Call for Papers for a Special Issue

THE MANAGEMENT OF SOCIO-POLITICAL ISSUES AND ENVIRONMENTS: ORGANIZATIONAL AND STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVES

Submission Deadline: 1st March 2021

Guest Editors:
Rose Xiaowei Luo, INSEAD, France
Tazeeb Rajwani, University of Surrey, UK
Pei Sun, University of Manchester, UK
Timothy Werner, University of Texas at Austin, USA

JMS Editor:
Jonathan Doh, Villanova University, USA

BACKGROUND

Management of complex socio-political issues and environments has become a top concern for corporations in the contemporary world. Firms and industries are facing mounting socio-political challenges, ranging from grand events that are beyond their control to direct hazards caused by social and political stakeholders with whom they have to interact regularly. A glimpse of the daily business press suggests enormous challenges that corporations need to tackle for their survival and growth: How should multinational enterprises (MNEs) adjust their production facilities in the UK in the face of Brexit uncertainty? How can emerging-market MNEs address their lack of legitimacy in developed economies? How can American firms and their executives manage the demands of social movement activists both old (e.g., civil rights) and new (e.g., #metoo and blacklivesmatter)? What role do MNEs have to play in addressing grand challenges such as climate change and water scarcity? Answers to these questions cannot be readily found in traditional strategy textbooks that focus primarily on market-based competition.

Nonmarket strategy is a firm’s concerted action to improve its competitive position and performance by managing the institutional and/or societal contexts of business competition in which it operates (Mellahi, Frynas, Sun, & Siegel, 2016). It is comprised of two key components: corporate political activity (CPA) and strategic corporate social responsibility (CSR). Modern business firms are engaged in continuous interactions with actors/stakeholders in their home and host country nonmarket environments and thus, are deeply engaged in nonmarket strategy formulation and implementation.

Compared to voluminous research on conventional business strategy, academic inquiries into corporate nonmarket activity were slow to develop, not gathering speed until the 2000s. Topics such as CPA (e.g., lobbying, campaign contributions, and political connections) and strategic CSR (e.g., stakeholder management, sustainability issues, and corporate
philanthropy) have received increasing attention from management research outlets over the last two decades (e.g., Luo, Zhang, & Marquis, 2016; McDonnell & Werner, 2016; Sun, Hu, & Hillman, 2016; Wang & Luo, 2019; Werner, 2015). However, an integrative understanding of how firms develop relationships with their socio-political stakeholders and navigate a variety of local, national, and cross-border nonmarket environments is still lacking (Doh, Lawton, & Rajwani, 2012; Lawton, Doh, & Rajwani, 2014; Mellahi et al., 2016; Scherer, Rasche, Palazzo, & Spicer, 2016). This special issue is motivated by the fragmented but burgeoning state of research and aims both to take stock of recent studies on CPA and strategic CSR, as well as to encourage further theory development and empirical inquires in these promising research areas.

**AIMS AND SCOPE**

This special issue aims to showcase the latest developments in and future directions of research on how firms and corporate executives address, manage, and exploit socio-political issues/environments. Moreover, we hope to extend organizational and strategic perspectives on such firm responses, bringing together two important sub-domains – CPA and strategic CSR – and their interactions.

From the perspective of organization theory, we hope to better understand how institutional contexts can shape different types of corporate nonmarket activities across nations, as well as the potential dark side and unintended consequences of such activities. Further, it is high time that we narrow the micro-macro divide by deepening our understanding of how psychological and ideological aspects of firm leaders affect organization decision-making with regard to socio-political issues (Chin, Hambrick, & Treviño, 2013; Scherer, Rasche, Palazzo, & Spicer, 2016).

From the perspective of strategic management, we hope to better assess the effectiveness and impact of nonmarket activities on market strategies and firm performance. This entails a deeper analysis of the contingencies both at the macro-institutional level and at the micro-foundational level (Lin, Shi, Prescott, & Yang, 2018; Powell, Lovallo, & Fox, 2011; Marquis & Qiao, 2019). Moreover, we hope to promote multilevel investigation by incorporating more micro-level inquiries in nonmarket strategy research.

