raised that focuses on increasing sales so more money can be donated to environmental nonprofit organisations. As the Holdfast Collective was established during the fieldwork period, it was too early to analyse whether the shift in corporate governance would influence the positionality of Patagonia staff towards their employers. However, the tension between messaging on overconsumption and the corporate focus on sales targets is an interesting observation from Patagonia staff. Staff are able to resolve these tensions by engaging in the different niches available to retail workers at Patagonia stores, such as engaging with nonprofit organisations, learning skills in repairing clothes, and organising community events.

Conversely, some employees may not be environmental activists before taking up a retail position at a Patagonia store, but through their activism hours they may find themselves aligned with one or more of the broader elements of the environmental movement. As Patagonia do not officially record where an employee uses their activism hours, instead relying on voluntary disclosure and encouragement to align it with the overarching mission of the company, it creates a disconnect between what Patagonia are saying they are doing and what they are doing in reality. If Patagonia recorded where and how activism hours were being used, they could strengthen their monitoring and reporting practices, thereby increasing transparency and accountability among the nonprofit community within the contexts in which they are based. This would strengthen the argument that Patagonia are a 'gift' to the community, using quantitative and qualitative data to augment the claim.

Patagonia as Community-based Organisation

Another aspect to the relationship between corporate activist and environmental activists is being embedded in and responsive to community needs. This relationship aspect goes beyond the financial and activist mechanisms developed by Patagonia and makes contributions towards conceptualisations of CA (Vredenburg et al, 2020; Eilert & Cherup, 2020). The physical aspect to Patagonia's presence creates a direct relationship to the specific community in which they base

themselves and is a direct example of place-based philanthropy and activism (Reid et al, 2022; Smarick, 2021; Colinvaux, 2018). By integrating themselves into the fabric of a community, Patagonia have built their reputation as an activist through hosting events, supporting nonprofits and tailoring their message to suit the local context. This role is one of a CBO (Squires et al, 2022), in which Patagonia are not perceived to be a for-profit corporation, but instead an ally to the environmental movement and a facilitator and enabler of environmental activism. For this to occur authentically, Patagonia have adopted a local-level approach that enables autonomy in decision-making on the causes of most interest to staff.

The distinctive characteristics of CBOs include local knowledge, trust, and relationships which aid in positioning them to play a supporting role in place-based development (Squires et al, 2022). The findings relating to trust-based philanthropy are relevant to this conceptualisation because it provides evidence that a significant amount of trust has been built between Patagonia and environmental organisations. Additionally, the mechanisms employed by Patagonia to create this relationship type include organising community events and hosting environmental nonprofits through tabling opportunities. These events incur significant resources but is one way to build relationships built on reciprocity and outlines a mechanism through which environmental organisations can reach a wider and more-engaged audience. Most environmental organisations highlighted the role of community events as an important support mechanism that enables the organisation to get in front of an audience and outline their role in combatting prevalent environmental issues.

The findings from the first empirical chapter highlight that states with Patagonia stores receive more philanthropic dollars than states without a store presence. This highlights the inequalities associated with Patagonia's philanthropic model, in which nonprofit organisations based in states and cities with a store presence can raise awareness of their profile and be eligible for the environmental grants programme run by the local stores. It is much harder for a nonprofit organisation based outside of these places to become a grantee. This is especially the case for newer organisations that have formed to solve environmental issues in their area following the shift to an invite-only policy. It puts Patagonia in an awkward position regarding its future operations. With consumer trends dictating an online-first retailing model, brick-and-mortar stores have closed, and this trend has only accelerated following the COVID-19 pandemic (Jílková & Králová, 2021). Patagonia were one of the first companies in the U.S. to close their stores during the pandemic and found ways to try and keep their warehouses operational. This model would lead to a decline in corporate-led community-level activism through the non-financial support mechanisms that Patagonia offers to the nonprofit community.

Patagonia maintain owned-and-operated stores but also sell their products online and through authorised dealers. Shifting to an authorised dealer model would severely impact Patagonia's reputation as a provider of place-based philanthropy and activism. Additionally, staff at the Patagonia store can use locally sourced knowledge to raise the profile of pertinent issues within the community. This locally sourced knowledge is embedded within the typology of environmental activism that exists at the frontline level. If Patagonia were to award all their grants from the corporate office with little to no input from staff around the country, then a plethora of localised environmental issues would be glanced over as there is no grounding within communities. This could, theoretically, lead to elite capture of environmental issues that do not promote social and EJ (Bloomfield, 2014). The current geographical spread of store locations means that Patagonia are not located directly within communities facing social and environmental injustices. However, these locations can still be reached by CBOs and can aid in raising awareness of issues that do not directly impact the traditional customer of Patagonia products.

The Role of CSR in Supporting and Enabling Grassroots Environmental Activism

The three types of relationships all make important contributions to identifying routes for corporate activists to support grassroots environmental activism in an authentic manner; these relationships can be held concurrently and can be ordered under activist-driven CSR activities (see Fig 8.3). The three relationships that Patagonia hold (funder, activist and community-based) coalesce to form an overarching role within the environmental movement. The role Patagonia play is overwhelmingly that of an enabler and supporter of environmental activism (see Fig 8.1). The supporting role is critical in ensuring that environmental action is embedded within the organisations that possess the relevant skills and expertise in offering solutions to environmental issues. The organisations supported by Patagonia through both financial and non-financial mechanisms are the ones that are framing and driving potential solutions to the environmental movement (Vredenburg et al, 2020). The role recognises that the knowledge needed to combat environmental issues lies in the hands of those who work full-time on the issue.

Fig 8.1: Patagonia's tri-relationship model with their overarching role of supporting and enabling grassroots environmental activism.

Through supporting and enabling direct environment activism to occur, Patagonia can be perceived as a conduit for environmental activism. This is achieved by the utilisation of Patagonia's store space for environmental activist activities through community organising, events or direct activism asks. This research finding has theoretical implications due to its potential to be replicated by other corporations seeking to support socially or environmentally focused organisations. Additionally, this finding demonstrates that supporting grassroots activism can shape positive social and environmental outcomes for a corporation's CSR strategy because it generates tangible evidence that the corporation is engaging with local nonprofit organisations and tailoring events centred around elevating the message of that organisation.

The research findings related to the role of corporate philanthropy within CSR and CA provide major contributions to the field of CSR, in particular conceptualisations of how CSR can be operationalised (Carroll, 2016; Kotler & Lee, 2005). This research has drawn on two of the most influential authors of CSR strategies and build upon their theoretical contributions by discovering additional considerations that underpin successful positive outcomes for society and the environment. The first author is Carroll, whose popular construct of CSR has been the CSR pyramid (see Fig 2.2), which states that the four responsibilities of business can be categorised as economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic. To account for the evolution of CSR towards CA, Carroll's pyramid of corporate responsibilities must be re-examined and reconceptualised. Within the reconceptualization model, the activist responsibilities of corporations are included because of the changing societal expectation from consumers making purchasing decisions (Edelman, 2018; Accenture, 2018; Sprout Social, 2017). Activist responsibilities are situated atop the pyramid when a corporation uses its platform to raise awareness of issues. As the majority of consumer

want to see a corporate's position on relevant issues (Accenture, 2018; Edelman, 2018), then it is wanted by society. Underpinning the corporation's activist responsibilities are the additional aspects of traditional forms of CSR. For CA to be considered authentic, then the philanthropic responsibilities (be a good corporate citizen) and ethical responsibilities (do what is just and fair and avoid harm) are pre-requisite corporate behaviour that demonstrates how a corporation is contributing to the issue (ethical) and the support offered to organisations to combat the issue more widely (philanthropic). Likewise, the base of the pyramid reflects the legal and economic obligations of businesses that is supportive of the Friedman doctrine of CSR (Friedman, 1970). The economic responsibility is cemented in making enough profits to make the business financially viable. Patagonia's model is representative of Carroll's approach because the total amounts donated to environmental causes is related to the financial performance of corporate activities, achieving legal and regulatory duties, and engaging in ethical business practices. When the business does not meet financial expectations or is in the process of litigation, the amount of philanthropy available to environmental causes would be impacted. The data from Chapter Four suggests that Patagonia's financial and economic position has strengthened over time, releasing more funds for environmental organisations. The years with smaller overall donations reflect the 2008 financial crisis, which decreased spending power, whereas the year with the highest donation can be triangulated to a corporate tax cut received under the first Trump political administration. Therefore, an important consideration related to this research is that corporate philanthropy is based upon profitable enterprises and reflective of the burgeoning philanthropic movements such as 1% for the Planet.

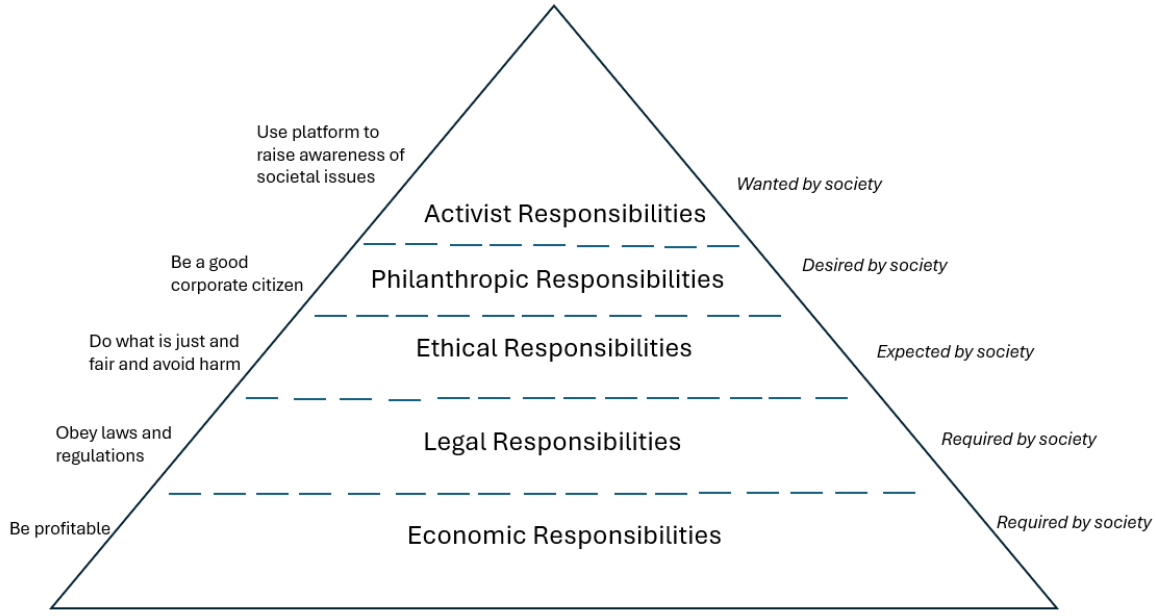


Fig 8.2: Author's reconceptualization of Carroll's (2016) pyramid of CSR.

The reconceptualization of Carroll's CSR pyramid outlines the pathway for corporates to be seen as authentic within the CA space. As CA has been argued to be an evolution of the concept of CSR, the elements of CSR strategy must be considered in theorising and conceptualising CA. As corporate-driven CSR activities are built around socially responsible business practices, corporate philanthropy and corporate community volunteering (Kotler & Lee, 2005), designed outcome-level interventions would incorporate indicators based around these three categories. Positive social and environmental outcomes are quantitatively measured by the amounts of philanthropic giving, the number of volunteering hours used by corporate employees and the resources used within socially responsible business practices. Qualitative measurements of positive social and environmental outcomes include the effect and impact of the philanthropic giving, the role of corporate volunteers within programmes, and the demonstrated impact of changes in the local environment and community because of switching to sustainable business practices.

The second key authors are Kotler and Lee (2005), who developed Carroll's theory of CSR further by including corporate philanthropy as a corporate-driven CSR activity alongside socially responsible business practices and corporate community volunteering. This research has demonstrated that philanthropy is a foundational aspect of CSR but also is a precursor to authentic CA. This is because philanthropic giving in the form of grants and non-financial mechanisms provides a robust evidence base of activities that aid in cementing a corporation's stance on a specific issue. In the case of Patagonia, the increase in philanthropic giving and the awarding of a larger average grant size over time provide proof that Patagonia are allocating financial resources towards an issue that they have built their corporate purpose around (We're in Business to Save our Planet). An additional contribution is the role of non-financial mechanisms that are not currently categorised under Carroll's pyramid or Kotler and Lee's classification of CSR activities. While product and in-kind donations are considered to be a form of philanthropic activity (Kubíčková, 2018; Gautier & Pache, 2015; Kotler & Lee, 2005), other mechanisms have been developed by Patagonia and other corporates seeking to support organisations that work on contested issues.

