

A STRATEGIC ANALYSIS OF CORPORATE PERSONHOOD

Alan E. Singer

Walker College of Business
Appalachian State University

ABSTRACT

This paper sets out a ‘strategic’ analysis of the abstract conceptual-linguistic categories “person” “citizen” and “moral-agent”. Their respective primary-qualities are duly emphasized and inter-related. Various aspects of the concept of a for-profit corporation are also described and depicted (e.g. fiction, aggregate and real-entity) but always with careful reference to the logical (set-like) distinction between a corporation *per se* and its human members jointly or severally. The composite notions of corporate-personhood, corporate-citizenship and corporate-moral-agency are then re-analyzed, including their intentionality aspects, but with systematic reference to the various “primary qualities”. The paper concludes with a discussion of the apparent motives of the debate participants when they themselves emphasize selected qualities of the corporation. It might be noted at the outset that thousands of complicated and quite challenging articles have already been written about the P/C/MA of the FPC. The present paper, in contrast, simply sets out just a few conceptual models (diagrams) and tables, with accompanying text. In the 19th century the pragmatic philosopher Charles Peirce argued that diagrams constitute an integral part of any scientific inquiry. Modern journalists sometimes say, in similar vein, that a picture is worth 1000 words. When abstract ideas like ‘corporate personhood’, citizenship and moral-agency themselves become the objects of careful inquiry and investigation, that ratio might be even higher.

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