

**Call for Papers - Special Issue –
Critical Perspectives on International Business (CPoIB)**

**“Multinational Corporations and Grand Challenges:
Part of the problem, part of the solution?”**

Submission deadline: 15th December 2022

I. Guest editors

- *Christoph Dörrenbächer*, Berlin School of Economics and Law, Germany
- *Mike Geppert*, Friedrich Schiller University Jena, Germany
- *Ödül Bozkurt*, University of Sussex Business School, United Kingdom

II. About Critical Perspectives on International Business (CPoIB)

The mission of CPOIB is to exclusively support critical reflections on the nature and impact of contemporary international business (IB) activities around the globe from inter-, trans-, and multidisciplinary perspectives. The journal places a special emphasis on scholarly work that questions the hegemony of multinational corporations (MNCs) and evaluates the effects of their activities on the global economy and national societies.

III. Scope and rationale of the Special Issue

Despite the accelerated slowing down of economic integration due to the global financial crisis, the Covid pandemic and the war in Ukraine, multinational corporations (MNCs) remain prime actors of the global economy with a particular high impact on the social and political life across countries (Dörrenbächer et al. 2021; Grosse, Gamso, and Nelson 2022; UNCTAD 2022). Predicated on the important role of MNCs in the world economy, International Business (IB) research has provided a rich account of instrumental knowledge associated with cross-border and cross-cultural management (Mellahi et al. 2021; Szkudlarek et al. 2020). These efforts have also comprised the study of the formal and informal structuring of MNCs including their handling of cross-border inter- and intra-organizational relationships. Nonetheless, research on the specific impact of MNC activities on societies, the environment and various stakeholders has remained scarce and scattered over disciplines (Dörrenbächer and Gammelgaard 2019; Geppert and Bozkurt 2021). Studies from a critical IB perspective (often on the pages of CPoIB) have provided insights on the economic and political power of MNCs, their at times morally and legally dubious activities, as well as on the detrimental effects some of their business activities have for the environment, the climate and vulnerable groups (Cairns and As-Saber 2017). Yet, the much bigger mainstream of IB research has so far carefully avoided addressing such ‘negative externalities’ of MNC activities across the world. Exceptions are rare and very recent (see e.g., Cuervo-Cazurra et al. 2021 on MNC misbehavior). It now appears that new debates in mainstream IB are on their way to putting greater emphasis on ‘Societal’s Grand Challenges’ (Buckley, Doh, and Benischke 2017). However, they one-sidedly focus on the solutions MNCs may provide (Cuervo-Cazurra et al. 2022b) to address Grand Challenges defined e.g., through the UN Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations 2015).

This Special Issue does not reject contributions that focus on practical solutions that MNCs provide to tackle Grand Challenges such as poverty, hunger, a clean and healthy environment etc. But here we are interested in research that goes beyond pure speculation about what MNCs might be able to do, and critically look at what they actually do, evaluating prerequisites, effects and consequences of such benevolent activities. This may also include research on MNC's rainbow washing (i.e., adopting the rainbow colors of the SDGs in marketing and communication without proper action) and SDG cherry-picking (selectively addressing Grand Challenges) (for the terms see, Cuervo-Cazurra et al. 2022a).

What makes this proposed Special Issue different, is that it recognizes that MNCs are not only part of the solution but in many instances part of the problem (see e.g., Adams, Nayak, and Koukpaki 2018; Flores, Böhm, and Misoczky 2022; Hermes and Lehto 2021). Hence, the special issue invites papers that investigate the strategies, business conduct and political behaviors of MNCs that cause and/or contribute to the very existence of Global Challenges in the first place. This involves papers that assess the compensations that MNCs offer (if any) for their harmful activities. We also encourage papers that study regulatory attempts and MNC counter activities to constrain such harmful activities.

Contributions to the Special Issue may focus on individual MNCs, MNCs of industries as well as on MNCs active in particular regions or countries. Grand Challenges may refer to specific aspects of an SDGs, a single SDGs or a combination of SDGs. We especially welcome contributions that study the MNC from the perspective of less powerful stakeholders who are less mobile, have less access to information and enjoy fewer financial resources than the MNCs that impact their lives, including those stakeholders who are politically and economically marginalized. The Special Issue invites both conceptual contributions and empirical studies drawing on qualitative or quantitative methods and data.

IV. Indicative list of potential topics invited for the Special Issue

We recognize the wide range of possibilities for critical IB research given the magnitude and complexity of the Grand Challenges and the variability of the ways in which these are intertwined with MNC activity in different locations and contexts. The following list of topics should therefore be seen as merely examples for potential topics rather than exhaustive.

- Extractive industries, global resource depletion and MNCs
- MNCs as enablers and/or obstacles of sustainable ecosystems
- MNCs's role in hollowing out of the social contract: issues of MNC mobility, tax evasion and corruption
- Global inequality (gender/race/income/education/health) and the role of MNCs
- Decent work in MNCs: workplace security, wellbeing, occupational health and industrial relations, labor exploitation, labor resistance and organizing
- Slavery in MNC value chains
- MNCs and the delivery of essential goods and services (food, water, health) to the marginalized
- MNCs, intellectual property rights and the global health crisis
- MNCs and the global refugee crisis
- Humanitarian action: the role and contribution of MNCs
- MNCs contribution to shaping and fighting against constraining institutions
- The Solution B-Corps offer to Grand Challenges
- MNC and SDG rainbow washing and SDG cherry-picking
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Contributors are encouraged to consult papers previously published in CPOIB related to the topics above: <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/1742-2043.htm>

V. Submission Process and Deadlines

Guidelines for submission

- Authors should refer to the *CPOIB* website and the instructions on submitting a paper. For author guidelines and more information see: <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/cpoib.htm>
- Submissions to *CPOIB* are made using ScholarOne Manuscripts <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/cpoib>
- All papers will be subjected to double-blind peer review and papers will be reviewed in accordance with *CPOIB* guidelines.
- Submission deadline: Thursday, **15th December 2022**
- Approximate date of publication: Late 2023 or early 2024

Guest Editors – contact details

- Enquiries about the special issue should be directed to the guest editors
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 - Ödül Bozkurt, o.bozkurt@sussex.ac.uk

VI. References

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VII. About the Special Issue Editors

Christoph Dörrenbächer is Professor of Organizational Design and Behaviour in International Business at the Berlin School of Economics and Law, Germany. His main research subject are multinational corporations, studied from an Organization Theory and Strategy perspective. Christoph currently serves as a Senior Editor of 'Critical Perspectives on International Business'.

Mike Geppert is Professor of Strategic and International Management at the Friedrich Schiller University Jena, Germany. His primary research interests are in the areas of Industrial Relations, IHMR, International Management and Organization Studies. Mike is

specifically interested in cross-national comparisons of management, work and organizations, socio-political issues in multinational corporations, and institutional change.

Ödül Bozkurt is Senior Lecturer in International Human Resource Management at the Department of Management, University of Sussex Business School, UK. As a sociologist of work, she is interested in the global/local dynamic of work experiences for a wide range of workers from the highly skilled professionals to the low skilled in “mundane” jobs such as those in mass retailing firms. Ödül has published on the uses and experiences of mobility in MNC jobs, the gendered outcomes of MNC employment in subsidiary locations, and the hybrid HRM practices of MNCs from emerging economies.

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