This research has documented several other non-financial elements that fall outside of Kotler and Lee's (2005) classification of corporate-driven CSR activity. Evidence from this specific research study includes Community Tabling and Community Events. Community Tabling is an approach that is not exclusive to Patagonia[59] but has been adopted by other outdoor apparel and industry companies. The research findings from Chapter Six argue that his activity is corporate-driven, as

[59] REI also hold community tabling events at their Utah store.

the Corporate Patagonia office set an expectation that each store host two tabling events and one community event a month. While requiring significant resources from Patagonia staff, it suggests that supporting grassroots activism at the local level positions the Patagonia brand as delivering positive social and environmental outcomes by elevating different environmental organisations within the local community. Community Events, which includes Community Tabling opportunities, should therefore be considered to be an additional activity under Kotler and Lee's classification of CSR activities that can be classified under activist-driven. This separation is important because while it could be a corporate-driven activity, it requires the participation of community organisations themselves within the process.

Marketing-Driven	**Corporate-Driven**	**Activist-Driven**
Cause Promotion	Corporate Philanthropy	Trust-based and Participatory Corporate Philanthropy
Cause-Related Marketing	Workplace Volunteering	Local-Level Autonomy over Community Events
Corporate Social Marketing	Socially Responsible Business Practices	Access to Activist Platforms

Fig 8.3: Author's own reconceptualization of Kotler and Lee's (2005) and Sarkar and Kotler (2020) CSR activities.

Sarkar and Kotler (2020) argue that brand activism is society-driven. While society plays a role in determining the types of issues that brands and corporations are expected to take a stand on, there is a need for further development of this concept to determine how brand activism is enacted and operationalised based on the corporate responsiveness to an issue. Identifying how society-driven issues can be better incorporated into conceptualisations of CSR activities is important. The research finding of local-level autonomy is one that aids in better conceptualising CSR-activities as it enables local issues to be acted on within CSR strategies. This includes the use of organising community events aimed at raising awareness of issues and provides an output related to activist-driven CSR activities (see Fig 8.3).

Previous definitions of CA and Brand Activism outlined in Chapter Two fail to consider the allocation of resources towards addressing the issue that the corporation or brand has taken a

stance on. Instead, definitions of CA and Brand Activism have focused on the adoption of a non-neutral stance, the issue being contested in the public domain and the desire to create societal change (Vredenburg et al, 2020; Eilert & Cherup, 2020). For example, Vredenburg et al define authentic brand activism "as a purpose- and values-driven strategy in which a brand adopts a nonneutral stance on institutionally contested sociopolitical issues, to create social change and marketing success" (Vredenburg et al, 2020:446). Vrendenburg et al's quadrant of brand activism (see Fig 2.8) outlines four key considerations of authentic brand activism: high activist marketing messaging, high engagement in prosocial corporate practice, explicit prosocial brand purpose and values, and framing and driving solutions to problems of public interest. This well-developed categorisation misses one final aspect to the final consideration: the allocation of resources to driving the solutions to problems of public interest.

The findings from research unearthed several important characteristics that aid in redefining what authentic CA can be. Therefore, CA can be defined as when a corporation takes a prolonged non-neutral stance on a contested social, economic, political or environmental issue and allocates resources towards addressing the issue. These resources could be financial, such as those that incorporate different forms of philanthropic giving, or non-financial, such as creating and enabling physical spaces for organisations to engage with communities on specific issues. This definition incorporates elements of definitions proposed by Vredenburg et al (2020) and Eilert & Cherup, (2020), including the non-neutral stance on a contested issue, but adds the resource allocation to account for more traditional definitions of activist activity and ensures that when a corporation takes a public stance on an issue, it is backed up with concrete actions and specific resources aimed at tackling the issue at hand. The inclusion of the word prolonged is reflective of the contributions of Nam et al (2023) to CA discourse, which include the pre-positioning of a corporation towards a specific issue that enables a quicker response time to external events and a deeper commitment towards driving solutions to an issue.

Theoretical debates surrounding the concept of corporate purpose have tended to argue for either SVM (Bainbridge, 2023; Stout, 2012; Bakan, 2004; Friedman, 1970; Berle, 1932) or stakeholder value maximisation (Glambosky et al, 2022; Dodd, 1932). The literature laid out in Chapter Two suggested that stakeholder value maximisation is closely related to the five dimensions of responsible business outlined by Sanford (2011). The Responsible Business Pentad (see Fig 2.3) illustrates the responsibilities of a corporation towards their customers, co-creators, the planet, local community and investors. This research has focused on the contributions of a corporation towards their environmental and social responsibility as two areas of Sanford's Responsible Business Pentad. While Sanford (2011) argues that environmental responsibility is centred on the

impact of their business activities, this research has developed this further by presenting evidence that environmental responsibility can be extended beyond corporate activities through supporting environmental organisations with their specific causes. By incorporating the voices of environmental organisations positioned within the local community, Patagonia's CSR outcomes can be enhanced as they continue to be responsive to local needs and demands (Gilberthorpe et al, 2016).

What this case study makes clear is that Patagonia have adopted for a stakeholder value maximisation strategy. It was not within the scope of this research to examine Patagonia's business practices and assess whether they are socially or environmentally responsible. However, this research has highlighted the role of the B-Corp movement in assessing corporate practices and certifying them (Buchanan et al, 2024; Kim et al, 2016; Stammer, 2016). Therefore, the assumption from the B-Corp certification model is that Patagonia engage in prosocial corporate practice (Vredenburg et al, 2020) through socially and environmentally responsible business practices (Buchanan et al, 2024). This assumption equates to the mechanisms that are within Patagonia's control and amounts to their ethical responsibilities under Carroll's CSR pyramid (2016). However, the impact from such activities and on Patagonia's positioning as an enabler of environmental activism is limited when you only consider the social and environmental impact of their corporate activities. Examining the mechanisms through which Patagonia can exert influence over the environmental movement can be achieved through analysing their philanthropy and community-support offers, which can have a much wider impact compared to the company getting their own house in order.

This research has examined the dimensions of CSR from the perspectives of environmental nonprofit organisations as opposed to the corporate perspective. In doing so, this research has filled the research gap outline by Liang et al (2024) and Lin-Hi et al (2015). Documentation of nonprofit organisational perspectives has been missing from the literature up until now. Therefore, the findings from this study make important contributions to the field of CSR by considering the perspectives of a diverse range of stakeholders involved in making authentic and high-impact CSR strategies (Gilberthorpe et al, 2016). The choice to use Patagonia as a case study aided in developing theoretical contributions. Buchanan et al (2024) argue that Patagonia is an extreme example of CA, and therefore is useful in theory development because the dynamics and mechanisms are more visible. Chapter One outlined how Patagonia have been used as a case study in the fields of green marketing (Guerreiro et al, 2023; Zint & Frederick, 2002), sustainability and consumerist social media messaging (Cristófol Rodríguez et al, 2021), circular fashion (Gautam, 2024; Iwasaki, 2024; Rattalino, 2018), CSR authenticity and engagement (Jung & Sa,

2020), and sustainable business and strategy innovations (Shourkaei et al, 2024; Rattalino, 2018; O'Rourke & Strand, 2017; Fowler & Hope, 2007). Furthermore, Chapter One illustrated how Patagonia are perceived in the CA space. Eilert and Cherup argue that Patagonia is "an example of a company that engages in bottom-up, grassroots activism to create environmental change" (2020:450). The findings from this research have challenged this perception. Firstly, there is no doubt that Patagonia engage in grassroots activism, but the engagement mechanisms occur from both a top-down and bottom-up approach. The top-down approach is exemplified by the finding that the larger grant sizes are awarded to philanthropic foundations to be dispersed among their networks. However, some of the larger recipients of Patagonia funding may be working on national or international environmental issues, with the size of the grant reflective of the issues they are trying to solve. Likewise, the grant process at the store level has been demonstrated to provide smaller grants and be managed on an invite-only basis; therefore, it is exclusive by nature. The Corporate Patagonia grants are managed in a similar fashion, with the difference between the two being the size of the grant. The bottom-up approach is exemplified by the creation of corporate activist mechanisms for environmental organisations of all sizes to engage with. This includes the use of digital platforms, such as PAW and Catchafire, the use of community space for events and tabling opportunities, and the shift towards principles of trust-based philanthropy and embedded granting.

Secondly, this research has argued that Patagonia's engagement with grassroots activism is through playing a supporting and enabling role. Patagonia do not organise environmental projects aimed at curtailing environmental harms or restoring nature, but instead raise awareness of the environmental groups that engage in these specific projects. From an internal perspective, Patagonia's CV initiative has enabled staff to volunteer with environmental groups; from an external perspective, Patagonia host events with nonprofit organisations that places the voices and experiences of the organisation at the centre of the event. The amplification of environmental organisational missions and project activities is the primary motivation for hosting community events, as these organisations are driving local environmental change. The plethora of environmental organisations that engage with Patagonia staff focus on the different ways that environmental change can occur. For some, it is through litigation of federal agencies (SUWA), others through environmental legislation changes (O_2 Utah and UPHE), and others through small-scale projects focused on urban gardening (WCG and GULB). Patagonia appear to take a holistic view of local environmental action, instead of focusing on singular issues that could have greater reach in terms of impact. Patagonia are not the only outdoor brand that utilise the various

mechanisms available to support environmental issues, but their approach has influenced the capabilities of other brands to operate within this space (see Appendix H).

As Patagonia's Director of Philosophy states "activism grounded in a company's core purpose can be built on for decades and adapted to the changing moment without loss of meaning" (2020:394). The findings from this research are consistent with Stanley's assessment of corporate purpose and authentic CA. The environmental movement may have shifted its focus from species protection and land management to the effects of environmental harms on communities, and corporate allies who supported work on the former are well-placed to align themselves with the changing dynamics within the environmental movement. Likewise, consistencies in activist behaviours, such as supporting grassroots activism through philanthropy, volunteering and community engagement, aid in cementing stances taken at a much higher level.

CA has been presented in the literature as a corporate-led initiative that helps to amplify the brand status and reputation by taking a public stance on an issue (Sarkar & Kotler, 2020; Vredenburg et al, 2020; Eilert & Cherup, 2020). McKean and King identified two types of CA: leader-driven activism and employee-driven activism (2024). However, I argue that CA can take on an additional form: customer-driven. Customer-led CA is when a brand takes a public stance on an issue after it has engaged customers with their views on the issue. An example of this is Black Diamond taking an anti-gondola in Little Cottonwood Canyon stance after engaging with their customer base around the issue and ensuring there was alignment. While there may have been staff at the corporate level that were supportive of taking a stance, the company only took the stance once they had conducted data analysis on public and consumer sentiment on this issue. This differs from more employee-led or leader-driven CA (McKean & King, 2024).

Patagonia's Role Within the Environmental Justice Movement

Authors situated within the EJ literature have argued that if the needs and preferences of local communities are not incorporated within CSR strategies, then these strategies could impose the values and preferences of powerful interests (Smith, 2021; Rodriguez, 2020; Bloomfield, 2014). Therefore, the finding relating to the community-based relationship has direct implications for processes related to EJ in the U.S. context. The EJ movement within the U.S. has tended to focus on anti-toxics and environmental racism (Schlosberg, 2007; de Luca, 2007; Bullard, 1994) and therefore has adopted a place-centric approach in combatting these environmental harms. Indeed, several authors have noted the role of valuing local knowledge as a mechanism for achieving justice in relation to environmental issues that disproportionately affect ethnic minorities and lower-income citizens (Smith, 2021; Rodriguez, 2020; Bloomfield, 2014). The

extent to which Patagonia value local knowledge within their environmental agenda is limited. Evidence presented that suggests they do incorporate local knowledge is through an internal participatory philanthropy mechanism that enables staff based in the community to vote for the organisations that will be recipients of the Environmental Store Grants Programme. Likewise, the case-study revealed that the Patagonia SLC Outlet Store does exert significant autonomy in taking their own stance on local environmental issues and can be classified as separate to the stances taken by Corporate Patagonia. The findings related to local-level autonomy and internal participatory grant-making demonstrate the partial valuation of local knowledge, but this is hampered by other dimensions. Critically, communities are not consulted on who should receive funding. Therefore, frontline EJ communities may miss out on funding and other support mechanisms due the practicalities of engaging with Patagonia staff; these practicalities include distance, time and other resource constraints. It is left to the Patagonia staff to be aware of systemic environmental issues and who they affect within the community, and for them to argue the case within the grant meetings.

