

call for papers

Andreas Rasche, Warwick Business School, University of Warwick
Laura J. Spence, Royal Holloway, University of London

Special Issue

Contextualizing Corporate Responsibility

Over the last two decades, the role of business in (global) society has changed significantly. Corporations are asked to voluntarily accept social, environmental and ethical responsibilities arising out of their operations and practices (Waddock 2008). Globalization is one key driver of this debate (Scherer & Palazzo 2008). Corporations have started to split up their value chains to make use of lower factor costs in other parts of the world. As nation-states are often unable or unwilling to "raise the bar", many corporations and their suppliers have started to self-regulate their operations. As a result, firms increasingly embrace responsibilities for their impact on various stakeholder groups also leading to a more direct interaction with civil society groups (Rasche & Esser 2006).

While the debate on corporations' responsibilities has matured over the last years, most of the discussion still does not consider contextual influences enough. Often, authors implicitly assume that corporate responsibility practices relate to large Western corporations. However, corporate responsibility practices differ significantly when accounting for geographic, cultural, religious and industry contexts. Developing and emerging economies, for example, where corporate responsibility is arguably all the more pertinent, are often overlooked. In addition, approaches also differ according to the organizational context, when contrasting large multinational corporations (MNCs) with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (Spence 1999, Moore & Spence 2006). This Special Issue aims to bring together scholars who reflect on and compare the different contexts within which corporate responsibility practices occur.

Possible topics for contributions include, but are not limited to, the following issues. We particularly welcome papers which link these themes:

- *Firm Size as a Context:* How does ownership structure of a small and medium sized enterprise influence corporate responsibility (e.g. sole trader, partnership, multiple shareholders, employee ownership)? Do small and medium sized family businesses approach corporate responsibility differently from non-family firms? What form does corporate responsibility take in small and medium sized enterprises in informal economies operating outside of a legal framework? What are the differences in terms of corporate responsibility between micro (<10 employees), small (10-49 employees), medium (50-249 employees) and large (>250 employees) firms and how do these responsibilities change as a firm changes in size?¹
- *Geographic and Cultural Contexts:* How do corporate

¹ Basic EU definitions of firm size.

responsibility practices differ across nation states, regions and cultural contexts? Do the motivations to become engaged in corporate responsibility differ between countries and regions? How is corporate responsibility exercised in the emerging BRIC economies? What are limits to managing corporate responsibility in emerging and developing economies? Can corporate responsibility foster socioeconomic development? How do different legal and regulatory traditions influence the uptake of corporate responsibility?

- *Industry Sector as a Context:* How do corporate responsibility practices differ when looking at different industry sectors? Adopting a historic perspective, how have firms from different sectors responded to corporate responsibility? How do different sectors respond to claims from civil society groups? What shapes the success and failure of public-private partnerships in different sectors? How do firms of different size work together within a given sector to respond to sector-specific corporate responsibility challenges?
- *Corporate Responsibility Initiatives in/across Contexts:* How do firms operating in different contexts respond to universal initiatives such as the United Nations Global Compact or the Global Reporting Initiative? How can the universal nature of such initiatives be balanced with their necessary contextual adaptation? Do industry-specific initiatives (e.g., the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative) have any impact?
- *Corporate Responsibility and Corporate (Financial) Performance:* What is the relationship between corporate (financial) performance and corporate responsibility practices in different geographic, cultural and industry contexts? Are there differences in this relationship when comparing MNCs, large national firms and SMEs?

We call for papers addressing the contextual embeddedness of corporate responsibility either by discussing this phenomenon in a particular context and/or by comparing it across a variety of contexts. We adopt a broad understanding of corporate responsibility, including reflections on corporations' role as citizens, business ethics and sustainable business practices. We are interested in conceptual and empirical studies that draw on a variety of theoretical perspectives and in quantitative and qualitative methodological approaches. Questions about the Special Issue should be addressed to guest editor Andreas Rasche (andreas.rasche@wbs.ac.uk).

Submission Guidelines: Please follow the guidelines on the website http://www.management-revue.org/authors_guidelines.php and submit the papers electronically to both guest editors by sending a fully anonymized copy of your manuscript (delete all author identification from this primary document) and in a second document information that would typically appear on the document's title page (title, author names, complete postal addresses, titles, affiliations, contact information including email, phone and fax). This document may also include author biographies if you wish. Please only submit PDF files.

Deadline: December 1, 2010

Tentative Timetable:

- December 1, 2010: Papers submitted electronically to guest editors for double-blind review process
- February 1, 2011: Authors invited to resubmit revised papers
- May 30, 2011: Revised papers due (incorporating editors' and external reviewers' comments)
- September 1, 2011: Authors notified if paper is selected for Special Issue
- December 1, 2011: Delivery of full set of papers and guest editors' introductory paper

Hoping to hear from you

Andreas Rasche: andreas.rasche@wbs.ac.uk

Laura Spence: laura.spence@rhul.ac.uk

References:

- Moore, G./Spence, L. J. (2006): Responsibility and Small Business, in: *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 67, No. 3, pp. 219-226.
- Rasche, A./Esser, D. E. (2006): From Stakeholder Management to Stakeholder Accountability - Applying Habermasian Discourse Ethics to Accountability Research, in: *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 65, No. 3, pp. 251-67.
- Scherer, A./G. Palazzo (2008): Globalization and Corporate Social Responsibility, in: A. Crane et al. (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Corporate Social Responsibility*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 413-430.
- Spence, L.J. (1999): Does Size Matter?: The State of the Art in Small Business Ethics, in: *Business Ethics: A European Review*, Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 163-174.
- Waddock, S. (2008): Corporate Responsibility/Corporate Citizenship: The Development of a Construct, in: A. G. Scherer and G. Palazzo (eds.). *Handbook of Research on Global Corporate Citizenship*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, pp. 50-72.