* CSR and going green—are these fads? Are they trends? Are they sustainable strategies? Give examples in your answer.
* What role do leaders play in promoting ethics and CSR in organizations?

What does “making a difference” mean? Who decides what level or type of social responsibility (CSR) is appropriate for an organization? What constitutes CSR? Is CSR a sustainable strategy? What is a green organization? Do government mandates make for good green policy? What has the Environmental Protection Agency done with taxpayers’ money, and is there a better way to affect environmental stewardship? Understanding basic economics debunks popular opinion on CSR and greenness.

Capitalism is better than command economies. The notion of CSR is not new, hip, or innovative. It is a well-known and respected practice among capitalists. Adam Smith, in his quintessential treatise on market-based economics, “The Wealth of Nations” (Smith, 2012), speaks eloquently of The Self-Interested Butcher. The butcher gives a fair measure and good quality to his customers, as a matter of self-preservation. In addition, when the butcher’s neighbor dies, leaving a widow and children, the butcher provides for the family both out of the goodness of his heart and the desire to preserve his reputation and business vis-à-vis good will among the rest of the neighborhood.

Command economies require that the butcher provide for those the government wants provided for, and the government provides the oversight and administration of this transfer of wealth, exacting their price along the way. By insinuating itself in the food chain between producers and consumers, the government raises prices, reduces quality, raids the product to be redistributed, and destroys producers and consumers alike. (Friedman, 1992)

Dr. Walter E. Williams, Economics Chair at George Mason University, puts it this way: “Imagine there's an elderly widow down the street from you. She has neither the strength to mow her lawn nor enough money to hire someone to do it. Here's my question to you that I'm almost afraid for the answer: Would you support a government mandate that forces one of your neighbors to mow the lady's lawn each week? If he failed to follow the government orders, would you approve of some kind of punishment ranging from house arrest and fines to imprisonment? I'm hoping that the average American would condemn such a government mandate because it would be a form of slavery, the forcible use of one person to serve the purposes of another.”

Even if it is not a government mandate, but worse, some un-legislated populist mob movement that dictates businesses must divest themselves of their earnings and dispose of it in some way approved by that mob, forced redistribution or Corporate Social Responsibility is wrong. On the other hand, capitalists and believers in free markets, left to earn money in the most efficient way, perform admirably in benevolence – especially as compared to their parsimonious collectivist detractors. (Kristoff)

CSR needs to be self-selected (Dubrin, 2013), and should never be used as a cudgel by anyone against a business trying to make the best decisions for its own interests. If it is truly self-interested and capitalistic, it should benefit from being socially responsible on its own terms. If it is selfish, it will fail. (Smith, 2012)

Green-ness is also not a new thing. Stewardship for the earth and all that is in it is part of the Adamic covenant between God and mankind given in Genesis. Corporate responsibility is more tricky than individual, because corporations cannot make moral decisions – only individuals can make moral decisions. (Locke, 2012) Corporate bodies can only make consensus decisions, and those are in the interest of the corporate body, not any altruism.

Modern pop-greenness is all show and no go – except in the exact wrong direction. On a cursory objective observation of natural phenomena and a responsible, truly scientific look at the history of our planet, one quickly finds out that the pseudo-science of Global Warming Alarmism was/is only a Trojan Horse for aspiring totalitarians. (Duffy, 2013) I particularly like the line by Frank York over at [www.epaabuse.com](http://www.epaabuse.com). He calls green imposers watermelons, because they claim to be Green, but they are truly Red to the core.

Companies should take care of the environment where they can, because this is the only way to true sustainability, but once again government intervention and populist mob rule are poor arbitrators that only invite abuse and counterproductive results.

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