Many of the organisations that participated in this research did not consider themselves to be frontline EJ organisations, but they did work on a range of environmental issues that have elements of EJ incorporated within them. In many cases, these organisations focused on the distributive and substantive elements of EJ (Bell, 2014; Walker, 2012; Schlosberg, 2007; Bullard, 2005a). Organisations such as HEAL Utah and O_2 Utah focus on the distribution of environmental harms and risks based on Utah's environmental policies and where these environmental harms are felt. Likewise, many organisations that are not categorised as EJ focus on procedural justice (Walker, 2012). Activities conducted by environmental organisations that focus on litigation and the formation of policies are examples of procedural justice in action. Organisations that adopt this approach include SUWA, O_2 Utah, WELC, Earthjustice and HEAL Utah. These organisations organise direct environmental activities, are involved in coalition-building, and are situated within the mainstream environmental movement. There are examples of environmental organisations that work on justice as recognition (Walker, 2012), including UDB and BEP. These organisations have utilised support from Patagonia and other corporates to incorporate respect for Indigenous peoples within their campaigns and activities.

Testimonies from EJ organisations argue that investing in EJ has greater reach and is addressed as systems-level change as opposed to other environmental causes. This is an important consideration for any corporate seeking to supporting EJ issues instead of using environmental activism as a public relations activity. However, Patagonia themselves are not situated within the communities that are most affect by environmental harms and there are numerous barriers for

organisations based within these communities to engage with the mechanisms designed by Patagonia. The analysis from Chapter Six revealed that Patagonia stores are often located in more affluent areas and therefore are less likely to be locally grounded within EJ issues (Schlosberg, 2004). Furthermore, the testimonies from staff at Patagonia highlighted the need to be situated within the communities where they can have a greater impact. The current situating in more affluent locations is preferential towards environmental organisations that already attract large amounts of funding and therefore may not need a store grant. By shifting locations, Patagonia can use their physical presence within communities to further their reputation as an ally and a supporter of EJ. Several respondents from EJ organisations argued that because EJ issues are highly place-based, a distance of a few miles from frontline communities inevitably creates tensions because the realities of everyday experiences are starkly different. However, Patagonia have attempted to bridge this gap through the use of media (such as film) to highlight the efforts of nonprofit organisations at the frontline of EJ issues. This is a demonstration of allyship, and highlights how a corporation can focus on EJ as part of its foundational activities.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the role of CA in supporting grassroots environmental activism by drawing on the findings from the three empirical chapters to conceptualise the different relationships held by a corporate activist and environmental organisations. The three relationships (funder, activist and community-based) are interconnected and dynamic, enabling Patagonia to use several mechanisms to be a considered as a supporter and enabler of environmental activism. This chapter has argued that the different components of these relationships make an important contribution to theoretical understandings of CSR-activities (Carroll, 2016; Kotler & Lee, 2005) and authentic CA (Lim & Young, 2021; Vredenburg et al, 2020). This includes demonstrating that activist responsibilities of corporations can only be authentic when supported by the other responsibilities outlined in Carroll's CSR pyramid (see Fig 8.2) and outlining activist-driven activities pertaining to corporate involvement in adopting CA stances (see Fig 8.3). Additionally, this chapter has re-defined CA to account for the significant findings relating to the allocation of resources to address an issue, highlighting that CA stances can only be authentic when supported by a wide range of resources that can have a more direct impact on environmental issues.

The next chapter will conclude the thesis by restating the main findings from the research study and the theoretical and conceptual contributions. It discusses the implications of this research for both corporates and environmental organisations and outlines several branches of further research needed to further understand the research phenomenon.

9. Conclusion, Recommendations and Future Research Possibilities

This thesis started by presenting the research problem: the global fashion and apparel industrial sector is responsible for a wide range of global environmental issues (Sehmen et al, 2024; Brewer, 2019), including being accountable for an estimated ten percent of global GHG emissions emitted on an annual basis (Biswas et al, 2024; Aponte et al, 2024; Bonelli et al, 2024; Shedlock & Feldstein, 2023; UNEP, 2023; UNEP & UNFCC, 2023; Brewer, 2019). Businesses situated within the fashion and apparel sector have attempted to address their contribution towards environmental harms through pursuing sustainability programmes and responsible sourcing of raw materials. These programmes have contributed towards the 'greening' of their own operations and associated supply chains, but GHG emissions continue to rise alongside a host of environmental problems.

Three corporate efforts to address the wide proliferation of environmental harms have been environmental responsibility, environmental philanthropy and environmental activism. In the context of the fashion and apparel sector, environmental responsibility occurs when a corporation or brand take steps to green their operations and source environmentally-friendly materials. Likewise, environmental philanthropy occurs when a corporation or brand donates money to environmental groups working to solve environmental problems in the communities in which they are manifested. Conversely, environmental activism occurs when a corporation or brand take a public stance on an environmental issue and take meaningful steps to address the issue. This form occurs when brands or businesses situated within the sector share technology and resources with competitors to make a larger contribution towards solving the problem, and elevate the voices of communities that are affected by environmental harms.

This research has utilised a case-study methodology to critically examine how an apparel company is attempting to support environmental activism at the grassroots level. The choice of selecting the apparel company Patagonia was deliberate as they have demonstrated efforts using all three mechanisms outlined above: environmental responsibility, environmental philanthropy and environmental activism. Patagonia's environmental responsibility has been well-documented in the literature and is publicly available for further scrutiny. Patagonia's environmental philanthropy is accessible through a 'follow-the-money' research approach, and one of the foundational contributions of this research has been the analysis of Patagonia's philanthropic activities through their general corporate philanthropy and Store Environmental Grants Programme. This philanthropy is geared towards environmental organisations who may engage

in direct environmental activism, and therefore Patagonia have played a supporting role in community organising and resilience towards the negative impacts of environmental harms.

The methodological approach used in this research project was an explanatory sequential research design, in which the research was conducted in two phases to examine the relationships unearthed during quantitative data collection and analysis to generate additional insight into the research phenomena. Phase One involved quantitative data collection through downloading Patagonia Org's IRS Form 990-PF, which detailed all the U.S.-based environmental grantees from 2007-2021. This provided an initial sample which could be analysed to address the first research objective of determining which grassroots environmental organisations have been supported by Patagonia and how this support is manifested. Following the analysis of data from Patagonia Org's IRS Form 990-PF, the specific context to examine the case study could be determined. This research decided to focus on the specific context of Utah for fieldwork in Phase Two of the research process. This was for several reasons: firstly, Patagonia had a store presence in the Sugarhouse neighbourhood of SLC. Secondly, Patagonia have taken direct CA stances on environmental issues in Utah, most notably the BENM and the ORS. Thirdly, being based in SLC enabled access to a range of environmental organisations that had been funded by Patagonia. Phase Two of the research design involved qualitative data collection using semi-structured interviews, participant observation and field notes. A total of fifty-four environmental organisations were invited to participate in the research, of which twenty-seven organisations agreed. Forty-three individuals participated in semi-structured interviews, with thirteen interviews conducted prior to the commencement of fieldwork and twenty-two interviews conducted during the fieldwork period of January 2023-August 2023. After fieldwork, the qualitative data was analysed to explain the quantitative results and draw inferences from the data.

Utah has a myriad of environmental issues that make for an interesting case study and yielded some important results specific to the research phenomenon. The issue of public land is specific to Utah given the percentage of land that is federally owned, but one that has national-level policy implications. Likewise, air quality is a tangible issue along the Wasatch Front due to the visible presence of smog during the winter. Other specific environmental issues relevant to Utah are of water quantity and quality, and the knock-on effects these have on other environmental issues such as biodiversity and habitats, air quality, and agriculture. This is pertinent to two specific water-related issues within Utah: the drying of the GSL releasing fine PM into the air, and the water rights issues that surround the Colorado River basin. This means that studying how environmental activism occurs within Utah is very place-based and would yield very different

results compared to a case study of New York or Los Angeles, two locations with multiple Patagonia stores and arguably a different array of environmental issues.

The first research objective was to determine which grassroots environmental organisations have been supported by Patagonia and how this support is manifested. Data was presented and analysed in Chapter Four that illustrated the role of corporate philanthropy in supporting environmental activism and demonstrated that Patagonia has increased their total philanthropic giving over time, but has seen substantive decreases in their total philanthropic giving in recent years. The average donation size awarded by Patagonia to environmental organisations has increased, from an average of US$10,000 in 2015 to over US$35,000 in 2021. This demonstrates that Patagonia are targeting specificity in their philanthropic giving by awarding larger grants. Likewise, Patagonia's average grant size to organisations that have only received one grant has increased from US$5,000 in 2015 to just under US$25,000 in 2021, signifying that Patagonia are creating space for newer organisations to receive corporate funding. Most organisations that received funding from Patagonia have either received between one and four grants; this highlights that most organisations do not tend to receive multi-year funding, a significant blocker in adopting one of the principles of trust-based philanthropy. Additionally, the analysis demonstrated that large-scale foundations received the highest amount of philanthropic support from Patagonia despite being a small percentage of overall organisations. These foundations offered grants to smaller organisations working in many different sectors, including the environmental sector. This amounts to a form of indirect giving, in which Patagonia award funding to a foundation who then offer grants to smaller organisations. As a result, the analysis revealed that several environmental organisations were both recipients of Patagonia's direct and indirect funding.

Academic literature concerning Patagonia has focused on high-level environmental giving, often quoting the financials that were reported by Patagonia, with little in-depth analysis on where that philanthropy ends up. This research has contributed towards addressing this gap in the literature by providing an in-depth analysis of Patagonia's philanthropy. The contributions include disputing the claim that Patagonia only support smaller environmental organisations with little overheads as opposed to large nonprofit organisations. The data demonstrates that small grants constitute the majority of grantees but a minority of total funding. Larger grants are awarded to a minority of grantees, who themselves provide grantmaking services. This indirect philanthropy is still an important contribution towards environmental philanthropy, but Patagonia would be best suited to expanding the small grants programme through local stores to incorporate the dimensions associated with place-based and trust-based philanthropy. The principles of place-based and

trust-based philanthropy are also significant contributions because of the presented evidence that Patagonia engage with these mechanisms to support local environmental activism.

While Patagonia have donated over US$111 million to environmental organisations, their approach has traditionally been focused on the markets in which their products are sold as opposed to manufactured. Most of Patagonia's philanthropy that can be tracked and analysed has focused on environmental groups based in the U.S., and there is little data that supports the notion that Patagonia fund environmental organisations in other contexts of corporate activity. This includes countries which manufacture Patagonia products to be sold in global markets. This finding is key in challenging the motivations behind Patagonia's environmental philanthropic and activism model, as the data presents the argument that it is centred on the U.S. and other western markets.

The second research objective was to examine the nature of the relationship between grassroots environmental activists and a corporate activist. The findings presented in Chapter Five demonstrate that the relationship between grassroots environmental activists and a corporate activist is generally positive and highlighted the shift from onerous reporting requirements to a more trust-based approach to philanthropy. While the financial nature of the relationship was an important dimension, it was not the only type of relationship that was held between the grassroots environmental activists and Patagonia. Outside of traditional forms of philanthropic giving, the relationship between the local Patagonia store and grassroots environmental organisations emphasised the importance of non-financial support mechanisms available. In several cases, it had been a significant amount of time since an environmental organisation had received funding from Patagonia or the organisation had applied for funding but had not been awarded any funds. However, the relationship was still active through the availability and use of varying mechanisms. These include the role of store tabling opportunities and organising community events, as well as employee volunteering opportunity, attending activism conferences and offering product and in-kind donations to environmental organisations as part of their fundraising efforts.

The third research objective was to examine the motivations and intents behind Patagonia's pursuit of CA and how they perceive their role in supporting grassroots environmental activism. While the importance of philanthropy and grant-making was raised, notably through the Community Store Grants Programme, the role of non-financial mechanisms were highlighted as an important contribution towards the environmental movement at the grassroots level in Utah. This includes mechanisms designed and enacted by Patagonia staff, including the Winter Walks and Nonprofit Tabling opportunities, as well as those co-designed by environmental grantees in the form of Activism Events and Community Engagement. The findings concluded that Patagonia

perceive their role in supporting grassroots environmental activism as that of an enabler and supporter; by establishing multiple mechanisms for local environmental organisations to engage with, they aid in providing support to the movement. The role is not one of positioning Patagonia as a leader in environmental activism because Patagonia do not organise and run projects aimed at combatting environmental issues faced by local communities. Instead, the store play an important role in developing a supportive ecosystem that enables grassroots environmental organisations to engage the public on a range of environmental issues, often with clear and direct activism asks. This includes the use of the Patagonia store as a place for communities to write postcards to elected officials or sign petitions aimed at specific environmental interventions.

