

Call for Papers Special Issue on the MNE as a Challenge to Institutional Theory

Written by Joel Gehman

Monday, 23 July 2012 18:22 - Last Updated Thursday, 26 July 2012 15:05

Call for Papers Special Issue

The MNE as a Challenge to Institutional Theory: Key Concepts, Recent

Developments and Empirical Evidence

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Submission Deadline 1 May 2013

MNEs pose an interesting context in which to study institutional stability and change. However, they have only recently assumed significance as a subject of study by neo-institutionalists whose focus has traditionally been on organizational fields. The recent upsurge of interest in how organizations respond to a multiplicity of institutional demands, however, points to MNEs as an exciting setting in which to develop ideas. These organizations operate in fragmented institutional contexts, face limited institutional isomorphism owing to multiple institutional pressures, and bring to light actors' efforts to seek legitimacy through micro processes of agency. It is these processes that we are interested in unravelling.

By the same token, comparative institutional analysts argue that nation states can have

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distinctive and multiple institutional logics that result in heterogeneous forms of organizing and social agency in MNEs. They have come to acknowledge that increased international competition challenges the dominance of institutional arrangements in national business systems and the complementarity of distinctive national institutional features. Similar to neo-institutional studies, there is a need in comparative institutional analysis to address how institutional arrangements across national business systems influence organizational responses.

Although international business scholars have studied the MNE and the role of institutions, they view institutions largely as constraints on MNE activity. This literature recognizes that institutions do not fully determine action, but overall it remains focused on how institutions constrain strategic choice and does not consider how institutions shape and enable the capabilities of organizations. There is, however, a growing appreciation of the need for an alternative conceptualization of institutions where actors are both enabled and constrained by institutions.

Given these developments, this Special Issue encourages a dialogue on MNEs and institutions that highlights the challenges confronting MNEs as they manoeuvre through multiple institutional demands, and that explores the enabling, capability-building and change-facilitating nature of institutions. Its purpose is to advance both the institutional and international business literatures by exploring these research themes.

We invite conceptual and empirical studies that draw on different theoretical streams, adopt diverse research methodologies, and examine multiple levels of analysis. In order to be eligible for the special issue, papers must seek to advance understanding of how complex institutional arrangements are experienced, unfold, and resolved by MNEs.

We encourage papers that explore, but are not limited to, questions such as:

- What implications do multiple institutional environments have for social agency?
- How useful are existing conceptual ideas in institutional theory for studying MNEs and social agency?
- Under what conditions do institutionally-embedded MNEs engage in action towards strategic change and innovation?
- How does exposure by MNEs to nested relationships between institutions at several levels shape micro processes of agency such as sense-making, translation, and hybridization?

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This Special Issue reaches out to institutional and international business scholars of any persuasion who see institutional complexity as central in their research, but also to scholars in management, sociology, and political science investigating forms of agency in MNEs. We are, in particular, interested in papers that encourage institutional and international business communities to engage in a dialogue on how multiple institutions shape organizational action, and seek a richer conceptualization of agency.

Papers should be submitted by 1st May 2013 by email to Miaevelyn at jmsed@ualberta.ca. Final decisions on submissions will be made in May 2014. Papers should be prepared using the [JMS Guidelines](#). The editors welcome informal enquiries and can be contacted at a.saka-helmhout@surrey.ac.uk

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