

SWG Standing Workshop Group (SWG 10) Call for Papers

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**Aalto University & Hanken School of Economics
Helsinki, Finland**

The Changing Role of Business in Global Society

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This SWG provides a platform to discuss the changing dynamics between business activity and society in the context of globalization (Beck 2000; Djelic & Quack 2003; Habermas 2001; Scherer & Palazzo 2008a). The dominant views of the firm in management and organization studies in general, and in subfields such as CSR or business & society in particular, still build on the economic view of the business firm that is focusing on profits and operating within a regulatory framework that is defined by government (Crouch 2006). In a globalizing world, governments may be ineffective and/or retreating causing corporations to operate in an institutional void (Hajer 2003). This dynamic erodes established ideas about the division of labor between the political and economic spheres (Scherer & Palazzo 2007, 2011).

The topic of the 2012 SWG is concerned with the political role of corporations, specifically the co-creation and enforcement of the international rules of the game by firms. The key research aim is to better understand how firms influence and participate in the creation of governance solutions in the international arena and how they support the enforcement of these solutions. The basic premise is that firms fill governance voids and thus turn into political actors, especially when considering their role in global governance and contributing to the production of global public goods (Flohr et al. 2010; Kaul et al. 2003; Matten & Crane 2005; Scherer & Palazzo 2008b, 2011; Vogel 2007). Governance, here, is not only understood as rule making, but also involves rule implementation and enforcement (including monitoring and reporting). Today, the governance of the global economy is characterized by the involvement of private, public, and civil society actors and the use of non-coercive steering mechanisms. Business firms are playing a significant role in this new governance of the global economy (Abbott & Snidal 2009).

This SWG looks at the supply and demand side of governance on a variety of economic, social, and environmental issues and gives special consideration to issues related to the emergence of private and/or public-private governance regimes (e.g. the UN Global Compact, the Global Reporting Initiative, or international accounting standards) (see, e.g. Bexell & Mörth 2010; Erman & Uhlin 2010; Rasche & Kell 2010; Vogel 2007). These problematic issues emerge with the business firms' ambivalent role as *governance makers and governance takers*. Apparently, the existence of non-state regulatory mechanisms provokes questions of *legitimacy* of private rule making and rule enforcement (Erman & Uhlin 2010; Palazzo & Scherer 2006; van Oosterhout 2010) as well as the *effectiveness* of global business regulation.

We want to discuss the consequences and implications of the new, enlarged role of the business firm for organization studies on the macro (business-society relationships) as well as the meso (organizational structures and procedures) and micro levels of analysis (leadership and individual behaviour). We specifically invite papers which take a critical perspective on the emerging political role of the multinational firm.

Possible questions include, but are not limited to:

- What is the business-role when looking at non-state regulation?
- Which institutional arrangements support the exercise of governance in the global arena? What is the role of international organizations such as the UN, WTO or the ILO?
- What determines the legitimacy and efficiency of private regulatory schemes?
- What are the enforcement mechanisms of private governance?
- How can we theorize about critical issues such as corporate dominance and influence on public issues, democracy gaps, and the failure of state governance?
- What are the success factors of private-public-partnerships such as, e.g., multi-stakeholder initiatives?
- What is the impact of a politically enlarged understanding of corporate responsibility on the theory of the firm?

We invite both theoretical and empirical contributions that help us to better understand the role of business firms in a globalized world. Papers that argue across the potentially relevant disciplines (organization studies, business ethics & CSR, international management, legal studies, political theory, etc.) would be particularly welcome.

EGOS has a long tradition of providing a forum for exchange and discussion rather than presentation of papers only. Therefore, the conference is organized in workshop form, which implies that every participant spends the three-days-conference in the subgroup where his/her paper is presented. Half the time is dedicated to paper presentation while the other half is free for discussion within the group. Therefore it is also a prerequisite that participants of the subgroup are familiar with all papers presented. The papers will be accessible on the conference website one month in advance. This workshop format allows for an intense, three-days immersion in a particular area of research and provides opportunities for profound exchange and learning within a group of international scholars. Further information can be found on the conference website: <http://www.egosnet.org/> or <http://www.egos2012.net/>

The schedule for submissions to the conference is as follows:

January 16, 2012: **Deadline for short papers of 3000 words**, to be submitted to the EGOS website (PLEASE CHECK FOR UPDATES, www.egosnet.org)
 March 1, 2012: Notification of acceptance of papers
 June 1, 2012: Full papers to be uploaded to the EGOS website

Abstracts and papers will be available on the EGOS website (www.egosnet.org). Any inquiries should be directed to the following address:

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Short Biographies

Prof. Dr. Andreas Georg Scherer

Andreas Georg Scherer holds the Chair for Foundations of Business Administration and Theories of the Firm at the University of Zurich (Switzerland). His research interests are in Business Ethics, International Management, Organization Theory, Philosophy of Science, and Strategic Management. His work has appeared in journals such as *Academy of Management Review*, *Business Ethics Quarterly*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *Organization*, *Organization Studies*. Dr. Scherer is Associate Editor of *Business Ethics Quarterly* and serves as a member of the editorial boards of *Business & Society*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *Organization* and *Organization Studies* and other journals.

Prof. Dr. Hans van Oosterhout

J. (Hans) Van Oosterhout is professor of corporate governance and responsibility at the Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University. He obtained an MA in political science from Leiden University, and a PhD in management from Erasmus University (2002). His research interests include the positive and normative theory of organizations and institutions, comparative corporate governance, business regulation, business ethics, and the role and position of corporations in the global institutional matrix.

Prof. Dr. Kathleen Rehbein

Kathleen Rehbein is currently an associate professor at Marquette University. Her research interests include examining the determinants and effectiveness of domestic and international corporate political strategies. She is also interested in shareholder activism, analyzing corporate responses to shareholder activists as well as determining the motivation of shareholder activists. She has published in *Academy of Management Journal*, *Decision Sciences*, *Business and Society*, and *Southern Economic Journal*. Dr. Rehbein has been very involved in the governance of the International Association for Business and Society and the Social Issues Division of the Academy of Management.