One of the main findings related to the third research objective is that local stores can be given more autonomy and funding from the central Patagonia office. During the research period, Patagonia staff noted that that the process was characterised by an invite-only policy, and the local store could only fund three to four organisations in a given financial year. This meant that a lot of potential environmental grantees were left disappointed that they did not receive funding. As each Patagonia store has an Activism Lead, there is significant resource at the local level to provide more support to previous grantees as well as encourage new grantees to apply. An identified need is for Patagonia to reconsider their funding model and increase grant allocations for stores to redistribute to environmental organisations. As Patagonia have shifted to a more trust-based approach to philanthropy, reporting requirements have been simplified and streamlined, effectively making it easier to award grants to more local organisations. This approach can be funded through reduced grant sizes to larger foundations (as outlined in Chapter Four) and help in meeting their stated philanthropic target of supporting smaller environmental organisations with little overheads as opposed to large nonprofit organisations. However, the findings from Chapter Four demonstrate that states with a Patagonia store receive more philanthropic dollars compared to states without a store presence. As environmental organisations based in cities with a Patagonia store presence can raise awareness of their profile and be eligible for the Community Store Grants Programme, there is a continued need for a central pot to award grants to organisations that are based outside of these contexts.

The overarching research aim was to examine how supporting activism at the grassroots level can shape positive social and environmental outcomes for CSR strategies. The findings related to the three research objectives provide significant contributions towards achieving the research aim, including classifying the different types of relationships held between the corporate activist and grassroots environmental activists. This research documented three types of relationships: financial, activist, and community-based. The financial relationship is evidenced using corporate

philanthropy in generating relationships between corporate and environmental organisations. However, the financial relationship was not considered to be the most important aspect, as the grant process and the grant outcomes were significantly more important than the awarding of a grant. The shift to a more trust-based approach to philanthropy enables the relationship to become broader than the individual dollar amount awarded, and relationships can be built upon principles of trust. The second relationship is that of activist: this is evidenced by the mechanisms available to Patagonia staff to directly engage in processes of activism. This includes staff using their CV hours to work directly with environmental organisations. At the store level, there is a direct resource allocated towards activism, which includes understanding the environmental movement in Utah and organising events with specific nonprofits for mutual benefit. These direct activism offers help to shape positive social and environmental outcomes within Patagonia's CSR strategy. Directly linked to this is the community-based nature of Patagonia's relationship with environmental organisations. As Patagonia are embedded within SLC, staff at the Patagonia store understand the range of environmental issues that need to be addressed. Corporate Patagonia expects local Patagonia stores to be a community asset through hosting events and creating an enabling and supportive environment for environmental activists. By being embedded in a specific community, the Patagonia SLC Outlet store exercised significant autonomy in how they were able to support environmental organisations and were creative in creating non-financial mechanisms to support organisations that had not received funding. The creation of these mechanisms at the local level aids in shaping positive social and environmental outcomes for Patagonia's CSR strategy, and enhancing their brand equity and reputation within the activist space.

An important contribution towards theoretical debates around CA is redefining what CA is. Although this research did not set out to redefine what CA is, the findings unearthed several important characteristics that aid in redefining what authentic CA can be. CA can, therefore, be defined as when a corporation takes a non-neutral stance on a contested social, economic, political or environmental issue and allocates resources towards addressing the issue. These resources could be financial, such as those that incorporate different forms of philanthropic giving, or non-financial, such as creating and enabling physical spaces for organisations to engage with communities on specific issues. This definition incorporates the action aspect of more traditional forms of activism and ensures that a corporation taking a public stance on an issue is backed up with concrete actions and specific resources aimed at tackling the issue at hand.

Implications and Recommendations for Businesses

This research project has identified and used Patagonia as a case study through which mechanisms can be uncovered for how CSR can be done differently. While Patagonia have been mentioned as inspirations for other business leaders, their model has not been examined to the extent that this research has focused on. Patagonia were chosen ahead of other brands that engage in CA for several reasons. Firstly, Patagonia submitted a Form 990-PF to the IRS each year that is publicly accessible, thereby allowing scrutiny and analysis. This level of transparency is unique in regard to the case study selection because not all corporate foundations, including competitors within the outdoor industry, either do not have their 990-PF publicly available or have not had a long-running corporate philanthropy programme that provides significant data for analysis. Secondly, Patagonia have owned-and-operated stores located across the U.S. that advertise a wide-range of events running throughout the year. Similarly to the aforementioned point, this enables ethnographic research to be conducted within the specific contexts where Patagonia have a store presence to uncover the extent to which the company engages with place-based philanthropy and activism. Finally, the Patagonia brand has attracted controversy through its public stances on a wide range of environmental issues.

For businesses who are seeking to improve their CSR initiatives and transform their philanthropic efforts, they should consider changing their grant reporting requirements to reduce the amount of resources required for environmental non-profits in spending that money. This involves a significant level of trust and comes with the expectation that the money may not be spent as the corporation would have intended. This means grants should be given as general operating, or 'unrestricted', as unrestricted funding allows organisations to make their own decisions about how money is spent and what resources they may be able to pool due to the money that is provided by corporate philanthropic foundations. This would be reflective of the growing trend in trust-based and participatory philanthropy.

Corporates must seek to increase their offer for environmental activists by considering a range of non-financial support mechanisms. For some organisations that have built up a relationship with a corporate over a number of years and who have cemented their brand identity and have worked on developing their track record, that support could be something as nominal as sharing a petition, hosting an information evening, displaying a sign or a logo in front of the store, or having CV opportunities made available. For smaller organisations, brand exposure through a social media post or tabling events may open doors with other organisations to collaborate on specific issues.

This can be achieved when a corporation takes time to listen to and understand the needs of the local community in regard to environmental and social activism. Displaying a brand name or logo at environmental organisations events enables the corporation to be seen as engaging with the issue, but using the event to increase sales for the corporate is when accusations of greenwashing are more likely to surface. It is important that environmental activists, when gathered in safe spaces to work on environmental issues, do not feel that corporations or businesses have co-opted that space for purely financial gain or for marketing purposes. Businesses can donate in-kind products to environmental organisations' events , but should avoid turning up to events with the pure objective of selling products to attendees.

Businesses should also seek to support environmental organisations not only where they have a store presence, but also where their products are made. It is easy for a company that has benefited from globalisation of labour supply and value chains to make generic statements about not owning their factories or mills, but until environmental injustices are addressed throughout the entire supply chain of a company, they will be subject to fair criticism. For example, Patagonia have considered cradle-to-grave design in their products and shifted to more cradle-to-cradle product design approaches. They understand the majority of a product's environmental footprint occurs through the design stage, but it is the production stage, which is often outsourced to companies within their supply chain, where most of the environmental impacts occur. Similarly, transparency is needed in decision-making process pertaining to where stores are located and for whom they seek to serve: this is a consideration for all businesses have to consider.

Where corporations decide to locate stores has implications for how the corporation want to be perceived by the same groups that they are seeking to support. Patagonia serves as an interesting example. Its physical brick-and-mortar owned-and-operated shops are almost entirely in urban environments, and within these urban environments they are not in areas associated with the 'dirtbag' climbers who recreate in wilderness areas associated with the sublime. There is no Patagonia presence in Moab or Yosemite Valley; instead, the stores are located in areas that are fairly well-off and which can attract the clientele that comprise the majority of Patagonia's revenue: the middle-class, college-educated urbanite who is attracted to Patagonia's sustainability and environmental ethos and wants to utilise Patagonia's brand image as part of their own personal brand.

For a brand to be fully supportive of EJ, and in particular the injustices associated with environmental harms, there needs to be a conversation about locating and rooting yourself in that community that you are seeking to support and represent. SLC is a good example of how different parts of the city experience different environmental problems. The west-side of the city is home

to the majority of low-income residents and where mining corporation Rio Tinto have a presence. Most of the toxic particles released from the dry and exposed bed of the GSL will specifically pass through this area, causing more health problems for residents. Environmental organisations that are based on the west-side are at a significant disadvantage than those who are based downtown or on the east-side of accessing support from Patagonia or other corporates. Corporations that want to support issues facing EJ communities need to position themselves within those communities and provide a space for these organisations to come to table and raise awareness of the issues that they face for their customers and the wider community. This research has found that Patagonia's funding and support would be generally classed as low-value opportunities for most larger non-profit organizations, who generate over half their income through individual giving and the rest through foundation funding, which can be hundreds of thousands of dollars in value.

The other aspect to consider is redesigning stores to allow for community engagement and collaboration to occur. While still providing space for retail products, alternative spaces can be utilised to foster a sense of environmental and social activism. Potential ideas include a classroom set-up with technology suited for educational seminars that enables speakers to talk to interested members of the community. Additionally, a more permanent nonprofit tabling feature would provide a dedicated space for activism. At the Patagonia SLC Outlet Store to reinvigorate the retail space to incorporate some of the growing aspects of the business. For example, there will be a dedicated space established for repairs, which will replace the mobile repair unit that was previously used in the store. I witnessed this upon returning to SLC in October 2024; the new store space had dedicated resources for community events and repairs by removing part of the store that was used as a back-office function. The investment in this change means, unfortunately, that it is unlikely Patagonia will migrate to areas of the city where environmental problems are more pervasive and are having a direct impact on communities. Patagonia is still a for-profit company, but one that has now pledged to reinvest profits back to environmental causes. Additionally, there is still a market and a need for goods by Patagonia, whether that is being intentionally driven by Patagonia's marketing and advertising teams, or whether as consumers are becoming more socially and environmentally conscious, they are researching which brands best reflect their personal values in order to build their own personal brand. This is often the catch-22 associated with Patagonia's approach to environmentalism and sustainability: the more environmentally and socially conscious they become as an organisation, the more attractive they become to those who share the same values, and they ensure marketing success. Quite often, this could mean making more products to sell, which in turn could increase their environmental

impact as a direct result. However, if market alternatives are not addressing the same issues, then it serves as a vote for a way for brands and businesses to market their products.

Implications and Recommendations for Environmental Organisations

Environmental organisations have multiple options for engaging corporates as part of their operational and fundraising strategies. This research has highlighted the importance of corporate philanthropy as a fundamental component of authenticating CA stances for the benefit of corporations. Similarly, corporate philanthropy can remain an important aspect of an environmental organisation's fundraising strategy even when the total dollar amount is lower than that of private foundations or governmental grants. Combining smaller grant amounts with relaxed reporting requirements enables grassroots environmental organisations to innovate their approach and trial new methods of environmental activism. Additionally, the use of non-financial mechanisms can provide a better return on investment for specific activist activities, including social media outreach, community engagement events and the use of petitions.

Another consideration for environmental organisations is to use CV as a mechanism for corporate engagement and utilisation of the skills and experiences that corporate volunteers can offer. Objectives for corporate volunteers should be clearly outlined and communicated before project initiation, with a clear indication of the measures for success. CV does not work when only corporates decide what is the best use of time on an environmental project. Instead, CV should only be considered where there is shared-value identified; for example, in cases where environmental organisations need specific tasks completed that corporate volunteers are well suited for, or for companies to engage their staff within projects in which they are directly contributing towards an issue.

The other aspects for environmental organisations to consider is to utilise the networks that corporates have built up over time through their market position. For a brand like Patagonia, which has been operating for fifty years and whose products can be found internationally, associating with that brand may have other outcomes that have not been previously considered. For example, a hyper-localised issue may be picked up by the local Patagonia store as an issue they want to get involved with, but it could also be picked up by corporate Patagonia, which has a much larger presence and is a more powerful facilitator of social action due to incorporating most of the brand's social equity. This occurred with SOC, whose work to stop a gondola being built through Little Cottonwood Canyon raised interest from Patagonia's founder (Yvon Chouinard) and his wife. The local store did not engage to the normal extent they would have

done due to negotiations between SOC and the Patagonia head office in Ventura in developing materials for sharing on social media that would have a much higher impact.

Another recommendation is considering the use of purpose-built platforms designed by corporates to support activism. Two examples from Patagonia include PAW, which enables grassroot environmental organisations to post opportunities for activists, and the Catchafire platform. These mechanisms can not only save the organisation significant financial resources but facilitate conversation between like-minded individuals, leading to exciting future opportunities. Setting up perimeters for volunteers is both resource and time-intensive, and an organisation that has a small cohort of paid staff may not necessarily have the time to engage in these platforms. This is where organisations should make a clear list of their priorities and focus on what they must get done (and therefore remains within the control of the organisation), what they could get done (which could be delivered through a hybrid delivery model), and then what they should get done (which can be outsourced to these volunteer platforms). This would reduce risks associated with external volunteers.

