

# **JOURNAL OF BUSINESS ETHICS**

Call for papers for a thematic symposium

## **Mass entrepreneurship policy and Chinese firms' corporate social responsibility**

### **Guest Editors:**

Zhenzhong Ma, University of Windsor, Canada

Maoliang Bu, Nanjing University, China

China has experienced an unprecedented growth over the past decades (Ma et al., 2009; Wu & Ma, 2016), yet the rapid growth was mainly driven by extensive capital investment, with resource-based expansion in manufacturing sectors as the major contributor. More importantly, the fast growth came with very high social and environmental costs. It has become obvious that a resource-oriented approach that has dominated the past four decades is not sustainable. Social and environmental costs are becoming overwhelmingly high. The worsening smog in the majority of Chinese cities has also made China a less desirable place to invest and live. Contrasting to the urgent need to change its current development approach, it is pitiful that China's pace in structural and capability upgrading has been very slow, and Chinese firms remain inactive in taking socially responsible initiatives to change China's economic development model, which is increasingly seen as a signal of the need for a shift in the development path for the future (Kolk, 2016; Wu & Ma, 2016).

The year 2015 was a defining moment when China's State Council issued opinions to instruct the public on mass entrepreneurship and innovation for a more sustainable development. Mass entrepreneurship is to encourage every individual to become an entrepreneur, which is considered important for implementing a new growth strategy for China's next phase of economic development, a slower but more sustainable growth (Xinhua News, 2015). Premier Li Keqiang claimed that China needed to develop new engines, including mass entrepreneurship to drive its development. The new development strategy is to use mass entrepreneurship to upgrade China's economic structure in order to enhance Chinese firms' performance, protect the environment, and improve social justice for a more sustainable development.

With the increasing attention to sustainable economic development, researchers have begun to explore the antecedents and consequences of China's economic growth strategies and Chinese firms' corporate social responsibility (Buysse and Verbeke, 2003; Christmann, 2004; Kassinis and Vafeas, 2006; Marquis & Qian, 2014; Wu & Ma, 2016). Situated in such a context, this thematic symposium is intended to explore the important role of mass entrepreneurship policy and its impact on Chinese firms' social responsibility and business ethics in China's new phase of economic expansion. With this thematic symposium, we wish to make critical contributions to a better understanding of what profound impact this new policy might have on China's sustainable economic development and further to shed light on dimensions that are crucial in defining Chinese firms' corporate social responsibility (Aguilera, et al. 2007; Mellahi, et al., 2015). We also want to explore the potential unethical behaviors in the rise of mass entrepreneurial activities and their impact as well as how stakeholders respond to irresponsible behaviors or unethical failures when more people begin to engage in risk-seeking activities to take advantage of the benefits of this national policy. A cluster of research on this topic is able to

help build a more sustainable economic model in China's next phase of economic expansion. We welcome submissions that focus on, but not limited to, the following topics of interests:

- The importance and potential contribution of mass entrepreneurship to China's sustainable development and business ethics culture
- The partnerships among firms, university, research institutes, and the government for social or business entrepreneurship
- The role of government and public policy and regulations in facilitating or hindering sustainable entrepreneurial activities
- The role of social capital or guanxi in entrepreneurial activities and their impact on sustainability and business ethics.
- Individual differences (such as personality traits, past experiences including entrepreneurial experiences, education background) in entrepreneurs and corporate social responsibility
- University based new ventures and student engagement for mass entrepreneurship and social responsibilities
- Sustainable entrepreneurship and social innovation with focuses on environmental issues and pollution reduction in China (Buisse & Verbeke, 2003)
- Venture capital, angel investing, and entrepreneurial financing in China's unique institutional environment, and their impact on Chinese firms' corporate social responsibility (De Hond, et al., 2013; Doh & Rajwani, 2012)
- The mechanism at the level of organizations and institutions employed to promote social enterprises, corporate social responsibility and business ethics
- Nonmarket strategies and their impact on entrepreneurial activities and corporate social responsibility (Doh & Rajwani, 2012; Kingsley & Bonardi, 2012; Mellahi, et al., 2015)
- The applicability of West-based corporate social responsibility theories in the Chinese context and the developing of contextualized corporate social responsibility theories for entrepreneurship.
- What is the interplay between individual, organizational, and institutional influence on business ethics and ethical behaviors in the era of new normal and mass entrepreneurship?
- What is the role of leadership in enhancing and maintaining ethical behaviors in mass entrepreneurship?
- How do stakeholders including employees, customers, and government agencies respond to and deal with unethical actions that occur when entrepreneurs are trying hard to keep their business afloat?