In sum, the special issue aims to attract cutting-edge theoretical/empirical research that sheds light on the nature, antecedents, management, consequences, and public/private regulation of corporate nonmarket activities. It strives to reveal how corporate nonmarket activities are shaped by institutional, organizational, and individual contexts, and it will critically assess the impact of such activities, including their dark side. We hope that the special issue further strengthens the reputation of JMS in publishing pioneering research on the interplay between business and society around the world (Arya & Zhang, 2009; den Hond, Rehein, de Bakker, & Lankveld, 2014; Janney & Gove, 2011; Jia, Xiang, & Zhang, 2019; Keig, Brouthers, & Marshall, 2015; McWilliams, Siegel, & Wright, 2006; McWilliams, van Fleet, & Cory, 2002; Marano & Kostova, 2016; Mena, & Waeger, 2014; Okhmatovskiy, I. 2010; Scherer & Palazzo, 2011; Sun, Mellahi, Wright, & Xu, 2015; Tang, Hull, & Rothenberg, 2012).

**TOPICS OF INTEREST**

The topics below provide an indicative, but non-exhaustive, list of questions that can be tackled through conceptual, quantitative, qualitative, or mixed method approaches, drawing on a variety of theoretical lenses and paradigms.

- What is the strategic interrelationship between CPA and strategic CSR: are they complements or substitutes?
In what ways are conventional competitive and corporate strategies shaped by multifaceted socio-political forces? And do nonmarket strategies tend to be substitutes or complements of these conventional strategies?

How do the composition and power of a firm’s top management team and board of directors affect its engagement in CPA or strategic CSR?

What are the micro-foundations of nonmarket strategy decision making and implementation in varying institutional contexts?

What are the roles of ideology, cognition, and motivation in shaping executives’ framing of socio-political issues and their management approaches?

How do psychological/personal traits of corporate executives interact with organizational characteristics and institutional environments to impact upon corporate nonmarket strategy formulation and implementation?

What is the role of the government affairs function in firms with socio-political activities? How are leaders and managers organised in these important functions?

What drives and what are the consequences of firm and CEO activism on social issues, such as race, LGBT rights, freedom of speech, press, etc.?

Are social movements that challenge firms from the right or a populist perspective different from the movements from the left that typically draw greater scholarly attention? Do movements from the right target different types of firms, and are they more or less successful in their activism?

How do firms manage nonmarket activities in Europe, North America, Africa, Asia and Middle East? To what extent are these activities shaped by local institutional contexts? What are the international variations in corporate nonmarket activities?

How are corporate political ties perceived in times of interstate conflicts? Do such ties help or hinder firms’ international strategies?

What are the potential dark sides in CPA (such as lobbying) and strategic CSR? What types of firms are more vulnerable to such problems?

How and when do firms disclose their nonmarket engagements? What effects, if any, does selective disclosure of nonmarket activity have on capital markets?

SUBMISSION PROCESS AND DEADLINES

Submission deadline: 1st March 2021

Manuscripts should be submitted by email to Margaret Turner at business.jms@durham.ac.uk

Papers will be reviewed according to the JMS double-blind review process

We welcome informal enquiries relating to the Special Issue, proposed topics, and potential fit with the Special Issue objectives. Please direct any questions on the Special Issue to the Guest Editors:

- Rose Xiaowei Luo: xiaowei.luo@insead.edu
- Tazeeb Rajwani: t.rajwani@surrey.ac.uk
- Pei Sun: pei.sun@manchester.ac.uk
- Timothy Werner: timothy.werner@mccombs.utexas.edu

SPECIAL CONFERENCE AND MANUSCRIPT DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

The guest editors of this Special Issue plan to hold a manuscript development workshop for those authors whose papers receive an invitation to revise and resubmit (R&R). During the
workshop (to be held in the second half of 2021; location and other details to be announced at a later date), the authors of manuscripts with R&Rs will present and discuss their papers with other attendees and the guest editors. Please note that participation in the workshop does not guarantee acceptance of the paper in the Special Issue. Likewise, attendance is also not a prerequisite for paper acceptance.

REFERENCES