At the local level, Patagonia engage their staff to vote on the environmental organisations that should receive the limited funding available. This approach should be noted by environmental organisations, but it does contain several drawbacks. The process allows for greater autonomy and promotes place-based philanthropy; that is, staff who live and work locally have an acute understanding of the variety and severity of environmental issues and would understand these challenges better than a corporate executive situated in a head office hundreds of miles away. However, the limitation to such approach is that for an environmental organisation to be funded, Patagonia staff must be familiar with nonprofit organisations through other avenues, such as tabling, hosting events or collaborating on a campaign to raise awareness of a particular pertinent environmental issue. Environmental organisations, like almost any other organisation, whether for-profit, non-profit or governmental, have resource constraints to local-level engagement and collaboration. In essence, the organisations that become most popular among staff at the store could be reinforcing organisations that have more power financially or politically.

On the other end of the spectrum are organisations that were funded previously and built up a relationship with the store over many years who miss out on funding. This could be due to corporate policies shifting philanthropic efforts towards new grantees or otherwise underserved groups. It is a difficult balance to strike because while the relationship between corporate granter and grantee recipient is not *quid pro quo*, there are power dynamics at play that signal to the non-profit that could be funded, but after significant investment of both time and resources this may not be the case.

Future Research Possibilities

Patagonia are not the only corporation that have taken public stances on issues; a multitude of companies exist within the CA space that have taken stances on economic, political, environmental, social or legal issues. Recent examples in the apparel sector include Levi's listing the Trump administration tariffs as contributing to rising Anti-American consumerism, with consumer preferences shifting away from US products towards national or European products (Companies House, 2025). More research is needed on understanding the underlying mechanisms that encourage brands to take stances on these issues. Appendix H highlights four other brands that are situated within the outdoor industry and some of the mechanisms they have employed to enhance their reputation as a corporate citizen and corporate activist. Further research is needed to examine whether these efforts have a positive impact on the communities they wish to reach, and how they are perceived both in the market and in the environmental movement.

There is potential for further research into Patagonia's model, including a comparative assessment between how different stores engage in local level activism. As this research has focused on a place-based case study of Utah, alternative case study methodologies could understand and classify environmental activism within different contexts. While the scope to do cross-comparative analysis between urban and rural contexts is limited due to the more urbanised locations of Patagonia stores, there is scope to conduct cross-comparative analysis of stores in different states or in the same city. This would aid in understanding whether there are differences in how activism is operationalised between different stores and the observations of how the nonprofit complex within these locales perceive Patagonia's role within their community. This would be increasingly pertinent in urban contexts where the focus of Patagonia's environmental grants programme is focused on environmental and social justice organisations, but the locations of the stores are not within the communities they are supporting. This would provide a test of Patagonia's credentials as an ally and a facilitator of activism for organisations that have traditionally remained outside of their sphere of influence.

Additionally, there has been a recent trend of corporations reneging on public stances towards issues as well as corporations that have remained activist and not backed down from their stances; these companies may enhance their positionality as authentic corporate activists. Understanding the reasons why companies may wish to remain corporate activists will be deserving of further study within the field of CA and CSR. Companies may choose to do this because it is reflective of their customer base (customer-driven), their employees (employee-driven) or their management or ownership structure (corporate-driven).

While this research has used a case study of a company that has taken a position regarding the climate crisis and associated environmental issues, other prominent issues remain within society. Further research could compare two differing corporate approaches to different issues. For example, Cotopaxi's mission is a world without poverty, and therefore how they operationalise their corporate practices around this mission could compare with an approach taken by Patagonia to combat environmental harms and global climate change. A comparative case study could unearth different corporate innovations in attempting to meet their stated mission.

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Appendix A: Principles of Environmental Justice from the People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit

WE, THE PEOPLE OF COLOR, gathered together at this multinational People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, to begin to build a national and international movement of all peoples of color to fight the destruction and taking of our lands and communities, do hereby re-establish our spiritual interdependence to the sacredness of our Mother Earth; to respect and celebrate each of our cultures, languages and beliefs about the natural world and our roles in healing ourselves; to ensure environmental justice; to promote economic alternatives which would contribute to the development of environmentally safe livelihoods; and, to secure our political, economic and cultural liberation that has been denied for over 500 years of colonization and oppression, resulting in the poisoning of our communities and land and the genocide of our peoples, do affirm and adopt these Principles of Environmental Justice:

1) ***Environmental Justice*** affirms the sacredness of Mother Earth, ecological unity and the interdependence of all species, and the right to be free from ecological destruction.
2) ***Environmental Justice*** demands that public policy be based on mutual respect and justice for all peoples, free from any form of discrimination or bias.
3) ***Environmental Justice*** mandates the right to ethical, balanced and responsible uses of land and renewable resources in the interest of a sustainable planet for humans and other living things.
4) ***Environmental Justice*** calls for universal protection from nuclear testing, extraction, production and disposal of toxic/hazardous wastes and poisons and nuclear testing that threaten the fundamental right to clean air, land, water, and food.
5) ***Environmental Justice*** affirms the fundamental right to political, economic, cultural and environmental self-determination of all peoples.
6) ***Environmental Justice*** demands the cessation of the production of all toxins, hazardous wastes, and radioactive materials, and that all past and current producers be held strictly accountable to the people for detoxification and the containment at the point of production.
7) ***Environmental Justice*** demands the right to participate as equal partners at every level of decision-making, including needs assessment, planning, implementation, enforcement and evaluation.
8) ***Environmental Justice*** affirms the right of all workers to a safe and healthy work environment without being forced to choose between an unsafe livelihood and unemployment. It also affirms the right of those who work at home to be free from environmental hazards.
9) ***Environmental Justice*** protects the right of victims of environmental injustice to receive full compensation and reparations for damages as well as quality health care.
10) ***Environmental Justice*** considers governmental acts of environmental injustice a violation of international law, the Universal Declaration On Human Rights, and the United Nations Convention on Genocide.
11) ***Environmental Justice*** must recognize a special legal and natural relationship of Native Peoples to the U.S. government through treaties, agreements, compacts, and covenants affirming sovereignty and self-determination.
12) ***Environmental Justice*** affirms the need for urban and rural ecological policies to clean up and rebuild our cities and rural areas in balance with nature, honoring the cultural integrity of all our communities, and provided fair access for all to the full range of resources.

13) ***Environmental Justice*** calls for the strict enforcement of principles of informed consent, and a halt to the testing of experimental reproductive and medical procedures and vaccinations on people of color.
14) ***Environmental Justice*** opposes the destructive operations of multi-national corporations.
15) ***Environmental Justice*** opposes military occupation, repression and exploitation of lands, peoples and cultures, and other life forms.
16) ***Environmental Justice*** calls for the education of present and future generations which emphasizes social and environmental issues, based on our experience and an appreciation of our diverse cultural perspectives.
17) ***Environmental Justice*** requires that we, as individuals, make personal and consumer choices to consume as little of Mother Earth's resources and to produce as little waste as possible; and make the conscious decision to challenge and reprioritize our lifestyles to ensure the health of the natural world for present and future generations.

https://climatejusticealliance.org/ej-principles/

Delegates to the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit held on October 24-27, 1991, in Washington DC, drafted and adopted these 17 principles of Environmental Justice. Since then, the Principles have served as a defining document for the growing grassroots movement for environmental justice.

Appendix B: Patagonia's Five Elements of Responsible Business

Patagonia's checklists that detail the five elements of responsible business. This can be found in Yvon Chouinard and Vincent Stanley (2023). *The Future of the Responsible Company*. Patagonia Works: Ventura. Pp 172-191

Element 1: Responsibility to Owners/Shareholders

- Maintain a board of directors that meets regularly, has at least one independent outside members, and oversees executive compensation.
- Share financial information with all employees; no one should be uninformed.
- Have financial controls in place to prevent fraud
- Have financial reports reviewed by the board of directors and audited by an independent accounting firm
- Incorporate into the purpose statement a commitment to reducing social and environmental harm. Share it with stakeholders.
- Provide employee training to reduce social and environmental harm.
- Dedicate staff, even if part-time, to monitor the company's social and environmental performance, preferably within operations.

Element 2: Responsibility to Your Workers

- Pay a living wage; if you can't, figure out when you can.
- Determine whether your company pays above-market, at-market, or below-market rates. Paying below market means your competitors will attract the best talent, including yours.
- Calculate the multiple by which the company's highest-paid employee compares to its lowest-paid full-time worker. Set a goal over a specific period to narrow the gap to a specific multiple.
- Calculate your average annual attrition rate and compare it with that of other employees in your business. If your number doesn't look good, figure out why. Set a benchmark for improvement.
- Calculate the internal hire rate for open positions. If you must hire from outside too often, are you training properly and allowing people to grow in their jobs?
- Distribute a portion of the company's annual profits to employees as a bonus. Include as many employees as possible in the company's bonus plan to secure broad-based support for company goals.
- In the United States, offer health insurance to all half-time and full-time employees.
- Make health insurance available at cost to employees' families and domestic partners. Offer flexible spending accounts (FSA).
- Make available a 401(k) pension or equivalent plan for all employees after six months on the job.
- Contribute directly to the 401(k) pension or equivalent plan to encourage employee participation.
- Maintain diversity and gender balance at all levels of the workforce. No excuses.
- Provide stock options or equivalent forms of company ownership to as broad a base of employees as possible. (Note: Patagonia is wholly owned by the Patagonia Purpose Trust and the Holdfast Collective. No individual owns stock. When they owned the

company, Yvon and Malinda Chouinard did not offer stock to employees. They were concerned that, with shares more broadly distributed, the company would become overly cautious in undertaking risk in pursuit of environmental goals.)

- Provide generous vacation pay: one week after six months' employment; two weeks after one year; three and four weeks as soon as possible.
- Provide paid sick leave and personal days, including bereavement leave, and days to care for sick children.
- Provide paid maternity and paternity leave for at least ninety days.
- Allow part-time, flexitime, and telecommuting opportunities as appropriate.
- Install showers so employees can exercise at lunch or bike to work.
- Establish a relationship with a good childcare centre close to work. Better, offer on-site childcare.
- Ensure that facilities meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards or the international equivalent.
- Provide a company café or kitchen, or, if that is not practical, a dedicated space to let employees eat and/or rest.
- Subsidize employee travel to work by public transportation or by walking/biking to minimize the carbon impact of commuting.
- Provide paid week-to-month long internship opportunities for individual employees to offer their skills to non-profit organizations in alignment with the company's mission.
- Provide paid sabbatical leave for long-term managerial and creative staff to help prevent burnout.
- Pay severance to nonexecutive employees who depart in good standing after two years, and specify the amount as a percentage of salary in the employee handbook.
- Get rid of dehumanizing cubicles; let there be natural lights.
- Pushing an employee handbook that details the company's mission as well as its benefits and expectations. It should include a code of ethics, anti-discrimination/harassment policies, and a policy that enables employees to register grievances without fear of reprisal.
- On an annual basis, conduct a job satisfaction survey of all employees; quantify and share the results.
- In a manufacturing or warehouse facility, track all injuries and time lost to injuries.
- Institute shift-based rather than on-call hiring so families can establish continuity for childcare and sleep routines.

Element 3: Responsibility to Your Customers

- Make long-lasting products whose parts can be repaired.
- Make useful things that have an identifiable benefit to the user.
- Make things that benefit the commons.
- Make things that benefit health or healthy activities (e.g., organic food, mountain bikes, etc.).
- Make things that benefit artistic or scientific activity (e.g., pianos or astrolabes).
- Make things that are multifunctional.
- Vigilantly avoid unnecessary product proliferation (including excessive options, whether of colours or accessories, for popular products).
- Make environmentally preferable substitutes for environmentally harmful products.

- Have production or manufacturing processes screened by a third party (e.g., Forest Stewardship Council, Bluesign System Partners, or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design [LEED]) to reduce environmental harm.
- Be progressively transparent about the social and environmental impact of what you make. Is anyone in your industry working on a manufacturer or brand-facing index? Participate in that endeavour.
- Guarantee your product unconditionally.
- Serve the underserved; donate what you no longer need to those who do need it. Your company may even get a tax break.

Element 4: Responsibility to the Community

- Bank locally where possible- where they know you and you know them.
- Make opportunities available for lower-income people and people of colour in your community.
- Where possible, provide work for those with physical or learning disabilities.
- Establish a community service policy. Benchmark and measure performance.
- Encourage employees to organize group volunteer activities.
- Create partnerships with local organizations that benefit the environment and the commons.
- Make your facilities available for use by local organizations outside your working hours.
- If possible, create a charitable foundation; if your company is too small to do that, give in ways that will make a difference to the communities or causes your company cares about most.
- Have your charitable giving certified by 1% for the Planet or another branded organization that promotes and vets charitable giving.
- Identify the major suppliers that represent 80 percent of your purchases. Meet with them annually to mutually review the quality and success of the relationship.
- Create and maintain an ethics policy for transacting with suppliers.
- Communicate to your suppliers your company's mission, including your social and environmental standards.
- Write a code of conduct that identifies your social and environmental standards; insist your suppliers post your code of conduct where people do significant work on your company's behalf.
- Set social and environmental standards for your major suppliers.
- Have third-party services verify whether and how those standards are met. If the standards are not being met, but your supplier is working in good faith, set goals for continuous improvement in social, environmental and quality performance, the goals should reflect mutual effort. Benchmark and evaluate performance.
- Share with other companies what you learn when improving your social and environmental performance so that your industry can follow your lead in establishing best practices.
- Encourage major suppliers to use renewable energy and to target and track usage.
- Encourage major suppliers to reduce and monitor greenhouse gas emissions.
- Encourage major suppliers to reduce waste and divert it from landfill and incinerators and to benchmark and track their progress.
- Encourage major suppliers to benchmark and reduce water use (and to recirculate or recover water).
- Mandate the use of wastewater recovery systems by major suppliers.