### **Submission process**

All papers must be submitted through the JBE on-line submission system (Editorial Manager) which can be found at: [www.editorialmanager.com/busi/](http://www.editorialmanager.com/busi/) by **Sept 01, 2018**. To ensure that all manuscripts are correctly identified for consideration for this thematic symposium, it is important that authors select '**SI: Mass Entrepreneurship Policy and CSR in China**' in the submission process.

Manuscripts should be prepared in accordance with the Journal of Business Ethics guide for authors at <http://www.springer.com/philosophy/ethics+and+moral+philosophy/journal/10551>. All submitted manuscripts will be subject to the Journal of Business Ethics' blind review process.

We may organize a workshop/conference designed to facilitate the development of papers. Authors of potential contributors to this thematic symposium will be invited to attend this workshop/conference. Presentation at the workshop is neither a requirement for nor a promise of final acceptance of the paper in the thematic symposium.

Questions about the thematic symposium may be directed at the following guest editors:

Zhenzhong Ma, Guest Editor, University of Windsor, Canada (email: maz@uwindsor.ca)  
Maoliang Bu, Co-Guest Editor, Nanjing University, China (email: bumaoliang@hotmail.com)

## References

- Aguilera, R. V., Rupp, D. E., Williams, C. A., & Ganapathi, J. (2007). Putting the S back in corporate social responsibility: A multilevel theory of social change in organizations. *Academy of Management Review*, 32(3), 836-863.
- Buysse, K., & Verbeke, A. (2003). Proactive environmental strategies: A stakeholder management perspective. *Strategic Management Journal*, 24(5), 453-470.
- Christmann, P. (2004). Multinational companies and the natural environment: Determinants of global environmental policy standardization. *Academy of Management Journal*, 47(5), 747-760.
- De Hond, F. D., Rehbein, K. A., de Bakker F., & Kooijmans-van Lankveld, H. (2013). Playing on two chessboards: Reputation effects between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and corporate political activity (CPA). *Journal of Management Studies*, 51(5), 790-813.
- Doh, J. P., & Rajwani, T. (2012). Advancing nonmarket strategy research: Institutional perspectives in a changing world. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 26(26), 22-39.
- Kassinis, G., & Vafeas, N. (2006). Stakeholder pressures and environmental performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 49(1), 145-159.
- Kingsley, A. F., & Bonardi, J. P. (2012). Political markets and regulatory uncertainty: Insights and implications for integrated strategy. *Academy of Management Executive*, 26(3), 52-67.
- Kolk A. (2016). The social responsibility of international business: From ethics and the environment to CSR and sustainable development. *Journal of World Business*, 51(1), 23-34.
- Ma, Z., Lee, Y., & Chen, C. (2009). Booming or emerging? China's technological capability and international collaboration in patent activities. *Technological Forecasting & Social Change*, 76(6), 787-796.
- Marquis C., & Qian, C. (2013). Corporate social responsibility reporting in China: Symbol or substance? *Organization Science*, 25(1), 127-148.
- Mellahi, K., Frynas, J. G., Sun, P., & Siegel, D. (2015). A review of the nonmarket strategy literature: Toward a multi-theoretical integration. *Journal of Management*, 42(1), 143-173.
- Wu, J., & Ma, Z., (2016). Export intensity and MNE customers' environmental requirements: Effects on local Chinese suppliers' environment strategies. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 135(2), 327-339.