

**REVERSE ACTIVISM: THE INFLUENCE OF ANTI-DEI MOVEMENTS ON
CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

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Introdução

The present study will define reverse activism as stakeholder movements that aim to rollback or dismantle corporate social responsibility related initiatives, particularly those perceived as socially progressive, therefore the focus on diversity, equity and inclusion programs. Unlike traditional social activism, which seeks to expand corporate responsibility, reverse activism considers oppositional framing and political mobilization to challenge CSR initiatives' legitimacy.

Problema de Pesquisa e Objetivo

This paper addresses that gap in literature by posing the following research question: How does anti-DEI activism affect firms' CSR strategies and non market decisions? Structured in a theoretical essay, the study explores how companies adapt their CSR and non market strategies when facing anti-DEI activism. More specifically, it aims to investigate whether anti-DEI activism exerts a reverse effect compared to pro-DEI stakeholder pressure or whether companies behave differently in response to negative activism.

Fundamentação Teórica

Nonmarket Strategy and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Social Activism: Stakeholder Pressure, and Corporate Legitimacy

Discussão

Anti-DEI Activism and Online Protest Mobilizing

Conclusão

Collectively, the propositions presented in this paper illustrate the strategic dilemmas firms face when navigating reverse activism. While symbolic CSR programs may provide firms with strategic flexibility to respond from contested DEI initiatives by disengaging their initiatives, substantive CSR commitments can create reputational constraints, making it difficult to retract or reframe DEI without backlash.

Contribuição / Impacto

This paper contributes to the nonmarket strategy literature by introducing the concept of reverse activism, forms of stakeholder pressure that seek not to advance social causes but to criticize or dismantle them, particularly in the realm of diversity, equity, and inclusion. While prior research has focused on corporate responses to progressive social movements, this study highlights how regressive activism can also shape corporate behavior and strategy.

Referências Bibliográficas

Aguilera, Bridoux, Dorobantu, Shiu