- Work with appropriate trade associations to set standards for your industry that reduce social and environmental harm, and to educate consumers on the impact of the products they buy.

Element 5: Responsibility to Nature

- Conduct independent (is possible) audits of energy and water use, and waste generation. Local utility companies might be helpful with this task.
- Inventory carbon use. For energy, water, and carbon use, and waste generation, target and measure reductions.
- Share both targets and results with your board of directors, employees, and other businesses engaged in related activities. Get the word out in staff meetings, company newsletters, suggestion and reward programmes, employee manuals, and new-hire operations.
- Work with your major suppliers, business partners, and customers to reduce the environmental impact of any activity done in your name. (You can use as a departure point a life-cycle analysis of the 20 percent of your products that generate 80 percent of your sales.)
- Dedicate a small staff to serve as an environmental resource for business and operational units. Do not create an environmental bureaucracy. Do not subordinate the environmental department to the public-relations or marketing arm of the company.
- Incorporate environmental goals into job descriptions and performance appraisals, as appropriate.
- As soon as possible, conduct a life-cycle assessment (LCA) of the products that constitute 80 percent of your business.
- Conduct an independent audit of the toxicity of the major materials used in your products and manufacturing processes- or hire an independent organization like Bluesign that can work directly with your suppliers.
- Benchmark and target increase use of recycles and biodegradable materials; measure performance.
- Benchmark and target reductions in packaging.
- Conduct an independent audit of transportation for all inbound freight. Decrease your use of air and truck shipping; use rail and ocean freight more often. Increase your efficiency; reduce energy and pollution.
- Work with your industry trade associations to establish tools that can be integrated into your IT software to measure environmental impact and help improve performance.
- Take back worn-out products for recycling or repurposing or work with a partner to do so.
- Design products to be of high quality and lasting value- and with repairable components. The greenest product is often the one the customer doesn't have to replace.
- Design products to serve as many uses as possible (think cast-iron pan vs. electric can opener).
- Design products to include as much recycled material as possible.
- Design products that wear out evenly and whose components can easily be replaced, so that the whole product does not need to be thrown away when a single part fails.
- Design products that can be recycled and, when possible, made into products of equal value. (It is better that synthetic underwear becomes new underwear, not carpet backing).
- Design products with minimal packaging.

- Monitor energy bills for spikes in use that may indicate the need for maintenance.
- Buy renewable energy credits.
- Purchase renewable energy from your utility company.
- Reduce corporate travel. First-and business-class travel skyrocket the passenger-per-mile environmental cost.
- Convert your fleet to electric or hybrid vehicles.
- Create a vanpool programme, is possible.
- Encourage employees to take the bus or train, carpool or bicycle to work. Subsidize these alternative transportation methods, if possible.
- Post to your intranet carpool ride sign-up sheets, bicycle—route maps, and mass-transit schedules/maps.
- Offer telecommuting opportunities and flexible schedules.
- Offer lockers and showers for staff who bicycle to work.
- Provide secure bicycle storage for staff and customers.
- Provide loaner bikes so employees can do chores or go to doctor appointments without brining their cars to work.
- Offer electric-vehicle recharge ports for visitors and staff.
- Use ceiling fans rather than central air-conditioning units: the fans use 98 percent less energy.
- Install renewable energy sources, such as solar panels or wind generators.
- Use a 365-day programmable thermostat to control heating and air conditioning.
- Convert to heat pump technology.
- Supplement air-conditioning systems with evaporative coolers on condensers.
- Set the thermostat to 78°F for cooling, 68° for heating, and use the thermostat's night setback. If you don't control the temperature, talk to whoever pays the bill. Circulate a letter to everyone sharing the system to suggest how much money could be saved.
- Seal off unused areas. Block and insulate unneeded windows and other openings.
- Use small fans or a space heather during off-hours instead of cooling or heating the entire office.
- Use instantaneous water heaters at point of use.
- Use a solar water heather or preheater.
- When repainting the building exterior and roof, choose light colours to reflect more sunlight.
- Build a roof garden.
- Install and maintain lighting with automatic sleep modes and timers.
- Use task lighting instead of lighting the whole area.
- Work with your water company to develop a site-specific "water budget".
- Monitor water bills for spikes in use. Maintenance may be required.
- Reduce water pressure to no higher than 50psi by installing pressure-reducing valves.
- Replace water-cooled equipment, such as air-conditioning units, with air-cooled equipment or a geothermal heat pump.
- Irrigate with low-volume, recoverable systems.
- Harvest rainwater.
- Irrigate with grey water (from domestic activities such as laundry and bathing) that contains no animal or human waste.

- Install a self-adjusting, weather-based irrigation controller that automatically tailors watering schedules to match local weather, plant types, and other site-specific conditions.
- Install matched precipitation-rate sprinkler heads for even distribution of water over a surface area. Avoid runoff onto pavement.
- Modify your existing irrigation system to include drip irrigation.
- Install water-flow meters on all large irrigation systems.
- When repaving parking lots, install permeable concrete or create berms to drain or direct water into plantings.
- Target zero wate to the landfill or incinerator.
- Centralize purchasing to eliminate waste and ensure that environmental guidelines are followed.
- Require the use of low-toxicity cleaning and janitorial products.
- Design berms, secondary containment, or grading to prevent runoff or rainwater from following across industrial and hazardous liquid storage areas where it could become contaminated.
- Mulch, or use ground cover, in landscaped areas to prevent exposed soil from washing into storm drains.
- Regularly check and maintain storm-drain openings and basins. Keep litter, debris and soil away from storm drains.
- Keep a spill kit handy to catch/collect spills from leaking company or employee vehicles.
- Do not use products with added antibacterial agents, such as triclosan; this includes products for handwashing, dish washing, and cleaning.
- Reduce or replace disinfectants used in industrial processes with environmentally preferrable ones.
- Eliminate or reduce pesticides by using integrated pest management (IPM), which includes implementing good housekeeping, acting only when needed, making physical changes to keep pests out, and using fewer or nontoxic pesticides.
- Keep the kitchen, waste storage, and other areas clean to prevent pest problems.
- When pest control is necessary, use barriers (such as caulking/sealing holes), traps, and, as a last resort, less-toxic pesticides (such as soaps, oils, microbials, and baits). Apply only as needed (rather than on a routine schedule).
- Do not allow outdoor perimeter spraying.
- Purchase organically or locally grown foods and beverages for the lunchroom or café.
- Use low- or no-VOC (volatile organic compound) paint products.
- Use natural or low-emission building materials, carpets and furniture.
- Replace standard fluorescent lights with no-mercury LED lights.
- Develop a consumer take-back system (e.g., for printer cartridges) to recover spent products.
- LEED-certify all construction activities for your facilities. Recycle what you can from demolition, including wood, wallboard, and carpeting.
- Specify recycled content for carpet and backing, lumber/wood, cabinets, fixtures, drywall, partitions, ceramic and ceiling tiles, roofing and concrete.
- Rearrange workspaces to take advantage of areas with natural light, and design for increase natural lighting when remodelling.
- Use power-management software programmes to automatically turn off computers and printers.

- Serve dishes at office events in reusable serving containers.
- Eliminate the use of single-serving disposable water bottles.
- Compost kitchen waste.
- Do not use leaf blowers; they blow particulates around, as well as leaves; gas-powered leaf blowers cause air and noise pollution.
- Leave mowed grass on the lawn for “green cycling”. In dry regions, avoid lawns in favour of xeriscapes.

Appendix C: Utah-based environmental non-profits that have received funding from Patagonia

Organisation Name	Total Received	Number of Grants Received
Friends of Cedar Mesa	$173,750	7
Utah Diné Bikéyah	$169,500	7
Utah Rivers Council	$153,000	11
Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance	$130,500	9
Wildlands Network	$111,500	6
Glen Canyon Institute	$106,500	9
Grand Staircase Escalante Partners	$ 80,000	5
Heal Utah	$ 77,576	11
Wild Utah Project	$ 76,000	9
Torrey House Press	$ 55,000	3
The Green Urban Lunch Box	$ 42,500	7
Yellowstone to Unitas Connection	$ 42,000	4
Wasatch Community Gardens	$ 41,850	10
Living Rivers	$ 32,300	6
Tree Utah	$ 30,500	9
Utah Clean Energy Alliance	$ 29,000	8
Hawkwatch International	$ 27,500	7
Round River Conservation	$ 18,500	2
Uinta Headwaters Resource Conservation and Development Council	$ 18,000	2
Utah Recycling Alliance	$ 17,616	3
Save our Canyons	$ 17,500	5
Blue Sky Institute	$ 16,000	2
Great Salt Lake Audubon	$ 15,808	3
Peaceful Uprising	$ 15,800	3
Wildlife Rehabilitation Center of Northern Utah	$ 12,400	4
Summit Land Conservancy	$ 10,500	5
Breathe Utah	$ 7,500	3
Citizens for Dixie's Future	$ 7,500	1
Salt Lake Climbers Alliance	$ 7,000	4
Friends of Alta	$ 6,500	4
Utah Environmental Congress	$ 6,000	2
Center for Documentary Expression and Art	$ 4,500	2
Park City Defense Coalition	$ 4,500	1
Uranium Watch	$ 4,000	2
Friends of Great Salt Lake	$ 2,000	1
Hartland Community for Youth and Families	$ 2,000	1
Ogden Nature Center	$ 2,000	1
Bear River Watershed Council	$ 1,500	1
Boulder Community Foundation	$ 1,500	1
Friends of Tracy Aviary	$ 1,500	1
Recycle Utah	$ 1,500	1
Utah Physicians for Healthy Environment	$ 1,500	1
Groga	$ 1,000	1
Mountain Trails Association	$ 1,000	1
Bike Utah	$ 966	2
Utah Bicycle Coalition	$ 454	1

Appendix D: Participant Information Form

Project Title: Business Unusual: A case study of Patagonia's use of Corporate Social Responsibility and Corporate Activism to promote Environmentalism and Environmental Justice

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask questions if anything you read is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not to take part.

WHO I AM AND WHAT THIS STUDY IS ABOUT?

My name is Sam Jones and I am a PhD Candidate at the University of East Anglia in the UK. I am a visiting scholar at the University of Utah and I am being supported by the Department of Anthropology in meeting my research aims and objectives. I am doing a study examining the intersection between corporate activism, protected landscapes, and environmental justice with an aim to examine the impact that corporate activism has on public land policy and environmental justice organisations. As a fairly recent phenomenon, corporate activism has emerged through corporate social responsibility and occurs when a brand or corporate takes a stance on a particular social, environmental or political issue. As such, it has opened new avenues for research to explore and examine the role that corporates have in supporting or opposing environmental justice movements and public policy. The data generated from this research will form the basis of my PhD thesis.

WHAT WILL TAKING PART INVOLVE?

Your participation in the research will involve an in-depth, semi-structured interview that examines a particular social, political or environmental issue that you are working on that has been supported or opposed by corporate actors, including by those from the outdoor apparel industry. Interviews will either take place online through Microsoft Teams or another teleconferencing platform, or will take place in-person at your offices. Interviews are expected to be around 1 hour in length and will be audio recorded to produce a transcript and to aid subsequent data analysis.

WHY HAVE YOU BEEN INVITED TO TAKE PART?

You have been invited to take part due to your expertise and role in an organisation that has either provided support to environmental justice organisation or have received funds from a corporate activist. This research is utilising a purposeful sampling methodology which provides in-depth and detailed information about the phenomenon under investigation (corporate activist).

DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART?

Participation is completely voluntary and you have the right to refuse participation, refuse any question and withdraw at any time without any consequence whatsoever. You will be offered a copy of the transcription after interview and you may request updates following the research publication.

WILL TAKING PART BE CONFIDENTIAL?

Taking part will be strictly on the basis of confidentiality and anonymity of the participant and any individuals they talk about. Confidentiality may have to be broken if during the research there is a strong belief that there is a serious risk of harm or danger to either you, the participant, or to another individual.

