

# Special Issue Call for Papers

## JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES

### Multinational Enterprises and Local Contexts

Submission Deadline November 1, 2008

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Multinational enterprises (MNEs) face diverse challenges and opportunities when operating in a variety of different contexts. Recent research suggests that classic theoretical perspectives such as models based on international trade theory, the OLI paradigm and the integration-responsiveness framework are insufficiently nuanced to address these complexities that MNEs face, and therefore do not always yield optimal solutions. This special issue aims to advance our theoretical and empirical understanding of the interaction of how MNEs cope with idiosyncrasies of specific contexts, and the dynamic interactions between the contexts and MNE strategies.

At the corporate level, MNEs are in a strong position to tap into resources and capabilities from multiple local contexts and integrate and leverage them to create a range of competitive advantages. Such strategies are likely to involve specialized design and adaptation capabilities and emphasize the importance of both R&D and marketing intangibles in value creation. Moreover, they include global supply chains that integrate geographically dispersed production processes to take advantage of diverse locational advantages. Yet, we lack understanding of how companies may actually implement such ambitious strategies on a diverse global stage. Further complexity arises with the growing importance of non-equity relationships (such as alliances and outsourcing) within global supply chains, alongside more 'traditional' affiliate networks, where MNEs maintain control even in the absence of ownership.

In any specific context, MNEs find subtle ways to combine their firm-specific capabilities with local knowledge to create value propositions that suit the particular local context. Subsidiaries thus develop strategies that integrate resources of the MNE with local ones to attain competitiveness in a local context. This requires some degree of adaptation, possibly even the development of entirely new business models. Yet the extent of such adaptation varies across market segments, industries and national contexts in ways that are not yet well understood.

These issues may be particularly relevant for MNEs bridging large psychic, cultural and economic distances. For instance, these could be West European and North American businesses entering emerging economies and conversely, MNEs from emerging economies entering advanced market economies. We thus welcome papers from a variety of contexts that investigate business strategies or operational aspects such as R&D, marketing, human resources or logistics.

Papers in this special issue should advance our theoretical understanding of the interaction between the local and global dimensions of the strategies and operations of MNEs, and the impact of local context on the variation of local strategies. We welcome in particular new conceptual perspectives, and comparative assessments of the suitability of alternative theoretical perspectives such as agency theory,

institutional theory and the resource-based view (RBV). It would be particularly valuable to explore how theories such as these can be combined to shed light on research questions dealing with the interaction between local contexts and strategy or subsidiary roles within MNEs. Papers may also integrate contemporary theories of resources and institutions with traditional theoretical concepts and frameworks, such as the integration-responsiveness framework or the OLI paradigm.

These theoretical advances should explain strategic challenges faced by MNEs, such as:

- *How do high value-added processes like design and R&D migrate from advanced market economies to emerging markets?*
- *How do MNEs coordinate business units within their global supply chain that operate in a diversity of local contexts?*
- *How do MNEs manage their existing network of subsidiaries while establishing associated networks of arms-length suppliers, alliance and outsourcing partners in a variety of local contexts?*
- *How do MNEs cope with idiosyncrasies of specific contexts? For instance, how do MNEs cope with the conflicting pressures for social responsibility where standards of ethical practice are inconsistent?*
- *How do specific aspects of context, for example cultural norms, influence subsidiary strategies and operations?*
- *How do MNEs design, select and adapt their business models for different markets? For instance, how can they benefit from scale advantages of standardization, yet offer goods and services that suit the local customer?*

All submissions will be expected to develop strong theoretical foundations and implement rigorous methodologies. The special issue welcomes a broad range of methodologies in enhancing our understanding of the aforementioned processes. These include quantitative studies, qualitative and case studies, multi-country comparative studies, replication studies and studies of specific MNEs operating in multiple contexts.

A paper writing workshop is scheduled for April 2009 at the University of Reading, where prospective authors may present their work and receive comments and feedback. Note that invitation to the workshop does not imply acceptance for the special issue. Conversely, attendance is not prerequisite for publication in the special issue.

All acceptances to the special issue are subject to verification from the General Editors of the *Journal of Management Studies*.

## Submissions

Authors may submit the papers electronically to [CIBS@Reading.ac.uk](mailto:CIBS@Reading.ac.uk). Submissions will be accepted from **May 1, 2008 until the submission deadline of November 1, 2008**. Papers should be formatted using the JMS style guidelines available at [www.blackwellpublishing.com/jms](http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/jms).