Individuals will be offered the chance to waive their right to anonymity if they feel that will strengthen the research process. Any non-anonymised data in the form of signed consent forms and audio recordings will be collected and retained as part of the research process.

HOW WILL INFORMATION YOU PROVIDE BE RECORDED, STORED AND PROTECTED?

The interview will be recorded and will be stored in a secure folder that will be password protected and only accessed by the researcher. The recording will be transcribed and offered to the participant for their records. The transcription will be anonymized.

The University of East Anglia's Research Data Management Policy states that publicly funded research data are a public good and should be made openly available wherever possible. In line with this, research data will be kept and remain available for access for at least 10 years following any publication. Any additional documents required to enable sharing or reuse, or to meet legal or ethical obligations should also be retained for as long as is necessary to ensure continuing access of research data.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY?

The primary plan for the research is to submit and defend my PhD thesis. As part of this, I will arrange to have a call with participants following submission to present them with the study results and offer a copy of my thesis for their records. Secondary plans include presenting at academic conferences, submitting publications to academic journals and potentially being used in teaching materials in future years.

WHO SHOULD YOU CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION?

In the first instance, please contact Samuel Jones (University of East Anglia) at samuel.jones@uea.ac.uk.

If you would like to contact my academic supervisors, then please contact Prof. Emma Gilberthorpe (University of East Anglia) at E.Gilberthorpe@uea.ac.uk or Dr. Iokiñe Rodriguez-Fernandez (University of East Anglia) at I.Rodriguez-Fernandez@uea.ac.uk.

Appendix E: Semi-Structured Interviews Questions for Organisations

Exploratory Interviews

Project Overview

This research project will examine the motivations behind the pursuit of corporate activism and assess their sufficiency in relation to the wider ambitions of the global environmental justice movement. The ambition is to produce a model for how corporate activism might beneficially impact the wider Indigenous movement against extractive industries.

The central aim of this research is to examine the relative impact that corporate activism, and specifically Patagonia Action Works, has on Indigenous organisations' ability to mobilise against extractive industries. To support this, my research objectives are to examine core concepts relating to corporate activism and global environmental justice, including articulation of self-determination, Indigenous knowledge, Land Management, and climate justice. This research aims to examine where, how, and why Patagonia Action Works and Indigenous organisations intersect.

These exploratory interviews aim to specify the key debates around corporate activism as an emerging trend within Corporate Social Responsibility literature, and to examine far-spreading concepts and ideas around settler-colonialism, protected areas, self-determination, land ownership and management, and access to public land within the United States of America. The answers to these questions will guide and inform the research analysis.

Part One- Initial questions

- Are you over the age of 18?
- Have you read through the project overview and are you clear on the research aim?
- Do you consent to take part in this interview?
- Do you consent to it being recorded to aid in transcription?
- Would you like a record of the transcription after the interview?

Part Two- Overview of the Organisation

- Please provide a brief overview of your organisation, including where you operate and who you work with.
- Please provide an overview of your main achievements as an organisation.
- What are some of the major concepts that your organisation deal with? (For prompt- settler colonialism, protected landscape and land management, self-determination, etc)

Part Three- Broad Challenges and Support

- What are three main challenges currently facing your organisation?
- How are you working to address these challenges?
- What kind of support have you had to address these challenges? (Prompt- what businesses have supported you and how has that partnership arisen?)
- In an ideal world, what support would be there for you to address these challenges?
- What are some of the other organisations in the area that support the work that you do? How is that support manifested?

Part Four- Financial and Operational Constraints

- How much financial support have you had from corporates?
- What are the main constraints imposed on you in regard to spending corporate funds?
- What type of activities are funded, and where does other financial support come from?
- Describe how you currently monitor and evaluate activities funded from corporates, including Patagonia Action Works.
- Describe and elaborate on your relationship with Patagonia, including the local outlet store and the head office.

Part Five- Further Research

- What has been the main challenges working with researchers in the past?
- What ways of working have worked well with researchers in the past?
- What is the most important thing that outside researchers should know before conducting research?

Appendix F: Patagonia Grants Programme Stipulations

The following guidelines for Patagonia's grant programme has been taken from https://www.patagonia.com/how-we-fund/, Accessed: 6/12/2024

Patagonia supports environmental organizations with bold, direct-action agendas and a commitment to long-term change.

We support innovative work that addresses the root causes of the environmental crisis and seeks to protect both the environment and affected communities. We focus on places where we've built connections through outdoor recreation and through our network of retail stores, nationally and internationally.

We believe local battles to protect a specific stand of forest, a stretch of river, an indigenous wild species or a community from a polluting refinery build public support and confront larger, more complex issues like climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental justice.

We encourage work that brings underrepresented communities to the forefront of the environmental movement and defend communities whose health and livelihoods are threatened by environmental exploitation.

We support multipronged campaigns that push for greater environmental protections and force the government to abide by its own laws.

We fund work that	**We do not fund**
builds an equitable, inclusive and diverse environmental movement confronts systemic bias, discrimination and injustice in environmental policy or outdoor spaces is action-oriented focuses on root causes has a clear strategy identifies specific goals and objectives that can be effectively measured to evaluate success builds public involvement and civic engagement is done by organizations with a 501(c)(3) public charity status or a comparative fiscal sponsor (for U.S. applicants) takes place within the following countries: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada,	organizations that perpetuate systemic biases and discrimination based on ethnicity, race, religion, color, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, age, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, veteran, or disability status organizations without a non-profit status or a comparable fiscal sponsor trail creation, maintenance or restoration any dam renovations, human-assisted fish passage infrastructure or hatchery programs conservation easements or land acquisition research, unless it is in direct support of a developed plan for specific action to alleviate an environmental problem projects that are solely focused on environmental education

Chile, Czechia, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States.	environmental conferences, event sponsorships or film festivals endowment funds political campaigns green building projects bike advocacy, unless the project is in direct support of a climate change solution

Patagonia believes that the most direct path to real change is through building grassroots momentum.

Our funding focuses on organizations that have or can create a strong base of support. Because we're a privately held company, we have the freedom to fund risk-taking, off-the-beaten-track groups, and that's where we believe our small grants are most effective.

We accept one proposal per group in a given fiscal year **(May 1–April 30)**, with deadlines varying from program to program. Our typical grant size also varies from program to program, but generally ranges between $5,000 and $20,000.

Appendix G: What next for Patagonia?: Patagonia Purpose Trust and the Holdfast Collective

In Chapter One I outlined Patagonia's campaign outlining their corporate purpose for the next fifty years. However, there have been several changes announced by Patagonia throughout the course of this research project that have changed the way the company will operate its philanthropic model. On September 14th 2022, Patagonia made an announcement that sent shockwaves through the business community. The Chouinard family transferred Patagonia's ownership to two new entities: Patagonia Purpose Trust and the Holdfast Collective, with "every dollar that is not reinvested back into Patagonia will be distributed as dividends to protect the planet (Patagonia, 2022). The Patagonia Purpose Trust owns all voting stock in the company, which equates to two percent of total stock, and exists to "create a more permanent legal structure to enshrine Patagonia's purpose and values […] and to facilitate what the company continues to do best: demonstrate as a for-profit business that capitalism can work for the planet" (Patagonia, 2022). While this form of corporate governance and ownership is not new outside of the U.S. (25 percent of the largest 100 firms in Denmark are foundation-owned), it has only been legally recognised since a tax legislation was passed in 2018 which allowed charitable organisations to hold 100% of voting rights in a corporation (Gautier & Bothello, 2022).

The Holdfast collective owns all nonvoting stock, equating to 98 percent of total stock, and "will use every dollar received from Patagonia to protect nature and biodiversity, support thriving communities and fight the environmental crisis […] the company projects that it will pay out an annual dividend of roughly US$100 million, depending on the health of the business" (Patagonia, 2022).

Home Planet Fund

On April 22nd 2024, marking fifty-four years since the first Earth Day celebration, Patagonia announced that they have created a new nonprofit called the Home Planet Fund, which is "a nonprofit that everyone can donate to and that directly supports nature-based solutions to the climate crisis practiced by local and Indigenous communities around the world" (Wieners, 2024). The fund has been launched with US$20 million in seed funding from Patagonia to cover overheads and is a legally separate 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organisation. The proposed financial flows can be seen in Figure G.1. As mentioned on their website, the Home Planet Fund is "an exciting new planet in Patagonia's solar system of environmentalism" (Wieners, 2024) and builds upon Yvon Chouinard's vision of "business unusual" by practicing "philanthropy unusual" in which the non-profit will operate with a high level of trust in grantees, minimal reporting

requirements and expenses, and a willingness to fund in remote communities. The Home Planet Fund has "identified regions where the science confirms the greatest potential for addressing global warming, including carbon sequestration and restoring soil health" (Wieners, 2024), and its international focus marks a turning point in its philanthropic efforts, which ordinarily has focused on environmental issues in markets where they have a store presence.

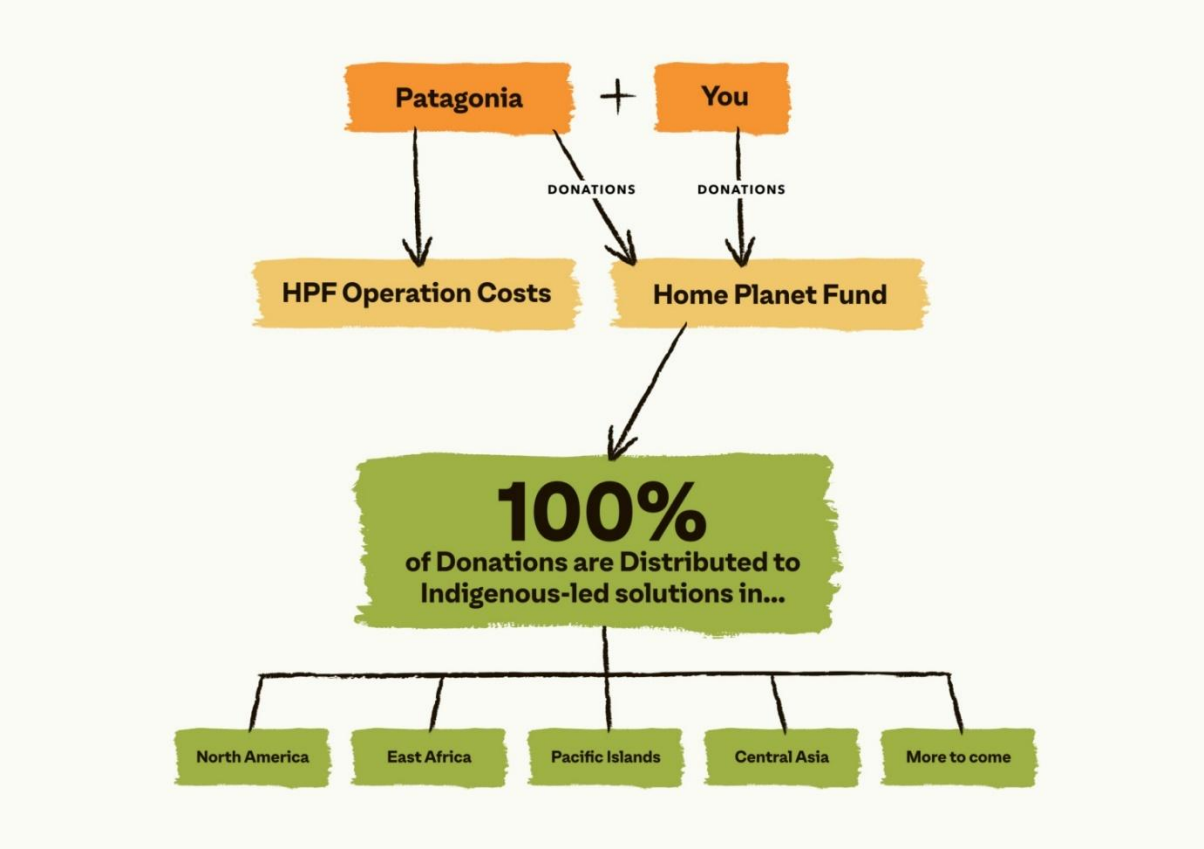

Fig G.1: The Home Planet Fund Financial Flow. Source: https://homeplanetfund.org/financials/

As a recently announced fund, it remains to be seen what kind of impact this new form of philanthropy will have on Indigenous-led solutions to climate change and environmental harms. Research in the future should examine how the Home Planet Fund model works and where the money and efforts are being spent.

As a point of note, it was an interesting time to do a case study analysis on Patagonia. During the fieldwork period, Patagonia were celebrating 50 years of being in business. It felt like a watershed moment, and the local stores across the country were organising and planning a series of events that celebrated the achievements over the past fifty years, but also looked to what the future holds for a company that has become one of the most influential proponents of stakeholder capitalism. One of the most prominent campaigns that corporate Patagonia (as opposed to individual stores) were focusing on this year were to remind consumers and the public that billionaire CEOs should be focusing on saving Planet Earth as opposed to funding exploration into life on Mars (see Fig.

G.2), directly implicating the owner of X (formerly known as Twitter), SpaceX and Tesla, Elon Musk.

Figure G.2: Patagonia's 50 years poster that illustrates there will be looking to save life on earth, and not follow in the footsteps of other companies seeking to build a new home on Mars.

Appendix H: Influence on other Outdoor Apparel Companies and Retailers

Patagonia are not the only company that engages in these public engagement mechanisms. The outdoor industry contains many examples of companies that use their platform to promote environmental causes. Perhaps this is not surprising given the fact that the outdoor industry relies on an intact environment for their products and services to be used. Outdoor companies such as The North Face, REI Co-op and Arc'teryx create media outputs such as documentaries and short films that raise awareness of environmental issues. The North Face have produced documentaries such as *Groundwork* that focus on building community through regenerative farming practices. Many of these companies have directly taken a stance on public lands, including on BENM and the withdrawal of public lands for the promotion of extractive industry interests (Raymond, 2022). These stances have been operationalised through public awareness campaigns, corporate philanthropic donations and partnerships supporting environmental nonprofits, and developing activist-specific product lines. For example, The North Face have developed several products that show support for protecting BENM and donate all the profits from this product line to the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition (BEITC) (see Fig H.1). This stance included twenty-four outdoor brands signing a letter written by The Conservation Alliance outlining reasons for boycotting the ORS in Utah due to the state's leadership in refusing to protect designated national monuments. Brands that signed the letter calling on Emerald Expositions[60] not to move the Outdoor Retailer trade show to Utah and to support tribes and public lands included Patagonia, The North Face, REI Co-op, Arc'teryx and Timberland (The Conservation Alliance, 2022).

[60] Emerald Expositions are a company that runs and manages trade shows, including the biannual ORS (summer and winter editions)

Fig H.1: A product example of The North Face's advocacy for Bears Ears. Source: thenorthface.com

Some collaborations between athletes and brands emerge through examining their brand ambassadors. Outdoor industry brands have used established ambassadors as a tool for marketing their products and testing their gear in extreme conditions. Climbing is one such example where brands collaborate with athletes to increase their brand equity and reputation within the sports they aim to represent. Many of these athletes use their collaboration to engage in environmental awareness-raising and direct activism. For example, the climber Alex Honnold, the subject of *Free Solo*, the 2018 Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature, is an athlete contracted to The North Face. Honnold's focus on environmental causes led to him establishing his own charitable foundation in 2012 (The Alex Honnold Foundation) which supports solar projects in twenty-eight different countries across the world. Similarly, the climber Tommy Caldwell, who co-starred with Honnold during *Free Solo* and is the subject of *The Dawn Wall,* a 2017 documentary about the creation of the first-ever free climbing route on El Capitan in Yosemite National Park, is a Patagonia brand ambassador and has written numerous articles for Patagonia's stories page on their website.

At this point it is important to note that although this research has utilised the case study of Patagonia to examine how businesses can support environmental nonprofits, Patagonia are not the only business that has engaged in this work. Several examples have materialised through the literature of companies that engage in CA, and most of these would be deserving of their own case studies to see how CA and CSR are approached in different industries. Patagonia are not the only outdoor brand that utilise the various mechanisms available to support environmental issues, but their approach has influenced the capabilities of other brands to operate within this space. Patagonia's model has been well-documented through the literature and has had direct influences on competitors and partners within the outdoor industry. Companies that have used Patagonia's model within their own operations include Black Diamond, REI, The North Face and Cotopaxi. Each of these will be examined in turn, outlining the information that is pertinent to each organisation and the processes that they have adopted which have similarities to Patagonia's approach.

Black Diamond is a company headquartered in Utah that was started by Yvon Chouinard, the founder of Patagonia. Its original name – Chouinard Equipment – references the fact that the company was founded by Yvon Chouinard. It designs, engineers and sells mountain equipment. It was taken over by Peter Metcalf and other employees of Chouinard Equipment in 1989 and rebranded as Black Diamond. The company is owned by the publicly traded Clarus Corporation (CLAR – NASDAQ). In addition, Black Diamond have put their brand equity behind their stance

on the proposed gondola in Little Cottonwood Canyon. The Black Diamond logo is the most prominent logo on the yard signs developed by SOC. In an interview with their Advocacy and Sustainability Manager, it was reported that Black Diamond took their stance on this issue based on a majority of their customers having a similar stance. When making their decision on whether to take a stance or not, they weighed up the benefits and potential consequences, and put their position out based on how they felt their customers thought about the issue. This is another way in which brands take stances on issues, by reflecting the values of their customers and ensuring that they are aligned. It is a different approach to how Patagonia operate, which ordinarily operates under a position statement from the brand and then educational and awareness-raising for their customers as a subsequent driver of activity. For example, the Advocacy and Sustainability Manager at Black Diamond reported that:

> "We felt like the gondola proposal, in addition to all of the environmental issues which are a big enough reason on its own, but we felt like our entire user group got forgotten with this proposal. It doesn't help our Backcountry skiers. It doesn't help our trail runners. It doesn't help for sure. Does it help our climbers by removing those resources from the canyons?" (Woman, Advocacy and Sustainability Manager, Black Diamond, 4/8/2023)

This highlights that many companies approach controversial issues by examining their customer base, conducting market research around customer values and opinions, and then aims to replicate those views through various mechanisms.

> "For this issue specifically, we just based on surveys and on public comments that 90% of the comments that were received were not pro gondola. So we for sure can't say we're speaking for all of our users not claiming to be supporting the wishes of all of our users. We can't. But we do feel like it's the majority and we know that just from the statistics of the reaction from locals." (Woman, Advocacy and Sustainability Manager, Black Diamond, 4/8/2023)

Using the public consultation comments is a good way to gauge public opinion, but it does come with the caveat that nonprofit organizations advertise public consultation periods through their membership, which often reflect the views of the same nonprofit organisations. This is not to say that there are not a lot of people who agree or disagree with a proposed infrastructural development, but it does not necessarily reflect the entirety of an issue. People are more likely to engage in public commentary when it directly affects them or if they have a strong personal opinion on the matter, which are often outliers with public discourse.

The North Face is a company that was founded by Doug Tompkins, a friend of Yvon Chouinard. Doug Tompkins also founded the Espirit brand. The name comes references the north face of El Capitan, one of the most notorious climbing faces in Yosemite National Park in California. Doug

Tompkins has a different approach to environmental conservation as opposed to Yvon Chouinard. In 1969 Tompkins sold his business and used the proceeds to buy tracts of land in Argentina and Chile to create national parks and protect the landscapes. More recently, The North Face have engaged in environmental activism by boycotting the ORS in SLC following the stance taken by Patagonia and others in their open letter to the organisers of the trade show. They have also campaigned for public lands protection, specifically around the BENM in southern Utah. The North Face's approach to these issues is to engage in cause-related marketing, in which the profits from certain products would be donated to the Bears Ears Education Centre, an initiative that was started by BEP.

Recreational Equipment, Inc. (ordinarily known as REI) is an outdoor retailer that has stores in 179 locations and is a consumer's co-operative. It is headquartered in the state of Washington just outside of Seattle. It was founded in 1938. The REI Co-op is the brand's line of products and, as an outdoor retailer, it sells products from a wide range of outdoor brands: The North Face, Marmot, Patagonia, Alpine Mountain Gear, Cotopaxi, Adidas, Columbia, Helly Hansen, Arc'teryx, Fjallraven and Black Diamond. REI are engaged in the network of environmental nonprofits at the local level and use community tabling as a mechanism through which environmental and other nonprofits can tell their story and engage customers.

Through REI's 'Cooperative Action Network', REI run campaign around Climate Action, Outdoor Equity and Places We Love. Under the 'Places We Love' umbrella, REI have called for a protection of America's public lands that incorporate the perspectives of Tribal Nations and other communities in the designation of national monuments. Additionally, REI operate the Cooperative Action Fund, that has supported over 350 nonprofits since 2021, with almost $19 million dollars awarded in the form of unrestricted, multiyear grants (REI, 2024). These grants are awarded under three initiatives: Connecting People Outside, Creating Space Outside, and Centring Health Outside. It appears that REI's approach to grantmaking has shifted since it launched the Cooperative Action Fund, focusing on unrestricted funding and simplifying the application process. Previously, it was noted by several respondents that had received funding from REI that the process was cumbersome, and the reporting requirements aimed at positioning the grant in the brand's favour as opposed to the activities that would support initiatives on the ground. REI's approach to grantmaking appears to reflect how Patagonia have traditionally funded projects: focusing on trust-based philanthropy and providing unrestricted funding that nonprofit organisations can use to support a wider range of community initiatives. A key difference in the approach between the businesses is that REI's fund is still aimed at outdoor industry initiatives, thereby remaining within their institutional environment and not taking

stances on issues that are more globalised (for example, climate change, biodiversity loss, habitat destruction, polluting industries, etc).

Cotopaxi are a Utah-based outdoor apparel and accessories producer and retailer that was founded in 2014. On the face of it, Cotopaxi are perhaps the company that has been influenced the most by Patagonia. The similarities are numerous. They are both named after topographical features in South America (Patagonia as a mountainous region in Argentina and Chile and Cotopaxi as a mountain in Ecuador) and use south American imagery in their logos (Patagonia utilise outlines of mountains in Patagonia and Cotopaxi used a llama from the Andes region). They are both certified B Corporations and have slogans that signal their brand purpose (Cotopaxi's Gear for Good slogan signals an intention to engage in corporate philanthropy). According to Forbes, Cotopaxi pledge one percent of revenue to charitable giving but donates closer to three percent (Molvar, 2022). While Patagonia helped to establish "1% for the Planet", Cotopaxi have a "Give 1%" initiative that is aimed at poverty reduction. The Cotopaxi Foundation is a private 501(c)3 nonprofit organisation that distributes revenues with targeted grants aimed at poverty reduction in developing countries: to date, they have reached over 4.25 million people by improving access to health, education, and livelihoods (Cotopaxi, 2022). In 2022, they offered nineteen grants to nonprofit groups, with a total of $1,080,218 donated. This would provide an estimate that Cotopaxi's annual revenue is just over US$100 million dollars a year. In addition, Cotopaxi stress the importance of offering high-quality outdoor gear that is, in the first instance, durable and functional: thereby cutting down on waste within operations. Finally, Cotopaxi are a privately held Public Benefit Corporation, the same legal status that Patagonia hold.

While there are several companies that have been influenced by Patagonia and have adopted similar mechanisms within their business models:

> "most of the outdoor companies, their environmental footprint and philanthropic legacy is terrible. It is absurdly bad. There are virtually no companies that are working to create an environmental legacy. Most of them are working if they're working at all and thinking at all about the environment they're trying to come up with a marketing campaign to convince consumers that they have some green aspect to themselves. And when you look at the depth of what they do, they're virtually meaningless" (Male, Executive Director, URC, 31/1/2023)

This reflects what the dominant preconceptions of CSR initiatives are: marketing ploys to attract consumers to their brand to increase revenue. Conversely, Patagonia, in his words, are the "most progressive and knowledgeable leader in the corporate environment for environmental and conservation values that there is […] they are literally 20 years ahead of most of their peers"

(Male, Executive Director, URC). In terms of other companies, it is interesting to see how they are perceived:

> "REI is a really good example. They're philanthropic endeavours are so weak. Their investment in groups, it has to all be. They used to be so 20 years ago REI had a pretty good philanthropic program. They would invest in groups that were working on advocacy and policy, and then they literally changed their giving requirements. And they said we're only going to be funding groups that are involved in the sports for the gear we sell. In other words, they changed their philanthropic giving to benefit their own sports and they turned a blind eye to climate change and the environmental crisis so that they could profit here for themselves by selling more backpacks and more T-shirts and more climbing gear and more things that are not going to make the world a better place. And is taking the money from their customers and using it for philanthropic endeavours that are not really benefiting our global environmental crisis" (Male, Executive Director, URC, 31/1/2023)

This critical reflection only strengthens the reputation of Patagonia as an ally and supporter of the environmental movement:

> "this one company is so far ahead that they're leading all the rest, and we're just going how come nobody's even trying to catch up? And that's our biggest problem is, you know, we really should have dozens and dozens of companies that are trying to compete with Patagonia. Not just for selling a better product, but for really trying to be leaders in the environmental movement. And that's really what Patagonia has done. And we just don't see happening in their peer companies" (Male, Executive Director, URC, 31/1/2023)